



AVAILABILITY AND INFORMATION NEEDS IN THE CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS DOMAIN – PORTFIR ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

Chemical contaminants (*Chc*) can be present and/or be introduced in food and feed as result of the various stages of the production/manufacturing process, treatment, handling, packaging and transport and/or due to environmental contamination.

Collecting and studying *Chc* analytical data from the food chain are essential procedures to generate fundamental information to support dietary exposure and risk-benefit assessment associated with food, to strengthen knowledge acquisition and dissemination and to provide better scientific advices, contributing for the continuous improvement of food safety and protection of public health.

In order to define priorities for the development of the Contaminants Database of the Portuguese Food Information Resource (PortFIR), the PortFIR Information Management Working Group (GTGI), of the Food Chemical Contamination Network (RPCQA), decided to identify and assess the availability and information needs on *Chc* present in food and feed of the main Portuguese stakeholders in the area.

Material and Methods

PortFIR Information Management Working Group (GTGI), developed a questionnaire to evaluate the availability and information needs of Portuguese stakeholders, from different sectors, namely: food production, industry, health, education and research.

The survey was implemented online between August and September 2017. In order to reach a larger number of respondents, it was requested to external entities (ex.: Directorate-General for Food and Veterinary (DGAV) and Portuguese Agro-Food Industries Federation (FIPA)), the dissemination of the questionnaire.



Results

The application of the survey resulted in the participation of 457 people. 93.4% of the respondents are "Economic operators" (Fig. 1) having as main activity the "Production and processing of foodstuffs (including supplements)" (56.9%). Only 0.9% indicated to be in the "Production and processing of feed" sector (Fig. 2). In addition, 55.2% of the respondents indicated to produce/have available analytical data on *Chc* due to their professional activities (Fig. 3).

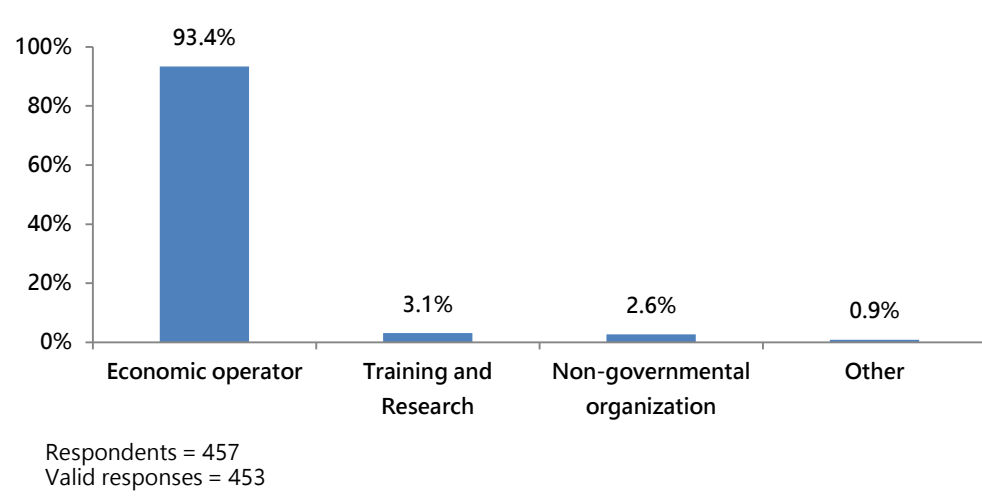


Figure 1: Respondents professional activity sectors.

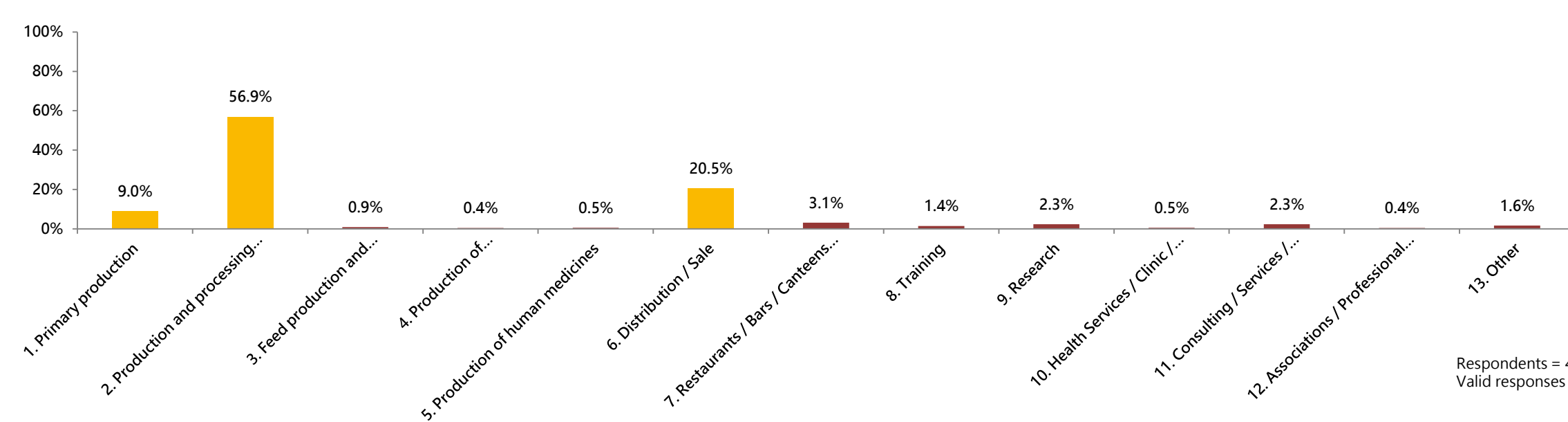


Figure 2: Areas where the main activities of the entities/companies/organizations of the respondents fall.

Respondents from "Primary Production" and "Production and processing of foodstuffs (including supplements)" sectors have as main food commodities:

- "Meat and meat products" (20.2%);
- "Fish, fishery products, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates" (11.2%);
- "Milk and dairy products" (10.8%).

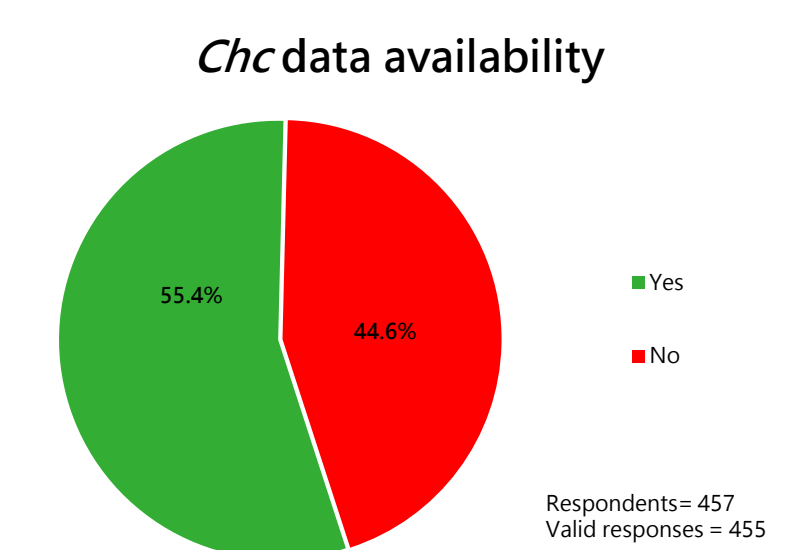


Figure 3: Respondents who produce/disperse and do not produce/do not disperse data on *Chc*.

Regarding the information needs, 42.5% indicated the need of more information on the data they produce/own and simultaneously 57.6% pointed out the same need on *Chc* in general (Figs. 4 e 5). The "Maximum Permissible Values / Maximum Residue Limits" and the "Main contaminants by food/product groups" were indicated in 17.5% and 39.8% of the valid responses of the participants, respectively (Figs. 6 e 7).

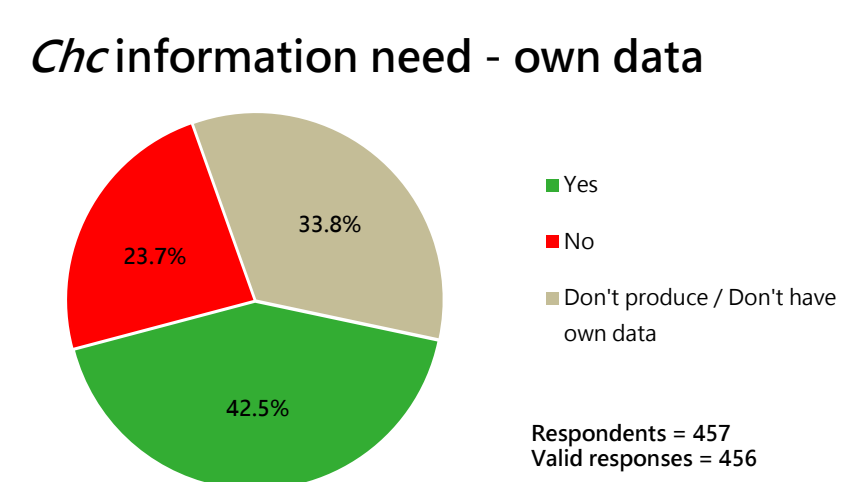


Figure 4: Respondents who feel and don't feel the need for more information about the analytical data they produce/own, and also respondents who don't produce/don't have own data.

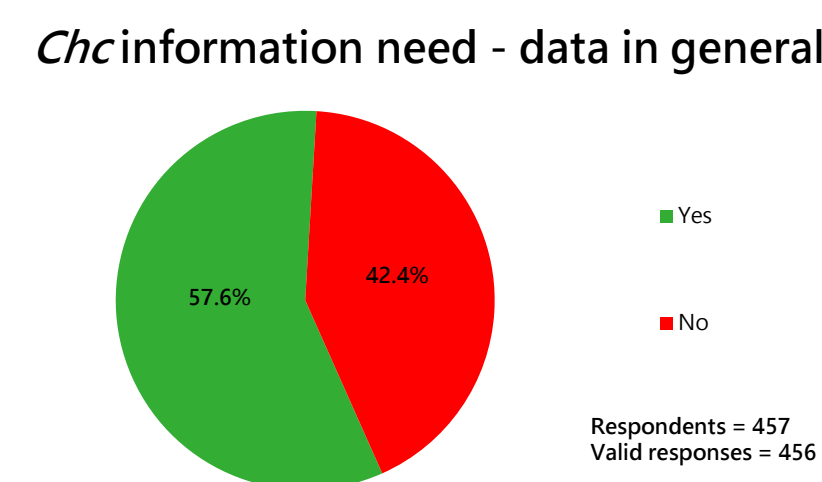


Figure 5: Respondents who feel and don't feel the need for more information about *Chc* in general.

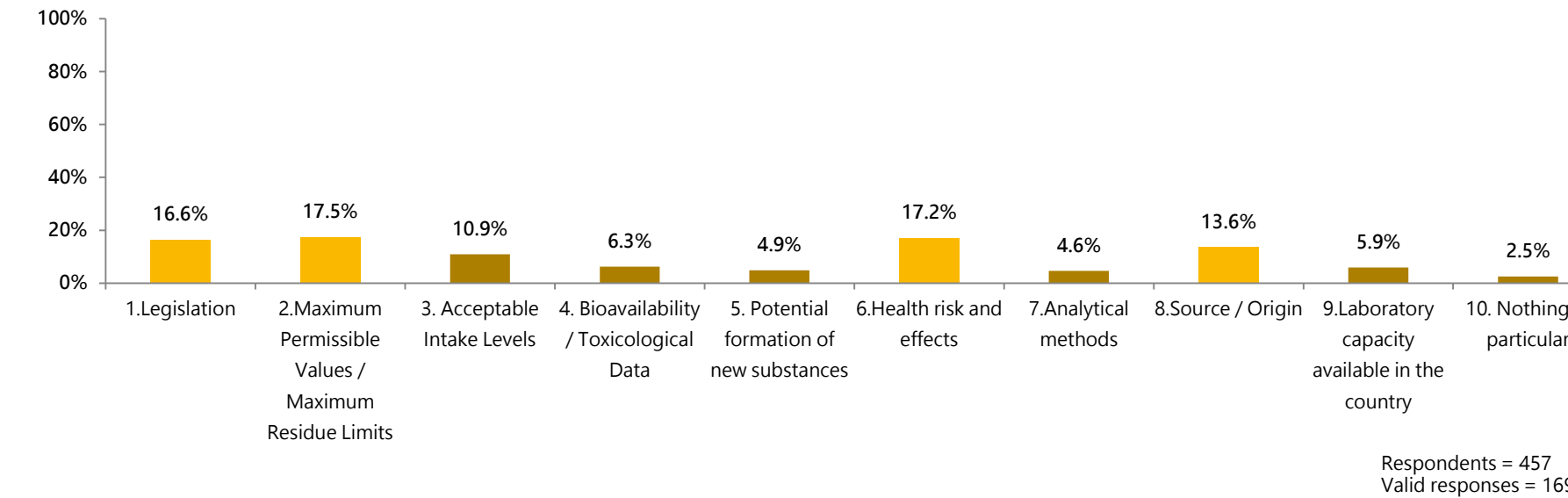


Figure 6: Information respondents would like to have available regarding *Chc*.

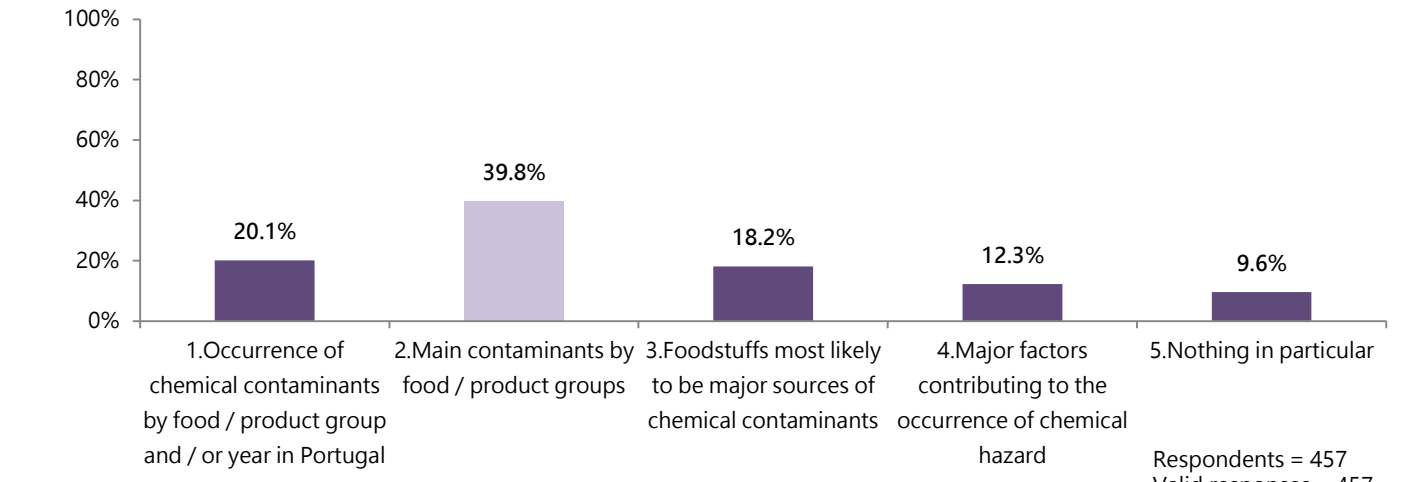


Figure 7: Additional information respondents would like to have available regarding *Chc* in general.

Finally, 96.9% respondents signalled the importance of having a national platform that can provide useful data and information in this domain and 65.7% indicated to be available to share data/information with this platform.

Conclusions

A significant number of stakeholders (55.2%) produce and/or have available information on *Chc* but the majority (57.6%) need more information. It was stated (96.9% respondents) the importance of having a National platform that can provide useful data, information and knowledge in *Chc* domain, accordingly to the stakeholders needs.

References

Relatório "Disponibilidade e Necessidades de Informação no Domínio dos Contaminantes Químicos de Alimentos". PortFIR - Rede Portuguesa Sobre Contaminação Química de Alimentos (RPCQA), Grupo de Trabalho Gestão de Informação (GTGI). INSA, 2018. Available in: <http://hdl.handle.net/10400.18/5625>