

Participant Information Sheet

Online Questionnaire

Project: *The impacts of Covid-19 on Food Systems in England*

Researcher names: Timothy Wilkinson, Matt Lobley, Michael Winter and Steven Guilbert

Invitation and brief summary: This research project is about understanding the changing food system in England, over the last year. Covid-19 has created challenges for the operation of food businesses throughout the supply chain (from producers, to manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers). Brexit-related border delays have caused issues for imports and exports. This survey is designed to feed into policy requirements for up to date intelligence on supply chain issues and concerns. To find out more about the project please see our [website](#).

Please take time to consider the information carefully and to discuss it with family or friends if you wish, or to ask the researcher questions.

Purpose of the research: The purpose of the questionnaire is to understand the range of business responses to Covid and Brexit. We would like to know how prepared you felt for Lockdown 3 (in January 2021), the lifting of restrictions and how prepared you feel for potential future supply chain issues. We are interested in the impacts the business has experienced over the last year; how has Covid and Brexit have affected the amount of time you spend on various business operations (such as obtaining stock or managing staff)? How long do you expect the impacts of Covid to last? We would like to understand how effectively you feel the business has responded to a range of challenges over the last year (for example, around staffing, cashflow and changing demand). The survey ends with questions about the business: including products/ services sold, market sectors supplied and approximate business turnover.

Why have I been approached? You have been approached as someone who can provide an insight based on your experience of being part of the food supply chain during the Covid-19 pandemic.

What would taking part involve? Taking part involves completing an online questionnaire, which will take approximately 13 minutes. We may send reminders about the survey. If you do not want to be contacted about this research again, please email 'STOP' to foodbusinesssurvey@exeter.ac.uk.

What are the possible benefits of taking part? We cannot promise specific benefits, but results from the project will feed into policy requirements for up to date intelligence on supply chain issues. If you would like to follow the project's progress and emerging findings, then you can sign up to our monthly bulletin via the project [website](#).

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? There are no foreseeable disadvantages in taking part.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study? Your participation is voluntary and you are free to stop completing the questionnaire at any point, without needing to give a reason. If you feel uncomfortable answering particular questions, then please skip these. Your responses will only be recorded once you press 'submit' at the end of the survey.

If you wish to withdraw from the research *before* you complete the survey, you do not need to do anything, except close the survey webpage. If you wish to withdraw from the survey *after* you

submitted your responses, please contact foodbusinesssurvey@exeter.ac.uk. As your responses are anonymous, once you submit the survey, you may be unable to withdraw your data, but we will do our best to help you. You may wish to keep a record of the date and time when you submitted the survey. You can make a request for your data to be withdrawn until 01 June 2021, after that it will not be possible to withdraw your data.

All individual responses to the questionnaire will be deleted by 15th December 2021 but anonymous, aggregated results will be stored indefinitely in an online data repository.

How will my information be kept confidential? The University of Exeter processes personal data for the purposes of carrying out research in the public interest. The University will endeavour to be transparent about its processing of your personal data and this information sheet should provide a clear explanation of this. If you do have any queries about the University's processing of your personal data that cannot be resolved by the research team, further information may be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk or at www.exeter.ac.uk/dataprotection

Your responses to the survey are anonymous. Any identifiable information you might mention will be removed in reporting from the project, including in academic papers and conference proceedings. Where we want to use direct quotes from answers you give in open text questions in the survey, we will use ID tags that reference the food sector of your business or supply chain stage, e.g. 'Meat Processor 123', 'Grocer 456' – rather than your name or any identifiable information.

Where you have consented, the research team will keep your contact details for the purposes of future research. If you change your mind please contact us to request that your contact details are removed. Your contact details will be stored separately from other data in a secure, encrypted databased accessible only to the research team.

Will I receive any payment for taking part? No, there is no payment for taking part.

What will happen to the results of this study? Anonymised results will be disseminated in our monthly bulletin, academic publication, conferences and in public engagement. The bulletin will be available on our [website](#).

Who are organising and funding this study? The Centre for Rural Policy Research are conducting the research, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) via the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) open call for research and innovation ideas to address COVID-19.

Who has reviewed this study? This project has been reviewed by the College of Social Science and International Studies Research Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter 201920-121.

Further information and contact details. If you have queries about the project, please contact:

Name: Dr. Timothy Wilkinson

Address: Centre for Rural Policy Research, Lazenby House, Prince of Wales Road, University of Exeter, Exeter, EX4 4PJ

Email: foodbusinesssurvey@exeter.ac.uk

If you are not happy with any aspect of the project and wish to complain, please contact: The University of Exeter, College of Social Sciences and International Studies Research Ethics Committee, ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this project