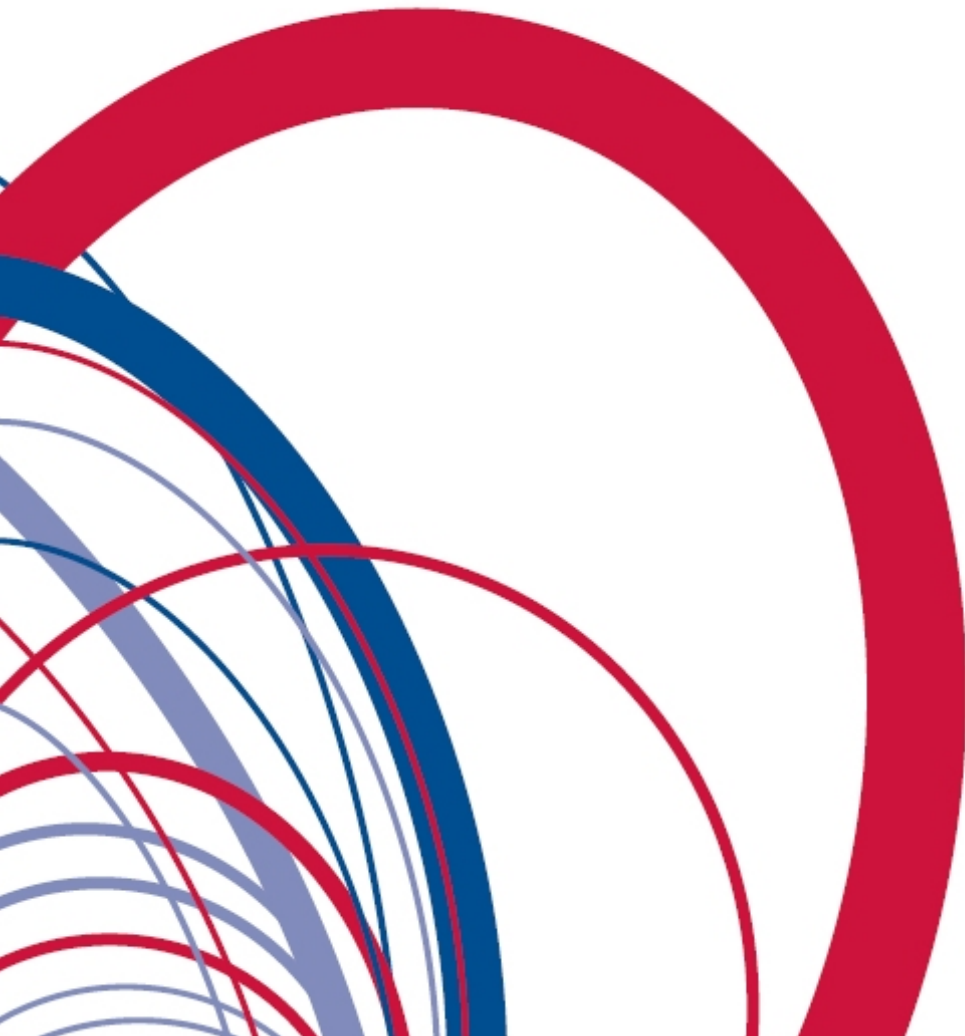


## Chapter 4 - Shopping Miles

March 2007



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## 1. Introduction

There has been a shift in both attitudes and consumptions within the UK as a result of new and changing ethical and environmental issues. One example is that 78% (2002) of UK Households now purchase organic food, compared to just 37% in 1998. In addition there has also been an increasing awareness of the environmental impact of long distance transportation of food.

A recent Millward Brown poll placed Fair Trade retailer 'Café Direct' as the most popular brand, with the poll seeing a rise of brands which embody ethical and environmental concerns. On top of this there has been momentum growing against foods transported from abroad, and also substantial distances within the UK. The concept of 'food miles' is becoming increasingly well known as we are encouraged to buy local produce in an attempt to combat the carbon footprint effect. Retailers are also being pressured into reducing the 'food miles' of the food within their stores.

However alongside this growing concern for both ethical consumption and environmental issues is the fact that whilst people are becoming increasingly likely to spend a few pence extra on fair trade or local oranges, they are not so keen to relinquish using their car on the supermarket shop. Additionally it is not just a singular 'shop' which is now taking place, almost a third of people in the UK, go to the supermarket 2 to 3 times per week just to stock up on basics such as bread and milk.

So whilst we are seeing increased concern with the carbon footprint a banana flown or shipped from Africa may have, it seems the general public is quick to ignore the effect that their car journeys may have on overall 'food miles'. It is perhaps easier to buy something different or extra rather than giving up either a drive or even one trip to the supermarket. This report examines the impact of 'shopping miles' and in particular needless 'shopping miles within the context of the Food miles debate.

The research upon which this report is based includes:

- Original quantitative on-line omnibus research by YouGov among 2,000 UK respondents
- Secondary desk research and analysis from nVision, the Future Foundation's unique database of social, economic and technological trends within the UK
- Secondary desk research on information and statistics from DEFRA and The National Travel Survey

### About the Future Foundation

The Future Foundation is a commercial think tank established in 1996. It has extensive experience in anticipating, understanding and forecasting changes in the ways people live and how businesses can respond to the changing environment. It has a unique joint venture with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Essex University to assist with the wider dissemination of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), the largest social science longitudinal panel study in the UK, which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

## 2. Shopping Miles

In this fourth chapter of the Local Life Report, we have combined findings from a YouGov omnibus study among 2,000 UK respondents along with existing research from DEFRA and the National Travel Survey to create an overview of the awareness and impact of 'shopping miles'.

- Trends in Food Miles
- Needless miles
- Awareness and cynicism
- Regional Analysis

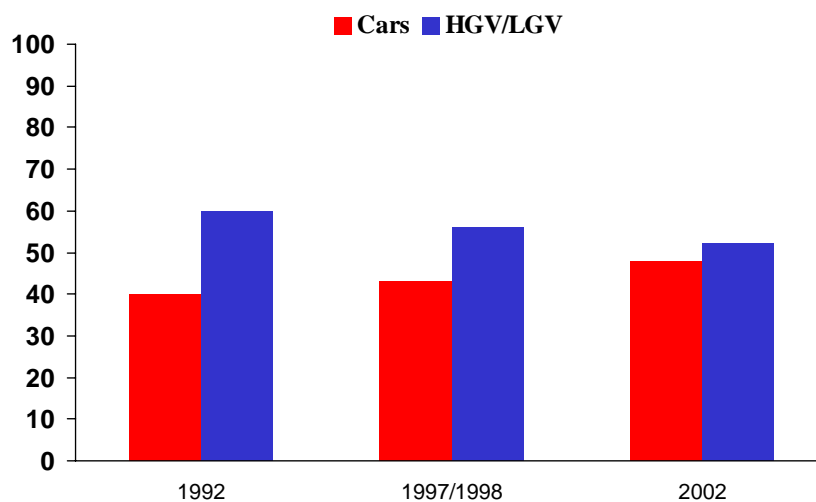
### Key Findings:

- 'Shopping miles' are increasing as an overall total of 'Food Miles' – 40% to 48% between 1990 and 1992
- 67% of Britain's could walk to the supermarket, but 86% choose to drive
- The average Britain travels a 'needless' 2.4 miles per week to get basics e.g. milk and bread from the supermarket
- London has an average of 1.1 supermarkets/convenience stores per sq kilometre, yet 78% of Londoners claim that they drive to do their Supermarket shop.

### 3. Trends in Food miles

There has been a growing increase in the amount of food that is transported both within and in and out of the UK. DEFRA figures show that since 1978 the average distance for each trip has increased by 50%. Whilst there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the source to shop journey, the 'shop to home' trip is also adding to overall 'food miles'.

**Chart 1 Food Transport – Percentage of UK food kilometres split by transport type**



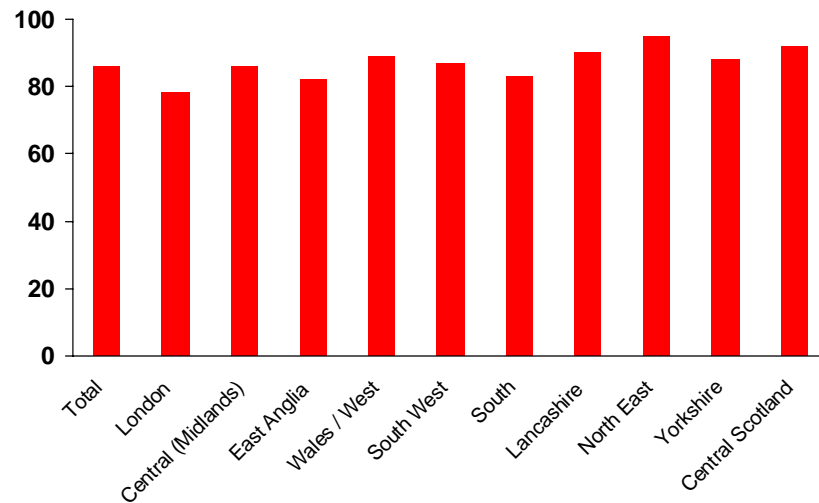
Source: DEFRA – The Validity of Food miles as an indicator of sustainable development

The above chart shows the percentage of total UK 'Food Miles' for Cars and HGV/LGV's. This demonstrates that the proportions of HGV/LGV miles are decreasing, with a drop from 60% in 1992 to 52% in 2002. At the same time car transport from 'shop to home' or 'shopping miles' are increasing. This is at a rate of almost 10% per decade, from 40% in 1992 to 48% in 2002. Thus if this trend continues, 'shopping miles' could quite quickly outnumber miles from HGV/LGV's.

Figures from the National Travel Survey also show an increase, the average person in the UK travelled 843 miles for the purpose of shopping in 2002/2003 and 714 of these miles were in a car either as a driver or passenger. This has increased by almost 100 miles since 1989/1991.

**Chart 2 I usually drive to the supermarket to do my main weekly shop, by region**

Of those who drive and have shopping responsibility



Source: YouGov Survey, 2007

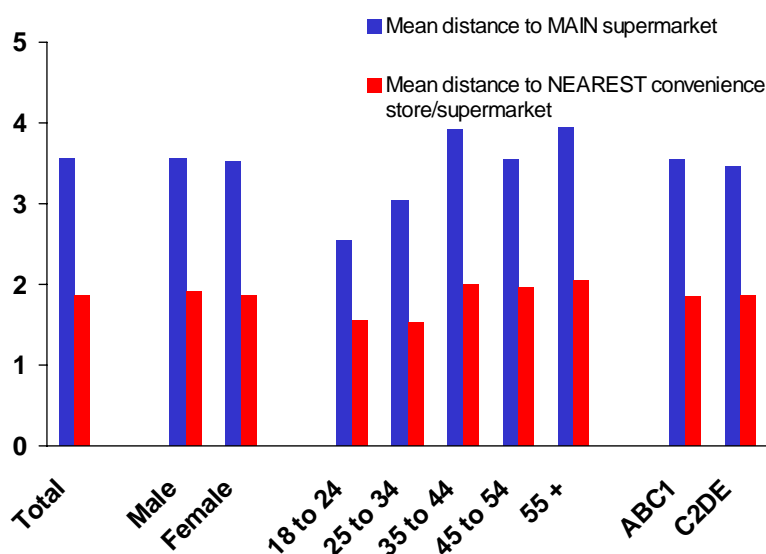
Figures from the YouGov omnibus study also show the high prevalence of the car as the dominant form of transport when it comes to travel to the supermarket, 86% choose to use this form of transport. DEFRA comment on the role in which out of town shopping centres have to play in increasing the length of journeys to and from food shops. However as we go on to show in the next section, the majority of people in Great Britain have a supermarket/convenience store within walking distance.

## 4. Needless Miles

We have established that 'shopping miles' do make up a large percentage of overall UK 'Food miles' it is perhaps necessary to distinguish between necessary journey's and more 'needless travel'.

**Chart 3 Distance travelled to main supermarket compared with distance to nearest convenience store or supermarket**

Of those who travel to the supermarket



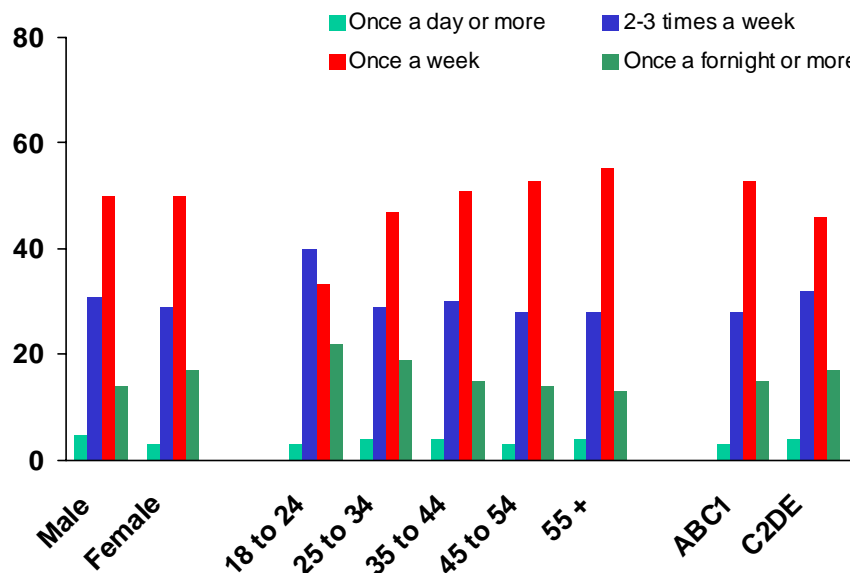
Source: YouGov Survey, 2007

What we can see from comparing the average distance to a persons nearest supermarket and the actual distance travelled is two key issues. Firstly the average distance to the nearest supermarket/convenience store is just 1.86miles. Over two thirds (67%) of the YouGov Omnibus survey live within walking distance (1 mile) of their nearest supermarket, in London this figure is even higher at 75%.

Secondly we can see that the average adult in Great Britain travels almost double the distance to go to their supermarket than they need to go, with the average amount travelled being 3.56 miles. This means the average Britain travels almost 1.7 extra miles than they need to, to do their supermarket shop, almost double the necessary distance.

**Chart 4 How often do you visit the supermarket at which you do your MAIN weekly shop?**

Of those who travel to the supermarket



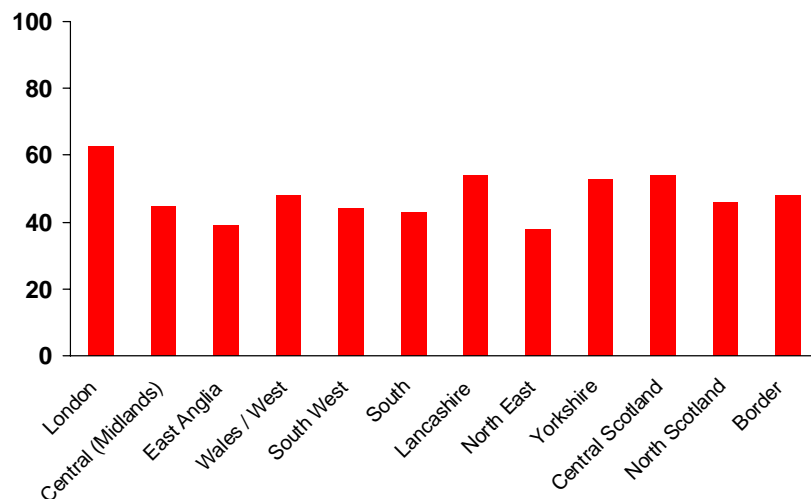
Source: YouGov Survey, 2007

In terms of how many times people visit their supermarket to buy basics e.g. bread and milk, 26% of the YouGov survey claimed to go between 2-3 times per week. This allows us to calculate the number of wasted miles each week that the average person travels to get basics such as bread/milk from their main supermarket, which comes to 2.4 miles per week. These 'needless' miles are responsible for 972.3 kilo tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year. If we consider that a transatlantic flight is responsible for 1.49 tonnes of carbon dioxide, then these unnecessary 'shopping miles' are the equivalent of over half a million transatlantic flights.



**Chart 5 Regardless of whether you actually go into the supermarket, do you pass by any supermarkets within your daily routine?**

Of those who travel to the supermarket



Source: YouGov Survey, 2007

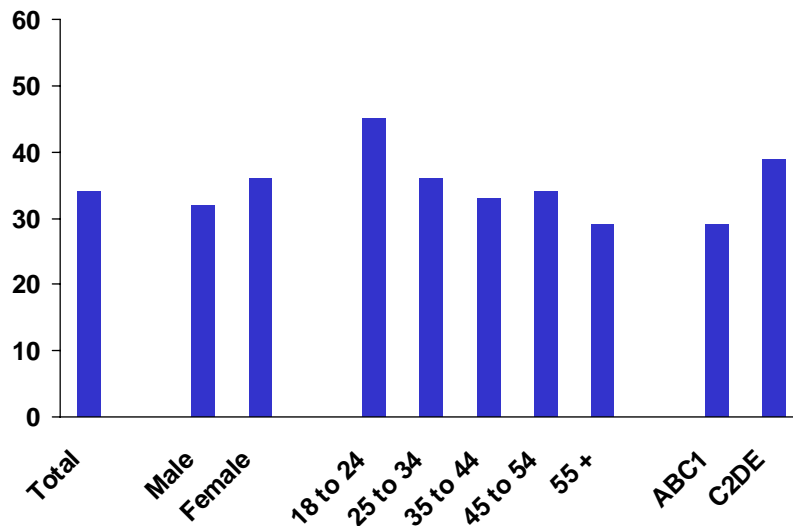
The extra distance and journeys that British shoppers make can be seen as even more 'needless' when we consider that 50% of us pass some sort of supermarket/convenience store during our everyday routine. If this 50% used these existing journeys to do 'top up shopping' this could see a significant reduction in trips by car to supermarkets.

Finally when we look at both wasted miles and wasted food, we build a picture of 'excess' shopping. According to Future Foundation research from National Accounts Expenditure, there are 8.2 million tonnes per year of Food and packaging waste. In addition only 15-½ % of all food waste is composted within the UK. With so many wasted journeys and food, perhaps the frequency and volume of shopping trips need to be questioned.

## 5. Awareness and cynicism

Chart 6 I don't know what food miles are

Of those who travel to the supermarket

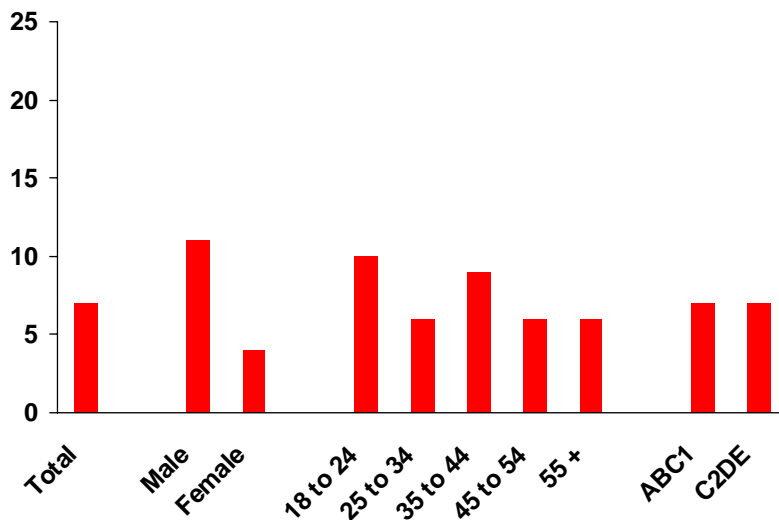


Source: YouGov Survey, 2007

Whilst we know that there is an increase in awareness of environmental issues as well as a growing uptake of organic produce, it would be a mistake to think that this represents the whole population. 34% of people in Great Britain claim not to know what food miles are, this is especially prevalent in the 18-24 age group, with 45% not knowing what food miles are.

**Chart 7 I don't care about food miles**

Of those who travel to the supermarket

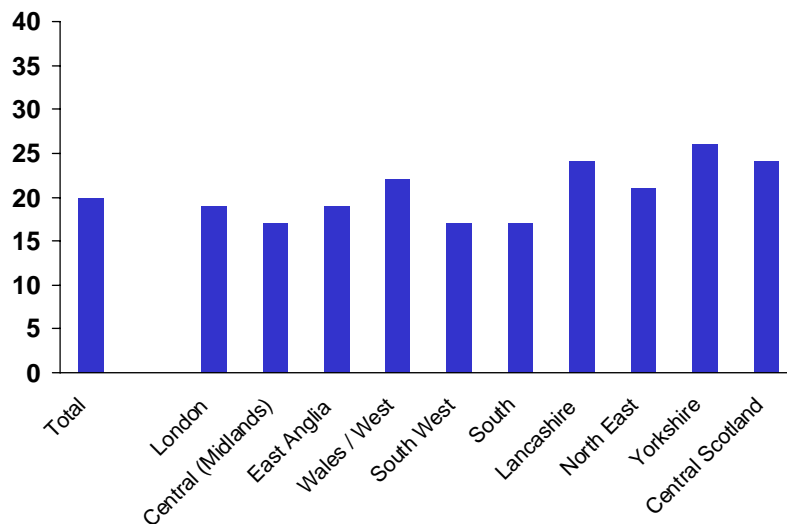


Source: YouGov Survey, 2007

What we can see is that there are very few people who do not care about food miles, only 7% claimed not to care, with men being more likely not to care than women. However is it perhaps a case of actions failing to speak louder than words. One fifth of Britain's admit that they could shop more locally, thus reducing their contribution to overall 'food miles', but would prefer a supermarket that is further away.

**Chart 8 I could do my shopping more locally but I prefer a supermarket that is further away from home**

Of those who travel to the supermarket



Source: YouGov Survey, 2007

What is also interesting is that almost one in ten surveyed for this study still believed that current discussions over the environment were 'hype', and almost one fifth did not worry about the environment when shopping.

**Chart 9 Attitudes to the environment**

Those who agree with the following statements.....



Source: YouGov Survey, 2007

## 6. Regional Appendix

Finally, we turn to the research in geographical terms. We will look at how distance travelled to supermarkets varies across regions, as well as frequency of supermarket travel and comparisons of distance to the nearest supermarket. We will also assess the differing attitudes towards food miles and environmental concerns.

### 6.1. Results by Region

Chart 10 Driving to the supermarket

Do you usually drive to the supermarket at which you do your MAIN weekly shop?	Total	London	Midlands	East Anglia	Wales / West	South West	South	Lancashire	North East	Yorkshire	Central Scotland
Yes	86%	78%	86%	82%	89%	87%	83%	90%	95%	88%	92%
No	10%	16%	10%	9%	10%	6%	11%	4%	5%	9%	4%

Chart 11 Proximity of Supermarket to home and distance travelled

	Total	London	Midlands	East Anglia	Wales / West	South West	South	Lancashire	North East	Yorkshire	Central Scotland
Average number of miles to NEAREST supermarket	1.86	1.55	2.04	2.15	2.22	2.37	1.74	1.67	1.93	2.01	1.86
Average number of miles to supermarket used for MAIN weekly shop	3.56	2.52	3.57	4.49	3.96	4.57	3.37	3.11	3.91	3.7	3.62
Multiple of extra distance travelled	1.9	1.6	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.9

Chart 12 Number of Journeys to Supermarket

How often do you drive to the supermarket at which you do your MAIN weekly shop to purchase basic items such as bread, milk etc.?	Total	London	Midlands	East Anglia	Wales / West	South West	South	Lancashire	North East	Yorkshire	Central Scotland
More than once a day	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Once a day	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%	5%	3%	6%
2 to 3 times a week	26%	27%	25%	25%	38%	17%	22%	24%	18%	28%	29%
Once a week	57%	58%	55%	54%	44%	67%	61%	59%	59%	55%	58%
Once a fortnight	10%	9%	8%	14%	9%	7%	11%	13%	14%	6%	5%
Once a month	2%	2%	1%	2%	5%	4%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Less often	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	3%	0%

Chart 13 Attitudes to shopping

	Total	London	Midlands	East Anglia	Wales / West	South West	South	Lancashire	North East	Yorkshire	Central Scotland
I could do my shopping more locally but I prefer a supermarket that is further away from home	20%	19%	17%	19%	22%	17%	17%	24%	21%	26%	24%
I take into account environmental concerns every time I do my shopping	23%	23%	24%	25%	23%	28%	23%	20%	20%	21%	21%
I never worry about the environment when shopping	16%	16%	18%	10%	11%	8%	16%	15%	21%	22%	16%



Chart 14 Attitudes to environmental issues

	Total	London	Midlands	East Anglia	Wales / West	South West	South	Lancashire	North East	Yorkshire	Central Scotland
I find that current discussions over the environment are all hype – the problem is not that bad	9%	11%	8%	9%	9%	4%	7%	8%	6%	14%	5%
I feel guilty about the impact that my car has on the environment	16%	11%	18%	17%	18%	18%	18%	17%	16%	16%	16%
I don't care about food miles	7%	10%	8%	4%	4%	4%	7%	6%	7%	7%	9%
I don't know what food miles are	34%	35%	29%	30%	34%	15%	34%	41%	42%	38%	31%

## 6.2. Summaries for each Region

### 6.2.1. London

Those living in London were the least likely to drive to their supermarket, however 78% still claimed to do so. The average distance from Londoners home's to their nearest supermarket/convenience store is just 1.55 miles, which is the least distance of all regions. However they are likely to travel a mile further to do their supermarket shopping, with the average distance travelled 2.52 miles. Although this is the least distanced travelled when in comparison with other regions, it is still quite a large distance when there are on average 1.1 supermarkets/convenience stores per square kilometre in the London area. As you would expect Londoners are the most likely to pass a supermarket within their daily routine, 63% report doing so. Those living in London are also the most likely not to care about food miles, with 1 in 10 people claiming not to care. In addition Londoners are the second most likely to declare that current discussions over the environment are 'all hype-the problem is not that bad'.

### 6.2.2. Midlands

86% of those living in the Midlands drive to do their main supermarket shop, and travel 3.57 miles to do so. Considering that on average their nearest supermarket is 2.04 miles, this means they travel almost double the mileage they need to, however this is the smallest amount compared with other regions, with only Londoners travelling less. They are also the third most concerned region when it comes to environmental issues, with 24% of midlands respondents reporting that they 'take account of environmental concerns' every time they do their shopping. Those living in the midlands are also

the most aware of food miles, with this region having the least percentage of people who do not know about food miles (29%).

### **6.2.3. East Anglia**

East Anglia came top when comparing distanced travelled to a supermarket compared to distance to nearest supermarket, people in East Anglia travelled 2.1 times further than they need to go to do their main supermarket shop. They also travelled the second longest distance, 4.49 miles, to get to their chosen supermarket. However they are the second least likely region to drive to a supermarket, although 82% still do. In addition 18% of those living in East Anglia shop for basic purchases less than once a week, making them the least frequent shoppers out of all the regions.

### **6.2.4. Wales/West**

Those living in Wales/West have the second furthest to travel to get to their nearest supermarket, on average 2.22 miles. However they travel, on average almost double (1.8) this to get to the supermarket where they do their main shop. With 39% of people who live in this region claiming that they shop for basics 2 or 3 times a week or more, they are the most frequent shoppers of all regions.

### **6.2.5. South West**

People in the South West have the furthest to travel to their nearest supermarket, 2.37 miles, almost double that of people in London. It was also within the South West that the average distance travelled to the supermarket was the greatest, 4.57 miles. Meaning that people travelled 1.9 times further than was necessary. However although they may travel the furthest, they were unlikely to do this very frequently with the majority (67%) shopping for basics only once a week. In addition this region was the most concerned about environmental issues, with them being the most worried about the effect of their car on the environment. As well they were also the least likely to claim that current environmental issues were 'hype' (4%) and to report that they didn't care about food miles (15%).

### **6.2.6. South**

People in the South had the third least distance to travel to get to their nearest supermarket (1.74 miles), however they travelled on average 1.9 times further than that to reach their chosen supermarket. However despite these 'wasted' miles, 18% of southern respondents claimed to feel guilty about the effect that their car had on the environment.

### **6.2.7. Lancashire**

Lancashire shoppers are the third most likely to use their car to do their main shop, with 90% claiming that they drive to the supermarket. Despite the fact that with an average distance of the nearest supermarket being 1.67 miles, making it the region with the second nearest supermarkets, people still travelled 1.9 times that distance to get to their chose supermarket. This was also

demonstrated by the fact that Lancashire was the second most likely region where people claimed that they could do their shopping more locally but preferred a supermarket that is further away (24%).

#### **6.2.8. North East**

95% of people in the North East drive to their supermarket to do their main shop, making this the region with the highest number of people driving to the supermarket. Similarly the people in the North East had the second highest number of 'wasted' miles, with shoppers travelling 2 times more than they needed to, making them the joint top region in terms of excessive amount travelled. In the North East's defence, people in the North East were the least likely to pass supermarkets during their everyday routine, with only 38% reporting that this happened. However it is the region where people were most likely to not know what food miles are, with 42% claiming that they did not know.

#### **6.2.9. Yorkshire**

Yorkshire shoppers travel slightly further to go to the supermarket than the overall average. In addition they also makes the second highest number of journeys to get basic food supplies with 31% of people travelling 2 or 3 times a week or more. However what is interesting about this region is their attitudes to the environment. Over a quarter of people (26%) say that although they could shop more locally they prefer to go to a supermarket that is further away. As well, people residing in Yorkshire have the highest propensity to claim that current environmental concerns are just hype and that they never worry about the environment when shopping. Thus meaning that Yorkshire is the region where people would appear least concerned with environmental issues.

#### **6.2.10. Central Scotland**

Shoppers in Central Scotland are the second most likely to drive (92%) to the supermarket to do their main shop. The average person in this region travels 3.62 miles to the supermarket, 1.9 times more than they would if they used their nearest supermarket. 24% of people also claim that they could shop more locally but prefer to shop at a supermarket that is further away. Fittingly then, this region contains the people that are second most likely not to care about food miles.