

Mainstream consumers driving animal welfare

By STEVE MARRERY
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MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. — Consumer expectations are crucial in a fast-moving world in which food companies are linked closely to suppliers. Bob Langert, senior public affairs director of McDonald's Corp., told producers and veterinarians attending the American Swine Conference Sept. 17-18 here.

In consultation with livestock handling experts and suppliers, McDonald's is developing welfare guidelines in response to public demands, Langert explained.

McDonald's social responsibility policy is designed to anticipate consumer concerns and minimize overreactions, he said.

As part of corporate citizenship policies, the company has adopted handling, auditing and compliance programs for packers and cage space standards for egg suppliers. McDonald's has just completed its third annual audit of packing plants that supply it with raw material. By year-end, it will buy eggs from producers who support its welfare guidelines. Dedicated suppliers must provide at least 72 sq. in. of cage space and 4 in. of feeder per bird. The company has similar standards for the handling of



Consumer expectations of animal welfare

A. K. Johnson

National Pork Board, Des Moines, IA

Introduction

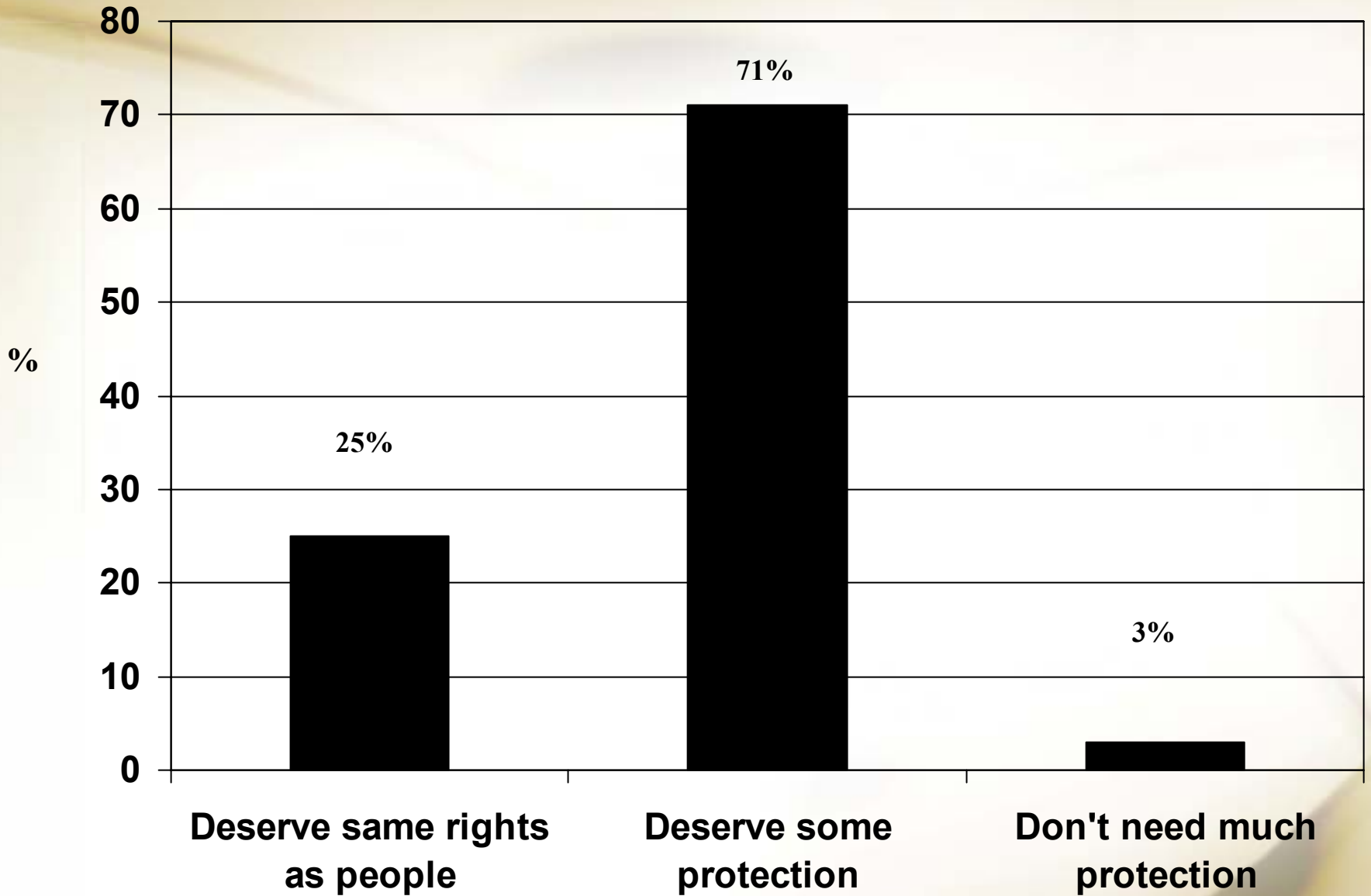
- Modern producer must wear multiple hats:
 - Steward of their animals and land
 - Make a profit
 - Cognizant of the political climate
- Renewed and passionate interest in farm animal welfare
- Initiatives in place today range from:
 - On farm assessment programs
 - Certification programs
 - Marketing guidelines
 - Third party audits
 - Legislative actions



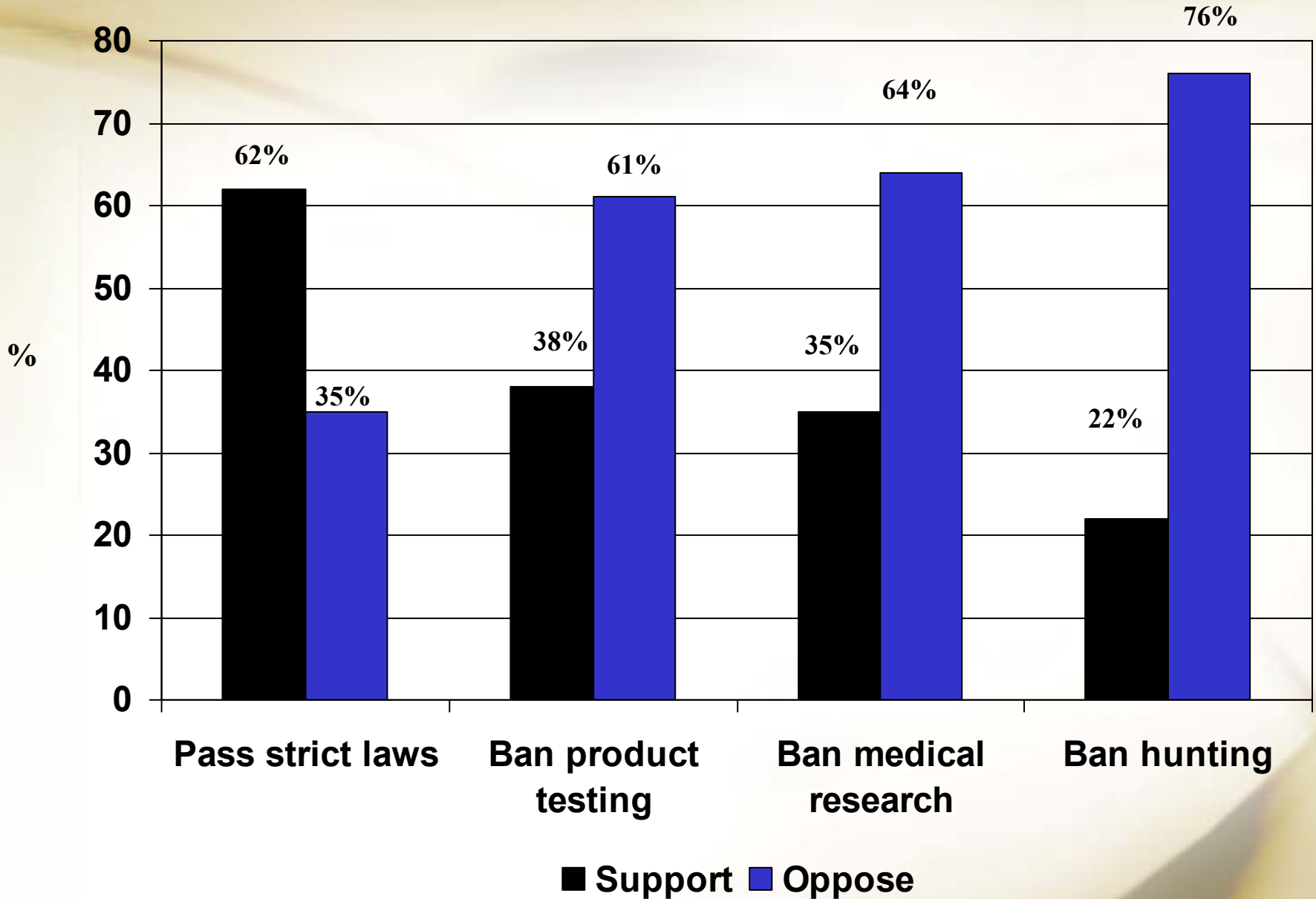
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHAIN RESTAURANTS
of the NATIONAL RETAIL FEDERATION



Gallup Poll, 2003



Gallup Poll, 2003



Customer attitudes and expectations

- **Objectives:**

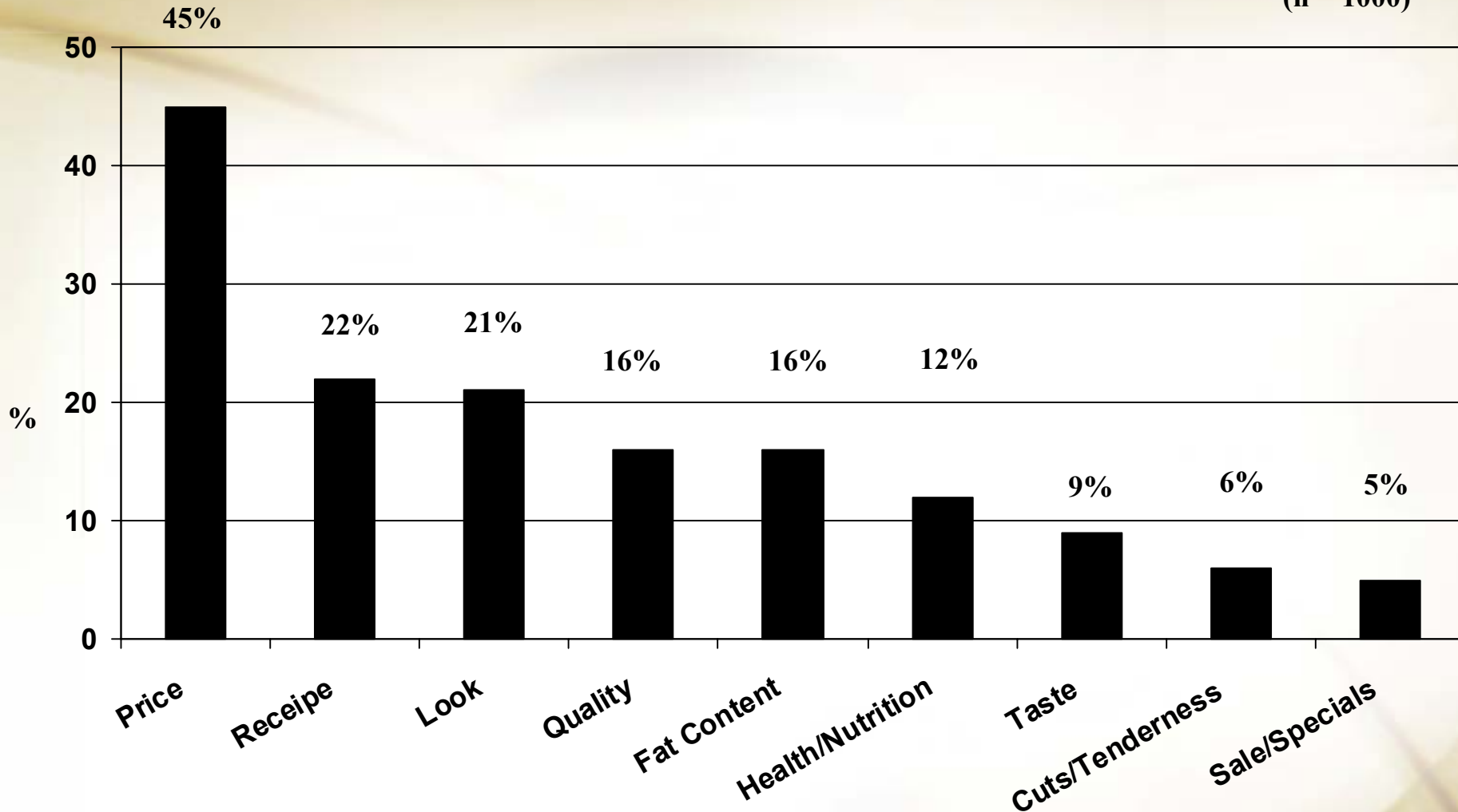
- ***“To identify issues of concern about pork industry practices and animal welfare”***
- ***“To obtain statistically valid data which will accurately measure public perception of pork production practices and animal welfare issues”***

Customer attitudes and expectations

- **Findings are based on a nationally representative sample:**
 - 1000 U.S. adults
 - Aged 18 years or over
- **Respondents had primary or shared responsibility for grocery shopping**
- **Survey was:**
 - Conducted by a 15 minute interview
 - Data was collected between December 1st and December 17th 2001
- **Results are projectable to the entire American adult population**

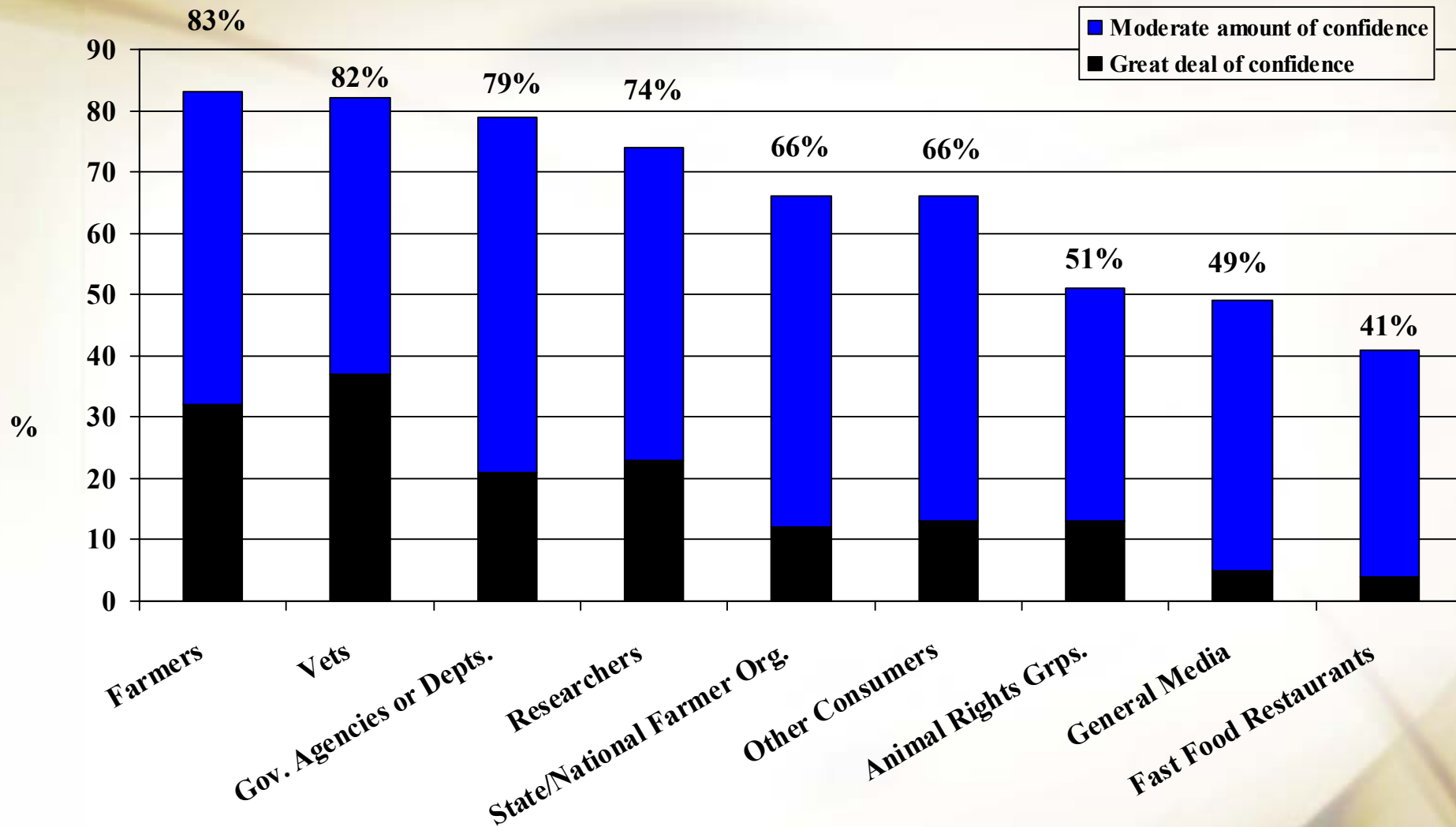
Open Ended

(n = 1000)



“What is the most important factor to you when deciding what meat to buy?”

(n = 1000)



“As Consumers who do you have a great deal of confidence or moderate amount of confidence in on animal welfare issues?”

Conclusions

- **Most important issues for consumers when purchasing meat are:**
 - Price
 - The recipe being made at the time
 - How it looks
 - Meat quality
- **Credible and reliable sources for animal-welfare related issues in the U.S:**
 - Farmers
 - Veterinarians
 - Government

Perceptions about hoop structures

- Hoop structures are low-cost housing systems
- Primarily used to grow and finish pigs
- Rely on heat from the bedding and natural air flow
- Work by Tranquilla *et al.*, 1998
- Objectives:



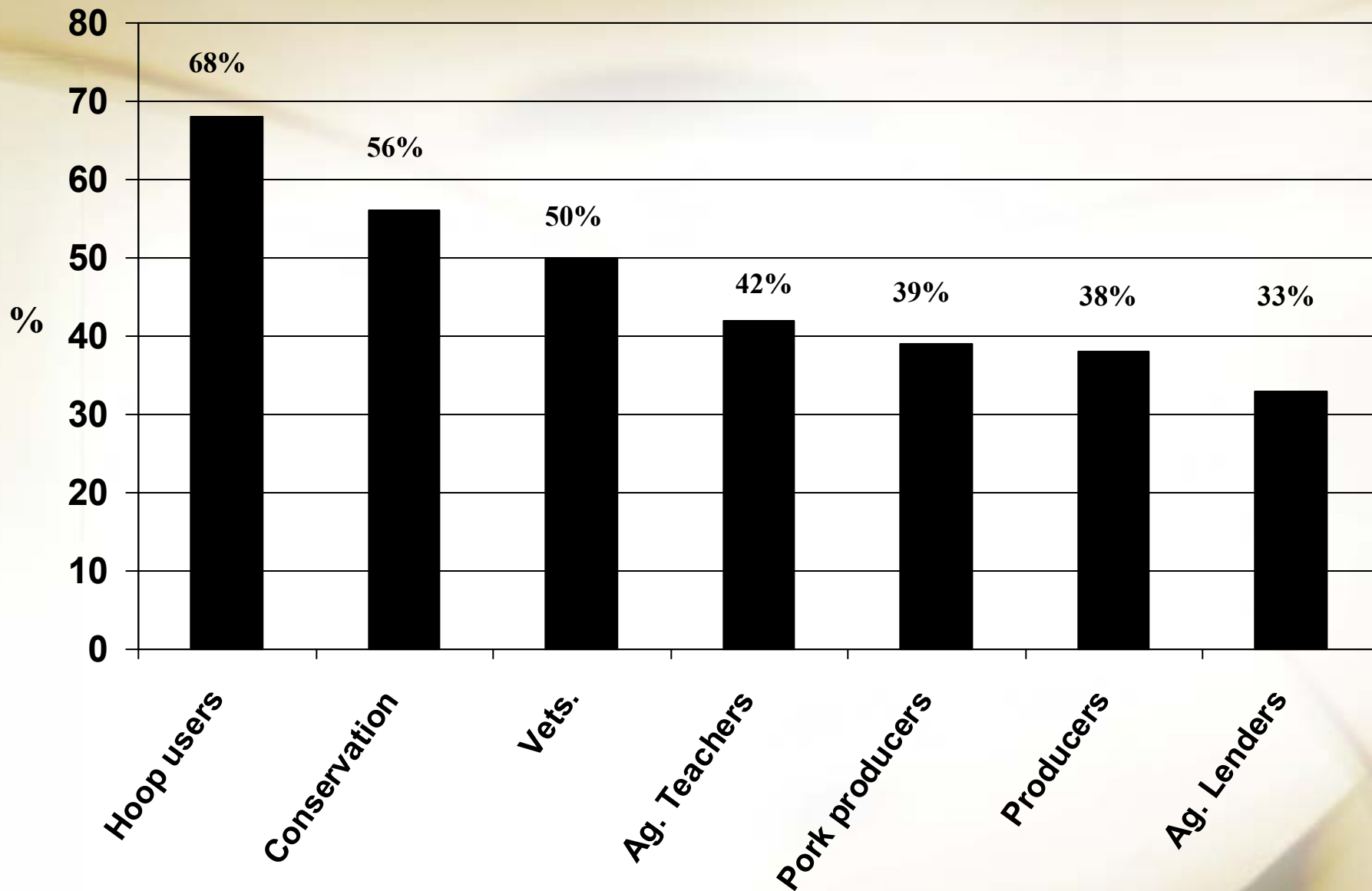
“to determine the opinions from selected stakeholder groups on the potential for hoop structures in IA”

Perceptions about hoop structures

- **October – November 1997**
- **Survey of 2,635 swine industry stakeholders in IA**
- **A total of 997 mailed questionnaire were returned for a response of 37%**
- **Survey covered a range of topics including:**
 - **Impacts on farm management**
 - **Consumer concerns**
 - **The pork industry**
 - **Rural life and quality**
 - **The environment**

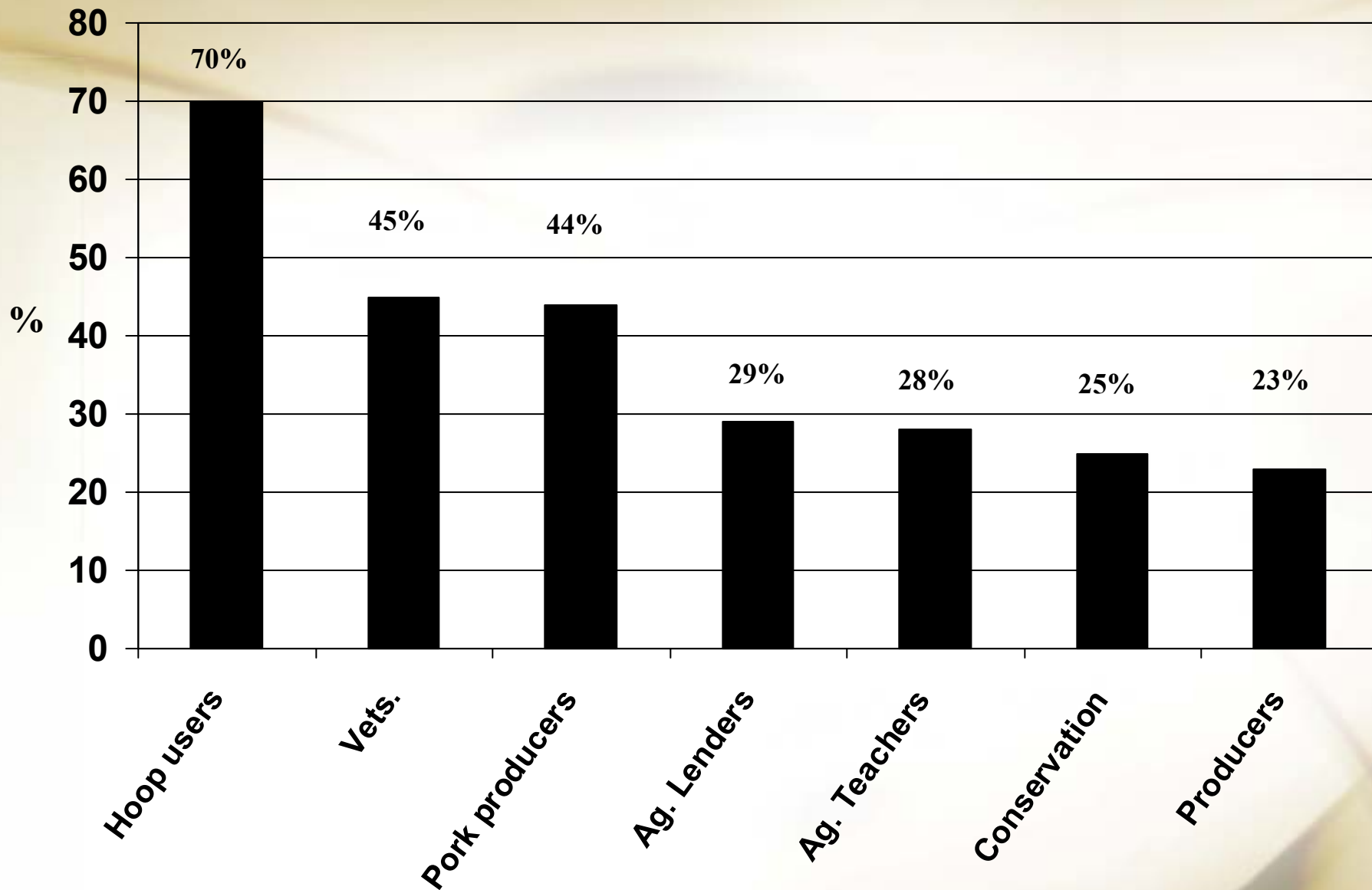


(n = 997)

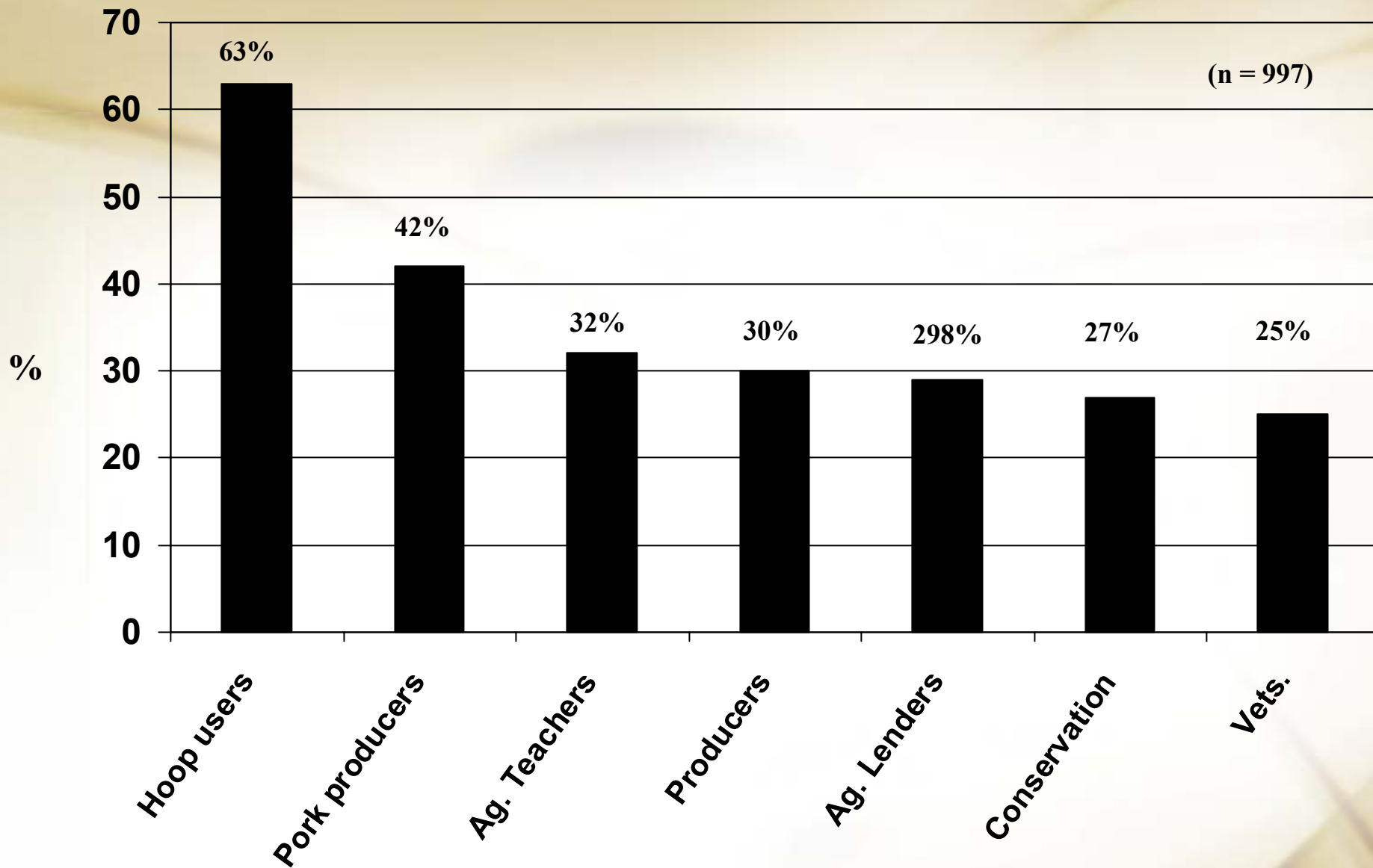


“Percent saying farmers profits will increase”

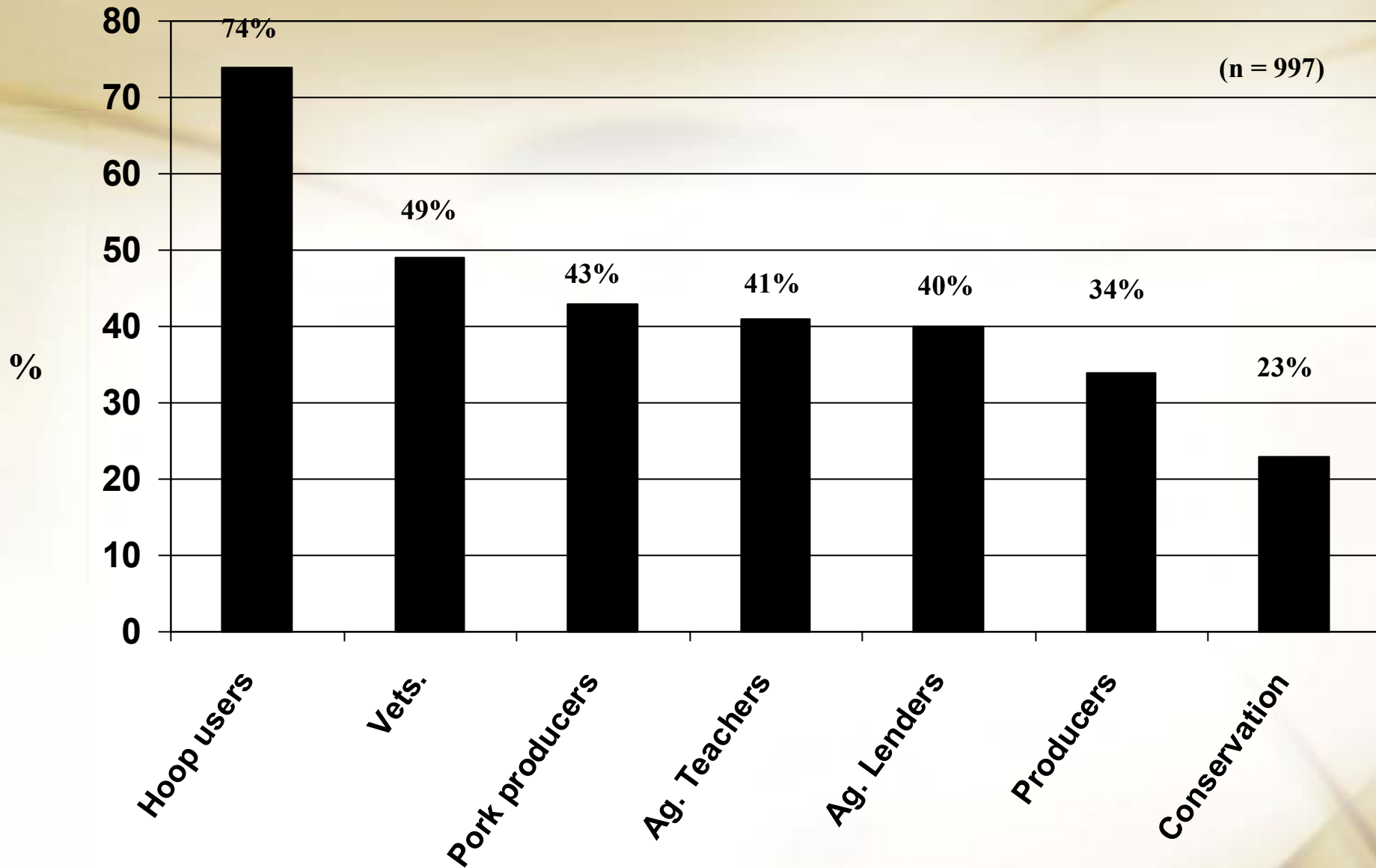
(n = 997)



“Percent saying public concern about animal welfare will decrease”



“Percent saying the quality of life on swine farms will increase”



“Percent saying the economic vitality of locally owned rural businesses will increase”

Conclusions

- Raise pigs in hoops were overall positive
- Veterinarians and other pork producer were more likely to favor hoops
- Economic and quality of life got mixed reviews



Overall conclusions

- **Consumers assume that care and welfare is part of daily farming (NPB, 2001)**
- **When directly asked consumers seem to support tighter controls for farm animals (Gallup, 2003)**
- **At the meat counter most consumers are focusing on product quality, safety and cost (NPB, 2001)**
- **Farmers that use hoops are very satisfied and mention multiple benefits (ISU, 1998)**
- **Other stakeholders had mixed assessments on economics and quality of life (ISU, 1998)**