

Public attitudes towards aquatic animal welfare

Survey prepared for:



October 2024

1. Background & research design

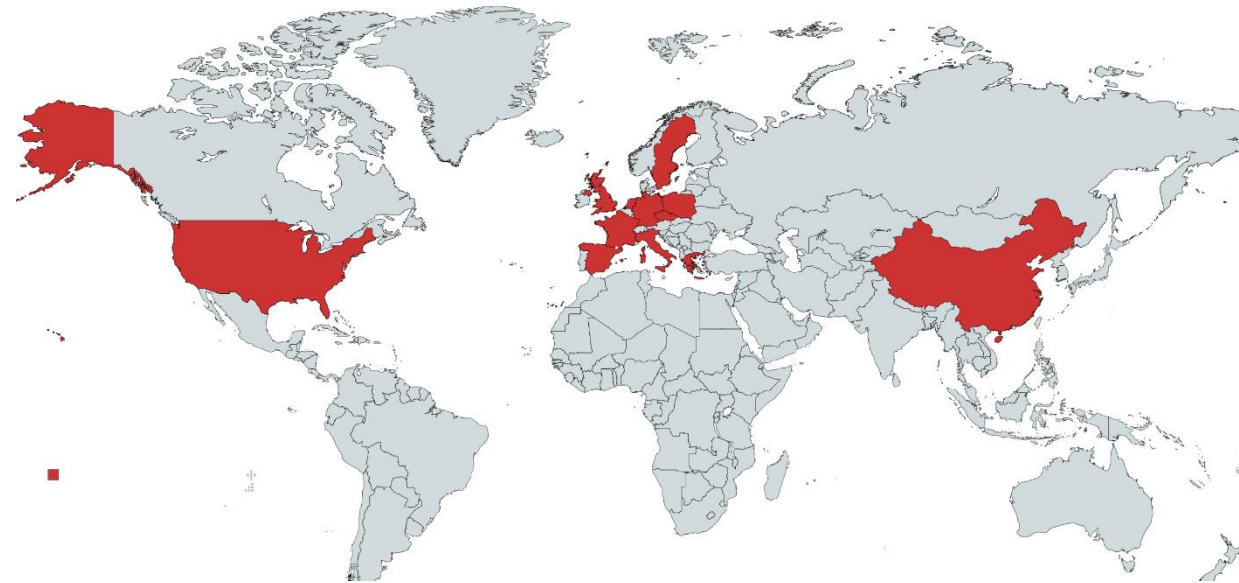


Research design & sample

To answer the research questions, an **online survey** of ± 12 minutes was designed, which 12 301 respondents from 12 different countries completed. The fieldwork ran from March 20th to April 5th 2024.

Data were weighted in each country to be nationally representative by age, gender and region.

This report highlights the results from the **USA**.



The 12 countries included: China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, USA



Please note that due to rounding, percentages on some graphs may add up to 101%, and the top-2 scores may differ by 1% from the actual underlying scores.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of the following **topics**:

- Background
- Attitudes Towards Animals
- Importance & Awareness of Aquatic Animal Welfare
- Consumption Habits & Behaviour
- Welfare Labelling
- Socio demo & Profiling



2. Results

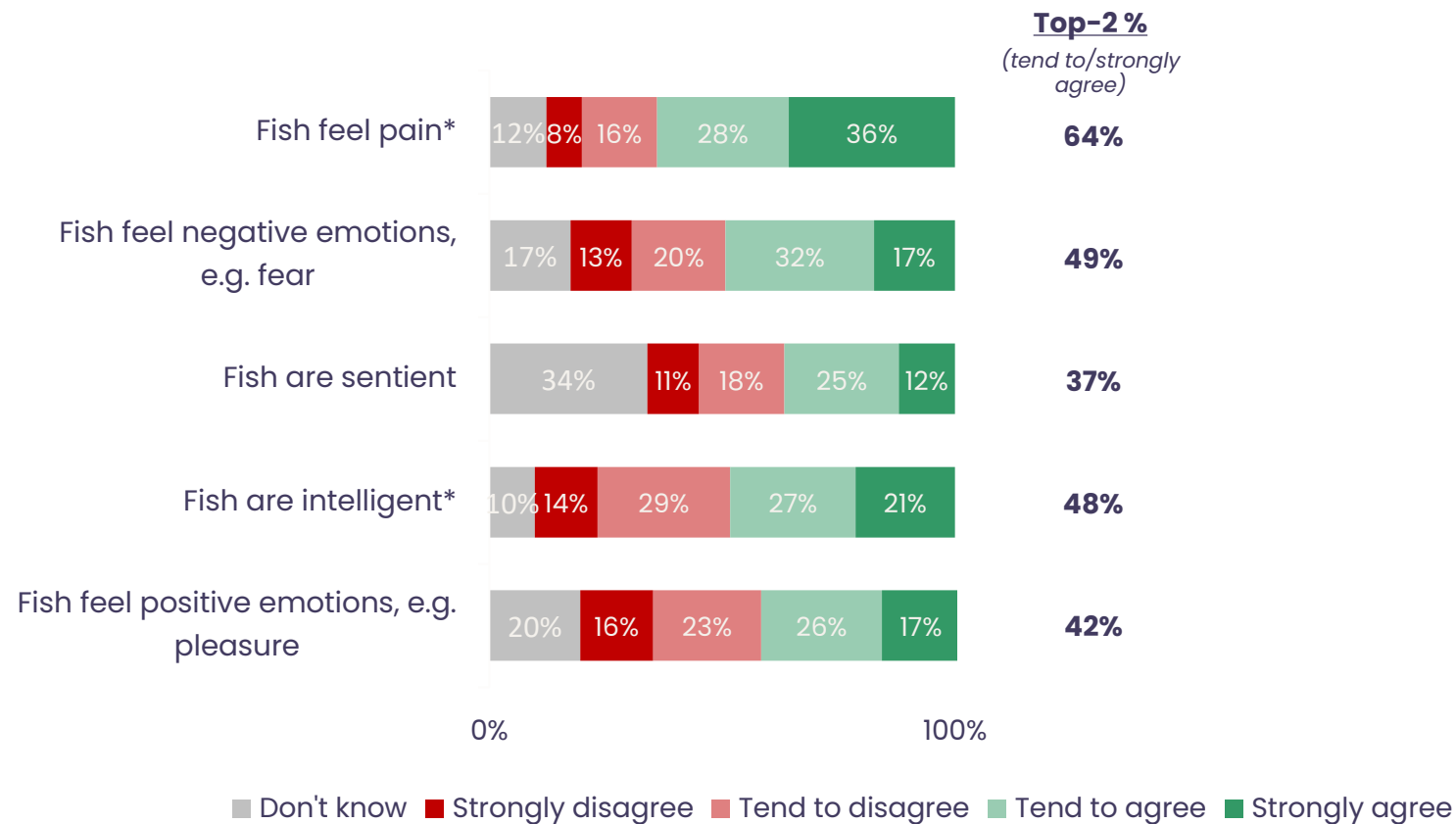




2.1 Attitudes Towards Animals

Most people agree that fish can feel pain. There is more doubt on the emotional/intelligence statements.

“Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?”



* This statement was negated in the questionnaire (i.e. 'Fish do not feel pain'/'Fish are not intelligent'). For the sake of uniform interpretation, the statement is reversed here in the report.

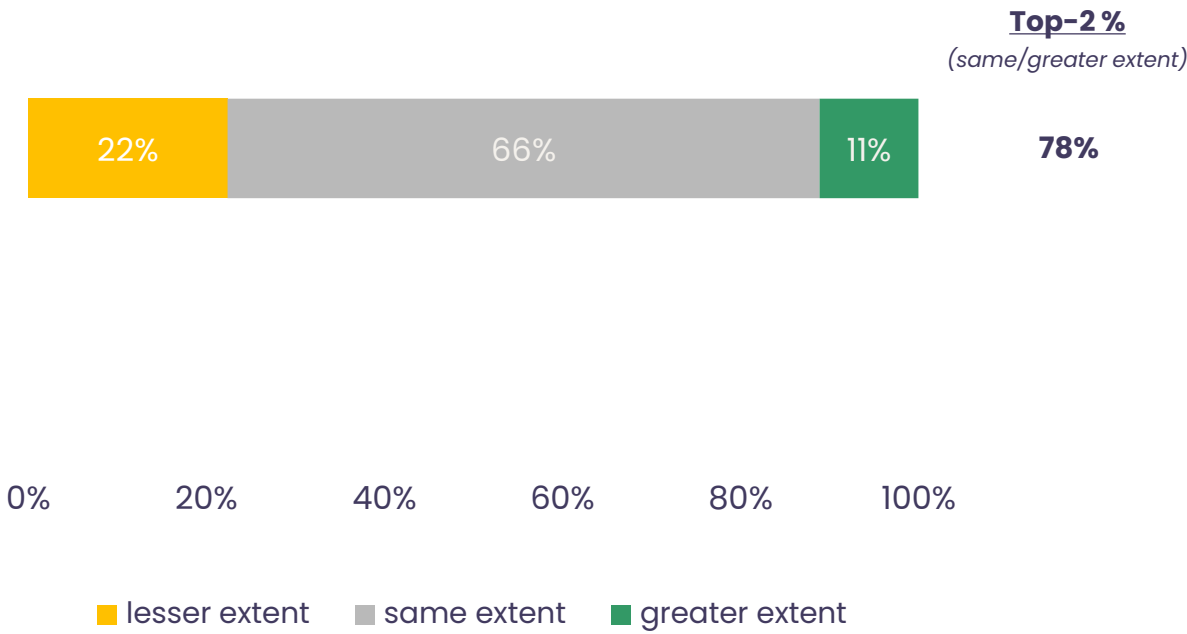


2.2 Importance & Awareness of Aquatic Animal Welfare

Most people believe we should protect the welfare of fish just like we do for other animals we eat.

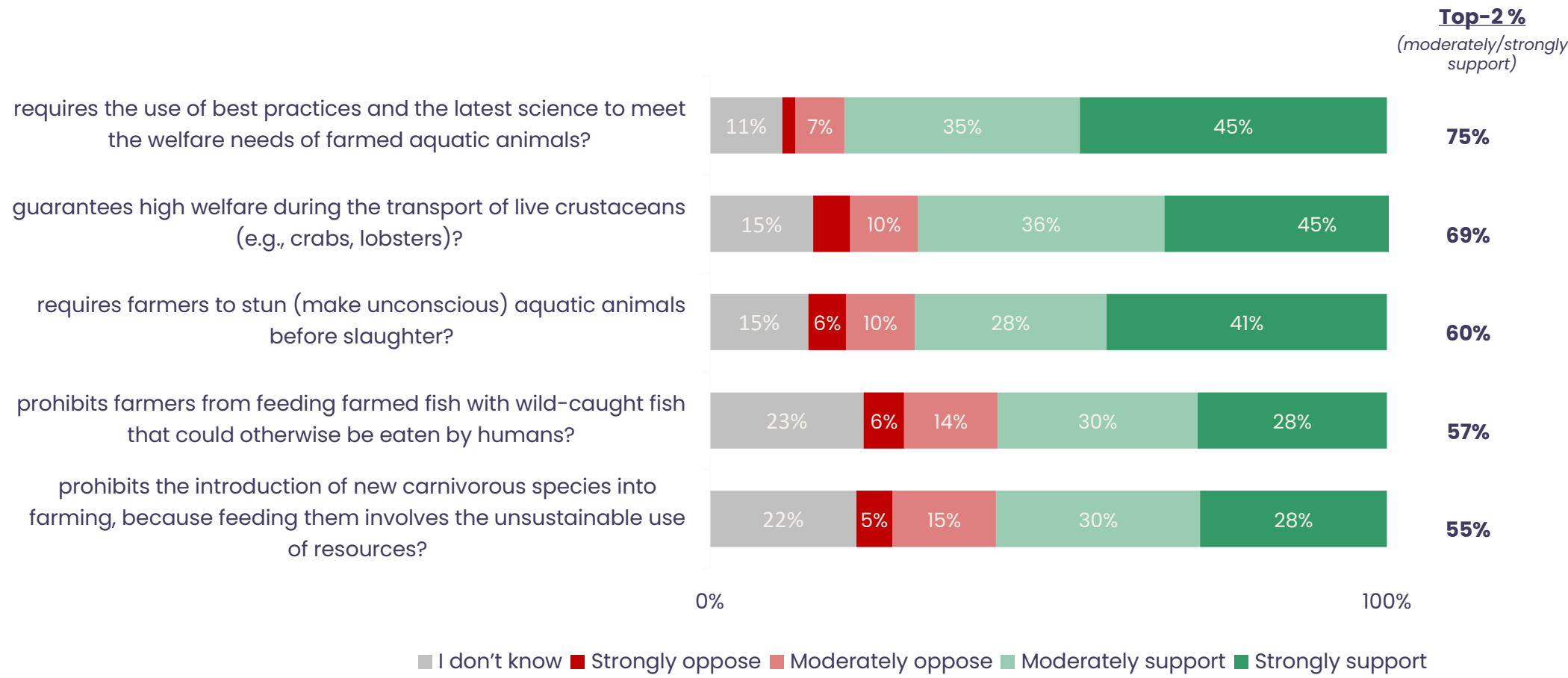
“Q4. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

The welfare of fish should be protected to a greater/a lesser/the same extent than the welfare of other animals we eat.”



This conviction drives widespread advocacy for enacting stricter legislation regarding the welfare of aquatic animals.

“Q7. Would you support or oppose legislation that...”



45% harbor the opinion that live sales of fish to consumers should be banned. However, concern is a little lower for other types of aquatic animals.

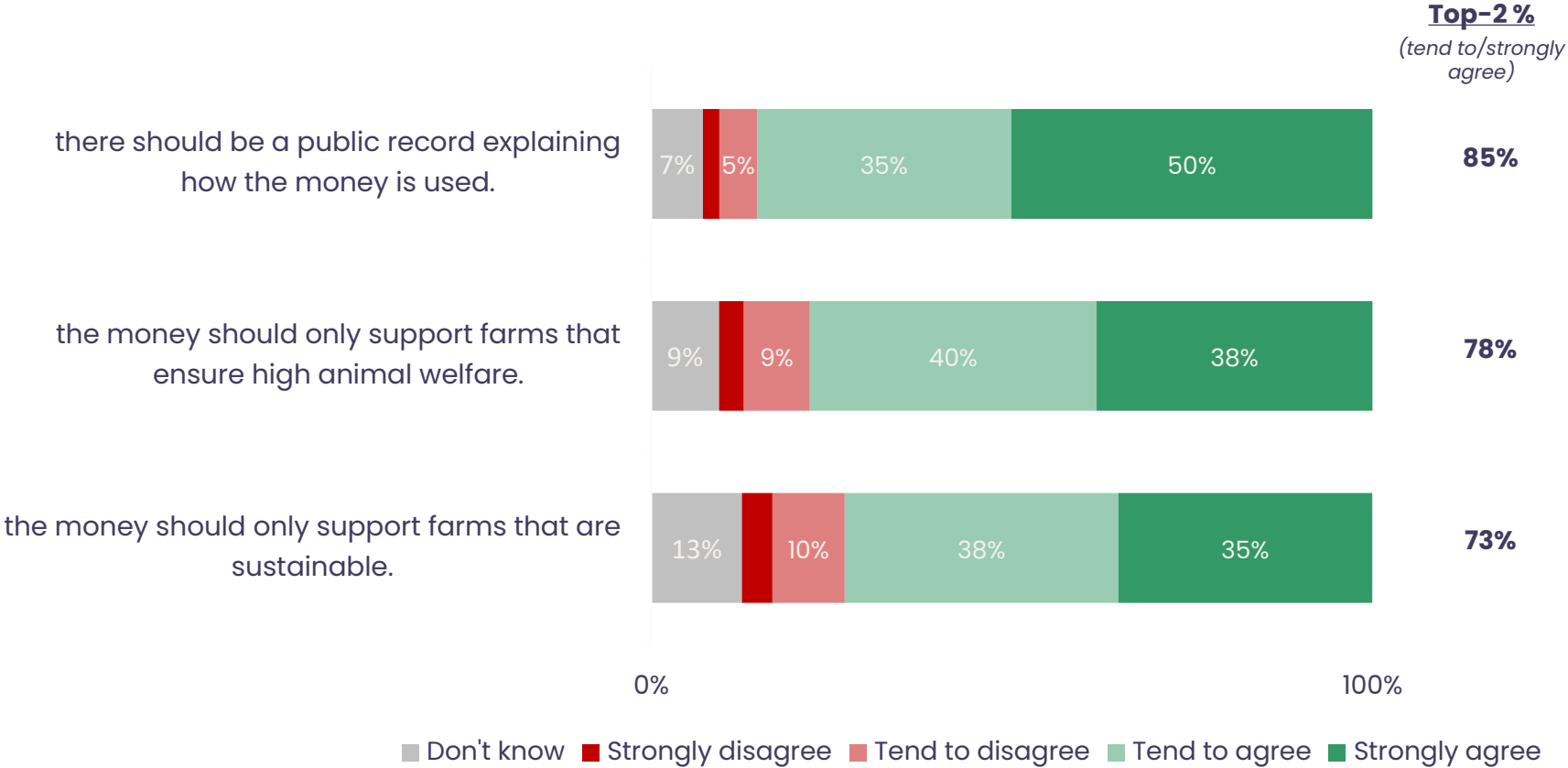
“Q8. Aquatic animals are sometimes sold alive to the final consumer. [...] Please indicate which statement you agree with regarding the live sale of the following aquatic animals to consumers.”



Finally, citizens also expect public funds to be allocated transparently, prioritizing farms that uphold high animal welfare and sustainability standards.

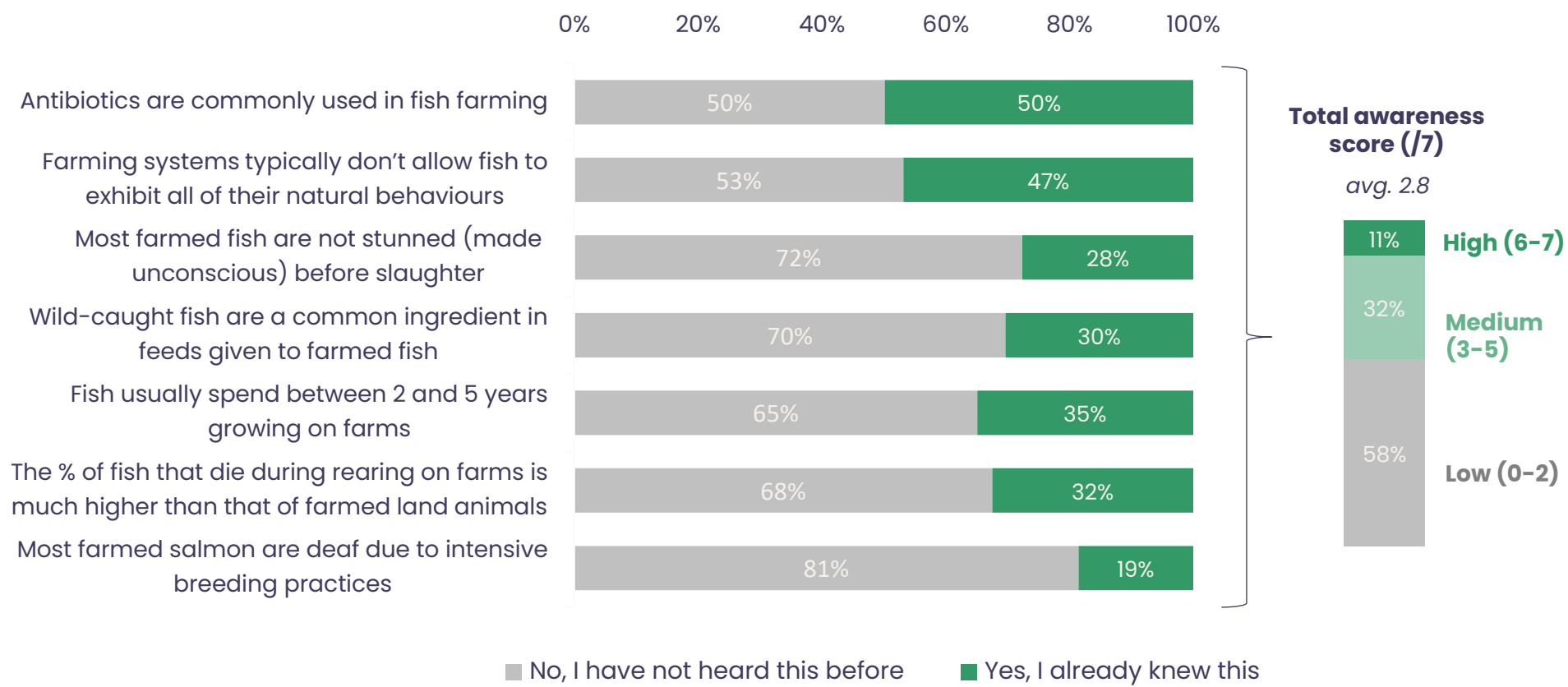
“Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?”

When public money is used to fund aquaculture... ”



There is a notable lack of awareness regarding fish farming practices, with nearly 60% indicating familiarity with max. 2 statements on the subject.

“Q6. Below you can find some statements concerning fish farming. In each case, please indicate whether you were aware of this information or not.”

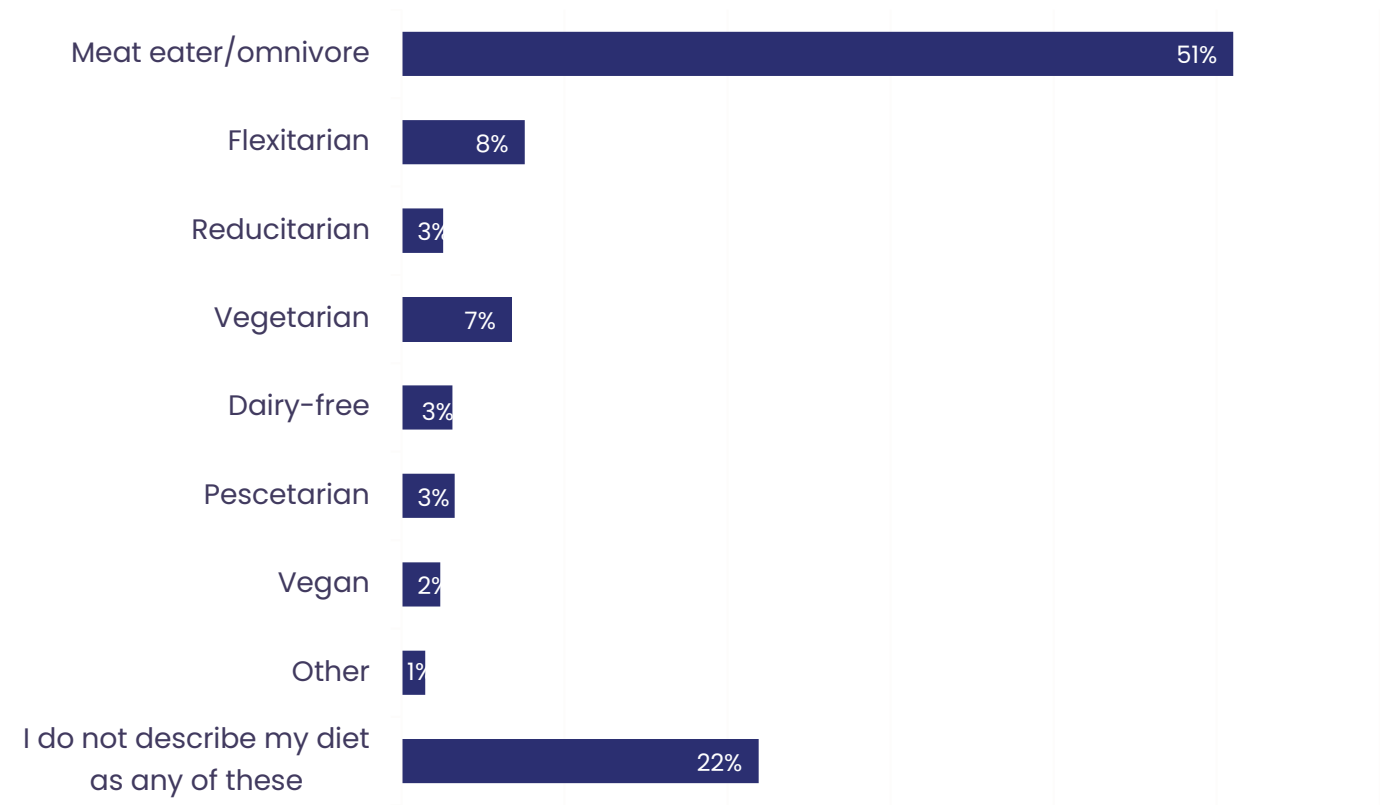




2.3 Consumption Habits & Behaviour

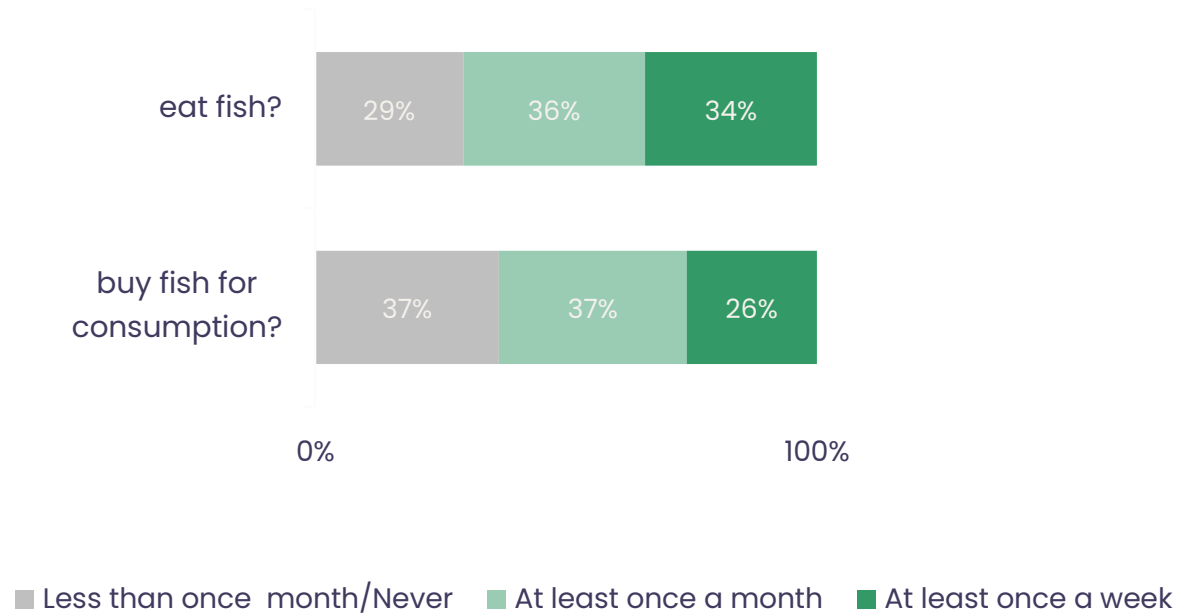
Roughly half of the US respondents identified as meat eaters ...

"Q10. Which of the following terms do you use to describe your diet?"



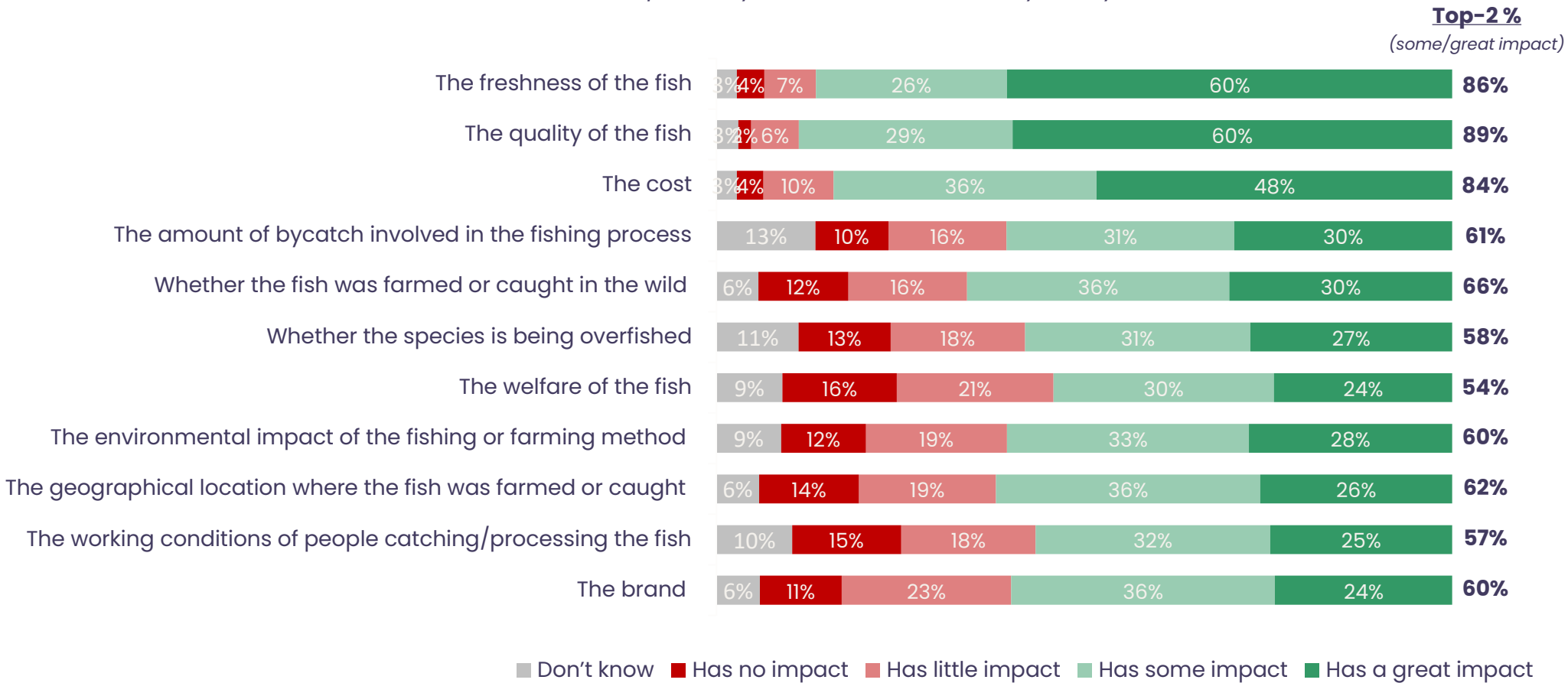
... and just over 3 out of 10 US citizens consume fish at least once a week.

"Q11. Roughly how often, if at all, do you ...?"



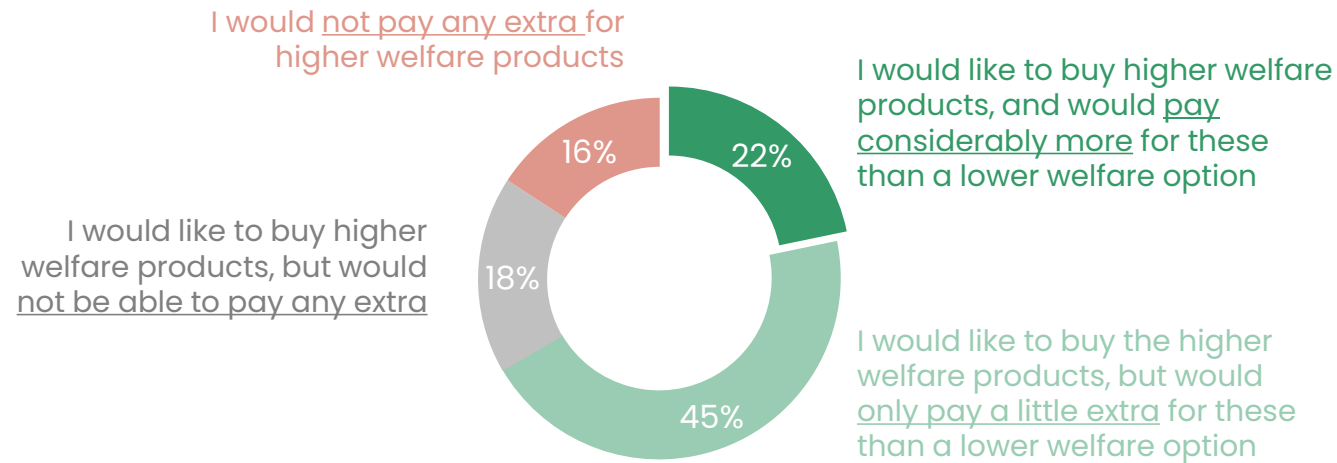
Consumers primarily prioritize factors such as freshness, quality, and cost when selecting fish. Additionally, 54% of consumers also take into account welfare-related considerations.

“Q12. To what extent, if at all, does each of the following things have an impact on your choice of which fish you buy?”



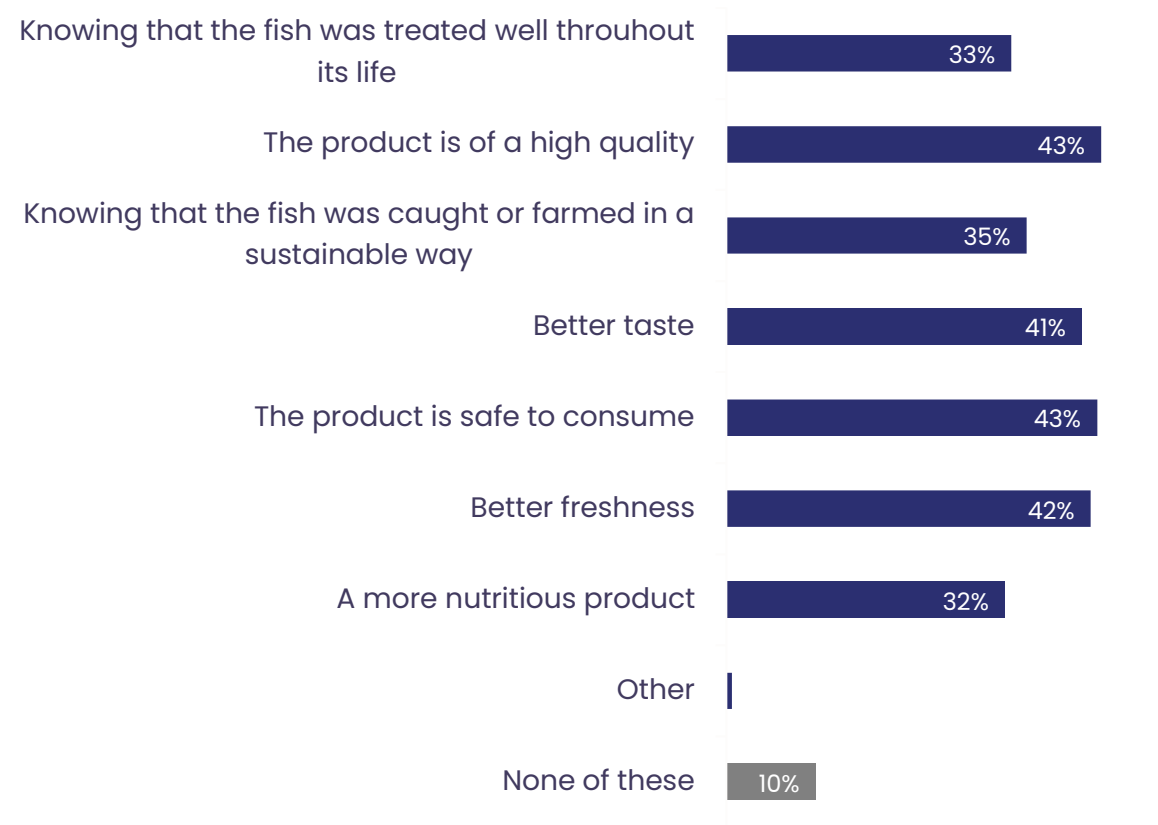
The willingness to pay for higher welfare fish products is quite high: 8 out of 10 would like to buy higher welfare fish products, with almost 1 out of 4 willing to pay a significant premium.

"Q13. Which of the following best describes your preferences when it comes to buying higher welfare fish products?"



Consumers recognize numerous benefits in opting for higher welfare fish products, including the overall quality of the food.

"Q14. What, if anything, do you think are the benefits for you of choosing 'higher welfare' fish products?"

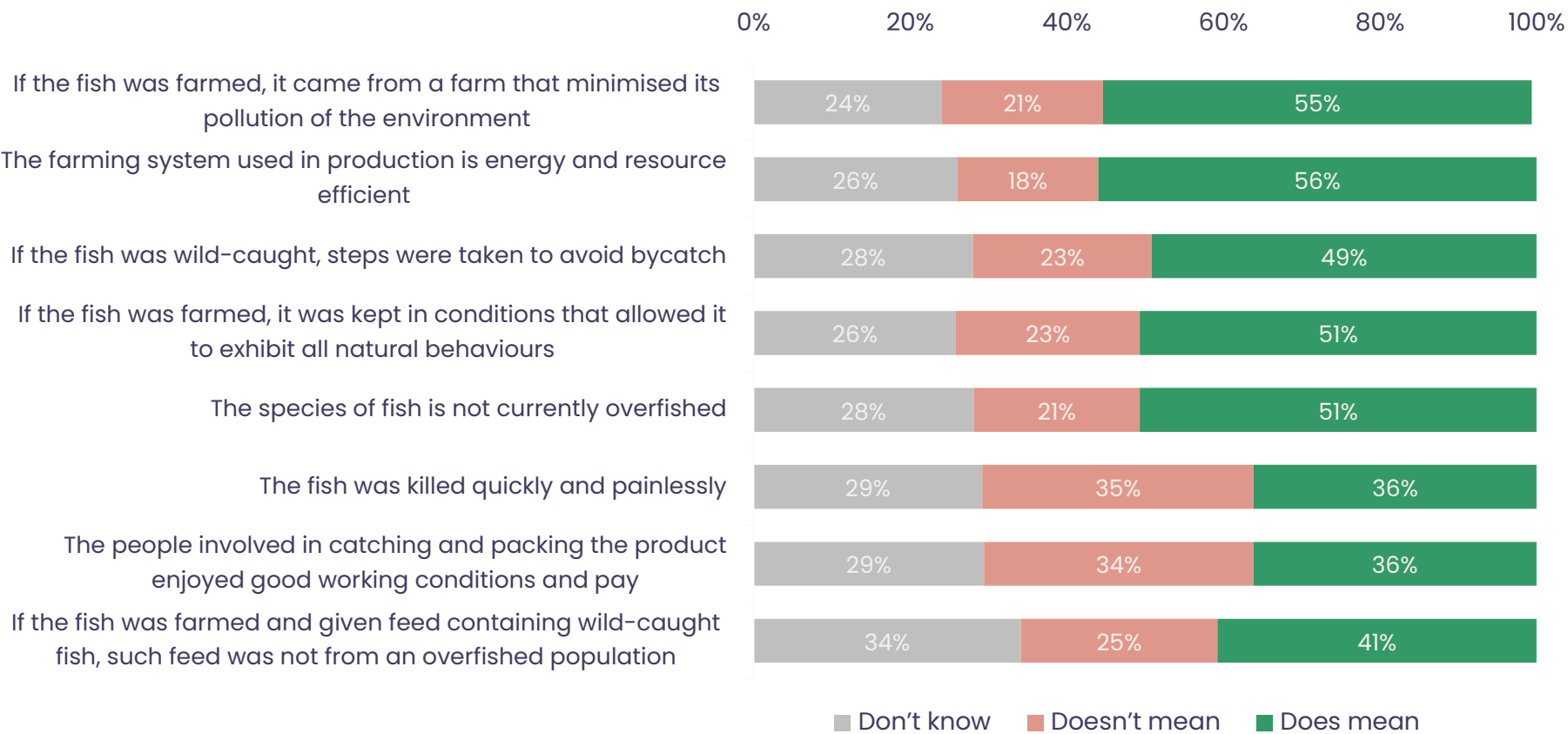




2.4 Welfare Labelling

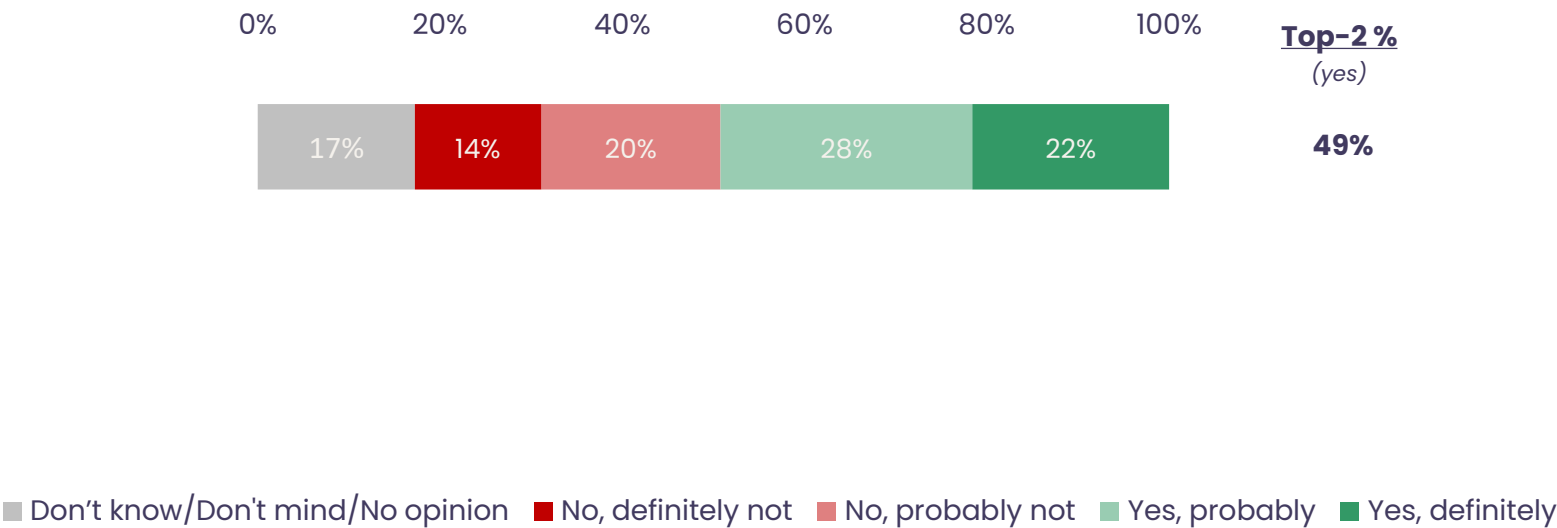
US citizens seem to associate aquatic animal welfare considerations with sustainability labels.

“Q16. In your opinion, which of the following, if any, do you think the term “Sustainable” on a fish product tells you about that product?”



Around half were interested in having information about fish farming practices on the labels of fish products.

“Q15. Would you like to see information about the way in which the fish was farmed and killed on the label of all fish products?”



Their current knowledge on common labels is nevertheless poor: many indicate they lack awareness or believe that these labels impose rigorous welfare standards.

“Q17. Certification schemes set standards for aquaculture and/or fisheries. What do you think the following labels require?”

