

Talking With Consumers About Farm Animal Welfare

Presentation For

Cattle Health Committee

National Institute for Animal Agriculture

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2007-2008 NIAA Statement on Animal Welfare

Position Statement: The NIAA supports the continued development and implementation of sustainable, science-based animal care guidelines by species organizations, which are credible, workable, and affordable.

Why ask consumers what they think?

when consumers talk...

- they tell you about themselves
- they lie
- they tell you what you want to hear
- they say what they think they are supposed to say
- they search for easy answers
- they are easily influenced

Telephone Survey Sample (N=1,019)

	<i>Survey Sample</i>	<i>U.S. Pop</i>
% Female	65.0%	50.7%
Average Age	52	49
% White	83%	75%
% With Bachelor's Degree	39%	24%
Average Household Size	2.73	2.57
% Household w/ Income \$30-\$99 k	53%	50%
% From Rural Area	≈ 17%	17%
% From Urban Area	≈ 33%	33%

How Important is Farm Animal Welfare?

Relative Importance of Each Issue

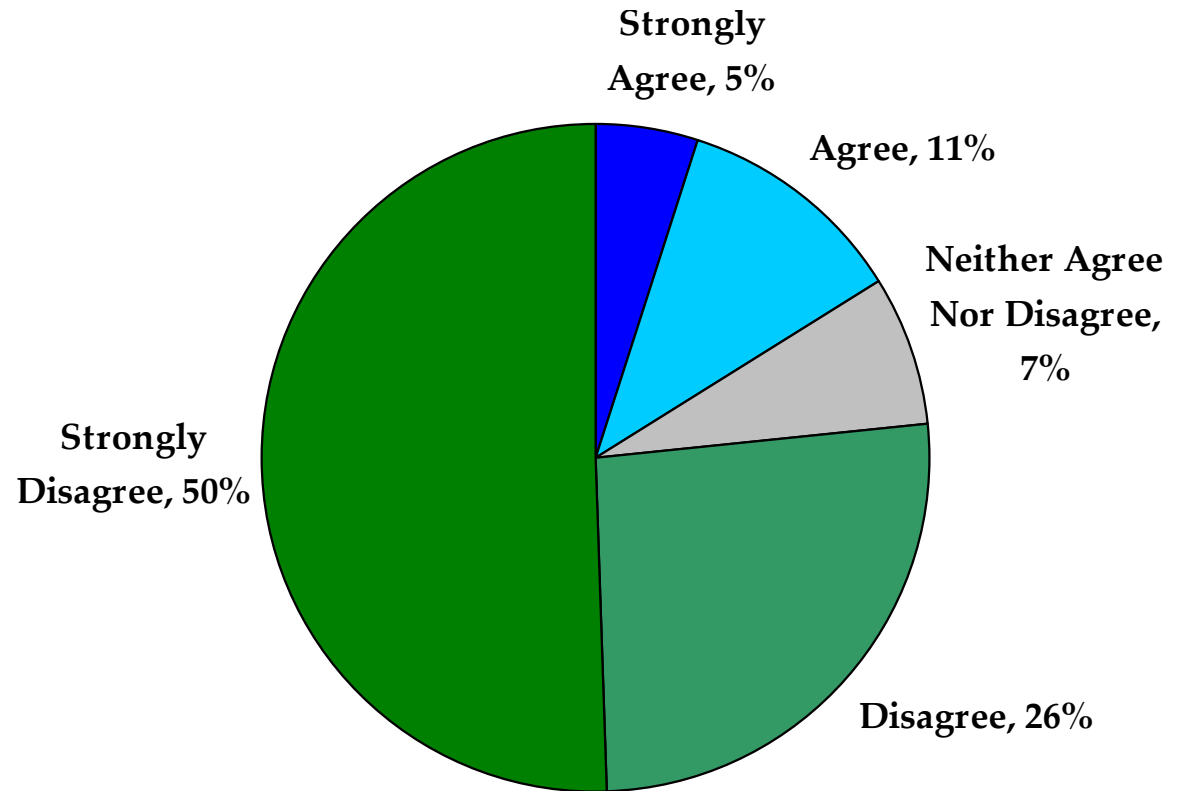
Human Poverty	23.95
U.S. Health Care System	23.03
Food Safety	21.75
Environment	13.91
Financial Well-Being of U.S. Farmers	8.16
Food Prices	5.06
Well-Being of Farm Animals	4.15

What Makes Animals Happy?

<i>Relative Importance of Each Issue</i>	
<i>It is important that farm animals ...</i>	
receive ample food and water	38.43
receive treatment for injury and disease	29.05
are allowed to exhibit normal behaviors	8.01
are allowed to exercise outdoors	7.95
are protected from being harmed by other animals	5.90
are provided shelter at a comfortable temperature	4.43
are allowed to socialize with other animals	2.76
are raised in a way to keep prices low	1.75
are provided comfortable bedding	1.72

Will They Pay More?

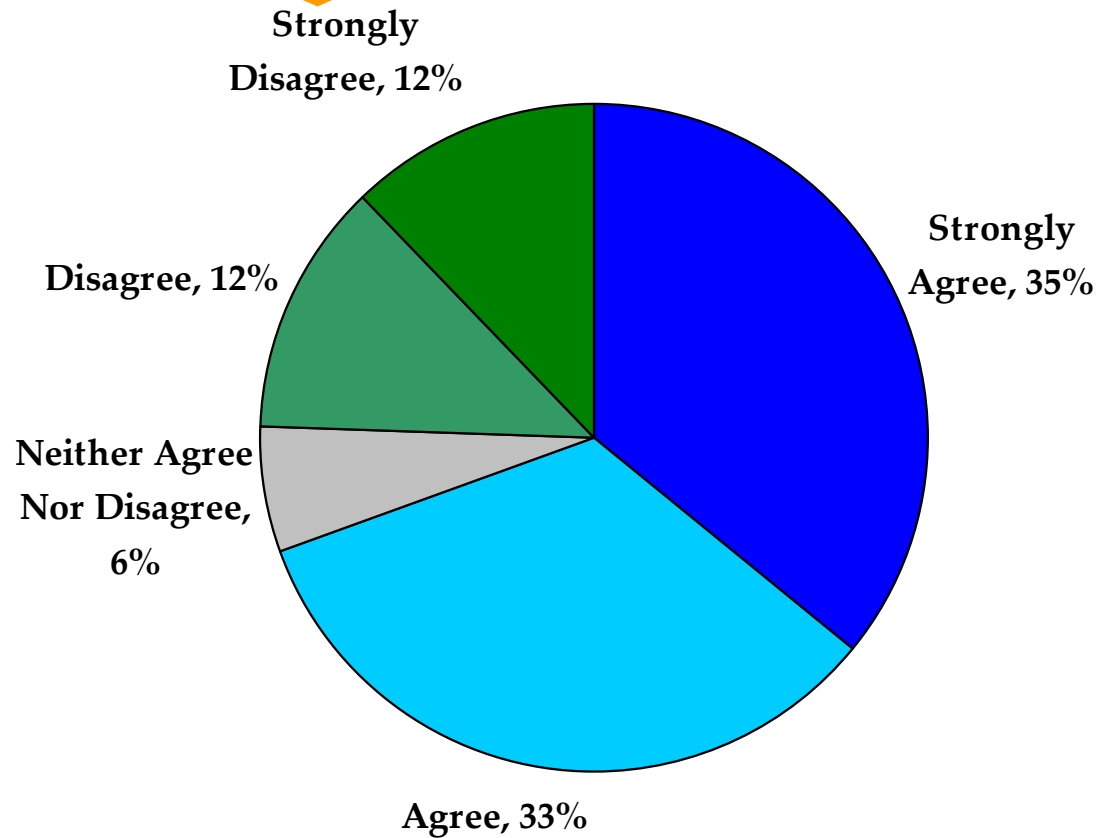
*Statement:
Low meat prices are more important than the well-being of farm animals.*



16% agree or strongly agree

Will They Pay More?

*Statement:
The average American thinks that low meat prices are more important than the well-being of farm animals.*



68% agree or strongly agree

Do They Care?

Direct Statement: *It is important to me that animals on farms are well cared for.*

95% agree or strongly agree

Direct Statement: *I consider the well-being of farm animals when I make decisions about purchasing meat.*

49% agree or strongly agree

Indirect Statement: *The average American thinks that farm animal welfare is important.*

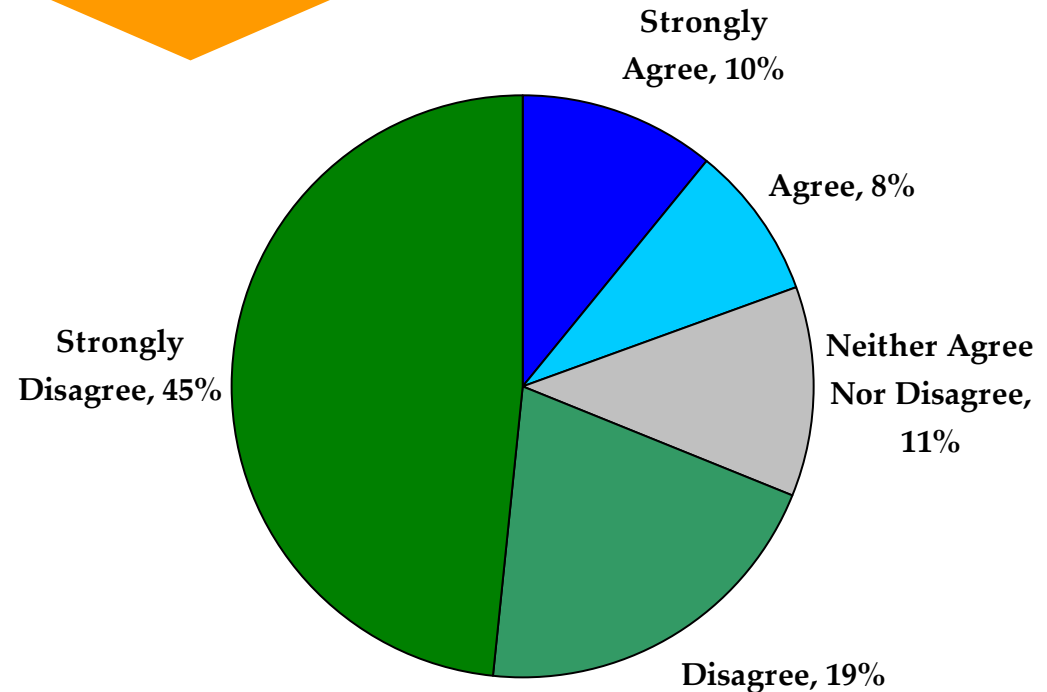
52% agree or strongly agree

Indirect Statement: *The average American considers the well-being of farm animals when they make decisions about purchasing meat.*

21% agree or strongly agree

How About Cages?

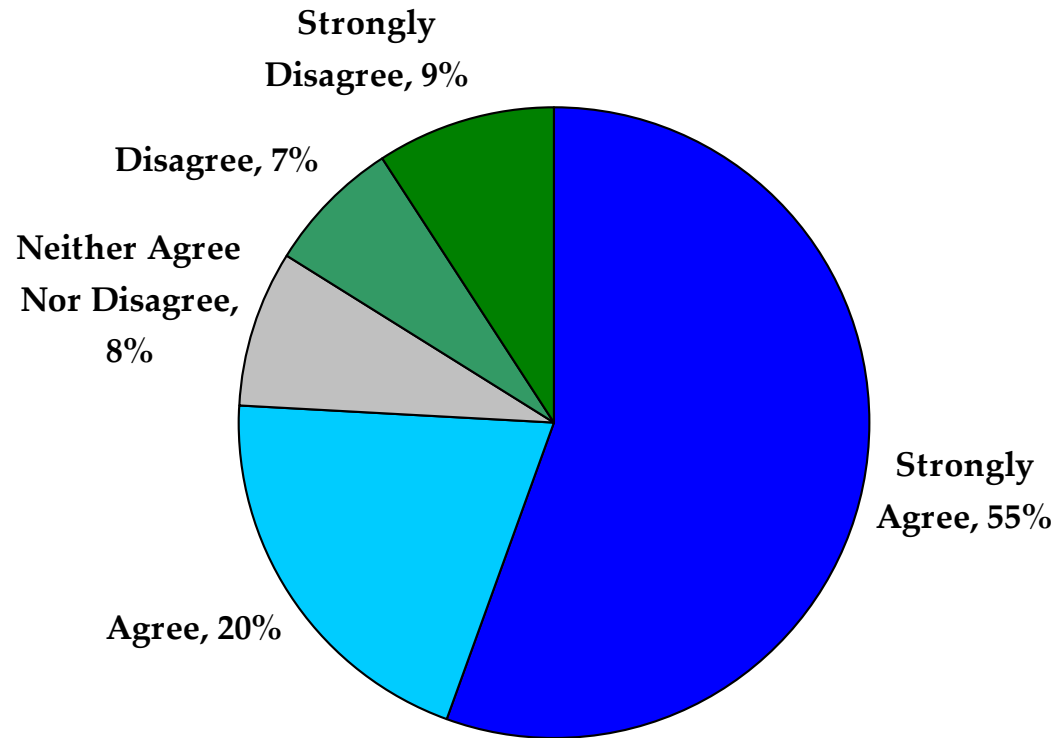
*Statement:
Housing pregnant
sows in crates is
humane.*



*18% agree or strongly agree
jumps to 45% when told for the animals' protection!*

More Regulation?

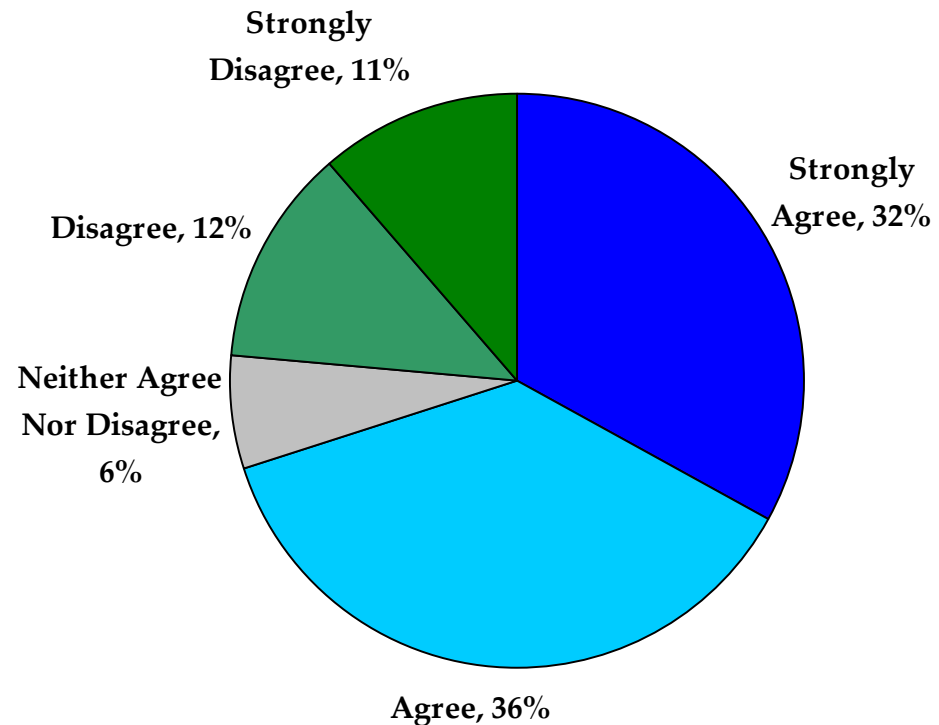
Statement: I would vote for a law in my state that would require farmers to treat their animals more humanely.



75% agree or strongly agree

More Free Enterprise?

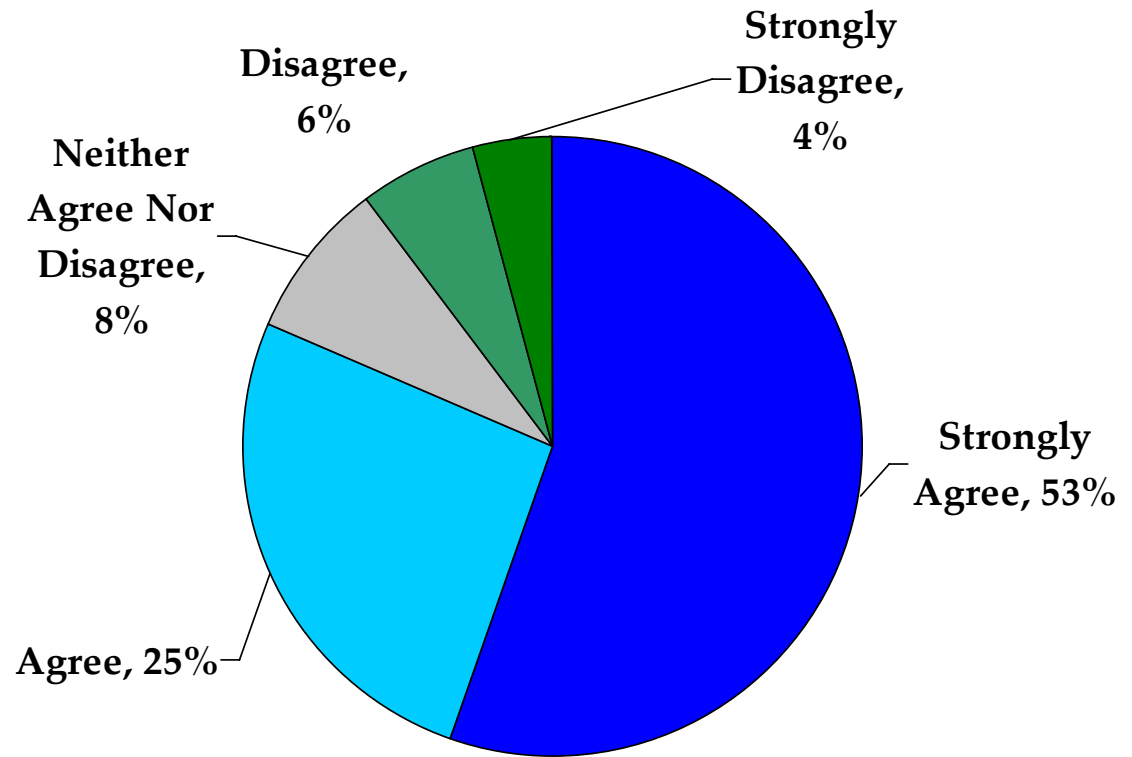
Statement: Food companies would voluntarily improve animal welfare, and would advertise as such, if people really wanted it.



68% agree or strongly agree

Who Is This Really About?

Statement:
Animals raised under higher standards of care will produce safer and better tasting meat.



78% agree or strongly agree

Conclusions

- farmers' economic well-being more important than animals' well-being
- beef production consistent with consumer perceptions about what makes animals happy
- people are not as concerned about farm animals as they say
- people look to both free markets and government
- animal welfare related to safety/taste