



USSA x IFAJ Journalist Benchmark Survey 2024

December 2024

The Objective

Purpose

The starting point: to establish a benchmark on journalist perceptions of U.S. agriculture with specific reference to sustainability and related issues.

The aim was to build on existing USSA European consumer research (undertaken in 2022) and track journalist perceptions before, and after, interacting with the USSA via our press trip program.

Methodology

Key points

Developed an agricultural correspondents' survey drawing on consumer research and introducing additional queries related to role and sector.

Delivered through online platform and co-hosted and promoted by the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) to their membership.

Whether the journalist had attended a USSA press trip was captured automatically on entry to the survey.

- 11 completed by journalists who had attended a press trip
- 93 completed by journalists who had not attended a press trip

Fieldwork dates: 21st March to 28th May 2024.

Headlines

Here's the topline

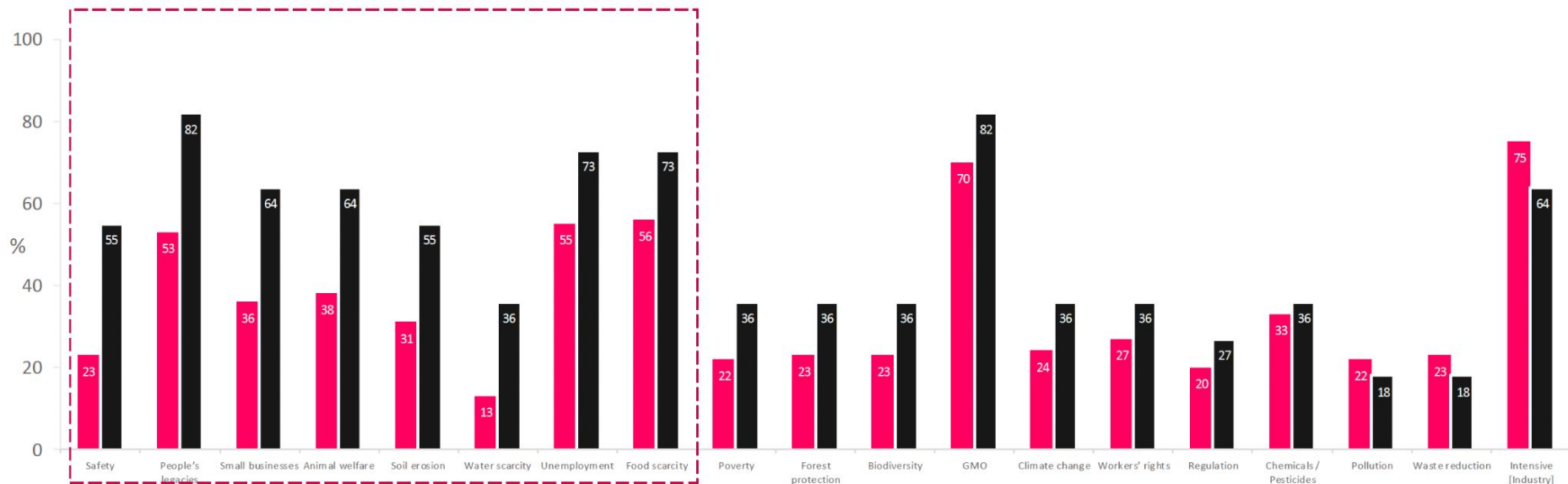
- When compared to the typical European consumer, journalists have a more **positive view of U.S. agriculture**. They are more likely to recognise it as **family-owned, innovative and committed to improvement**
- However, journalists perceive **U.S. agriculture as lagging behind the EU in standards and regulations**. There is a **need to raise awareness of sustainability initiatives**
- According to surveyed journalists, **climate change, pollution, animal welfare and water scarcity** are all areas important to consumers (and which the U.S. is perceived to perform less well on)
- **Responses from press trip attendees were encouraging** and suggest that these trips **reinforce favourable associations**, particularly regarding **soil erosion, water scarcity and food safety** efforts
- **Raising the profile of the USSA with the media is crucial**. Journalists unaware of the USSA undertake online searches on U.S. ag and sustainability. **Once they know the USSA, they approach for support and information**

Indicatively, press trips appears to improve associations with economic metrics, safety, soil erosion and food and water scarcity

Areas where U.S. agriculture is felt to perform well

■ Journalists

■ Journalists who have been on a press trip [CAUTION - LOW BASE]



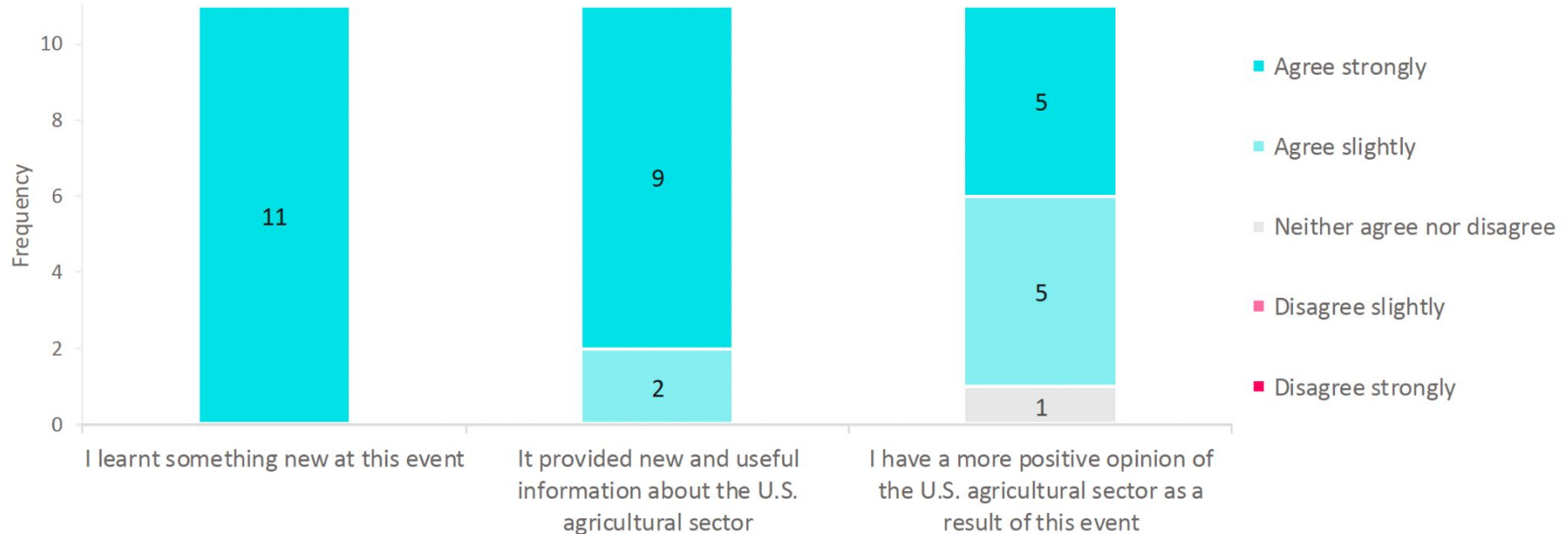
Q10: Which, if any, of these issues do you think [INDUSTRY] in the United States performs well on? / Q11: And which, if any, do you think [INDUSTRY] in the United States performs poorly on?

BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104), Journalists who have been on a press trip (11 – CAUTION LOW BASE)

The press trips appear to have been positive and useful experiences

Attitude towards USSA press trip [ABSOLUTE NUMBERS]

BASE: Those who attended [CAUTION – LOW BASE]



J5: How strongly would you agree or disagree with each of these statements when thinking about this recent USSA press trip?

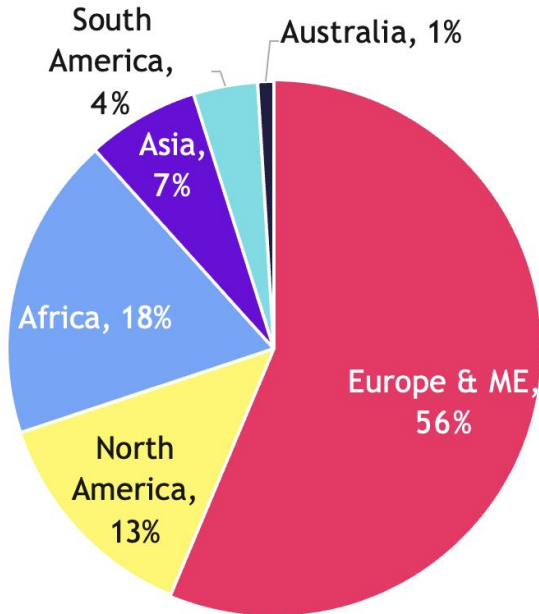
BASE: Those that attended the trip (11 – CAUTION LOW BASE)

Summary Findings

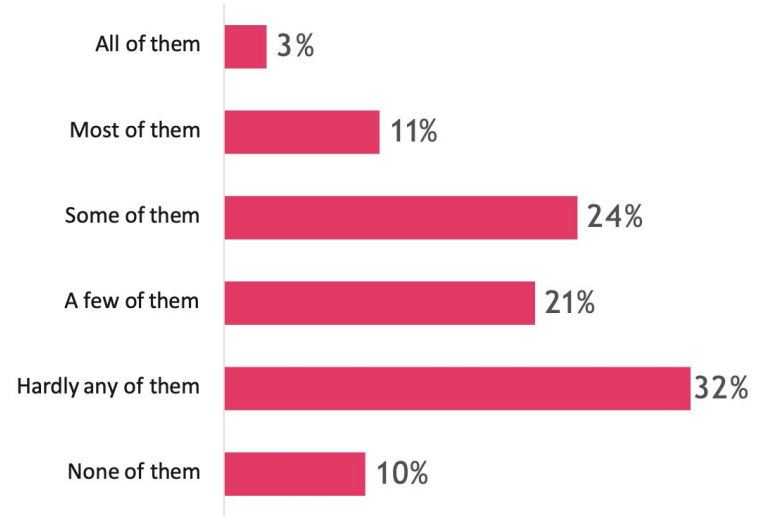
The survey in more detail

Less than a fifth of agricultural journalists surveyed have the U.S. as their main focus

Where did the journalists come from?



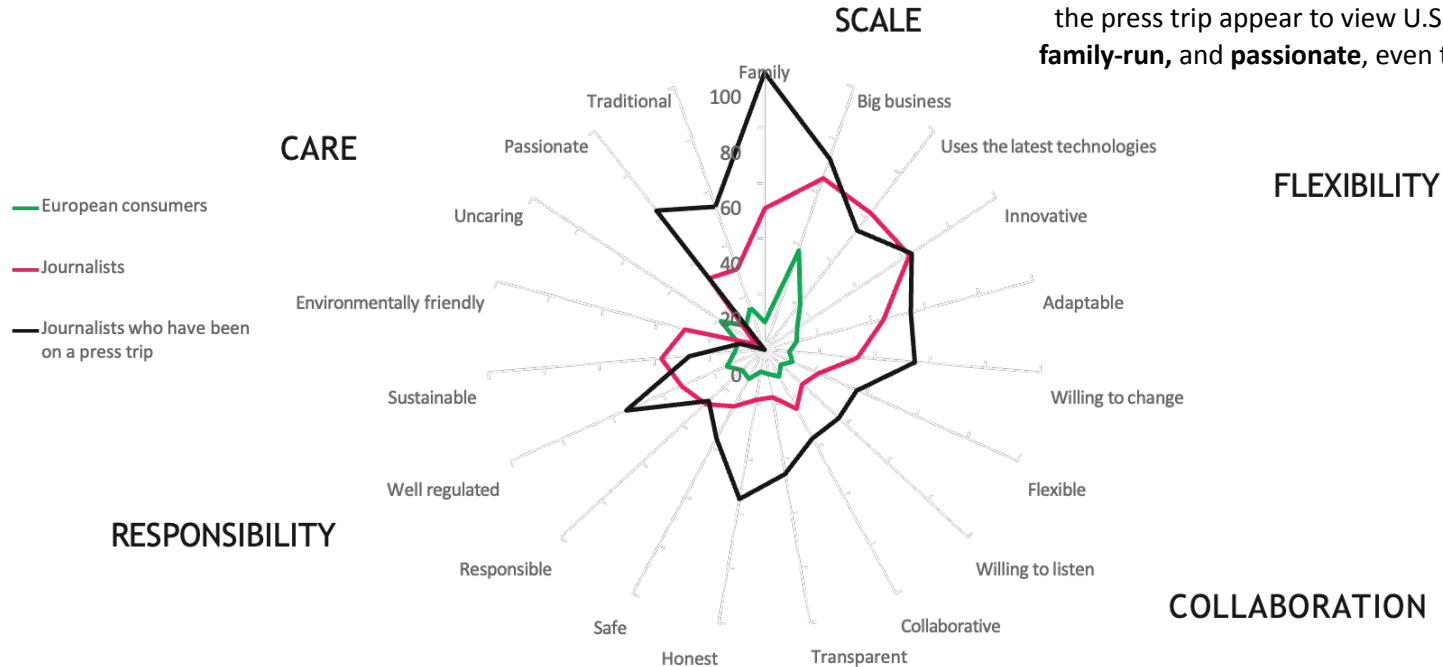
How many of the stories they write relate to U.S. agriculture?



S3a: Where do you live? / J10: Very roughly, how many of the stories you write in a year cover issues relating to U.S. agriculture? BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104)

Compared to European consumers, journalists have a more positive perception of U.S. agriculture

Journalists view it as **more innovative, adaptable** and **environmentally aware**. Indicatively, those that have been on the press trip appear to view U.S. agriculture as **more family-run**, and **passionate**, even than other journalists.



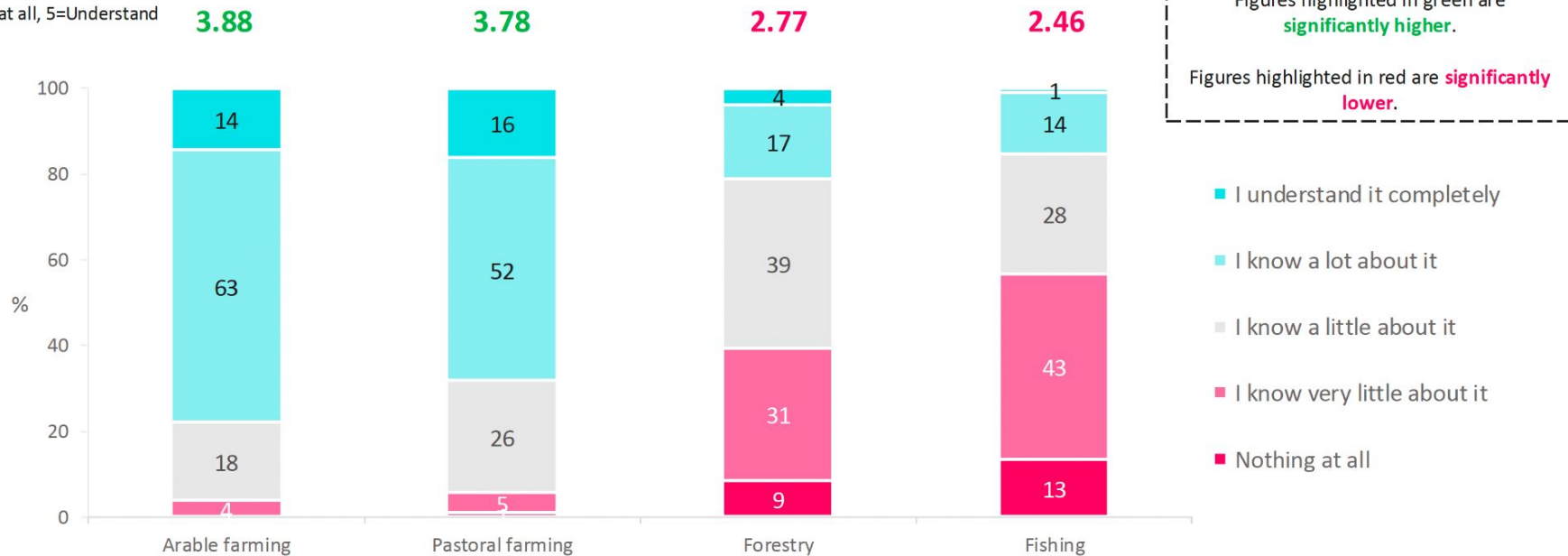
Q3: Which, if any, of these words and phrases do you think fit with [INDUSTRY] in the United States? BASE: European consumers: 2023 study (1500), Journalists: 2024 study (104), Journalists who have been on a press trip (11-CAUTION LOW BASE)

Journalists covering this sector tend to know more about farming than forestry or fishing.

Knowledge about U.S. agriculture

Mean score

(1=Nothing at all, 5=Understand completely)

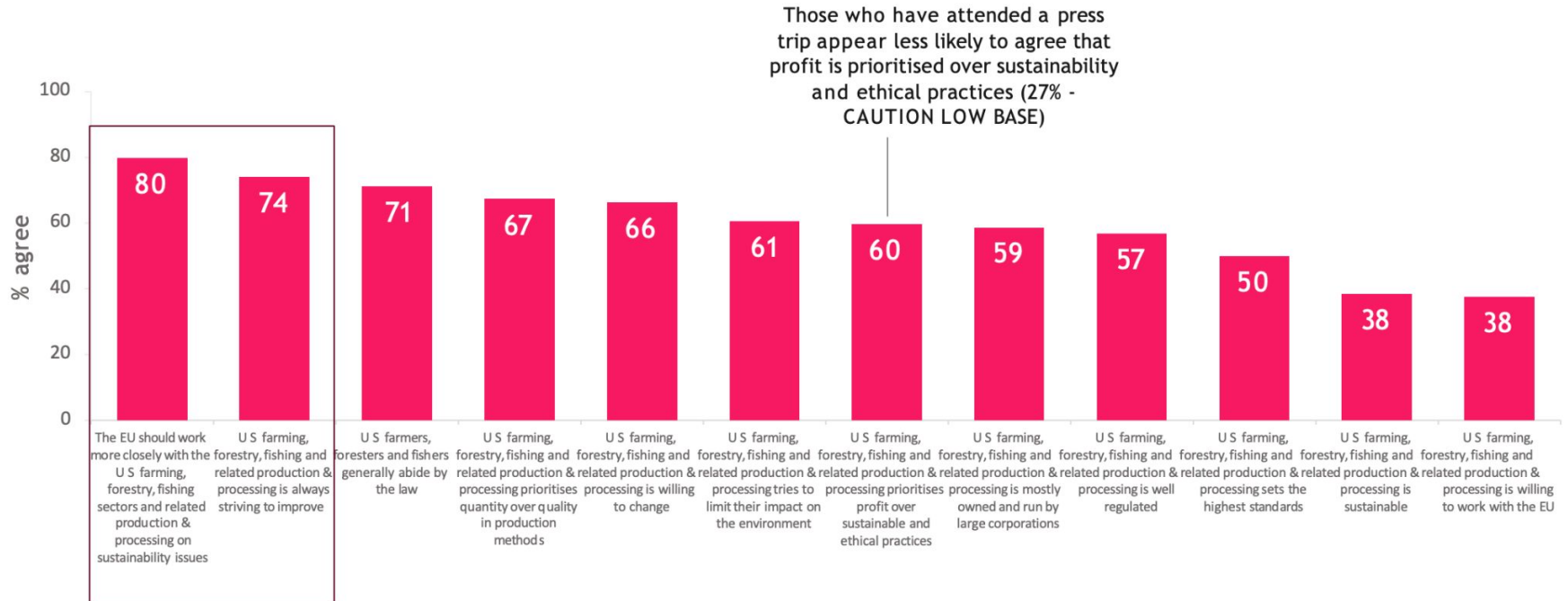


Q5: How much, if anything, do you think you know about [INDUSTRY]? BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104)

Perception of U.S. Agriculture

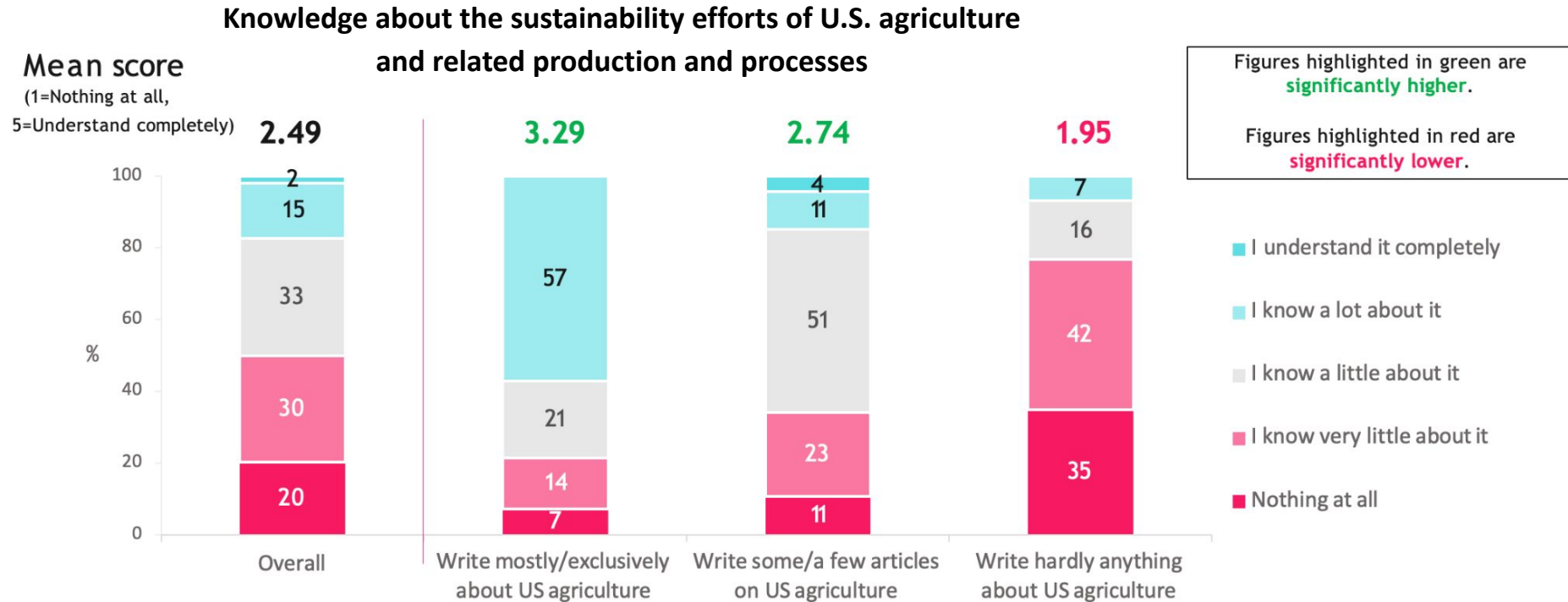
Though law-abiding, and improving, U.S. agriculture is not always perceived as sustainable or willing to work with the EU

Attitudes towards U.S. agriculture



Q12: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each statement, when thinking about [INDUSTRY] BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104)

There is an opportunity to increase awareness of sustainability initiatives even among those that chiefly cover this sector

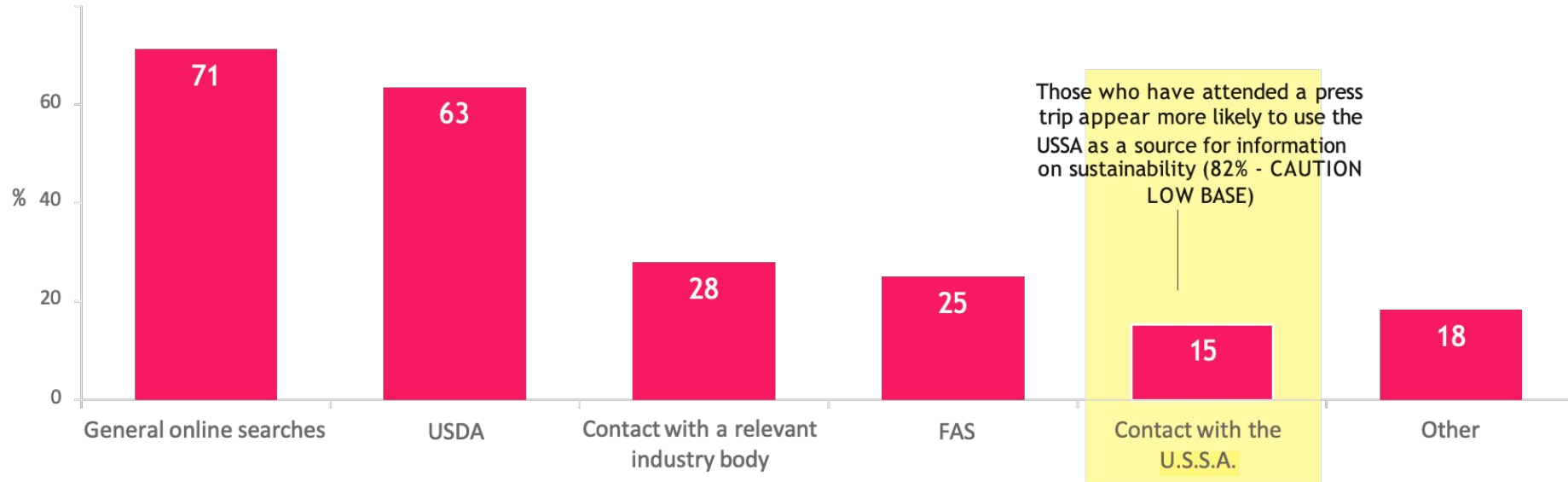


Q5: How much, if anything, do you think you know about [INDUSTRY]?

BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104), Those who write mostly/exclusively about US agriculture (14 - LOW BASE), Some a / few articles (47), Hardly any / none (43)

Work is needed to raise the profile of the USSA – to ensure it is the ‘go-to voice’ in the sector.

Information sources on the sustainability of U.S. agriculture typically used

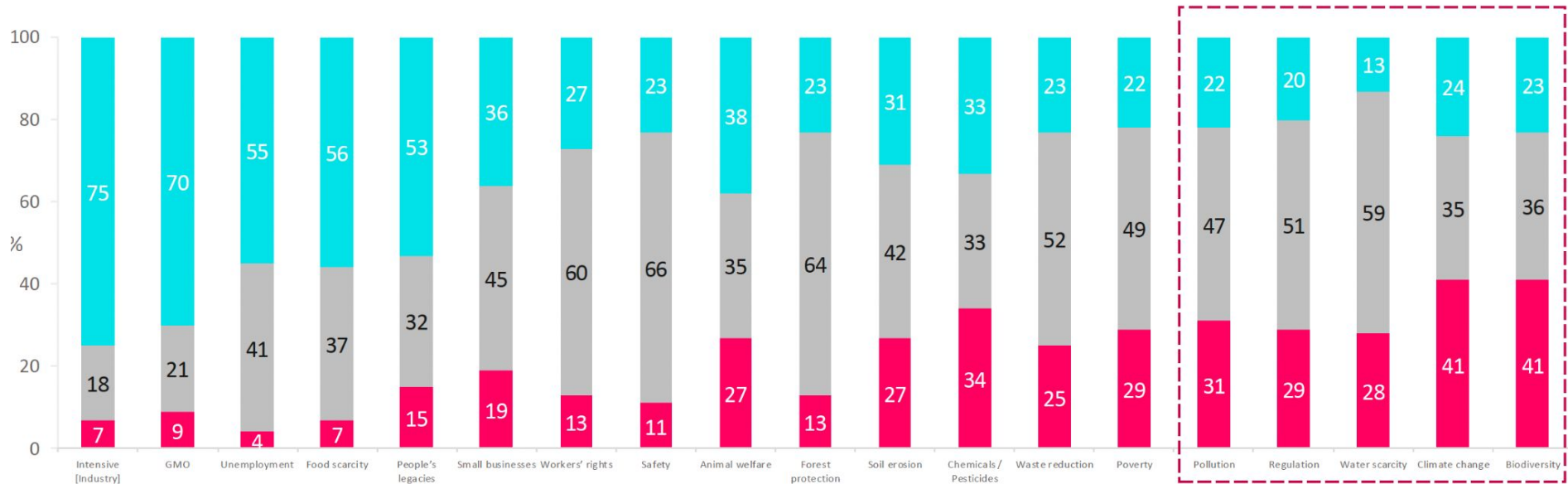


J4: What information sources do you typically use for information or news about the sustainability of US agriculture and related industries?

BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104)

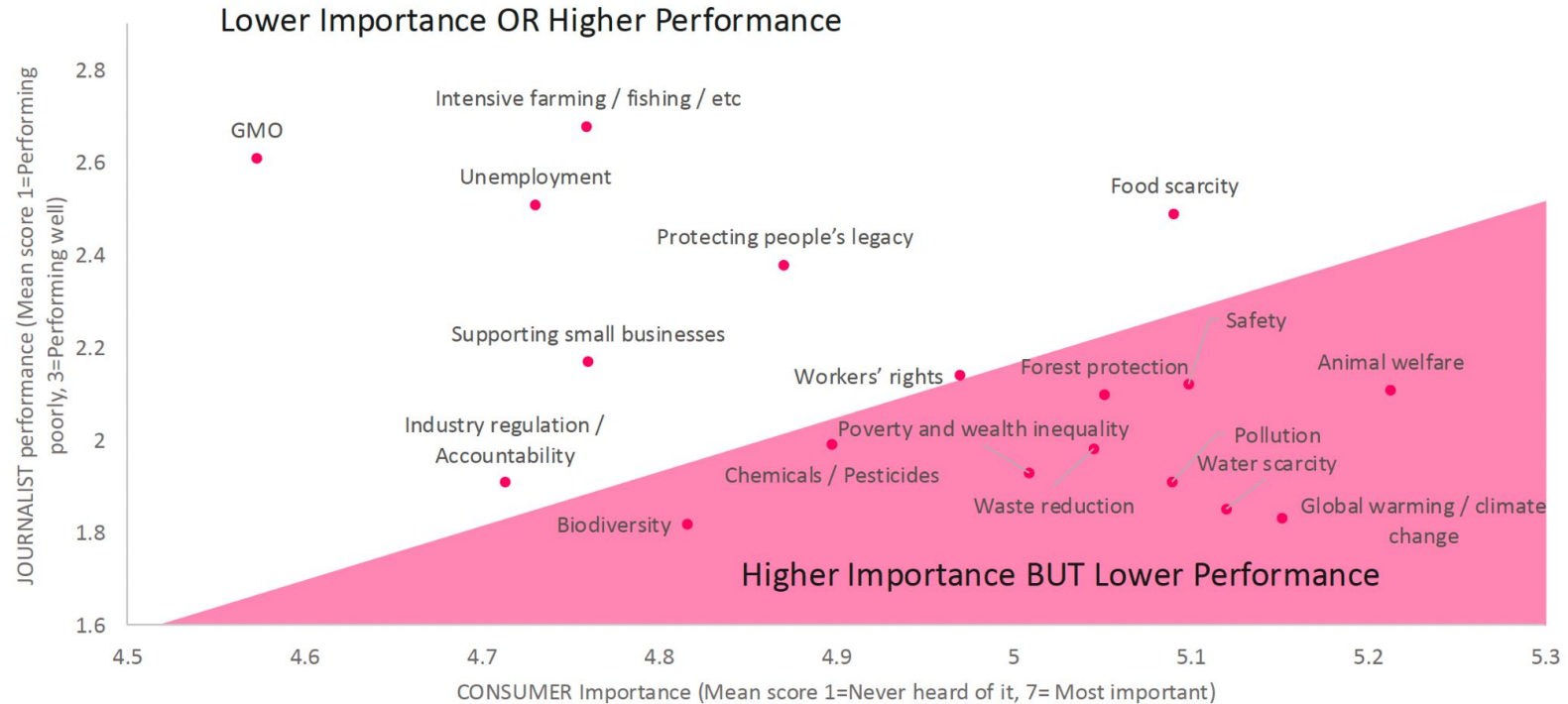
U.S. agriculture is felt to perform less well on issues of climate change and biodiversity

U.S. agricultural performance against key issues



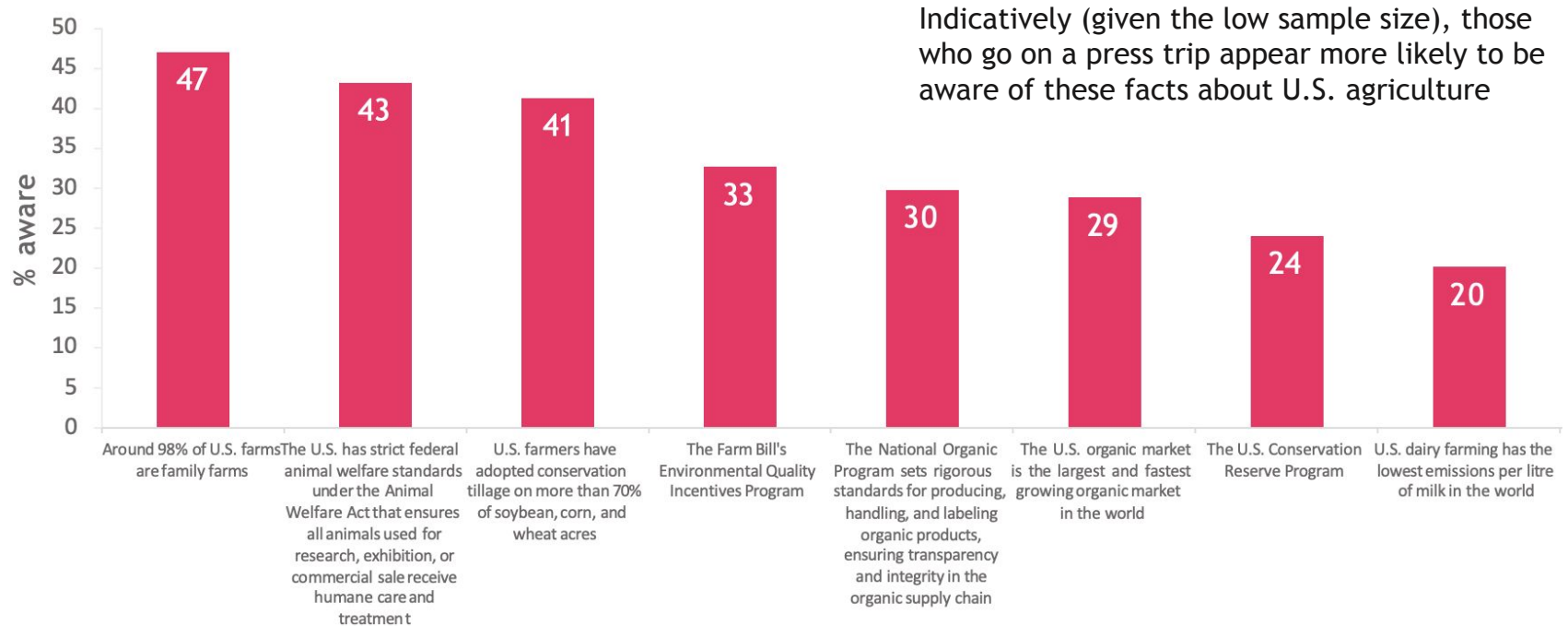
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Comparing perceived performance with what matters to consumers suggests areas for comms to media



Q7: How important are each of these to you personally? / Q8: Which of these issues is the most important to you right now? / Q10: Which, if any, of these issues do you think [INDUSTRY] in the United States performs well on? / Q11: And which, if any, do you think [INDUSTRY] in the United States performs poorly on? BASE: European consumers: 2023 study (2000), Journalists: 2024 study (104)

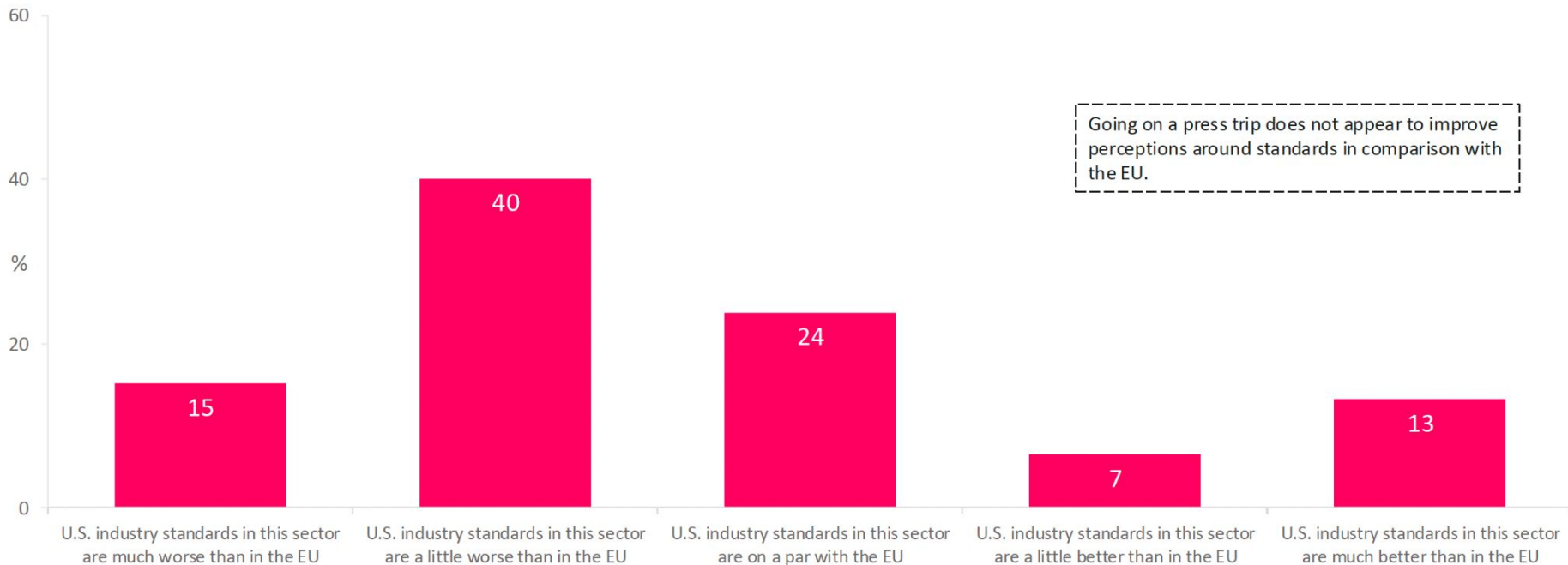
Awareness of the key facts about U.S. agriculture is limited - though knowledge may be improved by the press trip



Q14: Which, if any, of the below were you aware of before this survey? BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104), Journalists who have been on a press trip (11 – CAUTION LOW BASE)

On balance, journalists currently feel U.S. standards lag behind the EU

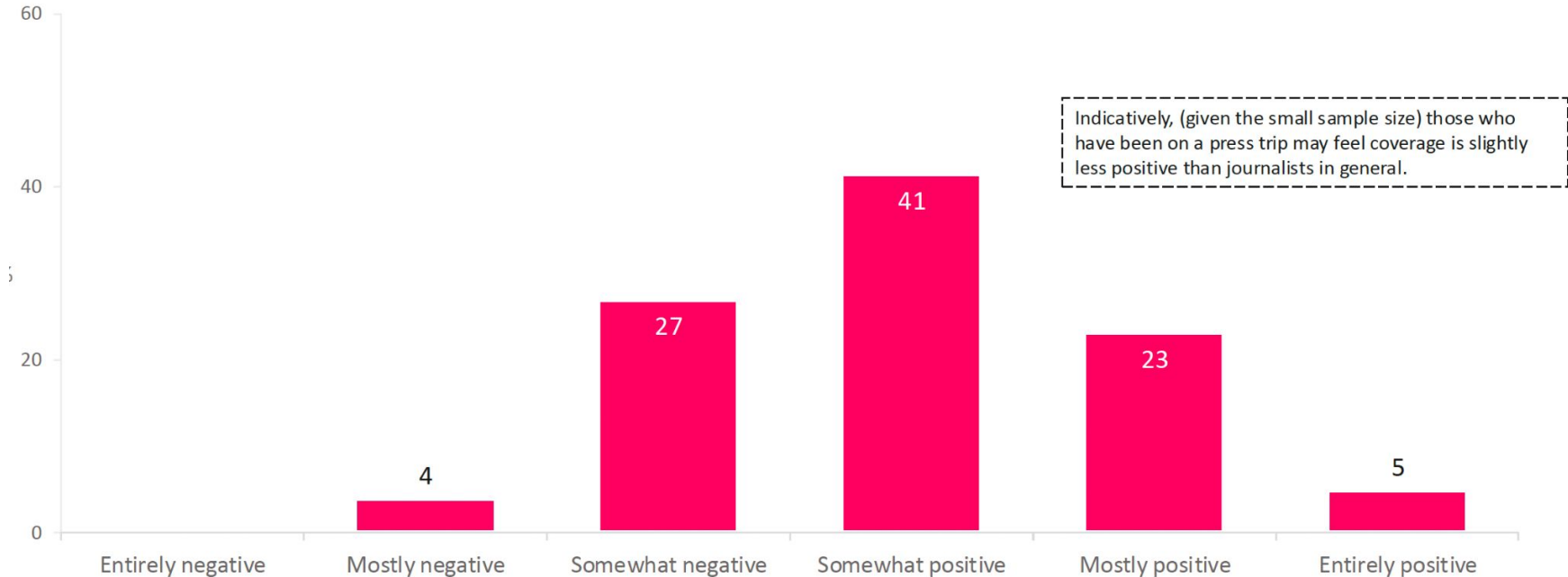
Comparison of U.S. and EU industry standards



Q13: Thinking about regulation and standards which of these best describes your view of the US [INDUSTRY] industry. BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104), Journalists who have been on a press trip (11 – CAUTION LOW BASE)

7 in 10 Journalists feel coverage of the U.S. agriculture (outside of the news) skews somewhat positive

Perceptions of non-news coverage of the U.S. agricultural sector



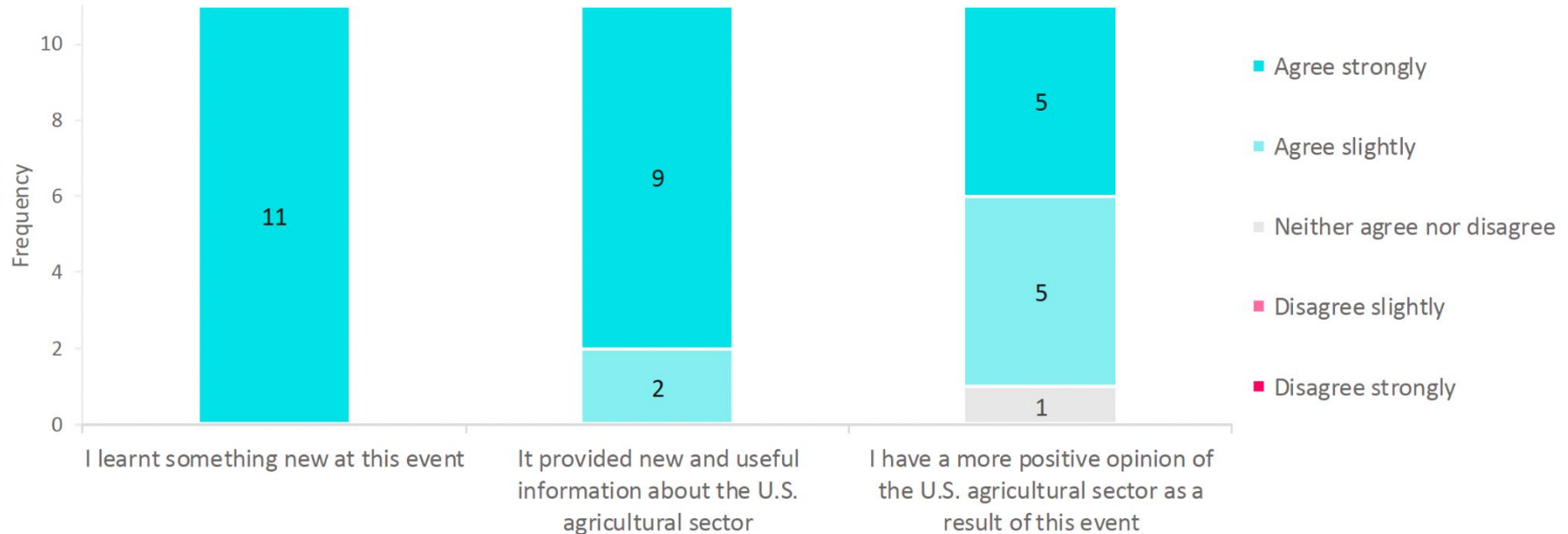
J3: Thinking about the non-news coverage (eg. features, reviews, word of mouth, influencers, etc.) of the U.S. [INDUSTRY] sector as a whole, do you think it is...: BASE: Journalists: 2024 study (104), Journalists who have been on a press trip (11 – CAUTION LOW BASE)

Press Trip Impacts

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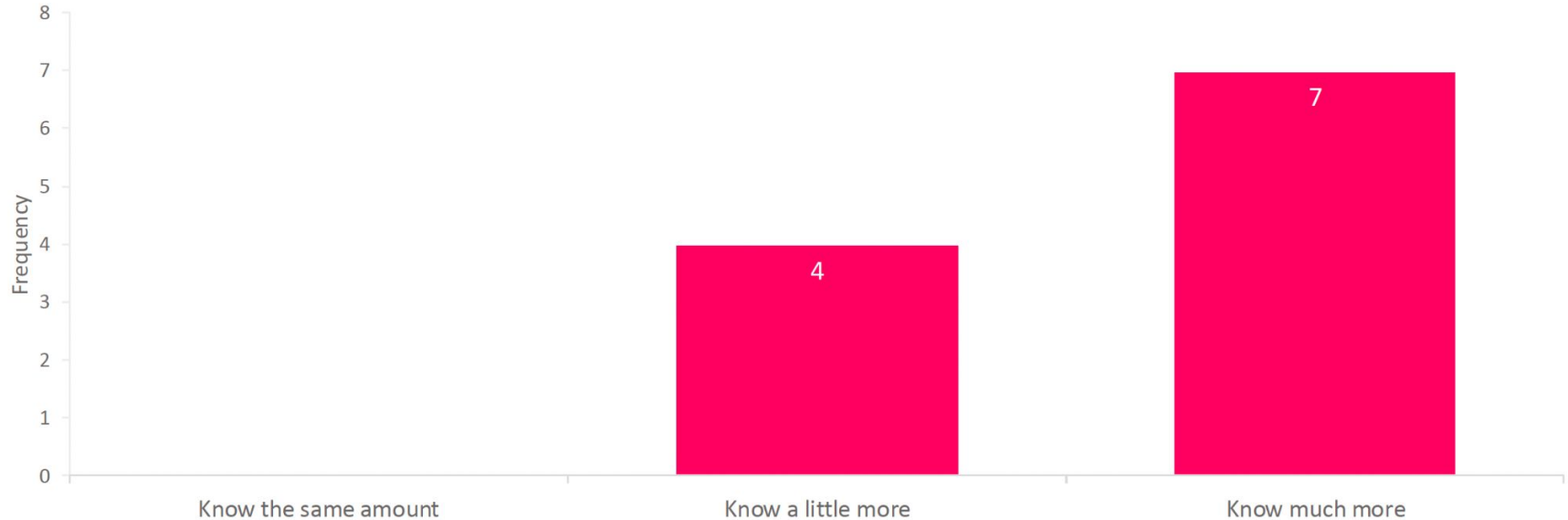
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Attendees seem to feel press trips increased their knowledge of the sector

Impact of the USSA press trip on knowledge of U.S. farming, forestry and fishing [ABSOLUTE NUMBERS]

BASE: Those that attended [CAUTION – LOW BASE]



Q15: Having been on the press trip do you think you:

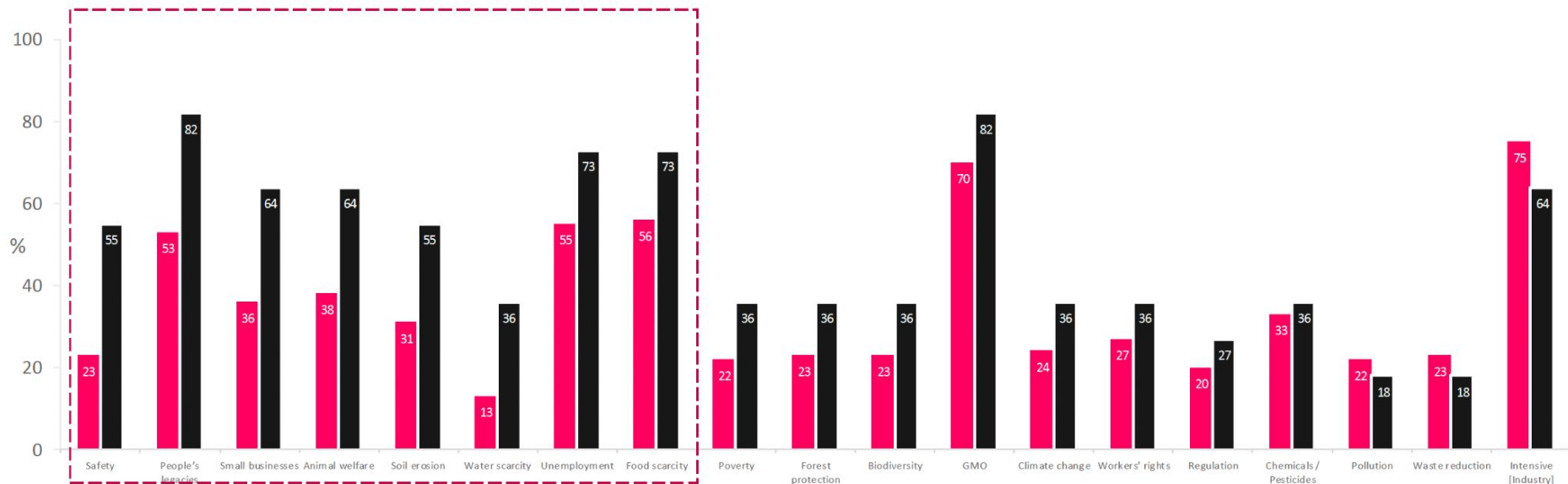
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Thank you

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