

Consumer views regarding ways to improve animal welfare in beef and dairy production

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Introduction and objective

- Previous research shows that the public has concerns on whether animal welfare is satisfactory in modern animal production systems
 - The concerns are related especially to the naturalness of production method and humane treatment of animals
- Consumers are willing to pay a premium for animal-friendly products
- A labelling scheme can improve animal welfare and help consumers to make informed choices by signalling that specific requirements are met in labelled production.
- The aim of this study was to test how the public views different ways to improve animal welfare in beef and dairy cattle production.

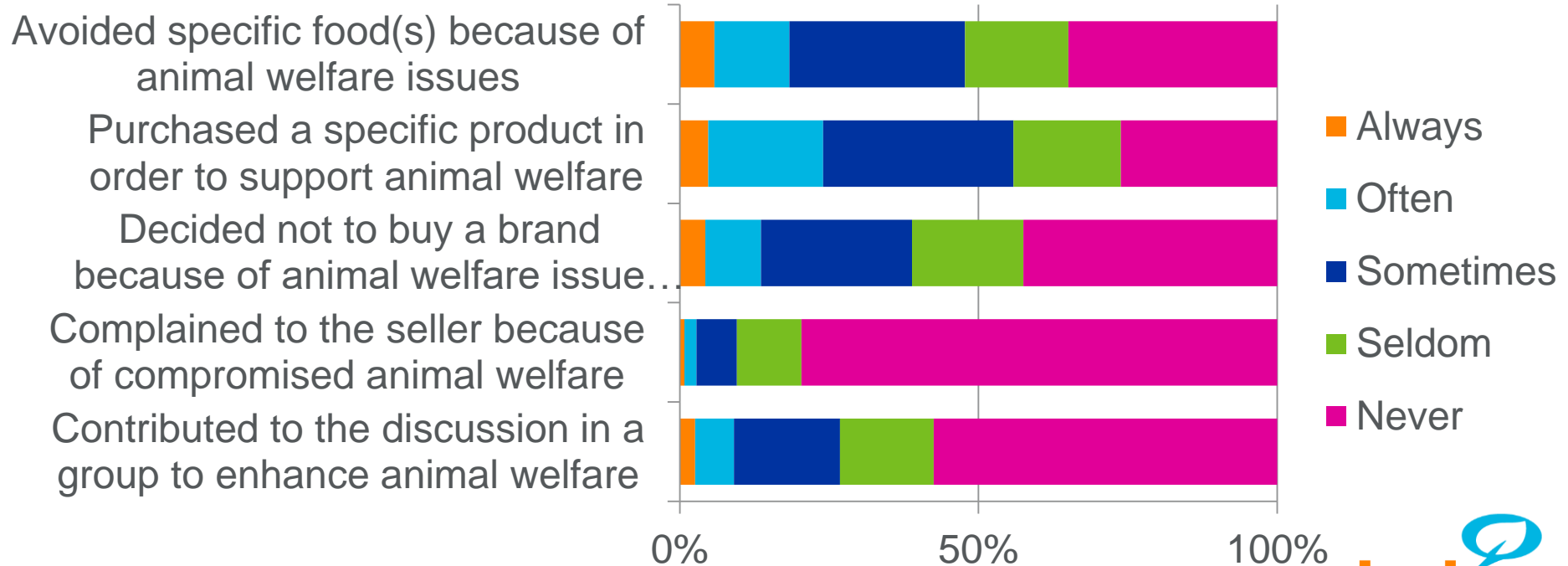
Data and methods

- An on-line consumer survey instrument was developed to study people's views regarding animal welfare, improvement needs and practices affecting animal welfare
 - September 2018
 - The survey was distributed by a market research company
 - An on-line panel of respondents (N=400)
 - A representative sample of population of Finland
- The respondents were clustered into four groups
- A multinomial logit regression was used to characterize respondent profiles

Which production attributes were studied?

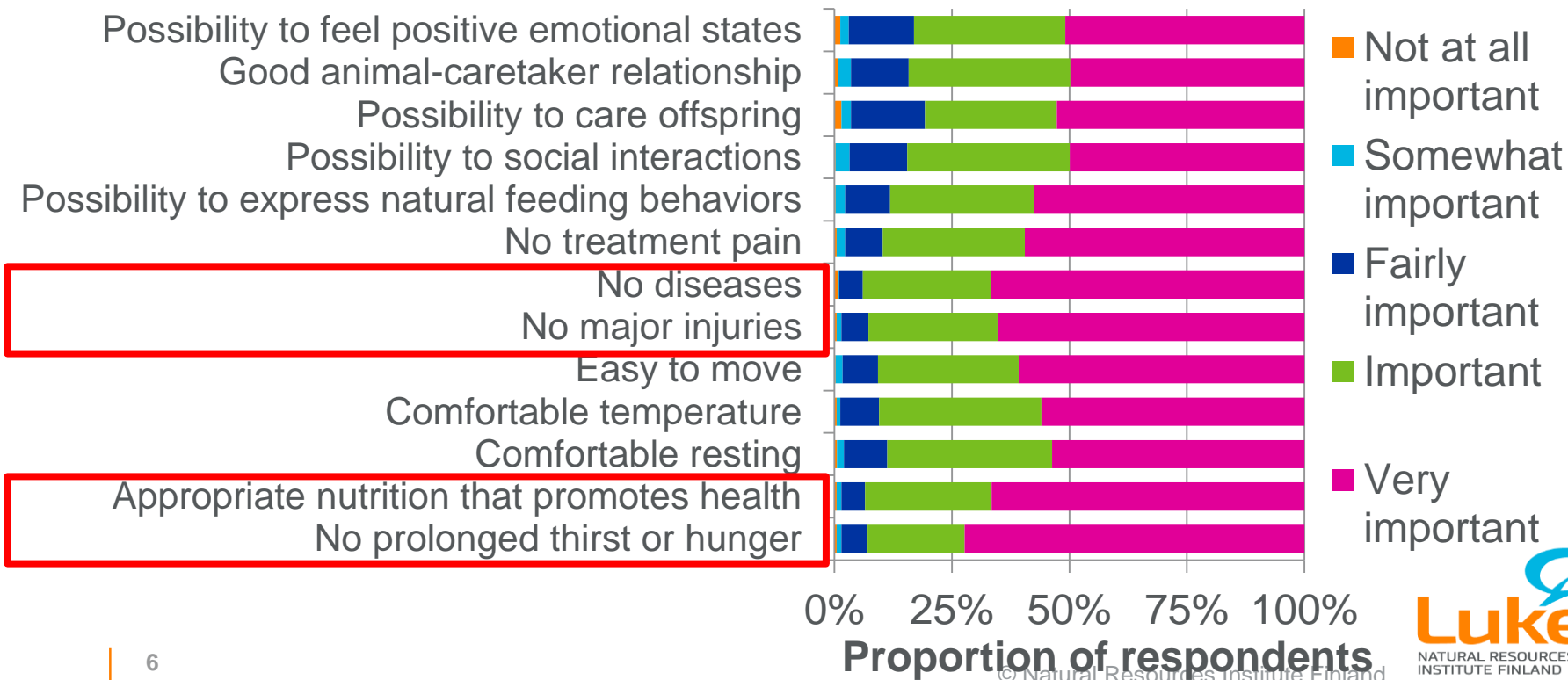
- In this study 11 attributes of production representing different aspect of animal welfare were selected for more detailed analysis:
 - Access to pasture or outdoor yard
 - Freedom of movement in dairy cows and beef cattle
 - Extended milk provision to calves and need to suckle
 - Comfort around dairy cows' lying
 - Access to water
 - Measures to improve leg health
 - Friendly handling of cattle
 - Space allowance
 - 4 – Preventive animal health care

The respondents indicated they have made food choices because of animal welfare issues,.... but had expressed their views less frequently

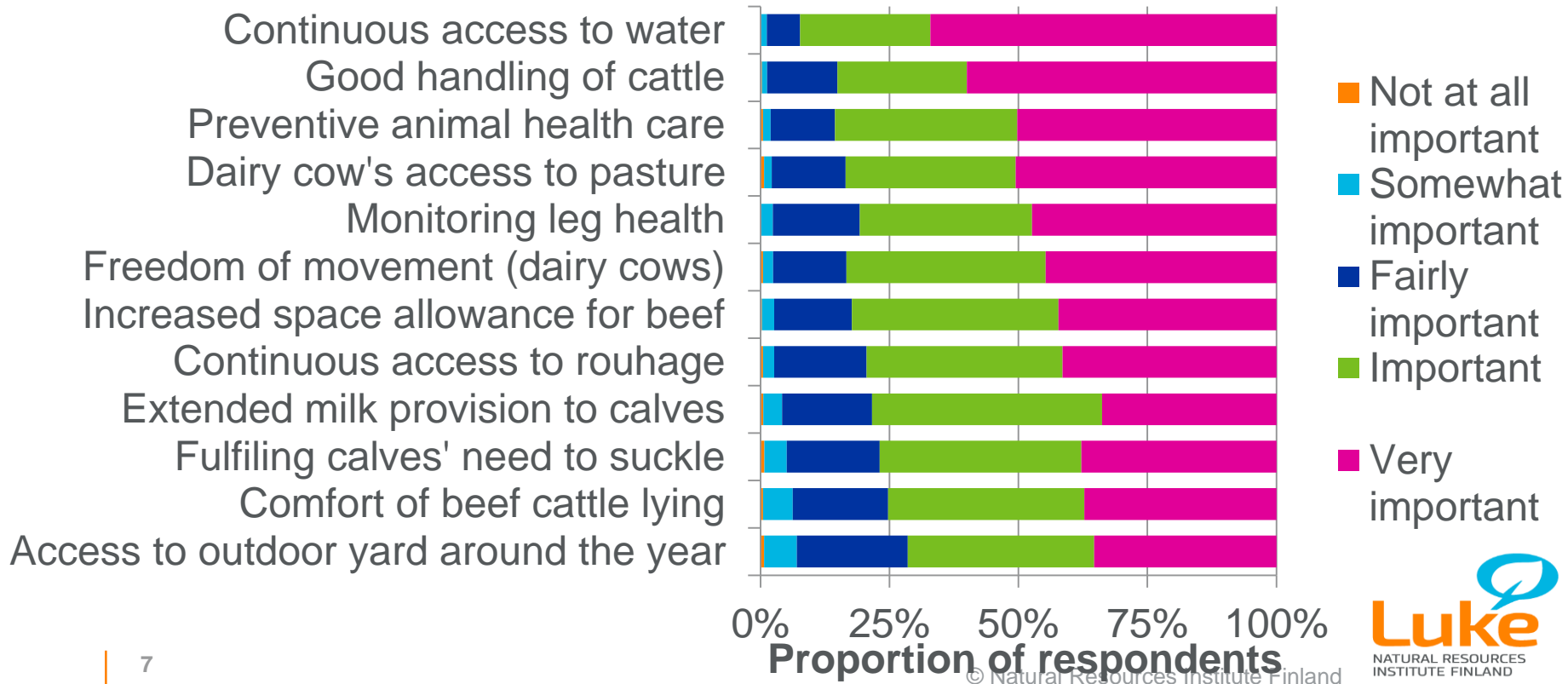


Health and nutrition were considered the most frequently as very important area animal welfare

The titles below reflect 12 topics of Welfare Quality



How important it is to the respondent that a measure to enhance animal welfare is required by the label?



Four consumer groups were identified

- Blue=important or very important
- White and light red=fairly important...important
- Red=somewhat important....fairly important

	G1 (40%)	G2 (11%)	G3 (19%)	G4 (11%)
Access to pasture (dairy)	Blue	Light Blue	White	Red
Freedom of movement (dairy)	Blue	Light Blue	White	Red
Extended milk provision to calves	Blue	Light Blue	Light Red	Red
Fulfilling calves need to suckle	Blue	Light Blue	Light Red	Red
Space allowance (beef)	Blue	Light Blue	White	Red
Comfort around dairy cows' lying	Blue	Light Blue	Light Red	Red
Access to outdoor yard	Blue	White	Light Red	Red
Access to roughage	Blue	Light Blue	Light Red	Red
Friendly handling of animals	Blue	Light Blue	White	Light Red
Preventive animal health care	Blue	Light Blue	White	Light Red
Continuous access to water	Light Blue	Light Red	Light Red	Red
Measures to improve leg health	White	Light Red	Light Red	Red

Consumer groups

- Group 1 (40% of respondents) typically considered **all 11 attributes** as a very important characteristic of a labelled product.
- People in group 2 (11%) typically considered **good handling of animals** as a very important characteristic and other characteristic also as important
- Group 3 (19%) typically considered **good handling, preventive animal health care and increased space allowance** important, and other attributes as important or fairly important characteristic
- Group 4 (11%) were **the least-demanding group**: they tended to consider all attributes as a quite important characteristic
- About 61% of respondents were interested in buying welfare-labelled products if they were available

How the four groups differed?

Summary of logistic regression model (likelihood of membership to groups 1-3 instead of group 4)

- Young respondents (aged 18-24) were less likely to belong to groups 1-3 when comparing with group 4
- Respondents who purchased food directly from farms *less frequently than once a week* were less likely to belong to group 1-3
- Respondents who had relatives or friends owning a livestock farm were less likely to belong to groups 1 and 2
- Overall, consumption of red meat was connected quite strongly to what people think about animal welfare attributes.
 - This applied **especially** to **beef** consumption
 - The more respondent consumed red meat, the more likely s/he was to belong to group 2, which emphasized good handling of animals

Conclusions

- Preventive animal health care and good animal handling are seen as an essential part of animal welfare in a labelled product.
- However, people face challenges in understanding specific measures
- Factors such as the respondent living in a city or a suburb, age and reduced familiarity with farming through relatives contributed to an increased likelihood of respondent belonging to the consumer groups which consider products' animal welfare attributes important.
- Links to farming are associated with the way people see farming
- Red meat consumption is a useful proxy for both animal welfare concerns and characteristics required from a product.
- The results provide guidance on which are the most essential criteria the consumers would like a labelling scheme to address.

Thank you!

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