

DRIVERS OF FOOD CHOICES AND DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

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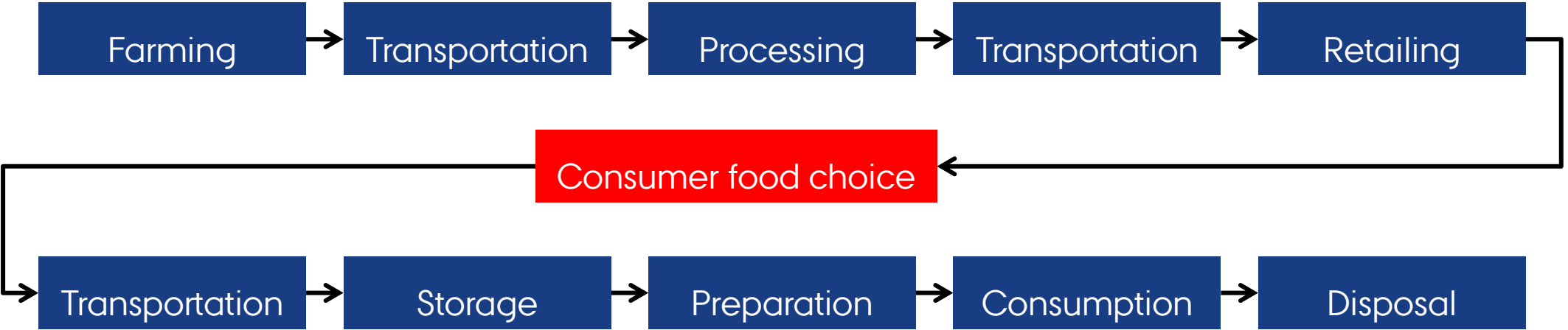
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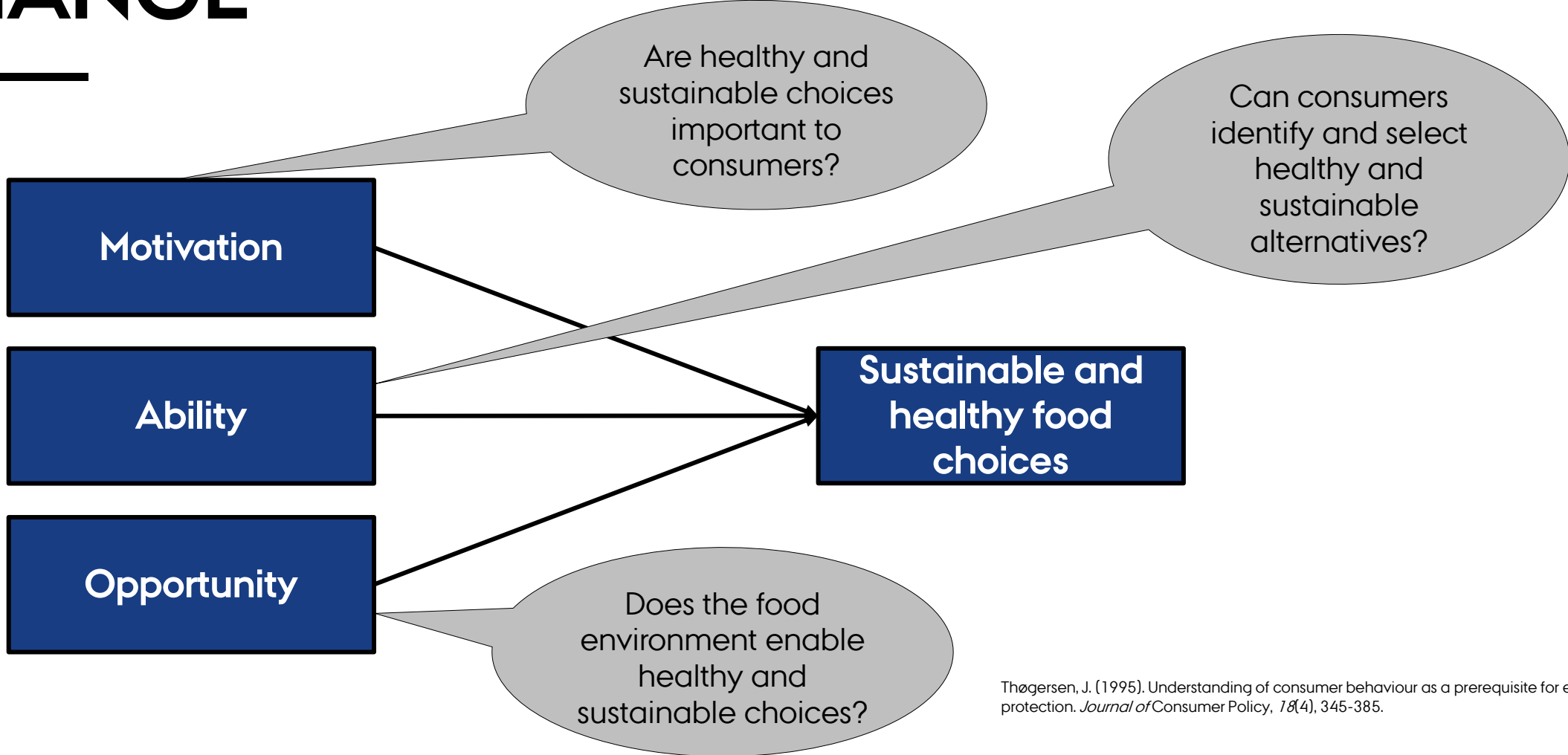
MAPP - RESEARCH ON VALUE CREATION IN THE FOOD SECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT
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THE ROLE OF CONSUMERS IN THE TRANSITION TO A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM



THE DETERMINANTS OF BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE



Thøgersen, J. (1995). Understanding of consumer behaviour as a prerequisite for environmental protection. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 18(4), 345-385.

TWO TYPES OF DECISION-MAKING

‘SYSTEM 1’ – Intuition

Fast

Parallel

Automatic

Does not require effort

Slow learning

Emotional

‘SYSTEM 2’ – Reasoning

Slow

One thing at a time

Controlled

Requires effort

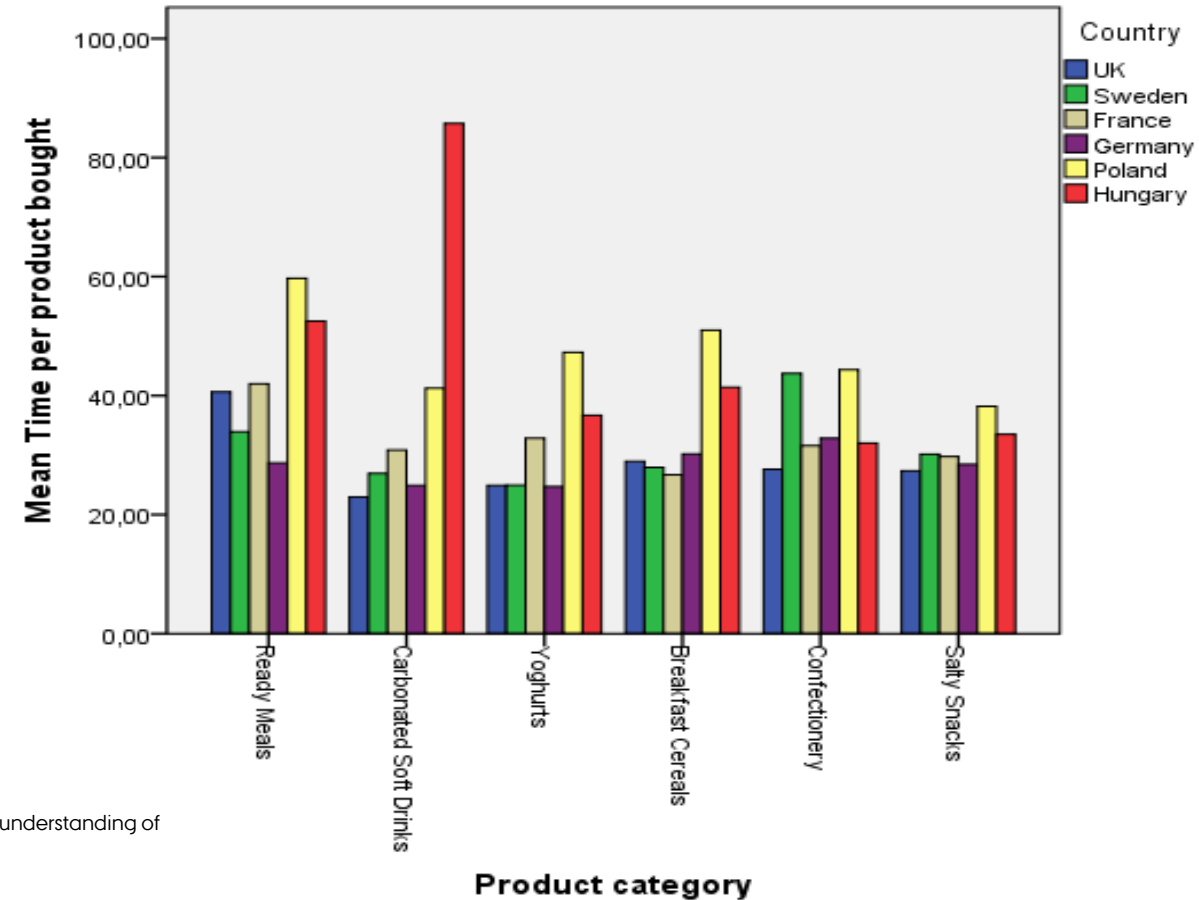
Follows rules

Flexible

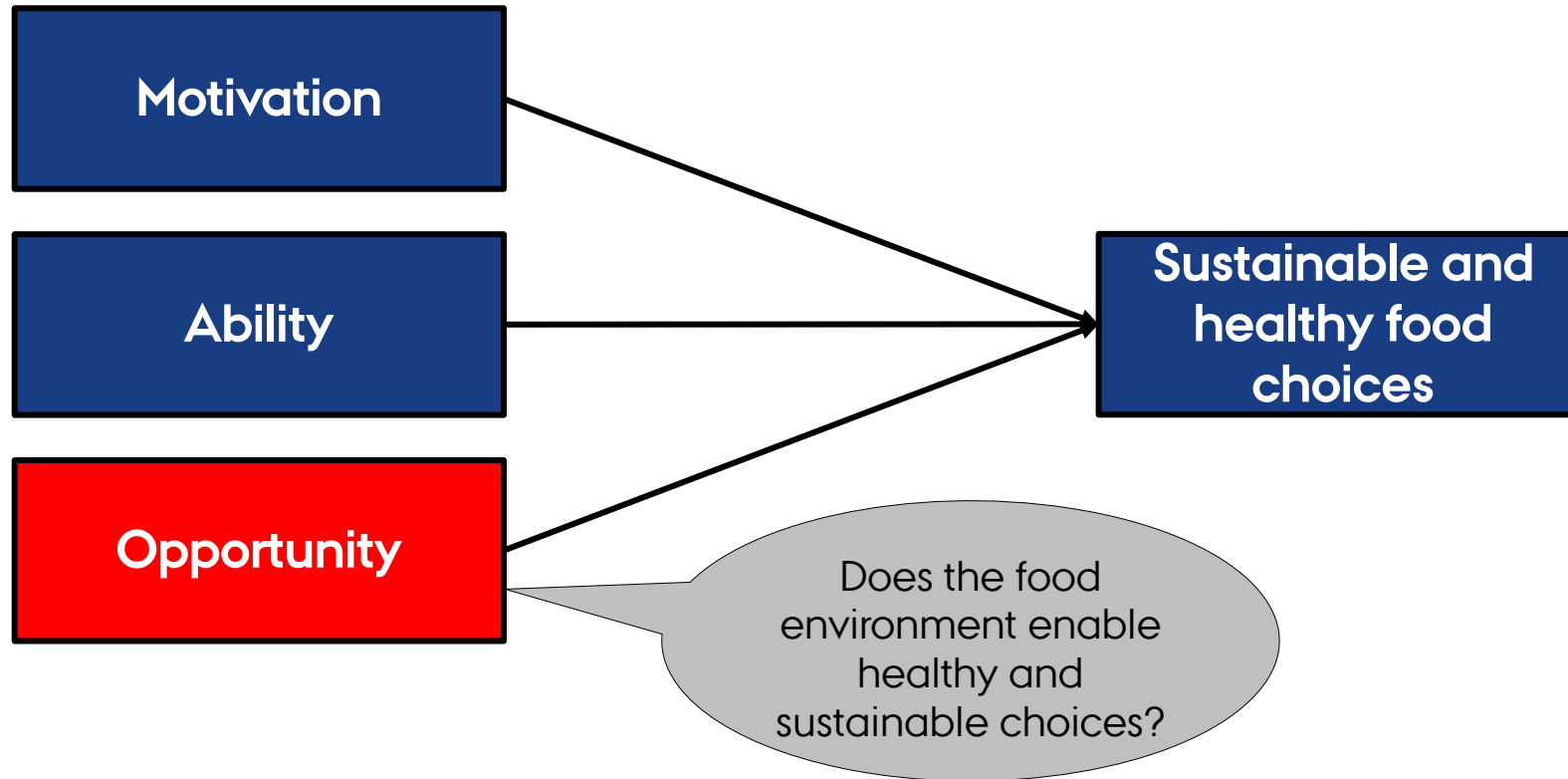
Neutral

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Macmillan.

Grunert, K. G., Fernández-Celemin, L., Wills, J. M., Storcksdieck genannt Bonsmann, S., & Nureeva, L. (2010). Use and understanding of nutrition information on food labels in six European countries. *Journal of Public Health, 18*(3), 261-277.



PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY



PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY

The right products – there is a need to develop and market healthier and more sustainable food alternatives



Innovation and new product development

The right information – health and sustainability are credence characteristics that depend on the availability of *easy to understand* and *credible* information



Labelling and consumer trust

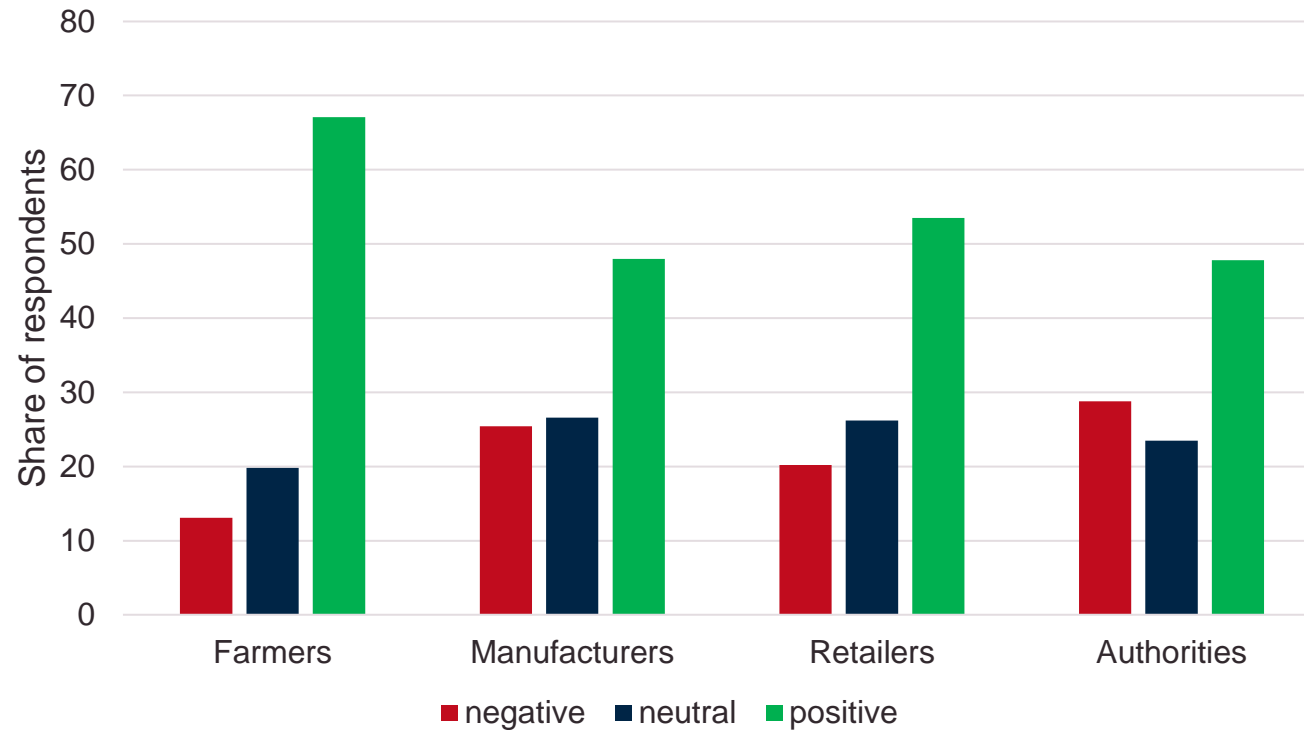
The right price – healthier and more sustainable products need to be affordable, there are limits to how much a price premiums consumers are willing to pay



Efficient production, pricing policies, taxes and subsidies

TRUST is a prerequisite for a food environment that encourages healthy and sustainable choices

“How much trust do you have in the following groups regarding the production, selling and regulation of food?”



The OPENNESS of food system actors is of primary importance in establishing consumer trust.

THE ROLE OF LABELLING

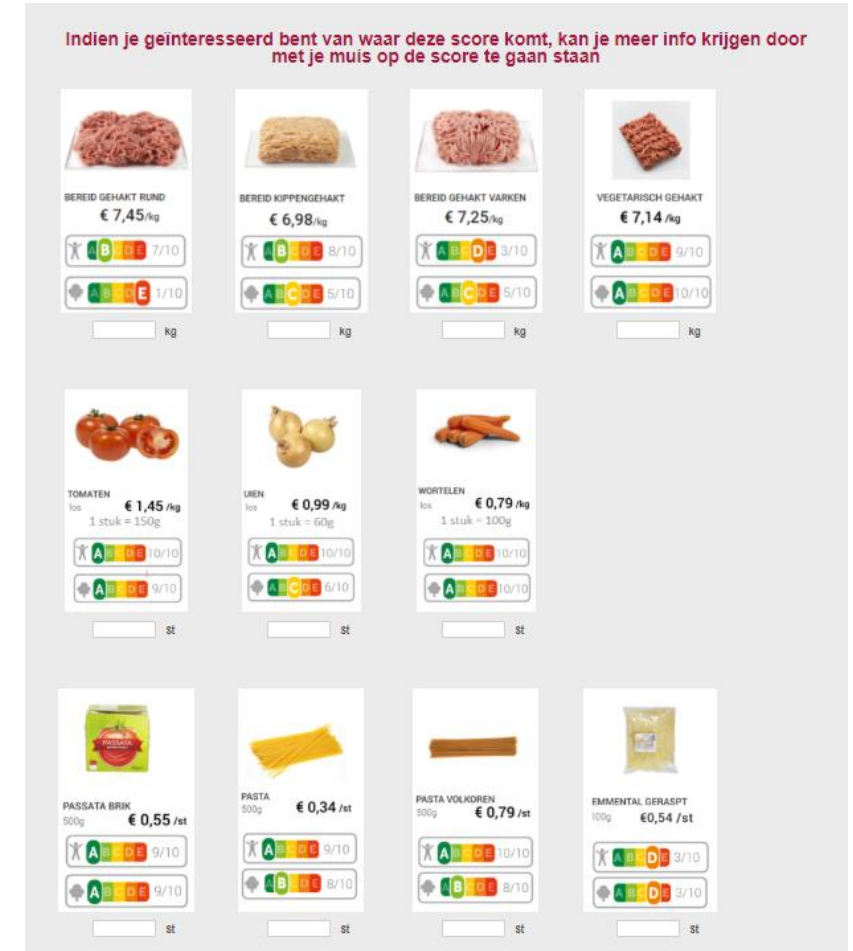
Labelling is a necessity to enable healthy and sustainable choices

However, experiences with nutrition labelling show that effects of labelling are modest and slow in coming

- The biggest bottlenecks are lack of motivation, lack of attention, and clutter on the food package

Labels should be designed in a way that is adapted to consumer decision-making – they should be simple, easy to understand, easy to use

Having more and more labels on the food products does **not** align with the way consumers mostly make decisions



PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY

Healthy and sustainable consumer food choices require that healthy and sustainable alternatives to existing food products are developed and launched on the market at affordable prices

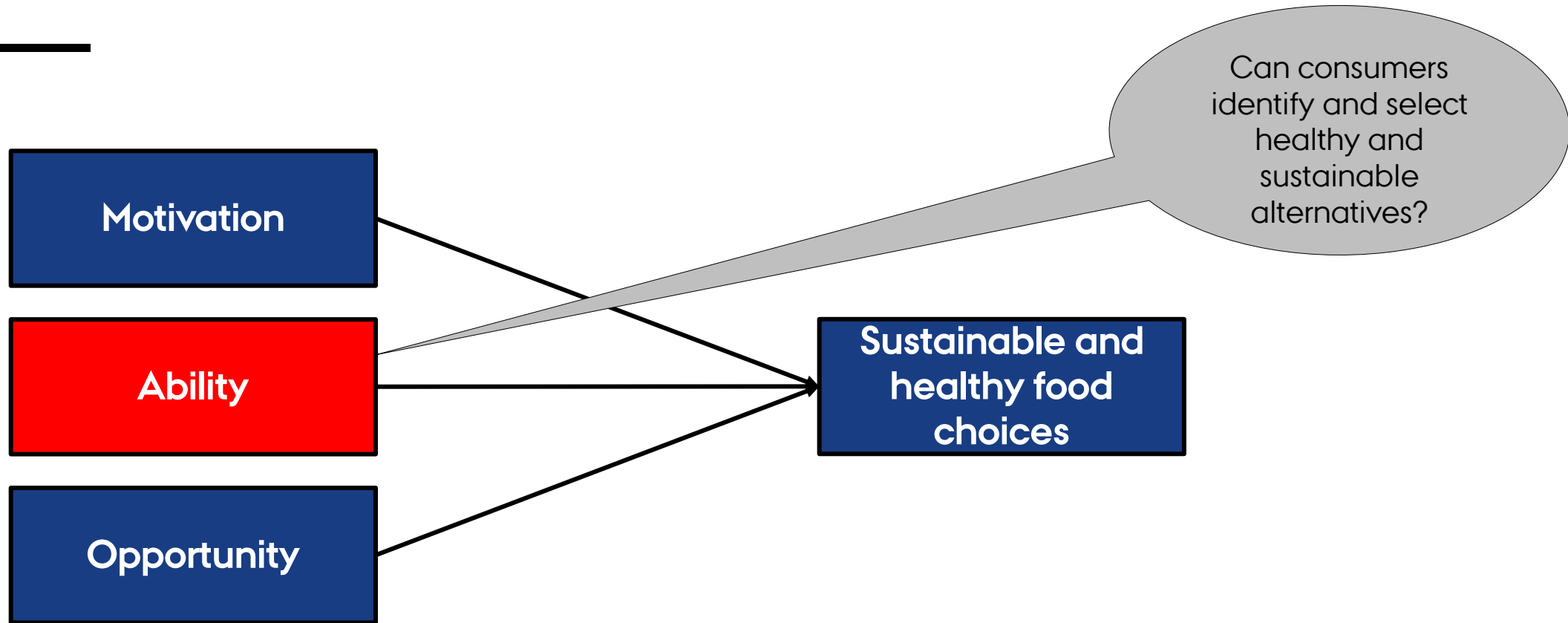
In order to enable the consumer to identify these products as healthy and sustainable, labelling is necessary

Labelling presupposes consumer trust

Labelling must be simple, easy to understand, easy to use

However, label effects are never huge, and providing opportunity is not enough

SUPPORTING ABILITY



SUPPORTING ABILITY

Food literacy: The ability to make decisions to support the achievement of personal health and a sustainable food system considering environmental, social, economic, cultural, and political components.

Tracy Cullen, R. D., Janelle Hatch, R. D., & Wanda Martin, R. N. (2015). Food Literacy: Definition and Framework for Action. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, 76(3), 140.

- Making decisions intra-category, cross-category
- Composing a diet
- Storing food, preparing meals, handling food waste

Skills develop through education and practice

Can food choices become more mindful over time?

Changes in food-related behaviours due to COVID

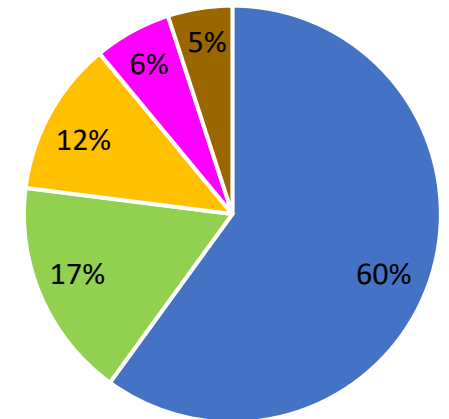
■ Cluster 1: Resilient

■ Cluster 2: More mindful eating

■ Cluster 3: More convenient enjoyment

■ Cluster 4: More food involvement

■ Cluster 5: Less food involvement



Grunert, K. G., De Bauw, M., Dean, M., Lähteenmäki, L., Maison, D., Pennanen, K., ... & Vranken, L. (2021). No lockdown in the kitchen: How the COVID-19 pandemic has affected food-related behaviours. *Food Research International*, 150, 110752.

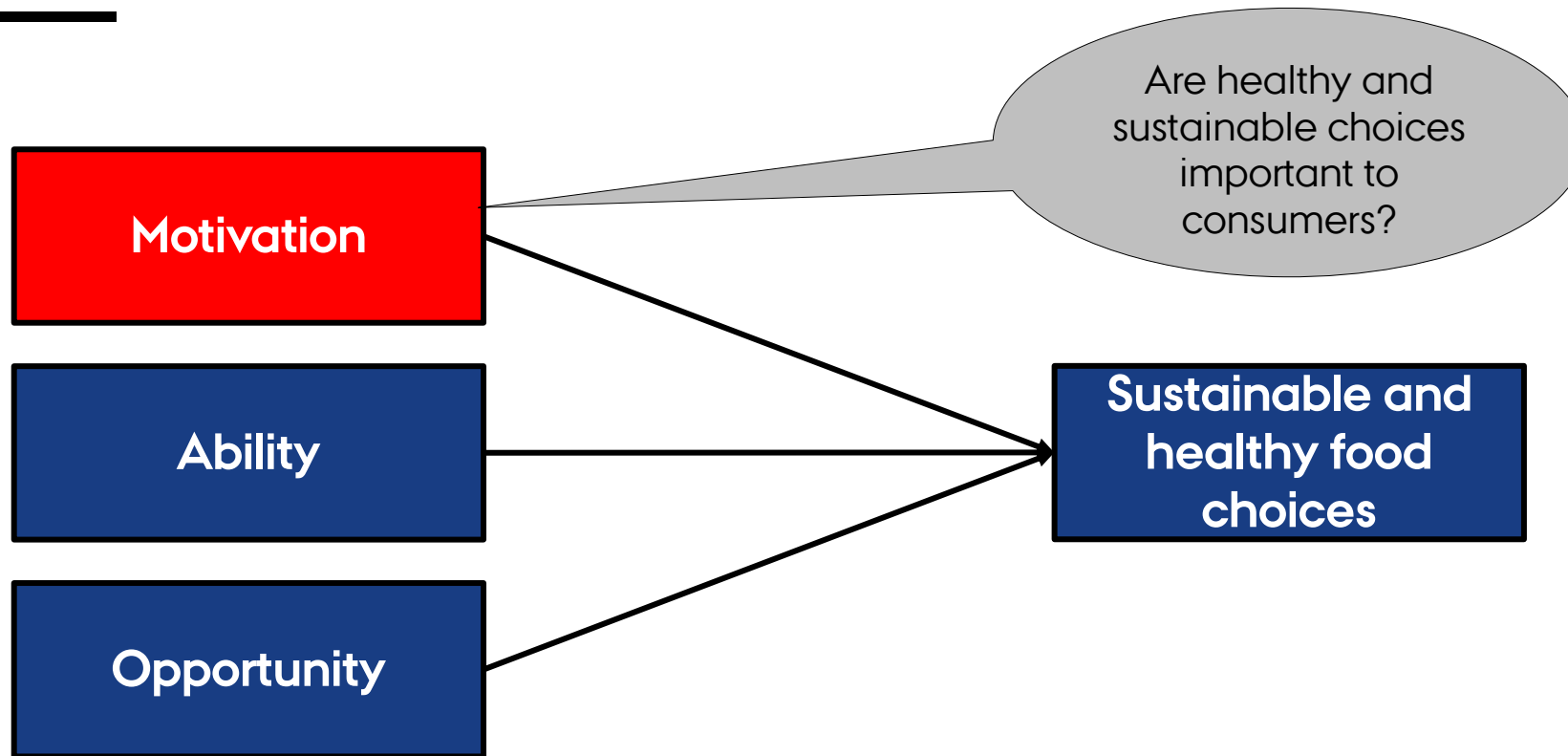
SUPPORTING ABILITY

Educational measures can enhance food literacy which will increase ability to make healthy and sustainable choices

However, the predominance of system 1 type decisions when choosing food is a barrier in the promotion of more mindful food choices

Disruptive events like the COVID pandemic and the current crisis due to the war in Ukraine may result in higher degrees of mindful food choice, at least for a period

STRENGTHENING MOTIVATION



STRENGTHENING MOTIVATION

Food choice is governed by multiple motives, and sustainability is usually not the main motive

Food choice motives are governed by long-term values and by situational factors

- We can, e.g., distinguish hedonic, egoistic, altruistic and biospheric values
- The relative importance of values will change only slowly
- However, motives in a particular choice situation are affected by cues in the situation, such that sustainability related motives can be primed and become more salient in the choice situation

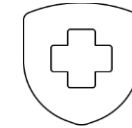
The best way of making sure that motivation is not a barrier to sustainable choices is to align food products according to the most important motives – especially making the sustainable choice the tasty choice

When consumers buy food, they say that the 3 most important aspects to them are:



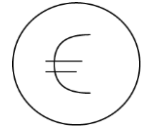
Taste

45%



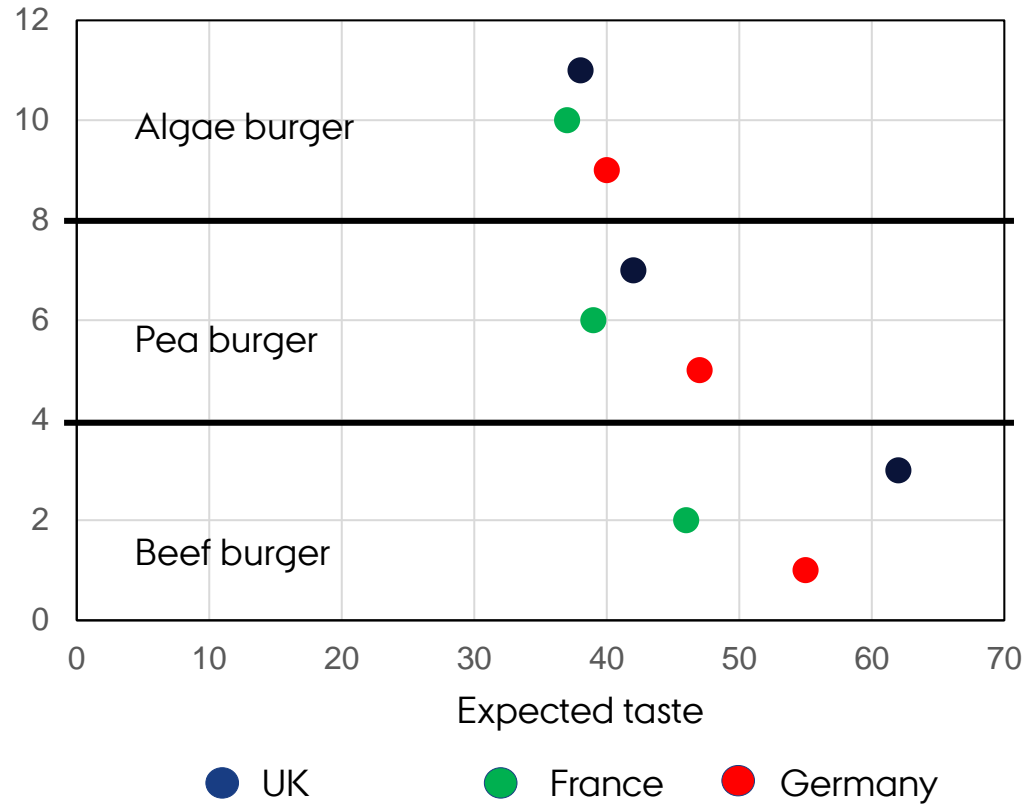
Food safety

42%

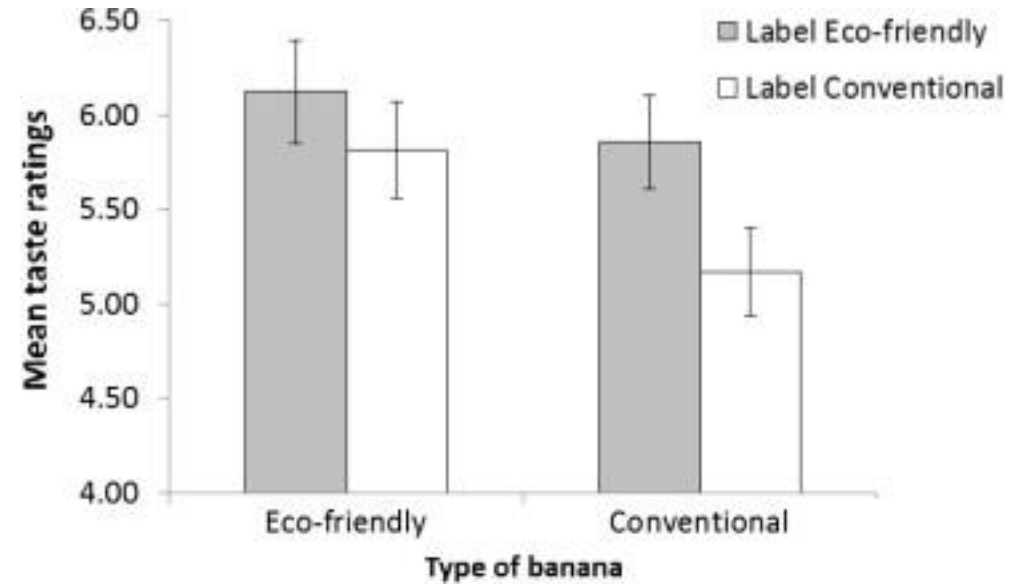


Cost

40%



Michel, F., Knaapila, A., Hartmann, C., & Siegrist, M. (2021). A multi-national comparison of meat eaters' attitudes and expectations for burgers containing beef, pea or algae protein. *Food Quality and Preference*, 91, 104195.



Effects for bananas, raisins, grapes – not water

Sörqvist, P., Haga, A., Langeborg, L., Holmgren, M., Wallinder, M., Nösti, A., ... & Marsh, J. E. (2015). The green halo: Mechanisms and limits of the eco-label effect. *Food quality and preference*, 43, 1-9.

STRENGTHENING MOTIVATION

Food choices are governed by multiple motives and this is not likely to change

Motives are related to values that are not likely to change in the short run, but can be influenced in the choice situation

The best way of ensuring motivation for sustainable choices is to align goals

- At the moment, consumers may think that the more sustainable alternative tastes better or worse than the conventional alternative, depending on product category and type of sustainability

THE TIME PERSPECTIVE

Food products are frequently bought and many food choices are made out of habit
It is therefore important that the sustainable choice is not only made on particular occasions, but that it becomes the habitual choice

Consumer learn over successive choices

- They learn based on the sensory experience – they find out which foods they find tasty and adapt future choices accordingly
- They learn based upon the availability of new information – and perceptions about sustainability can be adapted based on this new information

THE TIME PERSPECTIVE

The outcrowding effect: Will the taste experience, over time, become more important than sustainability, because taste can be experienced and sustainability is only based on information?

Mitigation by information: Can we provide new, additional information that will mitigate the outcrowding effect and ensure that sustainability remains a salient characteristic?

- Can labelling fulfil this function or do we need other types of information?
- Can we reinforce sustainable choices by giving consumers feedback on the sustainability of their choices?

The taste of sustainability: Can the sensory characteristics of the food support the sustainable choice?

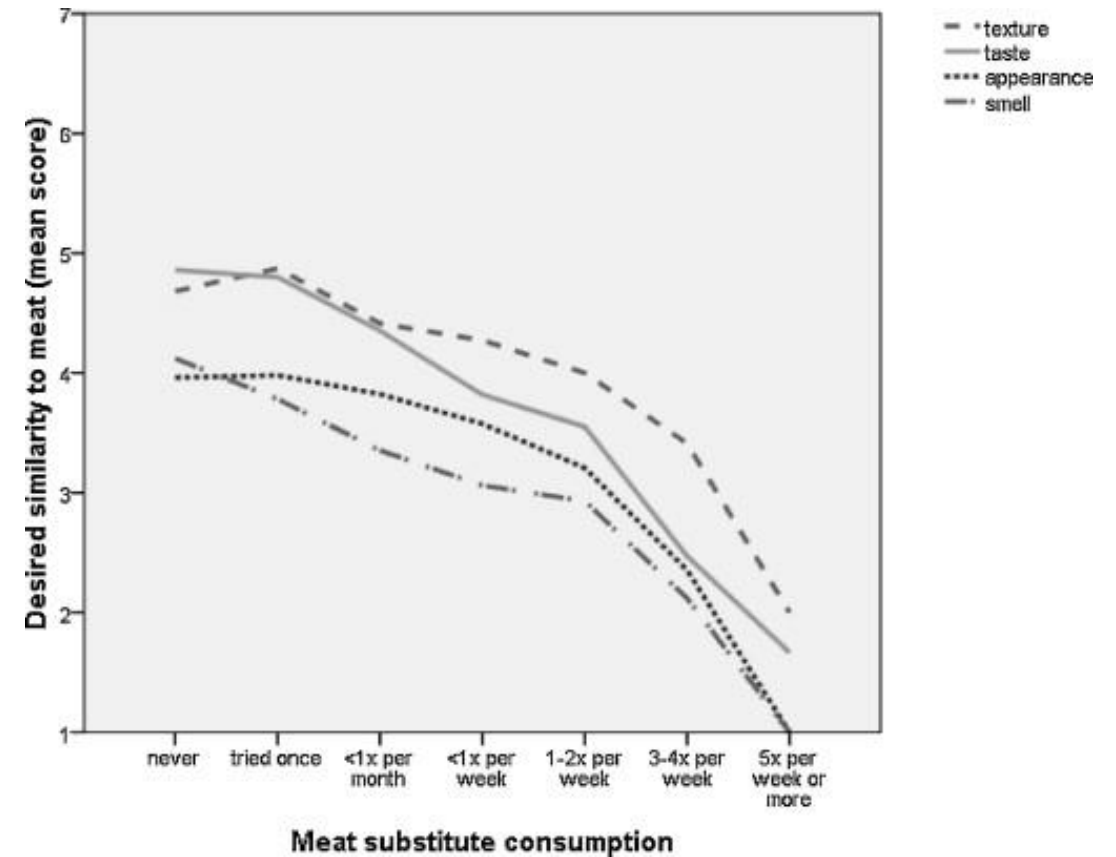
- Will consumers adapt their taste preferences to the sustainable alternative?

Over time, taste experience accumulates and will change expectations for the next purchase

It is well-known that taste preferences change due to a mere exposure effect

Comparisons and benchmarks may play a role

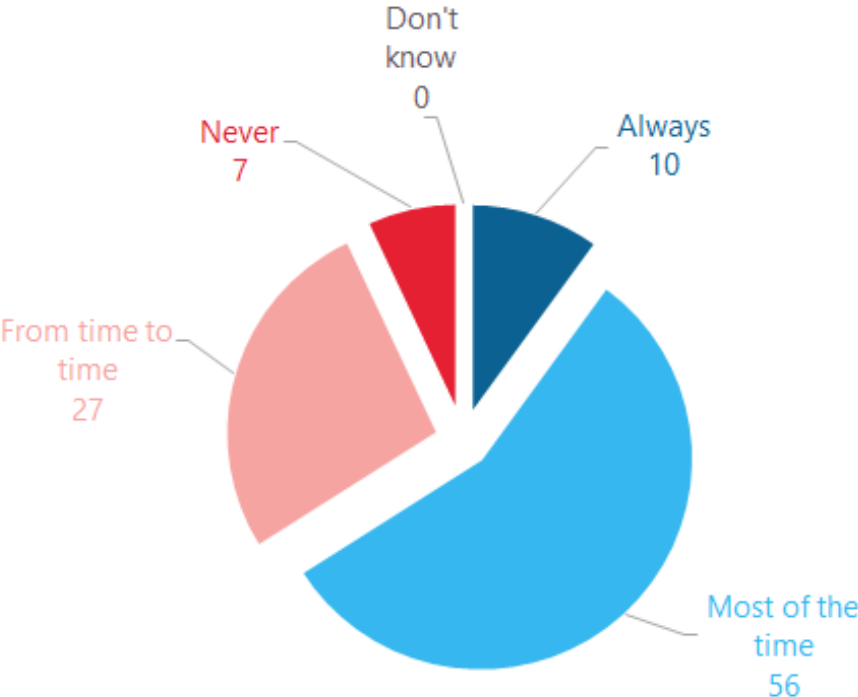
In addition, adaptations in meal preference techniques can play a role



Hoek, A. C., Luning, P. A., Weijzen, P., Engels, W., Kok, F. J., & De Graaf, C. (2011). Replacement of meat by meat substitutes. A survey on person- and product-related factors in consumer acceptance. *Appetite*, 56(3), 662-673.

ARE DIETS ALREADY HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE?

QB6 Would you say that personally, you eat a healthy and sustainable diet...? (% - EU)



OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Promoting healthy and sustainable choices needs to ensure that opportunity, ability and motivation all are in place

- Innovation and new product development to launch healthier and more sustainable food products
- Labelling that is simple, easy to understand, easy to use
- Education that raises food literacy
- Encouraging more mindfulness in food choices
- Make sustainability salient at the time of purchase
- Encourage the formation of long-time sustainable habits by making taste a change agent

None of these will bring about great change by itself – but together it will accelerate the green transition

Thank you for your attention!

Questions and comments?





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