



**Special
Eurobarometer 505**

Making our food fit for the future

**– Citizens’
expectations**

METHODOLOGY

- Survey conducted face to face in respondents' home in most Member States. Due to covid-19, different methodologies were used in some countries:
 - *BE, ES - a combination of face-to-face and online probabilistic panel*
 - *NL, DK - a combination of face-to-face and push-to-web*
 - *EE, FI, IE, LU, SE - online probabilistic*
- Fieldwork: *3 August to 15 September 2020*
- Population: *EU citizens aged 15+*
- Coverage: *27 EU Member States*
- Number of interviews: *27,237*

I. SUSTAINABLE FOOD

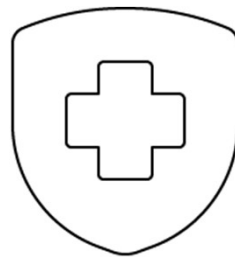
What drives consumers' food purchases?

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



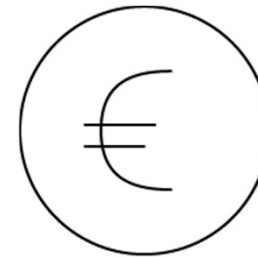
Taste

45%



Food safety

42%

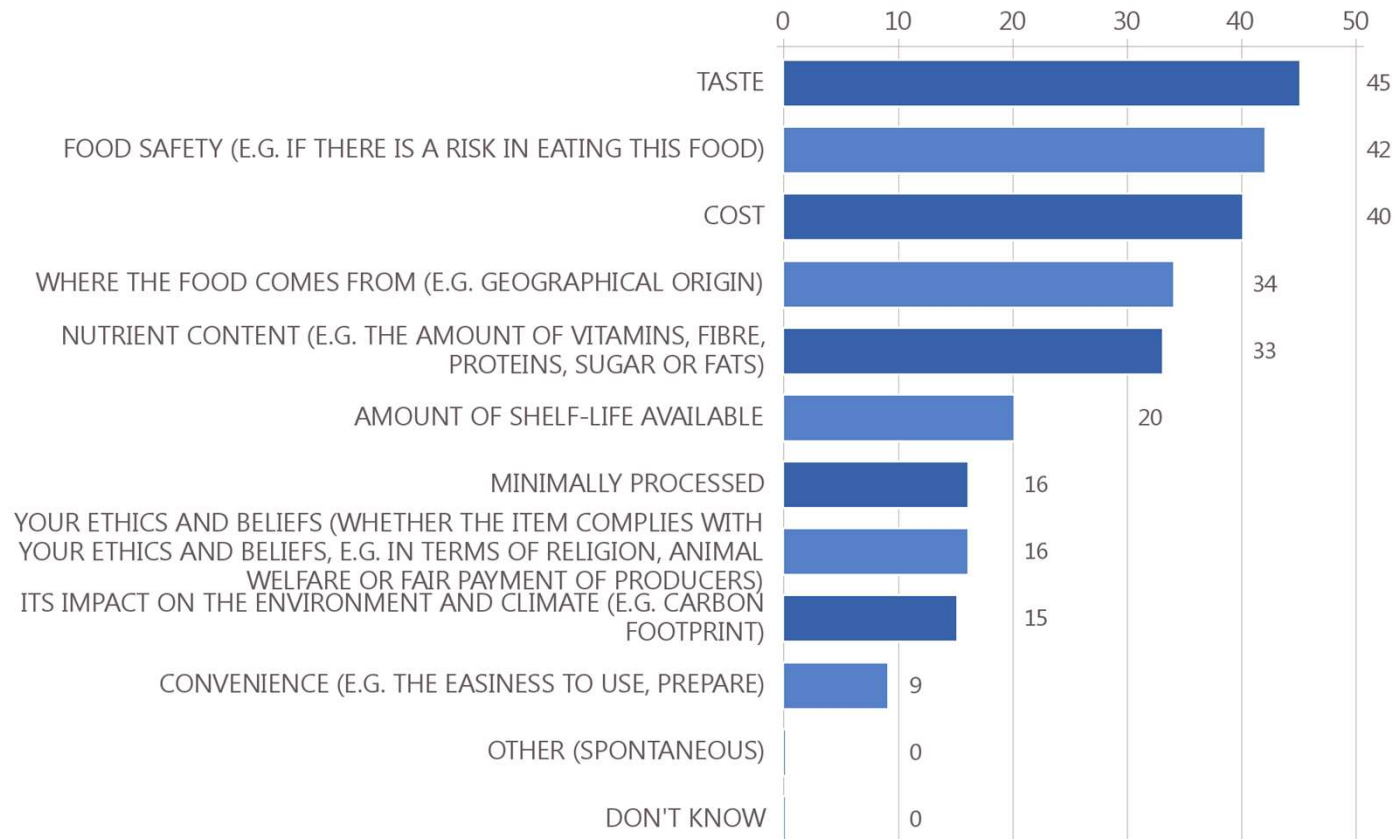


Cost

40%

‘Where the food comes from’ and the ‘nutrient content’ are also aspects which are important for Europeans (mentioned by around a third of them)

QB1T When you buy food, which of the following are the most important to you? Firstly? And then? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)
(% - EU)



Base: all respondents (n.= 27,237)

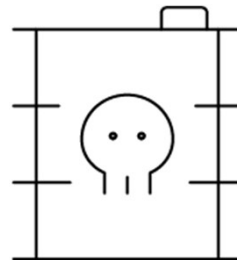
What are the main characteristics of “sustainable” food?

According to the consumers, the top 3 characteristics of “sustainable” food are:



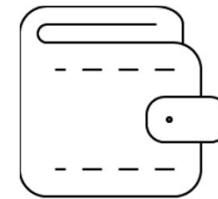
Nutritious and
healthy

41%



Little or no use of
pesticides

32%

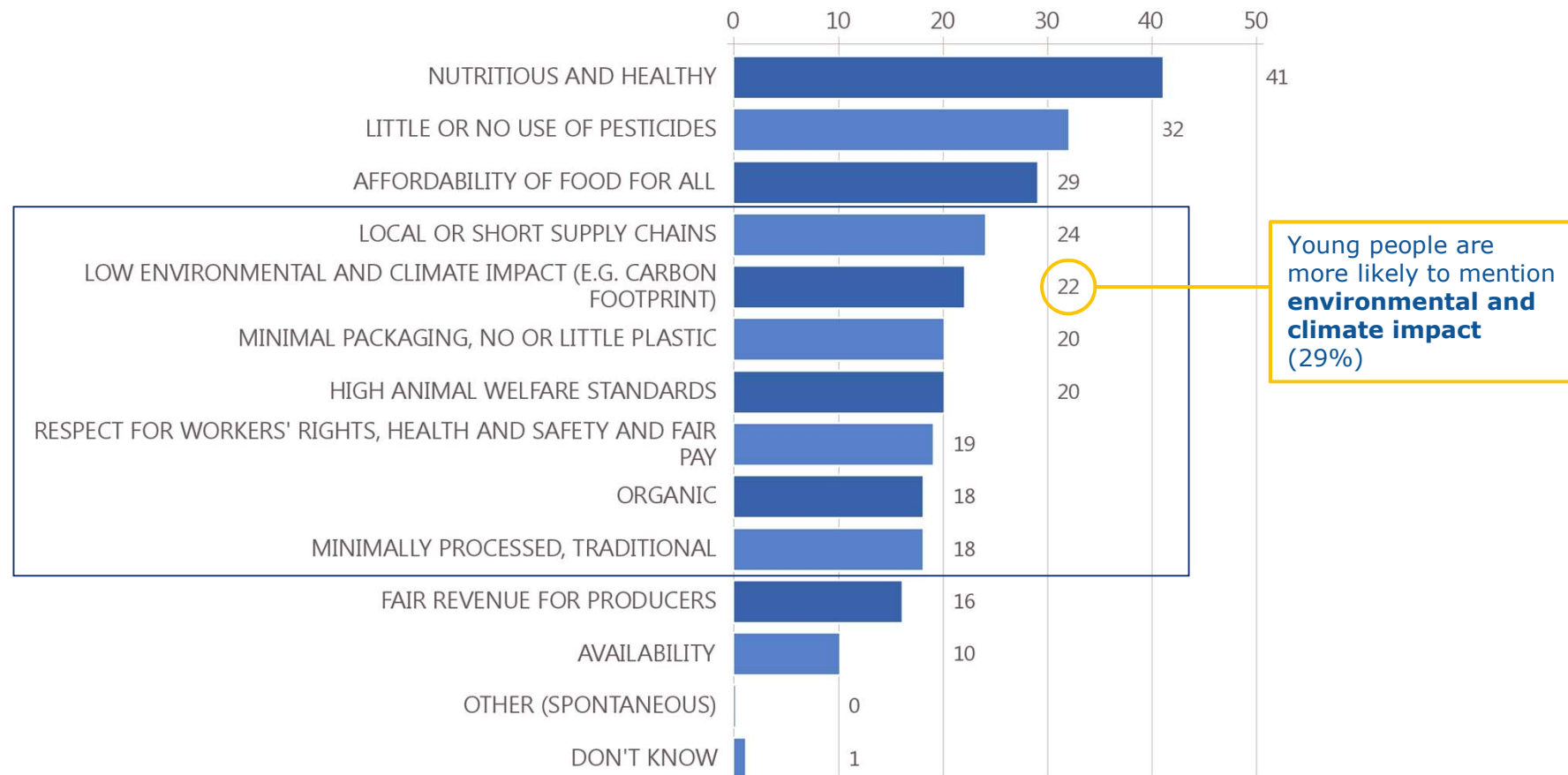


Affordability of
food for all

29%

In addition to the top three, two other items are mentioned by around 25% of Europeans – and five others by around 20%

QB2T Which of the following do you consider to be the most important characteristic of "sustainable" food? Firstly? And then? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)
(% - EU)

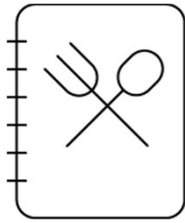


Base: all respondents (n.= 27,237)

II. SUSTAINABLE DIETS

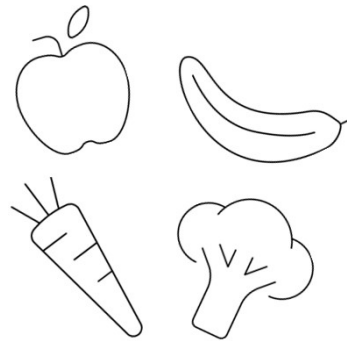
What makes a diet sustainable?

For most Europeans, 'eating a healthy and sustainable diet' involves the following:



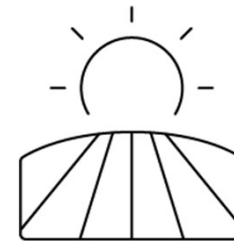
Eating a variety of different foods, having a balanced diet

58%



Eating more fruits and vegetables

58%



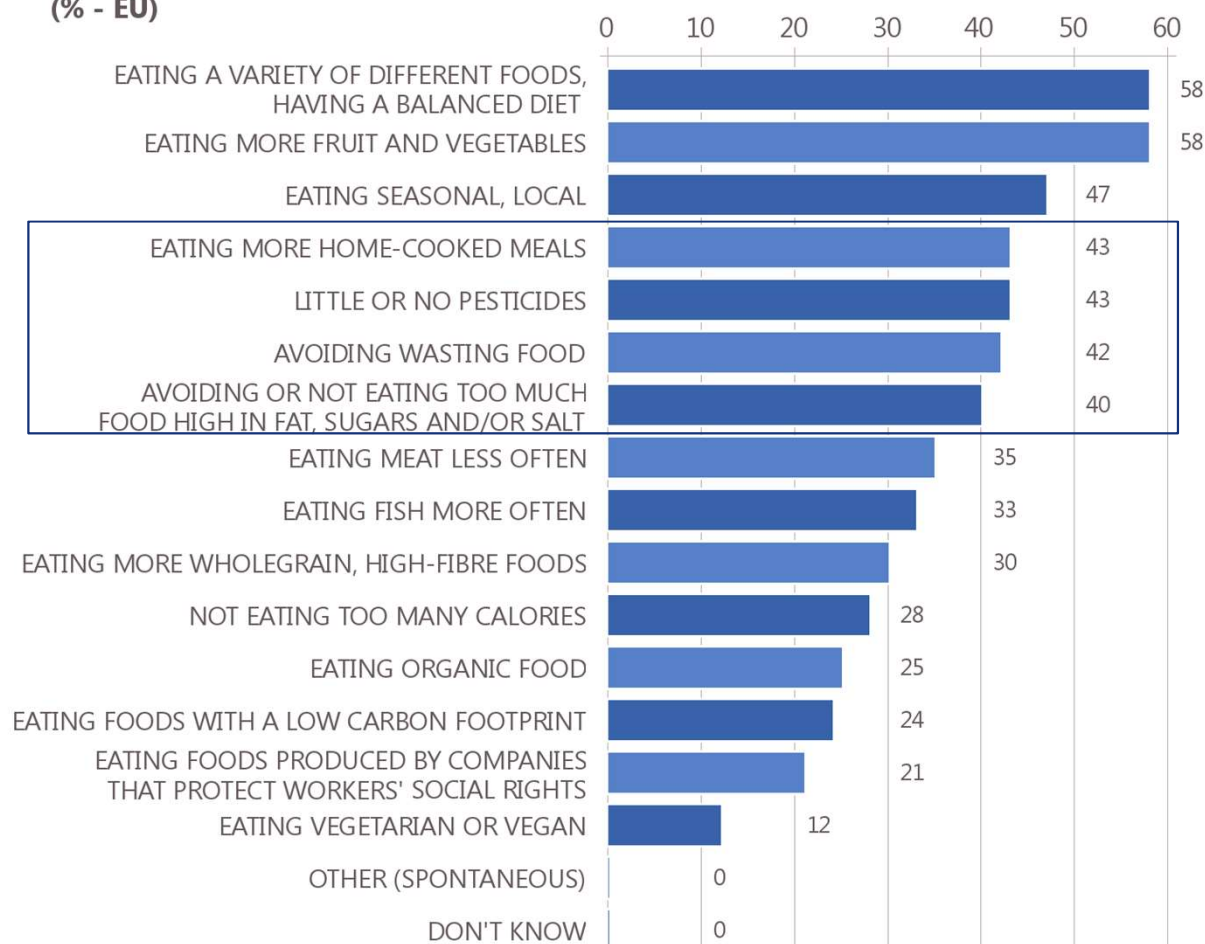
Eating seasonal, local

47%

QB4 We often hear people talking about the importance of eating a healthy and sustainable diet. What do you think "eating a healthy and sustainable diet" involves?

(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

(% - EU)



In addition to the three most mentioned answers, at least 40% of respondents mentioned:

- **Eating more home-cooked meals**
- **Little or no pesticides**
- **Avoiding wasting food**
- **avoiding/not eating too much food high in fat, sugars and/or salt**

Base: all respondents (n.= 27,237)

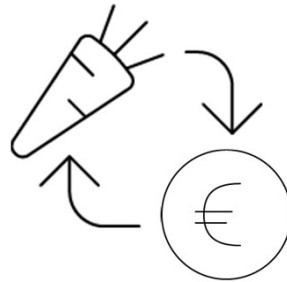
What aspects of a sustainable diet are important to you?

For Europeans, the most important aspect of a “sustainable” diet is that it is healthy; but two other aspects are mentioned by at least four in ten of them:



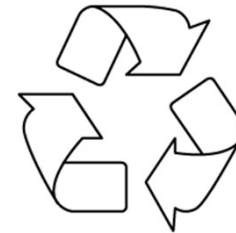
What you eat is healthy for you

74%



What you eat supports local economy

50%



What you eat has been produced in a way that minimises waste

40%

Two other important aspects are mentioned by nearly four in ten Europeans.

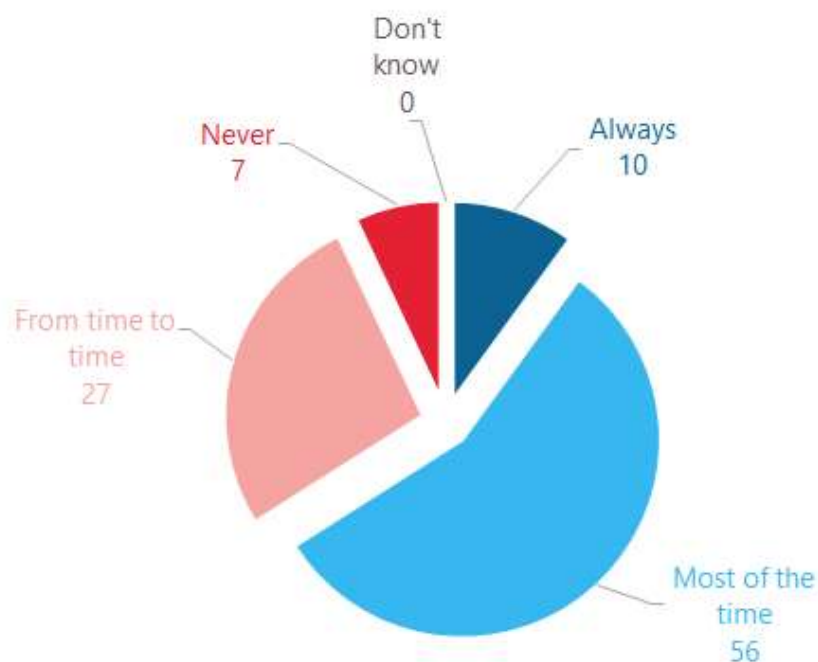
QB3T What aspects of a sustainable diet are important to you? Firstly? And then? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - EU)



Base: all respondents (n.= 27,237)

Adopting a sustainable diet: majority of respondents say they eat a healthy and sustainable diet most of the time

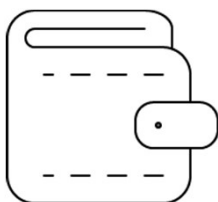
QB6 Would you say that personally, you eat a healthy and sustainable diet...?
(% - EU)



Base: all respondents (n.= 27,237)

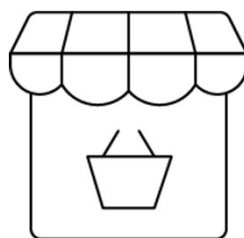
Adopting a sustainable diet: importance of affordability, availability and clear information

Affordability, availability and clear information are the three most mentioned aspects that would motivate the respondents to adopt a healthy diet



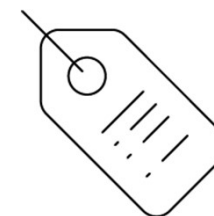
Healthy, sustainable choices are affordable

49%



Healthy, sustainable food choices are available where you shop for food

45%

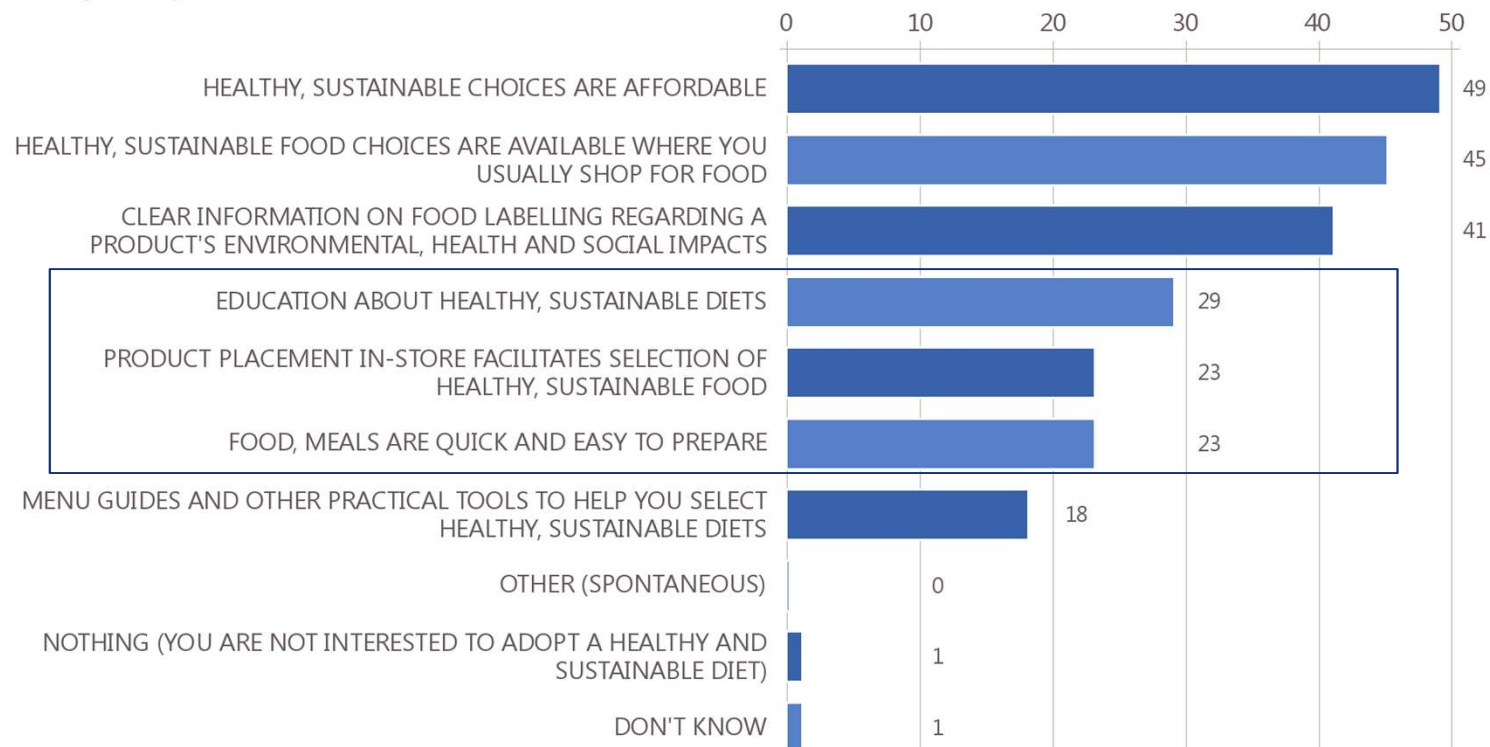


Clear information on food labelling regarding a product's environmental, health and social impacts

41%

Three other options are mentioned by at least one fifth of the Europeans: education about healthy diets, food being easy to prepare, and the product placement of healthy food in store

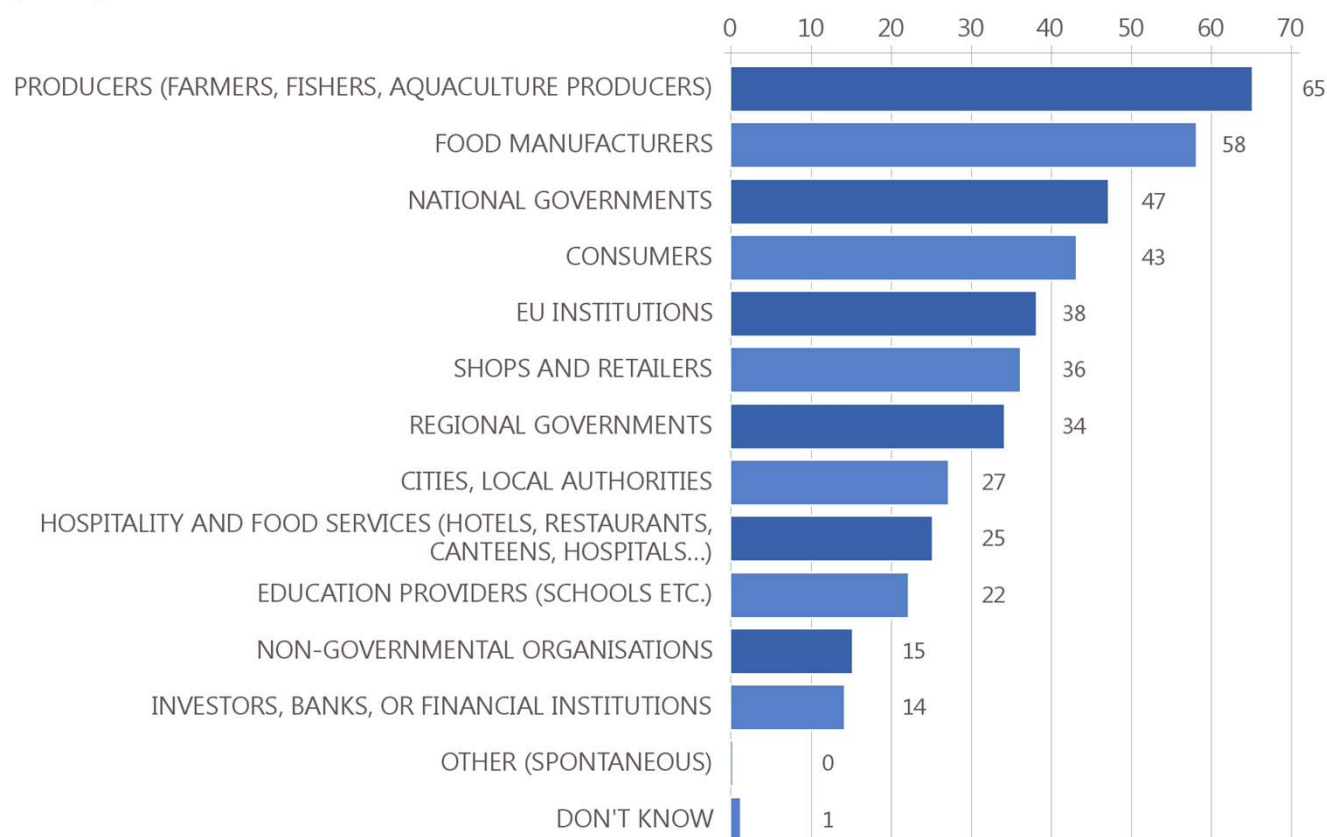
QB7 What would help you to adopt a healthy and sustainable diet? From the options below, please select the three most important for you. (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)
(% - EU)



Base: all respondents (n.= 27,237)

Who plays a crucial role?

QB5 According to you, which actors from the list below have a role to play in making our food systems sustainable? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - EU)



85%



Private actors

69%



Public authorities

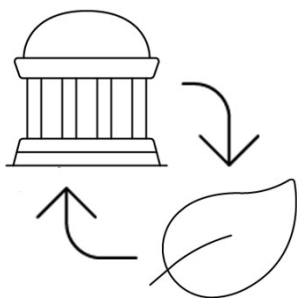
43%



Consumers

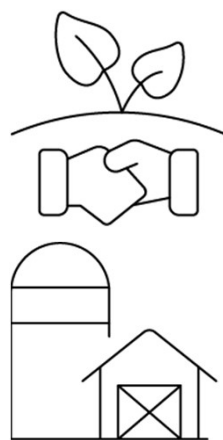
Base: all respondents (n.= 27,237)

Actions and policies to undertake and implement around sustainable food



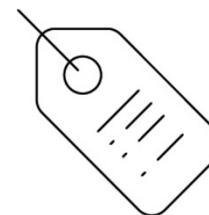
Food offered in public institutions should be sustainable

91%



Producers and food companies should themselves take action to raise their products' sustainability standards

89%



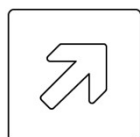
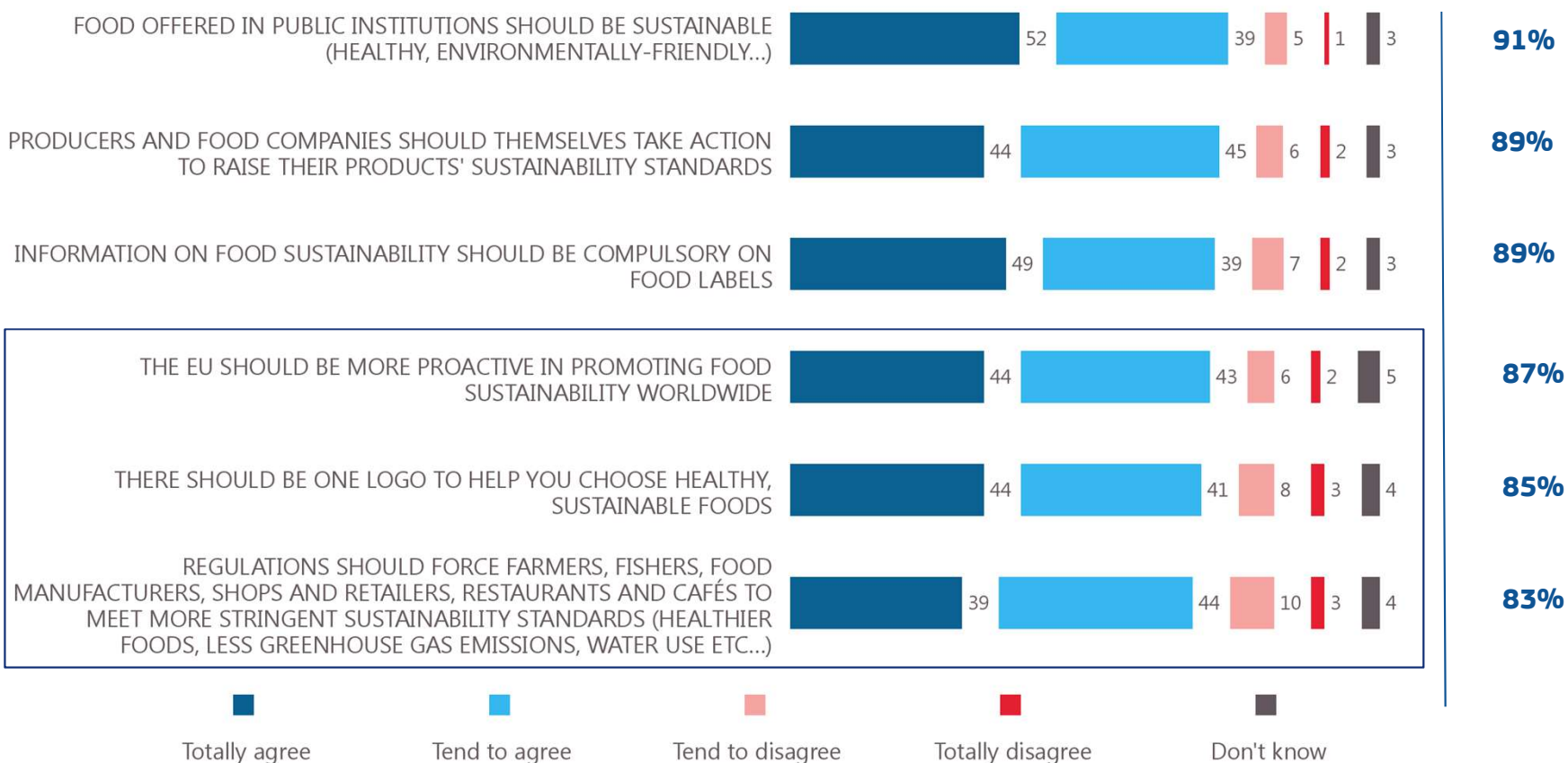
Information on food sustainability should be compulsory on food labels

89%

Actions and policies to undertake and implement around sustainable food: large agreements with the different statements

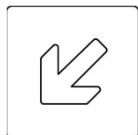
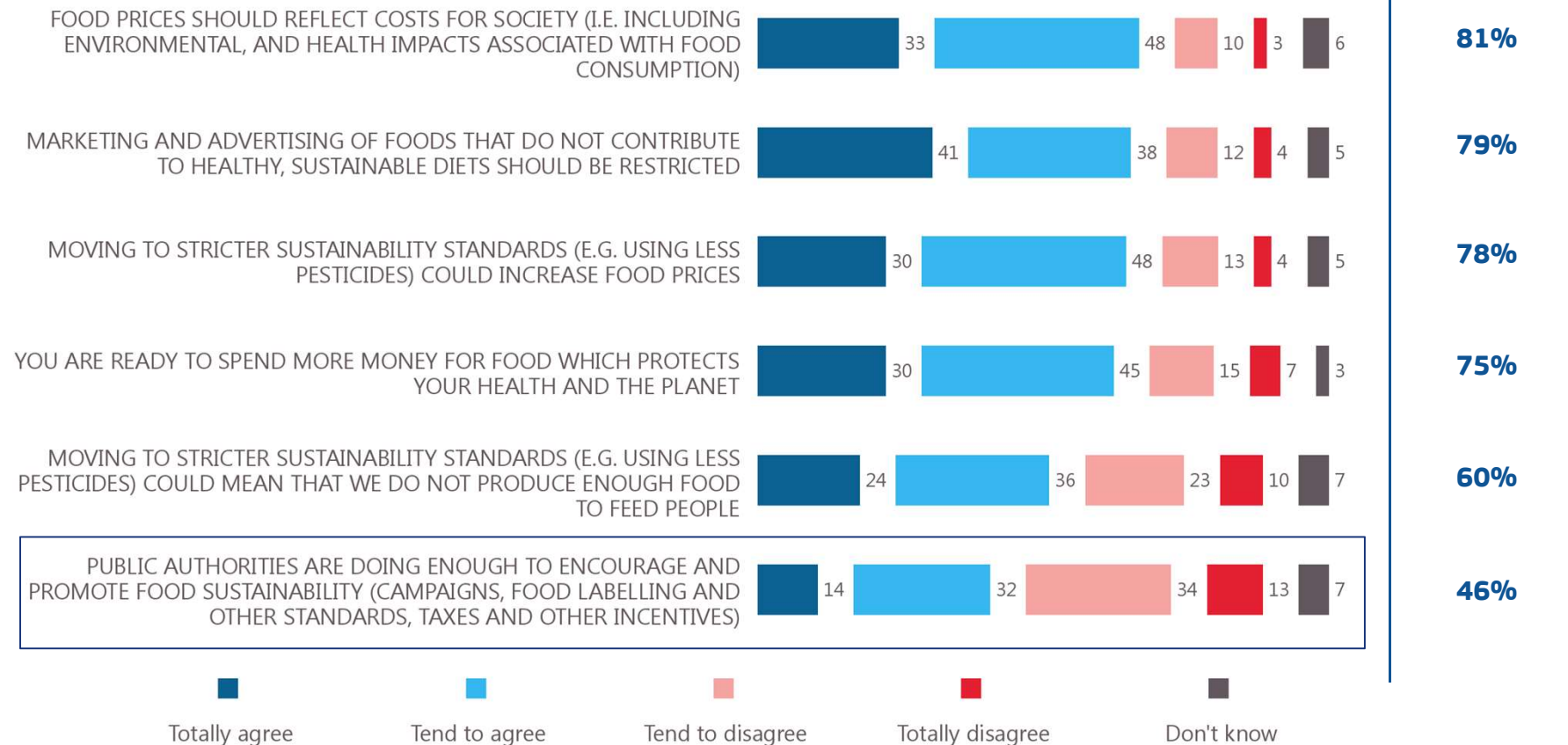
QB8 Please tell me to what extent do you agree or not with each of the following statement?
(% - EU)

Total 'agree'



Only a minority think that the public authorities are doing enough to promote food sustainability

QB8 Please tell me to what extent do you agree or not with each of the following statement?
(% - EU)



SOME TAKEAWAYS

- Europeans prioritise **taste, food safety** and **cost** over sustainability concerns when purchasing food.
- For Europeans, food is “sustainable” when it is **nutritious and healthy**, it has been produced with a little or **no use of pesticides**, and when it is **affordable** for all.
- Europeans consider that the most important aspect of a sustainable diet is that **what they eat is healthy for them**. Likewise, a “healthy and sustainable diet” involves eating a variety of different foods, having a balanced diet, and eating more fruits and vegetables.
- **Producers** (farmers, fisheries etc.) **and food manufacturers are seen as key actors in making our food systems sustainable**, above public authorities. Less than one in two recognise their own role as consumers.
- More specifically, Europeans think that **food offered in public institutions** should be sustainable, that producers and **food companies should themselves raise their products’ sustainability standards** and that **information on food sustainability** should be **compulsory on food labels**.
- A request for clearer information about food and its importance for health is also evident in citizens’ responses to concerns about food fraud: they mostly fear being **misled about the true qualities of food** and **the risks that it represents for their health**.

Thank you

Special Eurobarometer 505 - *Making our food fit for the future* – *Citizens' expectations*

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/special/surveyky/2241>



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