



# Farming Attitudes in 2013

National Opinion Poll

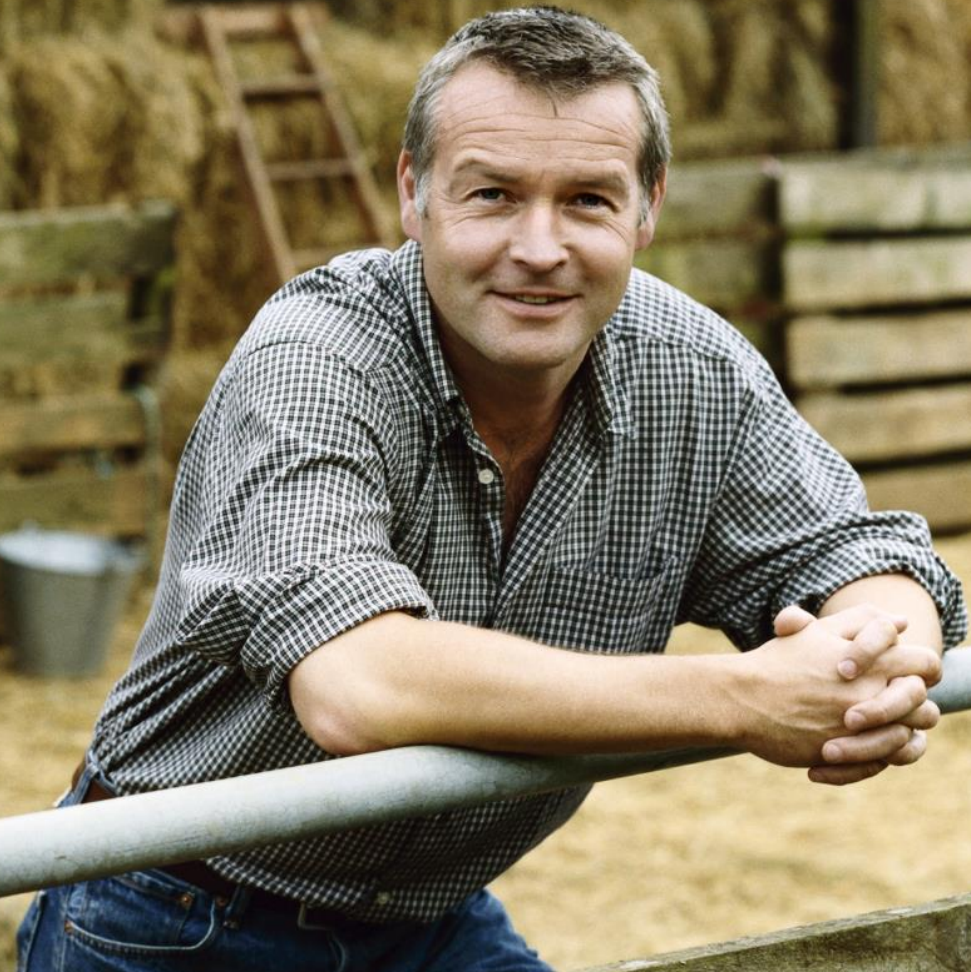
Prepared for

**Irish Examiner**

Prepared by Larry Ryan

**August 2013**

J.4714



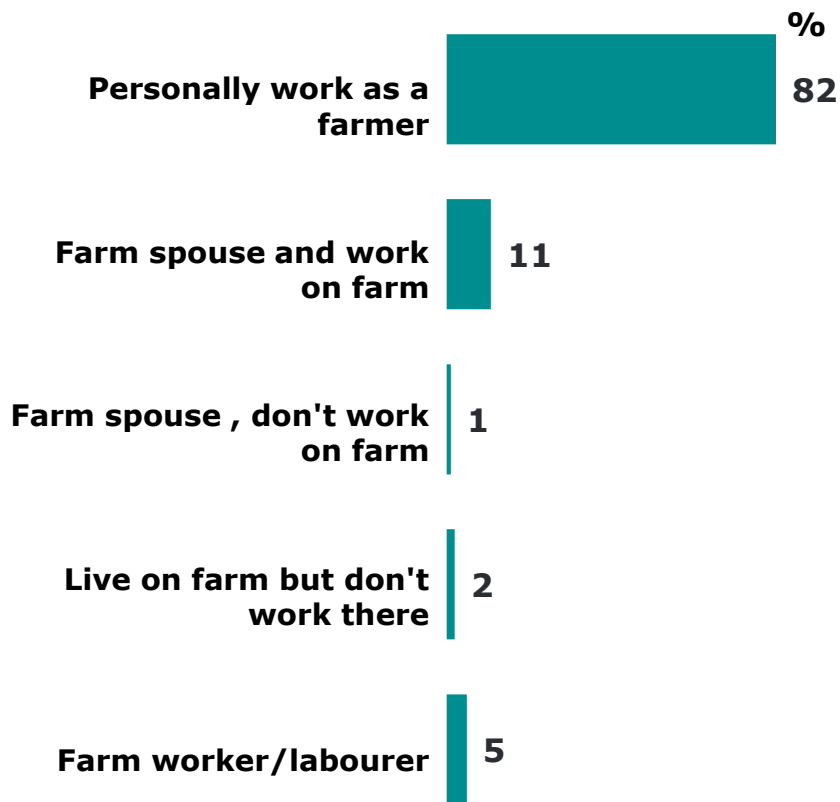
# Research Background & Objectives

- This report presents the findings from an opinion poll of farmers (and farm dwelling spouses.)
- 570 were interviewed at a series of Agricultural Shows between July and August. Interviewing was undertaken as follows by B&A interviewers.
  - ❖ Athenry 102 Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July
  - ❖ Skibbereen 101 Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July
  - ❖ Dungarvan 70 Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July
  - ❖ Tinahealy 64 Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August
  - ❖ Tullamore 162 Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> August
  - ❖ Cappamore 69 Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August
- The sample included 455 men and 114 women.

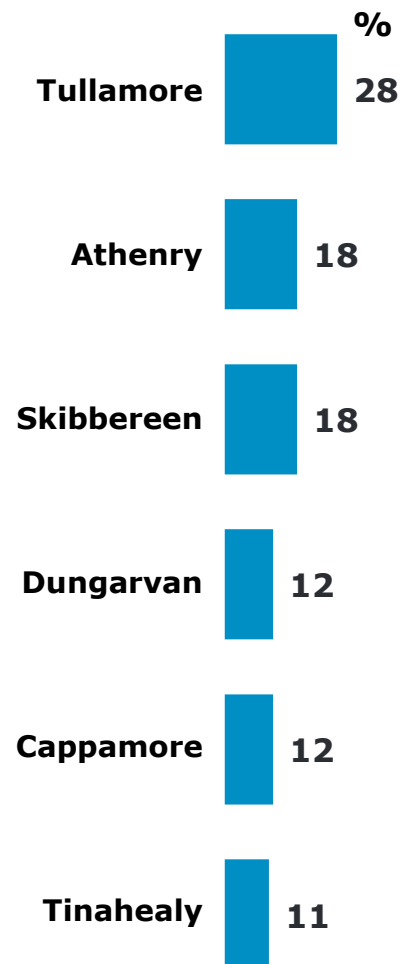
Sample Analysis					
Male	80%	F50+	81%	U15 Child at home	28%
Female	20%	F50-	19%	No U15 Child at home	72%
U35	13%	Single	12%	Dublin	-
35-44	15%	Married	73%	Rest Leinster	34%
45-49	12%	Cohabiting	2%	Munster	39%
50-54	18%	Widowed	3%	Conn/Ulster	22%
55-64	22%	Separated/Divorced	1%		
65+	19%				

# Overview of Sample

## Occupation



## Location of Interview



## Acreage



**Average Size 108 acres**

**Average Number of Livestock 86**

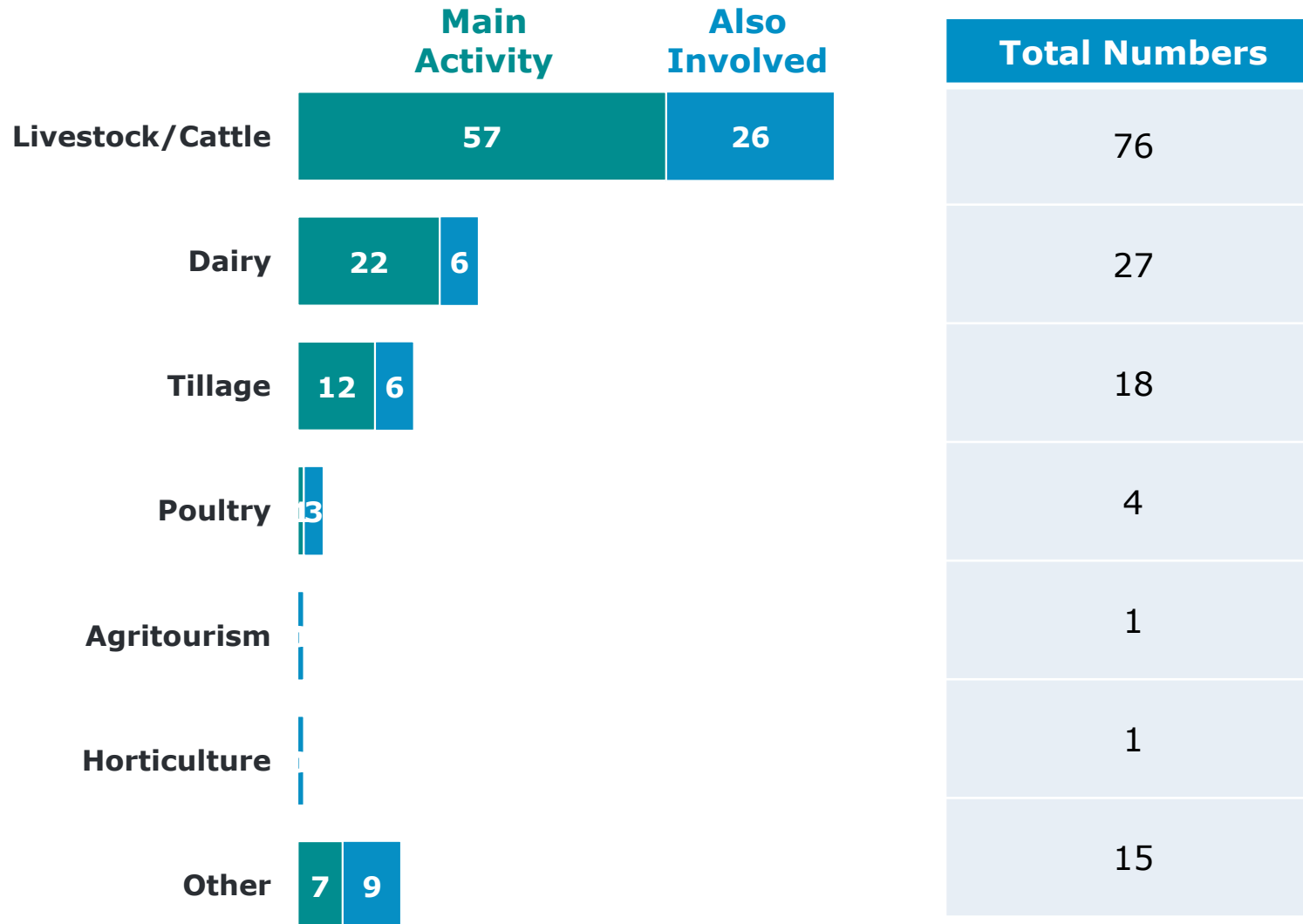
Respondents were required to work or live on a farm. All were interviewed at Agricultural Shows in July and August 2013.

# Findings



# Type of Farm

Base: All respondents - 570

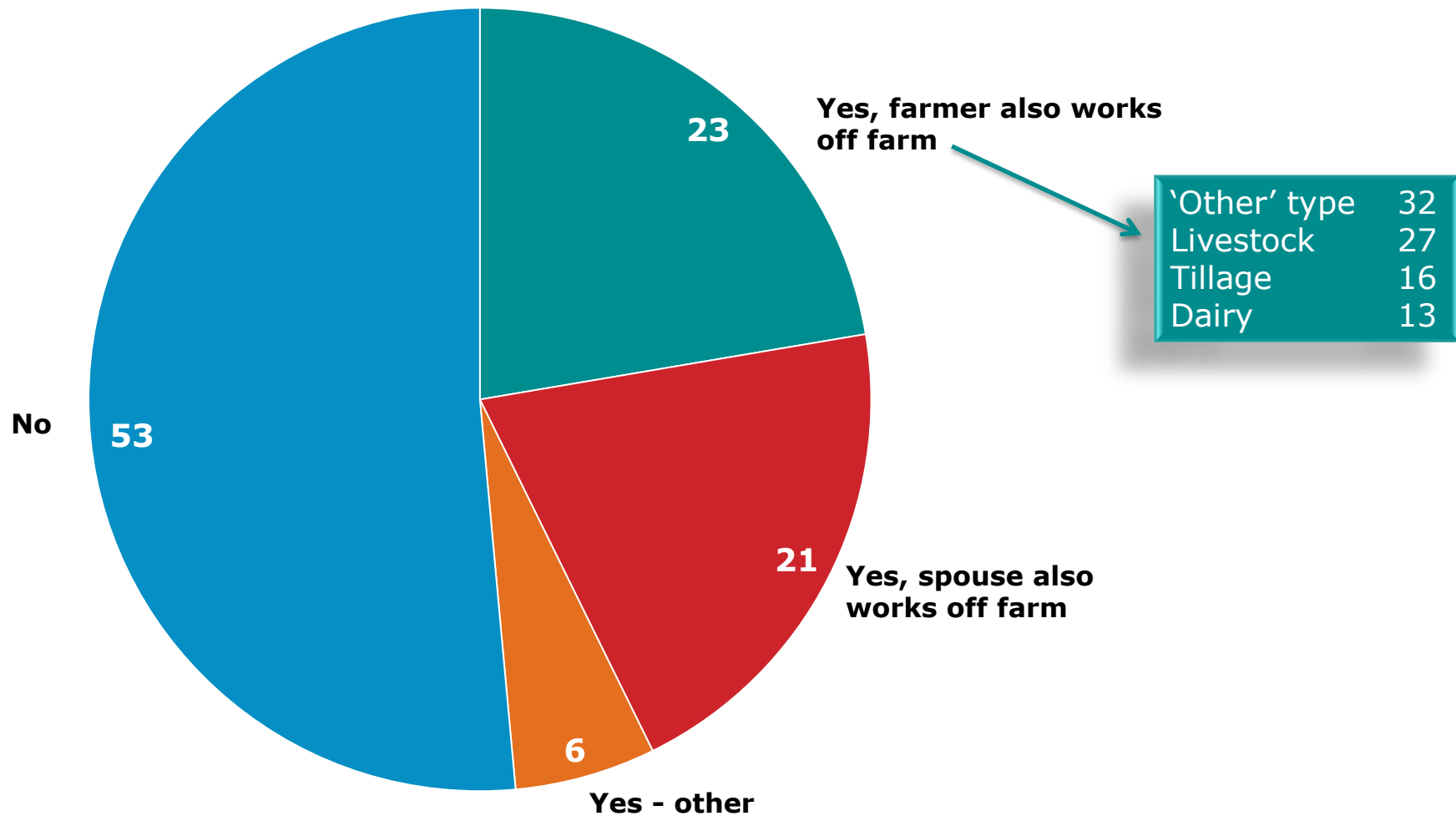


More than 3 in 4 have livestock, and for almost 3 in 5 it is their principal activity. Few admit to significant involvement in more peripheral types of farming activity.



# Off-Farm Income

Base: All respondents - 570



More than half have no form of off-farm income. Almost a quarter have another job – highest in cattle production and 'other' farming.



Q.3 Do you (or your spouse) also earn an income from non farming activity?

# Farm Type x Age

Base: All respondents - 570

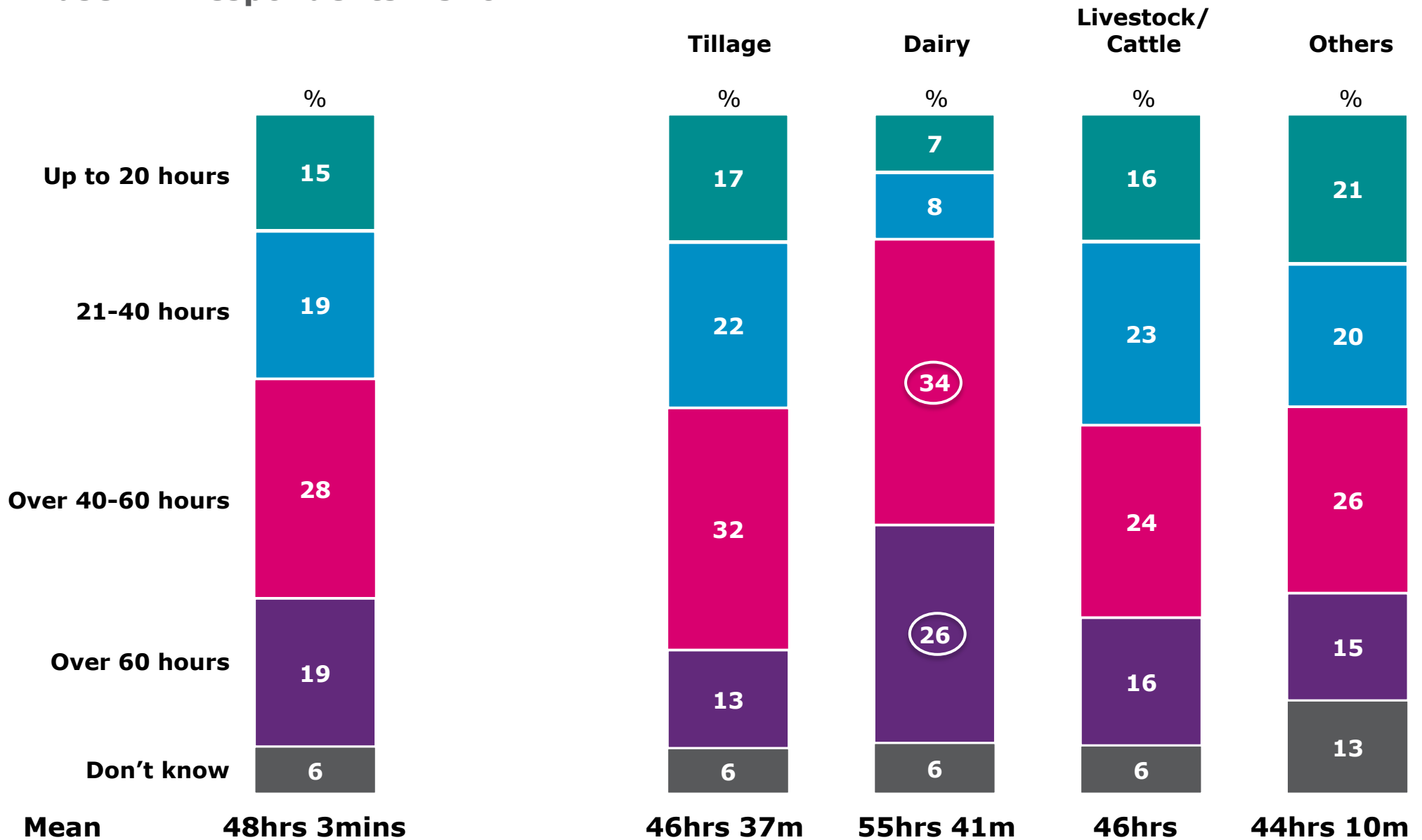
	Total	Age				
		U34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<i>Base:</i>	570	74	87	170	127	111
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Livestock/cattle	57	46	56	58	61	61
Dairying	22	27	32	24	14	16
Tillage	12	18	7	8	17	13
Poultry	1	-	-	1	-	1
Horticulture	*	-	-	1	-	-
Agritourism	*	-	-	-	1	1
Other	7	9	5	6	7	8

Interesting age-related differences with cattle production more preferred by older farmers and dairying younger.



# Hours Work on Farm Per Week

Base: All respondents - 570



Heavier time commitment in dairying generally.  
The dairy average equates with an 8 hour day, seven days a week.





# Average Hours Work Per Week on Farm

Base: All respondents - 570

## Average 48hrs 3mins

### Income

Off-farm	43hrs
No off-farm	52hrs

### Age

U35	43hrs 30mins
35-44	47hrs 40mins
45-54	47hrs 40mins
55-64	50hrs 45mins
65+	49hrs 20mins

### Gender

Male	51hrs 40mins
Female	34hrs 30mins

### Acreage

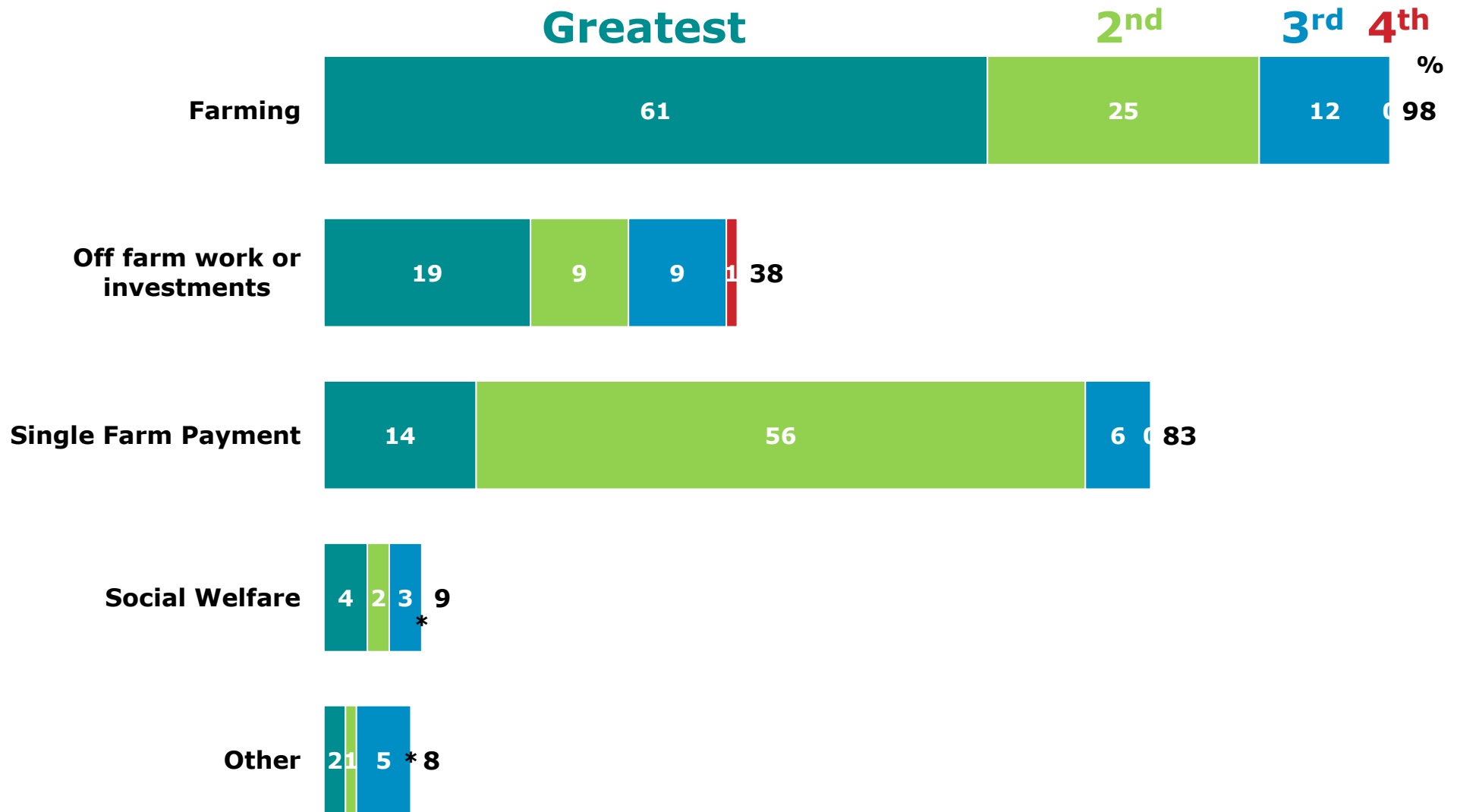
<40 acres	33hrs
40-80 Acres	46hrs
80-120 Acres	49hrs
Over 120 Acres	55hrs

The bigger the farm the longer the hours worked. Even those with an off-farm income work an average of 43 hours a week on their farms.



# Sources of Income

Base: All respondents - 570



Almost 4 in 10 have income from off farm work or investments: the Single Farm Payment is main or second most important facet for 7 in 10.



# Greatest Source of Income

Base: All respondents - 570

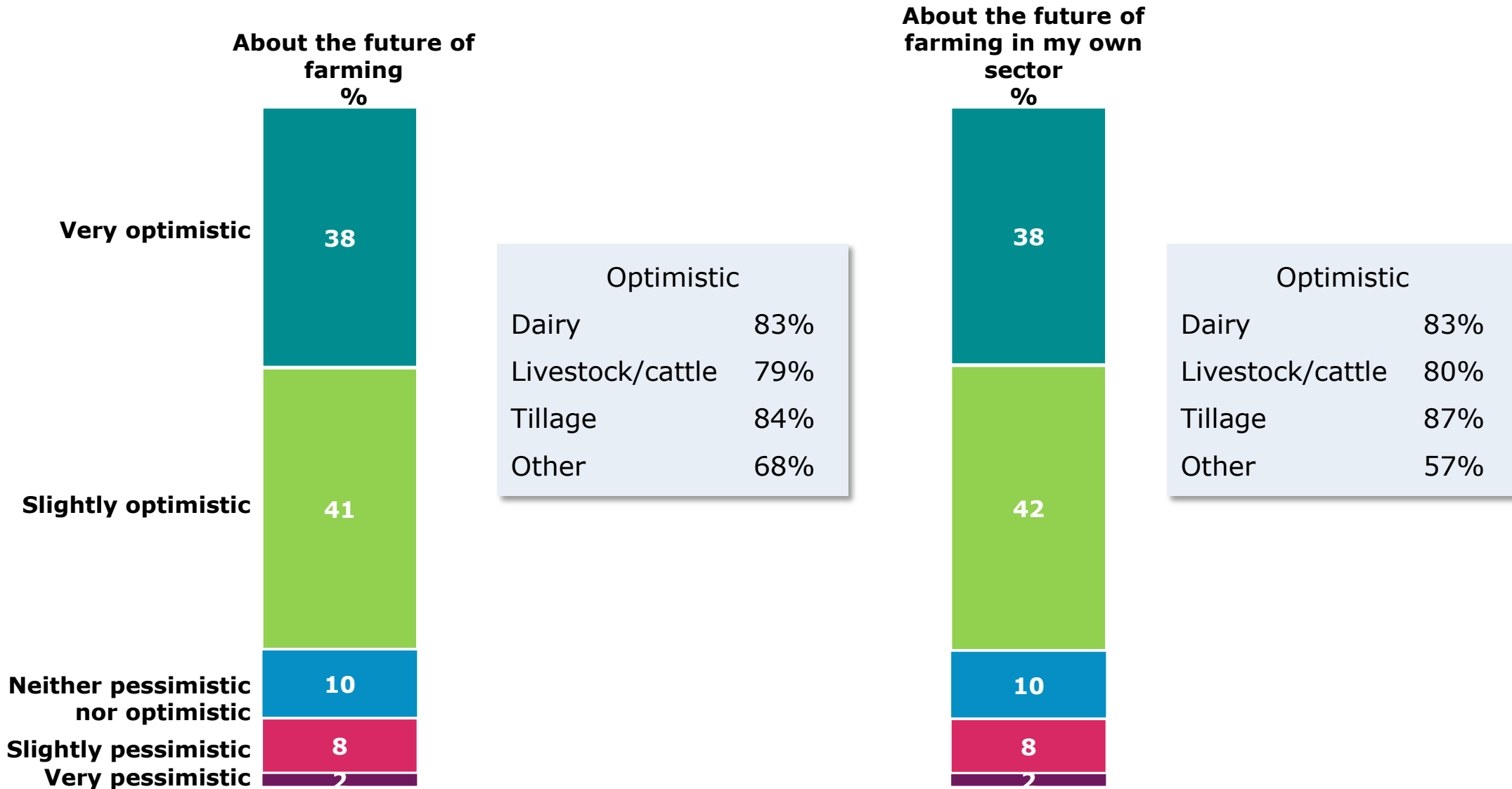
	Total	Livestock	Dairy	Tillage	Other	Off Farm Income	No Off Farm Income
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Farming	61	55	81	70	34	45	73
Off-farm work/ investment	19	23	7	9	30	37	4
Single farm payment	14	14	10	17	19	9	18
Social welfare	4	5	2	4	9	4	5
Other	2	2	1	-	6	3	1

37% of those who earn an income off the farm say that it (the off-farm income) is their primary source of income. For 45% of them, farming is still their primary income source.



# Overall Optimism/Pessimism

Base: All respondents - 570



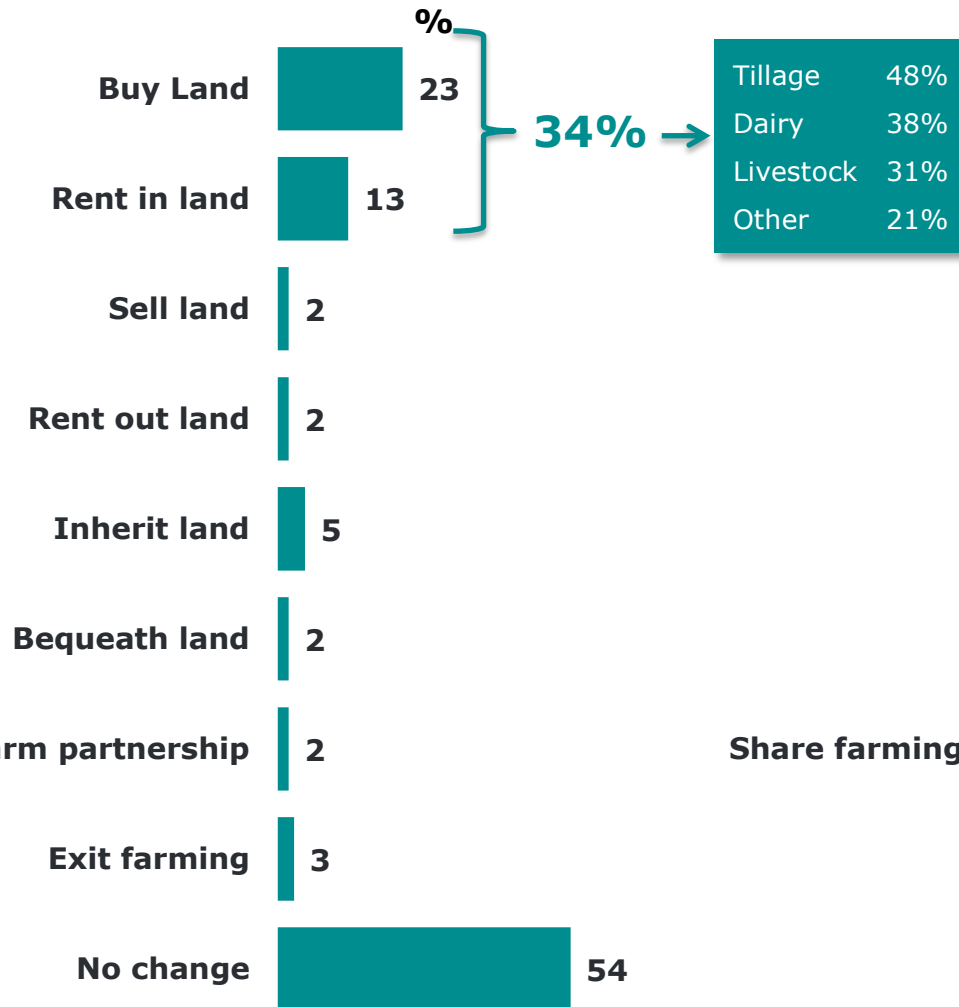
There is very broad optimism about the future at present.  
Least optimism in 'other' types of farming.



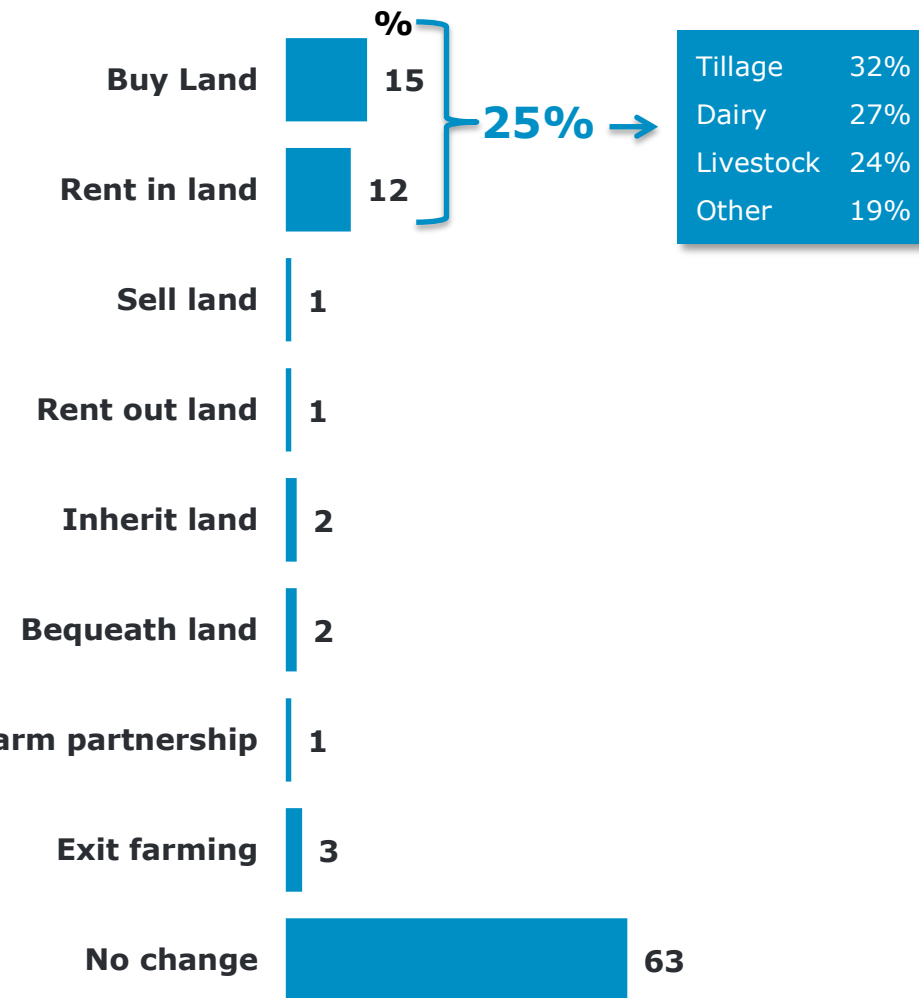
# Anticipated Changes

Base: All respondents - 570

## Would like to do



## Most likely to happen



Most don't foresee significant change in their holdings but a sizeable number would like to expand their farms and particularly those in tillage and dairy.

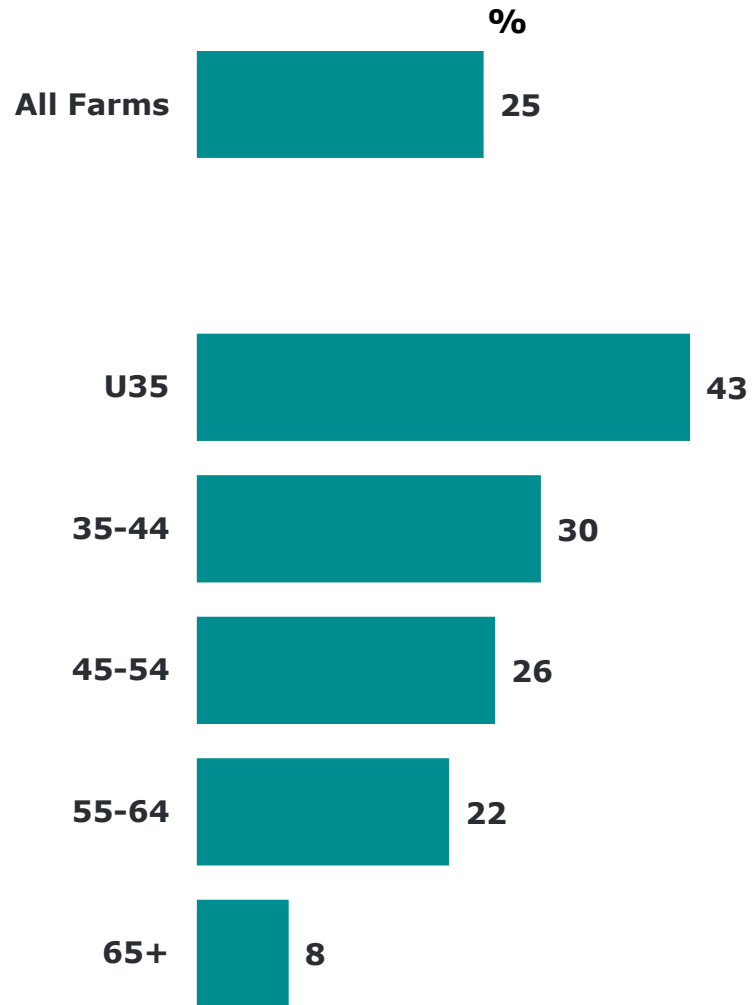


Q.6a  
Q.6b

Which of the following would you like to do in the future? Any others?  
Which of these are you most likely to do in the next five years? (Factual)

# Most Likely to Buy or Rent Land in the Next 5 Years

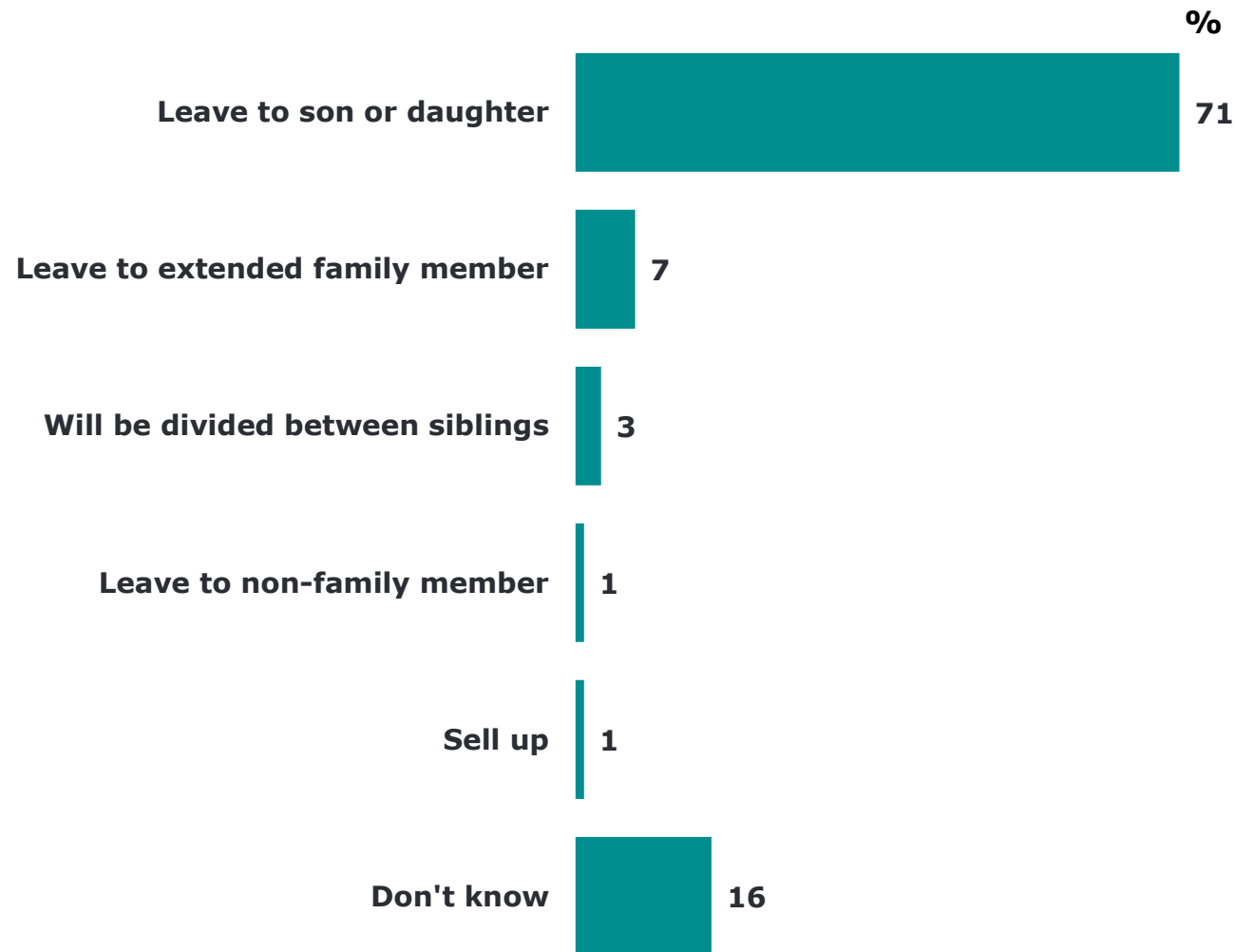
Base: All respondents - 570



Many young farmers are eager to expand.

# Future of our Family Farm

Base: All respondents - 570

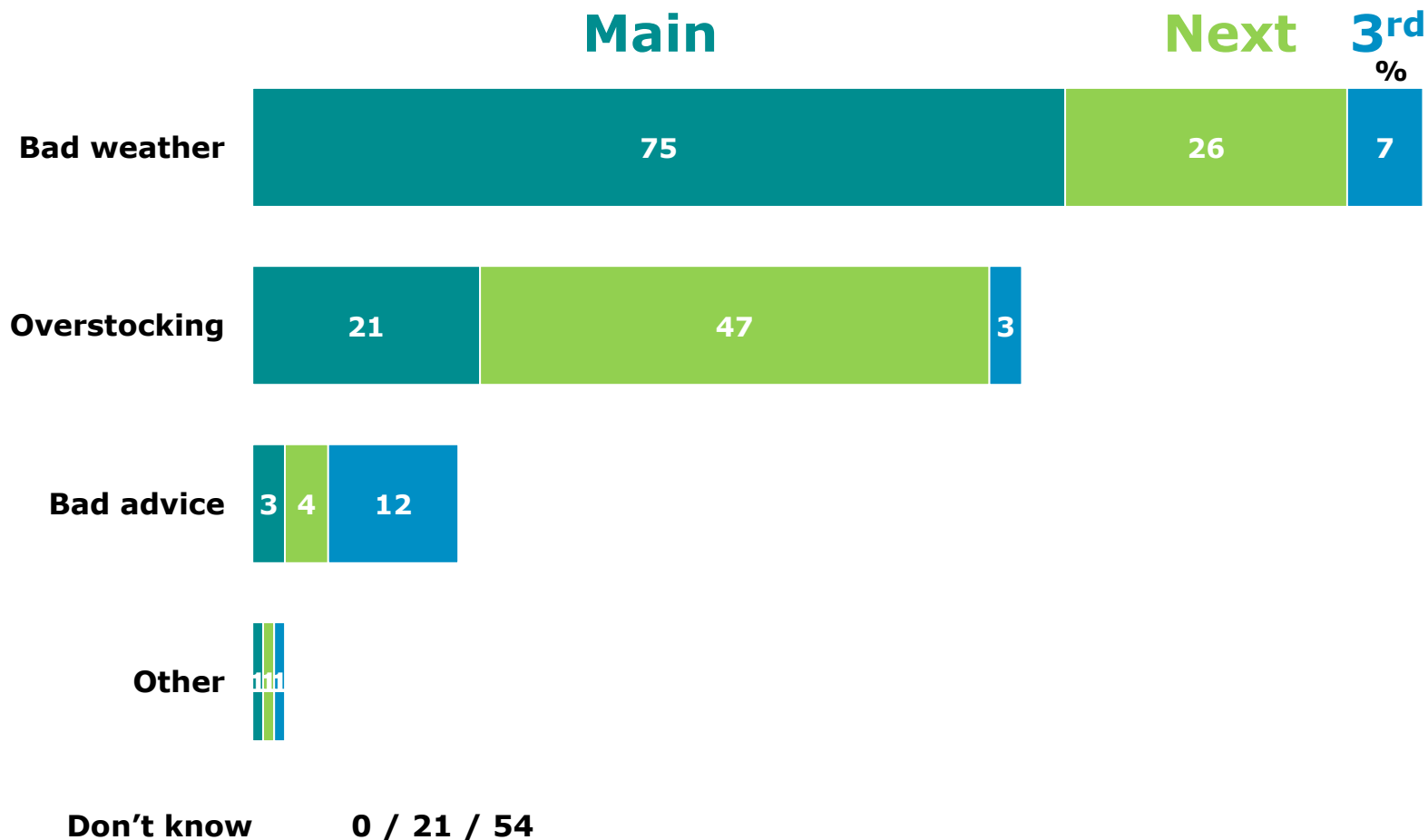


Most intend for farms to stay in direct family ownership.



# 2012/2013 Fodder Crisis Cause

Base: All respondents - 570



Most feel that bad weather was at the root of the fodder crisis – few blame others for this (although many admit that there may have been overstocking).



Q.8

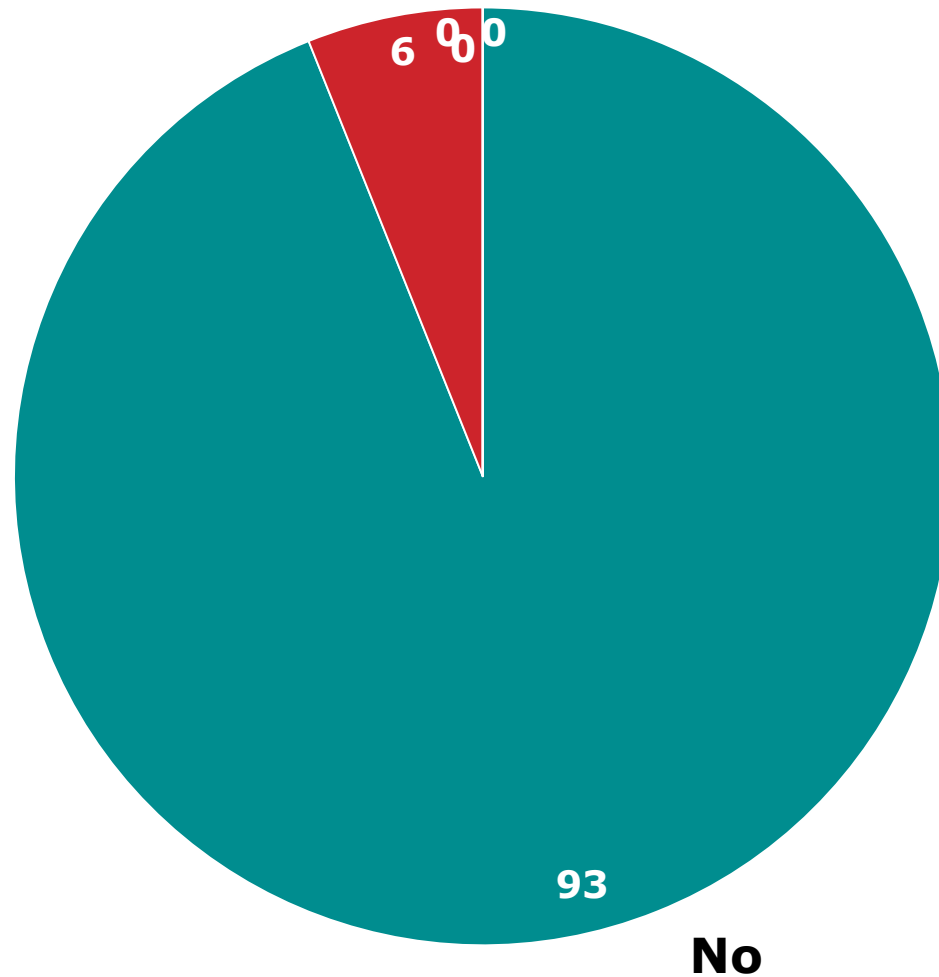
What, in your opinion, caused the 2012/2013 fodder crisis (RANK IN ORDER): What was the main cause? The second ( if any)



# Refusal of Credit

Base: All respondents - 570

Yes, financial institution



Refused	%
Tillage	6
Dairying	6
Livestock/cattle	6
Other type of farm	11
Skibbereen	19
Tinahealy	9
Athenry	3
Tullamore	3
Cappamore	3
Dungarvan	1

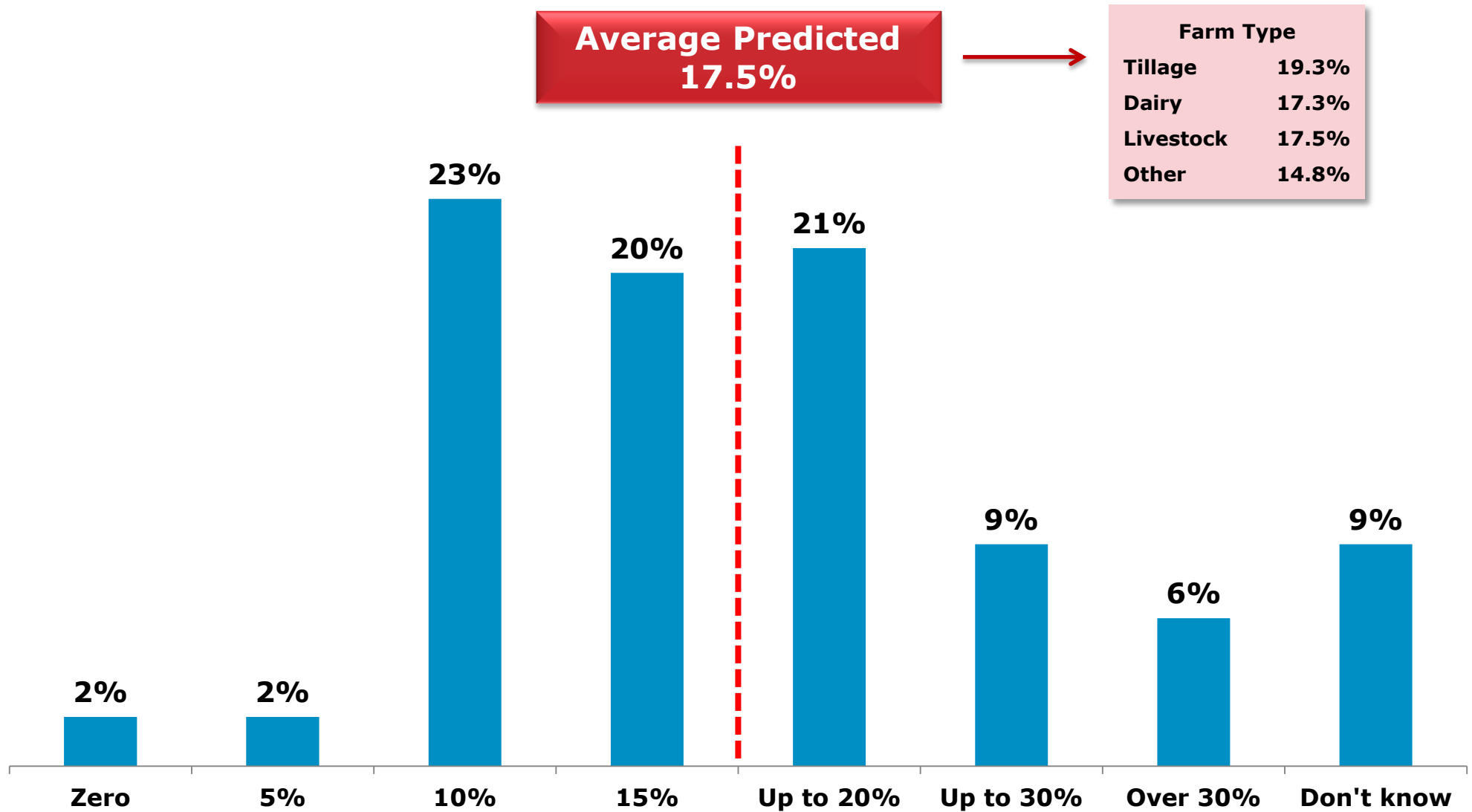
Credit refusals low: higher in 'other' types of farms.



Q.9

Have you been refused credit in the past year? And if yes, by whom?

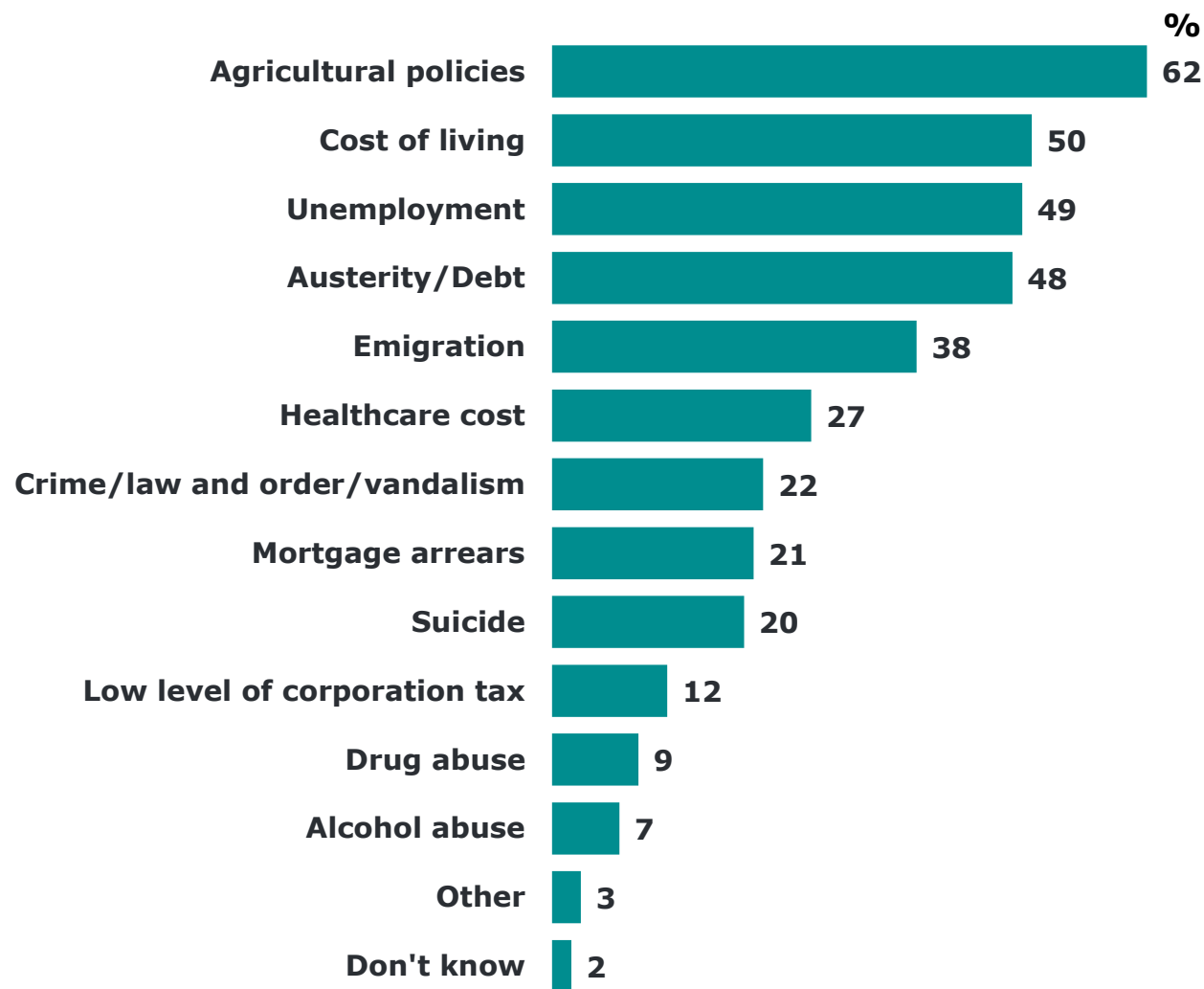
# Scale of Anticipated Growth in Food Output by 2020



Q. The food industry plans to increase its production by 33% by 2020. In your opinion, what percentage will actually be achieved?

# Issues That Would Influence Your Vote

Base: All respondents - 570



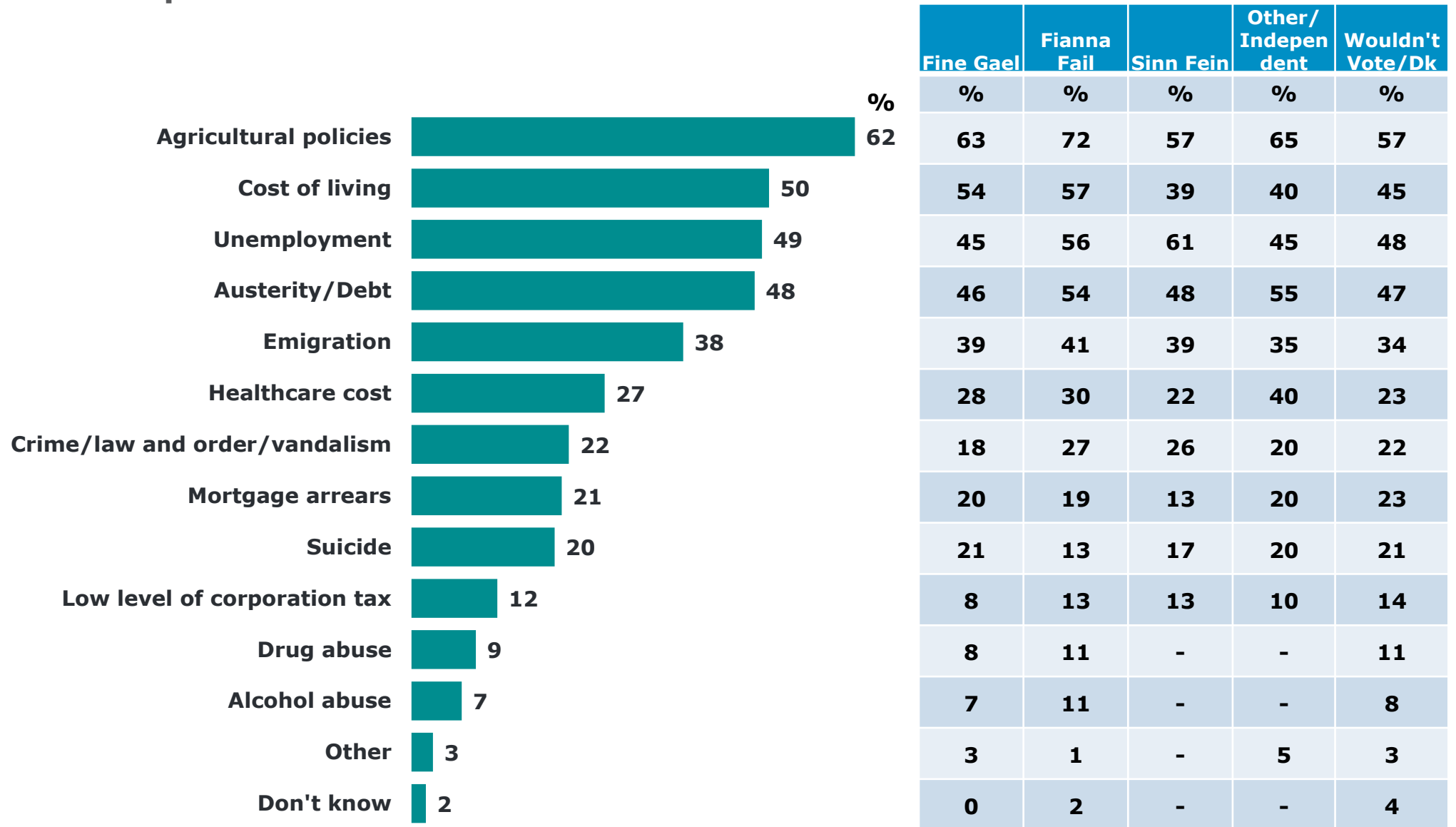
Tillage	Dairying	Livestock/ cattle	Others
%	%	%	%
72	61	64	38
42	55	51	45
58	39	52	38
61	56	46	21
30	40	39	30
28	28	28	19
22	16	25	11
25	19	22	15
23	21	19	21
13	9	13	11
4	11	9	11
3	9	8	9
-	2	2	13
-	1	2	9

Although agricultural policies are top priority, many are focussed on cost of living, austerity, unemployment and emigration as key issues too.



# Issues That Would Influence Your Vote x Party Support

Base: All respondents - 570

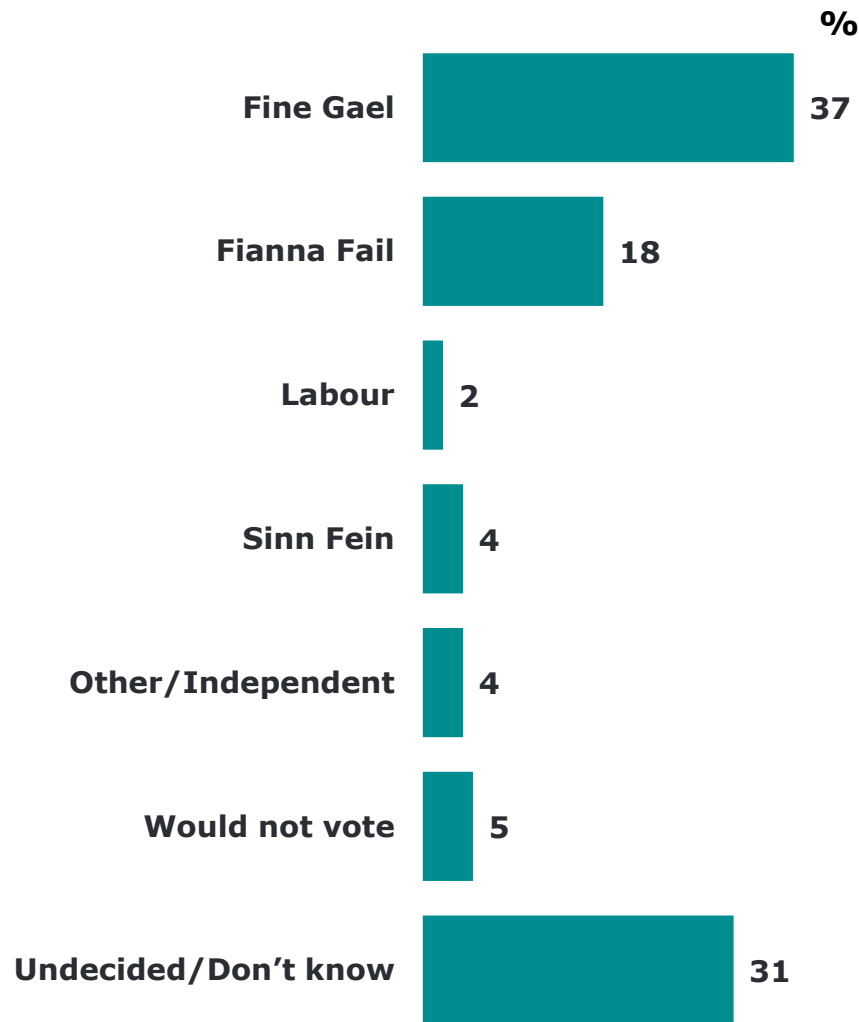


No substantial difference by party support.



# Current Party Preference

Base: All respondents - 570



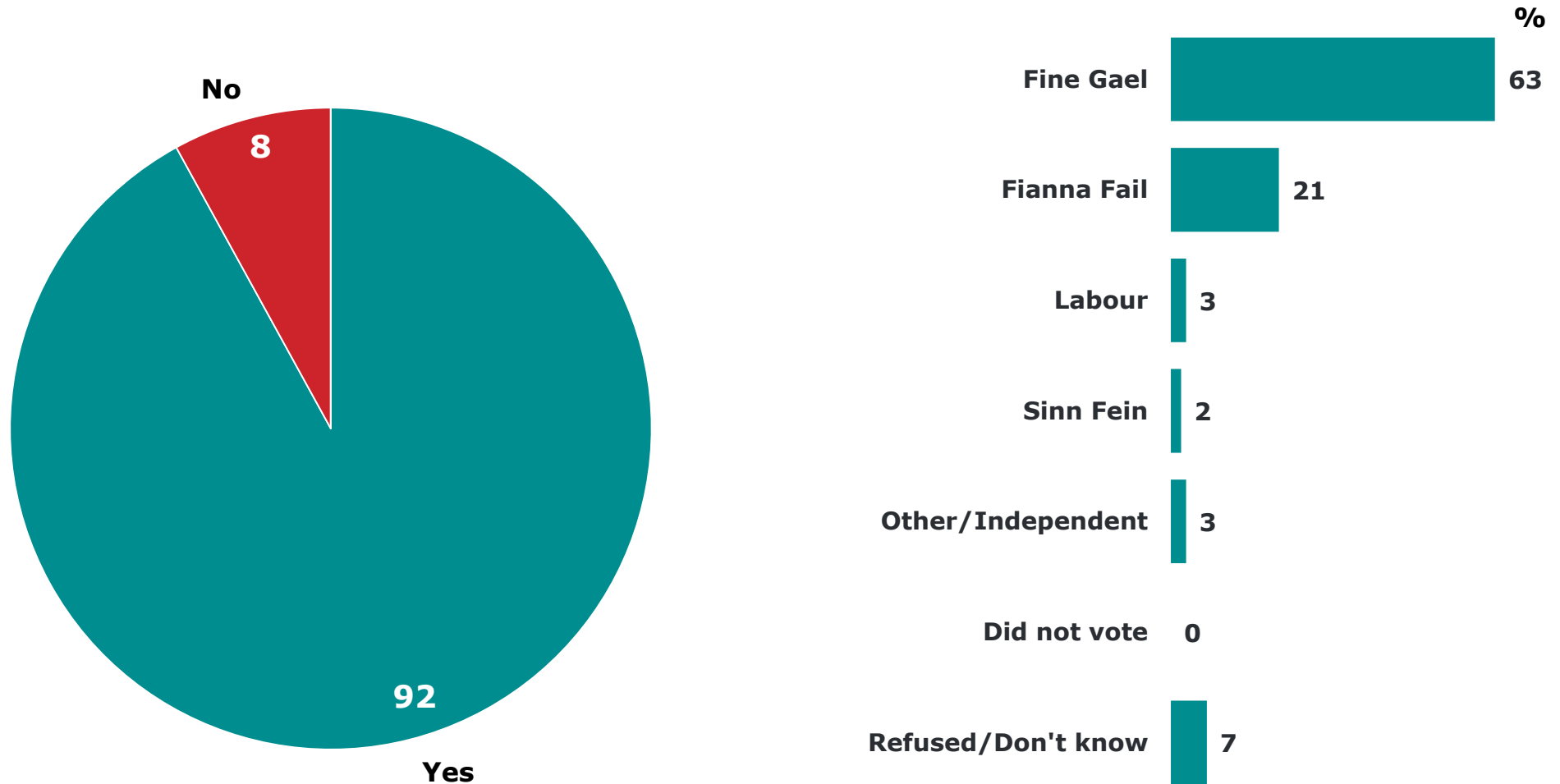
Tillage	Dairying	Livestock/ cattle	Others
%	%	%	%
32	58	32	19
19	10	22	13
3	-	2	4
7	1	5	-
1	2	4	4
9	3	4	9
28	25	31	51

With 3 in 10 undecided Fine Gael still have a commanding lead. Excluding those undecided, current FG support would stand at 54% to 26% for FF.



# Vote in Last General Election

Base: All respondents - 570



Support for Fine Gael much stronger in last election, with the vast majority claiming to have voted.



Q.13 If yes, to which party did you give your first preference vote?

# What is happening with the Fine Gael and Fianna Fail Vote?

- 63% voted for Fine Gael last time.
  - ❖ 61% of them will vote for them again (or 38% of all voters)
  - ❖ 5% will switch to Fianna Fail (or 3% of all voters)
  - ❖ 4% will switch to Independents & others (or 2% of all voters)
  - ❖ 2% will switch to Sinn Fein (or 1% of all voters)
  - ❖ 1% will switch to Labour (or less than ½% of voters)
  - ❖ 28% are undecided (or 18% of all voters)
- 21% voted Fianna Fail last time
  - ❖ 69% of them will vote for them again (or 15% of all voters)
  - ❖ 24% of them are undecided (or 5% of all voters)

The main parties are largely keeping their previous voters (or their previous supporters remain undecided for now.)

# Satisfaction with Current Agriculture Representatives

Base: All respondents - 570



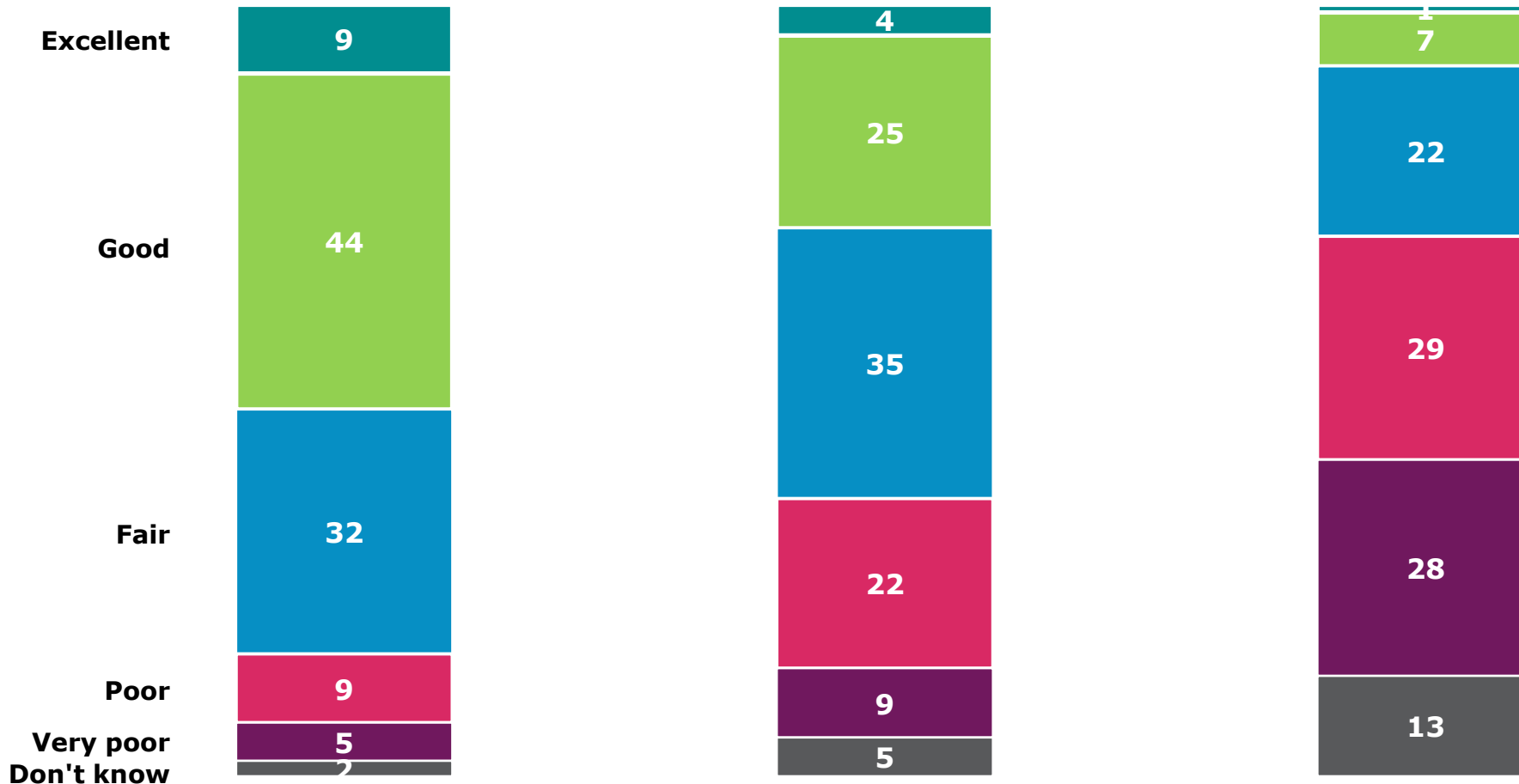
%



%



%



Satisfaction with the Minister is broadly very high: his excellent/good score runs at double O'Cuiv's.



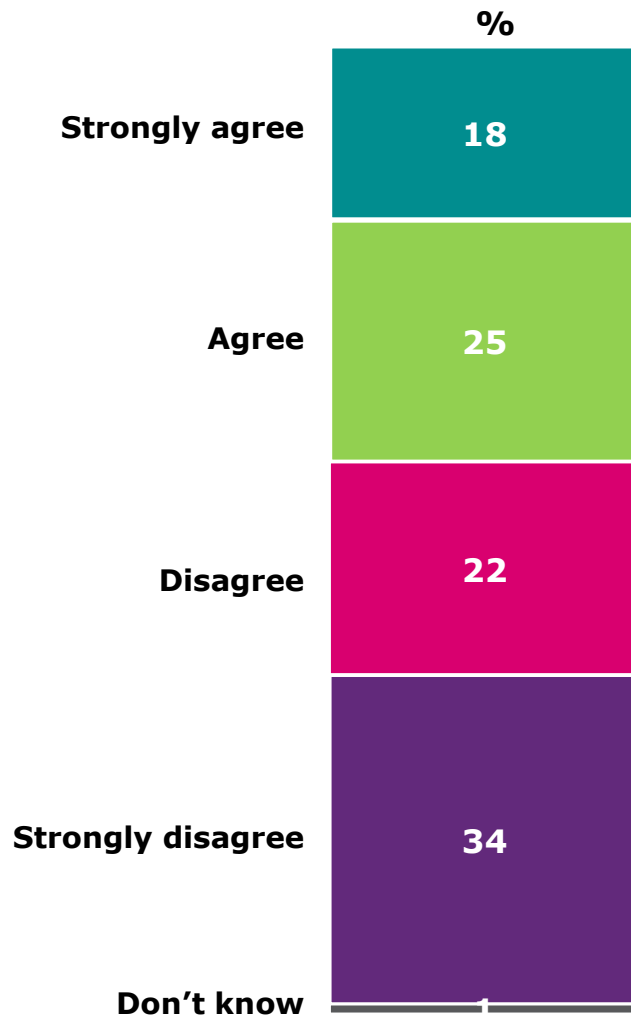
Q.14

Simon Coveney is the current Minister for Agriculture, Eamon O'Cuiv is Fianna Fail spokesperson on Agriculture and Martin Ferris is the Sinn Fein Spokesperson on Agriculture. How good a job are each of them doing?



# Relaxation of Drink Driving Restriction for Rural Dwellers

Base: All respondents - 570



	Agree	Disagree
	%	%
<b>All</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Men</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>U35</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>35-44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>45-54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>55-64</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>56</b>

A majority oppose such a relaxation. This is strongest younger and female.

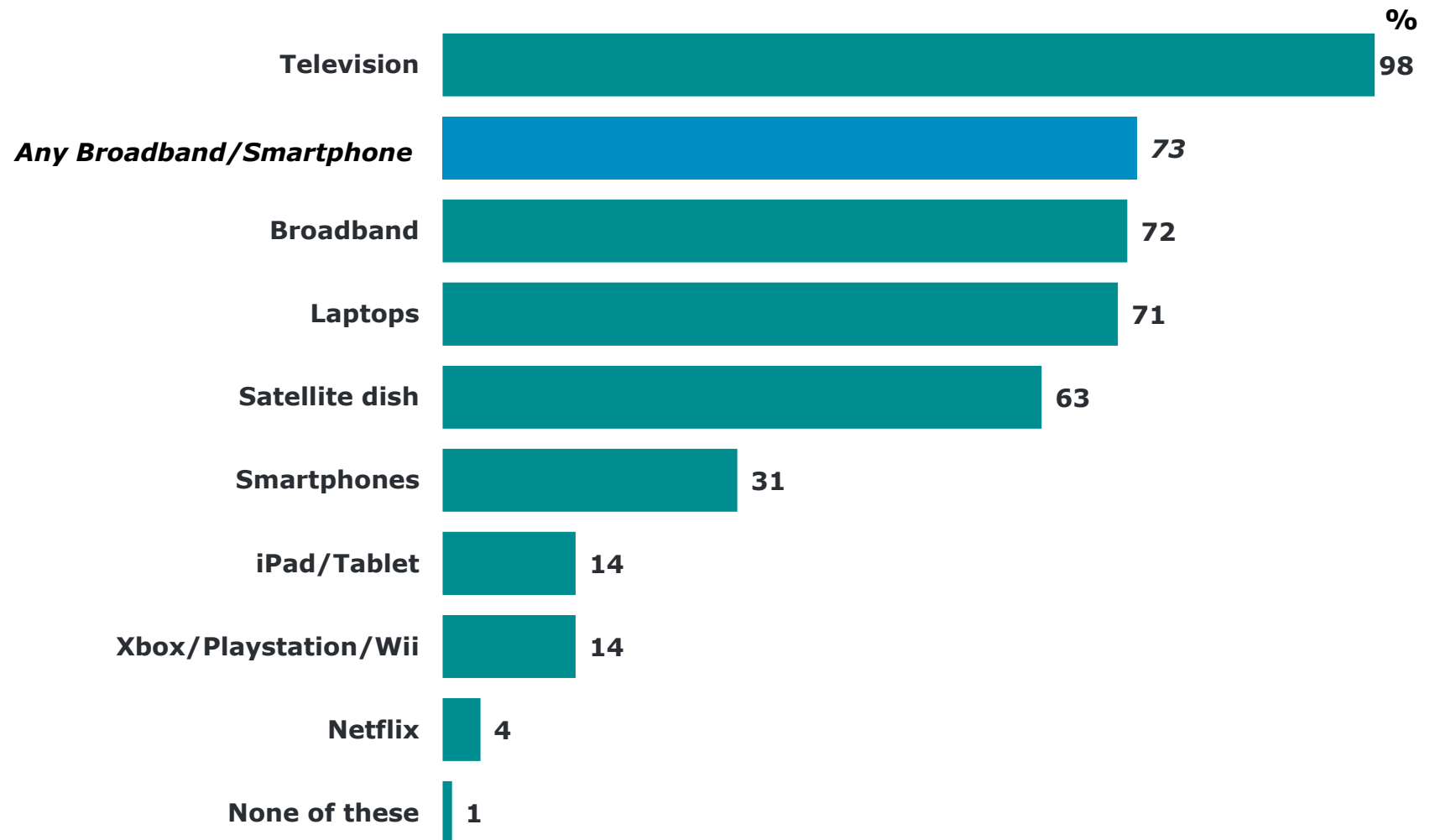


Q.15

Michael Healy Rae suggested that the drink driving laws should be relaxed to allow rural dwellers drink up to three pints (and then drive home). Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

# Technology Use

Base: All respondents - 570



7 in 10 have broadband at this stage, and a third a smartphone.

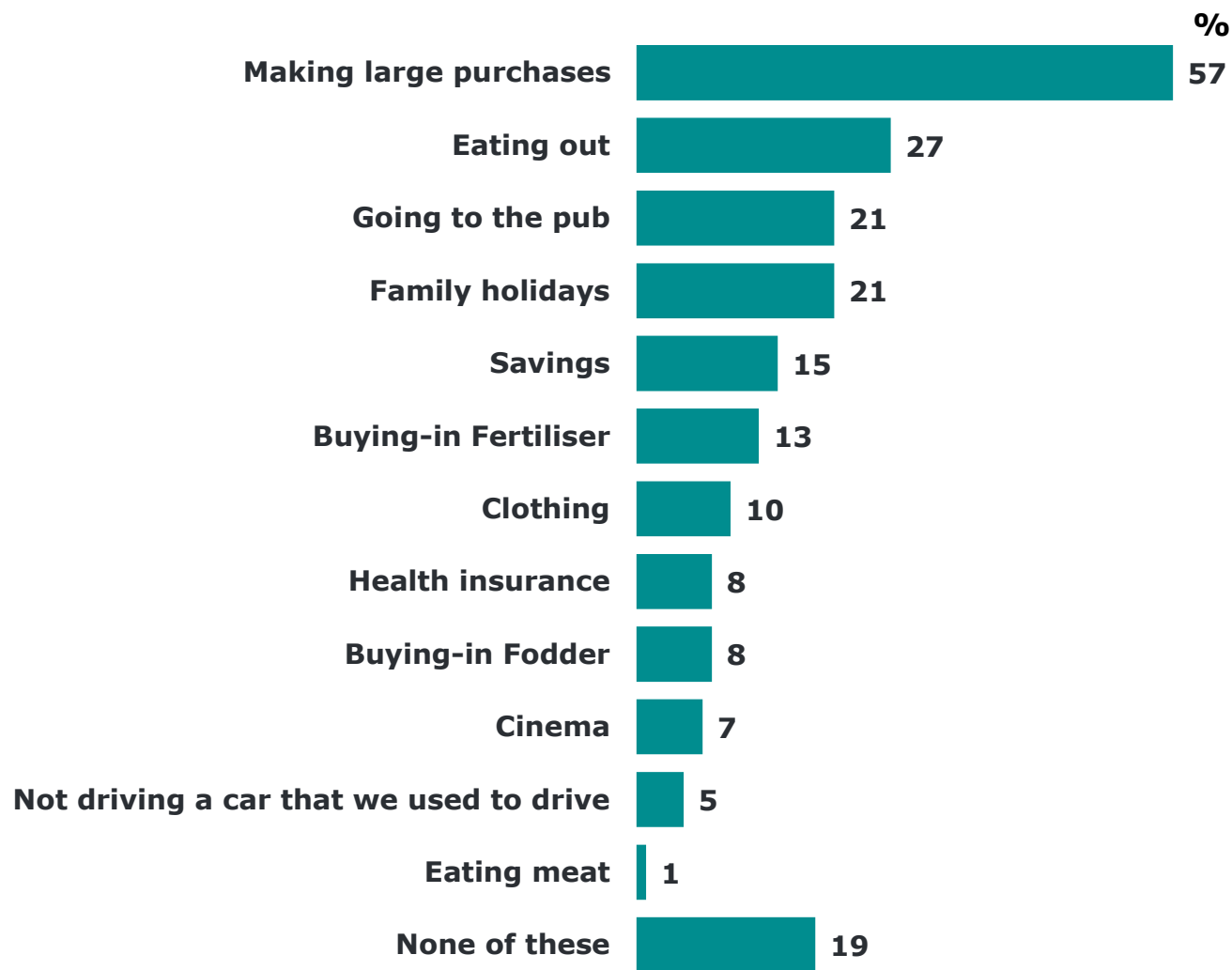


Q.16

Which of the following technologies do you personally use at home/farm?

# Recent Cutbacks

Base: All respondents - 570



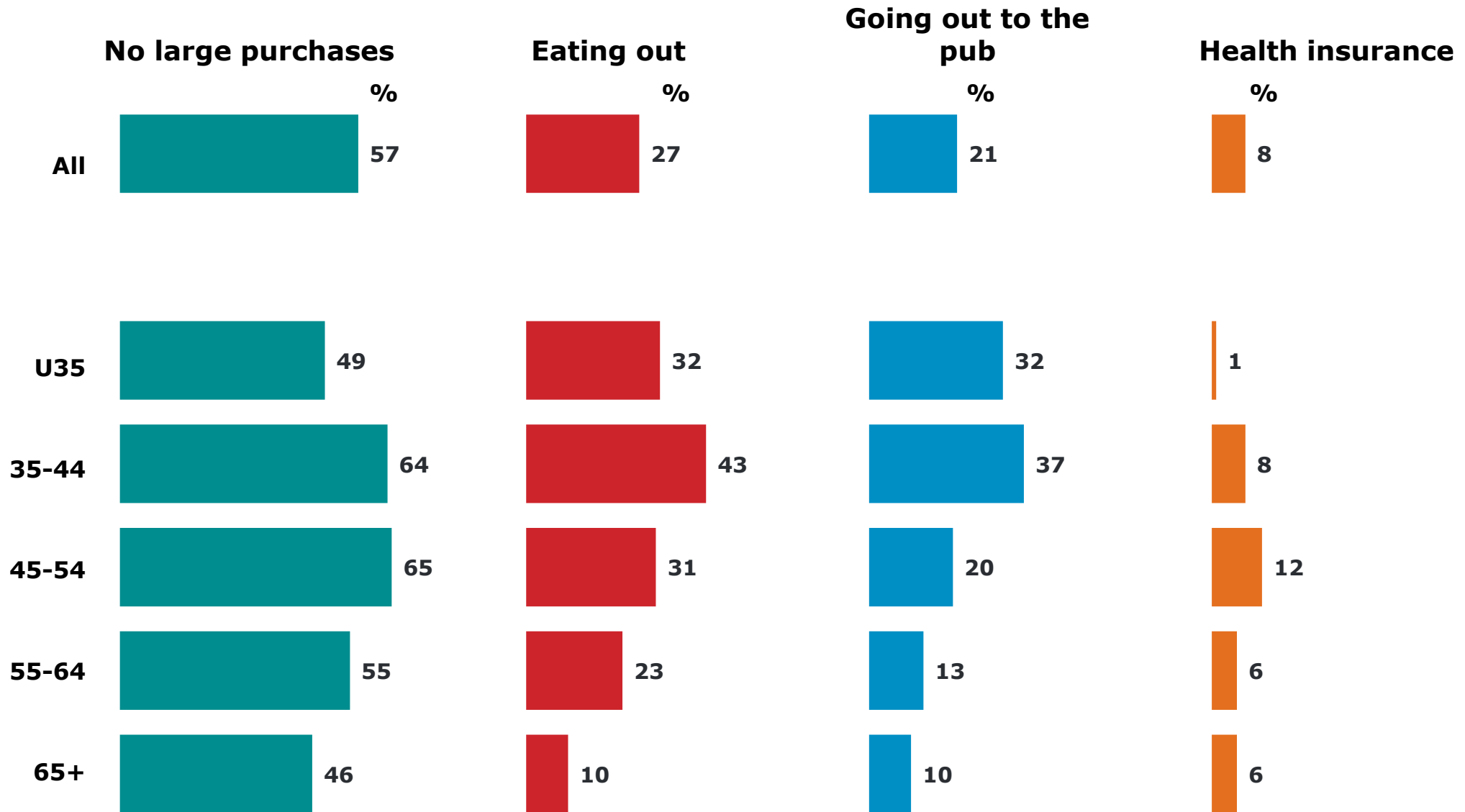
Farmer	Working Spouse	Non-working spouse	Live on farm/ Don't work on farm	Farm employee
%	%	%	%	%
56	62	50	60	54
24	41	50	40	35
21	18	-	30	31
20	23	50	30	27
13	20	38	40	27
12	13	25	-	19
10	13	-	30	4
7	8	13	20	8
8	8	13	-	12
7	10	-	-	12
3	11	13	10	12
1	3	-	-	4
20	20	13	10	4

Most are cutting back but, excluding large purchases, the levels reported are low.



# Significant Cutbacks x Age

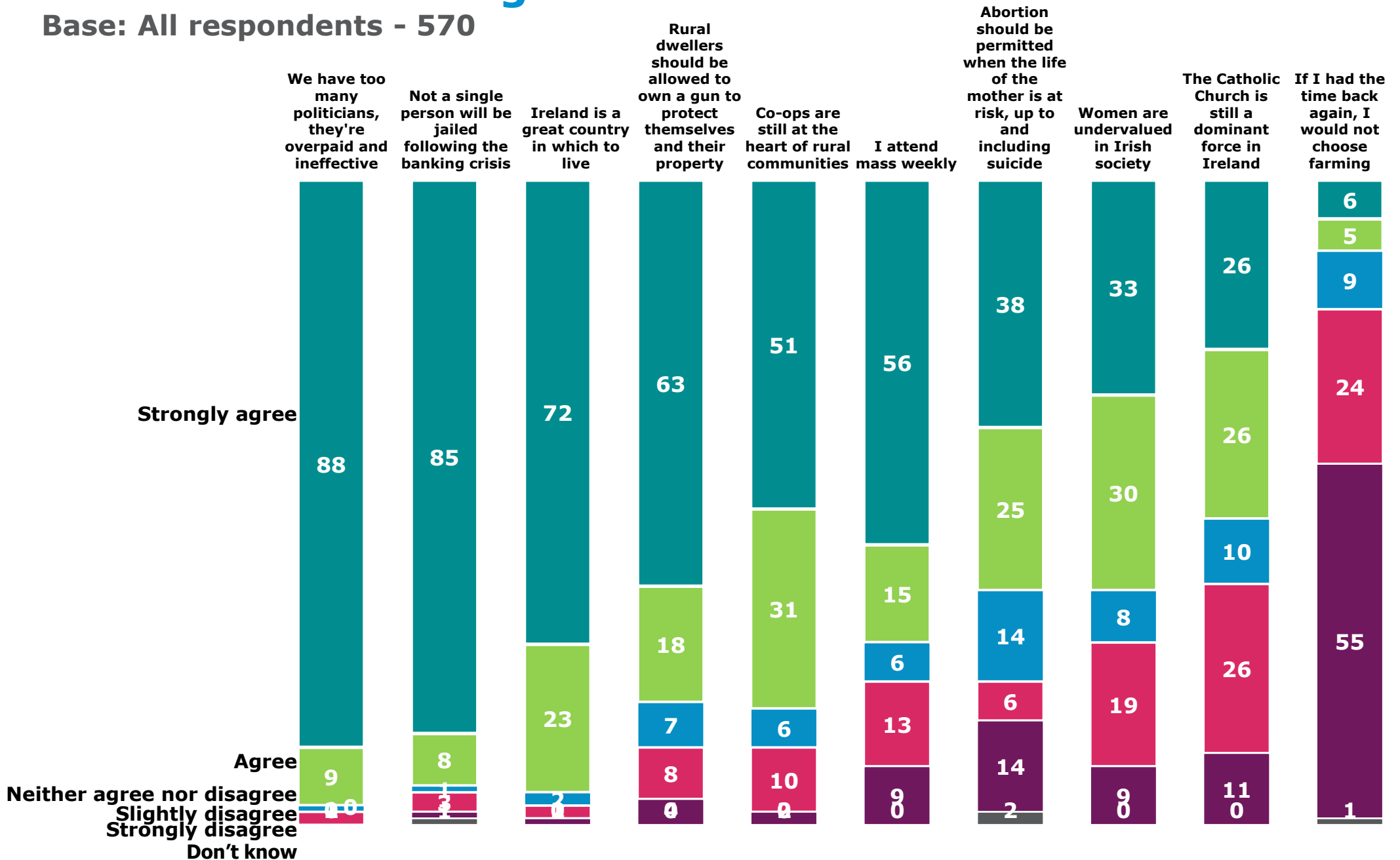
Base: All respondents - 570



Key cutbacks are happening for middle aged farmers (as is mirrored elsewhere in society.)

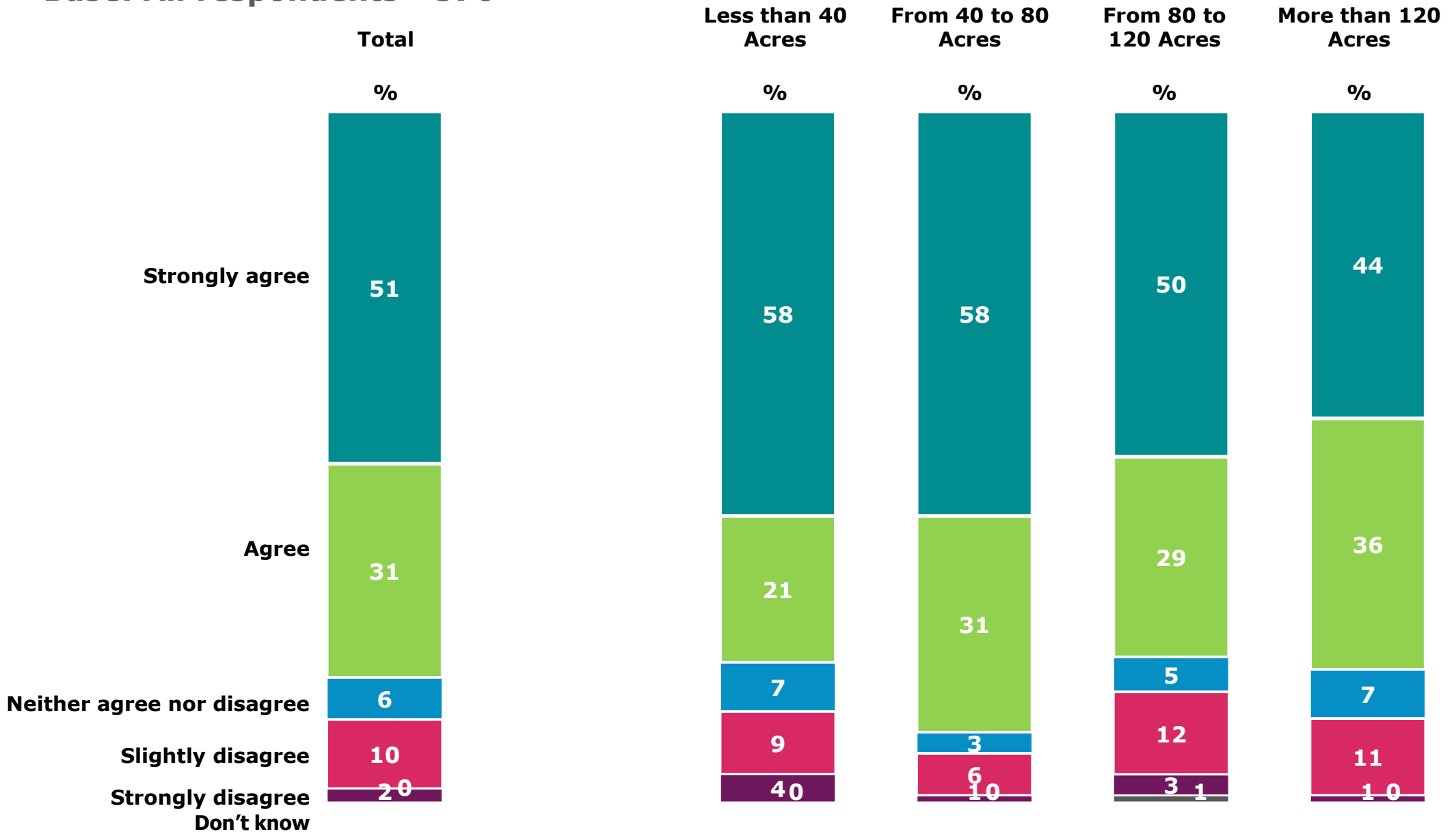
# Attitudes to Farming Issues

Base: All respondents - 570



# Co-ops are still at the heart of rural communities

Base: All respondents - 570

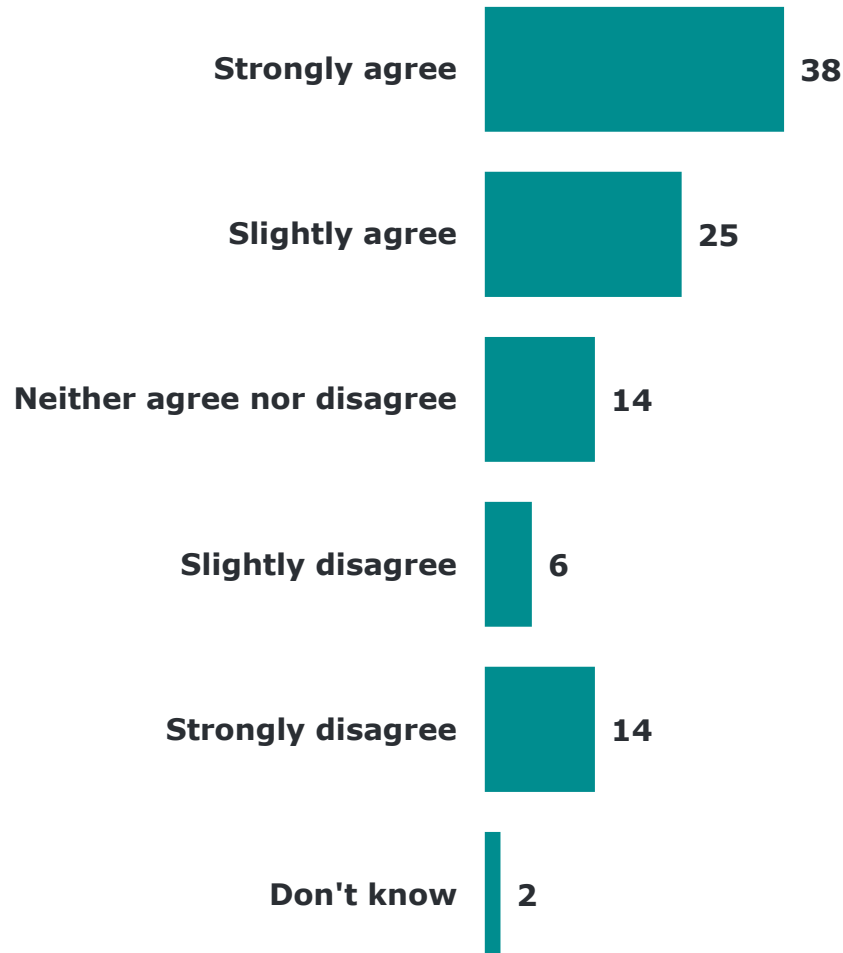


Agreement is broad and stronger among small holders.



# Abortion should be permitted when the life of the mother is at risk, up to and including suicide

Base: All respondents - 570

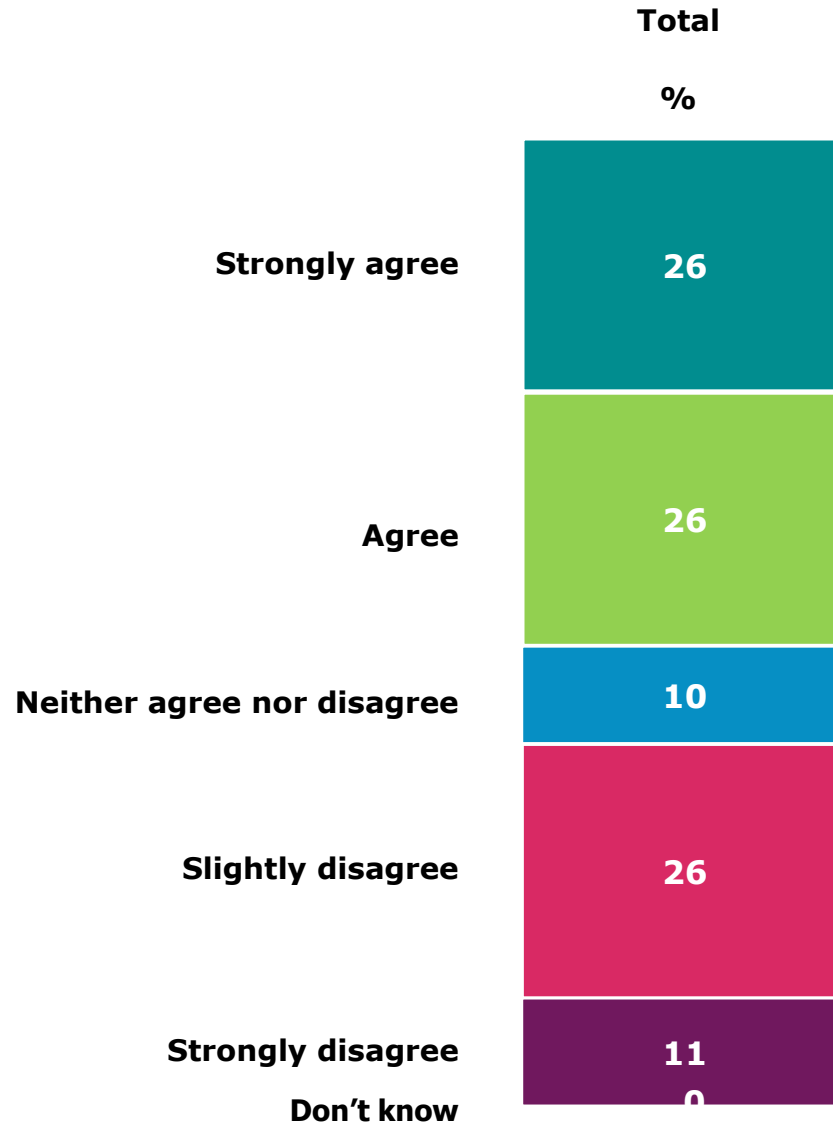


	Oppose
	%
All	20
Men	18
Women	28
U35	17
35-44	14
45-54	20
55-64	23
65+	23

Most are broadly in favour of the provision:  
1 in 5 oppose it (while almost 2 in 3 support it).  
Opposition a little higher female and older.

# The Catholic Church is still a dominant force in Ireland

Base: All respondents - 570



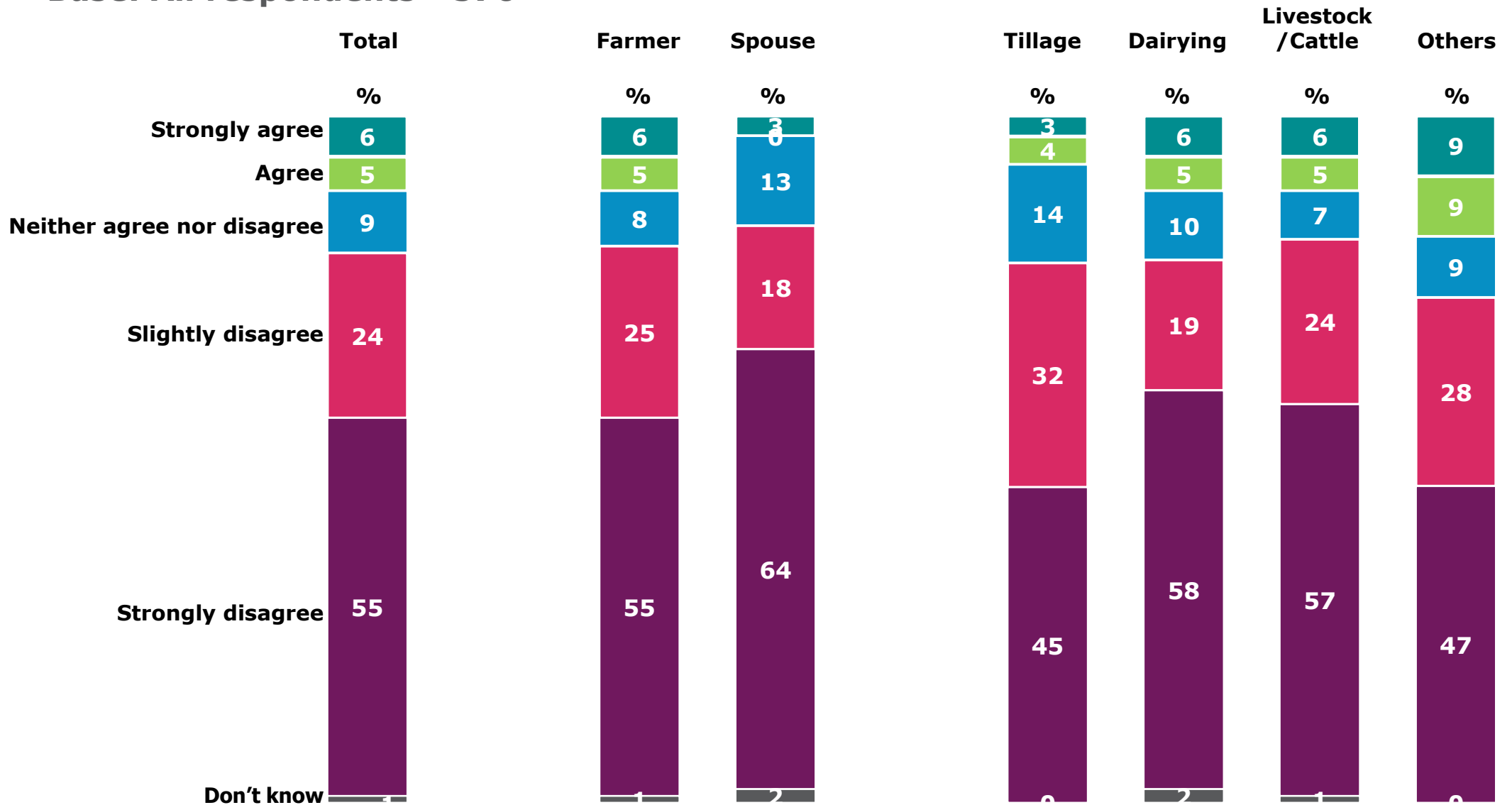
	Agree
	%
All	52
Men	49
Women	62
U35	50
35-44	53
45-54	53
55-64	45
65+	57

Almost half agree but 37% disagree. Women and older farmers more likely to agree.



# If I had the time back again, I would not choose farming

Base: All respondents - 570

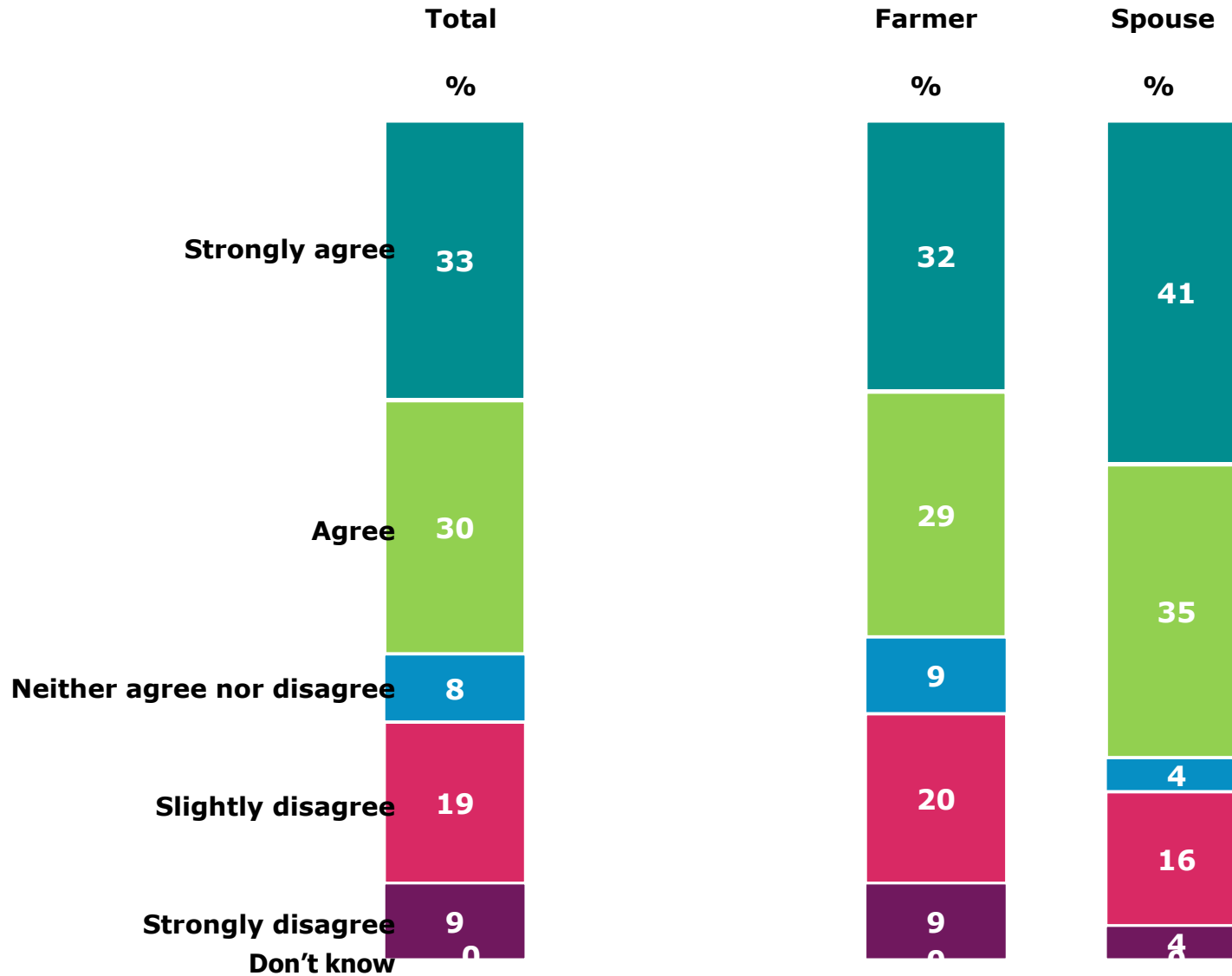


The vast majority are happy with their lot: about 1 in 10 would have preferred a different path.



# Women are undervalued in Irish Society

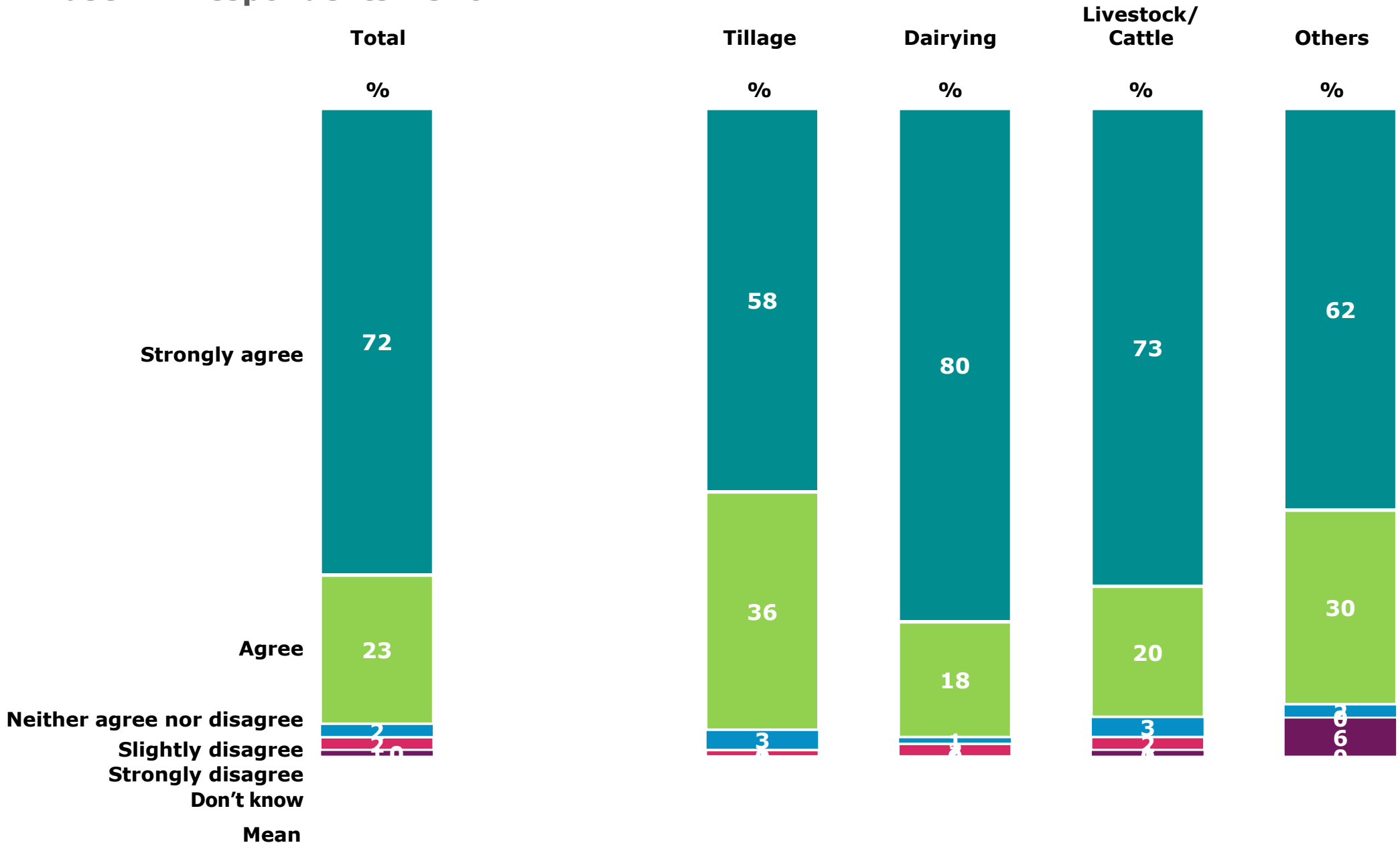
Base: All respondents - 570



Almost 2 in 3 feel that women are undervalued (as high as 3 in 4 among spouses.)

# Ireland is a great country in which to live

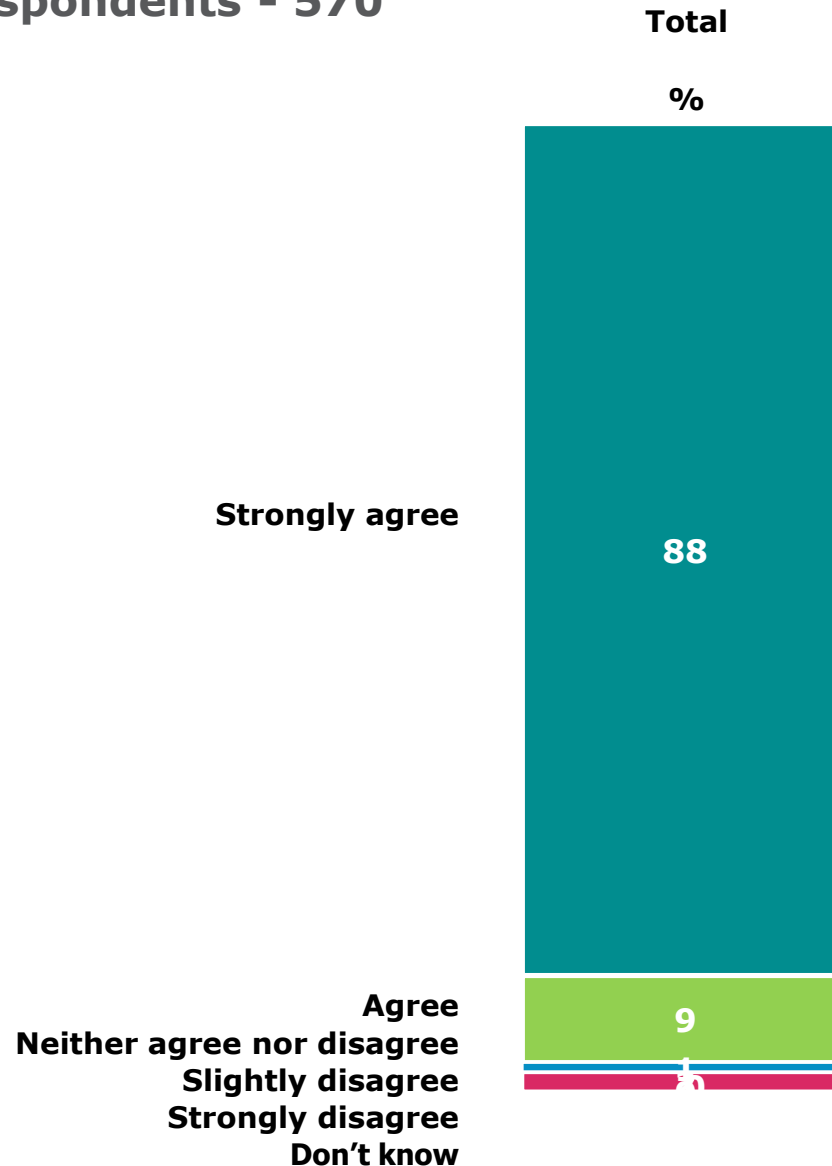
Base: All respondents - 570



Near universal agreement.

# We have too many politicians, they're overpaid and ineffective

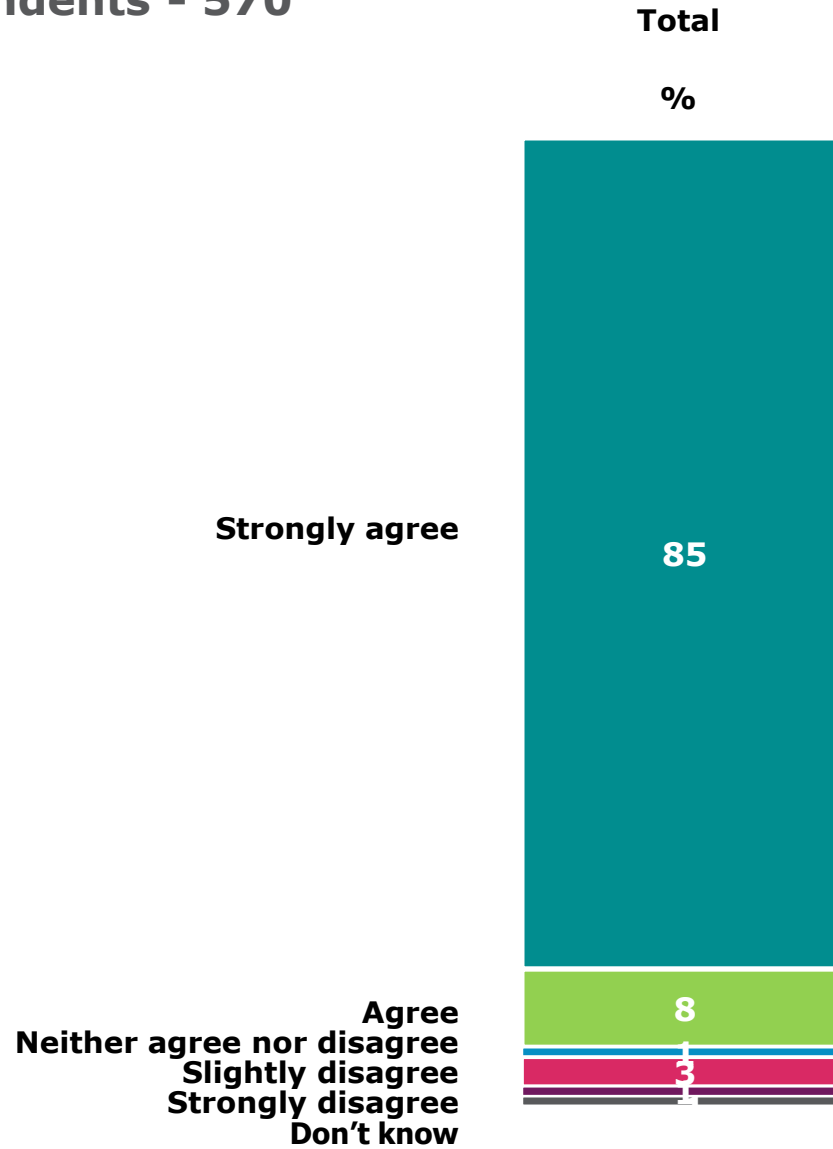
Base: All respondents - 570



Very little positive support for politicians.

# Not a single person will be jailed following the banking crisis

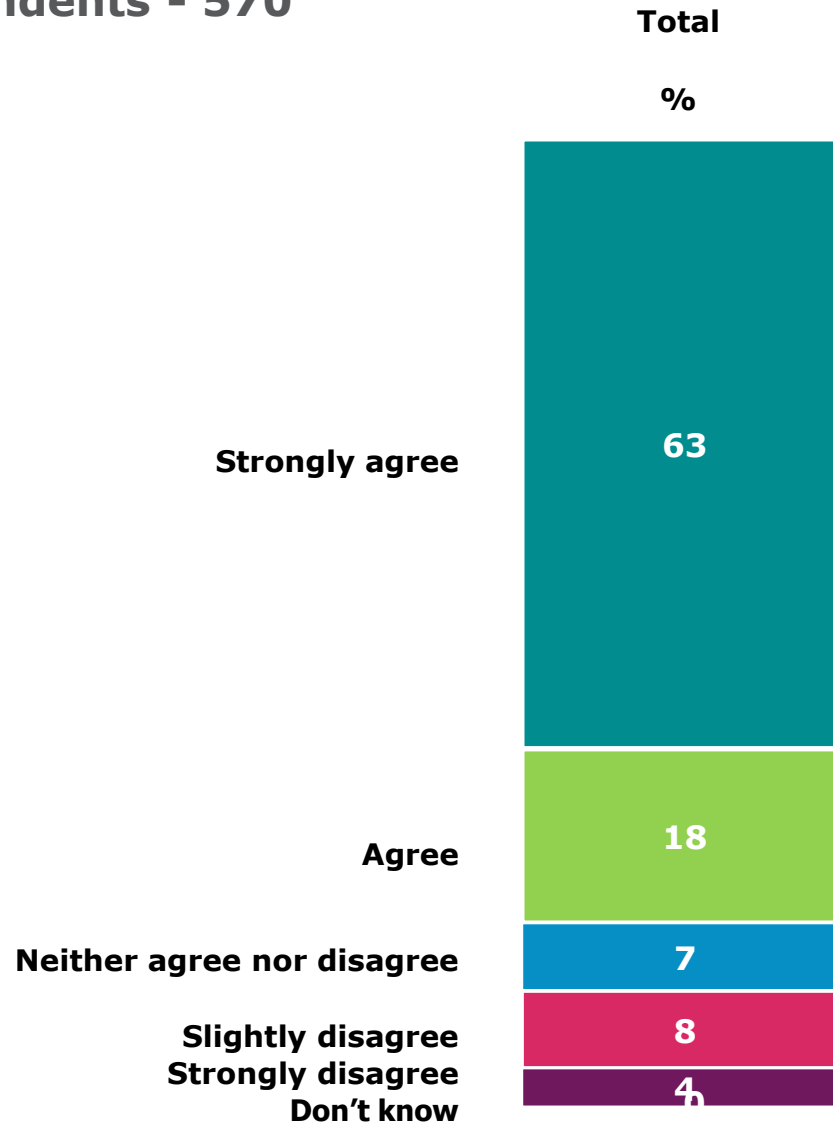
Base: All respondents - 570



Little optimism than the banking crisis will lead to the imposition of jail sentences.

# Rural dwellers should be allowed to own a gun to protect themselves and their property

Base: All respondents - 570

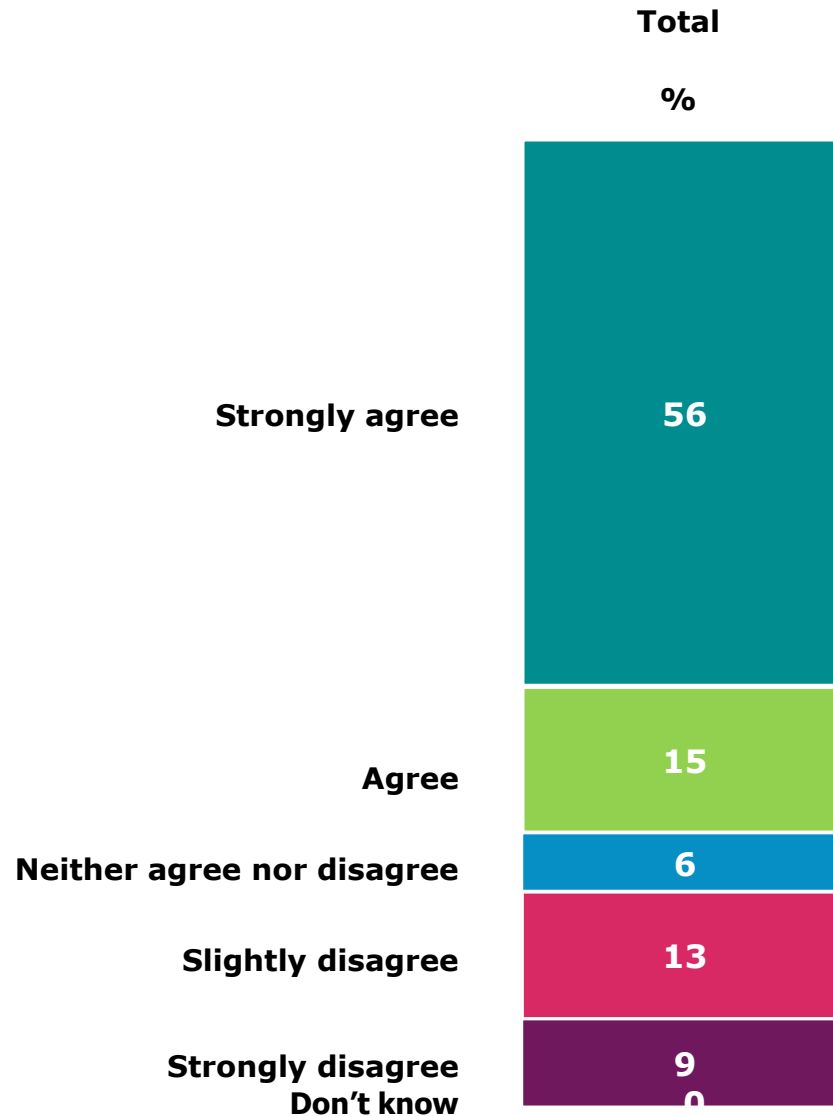


	Agree %
All	81
Men	84
Women	70
U35	81
35-44	75
45-54	80
55-64	81
65+	86
Fine Gael	71
Fianna Fail	83
Sinn Fein	100
Independents	85
Undecided	87

Just 1 in 8 disagree. Women are slightly less supportive.

# I attend mass weekly

Base: All respondents - 570



	Agree
	%
All	71
Men	71
Women	77
U35	47
35-44	74
45-54	71
55-64	73
65+	89

Mass going remains very high. 47% of U35s say they attend weekly.

# Key Points





## Key Points

- There is significant optimism among farmers at present:
  - ❖ Almost 4 in 5 optimistic about both farming and their sector.
  - ❖ 34% would like to increase their holding and a quarter think that this will probably happen.
  - ❖ Seven in ten (76%) hope to keep their farm in their immediate family.
  - ❖ 4 in 5 (79%) wouldn't change their life/occupation if they had a second chance.
- However, 57% are not making large purchases and aspects like eating out (27%) and going to the pub (21%) or taking holidays (21%) have been cut back. Only 6% have been refused credit.
- Heavy Fine Gael emphasis remains.
  - ❖ 63% voted for them in the last election but just 37% definitely would now while 31% are currently undecided.
  - ❖ However, farmers are political and the vast majority vote.
  - ❖ 53% feel Simon Coveney doing an excellent or good job, and 29% the same in relation to Eamon O'Cuiv.
  - ❖ Fianna Fail might get 21% now, and achieved a reported 18% last time.



## Key Points

- 62% feel that Agricultural policies are a key concern but many are also motivated by more everyday and general issues.
  - ❖ Cost of living 50%
  - ❖ Unemployment 49%
  - ❖ Austerity/debt 48%
  - ❖ Emigration 38%
- 47% have off-farm income with 23% of farmers actually having another job themselves: more likely in livestock or other types of farming.
- Farmers work an average of 48 hours a week but as many as 55 hours in Dairying.
  - ❖ 7 in 10 rely on the Single Farm Payment as a primary or secondary source of income
  - ❖ Most blame the weather for the fodder crisis but overstocking also a key factor (and few seem to blame the advise of others)

# Key Points

- Farmers are considerate and much less traditional in their mindset than heretofore
  - ❖ 56% oppose the Healy Rae suggestion on drink driving and just 43% support it
  - ❖ 63% would favour limited abortion if a mothers life is at risk while 20% would oppose it
  - ❖ 63% feel women are undervalued while 28% disagree
- Nonetheless, they remain quite traditional in some regards
  - ❖ A substantial majority are weekly mass-goers, and there is division on the continuing influence of the Catholic Church: 52% feel that it is strong whereas 37% disagree
- Large majorities doubt that anyone will be jailed as a result of the banking crisis, think that rural dwellers should be allowed arm themselves, and feel that we have far too many politicians.



# Thank You



**BEHAVIOUR & ATTITUDES**

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