

Introduction

The expansion of the Chinese agricultural business has become a threat to Americans in more ways than one. Not only does it pose a risk to our economy, but also our health and even our legislative process on a local level. This threat gained momentum largely with the purchase of Smithfield Farms by the Chinese Shanghui Group. Under this transaction, the United States handed China the largest pork producing company in the world (Gooch, 2018).

Many American consumers are not aware of the present threat posed by companies like the Shanghui Group and others like it that are growing domains in the American economy.

This study stakes a closer look at the significance of these given threats, and examines whether or not the consumers of these pork products are aware of the problems associated with the companies they buy from.

THE LARGEST
PORK COMPANY
IN THE WORLD



WH Group Limited - Home. (2018)

Aim

The aim of this study was to find out more about the imposed threat from Chinese agricultural expansion and how American consumers are impacted by the process. Things taken into consideration were:

- Economic significance
- Encroachment on US territory
- Health implications
- Political implications
- Impact on local legislation

This information was sought out to bring light and awareness to this matter that resonates close to home for those living in the Carolinas. All factors considered would directly impact consumers of the pork products owned by these Chinese entities.

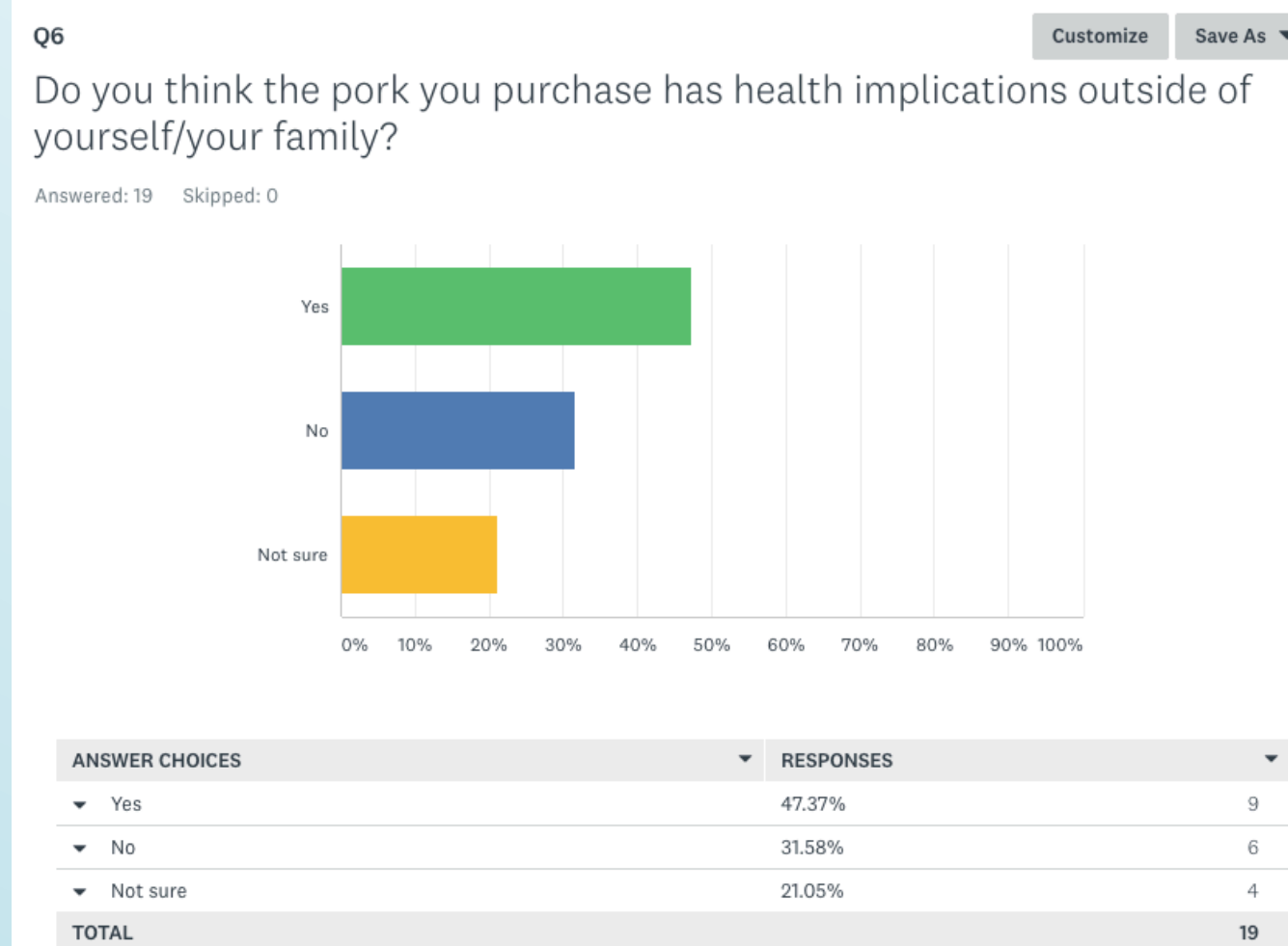
The main question behind this study was "How aware are consumers of the threats posed by Chinese agricultural expansion?"

Method

The method used to collect data on this study was a survey given to a convenience group using quantitative measures.

The numbers that came out of this would indicate exactly how many people were aware of what was happening in the pork industry, as far as China being a threat.

The survey included seven questions. It took the users about two minutes to complete the task. They were given informed consent and had the opportunity to back out of the survey at any time. The survey was anonymous.



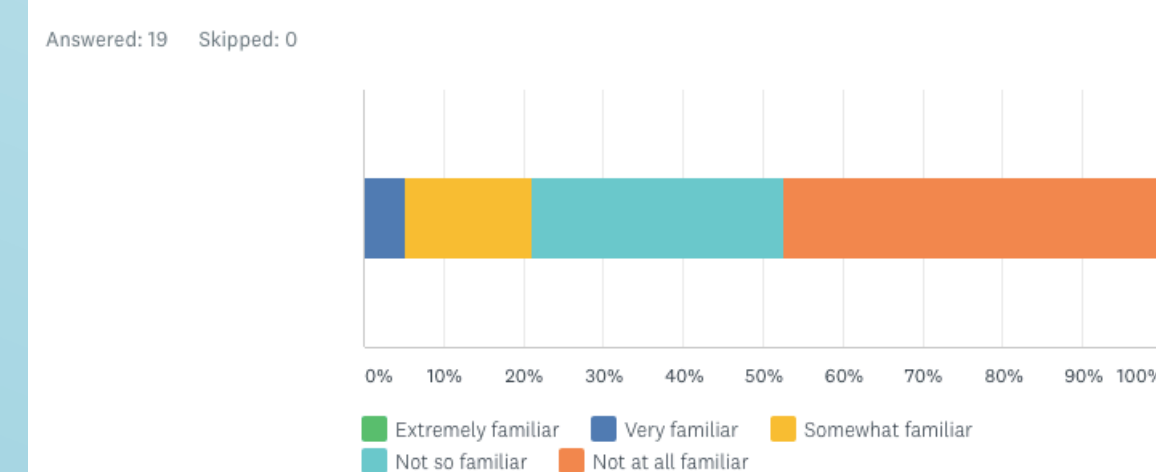
An example of a question with results posted. The survey ended up having 19 total participants.

Thank you for participating in this survey. The survey is for those who purchase and consume pork. The purpose of this survey is to collect information about consumers and what they know about correlation between their pork purchasing and the threats surrounding it. Your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

OK

The informed consent at the beginning informed the participants about the study and gave them the option to leave at any time.

How familiar are you with the community in which the pork you consume is raised?



Questions allowed for variation in responses to assess different levels of awareness from participants.

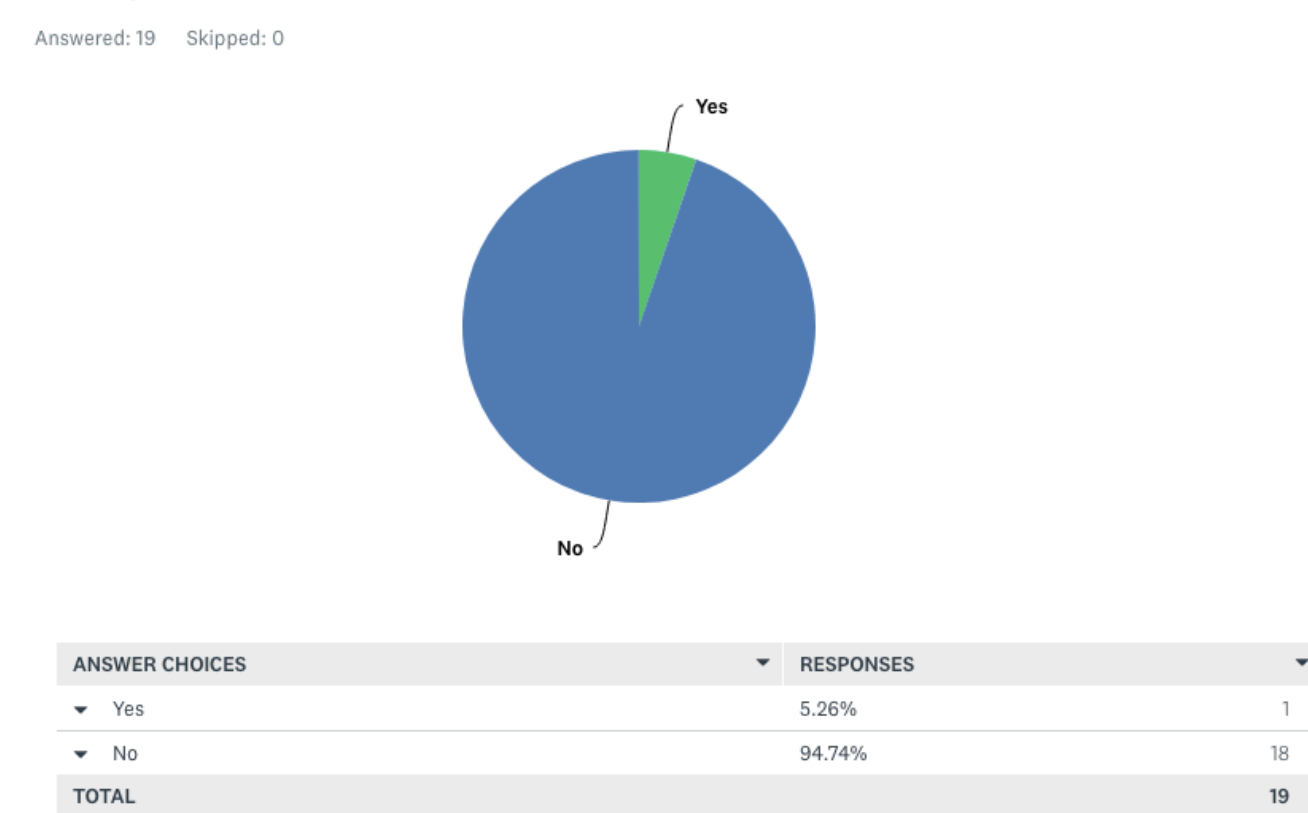
Results

The results from this research and study proved showed that consumers had a range of knowledge regarding how pork purchasing and China is impacting them at home.

Responses showed that consumers:

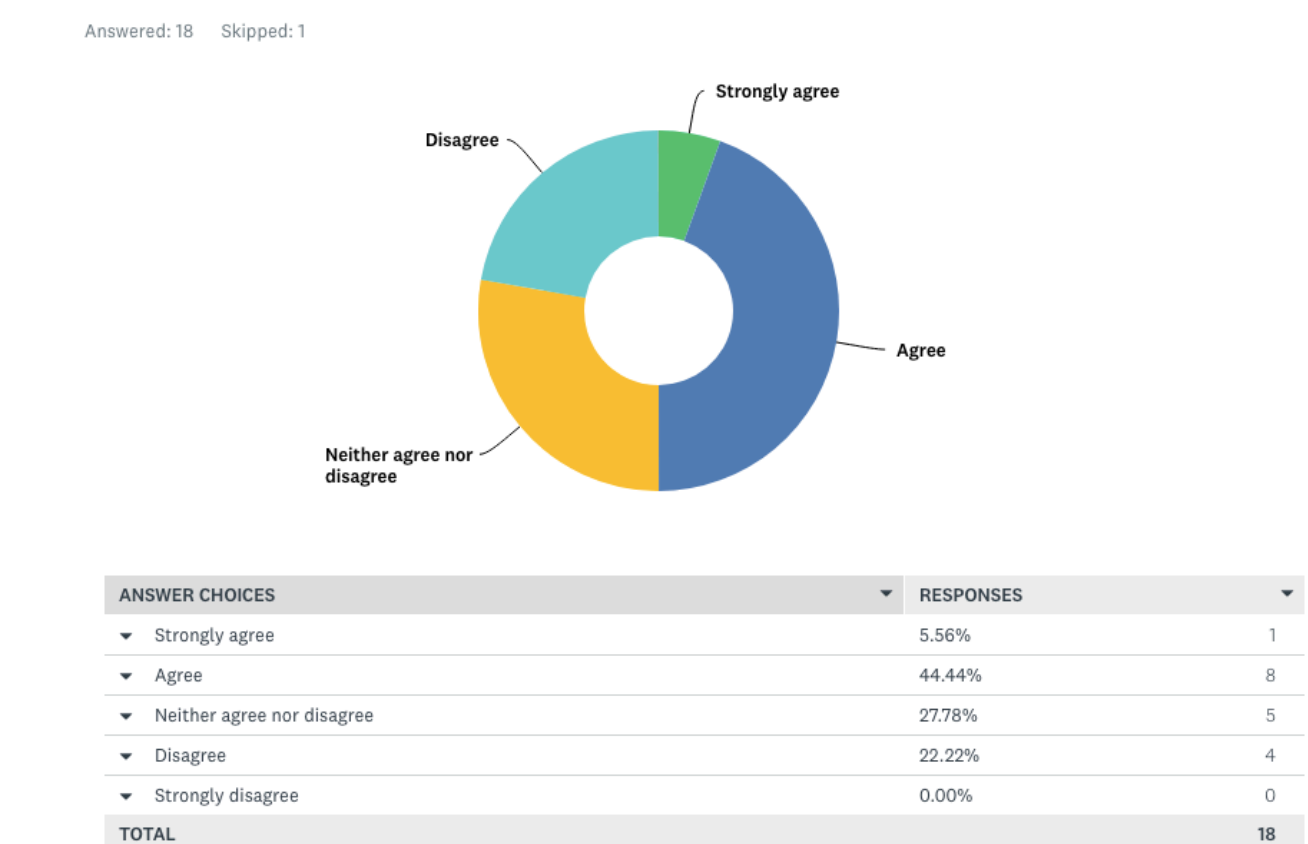
- Did not know about the community where the product came from
- Were not aware of the threat coming from Chinese agricultural expansion
- Did not think pork purchasing is associated with political corruption
- Were aware of a threat from China on a local policy level
- Were aware that the purchase of pork products impacted people outside of themselves as far as health is concerned

Do you think the brand of pork you purchase has an influence on political corruption?



Consumers were not aware of the influence pork purchasing had on local corruption, having only 5.3% respond "yes".

China has influence on American policy formulation on a local level.



Consumers recognize that China has an influence on American policy formulation with 44.4% agreeing and 5.6% agreeing.

Future Research

Looking forward, more research should be put into exactly how much influence the pork industry has on policy formulation. Law suits in North Carolina have come to light showing that citizens rights have been limited in the nuisance complaint cases against large pork industries like Murphy-Brown owned by Smithfield Foods (Sorg, 2018).

Research could look into funding given by these companies to the groups that fund politicians and their campaigns, in turn having pull on policy formulation.

This would be important research to conduct, especially in the state of North Carolina where the legal rights of American citizens could be effected by results, depending on what is discovered regarding corruption.

Conclusions

Overall, this study showed that consumers were aware of China being a threat to Americans but they had little knowledge of how that is a result of consumer behavior and purchasing power. Awareness about the negative impacts stemming from the expansion of Chinese agricultural business should be raised amongst consumers and taken into consideration in their purchasing process.

References

Gooch, E. & Gale, F. *China's foreign agriculture investments*, EIB-192, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, April 2018.

Sorg, L. (2018). *Neutering nuisance laws in North Carolina*. NC Policy Watch. <http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2017/11/15/neutering- nuisance-laws-north-carolina/>

WH Group Limited - Home. (2018). <http://www.wh-group.com/en/global/home.php>