

Certification from the US Consumer Perspective. A Comparison of 1995 and 2000

Lucie K. Ozanne and Richard Vlosky



Introduction

- In 1995, Ozanne and Vlosky surveyed US consumers to determine:
 - perceptions of environmentally certified wood products
 - willingness to incur a premium for certified wood products
 - most trusted certifying body

Introduction

- In 2000, this study was replicated using the same population
- Third-Party certification is the focus of these studies
- This presentation will compare the 1995 and 2000 studies
 - with data from the 2000 study also being presented

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) program is the most prominent of the programs operating in the forest products industry; however, a number of other approaches have been developed. All of the programs have some verification process to determine whether the candidate's operation conforms to the certification system. If the operation is deemed acceptable, the program seal may be used in product advertising and labelling.



Previous Literature

General Studies

- **Ottman (1998) - consumers are still concerned about the environmental impacts of their consumption behaviors**
- **Also research shows that consumer are:**
 - **confused by the terms and language used in environmental advertising**
 - **do not trust industry to make accurate environmental claims**

Previous Literature

Forest Products Studies

- **Ozanne and Vlosky (1997)**
 - **16.5 million Americans who would likely seek out and buy**
 - **pay a price premium 4.4% - 18.7%**
- **Ozanne and Smith (1998)**
 - **25 million Americans who may seek out environmentally certified forest products**

Previous Literature

Forest Products Studies

- Ozanne et al. (2000)
 - **conjoint study in New Zealand**
 - **What is the relative importance of?**
 - Environmental certification
 - Price
 - Warranty
 - Type of forest
 - Country of origin of wood

Research Methodology

- Mail survey using the Total Design Method (Dillman 1978)
- Study conducted in summer of 2000
- Sample frame:
 - homeowners
 - over 18 years old
 - incomes over \$30,000
- Same sample frame used in 1995 and 2000
- 308 matched responses
- Response rate: 1995-27%; 2000-33%

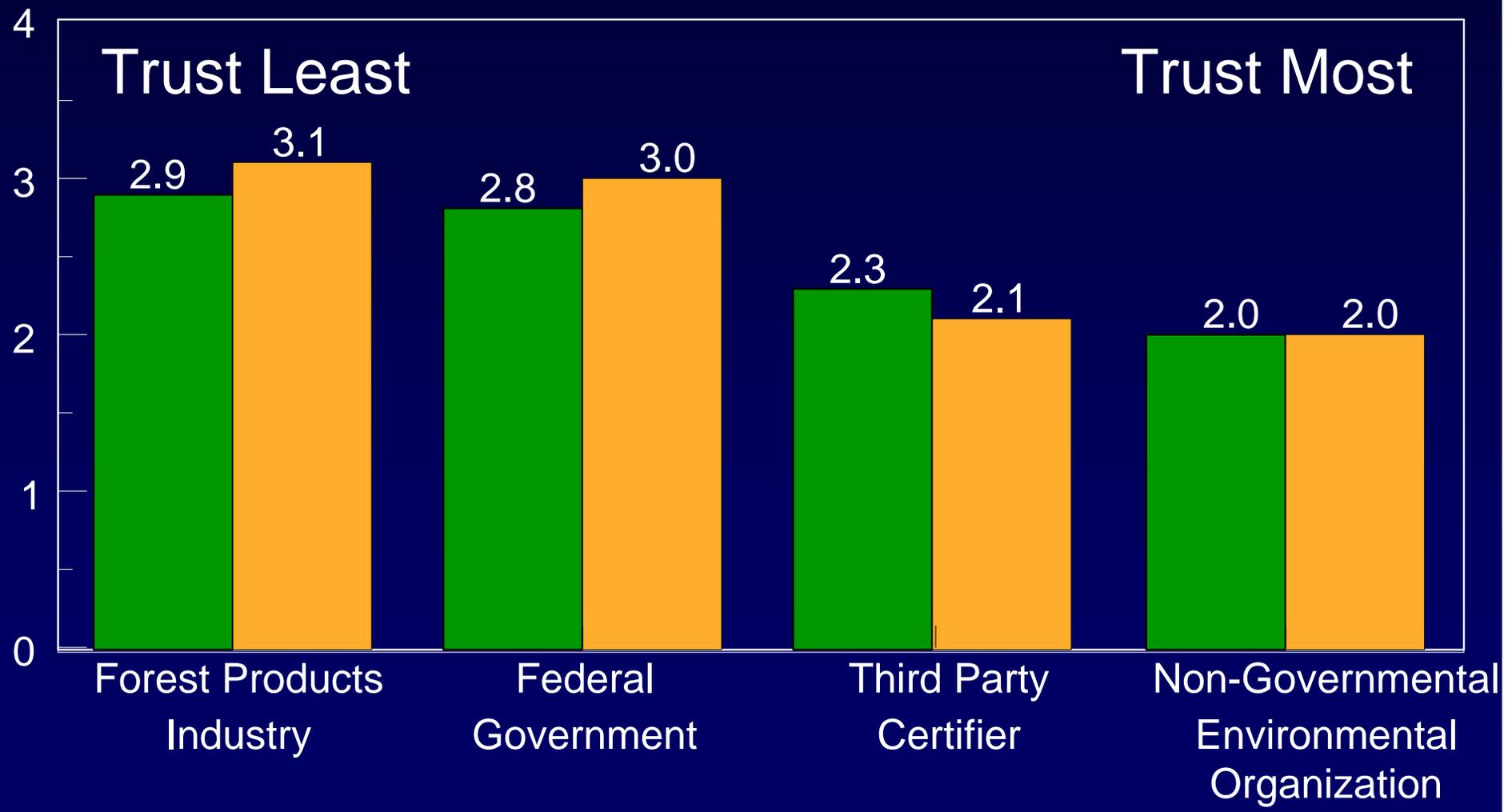
U.S. Consumer Certification Study General Environmental Attitudes

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree

	Mean 1995	Mean 2000	Change 95-00	Significant Difference*
Whenever possible, I buy products which I consider environmentally safe.	4.1	3.9		*
I would pay more for environmentally friendly products.	3.4	3.4		
I believe that environmental information on packaging is important.	4.1	3.9		
I generally believe environmental information on packaging.	3.6	3.5		
I believe there is much corporations can do to improve the environment.	4.3	4.2		
I believe there is much individuals can do to improve the environment.	4.3	4.2		*
* Statistically different at 0.10 ** Statistically different at 0.05 *** Statistically different at 0.01				

Level of Trust to Certify Forest Management & Harvesting

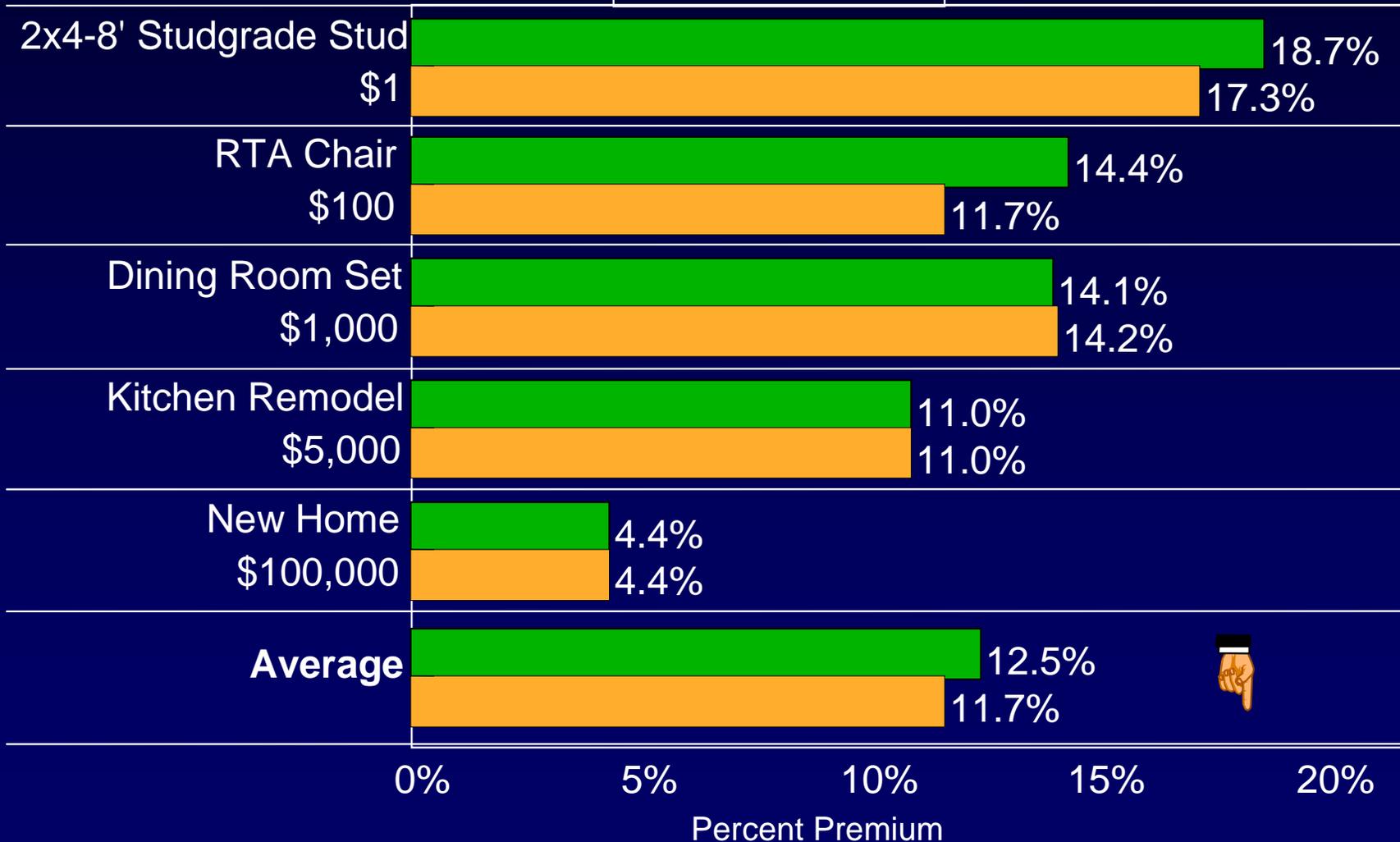
(1=Trust Most to 4=Trust Least)



Percentage Premium that Respondents are Willing to Pay for Certified Wood Products

Weighted average

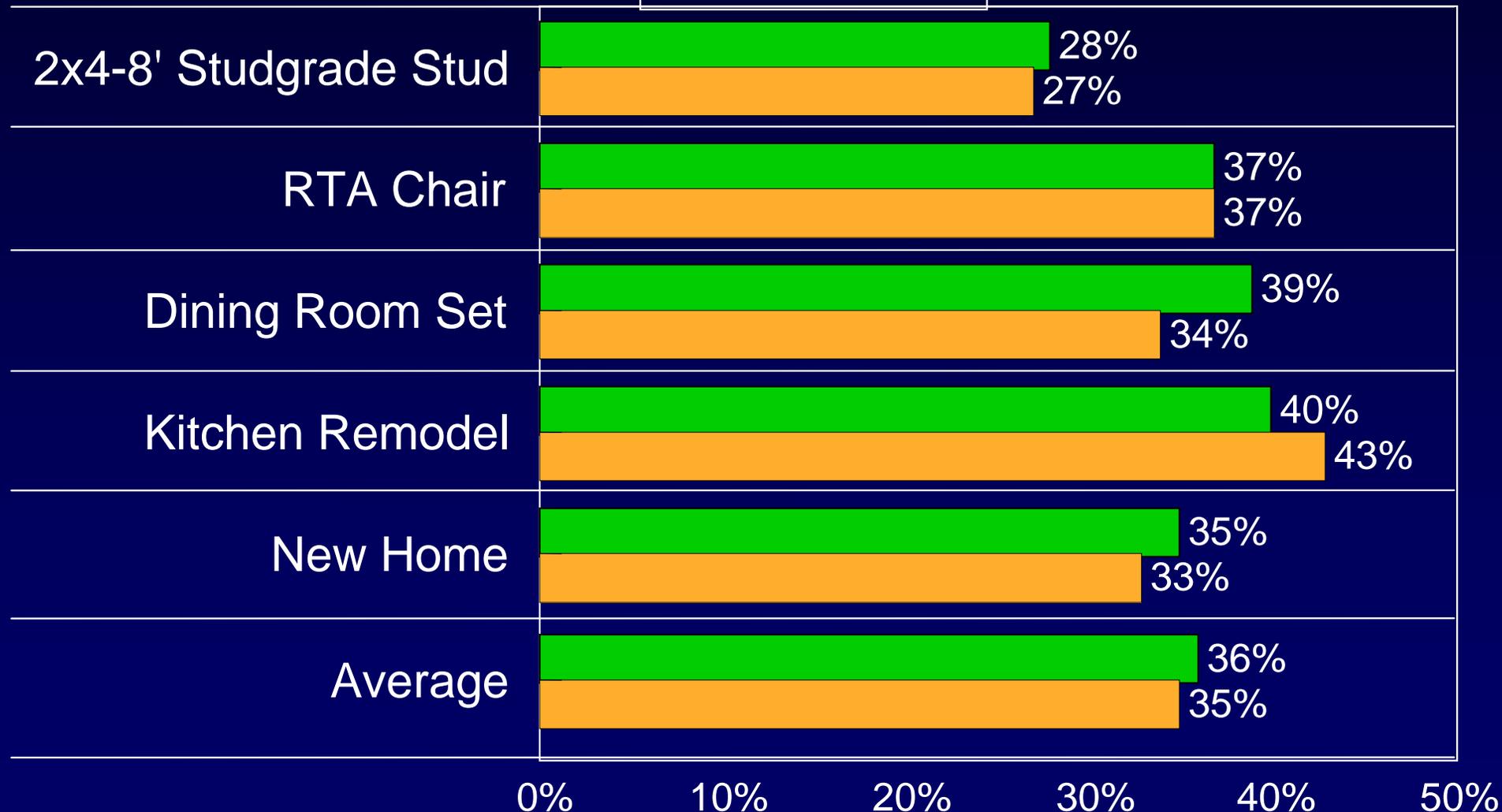
1995 2000



Percentage of Respondents that are NOT Willing to Pay a Premium for Certified Wood Products

Weighted average

1995 2000



U.S. Consumer Certification Study

Certification Attitudes & Perceptions

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree

	Mean 1995	Mean 2000	Change 95-00	Significant Difference*
I understand the concept of environmental certification.	3.7	3.9		*
I believe certification can reduce tropical deforestation.	4.3	3.7		***
I have purchased certified wood products in the past year.	3.0	2.7		**
If available, I would seek out certified wood products.	3.6	3.5		
I trust environmental claims made by wood product suppliers.	2.9	2.8		
I believe consumers will pay a premium for certified wood products.	3.1	3.2		

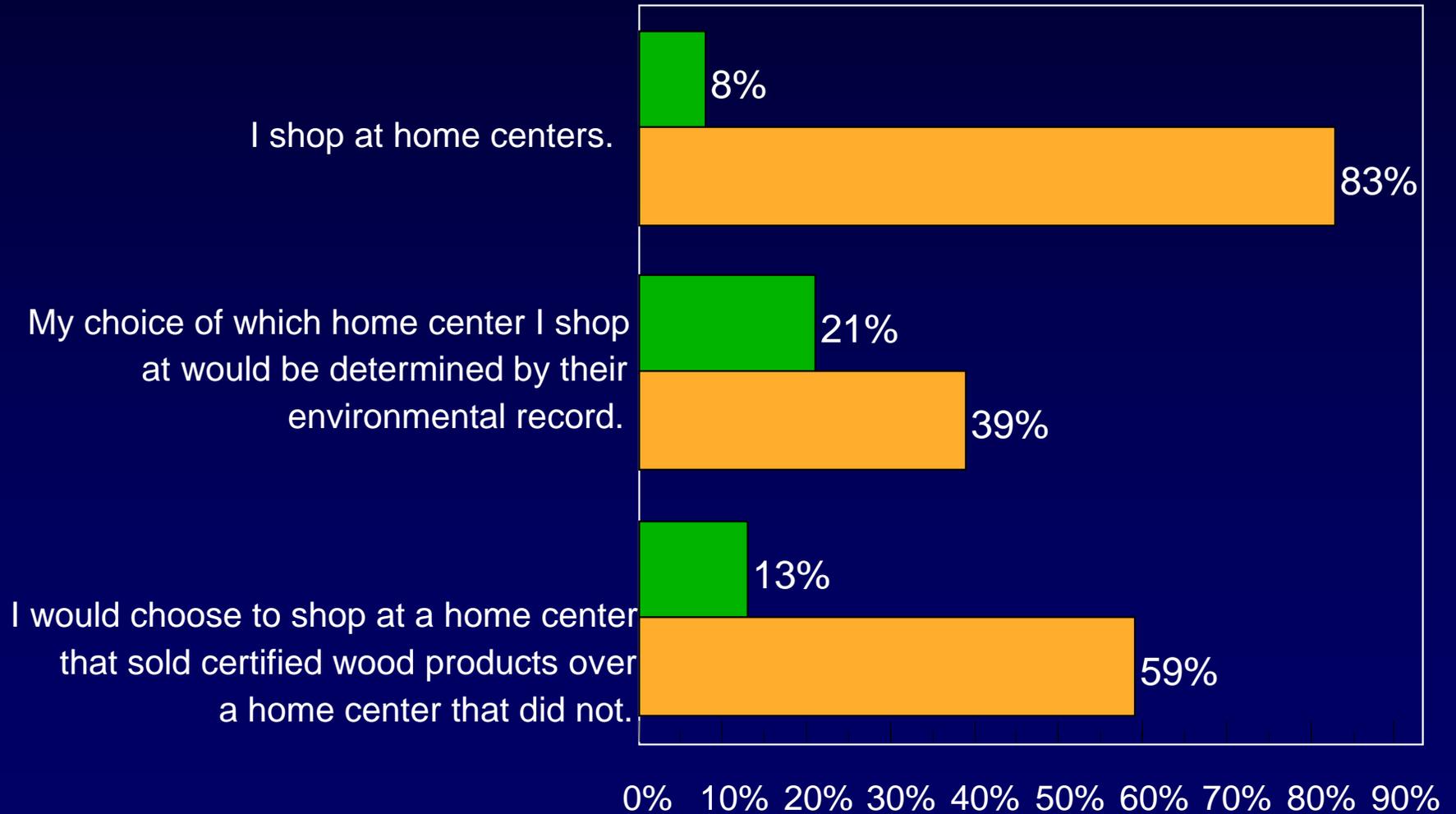
* Statistically different at 0.10
 ** Statistically different at 0.05
 *** Statistically different at 0.01

Questions Unique to the 2000 Study

n=638

NO

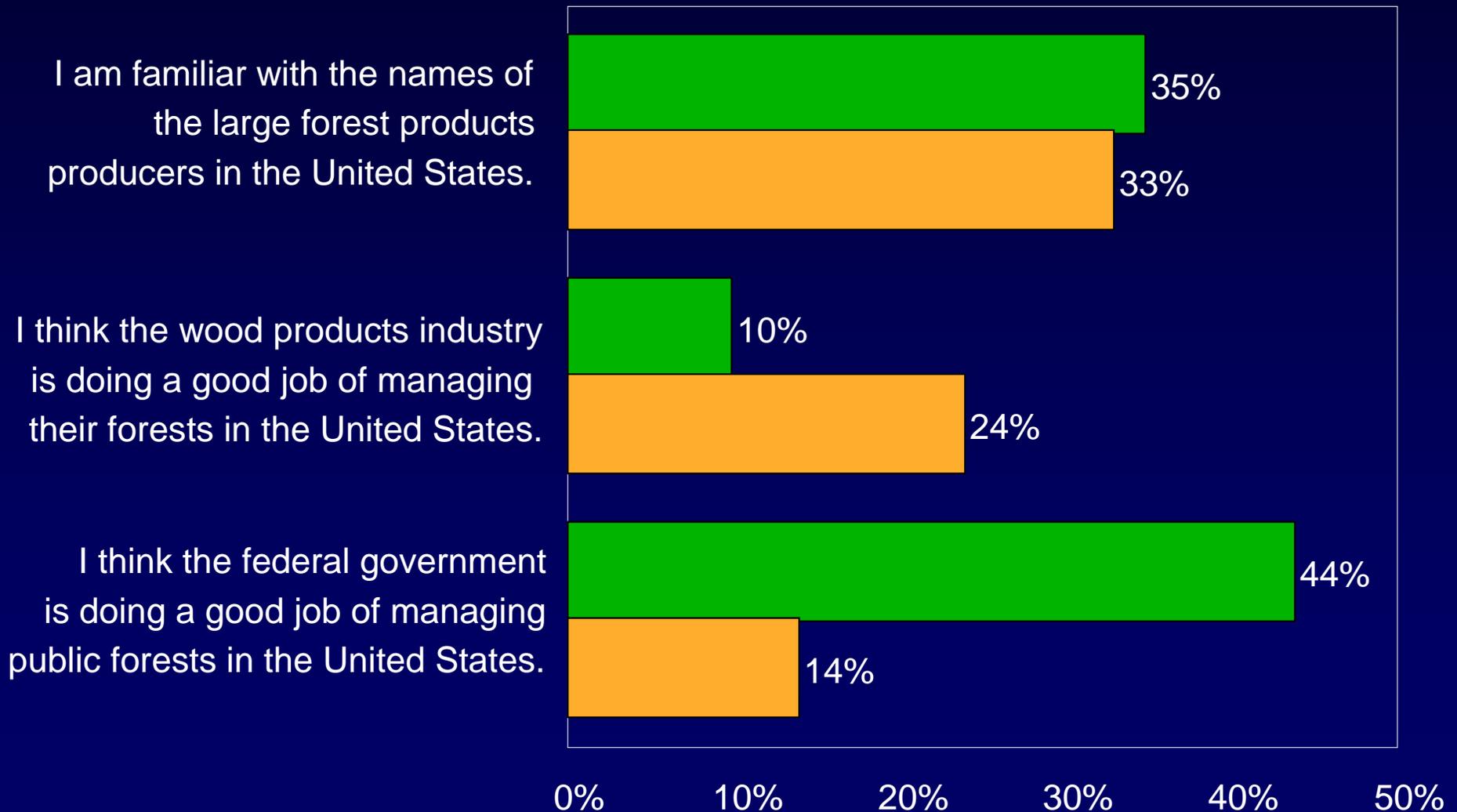
YES



Questions Unique to the 2000 Study

n=638

■ Somewhat or Strongly Disagree ■ Somewhat or Strongly Agree

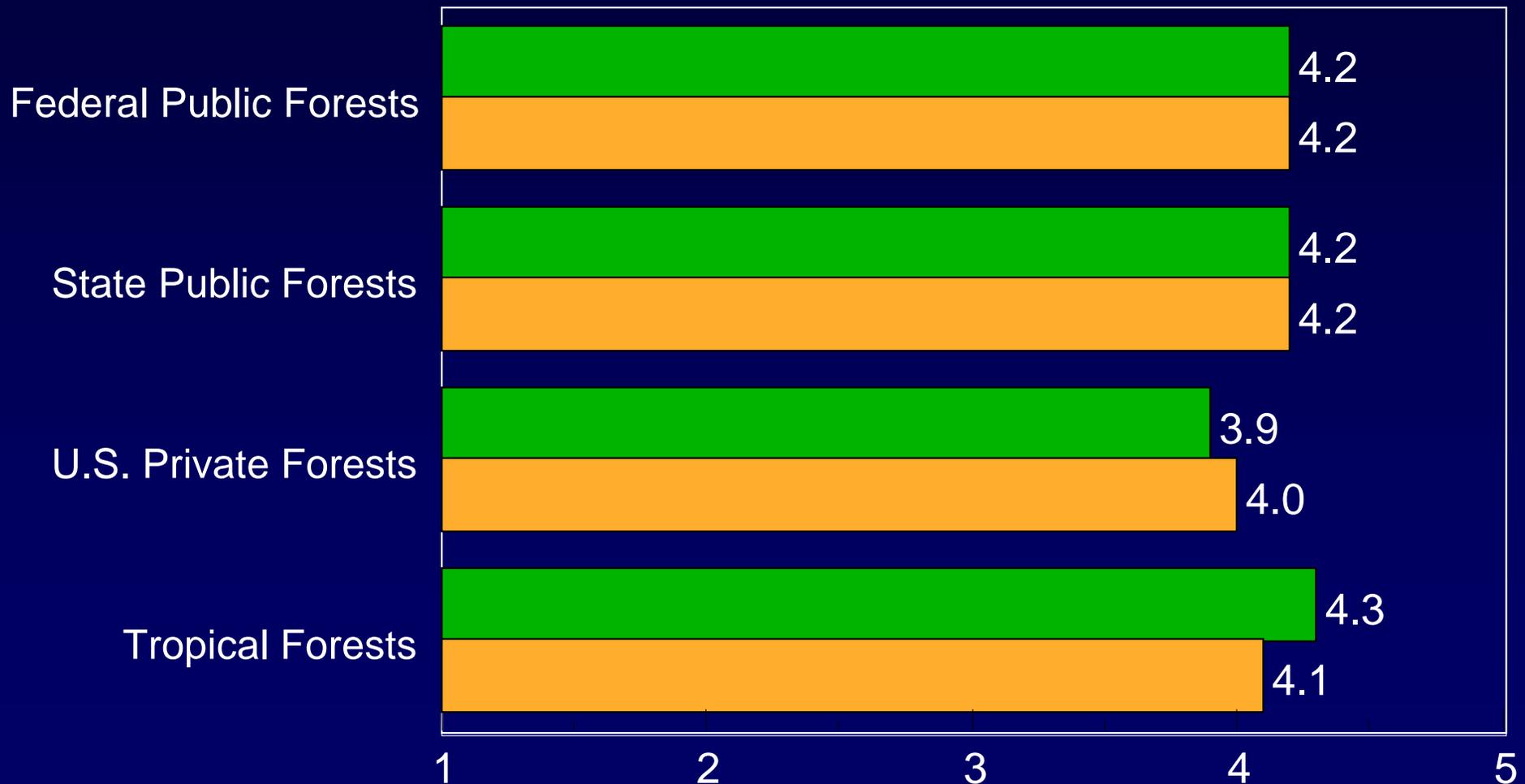


Questions Unique to the 2000 Study

n=638

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree

 There is a need for certification in these forests.  Certification can help sustain the health of these forests.



Conclusions

- **Concern for the environment has slightly declined since 1995**
 - **fewer buy environmentally safe products**
 - **believe there is less individuals can do**
- **Respondents still believe there is a role for environmental certification**
 - **it is needed and can sustain the health of US forests**
 - **less of a role in tropical forests**

Conclusions

- Respondents are slightly less willing to pay a premium for certified forest products
 - average dropped from 12.5% to 11.7%
- ENGOs are still the most trusted certifying body; the wood products industry is still least trusted



Questions

vlosky@lsu.edu
(225) 578-4527