



Hidden voices of the animal industry

A study of transparency in the production chain

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Abstract

The study is questioning the transparency of the animal production chain through different perspectives of the media landscape. Producers, suppliers, and consumers all meet in media outlets through campaigns, news stories and marketing, and the finalized product for purchase is often visualized more romanticized than its animal origin. The study will hopefully provide an insight to the hidden voices of the animal industry, such as small-scale businessmen who are often overlooked due to larger scale productions are often steering the market. The study has used a mixed-method model in order to triangulate both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings have clarified obstacles and advantages connected to a transparent production chain. Regarding legislation, all the participants agree that there is room for development. It is evident that media is priming consumers and to make an informed choice you need to know what to be informed about. The participating small-scale producers are active in providing transparency and making improvements, hence expressing frustration of being generalized by consumers in case of scandals. However, they are experiencing mixed signals from governmental institutions and are concerned that misconceptions from consumers will rise further due to misunderstandings of their profession with camera surveillance, and additionally lead to integrity and safety issues for the producers. The most important factors for consumers are trust, credibility, price, and accessibility when purchasing an animal commodity. Transparency would add to all of these factors, when you see and understand what you pay for, the knowledge and awareness for the industry increases.

Keywords: transparency, agenda setting, animal production, priming, consumer, small-scale production

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Abbreviations

ASC	The Aquaculture Stewardship Council
CFP	Common fisheries policy
EU	European Union
MSC	The Marine Stewardship Council
SMW	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem definition

“*Animals are at once workers and commodities*” Barua (2019, 657), yet the life of production animals are rarely seen as valuable except from their produce. Ever since the industrialization domesticated animals, terrestrial, and aquatic animals have been systematically used as a resource for food, entertainment and/or research in society (Schaffner 2010). How animals are used versus how they are visualized in media raises questions regarding transparency and also about how consumers are primed into acceptance with romanticized marketing. The global animal industry is often a controversial topic in society due to miscommunication, misunderstanding and lack of transparency between producers and consumers. With global access to media in technical devices, and additionally social media, the ability for transparency have changed the media landscape.

In 2021 an activist group revealed the actions of animal cruelty behind closed doors at a KRAV certified abattoir (Aftonbladet 2021). It questions the welfare of all production animals and especially those that are supposed to be “protected” by a label. However, to generalize that all production is executed in this way is also not a true representation of the industry, hence a need for better understand of the production chain through transparency.

Labels are meant to indicate high animal welfare standard like *organic or cage-free*. However, environmental labels can also contribute to confusion to what high standard implies and instead be used as a tool of priming which affect the consumers choice and food preference (Leslie & Sunstein 2007). Priming is reoccurring exposure to related stimulus that influence a how a person responds and act in society, commonly used are related words or images. Environmental labels can also lead to inactivity of further research from a consumer’s point of view due to the trust of labels.

As a result of the urbanization, geographical distancing from the producers have increased, historically, the slaughter and farms were centered to city cores (Vialles 1994). Whereas today’s production animals spend their life significantly more concealed in comparison. Distancing also takes place in how the animals are referred to, and de-animalized. The rephrasing of animals from cow into beef, calf into veal indicates the end purpose, not a sentient animal (Barua 2019; Packwood Freeman 2009).

The animal food production industry is one of the most profitable and controversial (Schaller 1993). However, the animal husbandry develops alongside society, and in a sense mirroring the current view of animals' welfare (Negowetti 2018). To exemplify, Djurens rätt initiated a debate with ICA in 2008 to cease supplying caged farmed eggs to the consumers (Djurens rätt 2022). ICA joined the initiative in 2021 as the final actor to make all eggs of Swedish food chain suppliers cage-free (Djurens rätt 2022). The example visualizes that through public awareness and transparency the cage-farmed hens' lives have been questioned and furthermore improved due to the more informed consumers.

The growing public interest in farm-to-fork type campaigns seem to reconnect the consumer with the basis of production for the first time in decades, which also encourage companies to advertise the behind-the-scenes dimensions of their production and also promote local small-scale producers. However, over the last decade, cattle farmers in Sweden have decreased with 26%, but not the produce (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022g). The reason is due to today do more than 70% of the farms keep cattle with at least 200 bovines, compared to 49% in 2011 (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022g). This is a clear indicator that it is more profitable to be a large-scale producer. However, a responsible and holistic food system should not solely rely on the producers (Lang & Mason 2017).

1.2 Aim and research questions

The study's aim is to question and bring attention to the transparency of the aquatic and terrestrial animal production chains, by analyzing the producers' and consumers' actions, experience and expectations of the animal industry in the media landscape. Producers, suppliers, and consumers all meet in media outlets through campaigns, news stories and marketing, and the finalized product for purchase is often visualized more romanticized than its animal origin. The analysis will primarily focus on how actors of the production chain are using media as a tool of transparency to either share, embellish or gather information in order to enhance animal welfare or profit for example. Furthermore, obstacles and advantages connected to a transparent production chain will be clarified, and possible communication gaps can be brought to attention. The study will hopefully provide an insight to the hidden voices of the animal industry, such as small-scale businessmen who are often overlooked due to larger scale productions are often steering the market.

Research questions

- What do the visibility or concealment of production animals lead to from a producer and consumer perspective?
- In which ways are production animals' realities made visible or concealed by third parties, such as suppliers and environmental labels?

Limitations of the study

The study will be centered to Swedish actors and consumers in the animal industry, regarding both fish and cattle. Due to the time-limitation, terrestrial animal production will solely be represented by cattle farmers, therefore are other terrestrial production animals excluded throughout the study. The narrowed focus can enhance a deeper understanding of the issue and gather a profound data corpus to perform a more meaningful analysis.

2. Background

2.1 Development of the industrial society and the animal industry

To understand the concept of concealment in the animal industry, this section will briefly discuss society's adaptation to the modern production chain.

Ryan (2019) describes the development of industrial society as *“if our ancestors were wolves [...] most of us are closer to pugs”* (Ryan 2019, 11), referring to today's wide selection of supermarkets and fast-food options. In comparison to individuals previously being responsible for food gathering by fishing, hunting or farm themselves. Nowadays large cooperation's have taken over family run farms and the care of the animals' wellbeing are connected to this shift in society (Singer 1973).

Historically slaughterhouses were operating in the center of towns, whereas it currently is a more or less invisible part of the food process (Vialles 1994). Gustafson (2020, 7) visualize slaughter-buildings appearance in Sweden as *“the gate is the entrance to an unmanageable landscape of grey sheet metal buildings. Only a faint little stale smell tells what is going on here”*. Humans are called carnivores, not carrion eaters, hence the society's wish to distance themselves from the process (Vialles 1994). No one wants to be the slaughterer, whereas society take for granted that the job will be executed (Vialles 1994). Geographical distance is a factor that make the work of producers difficult for consumers to oversee, and opens up potential misbehavior, such as illegal fishing or illegal fishing activities (Kuperan & Sutinen 1998). The concealment relates to Dawkins (2004) words, *“blindness to suffering is an inherent consequence of natural selection”*, and humans are adaptive. Which is a questionable lifestyle due to even though it is possible *“to adapt to horrible situation, does not mean we should”* (Ryan 2019, 119).

Singer (1973) exemplifies that in 1965 the British government concluded animals do suffer when exposed to stress or physical pain. However, legislations

still allow a modified quality of life for production animals in 2022. The welfare of animals is continuously overlooked and the minimum requirements in confined spaces are questionable, yet generally accepted by society (Singer 1973). Negowetti (2018) visualizes how animals are raised to fulfill human needs, that their natural behaviors are restricted when being kept indoors or force fed to gain weight faster than natural to maximize the meat production. When evolving selective species to fit our society's need for food production, it is not showing an evolutionary progress of the production species itself, more taking away the freedom (Ryan 2019). Gustafson (2020) suggest that in reality the animals have the physical advantage over humans, but the animals get subdued by the actions of the employees in the industry. To exemplify, the cows' intended purpose for profit is mainly to repeatedly become pregnant in order to produce milk, whereas, males are slaughtered early in life sold as veal, simplified, a waste product due to dairy production (Barua 2019; Gillespie 2014). Dairy cows are inseminated yearly and give birth to calves until they fulfill the average lifespan of five years (Arla 2022), whereas they can become up to 20 years naturally (The humane league 2022). Farmed salmon are on averaged harvested from 18 months of age, depending on when reaching market-ready weight of 2-5 kg (Norwegian Seafood Council 2022).

2.2 Previous research regarding agenda setting and animal production

Signs of transparency in society often take place through media outlets, hence, the following section will provide previous research regarding agenda setting, priming and perceptions of animals in the food production system.

“Communication is central to how we come to know and to know about, the environment and environmental issues” (Hansen 2011, 9). Sweden is viewed as a country that values transparency and accountability with an additionally low corruption rate in comparison to other countries (Transparency International 2022). Through public hearings, consultations, and parliamentary discussions, the government is often obliged to involve the affected stakeholders and the public in policy transformation and agenda-setting (Howlett 2014). If the government has ability to engage in reflexivity with actors, the food system works more efficiently due to values and practices are considered (Kugelberg et al. 2021). It is undeniable that economics is a priority compared to environmental considerations when influencing policies from a government perspective (Beder 2002). However, previous studies regarding agenda-setting have reached the conclusion that media effects had greater public impact regarding environmental issues than foreign policy or economics (Hansen 2011).

Agenda-setting is used for *priming* the audience in public issues and the perception of them (Scheufele 2000), in *“the way in which they are addressed, contested and resolved”* to create awareness (Hansen 2011, 9). Therefore, applicable on environmental issues (McCombs 2002) and corporate environmental communication (Pollach 2014) such as the animal industry as it is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions compared to other diets and additionally,

the production of livestock feed is a vast contributor to deforestation (Theurl et al. 2020).

It has been confirmed that agenda-setting is more effective when it comes to “unobtrusive” issues (Zucker 1978), where there is limited access for personal experience to the issue or if the information is only available at potentially biased media channels (Hansen 2011). Olausson (2011) underlines media's important role in intertwining science, politics, and citizens. However, Olausson (2011) also states that neglecting the publics’ possibility of discarding and making unintentional assumptions about the information impacts on media's power, which needs to be accounted for. When available information includes both sides of the debate regarding animal activists vs. agribusinesses, it can lead to an excess of information that is both contradicting and oversimplified, which increases the complexity and causes confusion for the public (Fraser 2001; Packwood Freeman 2009). Fraser (2001) advocates sharing a more truthful visualization of agriculture instead of generalizations that shows a limited version of reality. Studies have proven that “*image-based tactics, such as social media live streaming and ‘shock’ are still effective in raising and promoting an agenda*” (Williams, Archer & O’Mahoney 2021,16).

Environmentalist groups or activists are an example of non-profit actors that uses the mass media to gain attention and promote a chosen topic on the public agenda and furthermore engage in actions such as protesting (Beder 2002; Cobb, Ross & Ross 1976). Activists are prominent in revealing inconvenient messages and exposing them on the public agenda (Bourdieu 1977; Williams, Archer & O’Mahoney 2021). However, they are rather ineffective in influencing policy agendas even though they are successful in spreading awareness (Beder 2002), as “*[g]rowing concern, however, does not necessarily lead to action*” (Krøvel 2012, 261). An evaluation of a 2007 study in the United Kingdom revealed that vegans were portrayed by the media as hostile extremists, sentimentalists, and other types of stereotypical negative members of society, rather than animal and environmentally friendly individuals (Cole & Morgan 2011). In Australia, newspapers tended to exclude the link between meat production and consumption to climate change, with less than 1 % mentioning it (Friedlander, Riedy, Bonfigioli 2014). Packwood Freeman (2009) raised questions regarding how truthfully the news agenda covers animal protection, exemplifying that from a farmer's point of view, the media often reflects on how the bovine or fish is taken care of and the techniques used in order to be a high-quality product, such as not bruising the meat. As an object for sale, the focus is “bodies not beings”, and by continuing referring to the end product, beef, pork or seafood (Packwood Freeman 2009), it is easier to distinguish groceries as a commodity, not part of a sentient animal for consumers (Dunayer 2001). There is also a lack of emotional descriptions regarding animals when describing their surroundings’, commonly used expressions are *clean* or *sufficient* rather than *depressing* or *unjust* regarding the fate or state of the animals (Packwood Freeman 2009). The legitimacy of media when reinforcing an anthropocentric worldview can be criticized due to moral concerns, however, media channels are very important to keep the debate topical (Singer 1997; Packwood Freeman 2009).

According to Jones (1996) successful agenda-setting influenced and enhanced animal treatment in the United States of America to a more humane legislation in

the 1870s concerning transportation and in the 1950s regarding the slaughtering methods. The intense campaigning exposed what was previously concealed and thereby cause much attention (Jones 1996). However, farmed animals' status has not changed significantly even though there is a growing animal rights movement (Singer, Mason & Adamson, 2006; Packwood Freeman 2009). A more recent example of the public opposing legislations was when the meat and dairy industry advocated to prevent plant-based substitutes using labels such as vegetarian burgers, oat milk, or vegan sausage (Food Regulation Standing Committee 2019). The legislation suggestion was denied due to the raised resistance from the public as they became aware of the issue (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021).

2.3 Swedish legislation

To distinguish what information is transparently shared to consumers versus the reality of a producers and production animals' life, this section will provide information regarding Swedish legislation and requirements. The intention of the section is to facilitate the understanding of the findings and analysis for the reader regarding misconceptions and to get a brief insight of what regulations the farmers and fishermen are required to follow.

2.3.1 Animal husbandry regarding cattle

The principle of animal welfare in Sweden originates in general from the 1960s when the European Council initiated guidelines for farmers regarding animal transportation and animal husbandry (Veissier et al. 2008). The release of the Brambell report (1965) by the UK Farm Animal Welfare Council (Negowetti 2018) raised awareness of the treatment of animals in the production chain and also introduced “the five freedoms” (see table 1). Which has influenced the European regulations due to an acceptance of the concept (Negowetti 2018) “*although there is no official link*” (Veissier et al. 2008, 280). As a member of the European Union (EU) Sweden's regulations regarding the production chain are adapted to EU legislations. The EU set the minimum standard which includes allowed stunning- and slaughtering methods, environmental conditions and transportation with the aim to promote animal welfare. However, each country can choose to have even more restricted laws to obey. In general, Sweden has set higher requirements for animal comfort in the national regulations than the minimum standard in EU's common animal welfare legislation regarding the mammals slaughtered yearly, see Table 2 (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022a).

In Sweden, farmers are required to let their cattle engage in social contact, maintain an acceptable hygienic standard, good physique and have the opportunity to perform their natural grazing behavior (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022a). Milk and beef production are often intertwined, due to around 60 % of Swedish beef originating from dairy cows, therefore many of the welfare values coincide (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022a). However, the requirements depend on if its dairy cows or beef production and also if the cattle is raised organic, conventional or subsistence farmed.

The handling of cattle requires a lot of knowledge and The Swedish Board of Agriculture are responsible for to keep the producer's husbandry up to date. However, it is up to the farmer how they want to run their farm but here are some of Sweden's basic requirements;

- Swedish legislations require that cattle must not be subjected to unnecessary suffering or discomfort during slaughter or killing (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022a).
- The technique used when slaughtering cattle is first by stunning a captive bolt gun and then bleeding the animal out, unless special circumstances occur (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022c).
- An average of 87 % of male calves born in 2017 were slaughtered before the age of three, most commonly in week 53-104 (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022g).
- Pasture is for example required for dairy cows during the summer which do not apply to bulls (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022a). However, if the cows are lactating, they can be held inside during summertime for 18 hours/day (SJVFS 2017:24).
- During a maximum eight-hour transportation a calf's minimum space is depending on the weight not exterior size, 50 kg calf is required 0,40 m², and a 110 kg calf is 0,70 m², (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022e).
- Dehorning calves before the age of 8 weeks is allowed under supervised forms by a branding iron (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2018). Anesthesia is a must to minimize pain and stress since the horns are in a growing stage and are filled nerves and blood vessels (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2018).
- Calves are separated within days, sometimes hours from the cow, whereas, they do get the colostrum to enhance their immune system (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022h). Calves can be kept in an isolated confinement up to eight weeks of age, then they need social contact (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022h). In case of sickness they must have free access to water, otherwise is two times a day recommended water amount and they should get free access of food from two weeks of age (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022h).

Table 1. A summary of the five freedoms (Hewson, 2003; McCulloch, 2013)

Freedom from hunger and thirst	Species specific availability to food and fresh water in order to maintain health
Freedom from discomfort	Appropriate shelter and resting area with comfortable bedding, space, temperature, light, sound level
Freedom from pain, injury, or disease	Prevent risks of injury in the environment, vaccinate if possible, regular health checks and treat illness or injuries as soon as possible
Freedom to express normal behavior	Adapt social contact and environment depending on the species. Ability to move freely (stretch their body out)
Freedom from fear and distress	Maintain a high mental health since it can affect physical health. To exemplify, provide safe hiding spaces, enrichment and avoid too small spaces or overcrowding

Table 2. The total amount of production mammals slaughtered in Sweden 2021 (The Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022d)

Animals slaughtered in Sweden 2021	
Category	Total number
Cattle	399 578
Calf	11 499

Horse	1 036
Sheep	229 248
Goat	681
Pig	2 646 424
Total: 3 288 466	

2.3.2 Animal husbandry regarding farmed and wild caught fish

Sweden's fishermen act under the European Union's (EU) common fisheries policy (CFP), which aims are to increase productivity, stabilize the market, ensure reasonable pricing and promote health options for consumers (EU 2022). The total allowable catches (TACs) are set by EU and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SMW) is responsible that it is complied with nationally (SMW 2022b). In Sweden the landed fish was estimated to 153 000 metric tons in 2021, with a sales value of 767 million SEK (SMW 2022a). SMW also collects data regarding landing and fishing quotas, the information and statistics are based on the fishermen's own logbooks and coastal fishing records. (SMW 2022a). CFP was the first transnational comprehensive legal framework, which divided the use of water to exclusive economic zones, maximum sustainable yield regarding stock management (EU 2022). The aim is to promote sustainable fishing while working with conservation (EU 2022). Regarding environmental impact the Swedish Food Agency (2022b) recommend choosing environmental labeled fish, and also vary between the fish species to influence which fish is caught, and not contribute to overfishing. Due to being a part of EU, Sweden is required to implement a traceability system which is run by SMW (SMWc). The first buyer of the fishermen's product initiates the traceability chain, and subsequently must all companies thereafter label and submit information to the traceability system if reselling batches, until supplying a retailer, where the chain ends (SMW 2022c). To facilitate legislation and regulation regarding seas used by multiple countries, EU have implemented sea borders (SMW 2022d). Sweden's maritime territorial sea is 12 nautical miles beyond the baselines (SMW 2022d). The baseline is used for calculating where the territorial sea ends and the economic zone begins, usually measured from the shoreline at low tide (SMW 2022d).

In case of violations of the CFP the authorities refer to the Fisheries Act (1993: 787) or the Swedish criminal Code depending on the situation. Violations can relate to the fished species, fishing method, tools, ship, trespassing restricted areas or by increased risk of spreading diseases (SMW 2022d). The penalty is also dependent on if the violation occurred in Sweden's maritime territory, the Swedish economic zone, or the territorial waters. Which means that the marine fisheries are not accountable through The Animal Welfare Act, it only covers farmed fish, kept in captivity (the Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022f). When farming fish it is

therefore other obligations and welfare requirements, the fishermen need to show competence to manage supervision of the fishes, regarding farm design, safety, and general handling of the fish (the Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022f). The main purpose of the legislation is to prevent disease outbreaks, mortality, and behavioral disorders like stress and aggression and promote natural behavior (the Swedish Board of Agriculture 2022f). However, it is evident that a predator fish used to a life in solitary conditions experience stress when kept in cages with tens- or hundreds of thousands of other individuals (Stevenson 2007). As visualized by Table 3, fish is measured in weight and not in individuals. When harvested or caught, the fish is foremost not actively “slaughtered”, the cause of death is usually asphyxia, failure of producing oxygen to the brain (Mood & Brooke 2012).

If the fishes are kept overcrowded confinement, it can result in;

- *increased risk of disease and additionally high densities facilitate transmission*
- *aggressive behavior which increase physical injuries such as fin erosion.*
- *poor body condition*
- *poor water quality*
- *increased stress levels*
- *reduced growth, feed intake and feed conversion efficiency* (Stevenson 2007, 6)

2.4 Environmental labelling

As environmental labels are used widely as a promoter in marketing animal commodities, some of Sweden’s most prominent and well-known certifications will be presented in this section.

Environmental labelling is a way to promote a better sustainable choice for the consumer. “*Environmental labels, such as organic, guide to food produced with environmental considerations*” (Swedish Food Agency 2022a). It is an indicator that the company behind the commodity has intentionally developed their production process to promote a higher standard and are willing to share it openly (Liljenstolpe & Elofsson 2009). Cooperating with an environmental label requires the business owner to follow regulations and accept regular inspections of their labor indicating transparency (Klintman & Boström 2008). However, with the wide range of different labels representing organic, recyclable or environment friendly products, it is questionable if the consumers can distinguish the difference (D'souza, Taghian & Lamb 2006);

“Unlike other physical attributes of a product, environmental attributes are difficult to detect unless there is sufficient information about them. Owing to this difficulty in detecting green attributes, consumers rely on outside factors such as media advertising and/or information provided on product labels” (D'souza, Taghian & Lamb 2006, 164).

Following is Sweden’s most commonly used labels presented;

KRAV

KRAV was implemented in 1985 to replace several environmental labels used at the time due to confusion for both consumers and retailers (KRAV 2022). KRAV has since then become Sweden's most recognizable label for organic products, with the aim to guide the industry towards supreme standards regarding animal welfare, health, social responsibility, and climate change (ibid.). Businesses that aspire to use the label need to comply with the rules and pay a license fee, the vision is sustainability for the current and future generations regarding both food and beverages (KRAV 2022). In terms of animal husbandry, one of KRAV's main goal is maintaining healthy animals, which requires the farmers to provide adequate living space for normal movement, good stable environment with windows and a possibility for outdoor exercise (ibid.). Measurements of living area and species-specific standards are provided by KRAV, and the aim is that the farm should be self-providing to the fullest extent, additionally, medications can only be used, if necessary, no preventive treatments are allowed to minimize the risk of generating more resistant bacteria (ibid.).

KRAV invoke stricter and clearer regulations than required by the EU, and insist on free movement for the animals, due to the upkeep of social and natural behavior, tethered cattle is only allowed in small-scale farming to aid the farmers in their work and facilitate certification (KRAV 2022). To minimize stress the minimum time for separation between calves and cows are 24 hours, this due to stronger bonds are formed the longer time the animals spend together (ibid.). During the pasture period animals should only be indoors due to animal welfare grounds like, sickness, breeding, birth or prior to slaughter (KRAV 2022). A farm is not allowed to have both conventional and organic animals from the same species, it has to be clear and no misunderstanding if the animal is from an organic or conventional husbandry (ibid.). However, it is allowed to have conventional chickens but organic cattle in the same farm (ibid.).

KRAV can also be applied to fishing, also here is traceability, sustainability, animal welfare and social health aspects fundamental (KRAV 2022). The regulations cover all steps up to the landing of the fish and since KRAV regulations are formed in Sweden it is mostly applicable on fisheries active in the Northeast Atlantic (ibid.). To be certified by KRAV there must be viable stock and cannot largely impact the ecosystems in the area, since 2019 the ships have to be certified by MSC (KRAV 2022). KRAV is an additional certification to demonstrate a high standard, where the ships are required to keep documentation of fishing area, only use tools that minimize by-catch and have limitation of the time fishes are allowed to be hooked to promote animal welfare (ibid.). Beam trawls are for example prohibited, and bottom trawling is only accepted under specific circumstances (KRAV 2022). Reduction of environmental impacts are advocated for in terms of which and how much fuel is allowed (ibid.). Regarding social health, sea food that have bioaccumulated harmful contaminants that the Swedish Food Agency have invoked dietary restrictions about are not able to acquire the KRAV label, for example herring from the Baltic Sea or the Gulf of Bothnia (ibid.).

Swedish seal of quality, Svenskt Sigill

The Swedish seal of quality is a sustainable label for Swedish food and flowers, which prioritizes animal care, environmental responsibility, and food safety, which is controlled by an independent third party (Swedish Seal 2022a). The label intends to proceed developing agriculture with climate friendly progress in terms of increased biological diversity, sustainable use of water and climate-smart solutions to reduce emissions (Swedish Seal 2022a). The certification is *IP Sigill*, cattle are required to be outdoors throughout the day during the pasture period, have an adequate resting space, ability to get massage for example, and in case of injuries investigation are implemented (Swedish Seal 2022b). Additional strategies the farmers must follow to minimize their climate impact is; evaluate the feed used on the farm to prevent waste, and disregard soy and palm oil products due to global deforestation (Swedish Seal 2022b). Sea food certified with the Swedish seal of quality is solely farmed, where there are regularly evaluations regarding the health status of the animals (Swedish Seal 2022c). Factors to look at is behavior of the animals, the water quality, and the handling from the producers throughout the animals' life cycle and to minimize the use of pharmaceuticals, pro-active measurements are required (Swedish Seal 2022c). To make lesser impact on the wild stock only a restricted amount of fish meal or oil from wild caught fish can be used as feed, and if used it must be certified (Swedish Seal 2022c).

Marine Stewardship Council - MSC

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an international non-profit organization where the certification aims to indicate that the fishery is sustainable (MSC 2022a). The MSC mark demonstrate that the fish have been wild caught in an area with a viable stock and is in general considerate of the environment (MSC 2022a). A third party control the MSC certified businesses annually unannounced, to assess if the standard is acceptable and the production chain traceable to remain credible (MSC 2022b). MSC work within a cooperation of fishermen and scientist, with the aim to facilitate for the consumer to find sustainable sea food (MSC 2022a). Information from environmental organizations, suppliers, retailers, and governmental institutions are gathered and also publish for public display (MSC 2022b). MSC was implemented after a joint collaboration between World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Unilever in 1996 to improve the wild caught fish industry and secure a fruitful business for generations to come (MSC 2022c).

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council - ASC

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) is a certification used on farmed seafood that are produced with both environmental and social responsibilities assessed by an independent third party (ASC 2022a). ASC requirements are the strictest in the farming industry and are constantly developed to keep up with the current global demand and environmental situation. The certification was initiated on behalf of WWF, officially started in 2004 (ASC 2022b), due to an insight of the need to provide sustainable, healthy, affordable protein to a growing population and future generations (ASC 2022b). There are species specific standards with reoccurring evaluations about the feed, disease prevention, animal welfare, water

quality and a fair and profitable work environment (ASC 2022a). Additional aspects the farms have to take into consideration are the impact on biodiversity and pollution (ASC 2022c). ASC is run as an international, independent, non-profitable organization (ASC 2022a).

3. Theoretical lens

In order to conclude the communication regarding production animals and what information is disclosed, multiple theories apply. However, agenda-setting allows for a lens that provide insight to the means both behind marketing strategies but also facilitates the understanding of the different actors positioning.

3.1 Agenda setting theory

“What we know about the world is largely based on what the media decide to tell us” (McCombs 2002, 2). Agenda setting is a way to execute power and influence through communication tools, such as mass media or campaigns (Beder 2002). Through news channels, the media is able to set a nation’s agenda, by gaining the public’s interest and focusing on a chosen topic to influence the opinions on the matter, this is a well-known strategy in political campaigns, and influencing national policies (McCombs 2002). By selecting what information is spread on television or other media, the population will process and judge it, whether it concerns governments, policies, or other topics regarding the nation (Iyengar & Kinder 2010; McCombs 2002). When topics are difficult for the public to personally oversee or investigate, the media tends to take on a greater agenda-setting effect than in those cases where there is a more hands-on approach available or other sources of information (Pollach 2014, Zucker 1978).

Whether the audience is listening, reading, or watching a news segment, the *timing, positioning, length, repetition, and volume* matters (McCombs et al. 1997). The factors are essential in priming the audience hence, a tool for agenda-setting (McCombs et al. 1997). To exemplify, the most recent story has the possibility to create the most buzz and is presented first and with extra-large lettering size and/or in capitals (McCombs 2002). The *length*, and *positioning* if it is presented as an opening or ending story of the program, as well as how many days the story is repeatedly aired, influences how important the audience experience the media segment (McCombs 2002; McCombs et al. 1997). Mazur (1998) emphasizes that the quantity of media coverage is one of the major factors to gain attention, McCombs (2002) also proclaims the volume as a decisive factor. By regularly repeating a story the public will subsequently think of a story as important whereas an infrequently mentioned topic will be forgotten (Dotson et al. 2012). The attention gained creates public awareness and opinions are formed, the agenda is

transformed from the media to the public (Pollach 2014). The priming of a problem shapes both the understanding and limitations in how to address and solve it (Beder 2002).

“The media set the agenda only when citizens perceive their news stories as relevant” (McCombs 2002, 8). Media channels are in a power position where they can determine what information is newsworthy which means that they cannot be considered a neutral observer in a profound sense (Wagner & Payne 2017). Their ability to select or refrain from publishing certain topics and the regularity gives them a considerable influence in shaping the present reality (Wagner & Payne 2017). *“Elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind”* (McCombs 2002, 2). However, it is important to remember that the media is not single handed the only setter of the public agenda, even though they are influential (McCombs 2002) and can provide legitimacy (Pollach 2014).

Corporations with an interest in profit are also actively linked to the agenda-setting framework, they are trying to influence the news media for personal advantage, or when opposing lobbyists that are problematizing over their agenda (Berger 2001; Pollach 2014).

When referring to agenda setting McCombs & Shaw (1972) suggest including an analysis regarding selective perception and juxtaposition. Juxtaposition is *“an act or instance of placing close together or side by side, especially for comparison or contrast”* (Dictionary 2022). When the public experiences communication that results in personal importance, high salience blocks the need for more profound research (McCombs & Shaw 1972). Agenda-setting effects can partly be described by basic traits in human psychology, McCombs (2002) refers to it as an innate need to understand our surroundings to feel comfortable, this need for orientation creates a behavior where we keep exploring until we have made sense of that setting. Another proven trait is the media’s use of priming. *“The psychological basis of priming is the selective attention of the public. People do not, indeed, cannot, pay attention to everything”* (McCombs 2002, 12). This explains why salient objects attract the attention of the public, and they, therefore, rely on the media and also form their opinions from what is repeatedly in their focus (McCombs 2002). Further, McCombs (2002) suggests that the increased salience of certain topics influences the public to switch from a neutral and objective position to build an opinion.

Media work in an ever-changing landscape, with daily updates on politics and other social issues, so instead of trying to match a specific interest to a person they use major coverage and hope to appeal to a greater audience and influence the agenda (McCombs & Shaw 1972). In that way, the media let the audience create a personal picture in their head (McCombs & Shaw 1972). To summarize, *“mass media have implications for personal behaviors”* (McCombs 2002, 17). Related theories are *“gatekeeping theory”*, where it is suggested that editors are selecting what stories are published and are in that way the gatekeepers of information (Lasorsa 2007). Framing is another strongly related concept to agenda-setting, where you concretize by retracting and highlighting actors' identities, relationships, their use of language, and also the process itself (Entman 1993; Van Hulst & Yanow 2016, Westin 2019). Framing is primarily used to clarify and for *“sense-making”*, by *“selecting naming and categorizing”* (Van Hulst & Yanow 2016, 99). The bridge between agenda-setting, priming, and framing are divided into three

levels of analysis, (a) creation of news message, (b) message processing and, (c) the production of effects (Sheufele & Tewksbury 2007).

3.2 Building an agenda

When building an agenda there are optional levels and models to apply. McCombs & Shaw (1976) introduced two levels regarded as a primary and a secondary level. Firstly, the media create consciousness regarding the current issue to the public and secondly, the attributes of the issue are manifested by the way the media is communicating about it (McCombs & Shaw 1976; Pollach 2014). To simplify, the first level is about *what* to think and the second is about *how* to think about or frame it (Beder 2002).

Another contribution to the theory is by Cobb, Ross & Ross (1976) that suggest three models of agenda building:

1. *an outside initiative model where citizens groups gain broad public support and get an issue onto the formal agenda*
2. *a second model where the issues are initiatives of the government that need to be placed on the public agenda for successful implementation*
3. *an inside access model where the policy proposals come from policy communities with easy access to government, with support from particular interest groups but little public involvement (Beder 2002, 2)*

Timing was mentioned as one of the important factors of priming (McCombs et al. 1997). Kingdon (1995) advocate a “*policy window*” as an essential building brick in agenda-setting. A policy window is described as a newly risen opportunity where there is a possibility to change a policy direction (Beder 2002; Kingdon 1995). Typical examples of these situations are substantial accidents, disasters, or changes in government that trigger a wave of public action and increase personal investment (Beder 2002). To specify, an activist proclaimed that his involvement in activism arouse after he did not see any improvements in the American industry by just “*being a non-pushy vegan*” (Washington Post 2018). He and others are now facing charges with jailtime up to 60 years for releasing two piglets from a mismanaged farm with video evidence (Washington Post 2018). The example visualizes that any group has the possibility to mobilize awareness and support for a chosen cause when using a policy window in agenda setting (Beder 2002).

Williams, Archer & O’Mahoney (2021) discusses the concept of agenda-setting with “*agenda-melding*”, to describe the interaction between activist and the media in a more modern media environment. This development suggests that it is “*the process by which audience members seek out and blend media agendas from various communication sources to fit their individual preferences*” (Shaw & Colistra 2007, 11). The public access to interconnected information through social media and other digital sources simplifies the melding process, and due to that weakens the news media's role (Friedlander & Riedy 2018). Connecting with others sharing the same interest or views have been vastly facilitated by online communities and group memberships (Williams, Archer & O’Mahoney 2021). Geographic distance is no longer an issue and it is easy for an individual to become

an active member of the community regardless of location (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021). The availability of such groups online reduces reliance on traditional news media as gatekeepers or withholders of information (Friedlander & Riedy 2018). Redefining power in a way that weakens the traditional media role as the agenda-setters role and instead opens up for potentially multiple agenda-setters through themselves (Friedlander and Riedy 2018; Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021). Multiple sources of information that are constantly growing create more suspicion and source criticism, which is both required and exercised (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021). The public is more eager, willing, and demanding to witness for themselves with the access to digital platforms, in this way, the traditional media agenda can be balanced by activist groups' own stories in order to create a more equal setting (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021).

4. Method

To enable the analysis of transparency and the visibility or concealment of animals from a producer and consumer perspective the study will be further explained through the use of mixed method .

4.1 Methodological approach

The study's research procedures have been based on Creswell's (2009) mixed-methods model, by combining the strengths of qualitative and quantitative data to be evaluated through a theoretical lens. Creswell's (2009) description of a concurrent transformative strategy with the use of a triangulation design can be used for evaluating the inequality, which is applicable to the study's purpose. The three data sets the study used to evaluate the production chain's communication is interviews (producers), a survey (consumers), and websites (suppliers). The choice of method is what drives the study's development further, and the choice of combining and connecting two methods can facilitate the purpose, "*the qualitative addresses the process while the quantitative, the outcomes*" (Creswell 2009, 31). The combination also allows creativity, elaboration, and clarification (Halcomb 2019). The study's data was collected simultaneously which complies with the concurrent working method and is also favorable when working within a timeframe (Creswell 2009). Using a concurrent triangular design "*is advantageous because it is familiar to most researchers and can result in well-validated and substantiated findings*" (Creswell 2009, 197).

The survey was disseminated prior to the interviews. Furthermore, interviews were conducted simultaneously as the survey was active, and in order to triangulate the information presented in the survey and interviews, additional website observations have been conducted. The third data set was gathered to examine both how much information the consumers actually get when searching online, but also if the producers work with transparency shows. The suppliers are the natural bridge between producers and consumers and therefore relevant to examine. Since the supplier perspective is not represented by individuals, solely by their websites, the data have prominently been used as a tool to demonstrate the participating respondents' actual experience as both customers and collaborators from an objective view. However, criticism of the mixed method is that it may complicate the analysis when the data sets have two separate forms, statistics versus full-length answers, and requires a deep understanding of both methods (Creswell 2009; Bartholomew 2013).

Mixed-method research has enabled inclusive studies on social injustice and pluralism in need of transformation (Mertens 2003). It is a method that has the

potential to include the least advantageable without excluding the decision-makers, the purpose is to raise voices that have not yet been heard or misrepresented (Mertens 2003). It is recommended that it is a clear goal throughout the study that is solution-seeking toward a more just society (Mertens 1998; Sweetman, Badiee & Creswell 2010).

By using the theoretical lens of agenda setting, the concepts of social, political, and historical problems could be identified (Creswell 2009). Previous studies of agenda setting were evaluated prior to the use of it, to investigate to see if the approach was suitable as a lens. As stated by Creswell (2009, 70), a *“lens becomes an advocacy perspective that shapes the types of questions asked, inform how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change”*.

Steps taken to give validity to the research are to triangulate the data sets and compare different approaches and previous studies to provide authenticity (Creswell 2009). To improve the study's reliability, the study's result can be scrutinized through sound recordings, measurable statistics, governmental data, and previous research. All additional data have been clearly labeled with the date of the information gathering. Discussions regarding the format of the study, interview questions, and the survey have been held with the supervisor, instead of performing pilot studies prior to the data collection.

4.2 Survey

A survey was disseminated to elicit the consumers' perspective through the tool Google Forms. The aim was to include the consumers' expectations and experience on communication tools and media used within the animal industry, and also questions about their decisive factor when purchasing a product. The survey contained 16 questions in total (see Appendix 1) and followed the structure of Kothari (2004), where the structure is concise, approachable, intriguing, understandable, and proceed in a logical order, with a mix of both *“dichotomous (yes or no answers), multiple choice (alternative answers listed) or open-ended”* questions (Kothari 2004, 103). The use of both set and open answers was a good combination. The set answers gave statistical results and the open answers gave great input on consumers' personal thoughts and suggestions that are incorporated into the analysis. Quantitative research is the dominating method in behavioral science (Mertens 2003), which is why the survey was added, to generalize society's everyday behavior and opinions of the animal food industry. The use of a survey has been helpful, it would not have been possible to reach the final total of 134 respondents for personal interviews within the timeframe and through the survey a wide range of data was obtained. To compile the result into circular diagrams, Visme statistical tool was used.

The survey had 11 closed questions, which are good for statistical analysis, however, they can be seen as *“putting answers in people's mouths”* due to the limitation of options (Kothari 2004, 103). This is why five of the closed questions had the option to write a personal response if none of the options suited them. Additionally, there were two multiple-choice questions, and furthermore, three open questions where they could develop their answers from the previous question and also give a personal statement. In question nine the respondents' knowledge

were tested by exemplifying different labels, so data would be validated. Open questions can however be misinterpreted, and the researcher can become biased and only include comments that suit the study's aim (Kothari 2004). That is why both open and closed questions are used in the study, to remain reliable. This additional source of information was helpful when correlating the producers' expectations and views of their labor, versus the outcome in society, which thereby facilitated a bridge to the qualitative data of the interviews.

The survey was published on Facebook where the original post was re-posted seven times by others and on LinkedIn, where eight people reposted it. This ensured that the participants were randomly selected and covered a larger demographic spectrum, which improves the reliability (Creswell 2009). However, non-respondents do also affect the study's result due to their nonparticipation which results in a different outcome for the statistics (Creswell 2009; Fowler 2002).

4.3 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with individuals connected to the production in the animal food industry, specifically cattle and fishing. The intention was to gain insight into their experience regarding communication with media, their customers, and other parts of the production chain. All respondents were initially contacted through email where a description of the study's purpose was presented and additionally how the data would be used. 20 producers were contacted of which seven respondents participated. When selecting producers to contact the geographic location was not a decisive factor, however, they had to be located within the Swedish borders due to the relevance of this study.

The aim was to get an in-depth knowledge regarding the animal industry's producers and reach farmers and fisheries with various animal husbandry methods and sizes. The idea was to include organic or conventional cattle, and for the fish industry, both farmed and wild-caught produce to gather broader comparable data. However, the response rate was lower than anticipated and it was especially difficult to get a hold of farmers and fishermen. Either they did not reconnect at all, or it was too busy in the workplace to set aside time for an interview. This influenced the study's development, and instead of interviewing the people who are out fishing, contact was made with larger organizations that represent the interest of the fishermen through a recommendation from a person who declined to be interviewed. Furthermore, participating respondents were asked for further interviewee suggestions, and this led to faster contact due to being able to use the previous respondent's name as a reference, hence the order of the interviews.

The farmer perspective was extended to a fashion producer that shares a deep collaboration with meat producers and is relevant due to the respondent's interest in developing the animal industry through sustainable and circular collaboration. One large-scale fish producer who declined left a written comment regarding the owners' disinterest in participating in interviews. This correlates with Kothari's (2004) statement that the higher the pay grade, the less approachable the person is and consequently impacts the data set. The written reply;

“I don't know if our company, is the right one for your purpose. We fish pelagic species on Swedish quotas and unload the raw material to various receiving facilities, which in turn or through a series of intermediaries produce product to the final consumer. We do not communicate with customers ourselves. We are MSC certified to the extent that the fishery is approved. The owners spend a lot of time in Denmark or fishing and are not very keen to take part in interviews” (Large-scale trawling company 2022-03-08).

The respondents who did partake in the study were easy to get a hold of, and an important consideration is that the respondent participating are the ones actively willing to promote transparency and advertise their own efforts toward this. These respondents appeared to be engaged in animal welfare questions.

Respondents six and seven chose to participate in the same interview due to working in the same company, thus changing the nature of the one-on-one interview not to a focus group per se, but to a more interactive peer interview. However, both respondents delivered separate answers throughout the interview and their different roles and experiences in the industry contributed to the study as individuals. Sound recording of the interviews was optional, which led to one respondent declining, thus respondent two's data is relying solely on my own notes. All interviews were conducted in Swedish and took approximately 30-40 minutes to execute through phone calls, Zoom and Teams (see table 4 for detailed information).

The interviews are helpful due to the respondents' ability and encouragement to answer spontaneously, they can ask for clarification if the question is unclear and the overall reaction to the question can be interpreted (Kothari 2004). The five recorded interviews have been transcribed in Swedish and the statements used in the study have been translated by me to English with the help of translation tools. This is to validate if any misinterpretation had occurred during the translation process, (Creswell 2009; Gibbs 2007).

The interview guide (see Appendix 2) was divided into three themes, *the occupation, the production chain, and transparency* to cover the communication spectra in the study and enhances the understanding (Creswell 2009). Prior to formulating the questions and themes, common denominators were mapped out and differences between the terrestrial and aquatic industries following a literature review and a review of the industry. Initially, in the occupation section, the questions are formulated so the respondent gives an introduction of themselves, their profession, and their general thoughts about being active in Sweden's animal production. This is to ease into the next section regarding production chain and transparency where the questions are more developed to enhance the analysis in the study (Creswell 2009). The sequence the questions was semi-structured, and, in each interview, spontaneous follow-up questions were used for clarification or further development. When evaluating the interview process there are some conclusions that can be drawn. The initial prediction was that too many producers would be available for interviews. However, since the outcome was different, the interview could have been initiated sooner.

During the transcription process, it was interesting to hear my own development as an interviewer, the voice got calmer and I allowed for more silence from my end, which is crucial to keep the interview objective (Kothari 2004). It was also easier to come up with relevant follow-up questions since I began to see some patterns in the respondents' answers.

To get a clearer picture of the respondents' answers I color-coded the transcriptions, printed them, and cut the paragraphs apart to sort them under two categories. This strategy of categorization facilitated locating common thoughts among the respondents and made the large data set more manageable.

Qualitative content analysis is a helpful tool for decoding the collected data: it is "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, 1278). Braun & Clarke (2006) emphasize the need to repeatedly read the data to actively form ideas and identify patterns when conducting the study. The quantitative data collection method is helpful when you want to reach a wider range of people and enable a statistical overview of opinions (Creswell 2009).

Table 4. An overview of the when and how the interviews were conducted

Respondents				
Respondent	Title	Profession	Date & Time	Technique
1	Farmer	Organic dairy & beef	14/3 - 2022 14.45 37 minutes	Phone call Recorded Transcribed
2	Farmer	Dairy	17/3 - 2022 11.00 24 minutes	Phone call Notes
3	Fashion producer	Leather supplier from organic farms	6/4 - 2022 10.00 29 minutes	Zoom Recorded Transcribed
4	Fishery organization	Representing the interest of sea fisheries	21/4 - 2022 14.00 39 minutes	Zoom Recorded Transcribed
5	Fishery organization	Representing the interest of inland fisheries	26/4 - 2022 11.00 35 minutes	Teams Recorded Transcribed
6	Fishery	Sea fishery	29/4- 2022 10.00 40 minutes	Teams Recorded Transcribed
7	Fishery	Sea fishery	29/4 - 2022 10.00 40 minutes	Teams Recorded Transcribed

4.4 Website observations

To include the suppliers' everyday communication websites of Sweden's leading meat and animal product suppliers were evaluated from a consumer's perspective to review which information regarding the producers was presented. Schaupp & Belanger (2005) argues that easy navigation and an interactive and search-friendly website increase the satisfaction of the customer's online experience. Szymanski & Hise (2000) agrees and add product information as another factor for the consumer's decision-making. Details searched for; the geographic location, if the producer's name, husbandry, and environmental labels were mentioned, and if it was easily accessible, also if there were more information regarding organic products. Additionally, if they provided any excess information or other statements. By evaluating the customer experience there is a way to conclude if the e-commerce will be successful and reaches customer satisfaction (Schaupp & Belanger 2005). The primary factor when choosing which website to evaluate was that it had to be a Swedish corporation for the relevance of the study. Secondly, to enhance validity the suppliers are as recognizable as possible hence anyone can visit these pages. Additionally, familiar suppliers reach more consumers, so it is interesting how they present their products. The chosen websites are presented in table 5. The intention is to clearly compile what information is available to society as consumers, and how consciously or unconsciously consumers' choices and habits are based on this information. However, a disadvantage is that the websites are under constant construction and updates, hence it is important to mention the date the product was searched for.

Table 5. The suppliers used for website observation

Dairy	Meat	Fish
Arla www.arla.se [2022-04-27]	Scan www.scan.se [2022-04-27]	Miljöfiskbilen www.miljofiskbilen.se [2022-04-27]
Skåne Mejerier www.skanemejerier.se [2022-04-27]	Coop www.coop.se [2022-04-27]	Ishavet www.ishavet.nu [2022-04-27]
Norrmejerier www.norrmejerier.se [2022-04-27]	Ica www.ica.se [2022-04-27]	Martin & Servera www.martinservera.se [2022-04-27]
-	Naturligt Kött www.naturligtkott.se [2022-04-27]	Melanders www.melanders.se [2022-04-27]

5. Findings

5.1 Survey

To visualize the consumer perspective, the answer of the survey respondents have been divided into four categories to enhance the understanding of the findings.

5.1.1 Demographics

The survey collected 134 responses after being shared on two social media platforms, Facebook and LinkedIn between the 8th of March to the 12th of April 2022. The highest demographic response rate was in the age range of 31 - 45 (48,5%), followed by respondents aged 18 - 30 (35,1 %), thirdly, 46-60 (11,9 %), and the remaining 4,5 % were aged 61 or older. The majority of respondents have reported as omnivores (61%) and the remaining stated some types of dietary restrictions due to various reasons (see Appendix 3).

5.1.2 Information gap

A small majority of respondents proclaim that they rely mainly on the labeling of the product when questioning the product's quality and information (59 %). Secondly, the consumers turn to the internet to do the research themselves (33,6 %), very few put their trust in the grocery staff's competence regarding the products. 72,4 % think it is important to know what type of animal husbandry the farm or fishery uses in terms of rearing, slaughtering method, tools, and daily care. A small percentage think it is more important in meat and dairy production rather than fish and seafood. 81,3 % claim that information about the origin and animal husbandry is not easily accessible. However, almost 15 % select their product based on other criteria. One respondent states in an open question to which a written response could be submitted, that *" it is strange that we do not only sell organic and Swedish produced when it comes to meat/fish/dairy"*.

55,2 % said they could not describe the difference between the Swedish labeling such as The Nordic Swan ecolabel, KRAV, the Swedish Keyhole, or MSC by heart. The 60 participants who could, had to exemplify their knowledge in the next question, but only 48 described at least one labeling. The answers are varied, however, the majority are accurate, while some do not correspond with the actual meaning. The answers demonstrates that the MSC has successfully profiled its

label as an indicator for the marine industry. Expressions used to describe the labeling by the survey respondents are “sustainable”, “ethical”, “traceable”, “quality”, “information”, and “responsibility”. There is however some discrepancy regarding if it is a marker for farmed or wild-caught aquatic animals. The Nordic Swan ecolabel has a clear connection to an environmentally friendly choice for the consumer according to the respondents, several are also pointing out the absence of chemicals in the Nordic Swan products or that it is a governmentally issued voluntary label.

The Swedish Food Agency's Keyhole symbol is greatly recognized as a healthier food option with less fat and sugar. KRAV is also well recognized as an organic choice, and it is a label connected to animal husbandry and the food production system. Some implicate it is stricter than required legislations and stands for responsibility. ASC is mentioned by one respondent in a correct formulation.

Regarding the use of graphic images, currently used on cigarette packaging or campaigns from animal rights organizations (defined as question 12 in the survey) in marketing, only 1,5 % oppose this type of content. 41% feel uncomfortable with it, however, they still think it is important to show pictures from reality. The rest of the respondents are either positive or indifferent towards these campaigns compared to other marketing strategies. One respondent problematizes over this type of marketing, *“there is so much wrong in our consumption that if everything were to be marked with graphic images, it would only make people get used to the abuses/problems and close their eyes even more. I think that education is the best way to get people to choose the "right", instead of graphic images. I do not think anyone would want to have a baby if they knew what it looks like. Another respondent suggests another option than pictures” I believe that words have great power and can be an alternative to images. For example, "free-range" should never be used unless they involve outdoor living”.*

See Appendix 4 for a full schematic overview of the statistics of questions 3, 6, 7, 8 and 12.

5.1.3 Demand to know about the product's place of origin

A majority of 82,1 % stated that origin such as geographical location is important, especially if produced within the Swedish borders due to the national legislation, preferably locally produced. There is a desire that the government should be the main actor in implicating transparency from the place of origin. One respondent stated that *“I believe that greater transparency would be good, but I believe primarily that it should be done through the supervisory authority and not through the public”.* Additionally, another one suggested that *“beef taxes should be introduced, subsidies on livestock stopped and replaced with subsidies on locally grown vegetables that are good for our health, the planet, and additionally would spare animals' lives while reduce suffering.* Additional important information about the origin is the animal husbandry on the farm/fishery. Minimizing the environmental impact by shorter transportation routes gain some respondents' attention and a few mentioned that environmental labels demonstrates that the

product origin is reliable. However, one respondent shares that *“I feel constantly lost in the consumer world. What is really good compared to something else?”*

The respondents in the role of a consumer do not agree with the picture suppliers use in their marketing strategies when presenting a picture of the origin of their products. One respondent exemplifies *“there is much more suffering in the animals' daily lives that is not shown, especially when trying to press prices, animals suffer”*. Only 0,7 % agreed that suppliers clearly show what type of animal husbandry and which farm/fishery is supported by the purchase of the marketing product. 41 % do further research about the suppliers due to inadequate marketing, however, a respondent states *“sometimes the information is lacking, but I am not very good at looking up information by myself”*, another respondent shares a similar opinion *“I do not always have the energy to find out the facts for myself even though I care”*. 23,1% have trust in the suppliers and have little knowledge about the production chain.

Almost 13% do not think marketing in media channels needs to be connected to the production chain. The remaining respondents were negative and some commented that suppliers often show a glorified and inaccurate reality. Additional words used as criticism towards suppliers' marketing from respondents in question 10 were; *misleading, deficient, hypocritical, greenwashing, romanticized, and a false reflection of reality*. Lack of trust is mentioned four times regarding the credibility of suppliers. One respondent specifies *“I would consider going from lacto-ovo to eating more animal products if I knew that animal husbandry is fair and reasonable, but at the moment I do not have that trust in the industry”*. 73,1 % of the respondents request more transparency, which can be in the form of camera surveillance or personal visits but not limited to these options.

See Appendix 5 for a full schematic overview of the statistics of questions 4, 10, and 11.

5.1.4 Decisive factors in informing purchase of product

The top two factors when the respondents choose which product to buy are the geographical origin and environmental labeling, thirdly is an accredited supplier. Regarding the packaging, no one would buy a concealed product with only descriptive text. The respondents were, however, positive towards see-through covers and details like the name of the fishery/farm. A packaging showing a recommended recipe for the product was another appreciated factor. Pictures or names of the animals were only seen as positive by a few.

56,7% said that they are willing to pay a higher price if it comes with greater transparency, and 23,1% acknowledged that it depended on how much the price was raised. An open-ended entry admitted that: *“I feel guilty most of the time [when purchasing an animal product], sometimes laziness and price go before the knowledge that it probably has not gone quite right all the way”*. 8,2 % said that they would not pay a higher price, they trust that the producers are following legislation.

Four respondents added that there should be higher transparency without having to raise the price, one specified *“I think it is important but the wallet does not*

always agree". When asked why the respondents have their chosen diet, their personal well-being is the top priority followed by the animals' well-being and thirdly environmental impact. As the respondents could choose multiple alternatives, there is a clear combination of these three factors. Almost 40 % see cost as an important factor when choosing a product. Additional thoughts added from two separate respondents are family impact, *"other family members are more carnivorous than I am. I would have chosen to be a flexitarian myself"* and *"due to old habit, I am raised to eat what is offered"*.

See Appendix 6 for a full schematic overview of the statistics of questions 13-15.

All open statements from respondents in question 16 are presented in Appendix 7.

5.2 Interviews

In this section the interview respondents' answers will be presented and are categorized illustrating how they are affected by different actors in the livestock industry.

5.2.1 The respondents

Table 6. An overview of the roles the respondents have in relevance of the study

Respondent 1: R1	Runs an inherited farm with organic KRAV certified tethered dairy production. There are currently around 50-60 animals, including suckler cows, young stock, and calves,
Respondent 2: R2	Runs a family-owned farm, engaging in organic dairy production and is currently having around 30 animals.
Respondent 3: R3	Owns two companies working to improve global animal welfare while merging agribusiness with the fashion industry. The idea is to sell a high-end leather shoe where every piece is traceable.
Respondent 4: R4	Expert at an organization representing the sea fishermen's interest.
Respondent 5: R5	CEO of an organization representing the inland fisherman's interest.
Respondent 6: R6	The head of sustainability of a fishery, who works with improving sustainability by evaluating certifications, mapping out connections to the sustainable development goals, and how to promote the company among others.
Respondent 7: R7	The head of sales at a fishery, who manages the communication regarding purchases. R7 also handles the pricing, organizing deliveries, and complementary tasks.

5.2.2 Chain of communication

The role of central regulation is promoting transparency

Regarding legislation, all the respondents agree that there is room for development. R4 express that there are “*clear regulations to obey*”, however, they are at times focused on the wrong solutions. R4 and R6 believe that scientific research should be more involved, and R6 clarifies that “*the industry itself is not always included in the dialogue*” which keep impacting the fishing industry's profit. R5 and R7 are concerned about “*the authorities' lack of knowledge*”, which R4 and R6 agrees with and exemplify by explaining the importance of setting the correct fishing quotas rather than modifying the trawl boundaries, which only impacts on small-scale fishermen. There is a shared opinion that the communication between authorities and producers is not effective. R6 also specifies that there are vast differences between trawls, their company trawls with on a boat with a capacity of three fishermen, “*it is not comparable to mega-trawls*”. R6 continues with stating that fishing is often generalized incorrectly, and *there is often a lot of defamation*”, however, “*it is not the fishermen's fault, they act according to the law, those who trawl are allowed to trawl*”. R3 adds, to perform true development, “*there needs to be a change in the infrastructure and both education and communication alongside new legislation, not just recognizing that they are needed*”.

R5 states that Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management traceability project concerning the fishing industry is a “*complete failure*”, it is “*expensive and poorly managed*”. R5 means that if properly executed it is a great tool, whereas an independent revision by The Swedish Agency for Public Management entirely criticized it and announced its weaknesses. R3 also problematizes the fact that “*it is impossible to create ethical transparency if there are no preconditions for it*”. R3 continues with exemplify that slaughtering data is owned by the slaughterhouse and the Swedish Board of Agriculture refuses to share that information. R3 emphasizes that “*confidentiality creates a huge knowledge gap*”, and that Sweden is “*one of the most digitalized countries in the world*” so there are improvements to be made.

R4 informs that there are upcoming tests from the authorities with surveillance cameras on ships, which can be seen as both positive and negative. R2 states that “*it is a clear invasion of privacy to monitor farmers*”, and with modern technology, it is a “*safety risk*” when the farmer does not control who the information reaches. R1 agrees with R2 and explains it as “*a camera in the bedroom*”. R3 also mentions safety as a risk concerning the animals, “*there is a kind of limitation in openness regarding animals. We have to protect them too so that no one else can harm them*”. R3 exemplifies that “*people who are mean to animals can also come in and torture them*”. R3 suggests it should be used as a tool for “*technical safety*” for the farm itself if questioned by externals, to ensure data has not been manipulated. R1 and R2 mean that there is no trust for farmers' competence anymore. R2 states “*everyone with a smartphone seems to think they have better knowledge than the people working in the actual industry*”. R5 adds that there is an ongoing suspicion and suggests that society view fishermen' as “*gangsters, we*

are not gangsters”, and compare it to if it would be acceptable for home-care social workers to carry a camera.

R4 raises additional questions concerning surveillance *“is the public ready for that? When they do not really have a clue about how fishing is done”*. R3 is also unsure whether the consumer is the right viewer. R3, R4, and R7 all mention the risk of misinterpretation due to lack of knowledge from the consumer but also that the wrong camera position can leave out important factors in the sequence of events. R6 exemplifies *“if you have a person on board a ship then you know exactly how it happened whereas if you have a camera “why didn't you do that” you may not understand the full picture. The problem is more where the information ends up and is used, which is out of your control”*. R7 exemplifies positivity towards camera use in a production room for pig slaughter, *“you can show that you have clean flour in the bag. You can do that in the factory, but on the boat, it's a bit difficult”*. R7 continues *“however, it wouldn't be a bad thing for us”*. R5 also mentions *“it is obvious that it will not be possible to put cameras on boathouses”*, regarding lake fishing.

R4 exemplifies that sea fishing is not under national animal protection legislation due to the commercial status, hence, there are not as many controversial discussions in media about welfare. Furthermore, R4 states that *“authorities need to clarify if they think fish are sentient or not and what to do about it, killing fish one by one is simply not doable with the large catches”*, and additionally, how would that be processed by a watching consumer, better or worse than today's procedures. R6 exemplifies that animal rights activists bring up the subject of *“killing in a more humane way”* and describes that when fish is put on the ice they are almost instantly stunned, however improvements seem to be required, due to a lot of questions are asked about that area. R3 also addresses that to use the term humane; *“slaughter humane is wrong, it is kind of bullshit, but the best is to choose the better of the worst method”*, and rather want a reduction in the animal industry as a whole, and make sure both the animals and farmers are looked after through developing infrastructure. All respondents mentioned that the production they are involved in is working within the Swedish legislation, and R1 and R7, R8 repeat that anyone is more than welcome to visit to get a true experience.

The role of producers as the initiators or eliminators of transparency

R1 explains that some producers are afraid of openness due to animal rights activists and be reported due to their animal husbandry, *“a smaller incident can be blown out of proportion”*. All respondents except R2 are exemplifying situations and media channels where they are trying to promote themselves, whereas R2 is a bit more cautious and have chosen to operate without social media or other type of platforms. R1's farm has through generations been *“managed with an organic mindset even though the term organic was not yet established”* and encourages the public to visit, R5 and R6 also promote personal visits from whoever has questions. R1 argues that *“man has humanized the animal. there are so few who work with animals today that there is no understanding of how everyday life works. Animals have a bigger safety net than humans, I have respect for animals. they do not choose where they are themselves, but I think that has gone too far”*. R1 suggest the use of *“REKO-ringar”*, which is defined as *“a producer/consumer initiative*

for a way to buy locally produced food, completely without intermediaries” (The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies 2022).

R4 and R5 brings up that *“professional pride”* adds to transparency do to the willingness of speaking of one’s profession. However, R4 also brings up another side and exemplify that some acquainted fishermen rephrase their work title with *“I work on the sea”*, and not specifying fishery to avoid discussions at times. R4 suggests that the animal industry as a whole has some sides that are not up for public display which *“the animal industry is happy about”*. R4 exemplifies *“beef cattle, pigs, eggs, slaughterhouses and early weaning of calves, many do not know how it is done”*. R4 continues to exemplify a commercial about a chicken producer with a *“picture of a farmer and his dog, exactly zero pictures of chickens”*. R4 compares this with *“we as fishermen do not really have anything to hide or be ashamed of however we also have a hard time reaching out”*.

R5 believes that fishermen would appreciate being mentioned on packaging to show professional pride and feel solidarity amongst others in their profession. All respondents are ambivalent in their opinion regarding environmental labelling, however, they all use it and contribute with both positive and negative arguments about the outcome for the producers. All respondents share the opinion that environmental labelling can attract consumers. However, the consumers’ understanding of the implications is not as clear. R3 proclaims that there are no adequate labels offered, there is a need for clarification of what you are supporting as a customer. R1 exemplifies *“you buy something hoping it will be Swedish then it says something in such small text that you almost need magnifying glasses to see”*. R2 exemplify that at their farm they only eat self-produced protein due to all circumstances in the industry nowadays, *“we do not need to search for additional information or environmental labelling, we know how we treat our animals”*.

R3 develops on the complexity regarding consumers often need to choose to *“support the workers or the animals behind the product, not both”*. R3 continues by comparing that the organic label does not cover animal welfare in the same way as KRAV and it is also possible that conventional farms could have better animal welfare without any certifications. R1, R2, R4, and R6 also problematize the fact that a business can be run in the same way without environmental certifications, even with higher standards than required. However, due to ignorance, the consumer often assumes that the standard declines if a business forfeits its certificate. R3 collaborates solely with KRAV or organic farms due to the fact it is *“the best-known guideline provided today”*. All respondents except R3 bring up the cost as a major impact in the decision-making process to apply for a certificate. The cost is severe for a KRAV, MSC, or ASC certification, and the respondents mention amounts up to a million Swedish crowns annually. R4 explains that due to the many steps of observation and controls in the production chain the profit of environmental labeling disappears. Both R1 and R7 mention that they do not need the certification per se and that they are and will continue to run their business from a high standard regardless. R7 specify they would join ASC *“if it were easier and cheaper, it would be positive, but we can do without it”*. R6 describes that their product is certified by Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), which indicates it is *“fished, spiced and seasoned in a certain way and then you have this whole chain that is protected by such a designation. It helps to protect the industry. It*

becomes a more luxurious product, you can then market and make high demands on the industry that the production should be done in a certain way”.

R5 specifies that *“the fishermen have no positive ideological aspects whatsoever to the MSC. For example, we have extremely well-managed stocks in the lakes but we cannot use the MSC label because it is too expensive. For an individual fisherman, it can cost 500 000 - 600 000 Swedish crowns”.* However, R5 says the inland fishermen *“are extremely cunning and businesslike”*, they use MSC where it is profitable, zander and crayfish are two examples of that. R1 argues that *“sometimes I wish a brand would not stand for as much as it does. You would rather want people to visit or call up and ask”.* R4 adds that there is *“a bit of missing trust in these certifications on the part of both the fishing industry and the consumers.* R4 explains that countries can intervene regarding the sea fishermen's certifications due to the EU's common fisheries policy, so they have to adapt and sometimes forfeit their certifications even if the stocks are sufficient. R1 and R2 also bring up external effects that originate from their supplier. R1 informs that Arla will no longer classify tethered production as organic produce and will not collect it labeled as that from 1st October 2024, stating the change is due to public pressure by consumers. R1 is concerned that Arla forces their collaborators to *“decommission, build new, or switch to conventional production”*, which is very expensive for a small-scale producer and will instead support large-scale producers. R2 also mentions the economic importance of the collaboration between producer and supplier and how it is *“mutual dependence”*, if the producers cannot live up to the suppliers demands it is a non-beneficial situation for both. The point of transparency according to R3 is to spread awareness about these complex questions, for example even if the production is Swedish it can still produce high emissions through export, which then counterpoint the intention from the supplier. No individual or company has all the answers, which is why communication is a vital tool according to R3.

The role of suppliers as the bridge or obstacle of transparency

R1 states that Arla is centralizing the industry when they are excluding small-scale producers' products from their dairy production process and only use them for marketing purposes in media channels. R1 continues to question Arla's choices of not using robot farms with 500 cows in their commercials instead of cows on green pasture. R1 states that it is obvious hypocrisy because it does not matter if the farm is organic or conventional, *“the bigger the farm is, the larger pasture is needed to fulfil the legislation regarding organic husbandry and that equation does not add up in reality”.* Arla says *“the consumer demands”* instead of *“it is too expensive with transportation for picking up smaller dairy amounts”* according to R1.

R3 expresses the need to find a *“holistic system and transparency”*, and communication between producers and suppliers to improve global animal welfare. R3 also brings up Arla as an example of a supplier that only invoke changes in their production chain if they get bad publicity, *“if you improve your animal welfare because you get bad PR then you are not really working with animal welfare, you are a PR company”.* R4 believes that the way out of the romanticized commercials provided by for example Bregrott, is to show more of reality but also be more informative videos, *“this farm has 100 cows, this is due to...”*, so it is not a total shock for the consumer when pictures from reality are

shown. R4 do not think suppliers show a correct picture of the industry “*very little, not that they convey the wrong image, more that they convey no image at all. We feel that most consumers in general lack a lot of knowledge about Swedish and international fishing*”. R7 continues to exemplify how commercials can use visualizations of a single fisherman getting a big fish on a hook and that it is a misrepresentative picture of large-scale fishing. However, R7 says “*that is how it works for us, very often it is a single fisherman because it is so small-scale*”. R7 continues “*we are more correct visualized in the romanticized image*”. R5 gives an example of successful advertising, that due to suppliers handling the marketing, the inland fish have become a more common feature in Swedish cooking programs.

R6 and R7 state that they have close communication with their suppliers, R7 exemplifies, “*suppliers give an example on how they want to package and sell to consumers, then they always send it back to us so we can give them remarks*”. R7 continues “*it is not like we are selling our fish and it ends up in the shops and it is only lies*”. R7 says that the more information that is shared on the suppliers' page, the better, however, R6 points out that a wholesaler might not be interested in the name of the fisherman even if a regular customer is. R7 mentions that it is a generational change, where the younger generation asks more questions and requires more information from suppliers and insight from producers than previously.

R4 wishes for better information spread and general knowledge for the public regarding who, when, and where the fish is handled by the suppliers media channels. R6 has a suggest that suppliers should work on interactive webpages with “*company profiling*”, for example that the name of a fishery is a link to a information box,” *this is the owner of the company*” and “*Bengt is the fisherman*”. R6 states that by providing “*a picture and name, is better than it being thrown into Findus. That is not what we are trying to promote* “. R3’s business is run with traceability as a top priority and explain that “*every piece of leather of the shoe is traceable back to the farm*”. After purchasing a product from R3, the customer is referred to an interactive page where they can click on each part of leather if the shoe to see what type of bovine is used, and additionally there is information about the farm and the family behind it.

R4 exemplifies there can be too much information as well, that an area code for a regular consumer is quite meaningless due to ignorance, it is only interesting when possessing the knowledge. R4 suggests suppliers should foremost label the country, it gives more clarity, “*some countries' fisheries are a little more questionable than others*”. Additionally, R4 exemplifies confusion for consumers regarding too many details with WWF's recommended fishing list that gives one fish species both green, yellow, and red light. R4 states “*previously it was that a species had one color. Now they have become so detailed that it really does not make it any easier for the consumer. Again, the consumer must know a lot more to use the information that is given*”.

The role of consumers' impact, understanding, and experience of transparency

Keeping a dialogue regarding their animal husbandry is no problem for any of the respondents, and R7 exemplifies it by them inviting scientists, students, and other interested parties to their fishery. R5 states that due to inland fishing being kind of a small genre compared to other branches they have a great deal of dialogue

directly with customers, *“there is closer communication than in dairy production, for sure”*.

R1 argues that previously there was a connection to farming in families and an *“understanding of birth, slaughter, life, and death”*, nowadays if people are from a big city there is a significant chance that they never visited a farm themselves. R2, R3, and R4 also discuss that there is a greater distance both physically but also mentally between the producer and consumer. R3 explains that more data is often collected than presented regarding emissions or animal husbandry, the consumer only need to ask for it. R3 advises consumers to start a dialogue, and use smaller steps, for instance, start by *“influencing the production animals' life by pushing for prohibiting the slaughter of calves and lambs”*.

R4 thinks *“openness and transparency from the industry are very important to connect the public to the food production”*. R1 also uses the terms *“openness, communication, and honesty”* when describing consumer contact. R4 is engaged in a project called *“The fisherman at school”*, which is a pilot project to incorporate society, where a school class has live streams with a fisherman a few times a year to get an insight into the industry. R4 explains that the aim is to get the project spread to a national level with collaborations between schools and fishermen but also to provide an interactive web page filled with quizzes, visualizations, and general information. There are however difficulties to reach the masses, hence the future consumers, schools were chosen as a target group according to R4.

R3 emphasizes that there is a lack of understanding of why animals are important in society and few consumers understand that if you purchase a traceable product, they will positively contribute to better welfare due to the transparency. R3 believes that to restructure the industry the consumer needs to talk more about animal production and inspire each other to encourage someone to eat less meat is a huge win for example.

R1 states *“being a consumer today is not easy”* and R4 underlines the importance of *“to make an informed choice you need to know what to be informed about”*.

The role of the media in exposing, promoting, or discouraging transparency

R5 states that social media has had a *“positive impact”* on inland fishing and that the fishermen leverage it as a tool for direct sales. R4 promotes that the more media channels used to keep the consumers informed, the better, especially due to *“eight-year-olds do not use the same media as 80-year-olds, they never used to either but you need to keep that in mind”*. R4 continues, *“none of us are communicators and sometimes we can feel that we should be”*. R7 explains media gives the consumer more transparency and access to the small-scale fishermen. R1 states *“if you are not seen by society, you do not exist”*, and to be successful you need some social skills, *“the more energy you give the more you get”*, and the advantage of social media is that it is free of charge and when correctly used, extremely helpful. R5 and R8 share the opinion that terrestrial animals get larger space in media, R8 suggests it could be due to the meat industry repeated scandals with *“mishandling and other deficiencies”*.

R2 reports that they *“rather not engage in social media and prefer having a close connection to the supplier or local consumers but nothing more than that”*. R4 exemplifies that their organization actively uses social media to *“put a face on*

the producers, so the fish does not originate from a large anonymous ship". R4 continues by describing the fishermen's *"knowledge and humility for nature"* is information that they would be eager to spread whereas the question remains, who is responsible to do so. The problem according to R4 is that *"we are often seen as biased, but then you might ask - who isn't biased?"*. R4 continues *"positive news like equipment development and lowered climate impact hits badly in media"*, and it is a struggle to reach out. However, R4 rather keep pushing positive news than *"shout from the barricades when the wind is hard"*.

R3 brings up consumers that generalize too much from the global scope and American influence in media. R3 states that *"we don't have industrial agriculture like the United States in Sweden, and I am not saying that agriculture in Sweden is exceptional and good, but it's a lot better than in many movies"*. R3 continues that if *"someone has seen Cowspiracy and thinks you are going around abusing your animals, then we have a huge problem"*, R3's conclusion is that threats are only impacting negatively on a personal level and is not a prominent communication tool.

R3 additionally refers to customers who confuse animal welfare with animal rights due to misconceptions and interpretations of media. R3 continues by explaining animal welfare means securing the health of production animals whereas animal rights activist promotes total absence from the industry. R3 personally thinks *"it is terribly difficult. It is an emotion-based product. I think the most change can happen if you take emotion out of the product and look at it logically"*. R3 continues, *"we want to phase out the bad and replace it with better animal welfare rather than just proclaiming that they are wrong"* or *"you are idiots"*, there is mismanagement regarding animal welfare, however, *"that communication has not changed the world"*. R1 gets much positive feedback personally from consumers when showing another picture as a small-scale farmer, opposed to media's image of agriculture as a contributor to the destruction of the planet through emissions.

To some extent, all respondents relate that the animal production industry gets negative publicity in the media. R4, R5, and R7 refer to a recent incident where a ship dumped a large amount of by-catch of a protected species in the harbor of Lysekil. R4 emphasizes that *"on the same day, politicians were commenting that bottom trawling should be banned, without any intermediate analysis"*, and that *"media carries a big responsibility, that is where it blows up. Instead of pointing out that this is a fishery that has behaved in a directly illegal manner and that other fishermen are strongly opposed to this, suddenly all of Sweden's fishermen are environmental villains and animal abusers"*. R1 states that in every industry, there is always someone that is *"a bad apple"*. R1 continues by explaining that *"in case of scandals there is basically just more paperwork from authorities"*, not necessarily much change in the husbandries. R7 says they have been exempted from larger scandals due they are true to their vision and not affected due to their geographical location.

When discussing solutions on how to depict a more authentic image of the animal industry R3, R4, R7, and R8 are all exemplifying some type of documentary or posting more regular videos filmed by the fisherman or a farmer. R3 suggests it does not have to be *"perfectly cut or fixed"* as in today's commercial, and it should certainly be more *"realistic"*. R4 suggests that fishermen could publish more

“regular movies filmed with a cell phone”. R6 would like to see a comparison documentary between small-scale and larger-scale fishing, “no one knows, for example, where Kalle's caviar comes from”. R7 suggests “filming when we empty a salmon trap “. All four propose it to be filmed from the producers' point of view to really get engaged and up close to the production process as a viewer. R3 suggests being informative and presenting “this is farmer Bengt...this is happening to the animal, and these are the effects of it”. R4 adds that media attention can go both ways, and as a producer, you must make trade-offs and question yourself; “is it worth it, can we handle a campaign, and if threats are thrown at us”.

5.3 Website observations

To enable triangulation of the gathered findings from the survey and interviews, website observations were conducted to provide an insight of the transparency from a third-party supplier.

The website observation was conducted on the 27th of April 2022. The pre-selected animal products are vendace, zander, veal, beef, and dairy. The product information (see table 7) is directly from the suppliers' websites and demonstrates an accurate customer experience.

Table 7 The results of the website observation

Vendace (<i>Coregonus Albula</i>)	
Supplier	Product information
Miljöfiskbilen	- Brand: Kalix vendace roe - Couple-trawled by the trawlers Vilma and Natalia - Fishing area: FAO27IIIId, Kalix archipelago
Martin & servera	- Origin: Sweden - Producer: Guldhaven - MSC - The Swedish seal of quality ©
Ishavet	- Origin: FAO 27 (Kalix Sweden) - Fished - The Swedish seal of quality © -Protected designation of origin (PDO)
Melanders	- Origin: Gulf of Bothnia, Kalix
Zander (<i>Sander lucioperca</i>)	
Supplier	Product information
Miljöfiskbilen	- Wild cached with traps during summer and net all year around in Hjälmaren - MSC

Martin & servera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fished the old-fashioned way with nets in Hjälmarens - MSC - CO₂ indicator
Ishavet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin: Hjälmarens - Fished with net - MSC
Melanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin: Hjälmarens
Veal (<i>vitulo</i>)	
Supplier	Product information
Scan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin: Born, bred, slaughtered, and cut in Sweden. - The calf is between 8 - 12 months at slaughter
Ica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin: Sweden - Brand: Ica - Kött från Sverige ©
Coop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin: Sweden - Brand: AG.Bergfalk
Naturligt kött	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Swedish veal available
Beef (<i>entrecôte</i>) (<i>Bos Taurus</i>)	
Supplier	Product information
Scan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From Swedish meat - Kött från Sverige©
Ica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Origin: Sweden - Brand: Ica - Kött från Sverige ©
Coop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country of manufacture: Sweden - The country where it underwent its last significant processing and/or packaging.
Coop (organic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Born, bred, slaughtered, and cut in Sweden - At breeders of Änglamark's KRAV-labeled meat, all lambs are allowed to graze in the summer, the pigs are allowed to roost, and the cows have free access to feed. KRAV-certified animals also eat organic feed. - KRAV, The Swedish Keyhole, Kött från Sverige ©

Naturligt kött (organic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We offer KRAV meat from farms in our immediate area. We currently use about ten local KRAV producers, of which Wanås Gods is the largest. - The animals are transported a maximum of 60 km from the producer to the slaughterhouse. The slaughter takes place in our small-scale slaughterhouse. Everything is done with minimal stress and the animals are handled carefully. - We slaughter all year round and can offer finely chopped vacuum-packed beef in pre-ordered boxes. The meat is tender for the best possible quality, and we promise you meat that gives a tasty experience beyond the ordinary.
Milk 1,5 %	
Supplier	Product information
Arla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Made from Swedish milk from Arla farms now with even better animal care all year round. - The Arla Ko® brand guarantees that the product is made from 100 percent Swedish milk.
Skånemejerier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Made from milk from farms in southern Sweden with the highest requirements for animal care. - Contains as many as 18 of the 22 nutrients we need to get in us every day.
Norrmejerier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comes from Norrland dairy farmers. The carton in the package comes from responsibly grown forest. The cork and the outer film are made from plant-based raw material. This means that the proportion of renewable materials is as high as 99%.
Milk 1,5 % Organic	
Supplier	Producer
Arla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Made from Swedish milk from Arla farms - KRAV
Skånemejerier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Created with care and caution in all stages, from the cows' pastures, feed, and well-being - to the dairy and the finished milk on your kitchen table. Made from milk from our farms in southern Sweden
Norrmejerier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The milk comes from northern organic farms. Both the farms and Norrmejerier follow the rules set by the association KRAV, the control association for organic farming. The whole of agriculture is part of the ecological cycle. The carton in the package comes from responsibly grown forest, the cork and the outer film are made from plant-based raw material. This means that the proportion of renewable material is as much as 92%.

6. Analysis

In the analysis, the study's theory of agenda-setting will be used as a lens to intertwine the retrieved information and findings of the results. The analysis outline will proceed from Cobb, Ross & Ross's (1976) thoughts on how an agenda can be structured from three different models, updated to the contemporary media landscape.

The consumers' role as an influencer of the public agenda

The first model correlates to grassroots movements or citizen groups (Cobb, Ross & Ross (1976), and it is evident that consumers do contribute to today's agenda-setting when evaluating the combination of the survey respondents and interviewees' answers. R1 clearly exemplified that the whole husbandry at R1's farm is up for questioning and possibly reconstruction due to Arla's coming structural changes, which originated from consumer demands. It demonstrates that the public has formed an opinion of Arla, which indicates that as individuals the public has been exposed repeatedly to negative media features in the news or online as McCombs (2002), Mazur (2008) and Dotson et al. (2012) exemplifies. The awakened interest due to the media attention has engaged these individuals to the point that such a majority cannot be ignored by the industry (Cobb, Ross & Ross 1976), hence suppliers set new requirements and thereby demands the producers to evolve or liquidate.

As demonstrated by the result, acts of suspicion and further research indicates that today's consumers are willing to engage in action when being enlighten (implicit transparency) of an issue on media's agenda (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021). Survey respondents who perform further research as opposed to accepting the suppliers' marketing are assumingly the citizens who already have or will engage in forming an agenda developing the animal industry's transparency. The fact that the survey respondents turn to the internet when questioning a product's quality rather than the staff in person, demonstrates that there is an interest to seek out multiple sources of information through agenda melding (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021).

Geographical distances have reoccurred in the results as an obstacle regarding transparency both from both producers and consumers, and when the consumers have the option to ask in person in store it seemingly is not an attractive choice. This corresponds to some producers' frustration with consumers not asking them directly through a phone call or a visit, rather anonymous threats, or exposés in media. However, when triangulating the results by website observations, detailed information was presented by the majority of suppliers. This indicates that consumers have been active in demanding information, at least to some extent, and the suppliers adapt to that, hence, a sign of transparency progress (Cobb, Ross & Ross 1976). It could also indicate that when using the internet to search for

information, it is easier to navigate further and compare in a less stressful environment, rather than questioning a person for a longer period of time at a busy farm or a crowded supermarket.

By calling suppliers hypocritical and misleading, the majority of survey respondents show knowledge of experiencing two idiosyncratic media outlets of graphic visualizations versus a romanticized picture. The knowledge indicates source criticism which further verifies that consumers at least have an understanding that all marketing is up for questioning (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021) and there are grey areas in the industry. R4's words regarding "*the animal industry is happy about*" the consumers' ignorance in areas of the production chain, and R3 suggesting that some equalize factory farming to Swedish KRAV-certified farms, demonstrate that the insight and transparency specified to Swedish farms are inadequate. Which is also confirmed by the survey respondents.

There is an indication that consumers are more invested in the animal welfare of mammals compared to fish, which was reaffirmed by the producers. However, the results did not conclude why consumers was more engaged in mammals. The producers stated that media attention is greater regarding land-living specimens and therefore has a stronger consumer activism. Information regarding mammals in particular, contained more substance and was written more personally on suppliers' webpages. For example, Scan provided the age of slaughter, Naturligt Kött described the whole production process including transportation time, whereas Skånemejerier mentions nutritional values and Norrmejerier their circular production and renewable material use, see Table 7. The additional information could demonstrate that due to more scandals and negative publicity, dairy and meat suppliers feel the need to be extra thorough compared to the actors handling fish. To exemplify, the supplier Arla is explicit in their statement, "*now with even better animal care all year round*", which indicates that they have improved the animal husbandry compared to earlier and are eager to present this fact due to previous consumer agency regarding animal welfare. Skånemejerier also underlines animal care implying consumer demands; "*milk from farms in southern Sweden with the highest requirements for animal care*".

However, by problematizing over the consumers' open interpretation, multiple obstacles arise regarding transparency. Relating to R4's statement about the consumer need to know what to be informed about, do the consumers actually know what "*highest requirements*" implies? The requirements are set by the government and not the producers which R6 underline, but still do the consumers turn to the producers when engaging a conflict concerning the animals' well-being. One explanation of this action could be media's (unintentional or intention) use of juxtaposition when seeking public awareness to cause a reaction, resulting in a critical tone towards supplier marketing (McCombs & Shaw 1972) and especially the producers. When graphic images are shown on a news segment and are followed by a commercial about cows carelessly grazing, it triggers a reaction.

Friedlander and Riedy (2018) discussed the concept of redefining power and how the traditional media agenda is balanced by activists, which is exemplified by R4 in the comment that fishermen say they work on the sea, instead of on a fishing boat, or R2's wish for anonymity, due to the public's eagerness to reveal stories and scandals on digital platforms. Viral videos increase the chances of being put

on the public agenda (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021). Activists tend to use more drastic methods whereas the study's result shows that the participating producers share a willingness to educate children, and their local communities.

As R3 mentions, Sweden is one of the most digitalized countries worldwide which means access to information is everywhere and also facilitates forming of citizen groups who invoke transparency progress by engaging in agenda influence (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021). This means during a news segment an individual can search for further information and join a group before the news broadcast is finished. This fast mobilization can however also lead to negative aspects as well, as exemplified by R1 and R2, when it is the activists who form the agenda, they are the ones who want to create headlines and aims to reveal scandals (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021) it can cause farms to close their doors instead, due to safety reasons. Issues based on misconceptions and generalizations, that turn to threatful situation is one clear example mentioned by R3. The written reply from the large trawling company explained that their owners were not eager to speak to the public and this could be the reason why. However, as soon as the activist has gained explicit attention a transformative process is initiated (Friedlander and Riedy 2018), as happened with Arla and farmer R1. R3 proclaim the need of impacting the industry on different levels and make improvements without hostility. The fact that R4 as a part of the fishing industry, expresses the need to mentally prepare before releasing a campaign due to possible threatening behavior of consumers adds to the priming of media, it really does impact on a personal level for the producers.

An eagerness to understand our surroundings and feel comfortable creates a behavior where consumers keep exploring until having made sense of the occurring environment or information (McCombs 2002). This could be an indication that the survey respondents' diets are due to their personal need to feel comfortable, and they have performed profound research before becoming a vegan or pescatarian for instance by compiling information from both suppliers, authorities and activist by agenda melding (Williams, Archer & O'Mahoney 2021). The diet needs to feel comfortable, which correlates to the consumers' main reason for choosing a diet is personal well-being. It could also be connected to the consumers choice of seeking information by themselves in the comfort of their home rather than visiting a farm/fishery which is unknown territory for them.

R7's made a comment about a generational shift and the study's data demonstrates that the consumers certainly demands and questions more than before which indicates that power is indeed transformative towards a citizen perspective in some aspects of the animal industry.

There is however still room for more engagement and knowledge for the consumers to understand what the concept of full transparency will result in, which will be further analyzed in the coming sections.

Policy windows and public access to information

The second model suggests that selective government initiatives need public attention to create changes, which is applicable to the transparency aspect of the animal industry. A recurring and clear example of the use of a policy window (Kingdon 1995) was the recent incident in the fishing industry regarding by-catch that was plainly dumped in a harbor in Lysekil mentioned by several interviewees.

R4 exemplified that a politician immediately stated that a legislation to prohibit bottom trawling should be implemented, without further analysis. R6 was clearly stating that there is a huge difference in the environmental impact of different trawls, which is one factor that should be analyzed further to make a scientific and informed statement in media. The incident correlates to Beder's (2002) forecast that disastrous accidents increase public attention and subsequent actions. A *policy window* can be leveraged by any group or actor with an interest in gaining something out of the situation (Kingdon 1995). In this scenario, the politician saw an opportunity to take charge of the situation. However, according to the findings is there a disbelief of governmental institutions from the producers' perspective while consumers are more trusting in their actions. R2-7, all mention difficulties when policy implementation starts from higher instances, there is both lack of knowledge and an unwillingness to have a dialogue with the industry. It is not per se a bad thing for governmental institutions from an agenda setting perspective. When it is difficult for the consumers to personally investigate the issue, in this case, a fishing scandal, it is easier for governmental official to shape opinions implemented their agenda of winning public trust, and use the producers as scapegoats (Pollach 2014, Zucker 1978).

Additionally, it is the governments acts of duality that causes transparency difficulties regarding their action versus their legislations. Fishes are not protected by the Animal Welfare Act, whereas it is the authorities that are initiating a test using surveillance cameras on fishing boats as R4 mentions. Authorities are thereby sending mixed signals towards the producers, that they need to be recorded due to mismanagement but no concrete action towards animal welfare. They rather just move trawling limits, hence the frustration of the fishermen and farmers that see governmental incitements solely as a loss of profit and time due to more paperwork rather than improving the industry. Pricing is also an important factor for consumers, A survey respondent also mentions that the surveillance should be strictly governmental and not available to consumers, which demonstrate a deep-rooted trust in the state by consumers.

Repeatedly the interview respondents have described it as difficult to reach out to general consumers with their own husbandry and opinions. It can be interpreted as a sign that the producer is in an interdependent role where they need the acceptance of the consumer, it is no longer enough to just perform their profession, they need to justify everything about their work to the public. The producers in the study are also experiencing a pressure from consumers even if it is other suppliers and farmers/fishermen who misbehaved in their profession

The study's results reveals that the media is using priming to empower the authorities in various ways, as the survey respondents seem to pay attention selectively (McCombs 2002) when engaging in animal welfare. Media is priming the government as a reliable source and the fishermen and farmers as the troublemakers in this study's selective process (Iyengar & Kinder 2010; McCombs 2002). Seemingly there is a knowledge gap from the consumers' perspective regarding legislations and the interaction between government and producers, which then is filled by whatever is on the media's current agenda.

R3 problematizes over the specific fact that without preconditions for it, ethical transparency is impossible, exemplifying the confidentiality expressed by the Swedish Board of Agriculture, withholding slaughtering information when asked

for it. R5's experience of previous governmental action regarding traceable fishing services aided to this visualization, that governmental institutions require more interaction with producers and in other words transparency to not be a "complete failure" in their actions.

Since the public neither need nor can pay attention to all media posts (McCombs 2002), they turn to what is familiar such as recognizable suppliers, as stated by a survey respondent "*I am not very good at looking up information*", which is in the favor of people making profit of disclosing or withhold information. All producers that participated except R2 and R4 who rather let suppliers handling marketing, have been encouraging in enhancing the communication and transparency between small-scale farmers and consumers, instead of suppliers and media. They did indicate that they find it problematic that "*robot farms*" or "*Kalle's caviar*" are great in marketing but examples of actors not engaged in improving transparency.

However, when examining the websites of suppliers there are clear information about producers' fishing method, time of slaughter which shows transparency, and that animal welfare is implemented. Naturligt Kött exemplifies "*animals are transported a maximum of 60 km*" and Coop states "*all lambs are allowed to graze in the summer, the pigs are allowed to roost, and the cows have free access to feed*". Additional information can be seen as an indicator that the producers need to adapt to legislations, if they are required to collect and share more information by law, there is more to be shared to the supplier and later on the consumer.

A policy window is additionally linked to *focusing events* (McCombs 2002), where media act fast to enhance the attention span. When a scandal is in the spotlight older stories are looked into too as well. The illegal by-catch dumping in Lysekil is not the first time animal welfare is discussed in media channels. During the interviews R4 and R6 mention previous exposure in media regarding the slaughtering of pigs and cattle as attention creators. All interview respondents involved in fishing mentioned that there is a greater need to legislate terrestrial part of the industry than the aquatic, when discussing the Lysekil incident. Which correlates with mishandling of mammals have been in the spotlight of creating transparency for a longer period of time. When older and newer scandals are piled up, it creates a more profound base to problematize over. The whole industry's way of communication and additionally their transparency.

R3 returned to the fact that media statements can additionally lead to further confusion regarding legislations, as consumers have repeatedly mistaken animal welfare with animal rights. This shows that neither governmental institutions nor media have set a clear agenda regarding animal production and protection (McCombs 2002), hence, intention to transform is deficient. Confusion and misunderstanding also correlates back to Shaw & Colistra (2007) and McCombs (2002) regarding the consumers ability to seek information and then actively use agenda-melding to fit their chosen preference which affects which sources or websites they are visiting, if it is suppliers or the governments.

Third parties as the bridge between consumer and producer

The third model presented by Cobb, Ross & Ross (1976) demonstrates the communities who have close connections to governmental institutions. Historically there was a physical closeness to animal production whereas consumers nowadays use a third-party actor as a tool to make a choice if the

commodity is desirable. Consumers are a difficult target group in several ways due to they both demand and oppose concealment, as a survey respondent compared it with giving birth to children, you probably would not want to do it if you got to see a preview.

This fact demonstrates that environmental labels have actively set a national agenda transforming the customer experience and also pressuring the authorities to look into social and animal justice more (McCombs 2002). Factors such as recognizable suppliers and eco-labels helps the consumer to form an opinion from the outset and is widely used in the media when an organization or company is campaigning for itself (McCombs 2002). Hence, environmental labels have repeatedly been portrayed as positive indicators of sustainable options, as shown by the survey statistic. Additionally, it is visualized by questions eight and nine in the survey that strong profiling from a trustworthy organization, enhances the consumers understanding that their choice is an act of selecting better welfare and a higher standard product due to the producer and suppliers' willingness to be transparent in their husbandry.

Environmental labels have little public involvement (Beder 2002) and are mainly linked to governmental legislation, often to promote higher standards than what is required which is mentioned by R1. Only 0,7 % of survey respondents agreed that suppliers clearly show what type of animal husbandry and which farm/fishery is supported by the purchase of the marketing product. Which is an indicator that environmental labeling is used as a validator, as 107 of 134 survey respondents actively choose an environmentally labeled product in the stores.

An additional label on the packaging also refers to McCombs & Shaw's (1972) explanation of juxtaposition. In the grocery store, visible labeled product lying next to one without indicates there is something special with the labeled product. In the survey, 55,2 % said they could not describe the difference between the Swedish labeling, however, for those who could the phrases sustainability, "*traceable*", "*quality*" and "*responsibility*". The chosen words demonstrate at least an understanding that regardless of which exact label is used, it represents that a third party has approved the content and is strongly influential in the agenda-setting (Cobb, Ross & Ross 1976). Juxtaposition is also relevant to the website observations, by comparing the same product from different suppliers it is evident that the suppliers in a third-party role are controlling what information is disseminated. However, it is interesting that information shared on one supplier's website differs depending on the product, for zander Martin & Servera have a CO₂ indicator but not on vendace. It correlates to WWF's fish guide where the indicator is supposed to simplify the choice to consumers as R4 exemplifies, whereas, it rather can cause a sense of saturation due to being too informative and require even further research to choose "the correct" cod from the right area of the Baltic Sea.

The use of a third party can be interpreted as the bridge between consumer and producer, in the survey 81,3 % claim that information about the origin and animal husbandry is not easily accessible, whereas R1, R3, R4, and R6 clearly state that they work hard on profiling and giving access to information. Berger (2001) & Pollach (2014) argues that corporations seeking profit are also influencing the agenda-setting, which correlates to R5's statement about selectively label profitable fish thus, attracts consumer attention. When triangulating with the website observations there are clear differences between the suppliers' amount of

information. The organic or environmental labeled products have substantially more detailed information (see table 7).

According to the survey *origin* is solely the most important decisive factor and that is the only information provided by Melanders, for example and Swedish produce was an option on all websites. It demonstrates that the suppliers are up to date with the consumers' demands.

Supplier can choose to withhold information which was validated by Melanders, as environmental labeling is clearly visualized by all suppliers except them, and the producer for vendace was the same on all four websites. If not using agenda melding and combining sources, information can certainly be lost due to the suppliers. Depending on how many websites the consumer decides to visit, the selective information shapes the consumers' opinion (McCombs 2002). Pollach (2014) also state that agenda-setting gives legitimacy in a positive way, and it is clear that producers want the media to promote that they use environmental labels, which in theory is an easy tool to use. However, since the consumers and producers do not share the same experience with labeling, it is questionable if it really is a good way to show authenticity. Labeling simplifies, however when used for social reasons as of profit, it is not for the greater good of the animals. Additionally exemplified by R1 whose farm has been run organic "*before organic was an expression*", stated the risk of consumers believing that the animal husbandry will change if the farmer stop using an eco-label even if it could be due to the label is too expensive for the producer to possess. Pricing is also an important factor for consumers, and as Negowetti (2018) compare, it could be so that the pricing of the product is going up and not the actual wellbeing, due to definitions of animal welfare can be interpretable.

The study's result illustrates that consumers have concerns regarding the production chain and see transparency as an important component of the animal industry. However, there are clear differences on how much details are shared by suppliers and producers. Information is available but in certain context, hence, active engagement in research is needed as a consumer. The survey respondents' lack of knowledge and struggle to find information is somewhat questionable, due to as R3 mentioned, Sweden is one of the most digitalized countries, so information should be available of the problems the production chain is facing. However, it seemingly needs to be clearer to *where* the information is shared.

What is also reaffirmed by the consumers and participating producers, is that there are not any adequate communication tools available, and both perspectives find it difficult and time-consuming not being able to have the kind of transparency that is a balancing act, namely: a transparency where there is no need for invading producers' privacy and for the consumer to feel trust for their producers.

7. Conclusion

The study's intention was to bring attention to the communication aspects of the animal production chain. By applying the agenda setting theory to the gathered data, the positioning of the different actors opinions and experiences have been clarified.

There is discrepancy regarding the views on the transparency and communication when evaluating the actors' different experiences of the same issue. The digitalization of society seems to be both contributing to disclosure of information when offering ability to create romanticized marketing strategies but also act as the most important factor for full transparency. The majority of solutions to dissolve disclosure of the animals' reality were focused on live feeds from producers. Both in a formal setting as of *school to fisherman* as well as a wish for more own produced videos from fishing vessels and farms. The study has concluded that there is an understanding that marketing and the real life of the animals in the industry differ. However, it also demonstrates a simplified acceptance of transparency. The study indicates that focus and actions to invoke more transparency is initiated by younger generations. The consumers who are 30+ and represent the omnivores seem to be eager to make a "better" choice from an animal perspective, but the engagement in active research stop at the sight of an visibly shown eco-label or similar on the final product.

The consumers do not seem to have profound knowledge of basic Swedish animal husbandry such as legislations, living conditions, fishing tools, lifespan, dehorning, stunning etcetera since there is expressed a lot of examples of misconceptions in in the study. These methods would be visible if total transparency through surveillance occurred but as an interviewee discussed; are the society ready to see it and is it possible to make large-scale production with animals' health as a top priority. The producers seem to know there are problematic sides to today's handling of animals and full transparency would probably negatively impact profit on them even if they are acting accordingly to legislation. However, it is important that integrity and safety is not compromised for both producers and animals.

The generalized picture of transparency is clearly problematized from the small-scale producer's point of view. They express frustration of being excluded from much of the communication and legislation processes, relating back to the mixed signals from governmental institutions. It is the authorities who are in charge of evaluating the standard and living conditions of the animal every year, so when scandals happen, they cannot be completely unaware even though they distance themselves in media channels. The geographical distance is also an extensive factor, the physical distance but also the consumer pattern of verifying information

with the help of smartphones. It seems that consumers are more eager to engage in transparency progress in the company of others and rarely do personal visits to farms or harbors. One conclusion of this behavior is that as individuals it is uncomfortable both with direct communication with producers and also about the actual facts regarding animal husbandry.

An additional conclusion is that availability does not equal transparency. Most information is available but there have been indicators of both intentional and unintentional concealment. The consumers do not know where to look and neither seem interested in searching on a governmental webpage for information. Headlines on the news are more inviting and accessible, yet do not give a true representation of all of Sweden's animal producers.

The most important factors for consumers when purchasing an animal product are trust, credibility, price, and accessibility. Transparency would add to all of these factors as visualization increases reliability, which makes a stronger connection to local farmers and consumers are offered to make a more educated choice.

Future studies on the topic are encouraged and would benefit from doing broader qualitative research to incorporate conventional and larger scale farmers and fishermen. Additionally, a comparative study between different countries would visualize more clearly how Sweden animal production chain works with transparency.

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Popular science summary

By investigating the transparency in the communication chain of animal production, I have taken away many new learnings and experiences. From the outset I had a view of seeing producers as the villains, but the more interviews that were conducted, my view changed. I realized the obstacles producers face rely much on authorities and how the suppliers exploit their produce. Additionally does the consumers come across as there is a lot more disclosure than it actually is. Geographically it is clearly a hidden production chain, but much information can be found through articles, authorities' websites, and other informative pages online. It seems like the consumers are comfortable in relying on environmental labels, suppliers and governmental legislations.

By getting an insight of the everyday life of small-scale producers, my knowledge has improved, and I can sympathize with the struggle of competing with the large-scale producers who engage a lot less in providing transparency for the consumers. The participating interviewees have all shown engagement in performing sustainable production, treating their animals with a standard they all are proud of.

I hope that the study will get more consumers interested in visiting their local farmers/fishermen and get them more engaged in their own consuming patterns. The study has hopefully contributed to spread awareness and also informing consumers of what information they can find if they start investigating.

The reason I wanted to do this study is because I wanted to bring attention to the production animals reality and additionally the producers.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Survey questions

1. Age?
2. What is your diet?
3. When you seek information about an animal produce (meat, dairy, fish, seafood), where do you turn to?
4. Origin, is it important for you to know which fishery or farm produces your raw material? (e.g., geographical location, renowned name)
5. Please elaborate on your answer from question 4 about why/why not you think it is important *
6. Is it important for you to know the type of animal husbandry used by the fishery/farm? (e.g., fishing gear, slaughter method, feed, daily care, space, breeding)?
7. Do you feel that information on the origin of animal (meat, dairy, fish, seafood) raw materials & animal husbandry is accessible?
8. Do you know the difference between e.g., The Nordic Swan, KRAV, The Keyhole and MSC?
9. If you answered yes to question 8: Briefly summaries your personal understanding of the difference between at least two eco-labels *
10. Do you think that suppliers (e.g., Arla/Melanders/McDonalds) present a credible and clear picture of the supply chain in TV commercials & newspaper ads?
11. Do you want more transparency on farms/fishing (e.g., camera surveillance or more personal visits for individuals)?
12. Do you find graphic advertising offensive? (e.g., cigarette packaging or animal rights campaigns)
13. Mark the factors that lead you to choose a food item: (you can mark several options)
14. Would you be willing to pay more for a food item if you had more insight into the living conditions of the animals?
15. What is the basis of your own diet? (You can mark more than one option)
16. Finally, you can leave your own thoughts on the subject or if you wish to elaborate on any answer or have any other addition *

* Open questions

Appendix 2

Interview guide

The occupation

1. Describe yourself and your occupation (role, animal husbandry, method, tools etc.)
2. Why have you chosen this occupation?
3. How do you usually think when you buy fish/meat/dairy products? What information do you want to see as a consumer?
4. How do you view Swedish legislation?

Distribution Chain

5. What are your current collaborations with suppliers?
6. Are suppliers conveying the right image of your product to consumers?
7. Would you like suppliers to provide more detailed information about your producers
8. Do you adapt the way you run your fish farm depending on other actors in the production chain?
9. Is there an interest from the public to contact you?
10. What does environmental labelling mean to you?
11. How are environmental labels used in your business?
12. How much influence do you have in the marketing of the final product?

Transparency

13. Do you feel that the animal industry communicates openly with society?
14. How do you think communication has changed in the last 10 years? Has it been facilitated by (e.g. social media).
15. Have you ever encountered any kind of silence culture in your work?
16. Are you comfortable talking about your profession?
17. Often there can be two different images of the animal industry, e.g. animal rights organizations show images/films that are not used in normal advertising. How do you think better communication can be achieved?
18. How do you deal with negative publicity regarding fellow actors in the animal industry? - Do you feel you can influence? - What can be improved?
19. What is your opinion regarding tools to add transparency for the public? (e.g. camera surveillance)
20. Do you think there is a difference in communication in the community between livestock farming on land and in water?
21. Finally, as a producer, do you have your own thoughts/opinions you would like to share?

Appendix 3

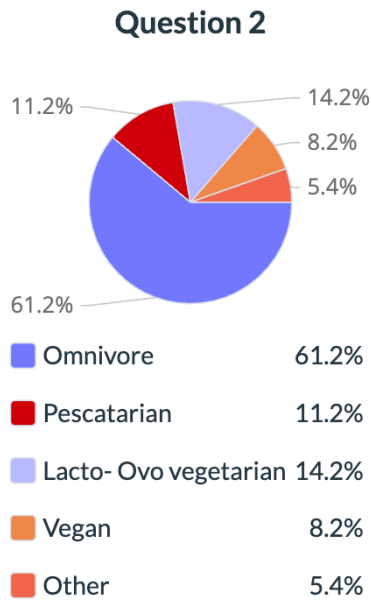


Figure 1. Respondents' answers to Q2

Appendix 4

Questions 3, 6, 7, 8 and 12.

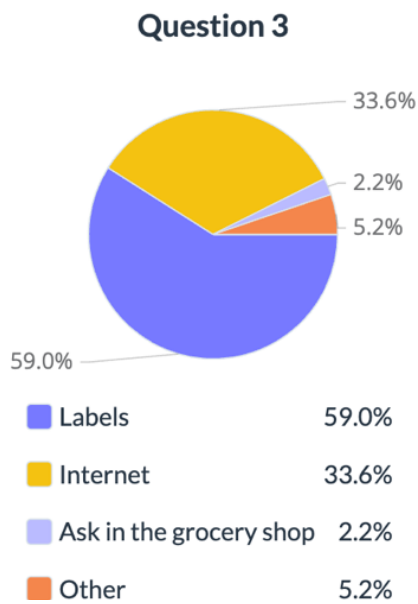


Figure 2. Respondents' answers to Q3

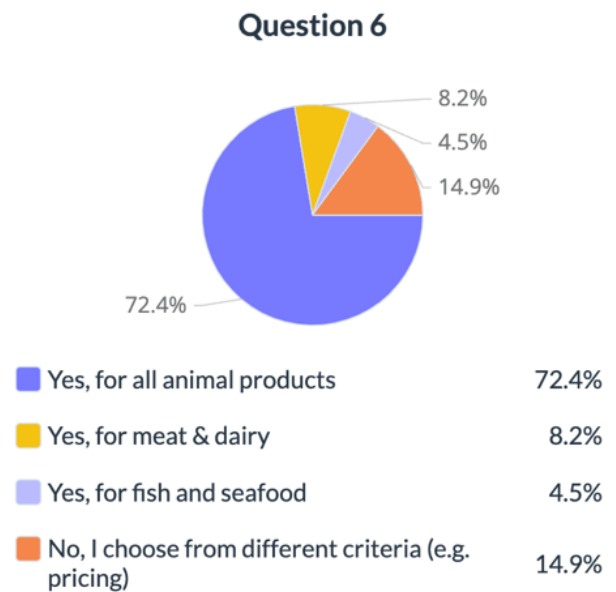
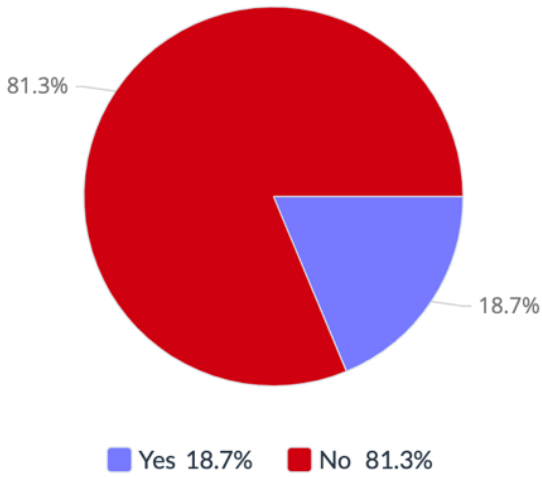


Figure 3. Respondents' answers to Q6

Question 7



Question 8

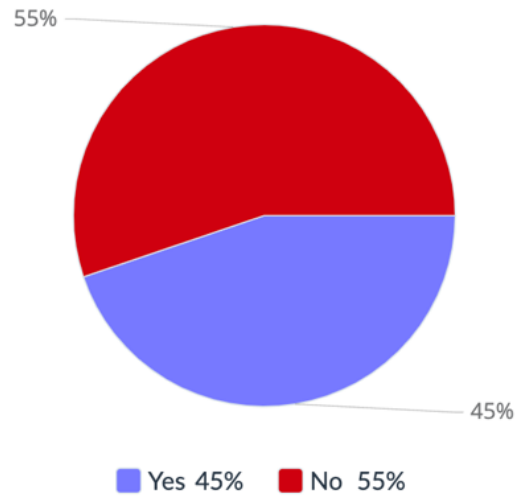


Figure 4. Respondents' answers to Q7

Figure 5. Respondents' answers to Q8

Question 12

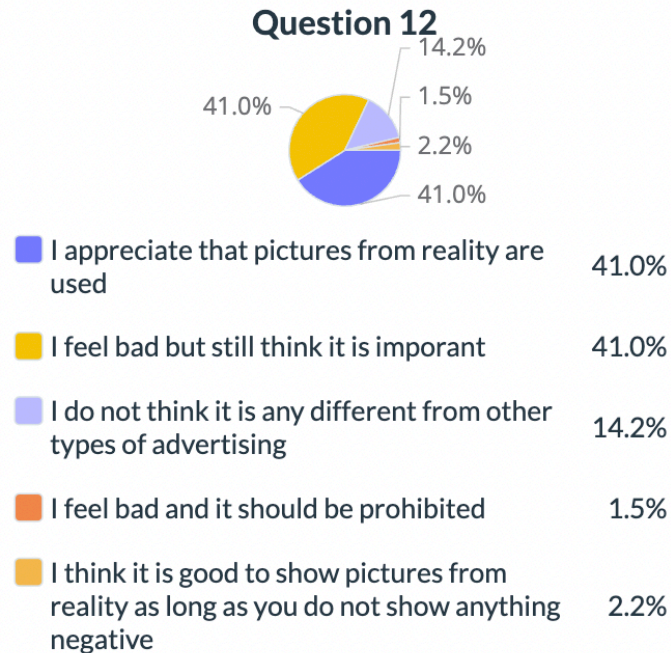


Figure 6. Respondents' answers to Q12

Appendix 5
 Questions 4, 10 and 11.

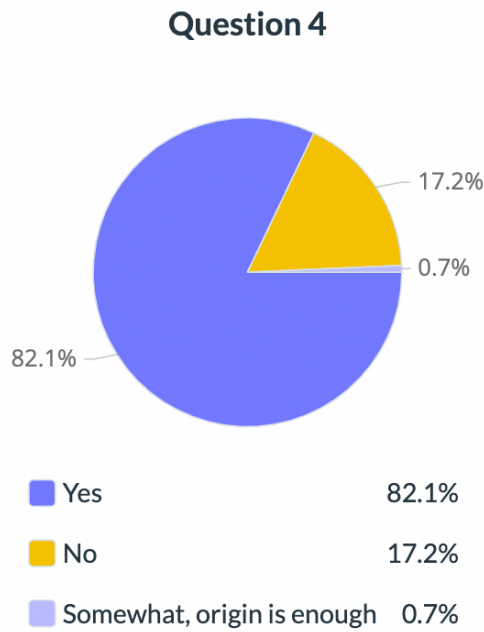


Figure 7. Respondents' answers to Q4

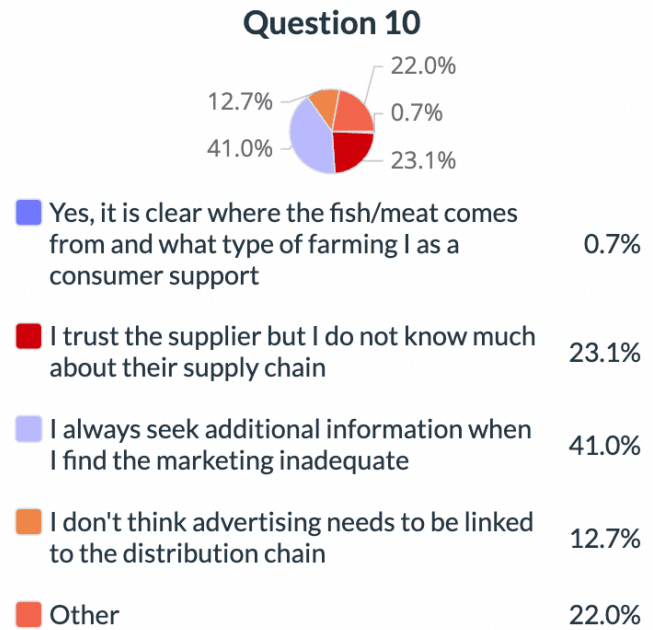


Figure 8.. Respondents' answers to Q10

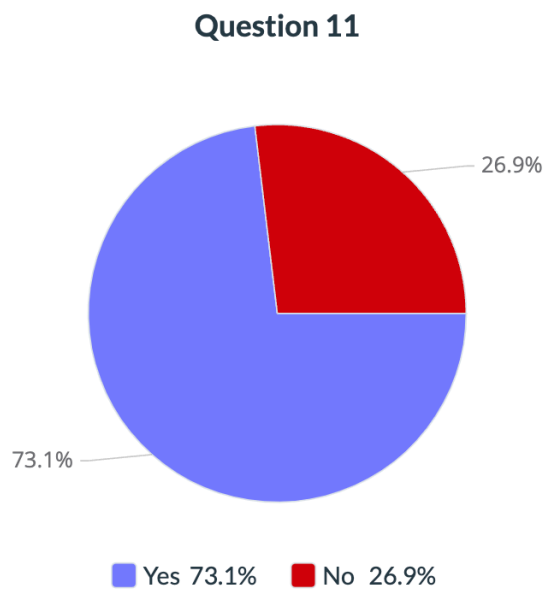


Figure 5. Respondents' answers to Q11

Appendix 6
Questions 13-15.

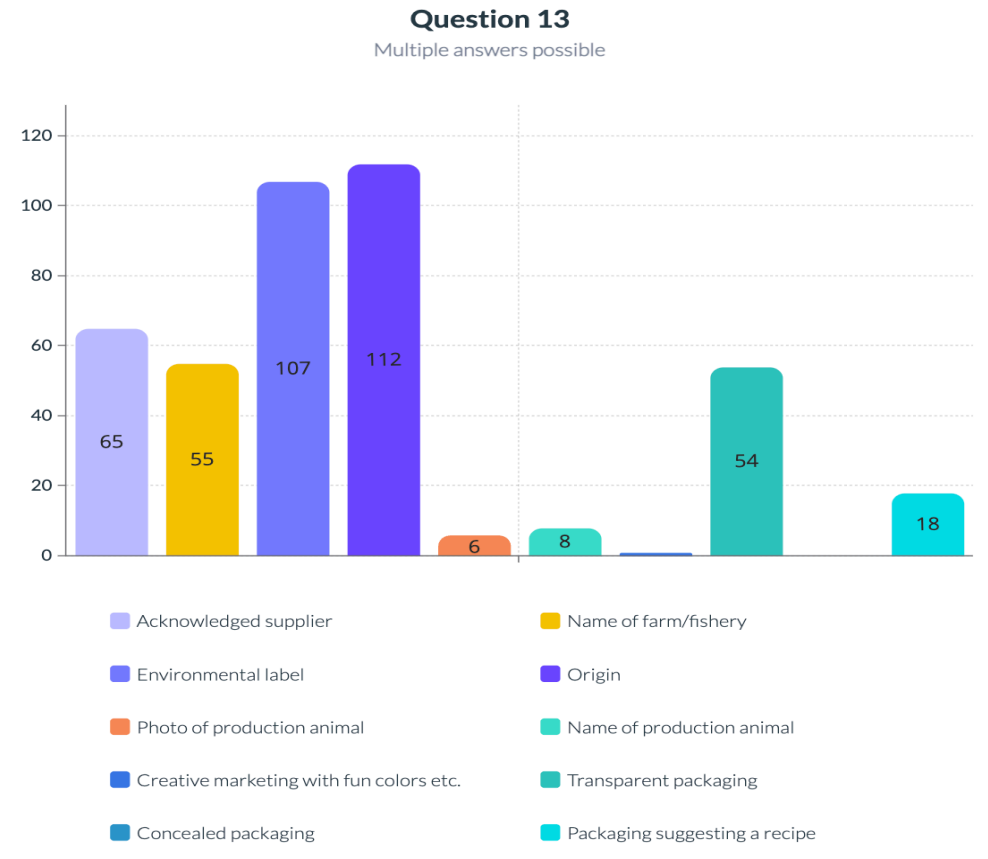


Figure 6. Respondents' answers to Q13

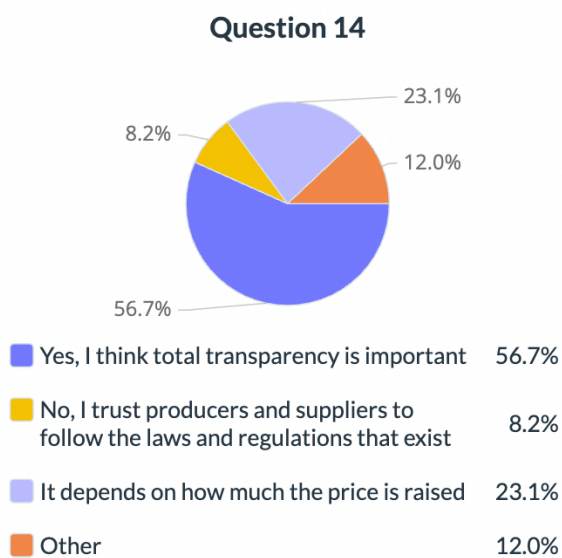


Figure 11.. Respondents' answers to Q14

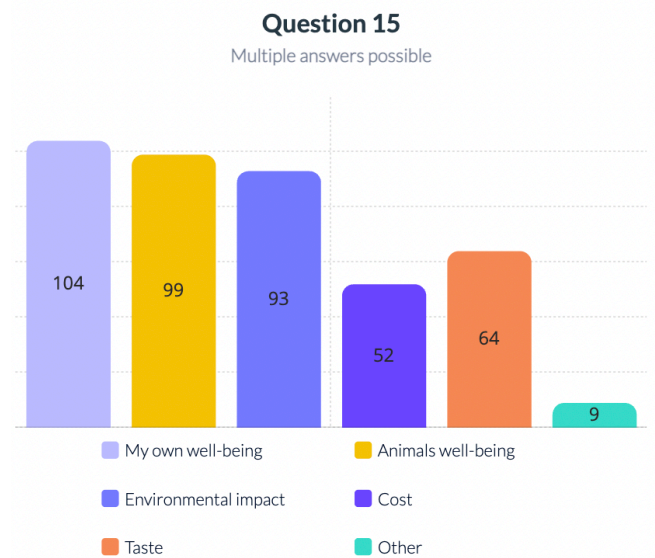


Figure 12.. Respondents' answers to Q15

Appendix 7

Additional answers to survey question 16:

- I would like more debate and information on this very important issue.
- No marketing provides full transparency in production. Question 12 is difficult. There is so much wrong in our consumption that if everything were to be marked with graphic images, it would only make people get used to the abuses/problems and close their eyes even more. There I think that education is the best way to get people to choose the "right", instead of graphic images. I don't think anyone would want to have a baby if they knew what it looks like.
- I believe that words have great power and can be an alternative to images. For example, "free range" should never be used unless they involve outdoor living. I would like information on the origin of feed
- I think this topic is incredibly important and that more transparency is needed
- Since the meat I eat comes from an animal that has lived its life in nature, I have no but from eating meat etc.
- I believe that greater transparency would be good, but I believe primarily that it should be done through the supervisory authority and not through the public.
- Beef taxes should be introduced and subsidies on livestock stopped and replaced with subsidies on locally grown vegetables that are good for health, the planet and spare animals' lives and reduce suffering.
- An area where I feel guilty most of the time, sometimes laziness and price go before the knowledge that it probably hasn't gone quite right all the way.
- Transparency in the food industry is very important to me. I would consider going from lacto-ovo to eating more animal products if I knew that animal husbandry is fair and reasonable, but at the moment I do not have that trust in the industry.
- It is incredibly important that animals live as naturally as possible, without the mass of unnecessary, growth hormones, drugs, etc. that they receive in order for them to grow faster and give more meat. Just for a lot of people to make more money.
- It makes it easier for people to do the "right thing". Our modern society places such great demands on individuals to make good decisions all the time, and there is not always energy to put themselves in every area.
- Interesting and follow up eco-labelled products, thank you for bringing it up in your essay work. Good luck
- I feel constantly lost in the consumer world. What is really good compared to something else? I have also taken courses in marketing and feel like most of them can be classified as greenwashing :) try to do the right thing for as many people as possible but they are difficult in today's society

- You want the best for the animal, absolutely. But I am hungry and need food, recipes that are vegetarian have been tested and give neither the same sense of satiety nor taste experience. If there is vegetarian food that mimics the Swedish home cooking, it is more than happy to be tested. But rhyming pork, onion sauce and potatoes, there is little that beats (Except for fillet of beef).
- It is strange that we do not only sell organic and Swedish produced when it comes to meat / fish / dairy.
- It is important that the entire chain in a product is accounted for and what they do to reduce their climate impact in general.
- I believe that we need better and more transparent animal husbandry
- I believe that total transparency and transparency should be a requirement for all companies that produce food.
- If there was meat that was slaughtered in a pet-friendly way, I would choose it even if it was more expensive.
- Go vegan

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