



Where Does Your Meat Come From?

Waterloo Region Food System
Roundtable

February 22, 2011

Outline

- **Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?**
 - Industry Profile
 - Local Food Perspective
 - Community Economic Development Perspective
 - Food Safety
 - Animal Welfare
- **What are the Issues Facing the Industry?**
 - Our Survey
 - Regulatory Compliance
 - Other Topics





Committed to Food Safety

Food safety is the small
producers' livelihood

Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?

Industry Profile

- 152 abattoirs in Ontario as of December 13th, 2010;
 - In April 2004, there were 191 provincially licensed abattoirs, and
 - In 1998, there were 267 abattoirs.
- 380 Freestanding Meat Processors as of Feb 10, 2011
- They provide services to local animal producers: slaughter, butchering, wrapping, curing, smoking, further processing.
- Product marketing is generally in about a 50km radius.



Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?

Local Food Perspective

Hellmann's Survey – 2,238 Canadians

- 86% say they prefer to eat locally sourced foods
- 77% say that they are willing to spend more on a locally produced food product versus a similar item that has been imported from another country.



Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?

Local Food Perspective

Hellmann's Survey – 2,238 Canadians

- 71% of respondents say they read labels and packages to see where their food is produced, and
- 68% say that they always pay attention to the origins of the food they eat
- Clearly, there is the demand!



Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?

Community Economic Development Perspective

Key Principles of Fair Trade

1. provide market access to otherwise marginalized producers
2. connect producers with customers and allow access with fewer intermediaries
3. provide higher wages than typically paid to producers
4. allows for more of the money from transaction to remain in the community of production



Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?

Community Economic Development Perspective

Local food, and local meat production is about fair trade

- Abattoirs and small meat plants are an integral part of a localized food system; providing market access to farmers
- Direct marketing allows farmers to command a premium for a specialized product
- Sales result in a greater amount of money circulating within the community



Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?

Community Economic Development Perspective

- There is an increasing demand for locally produced, niche market products, such as Hormone free, Grass fed, or Organic
- Can only be achieved within the small abattoir and meat plant system that can guarantee the meat returned to the farmer comes from the animal shipped



Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?

Food Safety Perspective

- Shorter Supply Chain:
 - Fewer handlers
 - less transportation, and
 - less mixing from several animals
- provides a more direct link between producer and consumer
- A shorter chain reduces the potential for poor product handling and the introduction of pathogens
- Faster recall speed and removal from food system



Why do we need local abattoirs and freestanding meat plants?

Animal Welfare Perspective

- Animals shipped from a farm to a local abattoir are killed shortly after arrival
- Consequently, they experience less stress compared to animals that are transported to slaughter facilities many kilometres away.



Major Issues Facing the Industry

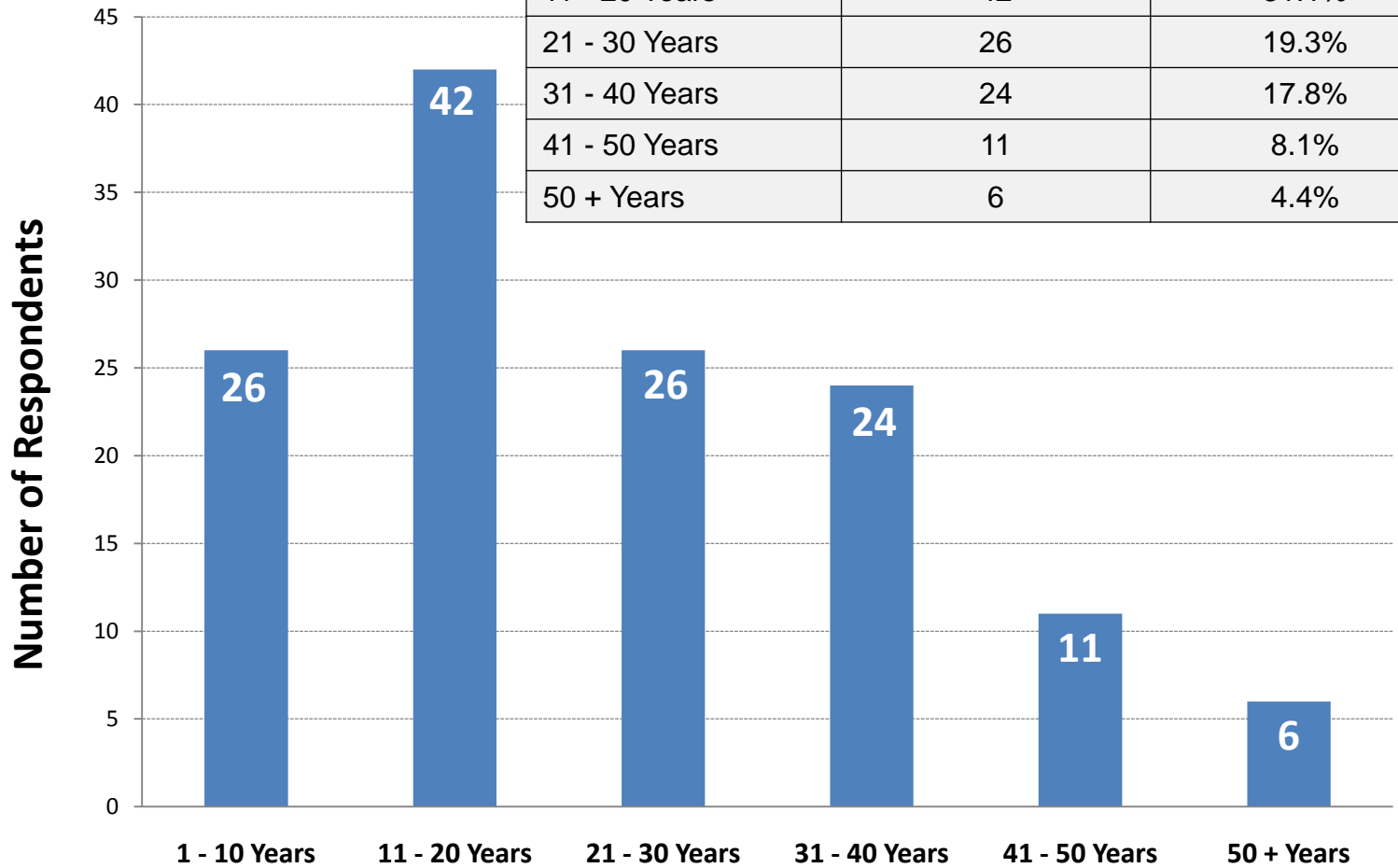
Our Survey

- Conducted in 2010
- Surveys sent to all licensed abattoir and freestanding meat plants (FSMP) in Ontario
- List of abattoirs and FSMP is available from OMAFRA
- 540 surveys sent, 135 responses received, response rate of 25%



Ownership: How long (in years) have you been in business?

Years in Business	Number of Respondents (n = 135)	Percentage of Respondents
1 - 10 Years	26	19.3%
11 - 20 Years	42	31.1%
21 - 30 Years	26	19.3%
31 - 40 Years	24	17.8%
41 - 50 Years	11	8.1%
50 + Years	6	4.4%



Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

- Presents unintended barriers to smaller-scale, local meat production and sale
- Owners understand the need for regulation and food safety
- Current structure appears to have been developed in the context of large-scale production
- And seems to focus on interprovincial and/or international marketing

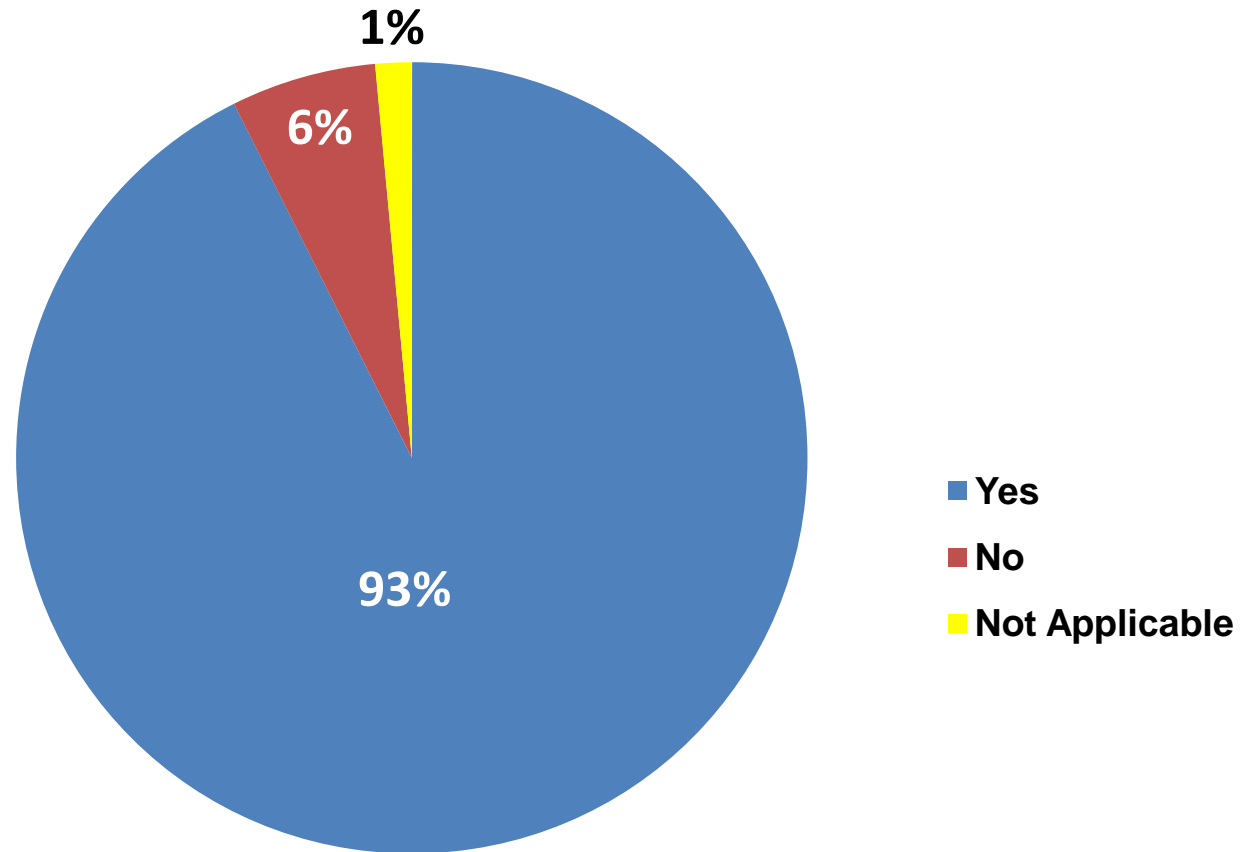
Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

1. Excessive paperwork



Regulatory Compliance: Do you feel overburdened with the amount of meat inspection paperwork that is required on a daily and weekly basis?



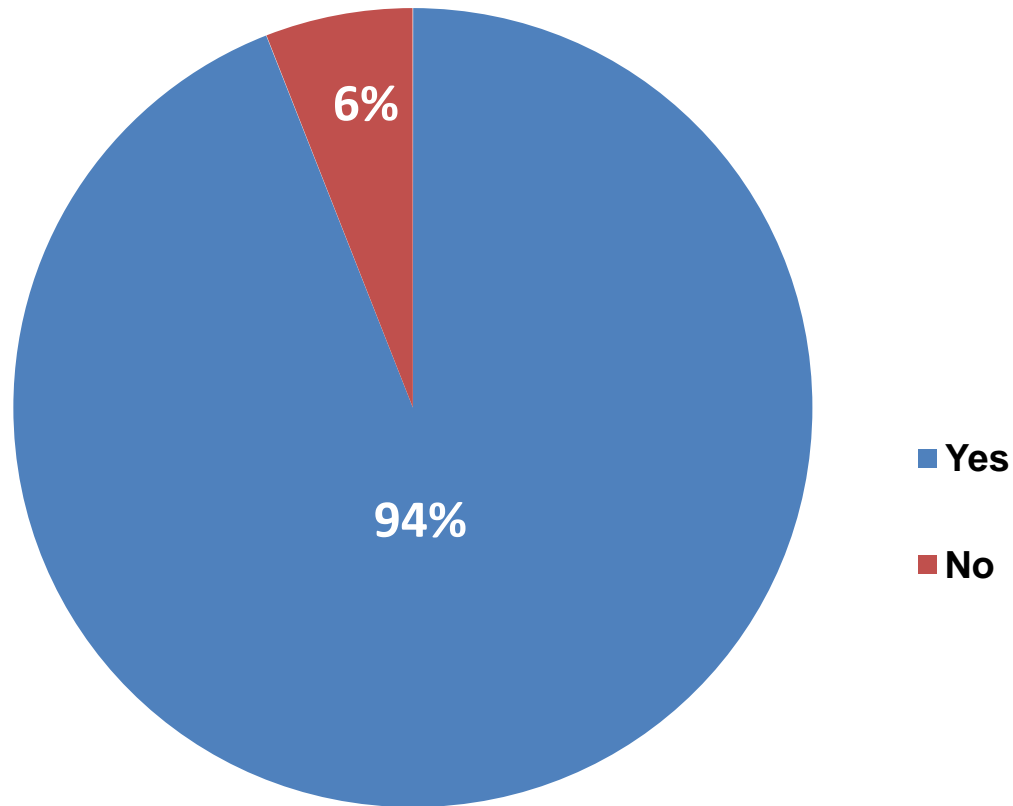
Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

1. Excessive paperwork
 - a) *Redundant paperwork*



Regulatory Compliance: Do you feel that some of the meat inspection paperwork is unnecessary and repetitive?



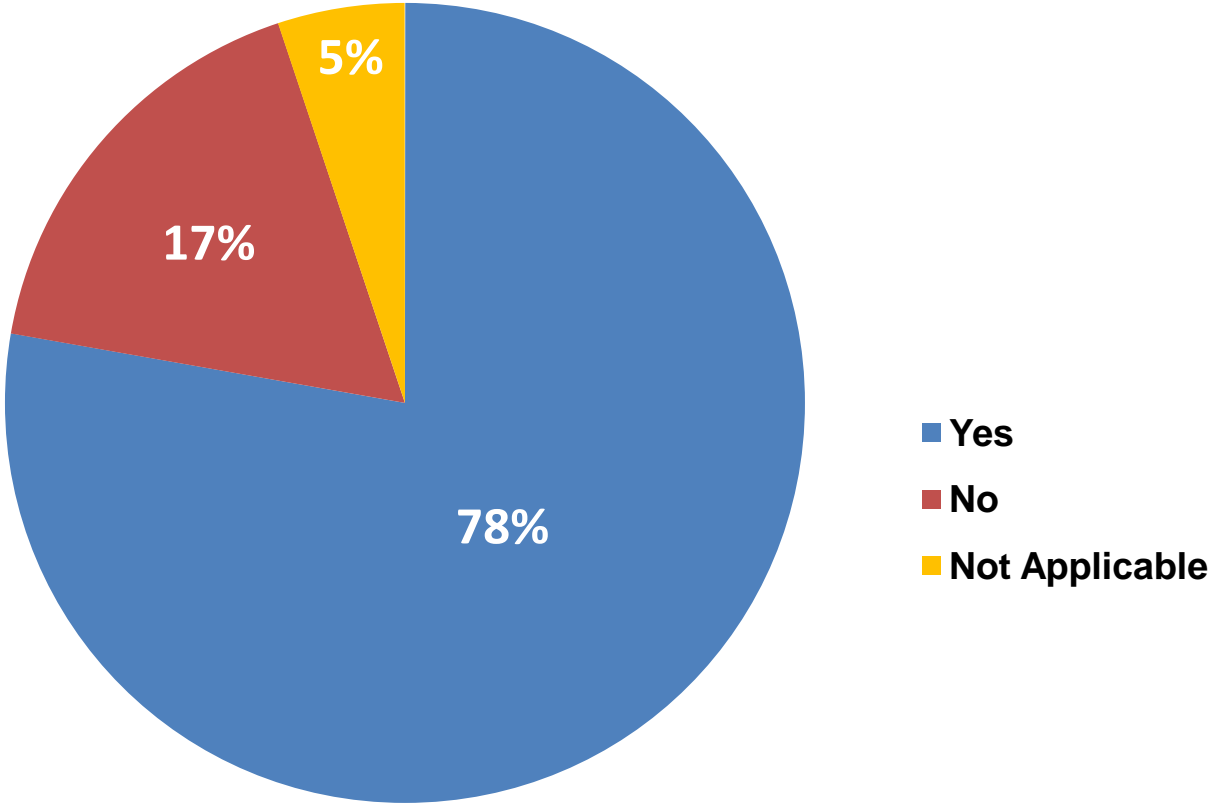
Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

1. Excessive paperwork
 - a) Redundant paperwork
 - b) *Not food safety applicable regulations*



Regulatory Compliance: Do you find that certain regulations do not assist you in providing a high-quality product to your customers?



Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

2. An Ever Changing Regulatory Environment
 - a. *Inconsistency of Inspections*



Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

2. An Ever Changing Regulatory Environment

a. Inconsistency of Inspections

“I have had 9 inspectors in 3 years. When I did what the auditor told me, then someone else came along and said it was wrong. Some demand a wooden table, others plastic.”

- Producer, regional meeting



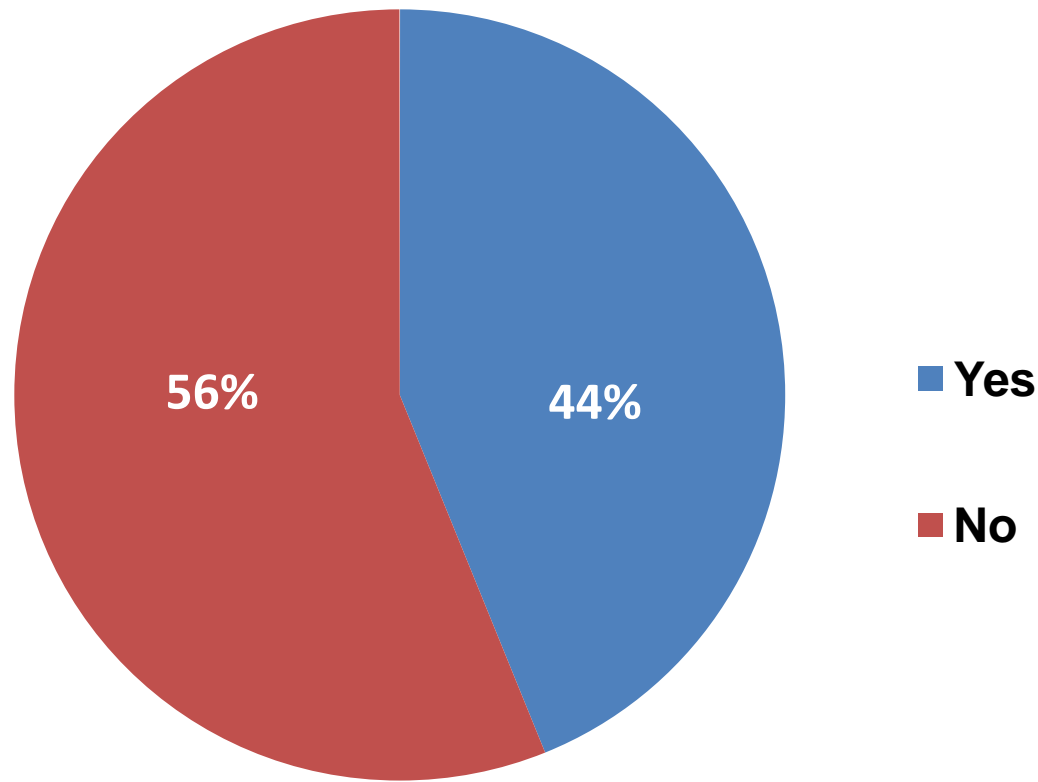
Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

2. An Ever Changing Regulatory Environment
 - a. Inconsistency of Inspections
 - b. *Fear of Retaliation*



Regulatory Compliance: Do you feel that you can speak out about your concerns without retaliation or intimidation from food safety inspectors?

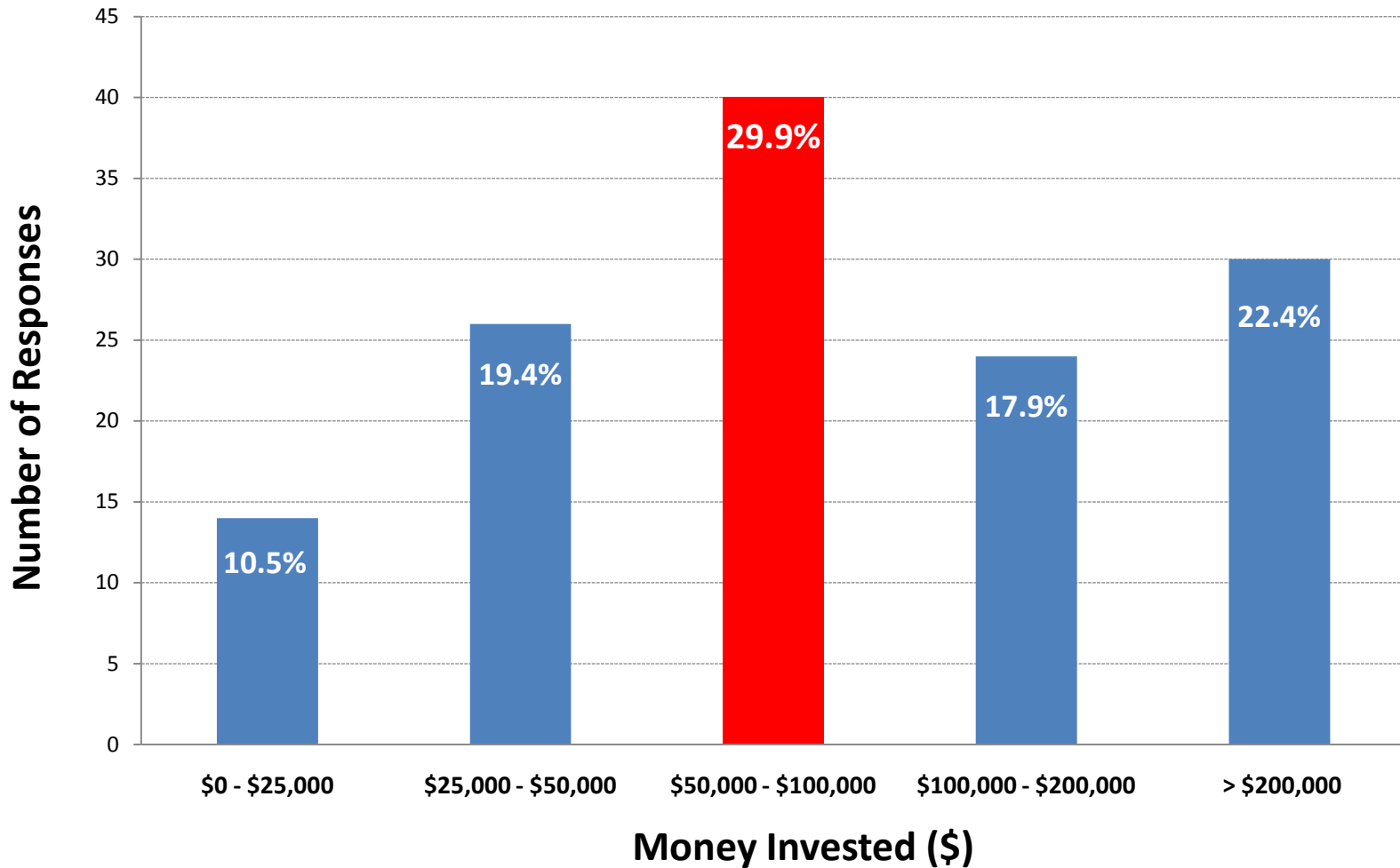


Major Issues Facing the Industry

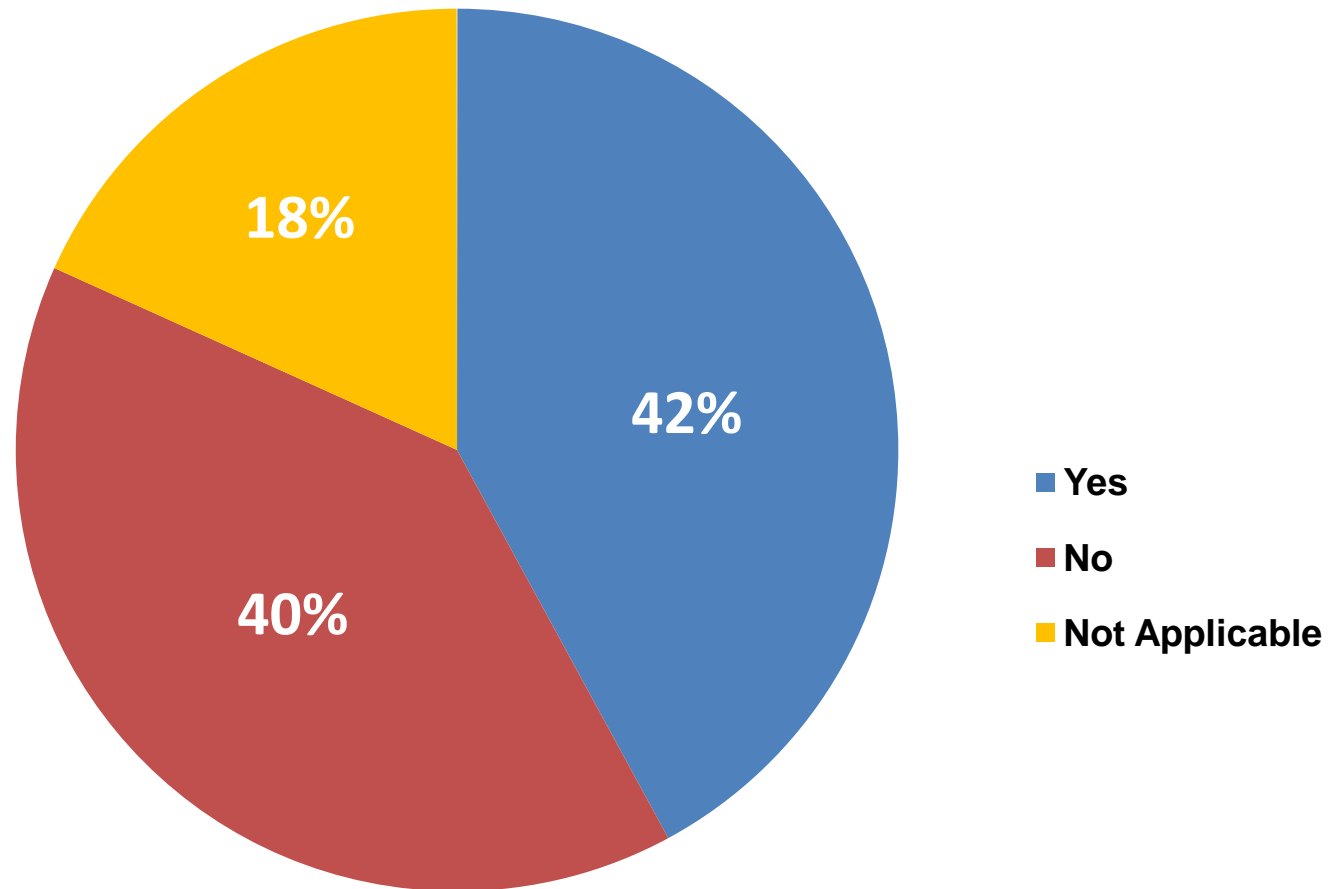
Regulatory Compliance

2. An Ever Changing Regulatory Environment
 - a. Inconsistency of Inspections
 - b. Fear of Retaliation
 - c. *Financial investments to achieve regulatory compliance*

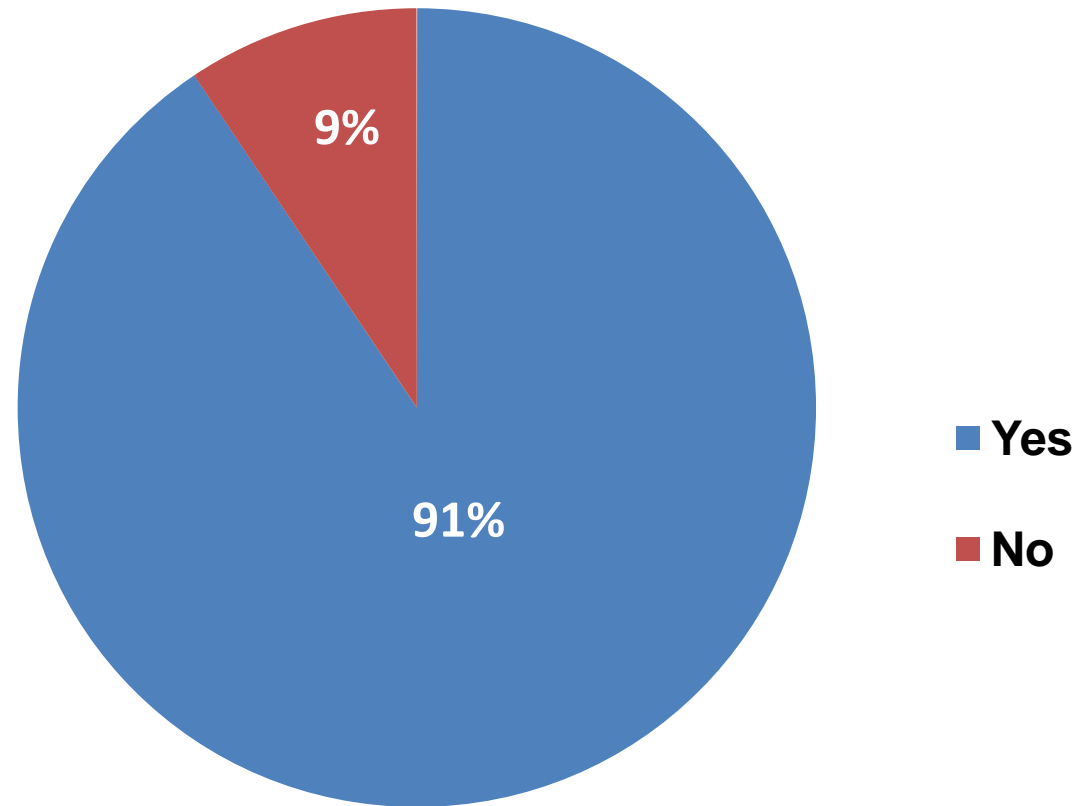
Financial Investment: How much money have you invested over the last 10 years in order to maintain compliance with Ontario's meat inspection regulations?



Financial Investment: Considering the audits your business has undergone in the last 2 years, have your investments improved the outcome of your audits?



Financial Investment: Do you feel that some regulations require you to put money into cosmetic solutions?



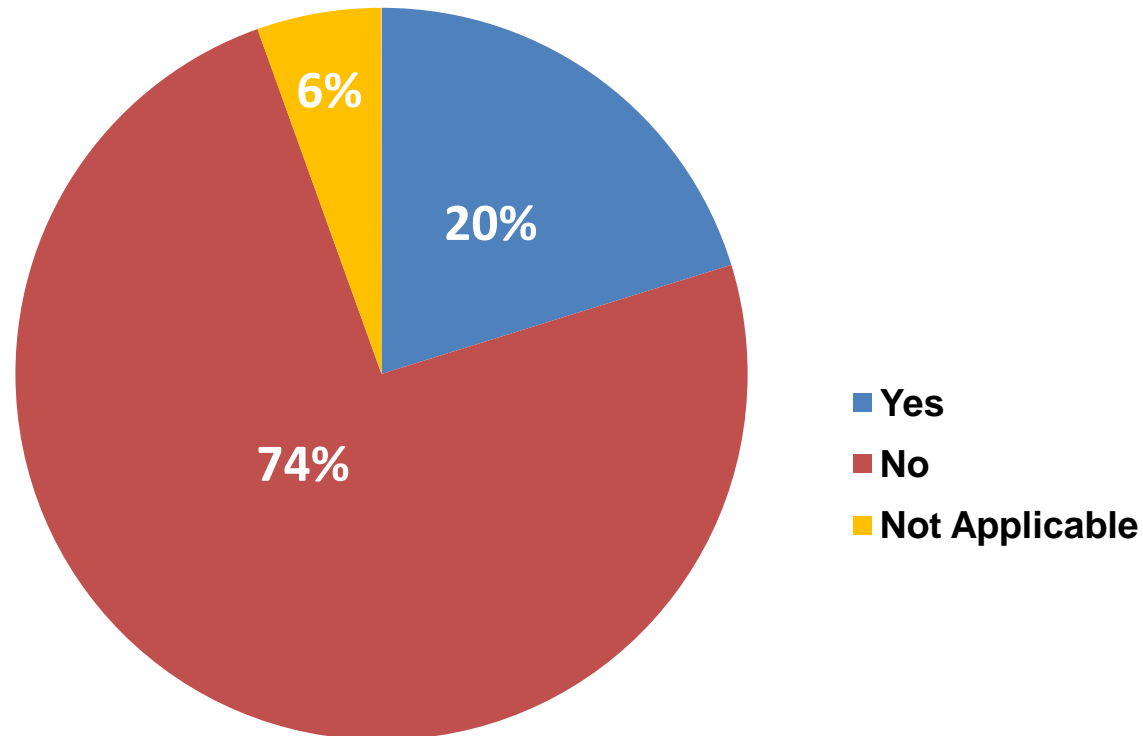
Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

3. Communications



Regulatory Compliance: Do you feel that you generally receive enough time and information about upcoming regulations that you can prepare your business to keep up with the changes required?



Major Issues Facing the Industry

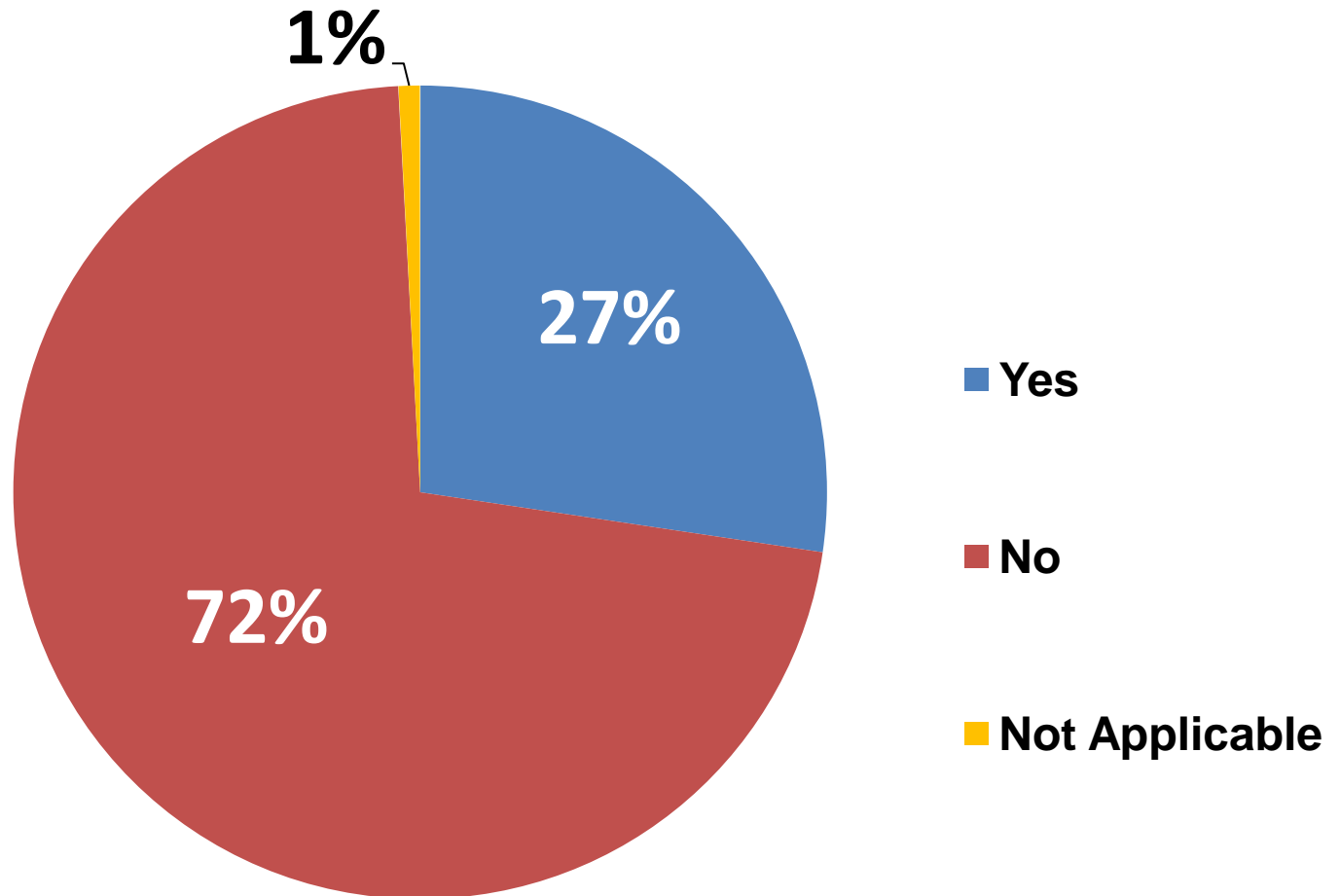
Regulatory Compliance

3. Communications

- With little time to make changes, operators perceive this as “got you” type of food inspection system
- We also asked if regulations were easy to understand



Regulatory Compliance: As a business owner do you feel that food safety regulations are easy to understand?



Major Issues Facing the Industry

Regulatory Compliance

From the Survey data, our respondents report:

- Low communication
- Difficult to interpret regulations
- Inspectors perceived as out to get you not help you

This is not a good business environment



Major Issues Facing the Industry

Other Issues

- **Efficiency of sale:**
 - Not all parts of the animal are marketable in Ontario
- **National supermarket chains do not accept provincially inspected meat**
 - Centralized purchasing barrier to local

Major Issues Facing the Industry

Conclusions

- If farmers want to market meat direct to consumers, they must have access to abattoirs and meat processors in their community;
- Local abattoirs are an essential component of local food systems from a community economic development, food safety, and animal welfare perspective;
- Abattoirs and Freestanding Meat Plants are facing number of serious issues that limit expansion and development of sustainable local food systems.

