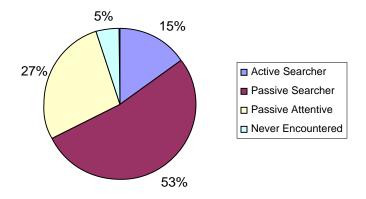
Analysis and Results

GE Information Searching and Label Reading

Two questions on our survey sought to elicit information on the respondents' current label reading practices. Under the current voluntary labeling programs, food producers may choose to label their products as "GMO-free", "does not contain GMO ingredients", or with other labels. First, we asked whether the respondent actively sought information on GE ("active searcher"), paid attention to information if it caught their eye ("passive searcher"), had encountered information but did not pay attention ("passive attentive"), or had never encountered information on GE. More than half of the respondents reported that they paid attention to information if it caught their eye, while just 15.2% claimed that they actively sought GE information (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Type of Information Searcher



N=422 Source: Center for Rural Studies, UVM, 2004 Vermonter Poll.

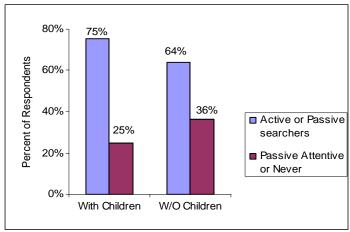
Our second question on label reading asked the respondents whether they had noticed during the previous year (2003) any labels on food regarding genetically modified organisms. Three quarters of the respondents (75%) reported that they had not seen any labels. We examined whether GE search behavior was related to having noticed GE labels before and found a fairly strong positive relationship (significance < 0.001, Gamma value = 0.470.) The more attention a person paid to information on genetic engineering, the more likely he or she was of having noticed a label in the past.

We then investigated whether the types of information searchers may have been influenced by demographic characteristics. We looked at the data to see if information search behavior appeared to be related to the age of the respondent. Our analysis revealed that people who never encountered information on genetic engineering were, on average, 13 years older than active searchers, 14 years older than passive searchers, and 12 years older than passive attentive people (significance = 0.001).

Our data also suggested a relationship between th

Further, our results indicated relationships between the type of information searcher and education and family type, respectively. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the respondents with a Bachelor's degree or higher reported paying attention to or actively seeking information on genetic engineering, compared to 61.5% of the respondents with less than a Bachelor's degree (significance = 0.008). Three quarters (75%) of the respondents with children under 18 years of age claimed that they pay attention to or actively seek information on genetic engineering, compared to 64% of the other respondents (significance = 0.018) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Relationship between type of information searcher and family type (n=406, significance=0.018)



Source: Center for Rural Studies, UVM, 2004 Vermonter Poll.

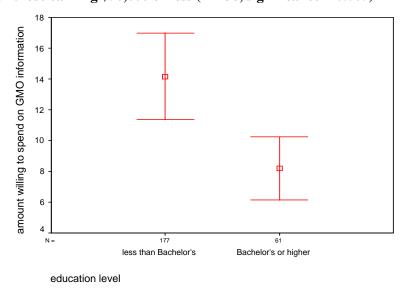
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Figure 3: Amount willing to spend on GMO info and income (n=474, significance= 0.011)

Source: Center for Rural Studies, UVM, 2004 Vermonter Poll.

When we examined the data for a relationship between the amount willing to spend on information and education level, we found that those with less education were willing to spend more on information. Those without a Bachelor's degree were willing, on average, to spend 4.8 cents more for the information than those with a Bachelor's degree or higher (significance = 0.002). When we controlled for income, we found that there may be a relationship between the amount respondents were willing to spend on information and their education level only for those who earned \$50,000 or less (Figure 4).

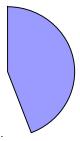
Figure 4: Relationship between the amount willing to spend on GMO info and education for those earning \$50,000 or less (n=238, significance = 0.005)



Source: Center for Rural Studies, UVM, 2004 Vermonter Poll

Next, we asked our respondents whether they would be willing to pay more for food products that were labeled "GMO Free", food products that were labeled "Contains GMOs", both, or neither. Forty-four percent (44%) of people reported that they would be willing to spend more for "GMO free" labels, but 29% reported that they would not be willing to pay more for either label. Twenty percent of respondents said they were willing to pay more for both kinds of labels, while just 7% said they would only pay more for products labeled "Contains GMOs" (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Willingness to Pay More for Products with Specific Labels (n=584)



A majority of Vermonters would be willing to pay more for a product if its label contained information on genetic engineering. The average amount Vermonters would be willing to spend for the information was 10 cents. Those with an annual income of over \$50,000 were willing, on average, to pay 4 cents less than the rest. A mong those whose annual income was less than \$50,000, those with a bachelor's degree or higher were willing, on average to pay 4 cents less than those without a bachelor's degree. While 28% of our respondents were not willing to pay more for any type of GE labeling, 44% were willing to pay more for products labeled "GMO free."

The great majority of Vermonters were supportive or very supportive of labeling genetically engineered seeds for farmers. More than three quarters of our respondents supported the labeling of GE seeds. The recent passage of legislation to require the labeling of GE seeds in the state of Vermont reflected this interest for GE information on labels.

Authors: Emilian Geczi, Amy S. Hoskins, Jane Kolodinsky

For more information about this report, contact:

Jane Kolodinsky, PhD

Co-Director, Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont jkolodin@uvm.edu, 802-656-4616.

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