

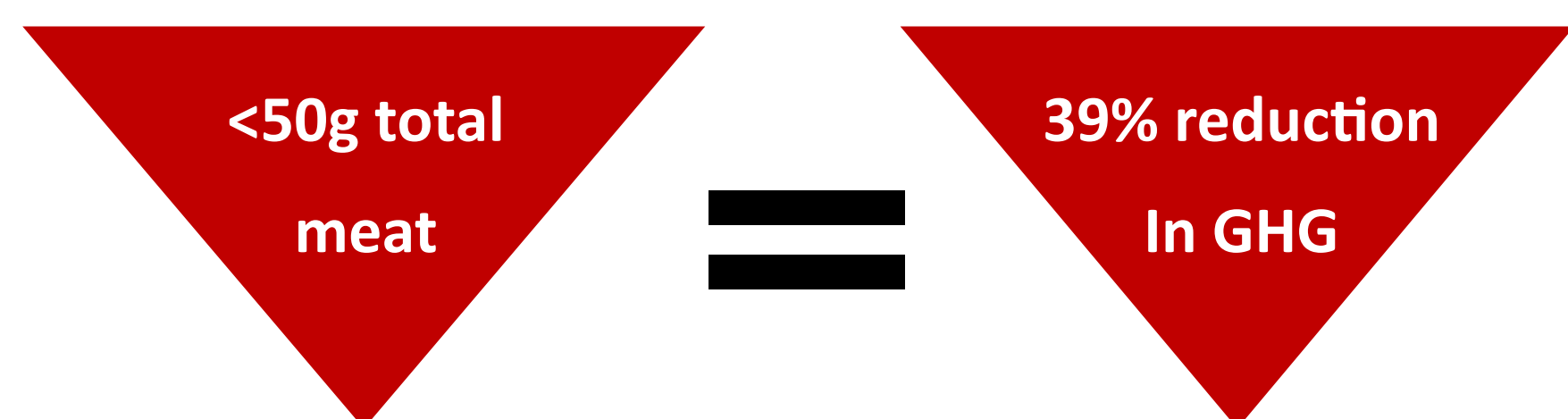
SUSTAINABLE DIETS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE KNOWLEDGE OF, AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS, SUSTAINABLE DIETS IN GCU

Dean Newell - School of Health and Life Sciences - Glasgow Caledonian University



1 Introduction

Anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gasses have been proven to be a significant factor in climate change¹. In the UK agriculture sector there has been virtually no change in emissions since 2008². The way food is produced and consumed needs to change. A transition to a more sustainable dietary model is essential in the mitigation of climate change, and reducing the intake of meat is one of the more substantial changes that an individual can make³.



A sustainable diet does not only focus on lessening environmental impact, but also improves health of the individual, food security, and the economy, for people now and for future generations⁴. The GCU sustainable food policy aims to enhance the sustainable credentials of on-campus catering, with one such focus on reducing red meat consumption.

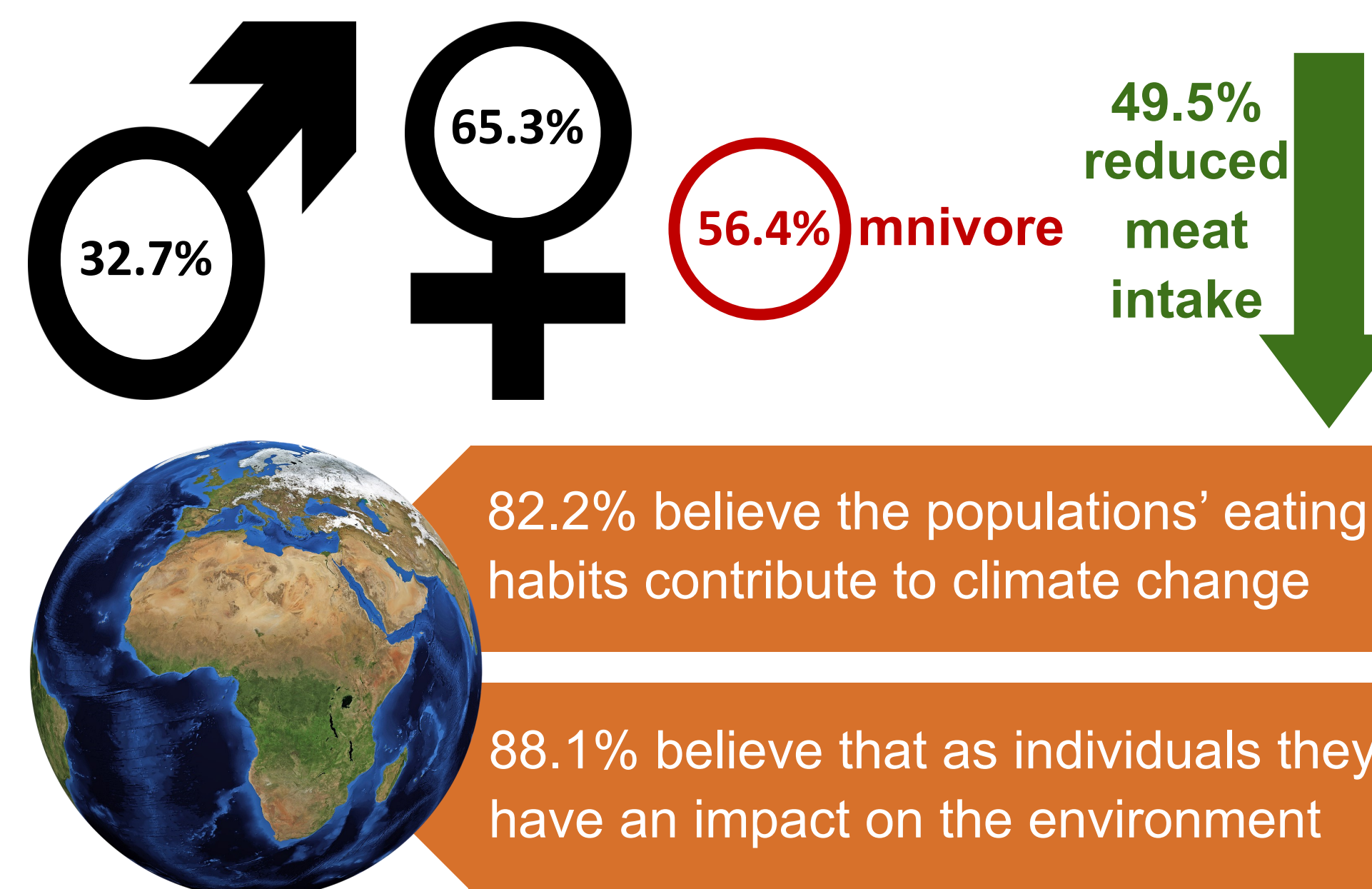
2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study was to explore the knowledge and attitudes of students, staff, and others who use the GCU restaurant, towards sustainable diets and meat consumption.

- 1 Provide an overview of the definitions of sustainable diets
- 2 Explore the understanding and attitudes of GCU restaurant users towards sustainable diets
- 3 Explore how understanding and attitudes influence the role that red/processed meat plays in food choice at GCU

3 Findings

A questionnaire was produced to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data, with subsequent descriptive statistics and thematic analysis being carried out respectively. Below are some characteristics of the 101 participants:



The definitions of a sustainable diet found in the literature were thematically analysed, producing 5 key themes. The participants' definitions were also thematically coded and analysed for instances of each theme being met.

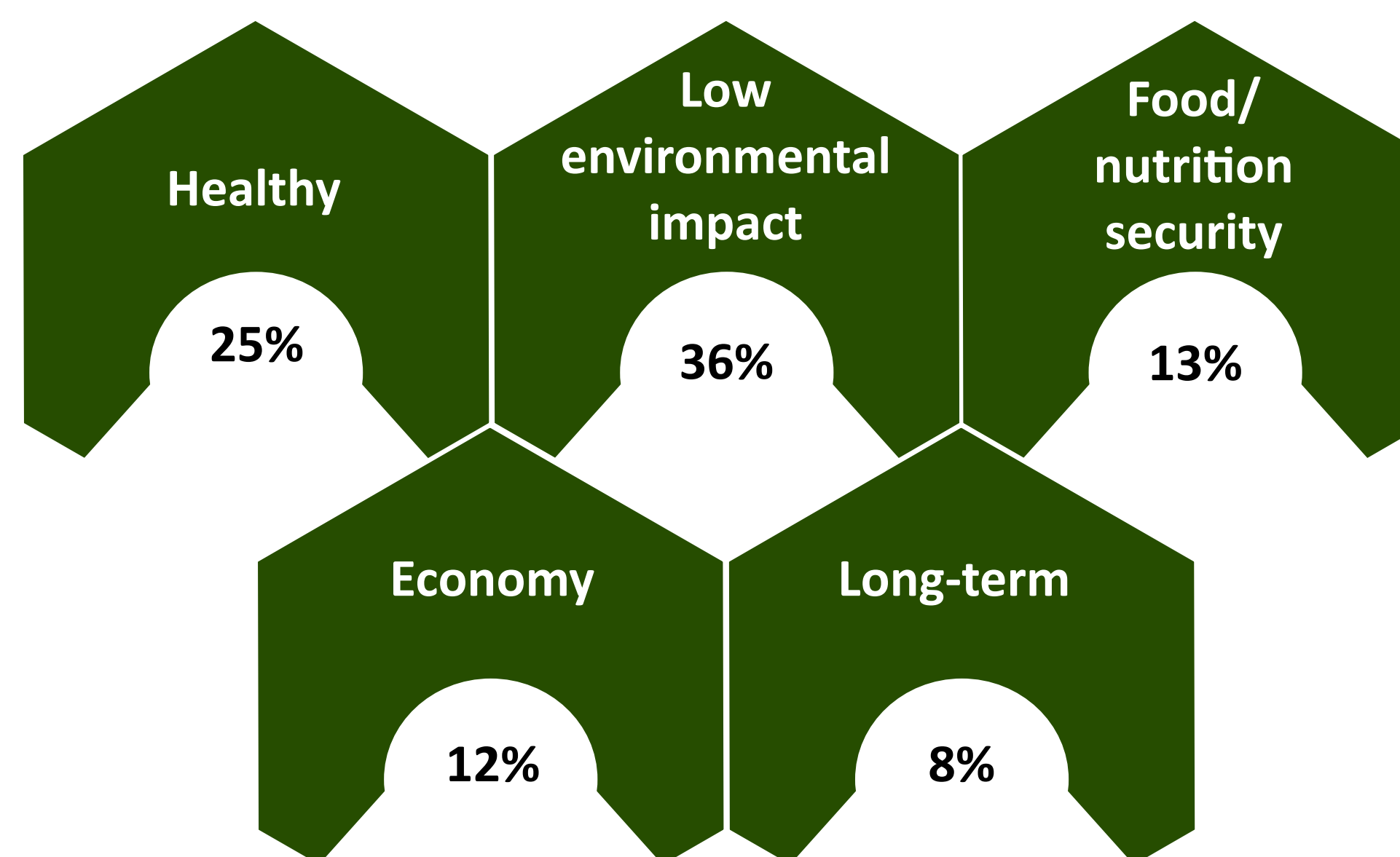


Fig. 1. Percentage of corresponding themes in provided definitions

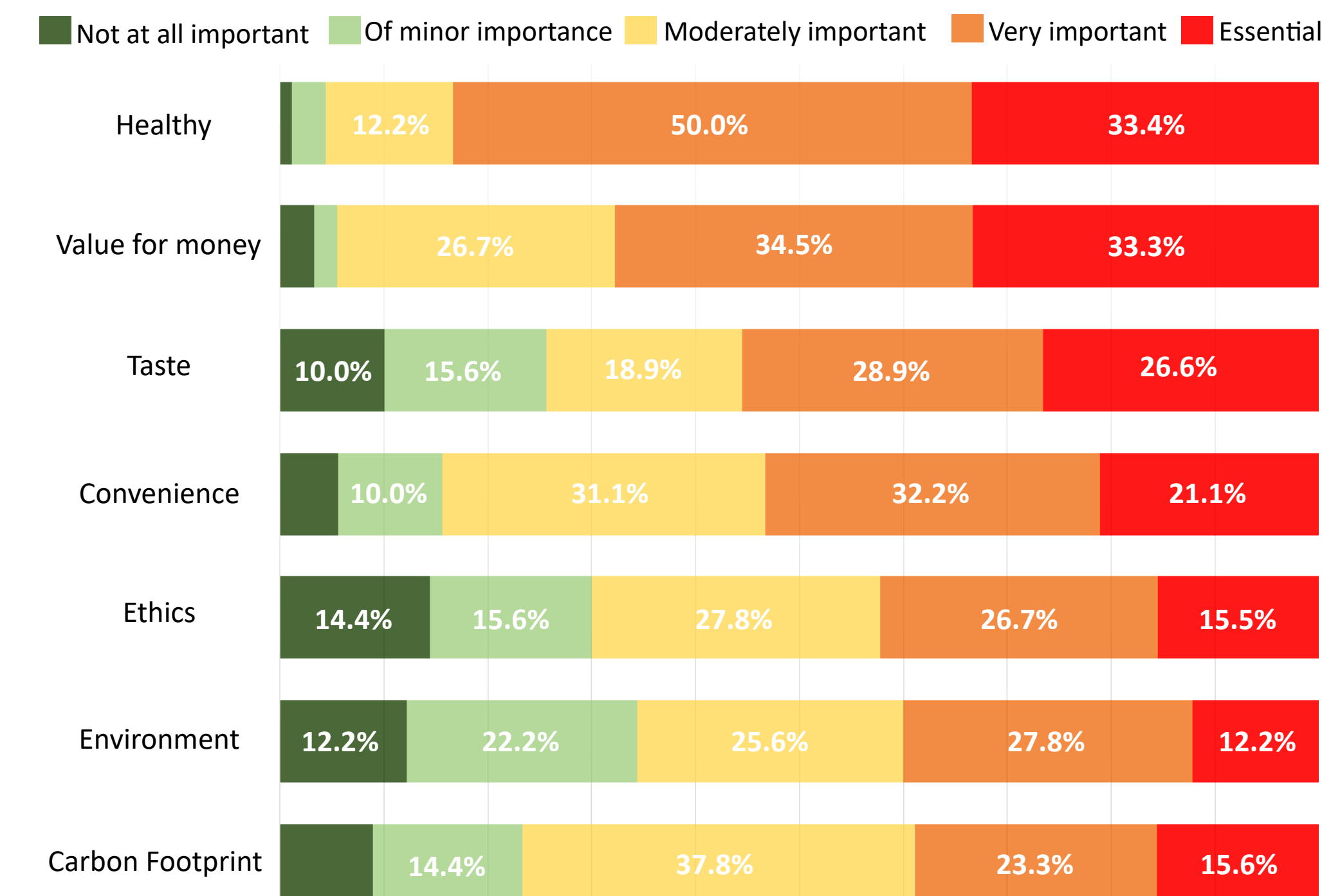


Fig. 2. Importance of factors when buying food from the GCU restaurant

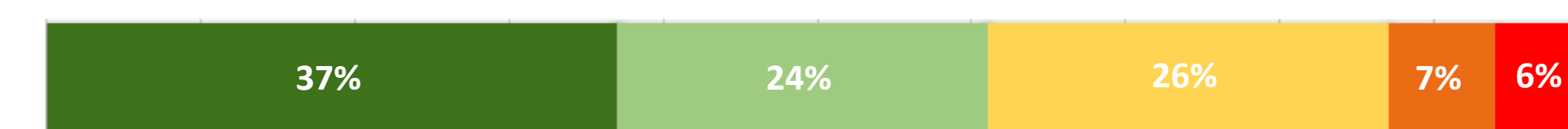


Fig. 3. Importance of meat in meal choices from GCU restaurant

Sustainable criteria were of little influence in dietary choices both in general and when using the GCU restaurant. Meat consumption was found to be of little influence on dietary choices when using the GCU restaurant, however this may be due to health concerns rather than sustainable criteria.

4 Conclusion

Attitudes towards meat consumption show that a meat-free day at the GCU restaurant is a feasible way of advancing GCU's sustainable food policy. Further research is needed to greater understand how best to address the root of the knowledge-action gap of the population.

5 References

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- (3) British Dietetic Association. *Eating patterns for health and sustainability: A reference guide for dietitians*. Available from: https://www.bda.uk.com/professional/resources/environmentally_sustainable_diet_toolkit_-_one_blue_dot [Accessed 2nd May 2019].
- (4) Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. *Final document: International Scientific Symposium Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets: United against Hunger*. Available from: <http://www.fao.org/3/i3004e/i3004e.pdf> [Accessed 3rd May 2019].