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**Fellowship in
Food Protection**

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IFPTI Fellowship Cohort VIII: Research Presentation

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Consumer Perceptions on the Impact of Pet Food on Human Health

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Background

Key Players in U.S. Pet Food Safety

FDA	U.S. Food and Drug Administration
States	State Feed Regulatory Agencies
AAFCO	Association of American Feed Control Officials (Not a regulatory agency)

Background

- Recent recalls
- Pet illness and death
- Human illnesses



Source: <https://www.istockphoto.com>

Background

2007

- Multistate salmonellosis outbreak
- Linked to Mars Petcare dry pet food
- 62 people affected
 - 31% children 1 yr. or younger

Background

2012

- Salmonellosis linked to Diamond Pet Food dry dog food
- U.S. and Canada
- 49 people

Background

2019

- Multi drug resistant *Salmonella* strains
- Pig ear dog treats
- 154 illnesses
 - 27 children 5 y/o and less

Background

Possible Modes of Transmission Pet Food to Humans



Source: <https://www.istockphoto.com>

Problem Statement

Consumer perceptions regarding the effects of pet food products on human health are unknown.

Research Questions

1. What are current consumer beliefs regarding the impact of pet foods on human health?
2. How do consumers get information about pet food safety and safe handling of pet food?
3. What types of safe handling recommendations do consumers want to see on pet food labels?
4. How can regulators educate consumers about the safety of their pet food?

Methodology

SURVEYS

- 5 minutes
- Anonymous
- In-Person & Electronic

STUDY POPULATION

- Cat and Dog Owners
- Minneapolis – St. Paul Metro Area, MN

ANALYSIS

- Microsoft Excel

Methodology

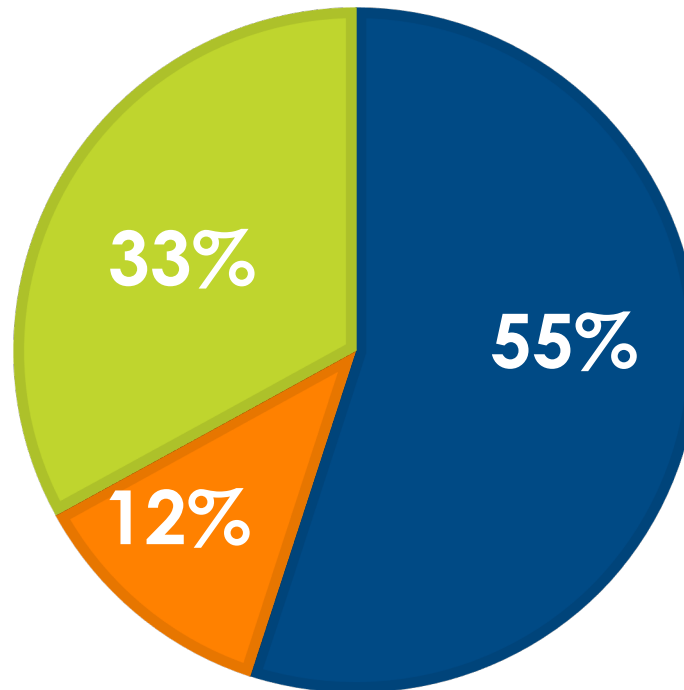
SURVEY QUESTIONS (PARAPHRASED)

- Hand washing
- Cleaning of food bowls
- Recall notifications
- Human illness from handling pet food
- Pet food safety and safe handling education

Results

676 RESPONSES

■ Dog Owners ■ Cat Owners ■ Both



Results

Shopping Trends

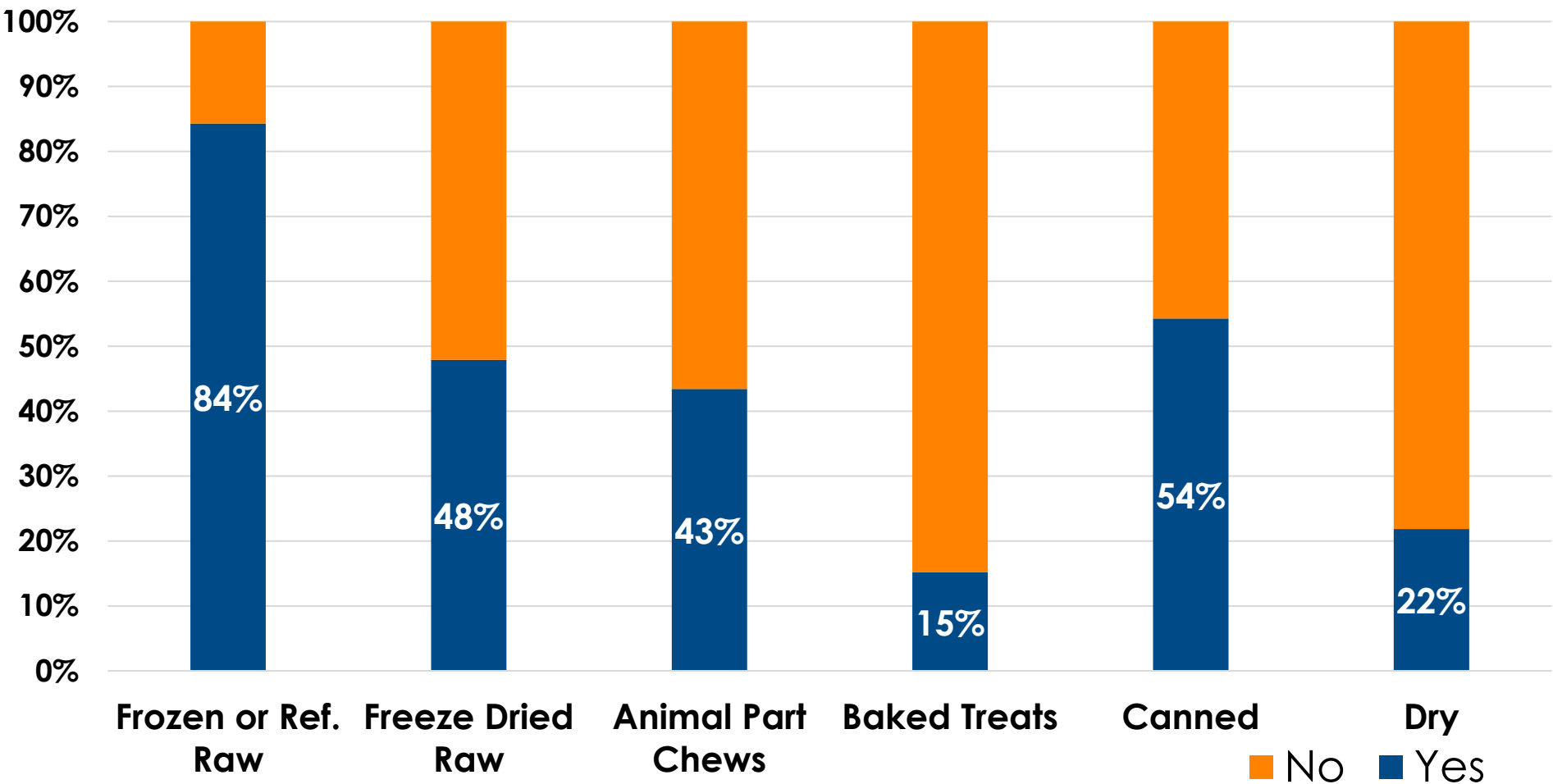
44% Pet Stores

23% Online

19% Grocery Stores

Results

Percentage of Pet Owners that Typically Wash Hands After Feeding Different Types of Food



Results

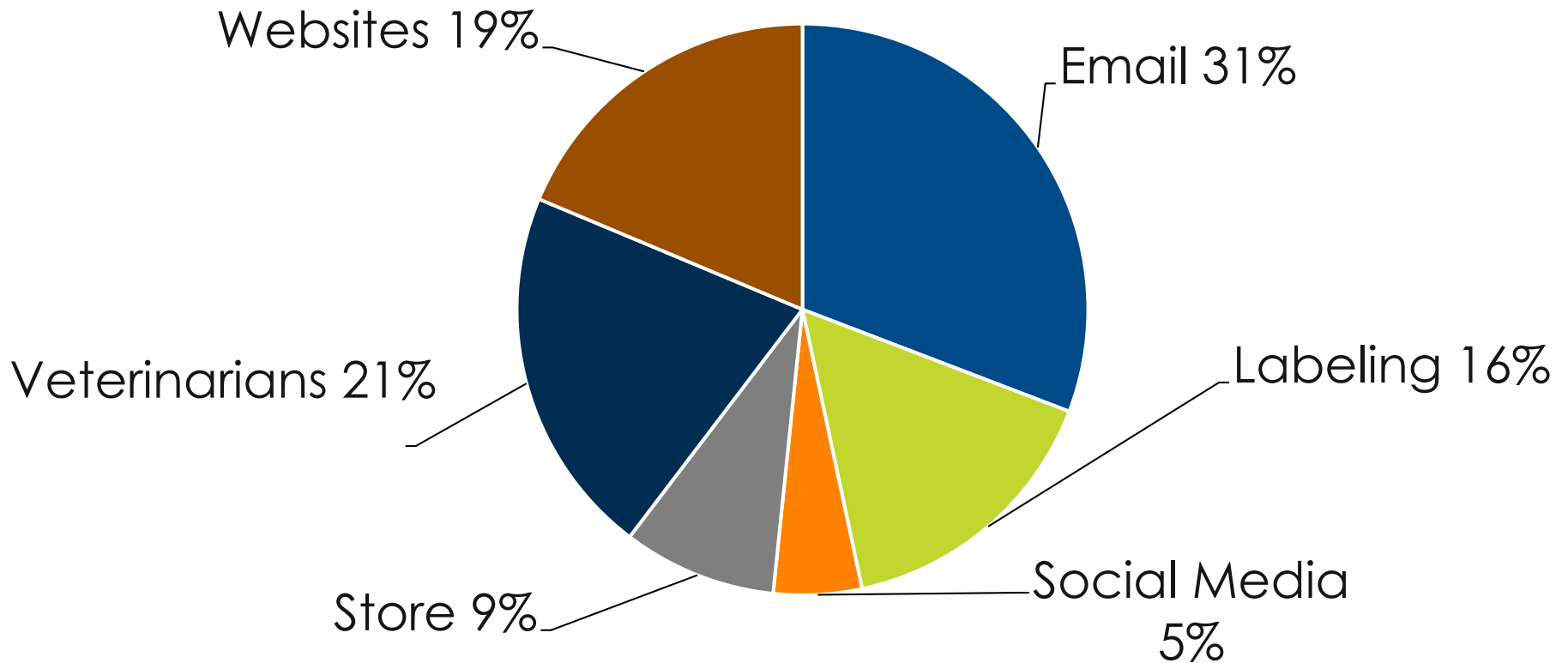
- **Food Bowl Washing Frequency**
 - In general, pet owners that fed some sort of raw food tended to wash their bowls more frequently.
- **Effect of Pet Food on Human Illness**
 - 29% Don't think people can become ill from handling pet food

Results

- **32%** Receive Recall Notifications
- **58%** Don't Currently Get Safety or Safe Handling Information
- **63%** Interested in Safe Handling Education

Results

Percentage Of The Most Mentioned Sources Of Safety And Safe Handling Information By Pet Owners



Conclusions

- Opinions on low risk of animal chews and dry food is significant
- Raw feeders more likely to:
 - Receive recall notifications
 - Believe that people can become ill from handling pet food
 - Wash bowls more frequently

Conclusions

- Consumers want to learn from qualified individuals
- Education is necessary to help prevent pet owner foodborne illness

Recommendations

1. Govt. agencies and partners should perform consumer outreach activities and evaluate them.
2. Study if there is a difference between pet owners active on social media and not.
3. All pet food labels should have attractive, standardized safe handling recommendations.
4. Studies to investigate safe handling information given by veterinarians, retailers, and other sources of pet food.

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Questions?

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