

# Differences in Decision Making Related to Sustainable Protein Choices: A Cross Sectional Survey

Samantha Pender<sup>1</sup>, Beth Carlton<sup>1</sup>, Janette Bedoyn<sup>1</sup>, Jade Mcnamara<sup>2</sup>, Geoffrey Greene<sup>1</sup>

“University of Rhode Island Nutrition & Dietetics Department” “University of Maine Nutrition & Dietetics Department ”

## Background

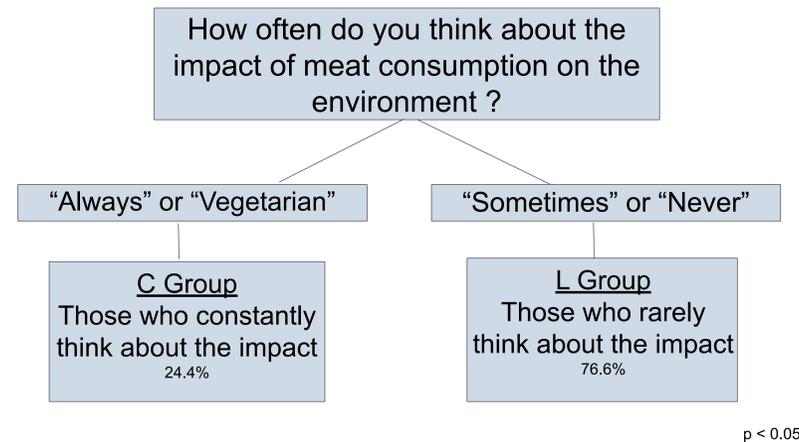
Consumer protein choices are an important component of the environmental cost of the food system. It is important to consider the limited research done on protein choice decision making within this age range. Students who are aware of their protein choices at the decision point may be more likely to practice sustainable food choices throughout their life.

## Objective

Compare differences between college students who constantly think about the environmental impact of their protein choices (C) to those who are less concerned (L) including demographics, red meat consumption, readiness to consume environmentally conscious protein choices, and green eating behavior.

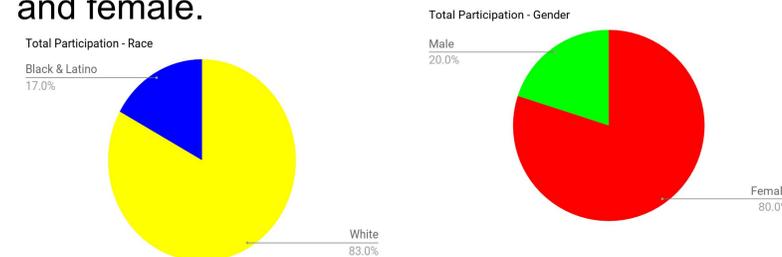
## Methods

Participants, 18-24 years old and consenting to participate in this cross-sectional survey (n=390), were recruited from introductory classes at a northeastern university for extra credit. Participants were categorized by their response to “How often do you think about the impact of meat consumption on the environment?” with responses of “always” or “vegetarian” categorized as C and “sometimes” or “never” categorized as L. C and L groups were compared using chi-square or t-test analysis for demographics, stage of change for environmentally conscious protein choice (EC), and green eating (GE) behavior, red meat consumption, and health consciousness.



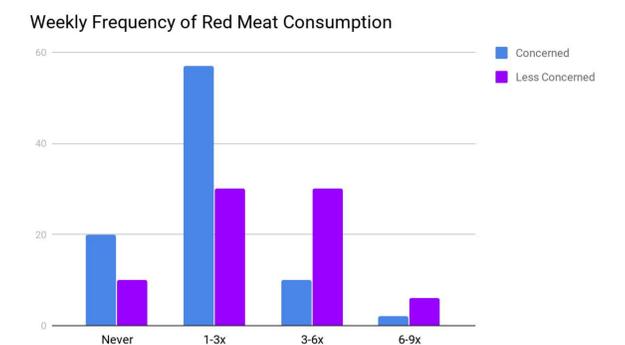
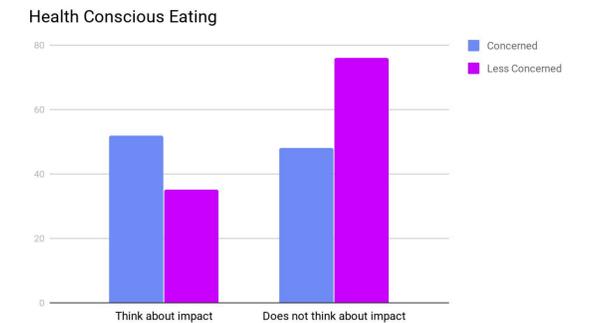
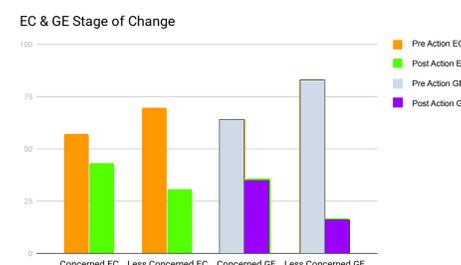
## Demographics

390 students consented and participated. The mean age was 19.2 and they were predominately white and female.



## Results

C was more likely to include women (95%) (p<0.001), be post-action for EC and GE (64%, 43%) (p<0.001, p<0.001) and eat less red meat (77%) (p<0.001) than L. C (50%) was more concerned about their long-term health than L (24%) (p<0.001). There was no significant difference between C and L in race, class standing, major, or residence.



## Conclusion

Students who consistently thought about the environmental impact of meat consumption was the minority at 24.4%. The students who did do think about the impact differed from those who did not by sex, attitudes, and behavior, but future research is needed to determine if this is associated with a more sustainable lifestyle.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the USDA National Institute of Food And Agriculture, Hatch Multi-State project accession no. 1011301

## References

Weller KE, Greene GW, Redding CA, et al. Development and validation of green eating behaviors, stage of change, decisional balance and self-efficacy scales in college students. J Nutr Educ Behav. 2014, 46 (5):324- 33.