

Responsive Management



OPINIONS OF MISSISSIPPI RESIDENTS REGARDING DEER BAITING

Conducted for the Mississippi Wildlife Federation

by Responsive Management

2005

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted for the Mississippi Wildlife Federation to determine residents' opinions on legalizing deer hunting over bait. The study entailed a telephone survey using random digit dialing of Mississippi residents 18 years of age and over. Specific aspects of the research methodology are discussed below.

For the survey, telephones were selected as the preferred sampling medium because of the universality of telephone ownership. In addition, a central polling site at the Responsive Management office allowed for rigorous quality control over the interviews and data collection. Responsive Management maintains its own in-house telephone interviewing facilities. These facilities are staffed by interviewers with experience conducting computer-assisted telephone interviews on the subjects of natural resources and outdoor recreation. The telephone survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and the Mississippi Wildlife Federation.

To ensure the integrity of the telephone survey data, Responsive Management has interviewers who have been trained according to the standards established by the Council of American Survey Research Organizations. Methods of instruction included lecture and role-playing. The Survey Center Managers and other professional staff conducted project briefings with the interviewers prior to the administration of this survey. Interviewers were instructed on type of study, study goals and objectives, handling of survey questions, interview length, termination points and qualifiers for participation, interviewer instructions within the survey instrument, reading of the survey instrument, skip patterns, and probing and clarifying techniques necessary for specific questions on the survey instrument. The Survey Center Managers and statisticians monitored the data collection, including monitoring of the actual telephone interviews without the interviewers' knowledge, to evaluate the performance of each interviewer and ensure the integrity of the data. After the surveys were obtained by the interviewers, the Survey Center Managers and/or statisticians edited each completed survey to ensure clarity and completeness.

Interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time. A five-callback design was used to maintain the representativeness of the sample, to avoid bias

toward people easy to reach by telephone, and to provide an equal opportunity for all to participate. When a respondent could not be reached on the first call, subsequent calls were placed on a different day and at a different time of the day. The survey was conducted in October and November 2005. Responsive Management obtained a total of 412 completed interviews.

The software used for data collection was Questionnaire Programming Language 4.1 (QPL). The survey data were entered into the computer as each interview was being conducted, eliminating manual data entry after the completion of the survey and the concomitant data entry errors that may occur with manual data entry. The survey instrument was programmed so that QPL branched, coded, and substituted phrases in the survey based on previous responses to ensure the integrity and consistency of the data collection. The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management.

Throughout this report, findings of the telephone survey are reported at a 95% confidence interval. For the entire sample of 412 Mississippi residents, the sampling error is at most plus or minus 4.83 percentage points. This means that if the survey were conducted 100 times on different samples that were selected in the same way, the findings of 95 out of the 100 surveys would fall within plus or minus 4.83 percentage points of each other. Sampling error was calculated using the formula described on the following page, with a sample size of 412 and a population size of 2,059,723 Mississippi residents 18 years and over.

Sampling error equation:

$$B = \left(\sqrt{\frac{N_p(.25)}{N_s} - .25} \right) (1.96)$$

Where: B = maximum sampling error (as decimal)

N_p = population size (i.e., total number who could be surveyed)

N_s = sample size (i.e., total number of respondents surveyed)

Derived from formula: p. 206 in Dillman, D. A. 2000. *Mail and Internet Surveys*. John Wiley & Sons, NY.

Note: This is a simplified version of the formula that calculates the maximum sampling error using a 50:50 split (the most conservative calculation because a 50:50 split would give maximum variation).

Note that some results may not sum to exactly 100% because of rounding. Additionally, rounding on the graphs may cause apparent discrepancies of 1 percentage point between the graphs and the reported results of combined responses (e.g., when “strongly approve” and “moderately approve” are summed to determine the total percentage in approval).

OPINIONS ON WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTING OVER BAIT

Opinions on Legalization of White-Tailed Deer Hunting Over Bait

- In the most important finding of the survey, a minority (28%) of Mississippi residents said that they would respond yes to the following question, “Do you want to legalize white-tailed deer hunting over bait for future hunting seasons in Mississippi?”, if they had to enter a polling booth today and vote on the issue. A majority (58%) said that they would respond no.
- Hunters’ support for legalization (43%) is nearly double that of non-hunters (24%).
 - The following groups have more opposition than support for legalization at statistically significant levels: hunters, non-hunters, those who always vote in presidential election years, those who know a little about hunting deer over bait, those who know a moderate amount about hunting deer over bait, and those who know *at least* a little about hunting deer over bait. Two groups showed more opposition than support, but not at statistically significant levels: deer hunters and those who know a lot about hunting deer over bait.

Q12. Do you want to legalize white-tailed deer hunting over bait for future hunting seasons in Mississippi?									
						Those who know ... about hunting deer over bait			
	All respondents (n=412)	Those who always vote during presidential election years (n=266)	Deer hunters* (n=73)	Hunters (n=86)	Non-hunters (n=326)	A lot* (n=35)	A moderate amount (n=48)	A little (n=89)	A least a little (n=172)
Yes	28	28	45	43	24	46	29	35	35
No	58	61	53	55	60	49	67	57	58
Don't know	14	11	1	2	17	6	4	8	6

*Not statistically significant.

Reasons for Opinions on Legalization of White-Tailed Deer Hunting Over Bait

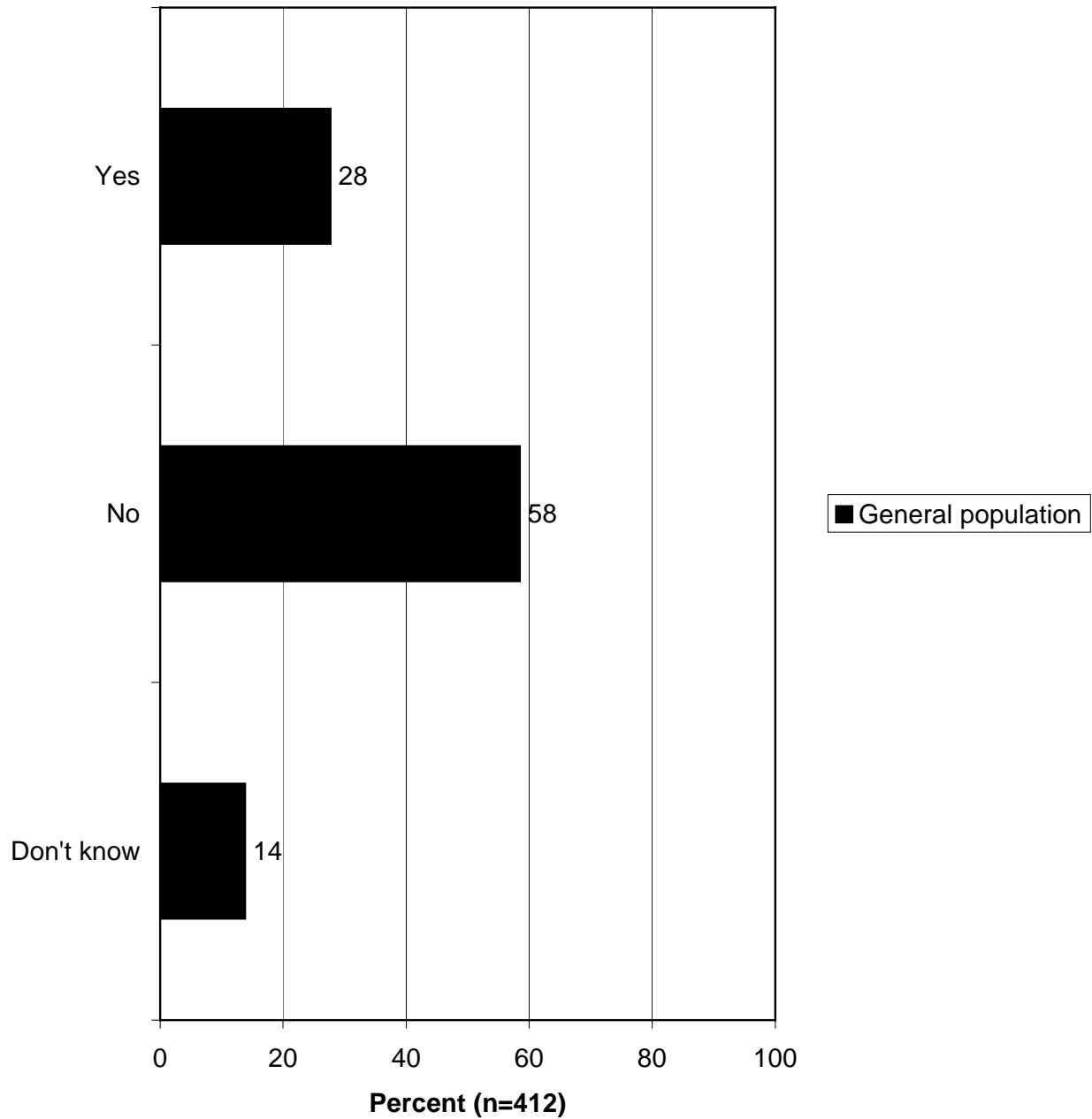
- Among those who oppose the legalization of deer hunting over bait, the top reason is that the method does not allow fair chance for the deer/there is no sport in the method (47%).
 - Among hunters, the lack of fair chance/no sport was overwhelmingly the most common response (64%), more than triple the next most common response, that it is unethical to trick deer (19%).
 - Among non-hunters, the lack of fair chance and sport was the most common response (43%). Second was that it is unethical to trick deer (24%), followed by opposition to hunting in general (11%).

- Among those who support the legalization of deer hunting over bait, the top reason is that it allows hunters to better control deer populations (35%). Other reasons include that it increases hunters' chance of harvest (16%) and that it helps with quality deer management (12%).
 - The order of the top reasons to support legalization is identical to the above for both hunters and non-hunters.

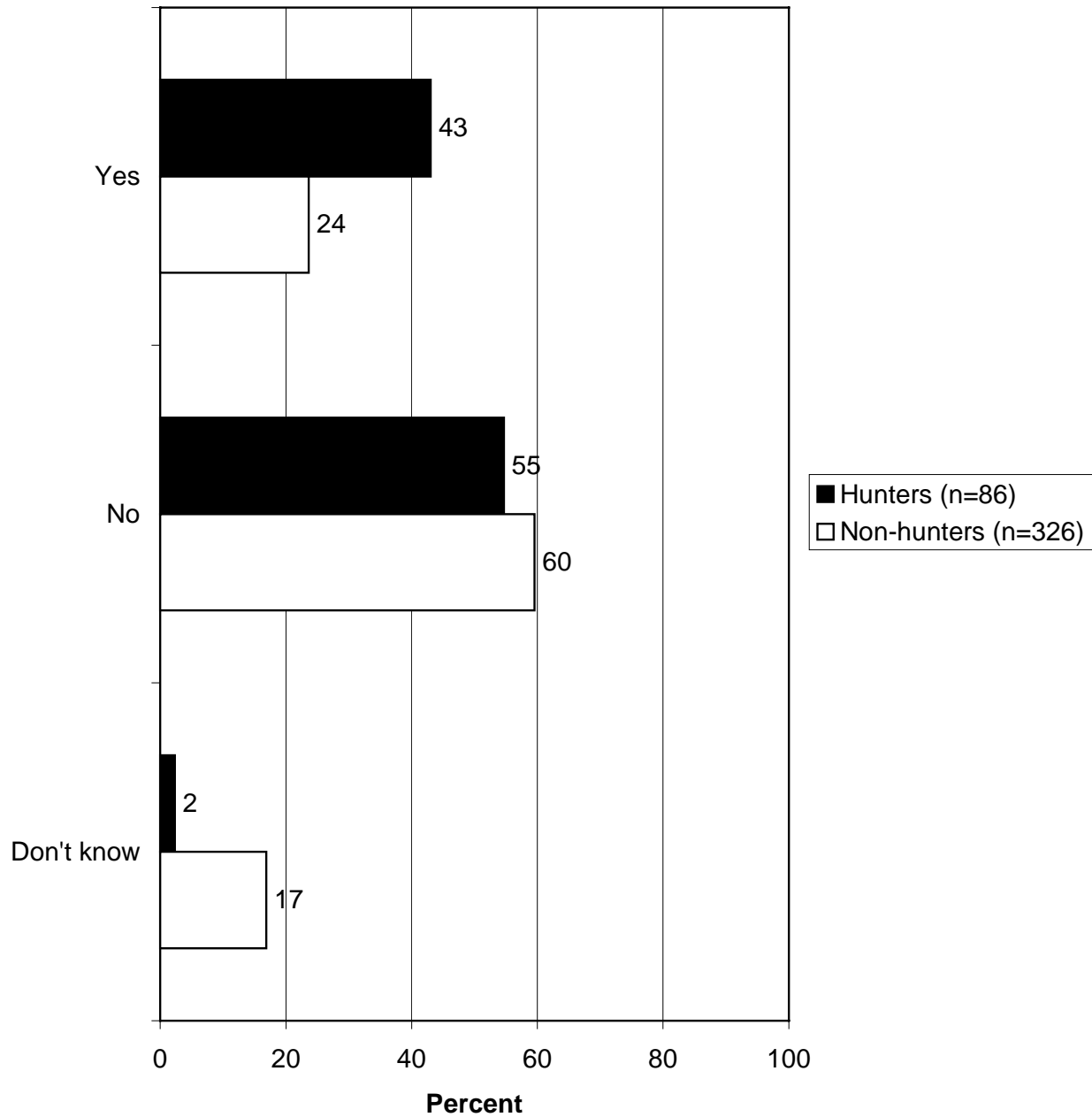
Opinions on the Practice of White-Tailed Deer Hunting Over Bait

- A minority of respondents (27%) approve of white-tailed deer hunting over bait, nearly identical to the percent of respondents who would vote to support the legalization of white-tailed deer hunting over bait if they had to vote today. A majority of respondents (55%) disapprove of white-tailed deer hunting over bait, with 39% *strongly* disapproving.
 - *Overall* approval among hunters (40%) was nearly double that of non-hunters (23%), and *strong* approval among hunters (21%) was nearly double that of non-hunters (11%).

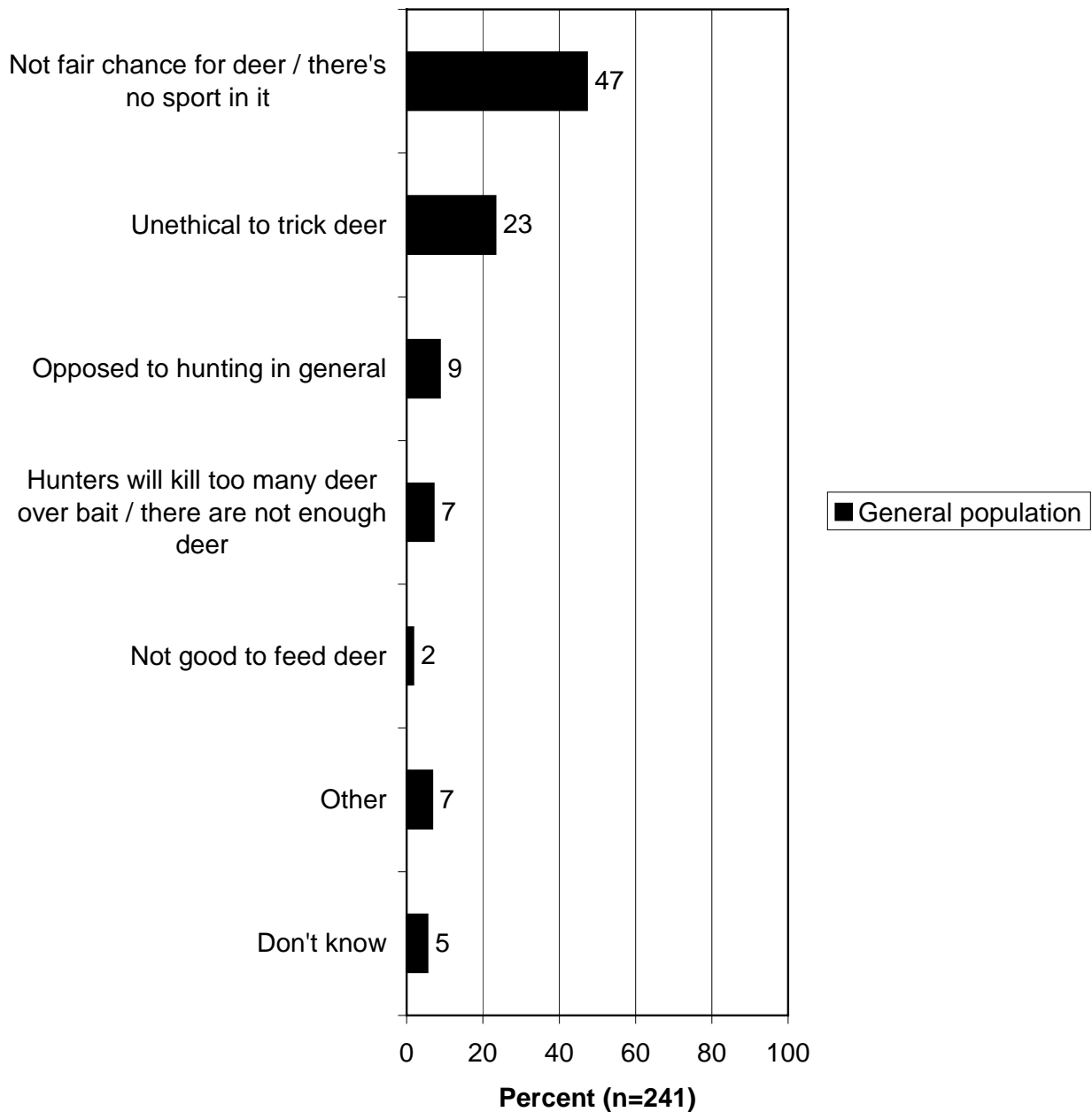
Q12. Do you want to legalize white-tailed deer hunting over bait for future hunting seasons in Mississippi?



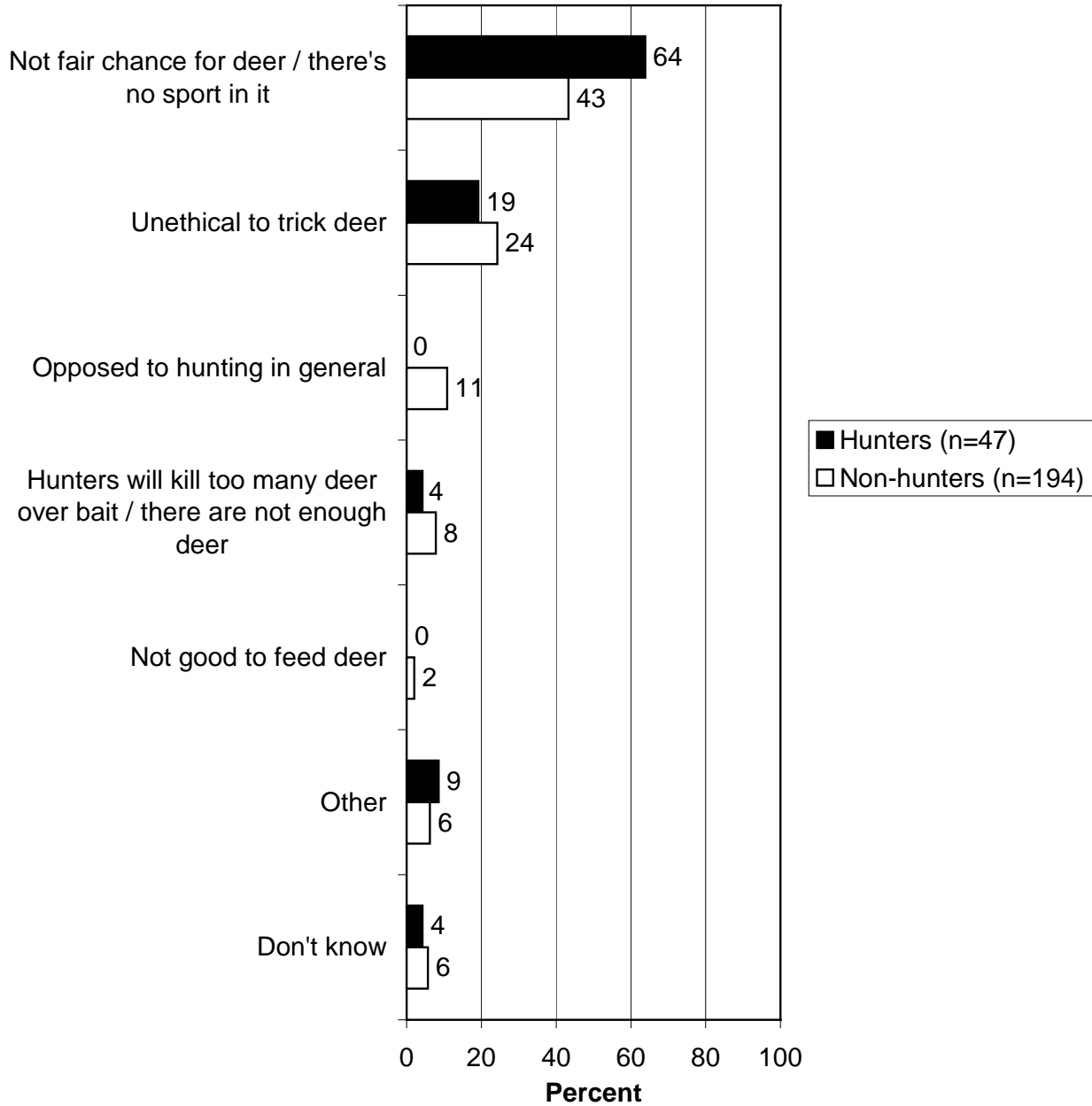
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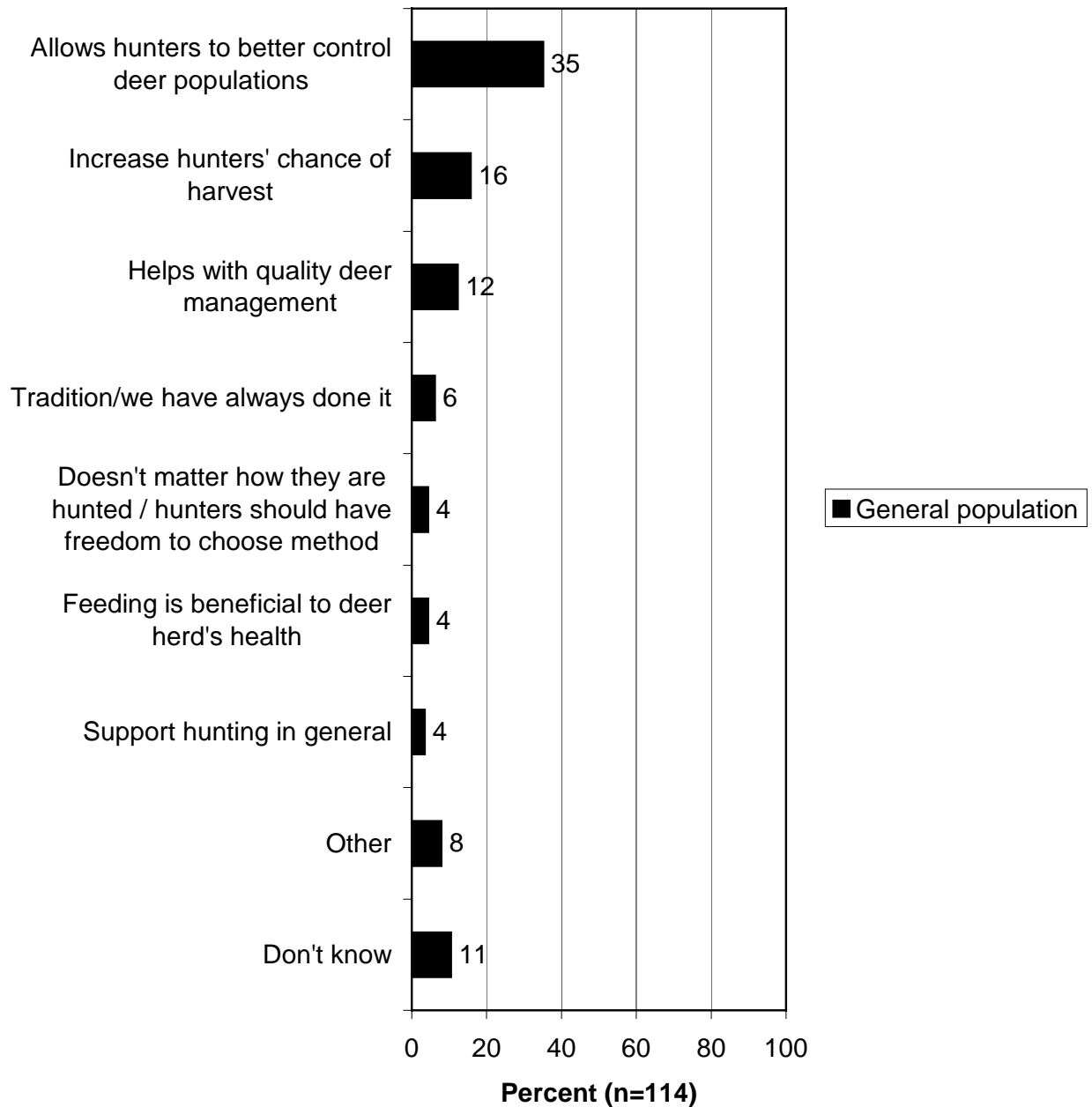
Q15. What is your main reason for opposing the legalization of hunting deer over bait in Mississippi? (Asked of those who do not want to legalize hunting deer over bait.)



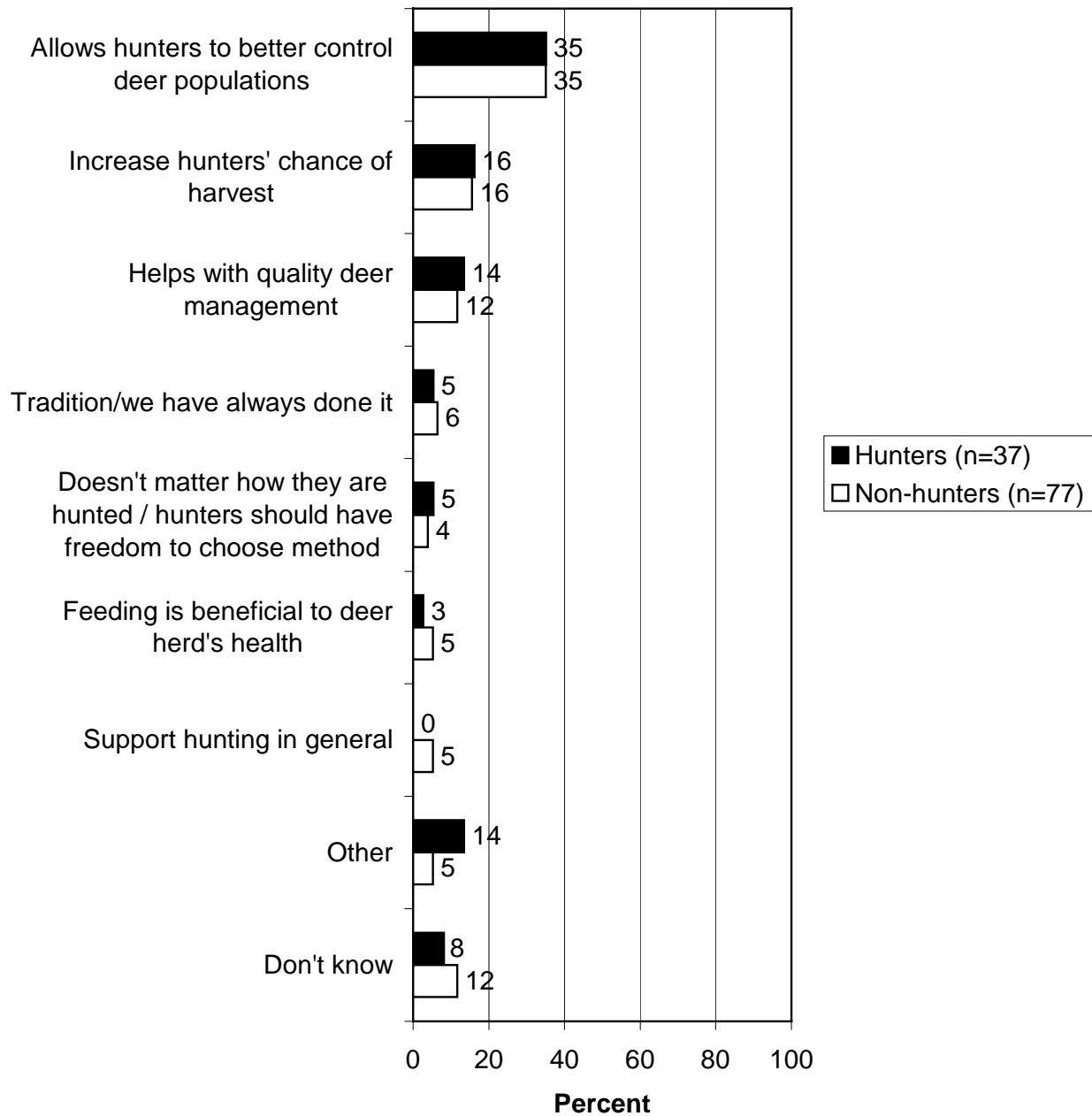
Q15. What is your main reason for opposing the legalization of hunting deer over bait in Mississippi? (Asked of those who do not want to legalize hunting deer over bait.)



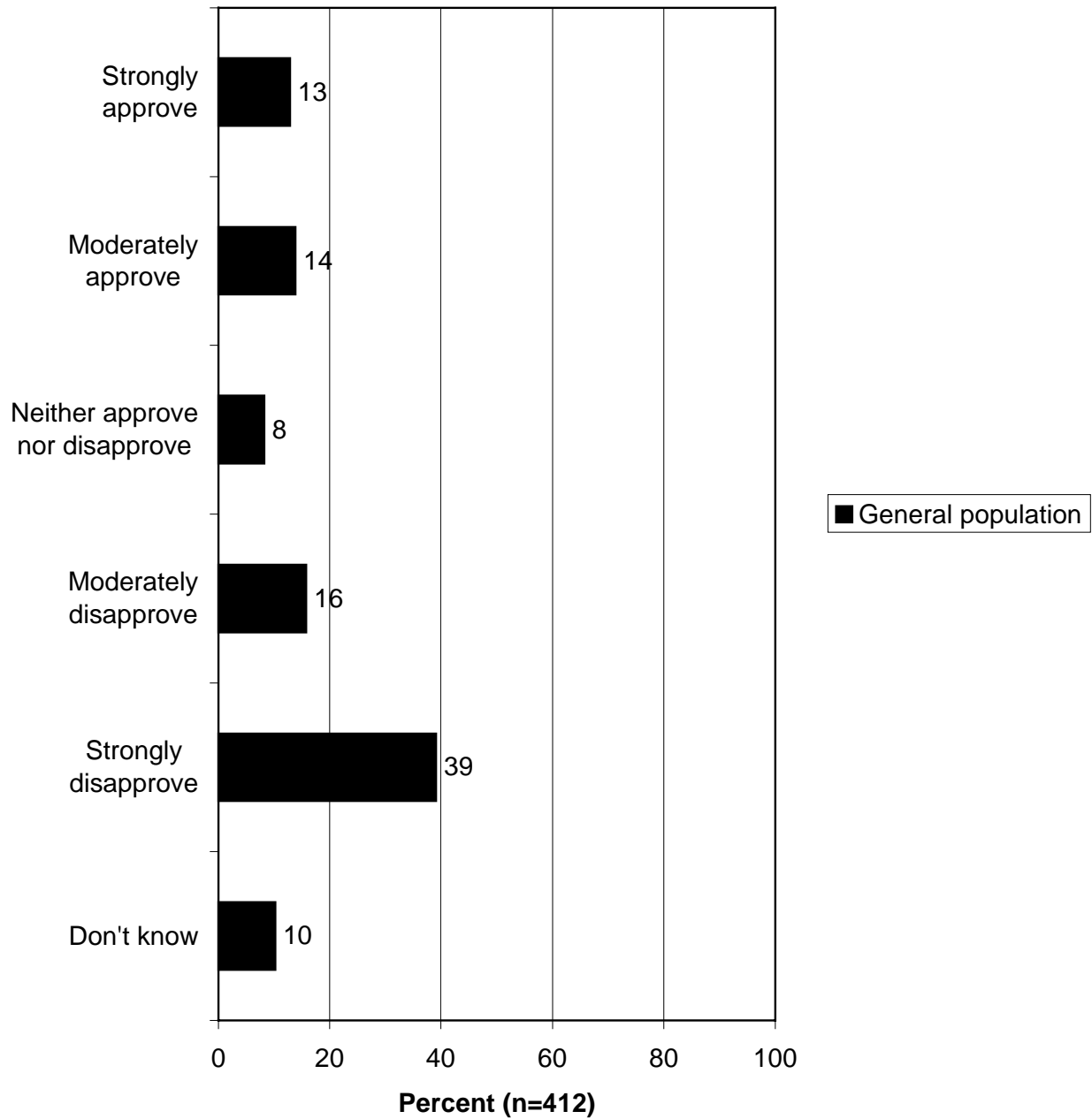
Q13. What is your main reason for supporting the legalization of hunting deer over bait in Mississippi? (Asked of those who want to legalize hunting deer over bait.)



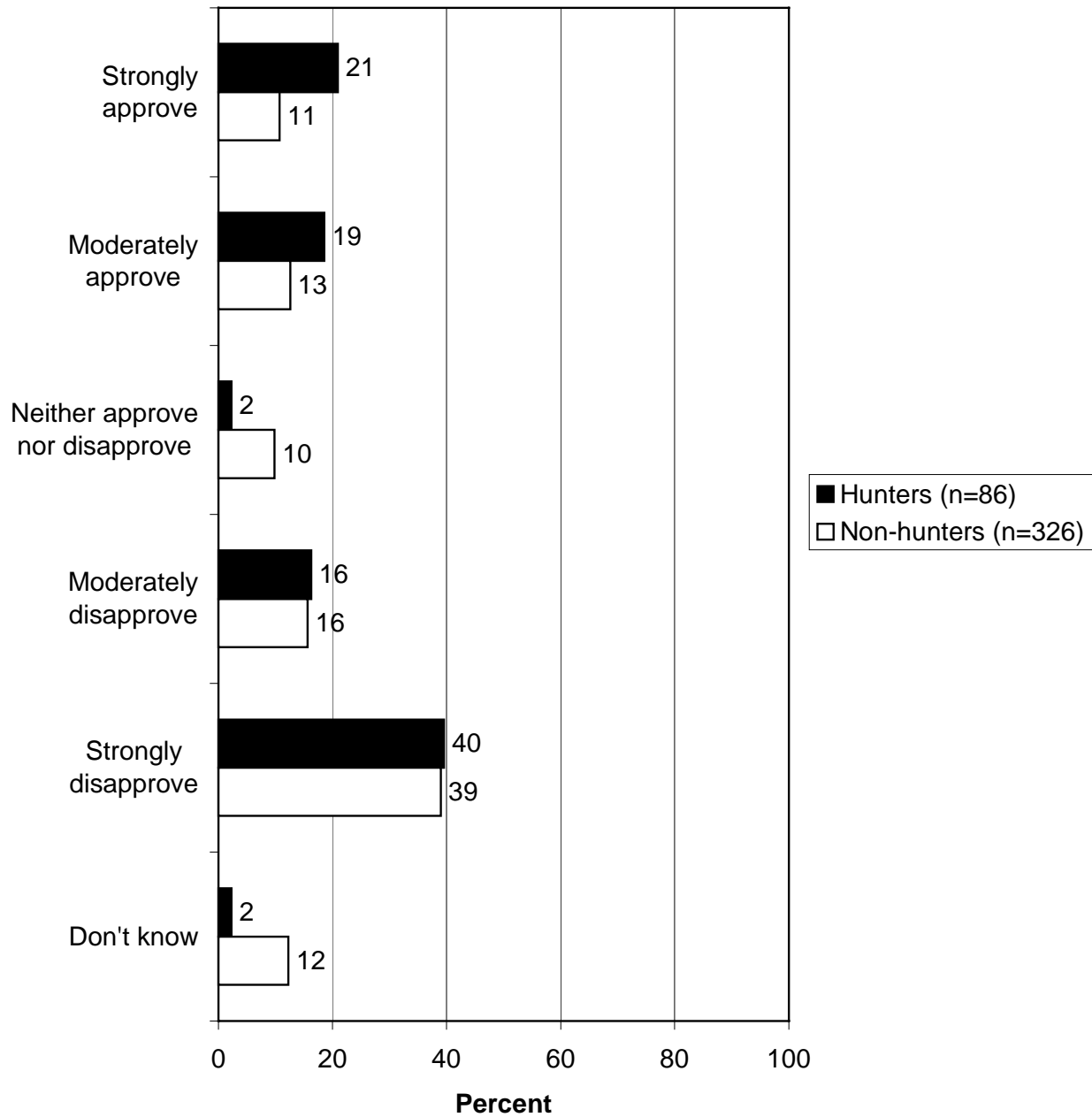
Q13. What is your main reason for supporting the legalization of hunting deer over bait in Mississippi? (Asked of those who want to legalize hunting deer over bait.)



Q10. Do you approve or disapprove of white-tailed deer hunting over bait?



Q10. Do you approve or disapprove of white-tailed deer hunting over bait?



KNOWLEDGE AND PARTICIPATION

Knowledge of Hunting Deer Over Bait

- A substantial percentage of respondents (42%) said that they know at least a little about hunting white-tailed deer over bait. Most (58%) said they know nothing at all about hunting white-tailed deer over bait.
 - A large majority of hunters (79%) said they know at least a little about hunting white-tailed deer over bait, compared to only 32% of non-hunters.

Hunting Participation

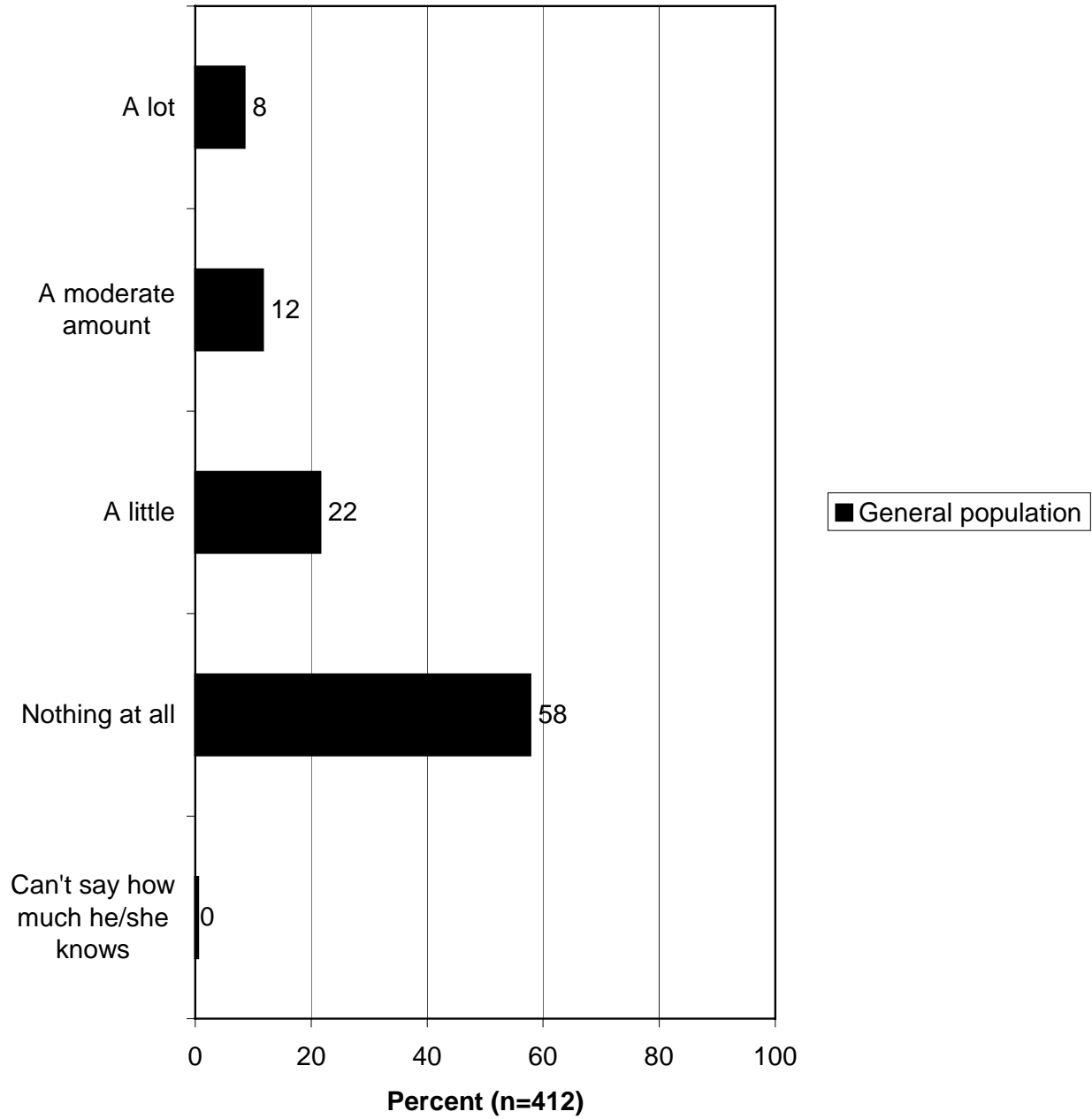
- About 1 in 5 (21%) respondents have hunted in Mississippi in the past 3 years, and 18% of respondents have hunted white-tailed deer in Mississippi in the past 3 years.

Election Participation

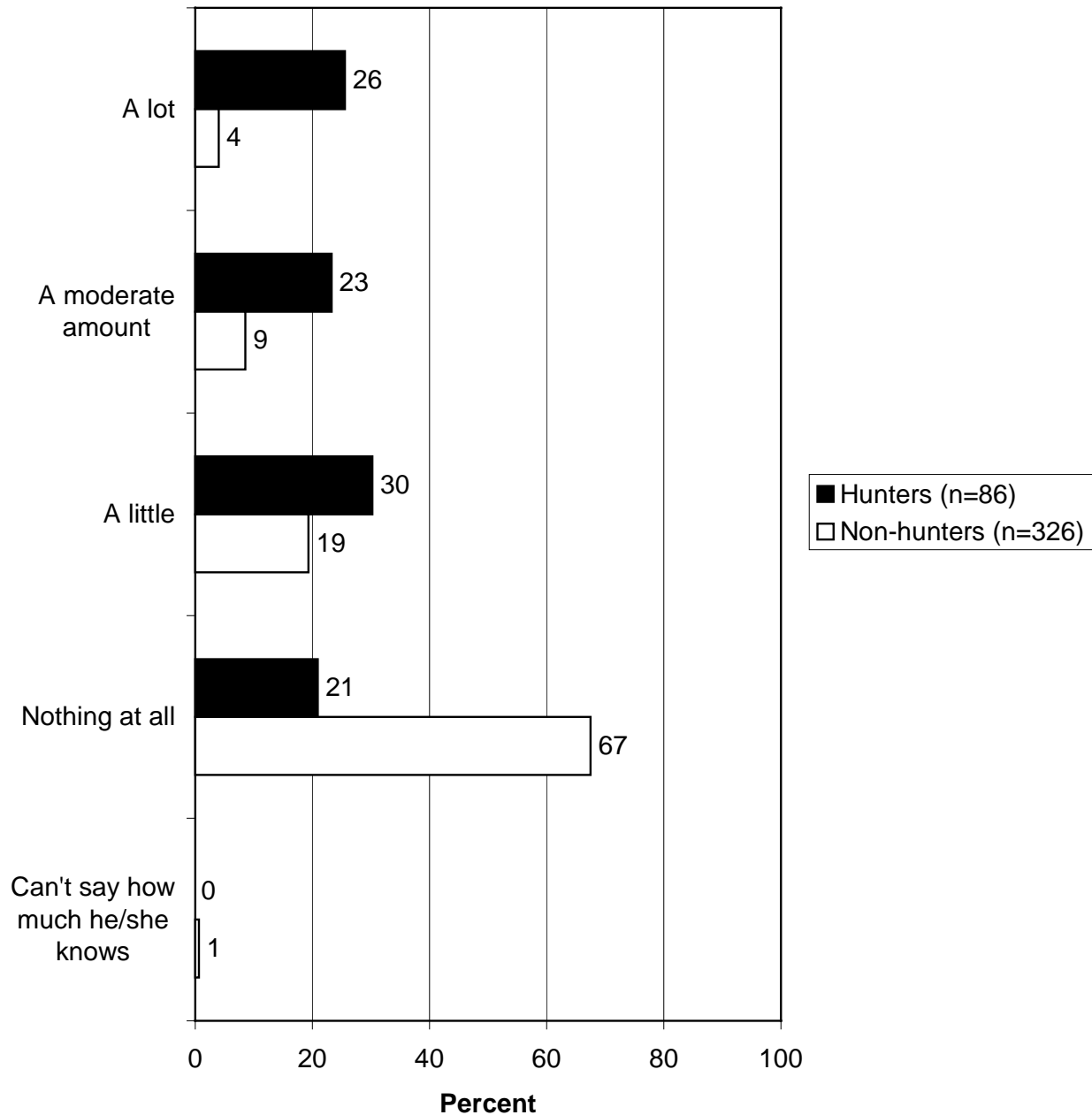
- A majority (65%) of respondents said that they always vote during Presidential election years.
 - There was no statistically significant difference between the percentages of hunters and non-hunters who always vote during Presidential election years.

- A large majority of respondents (77%) said that they voted in the 2004 Presidential election.
 - There was no statistically significant difference between the percentages of hunters and non-hunters who voted in the 2004 Presidential election.

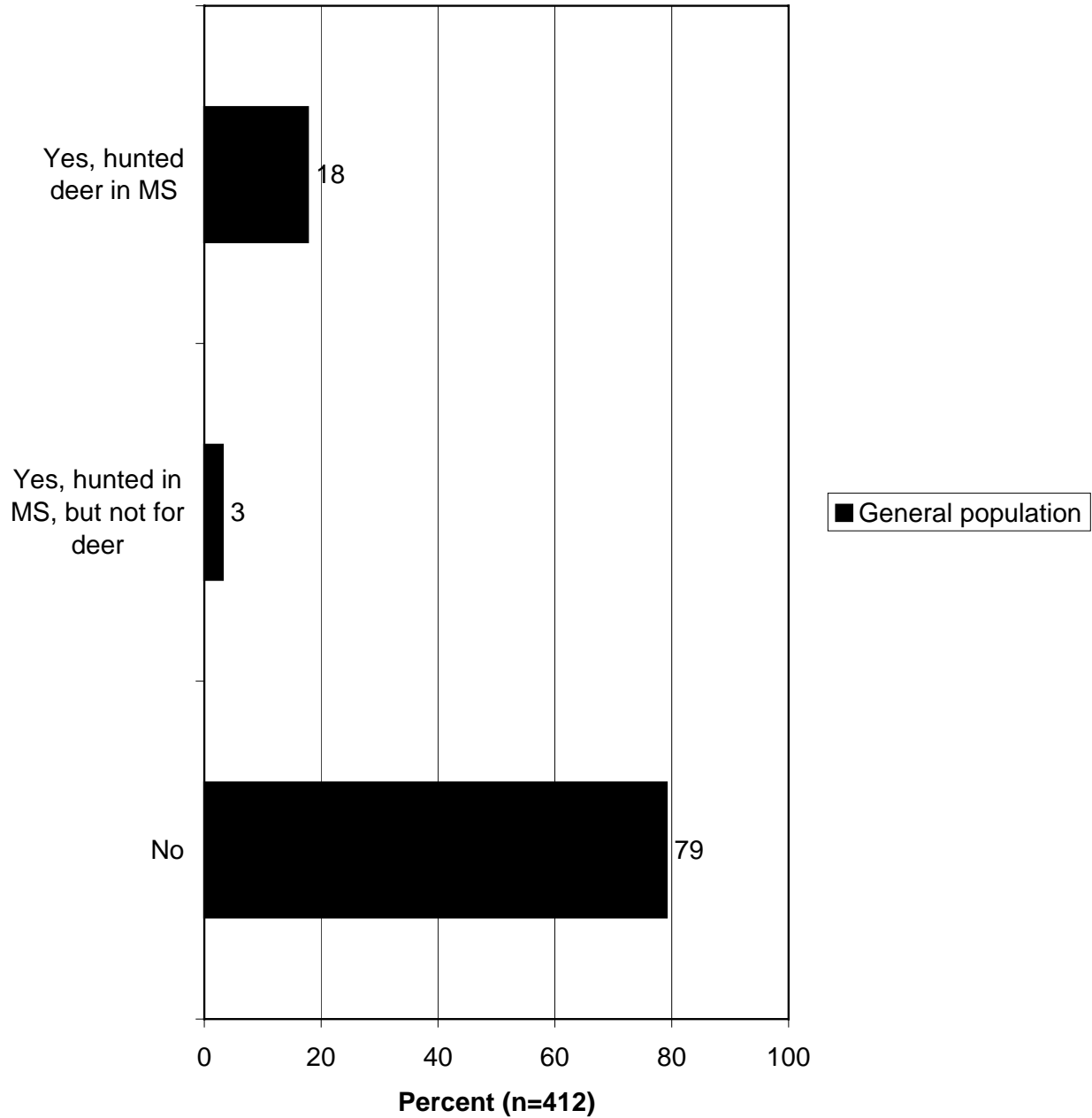
Q7. How much would you say you know about hunting white-tailed deer over bait?



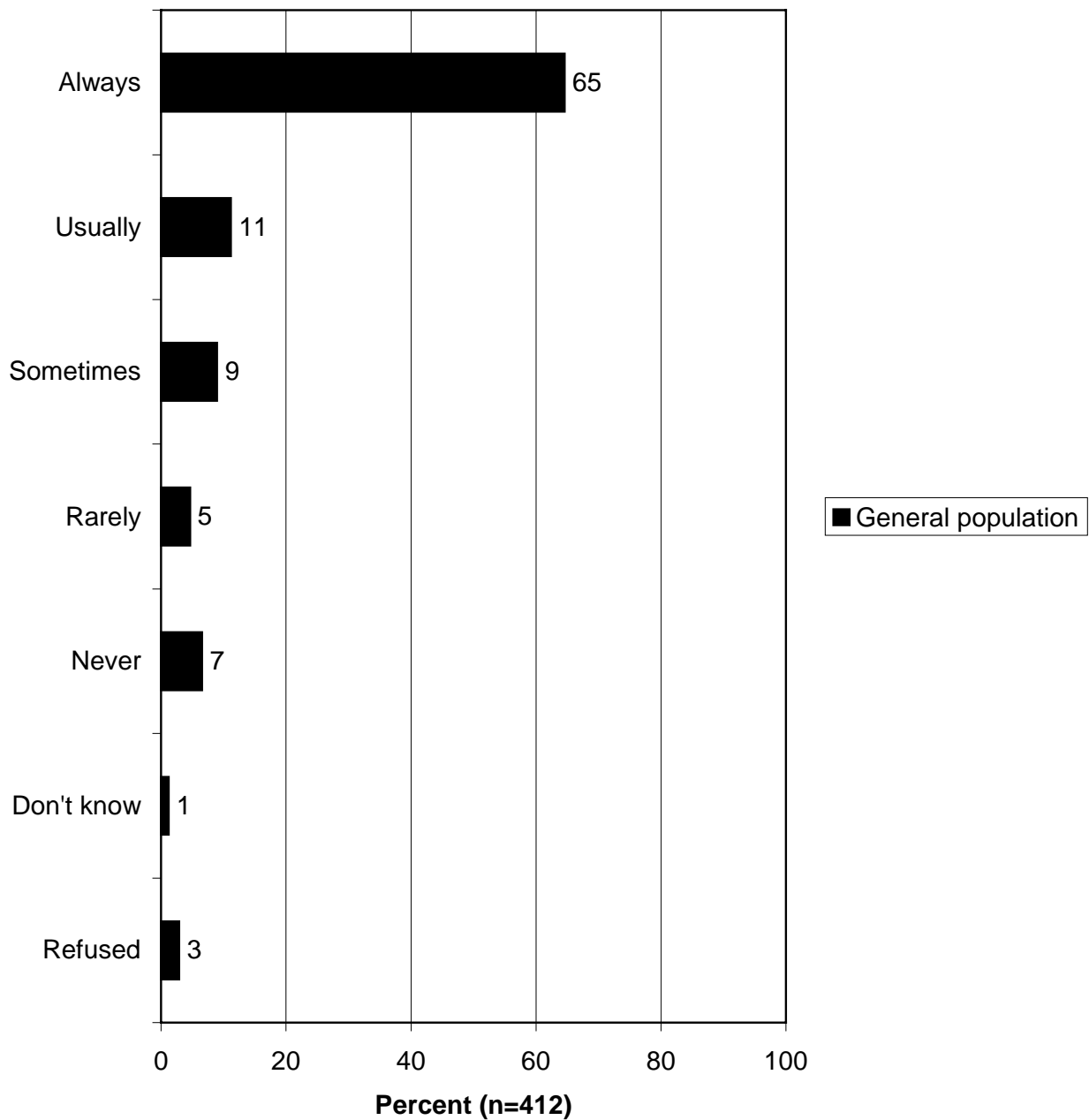
Q7. How much would you say you know about hunting white-tailed deer over bait?



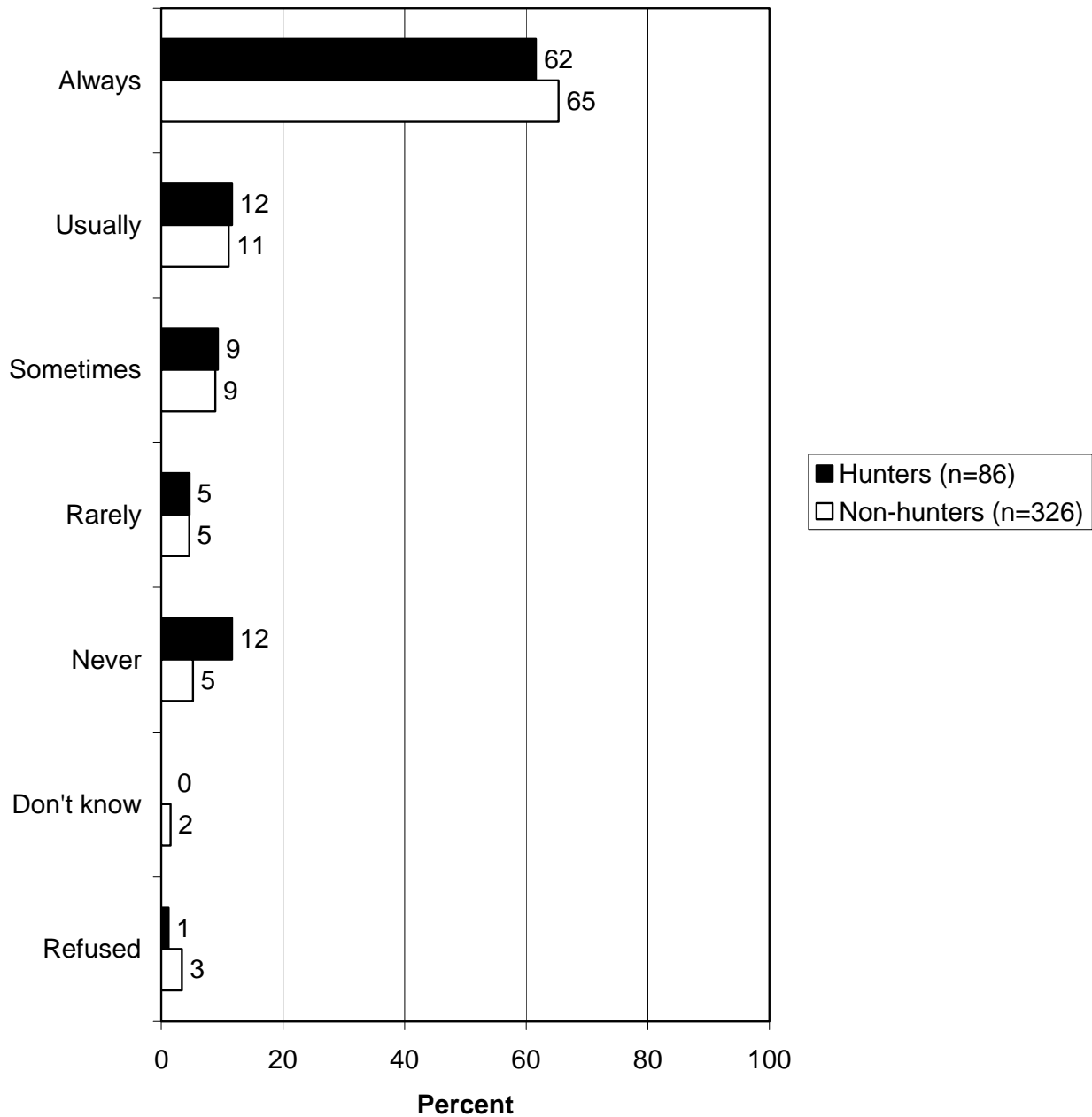
Q17/Q18. Have you hunted in Mississippi in the past 3 years? (If yes: Have you hunted white-tailed deer in Mississippi in the past 3 years?)

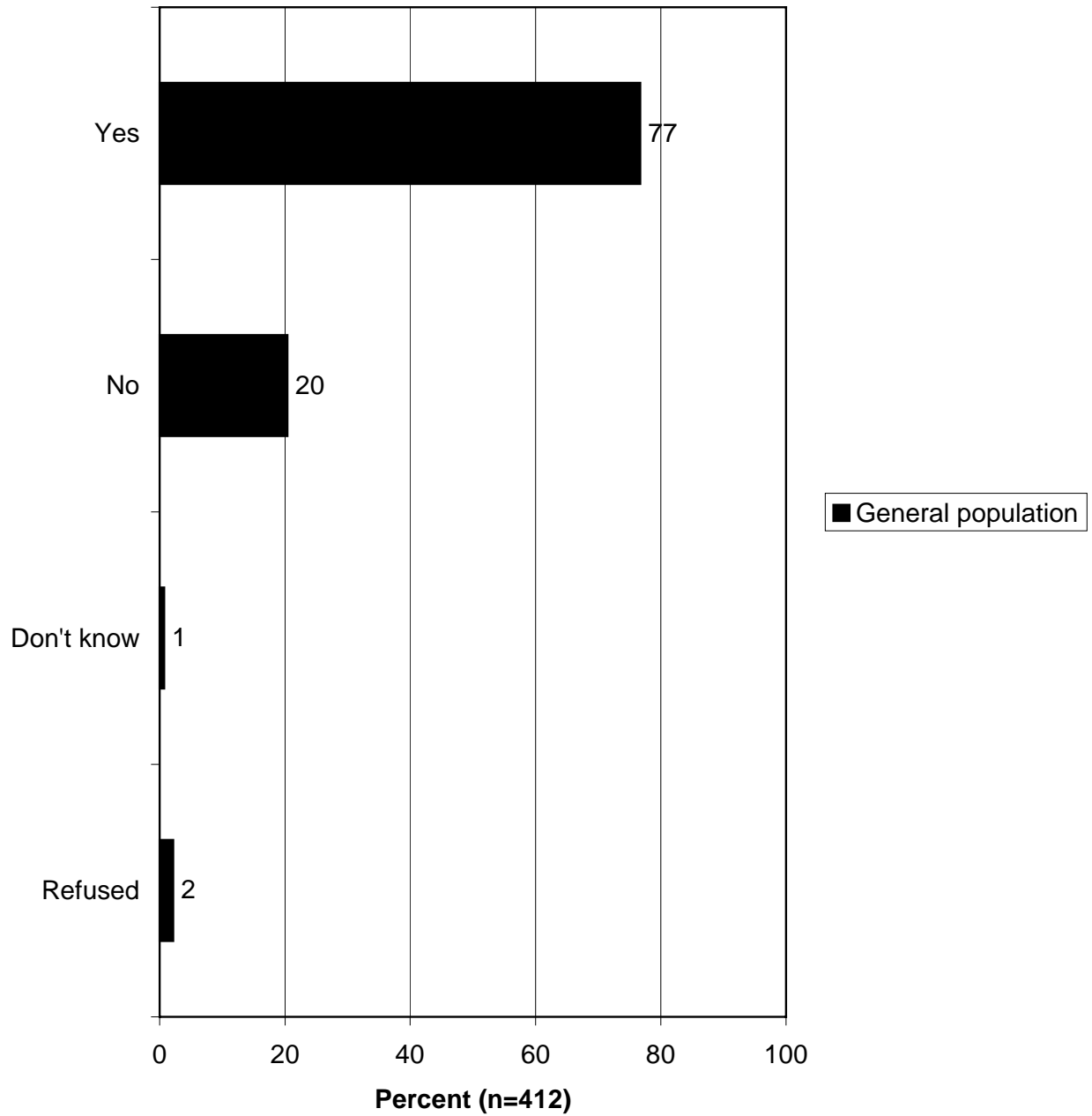


Q22. During Presidential election years, would you say that you vote always, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?

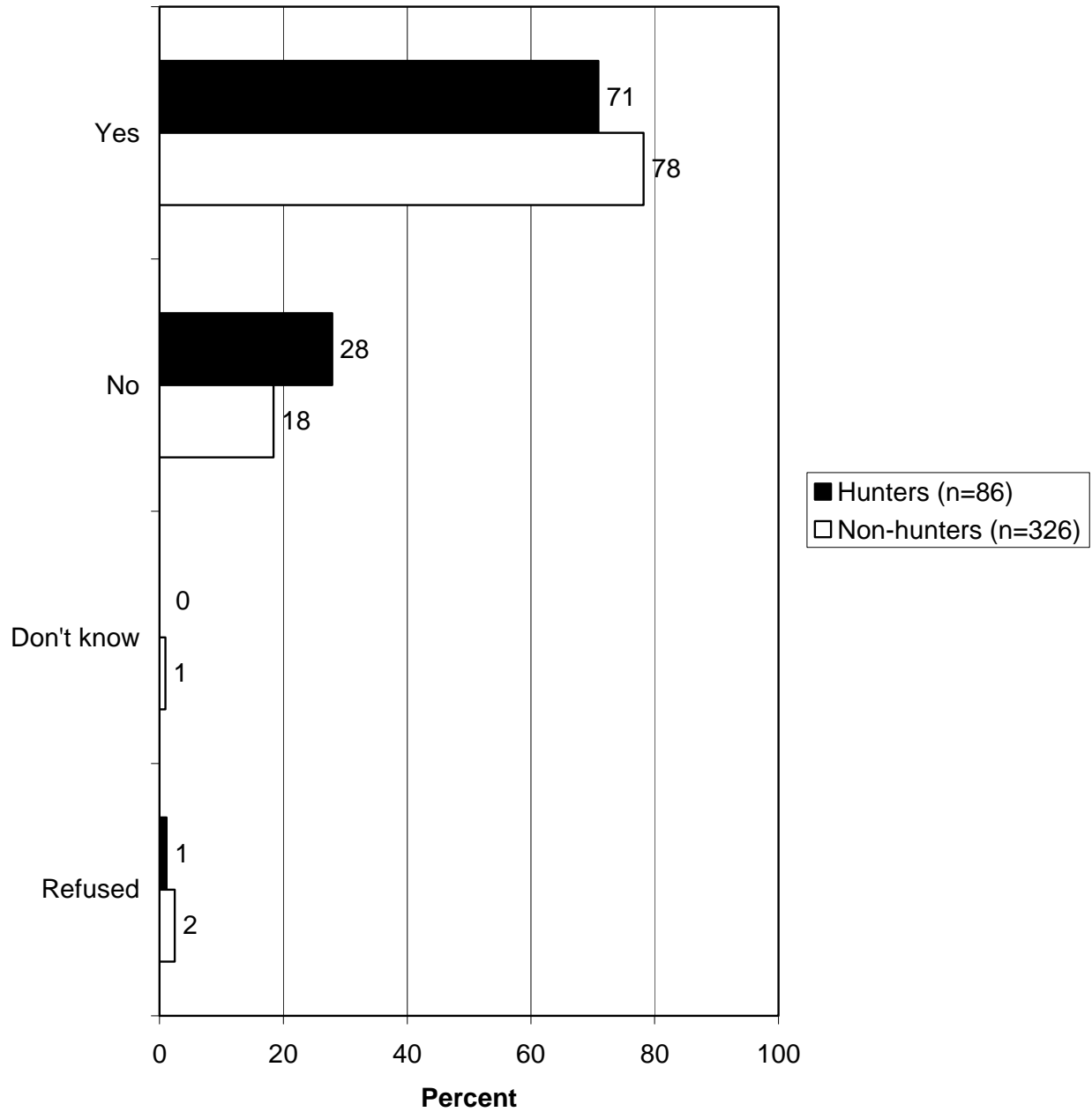


Q22. During Presidential election years, would you say that you vote always, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?



Q21. Did you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?

Q21. Did you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?



DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender

- A majority (54%) of respondents in the survey were female.
 - A large majority (88%) of hunters were male. A majority (65%) of non-hunters were female.

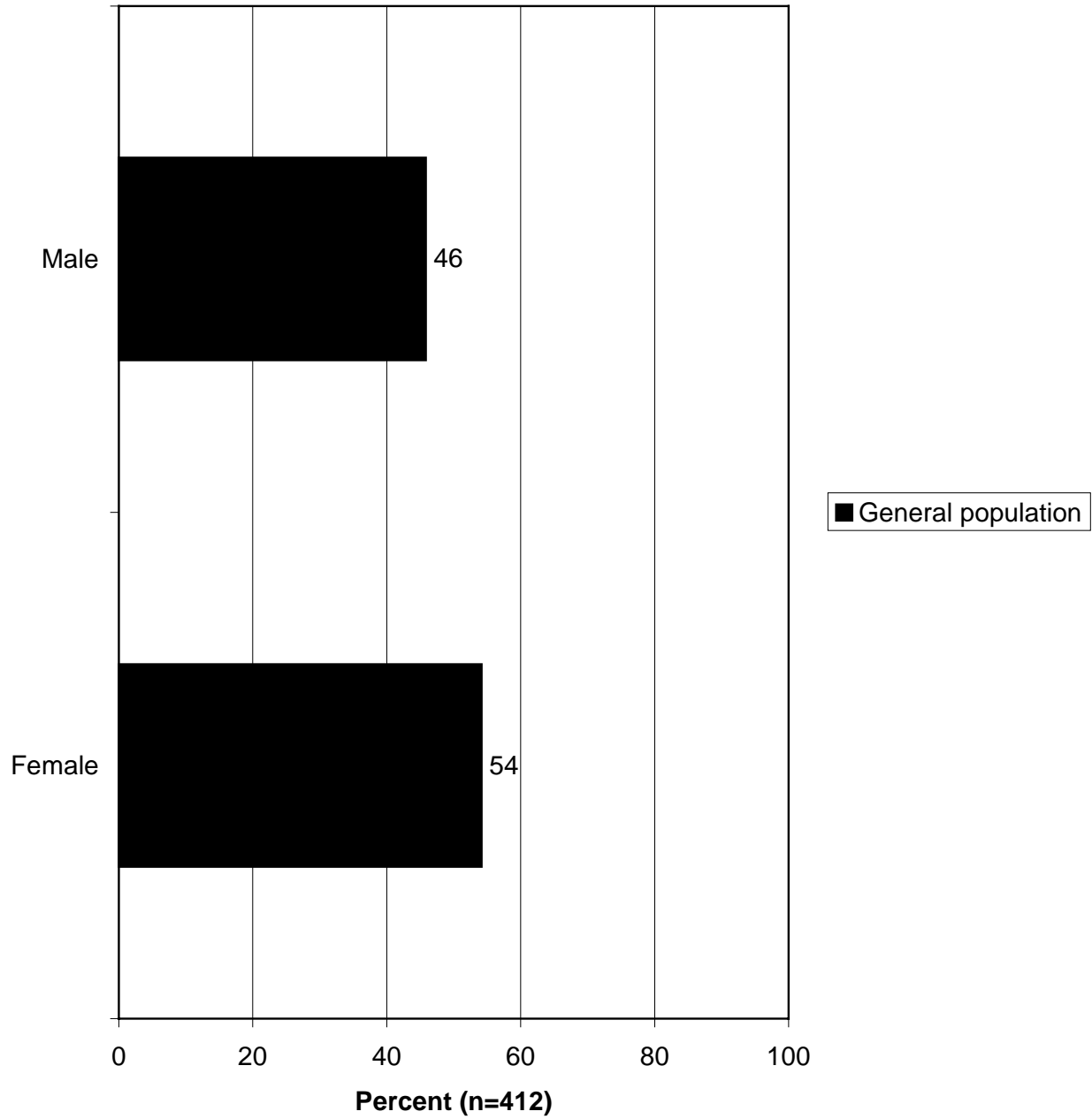
Age

- Distribution of age is somewhat skewed towards the older age groups. A majority of respondents (60%) were at least 45 years old. In the 2000 U.S. Census, 46% of Mississippi residents 18 years and older were at least 45 years old. The higher percent of older respondents is likely the cause of the high percentage of voters in the survey. Respondents 45 and older more commonly said that they always vote during Presidential election years and that they voted in the 2004 Presidential election.
 - Just under half (49%) of hunters were at least 45 years old. A majority (63%) of non-hunters were at least 45 years old.

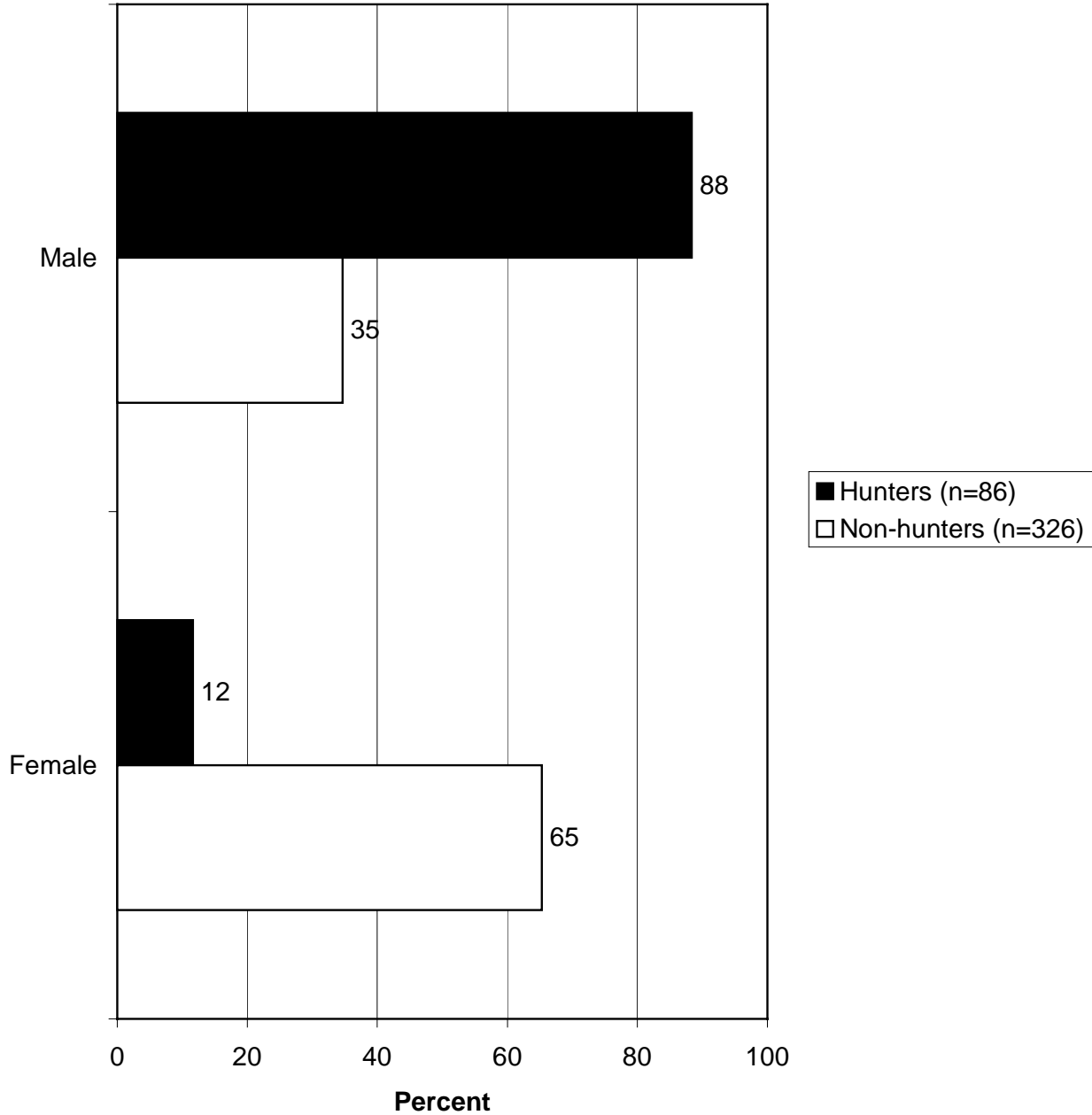
Area of Residence

- Respondents most commonly consider their place of residence to be a small city or town (39%), followed by a rural area not on a farm or ranch (25%).
 - Place of residence was similar among hunters and non-hunters, with the exception that a higher percentage of hunters live in a rural area on a farm or ranch (16%) than do non-hunters (9%).

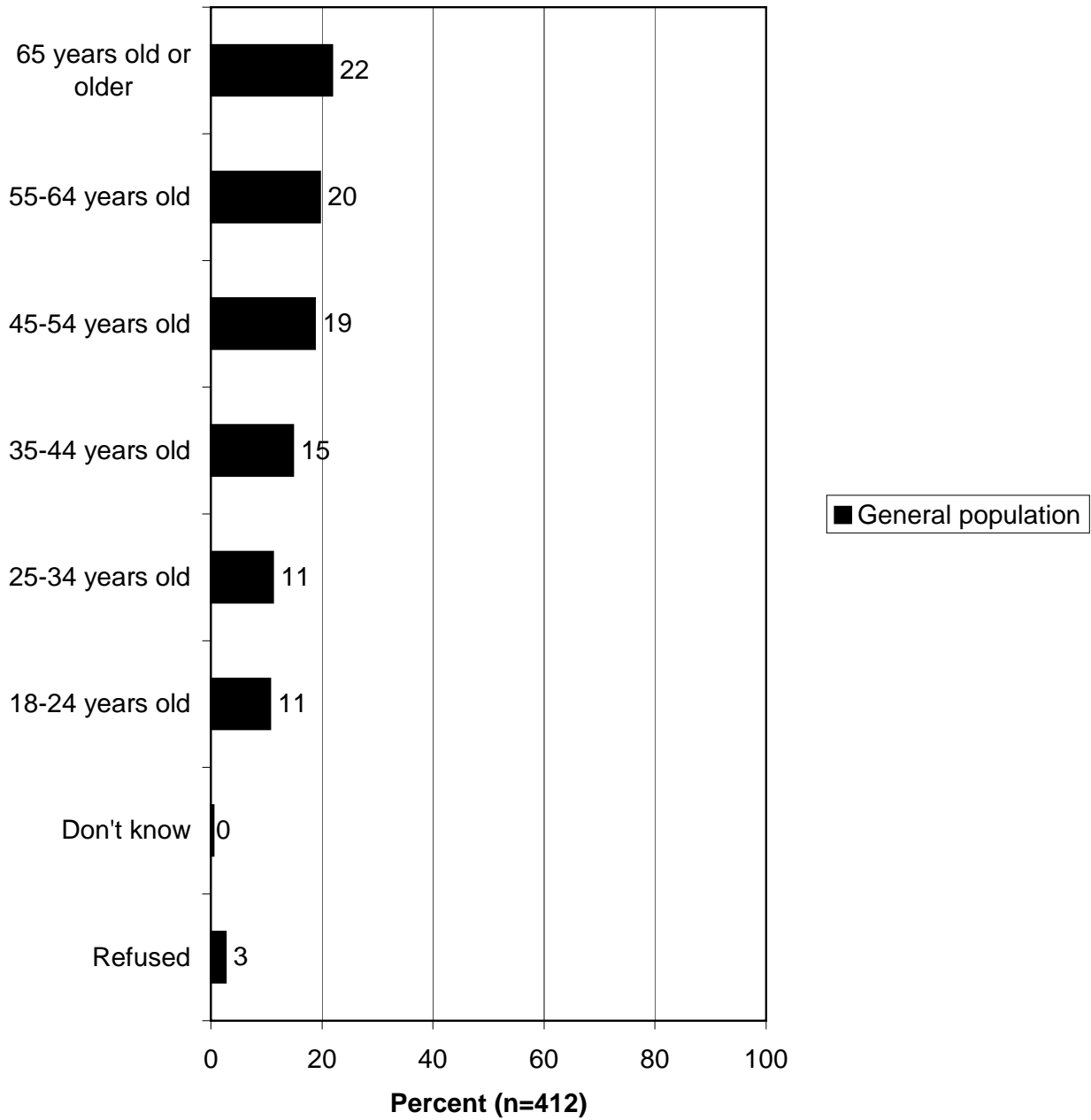
Q25. Respondent's gender (not asked, but observed by interviewer)

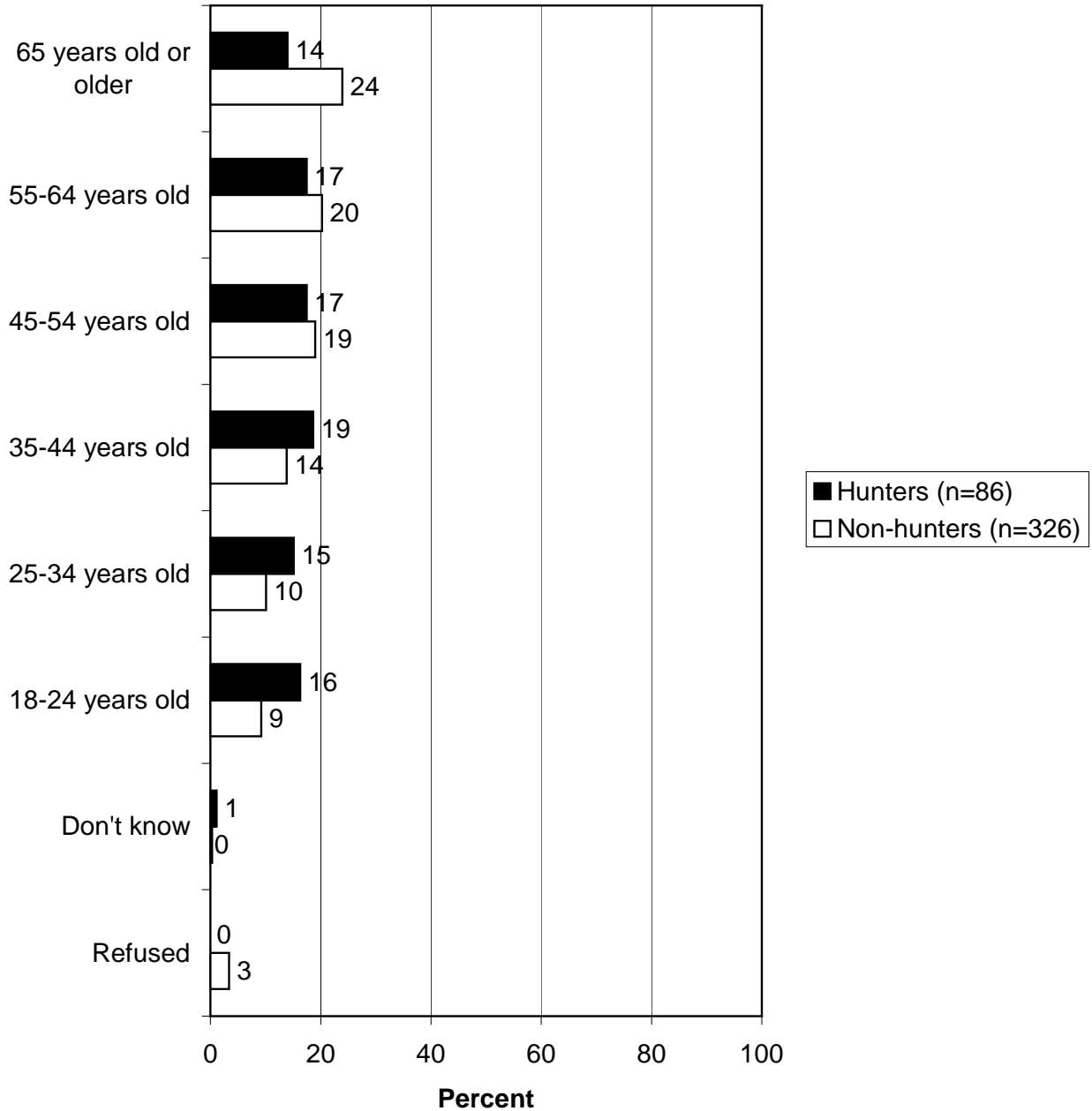


Q25. Respondent's gender (not asked, but observed by interviewer)

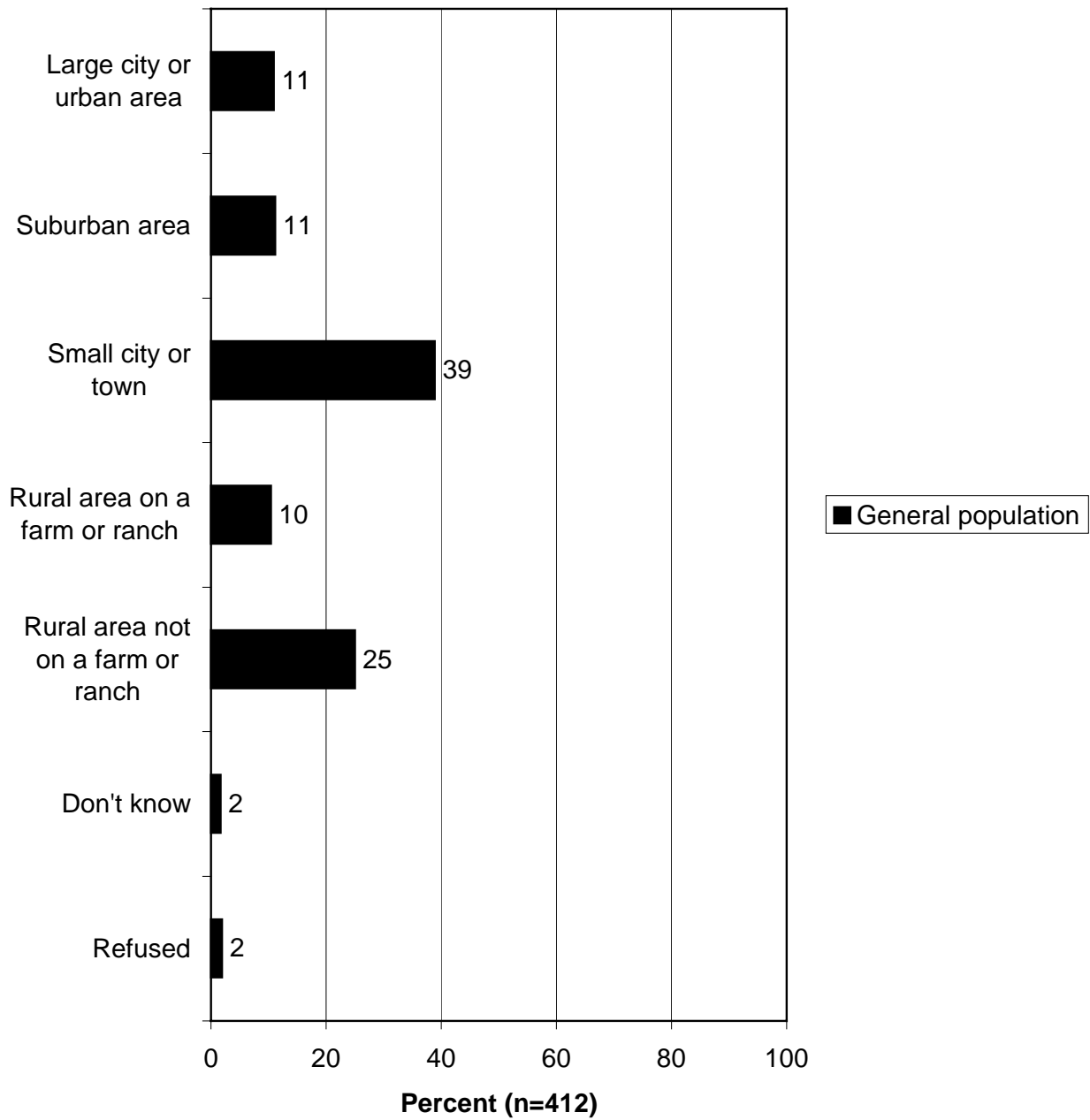


Q23. May I ask your age?

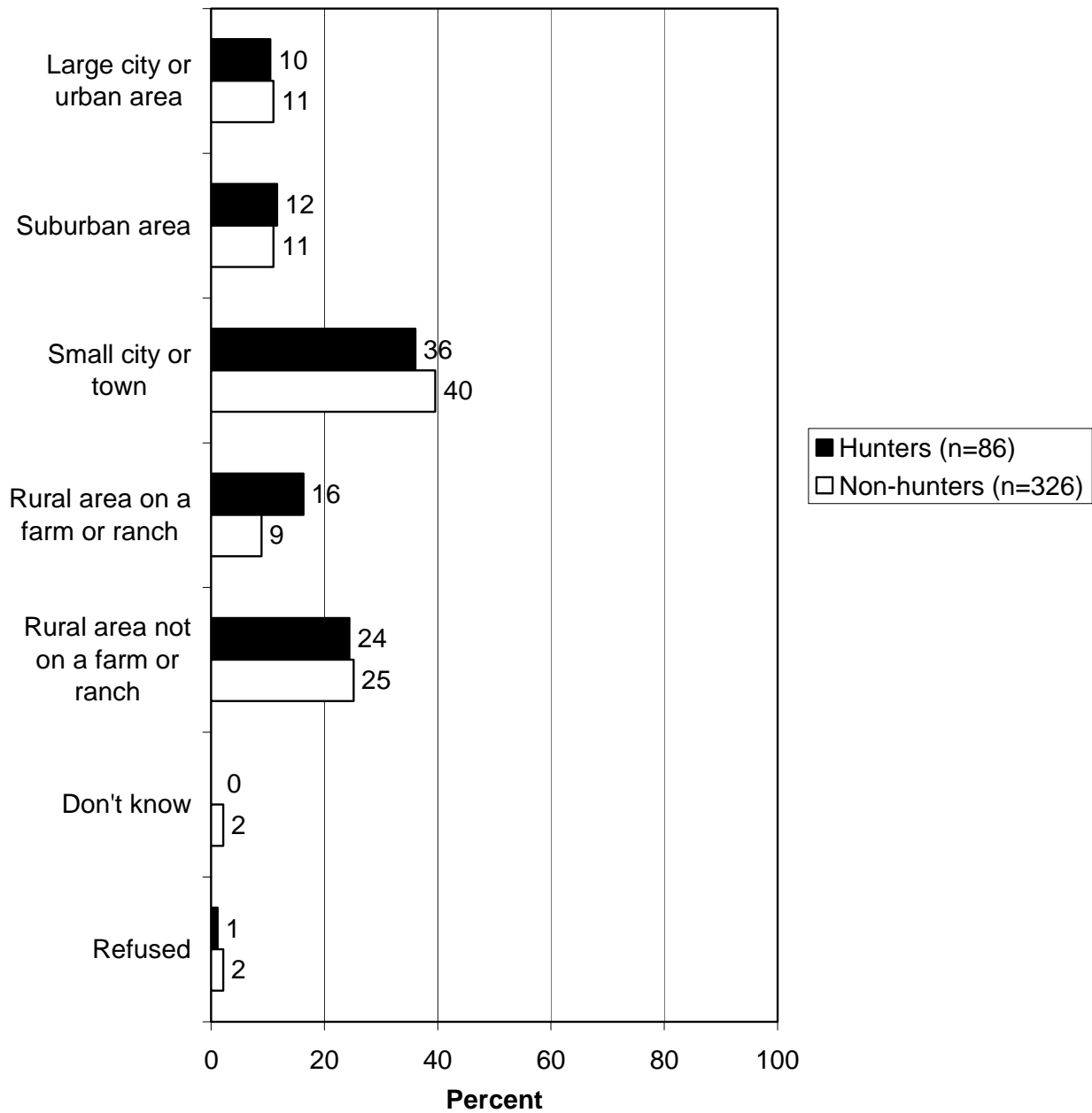


Q23. May I ask your age?

Q20. Do you consider your place of residence to be a large city or urban area, a suburban area, a small city or town, a rural area on a farm or ranch, or a rural area not on a farm or ranch?



Q20. Do you consider your place of residence to be a large city or urban area, a suburban area, a small city or town, a rural area on a farm or ranch, or a rural area not on a farm or ranch?



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

That's the end of the survey. Thanks for your time and cooperation! (Additional comments are recorded below.)

I strongly oppose hunting deer over bait. It's cowardly and unsportsmanlike. Everyone who would hunt deer over bait is lazy. Anyone who would propose hunting deer over bait should go to a cattle feed lot and shoot cows.

They should rethink the fee they charge for hunting on wildlife reservations, and they need to drop the size limits.
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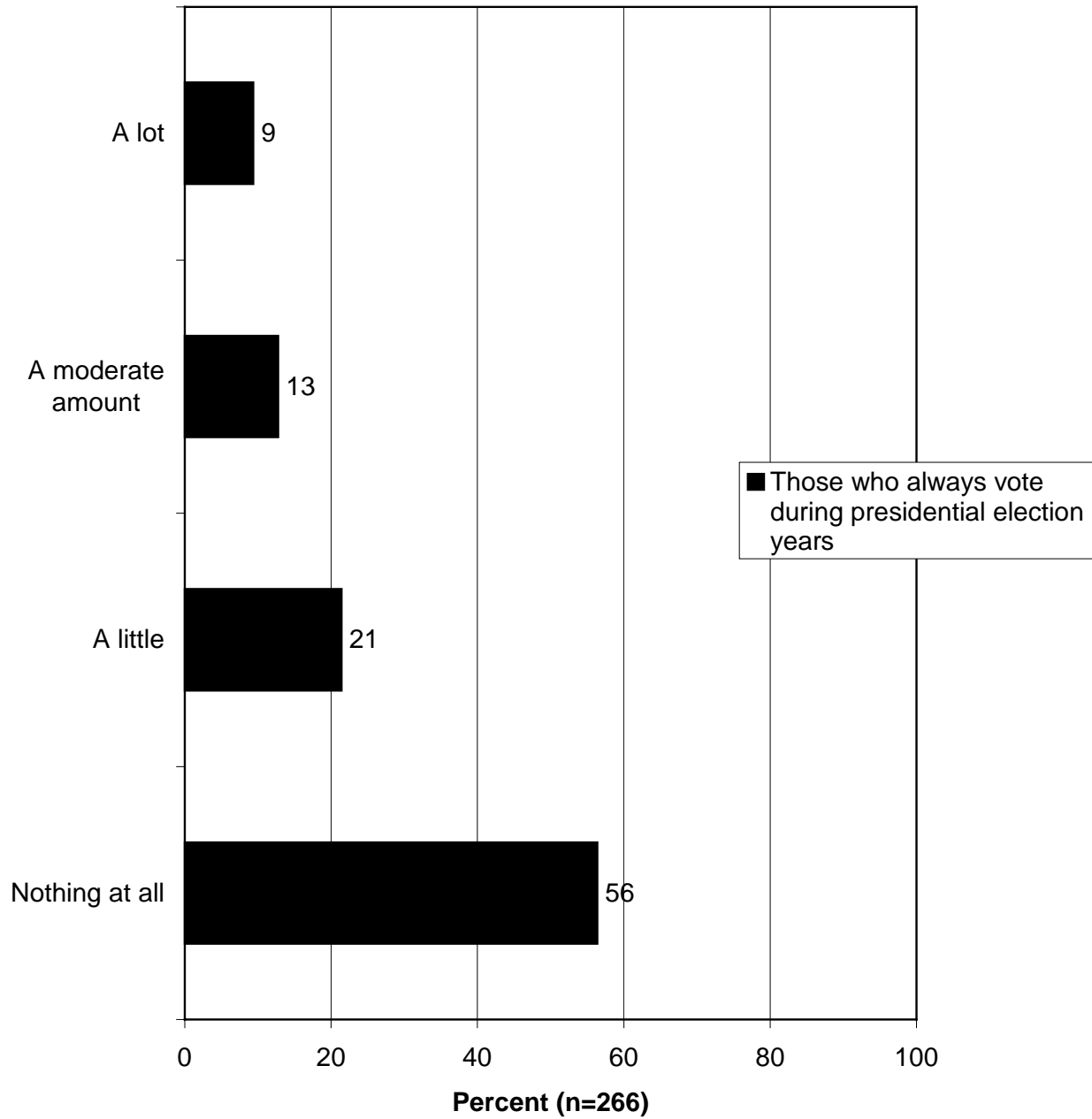
More money ought to be spent on giving wardens a chance to catch illegal deer killers. I need more protection. Deer need more protection.

Tell them I think they are doing a wonderful job. [They should] keep control over baiting. I'm not saying everyone should go out and bait.
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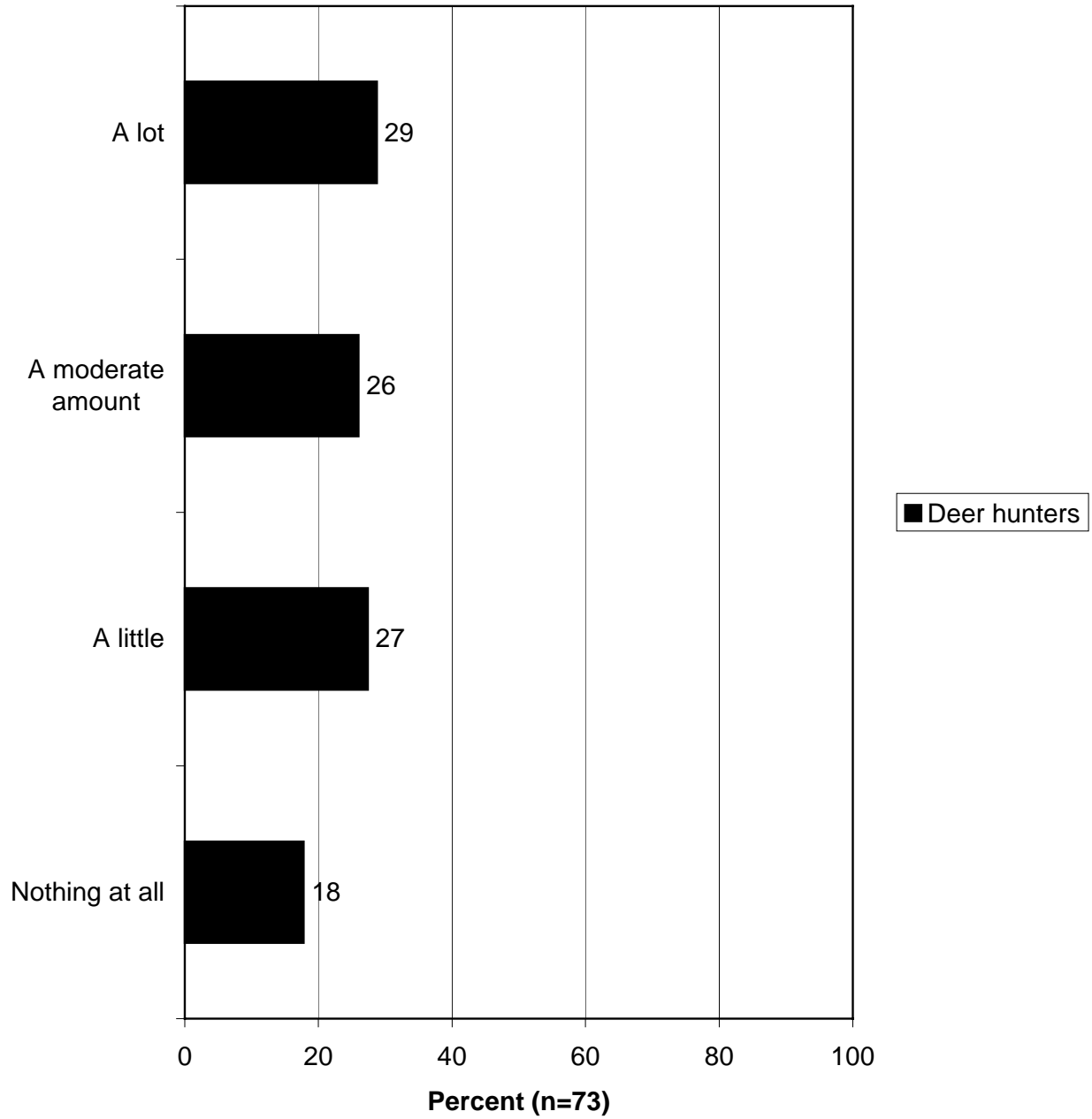
I want to stress that I believe in hunting over bait only for the purpose of getting food. It should not be done as a sport.
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APPENDICES (VARIOUS CROSS-TABULATED GRAPHS)

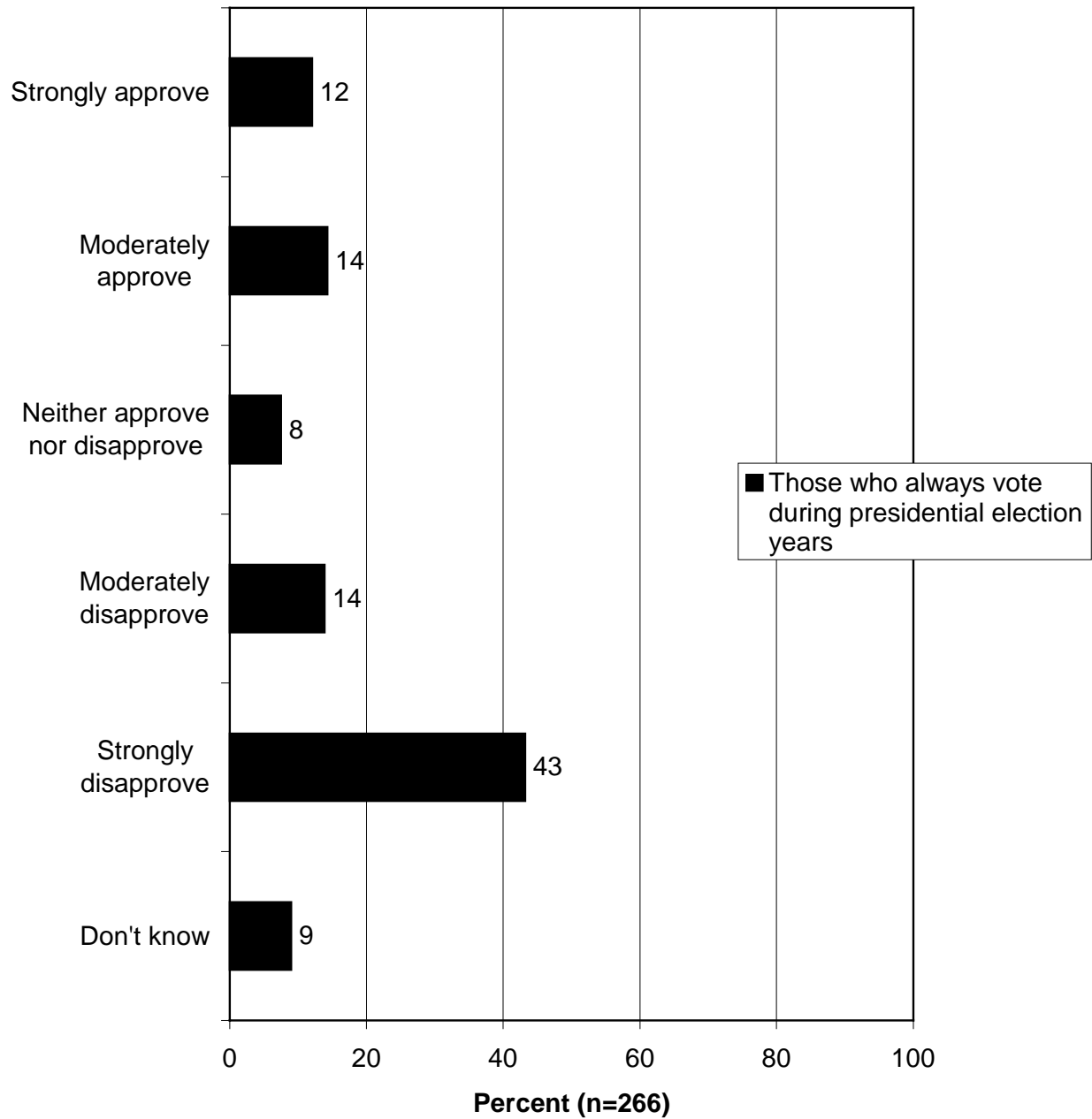
Q7. How much would you say you know about hunting white-tailed deer over bait?



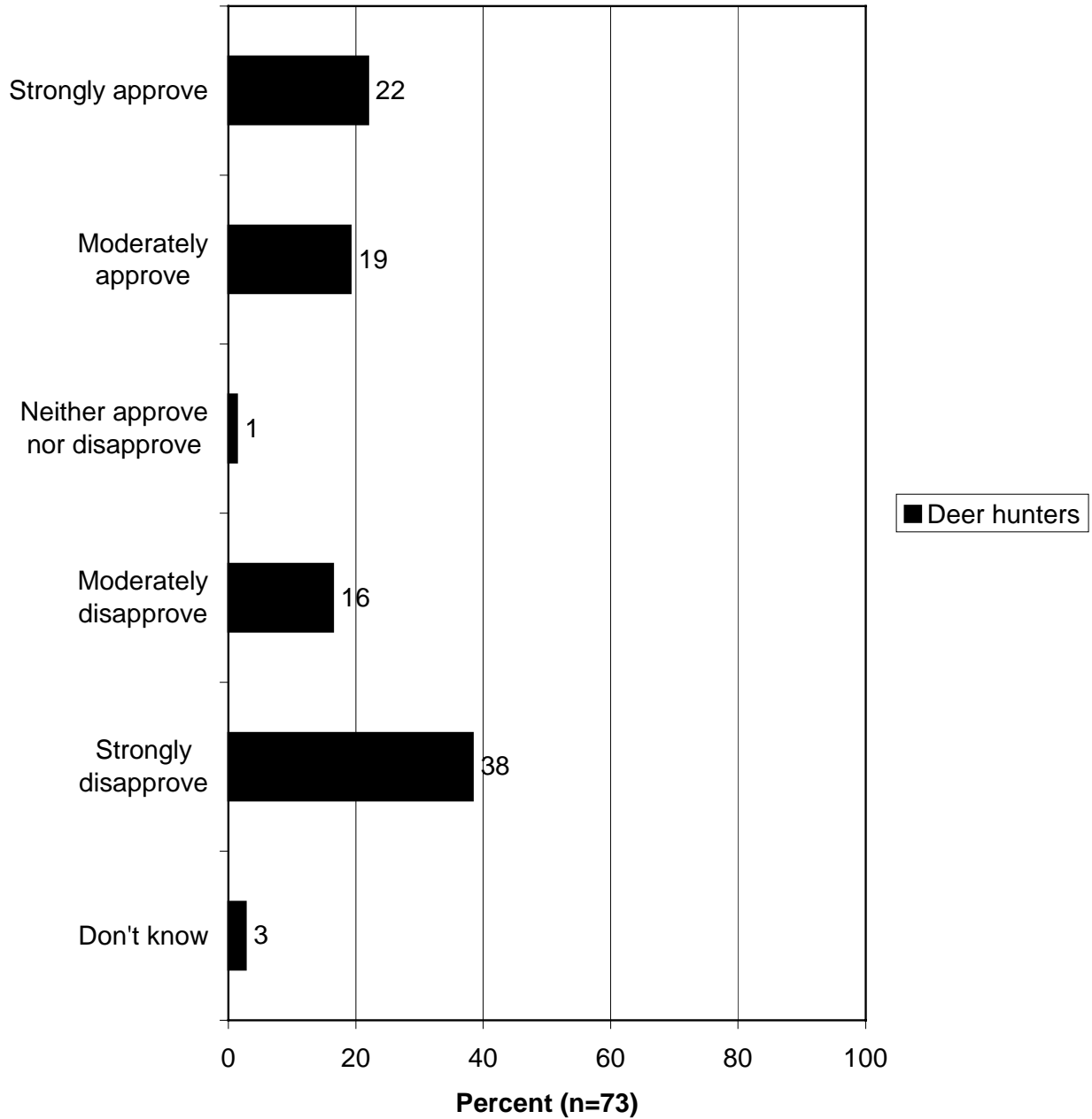
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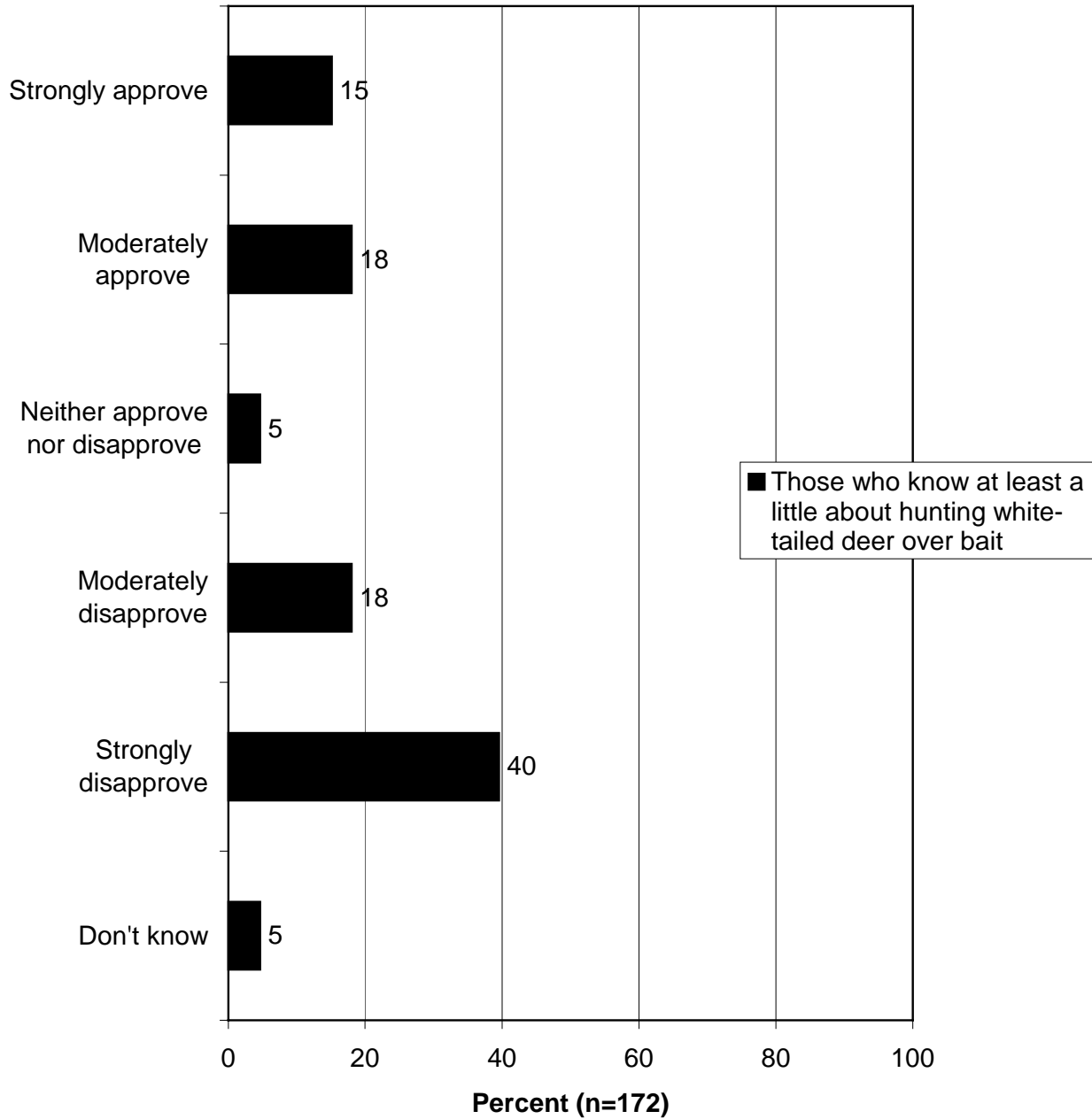
Q10. Do you approve or disapprove of white-tailed deer hunting over bait?



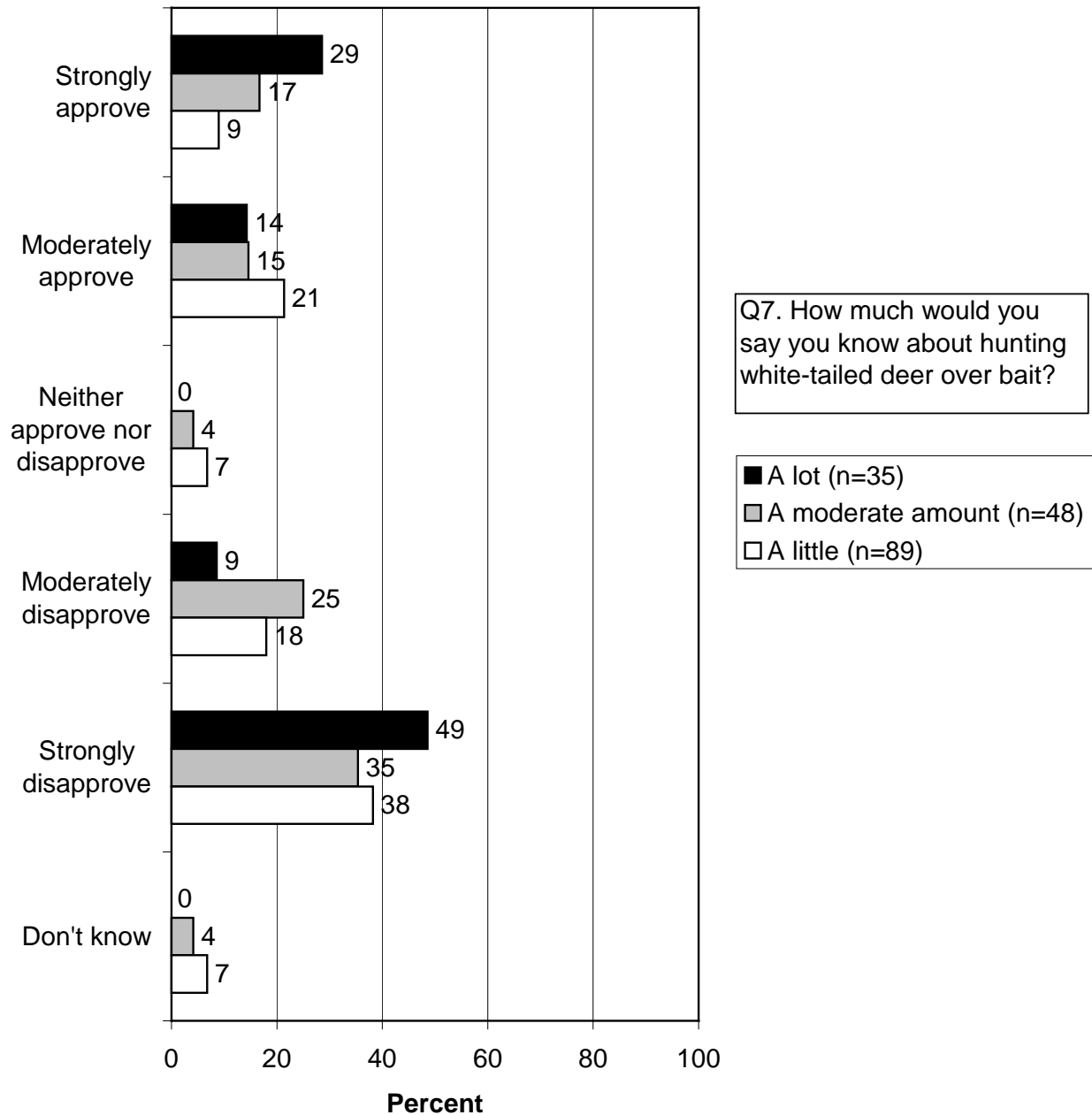
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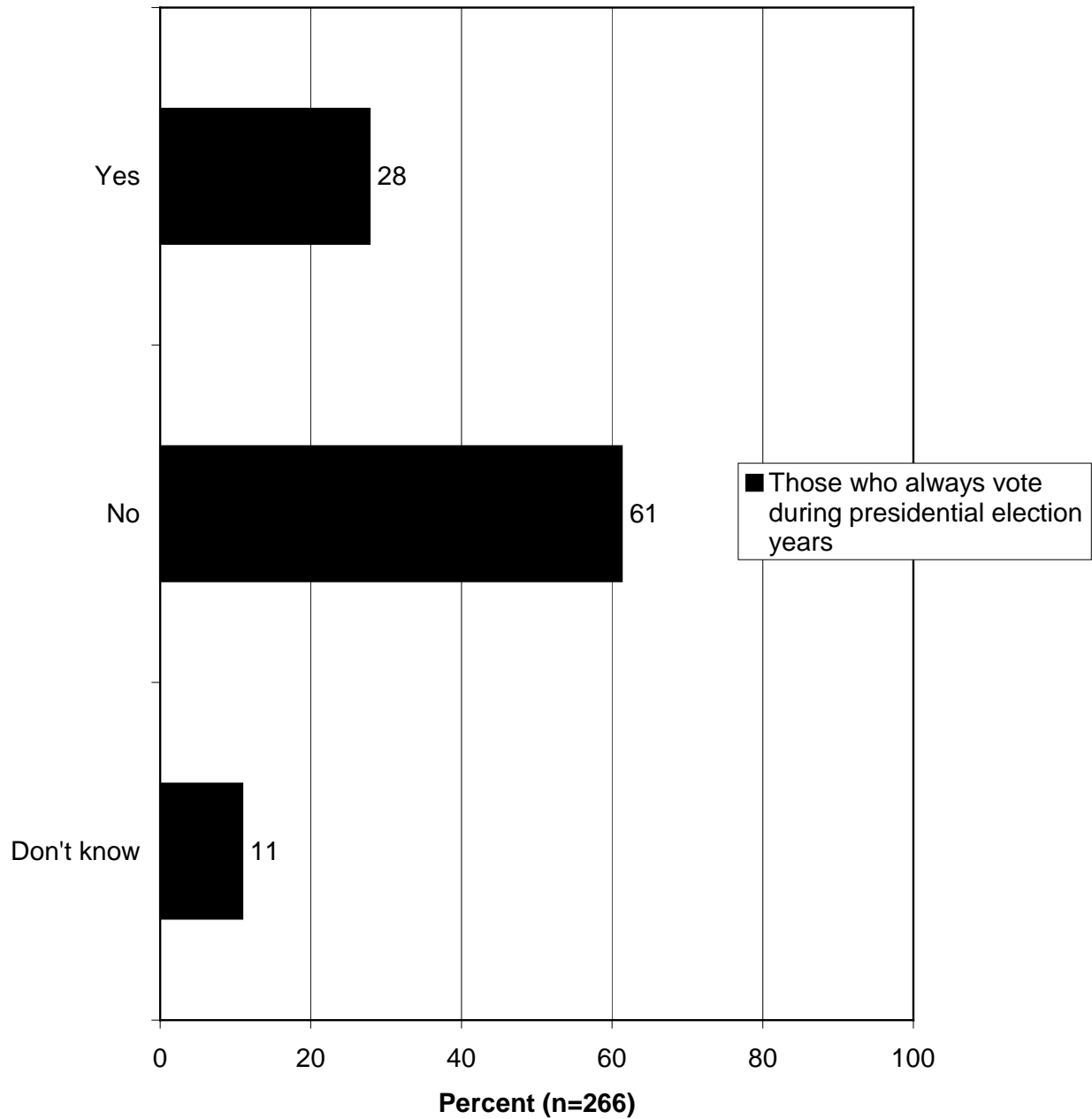
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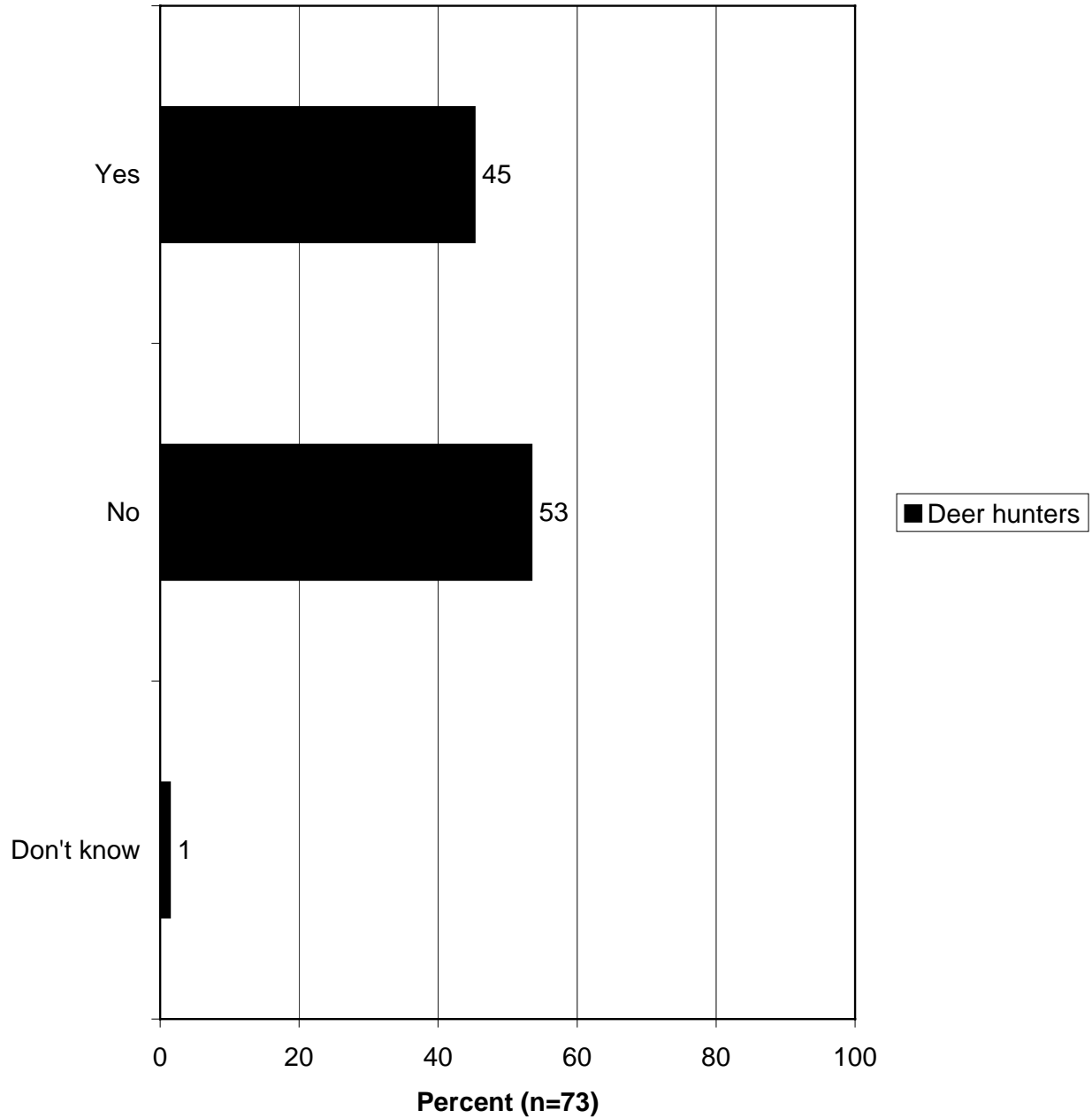
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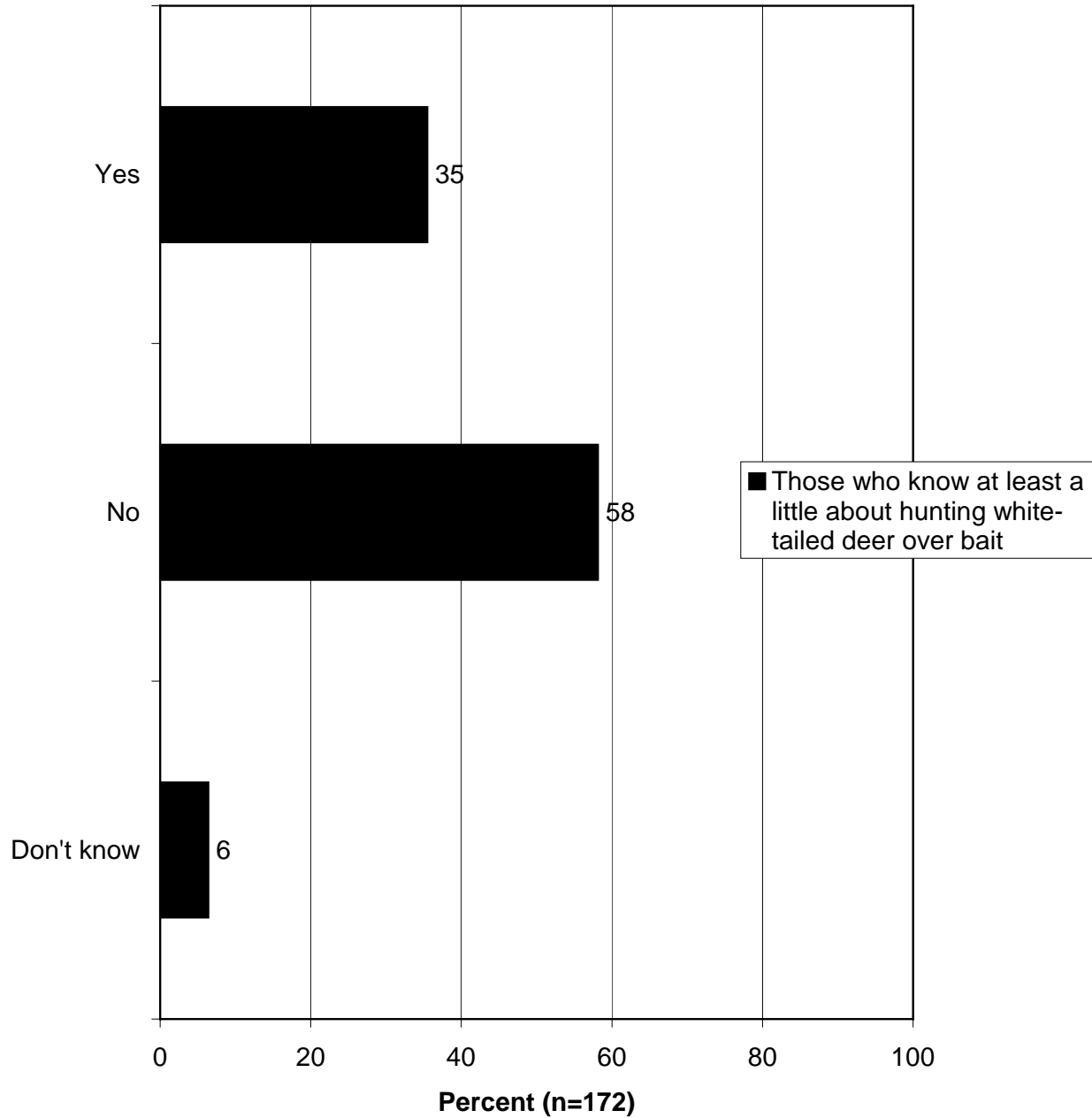
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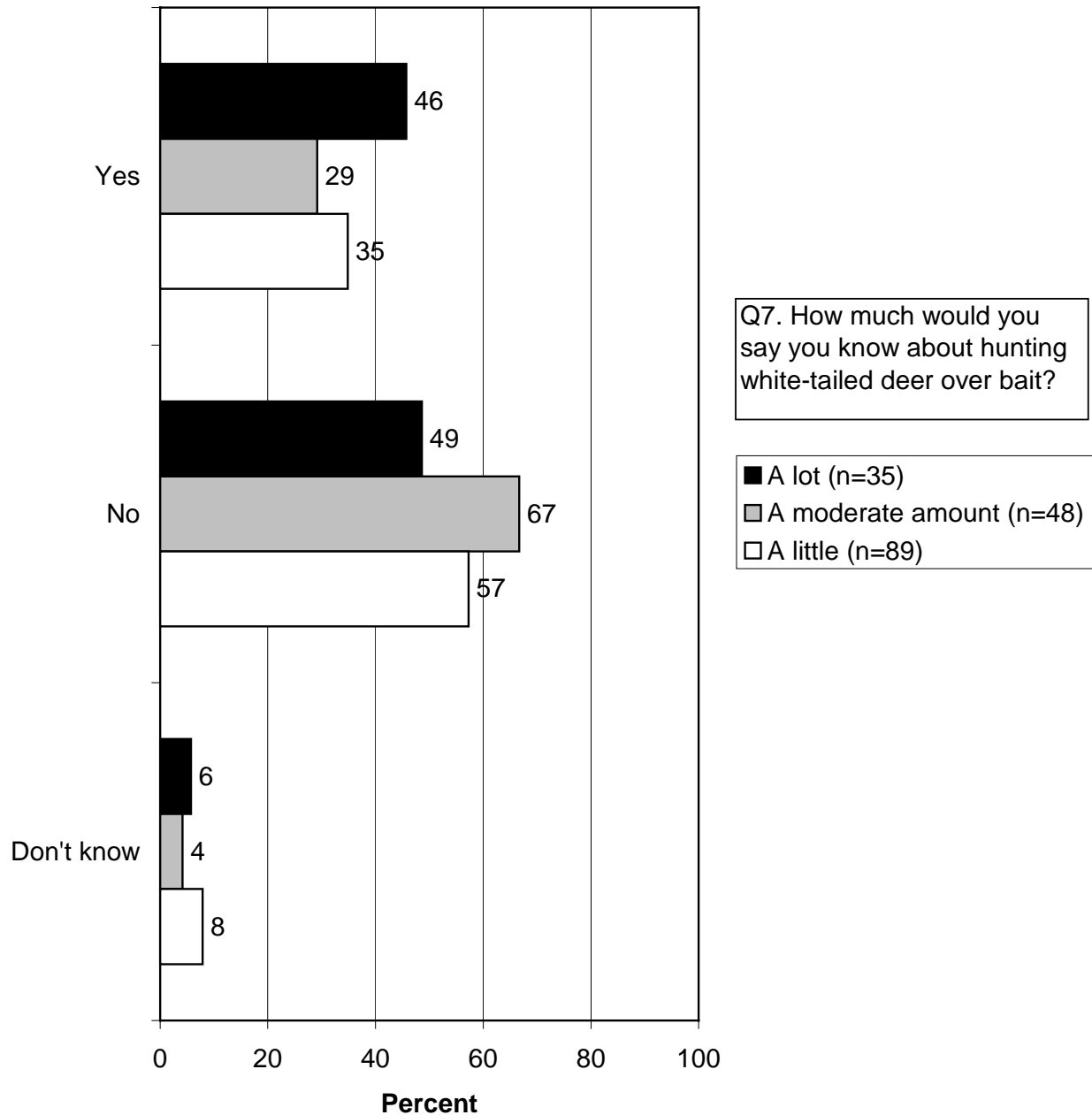
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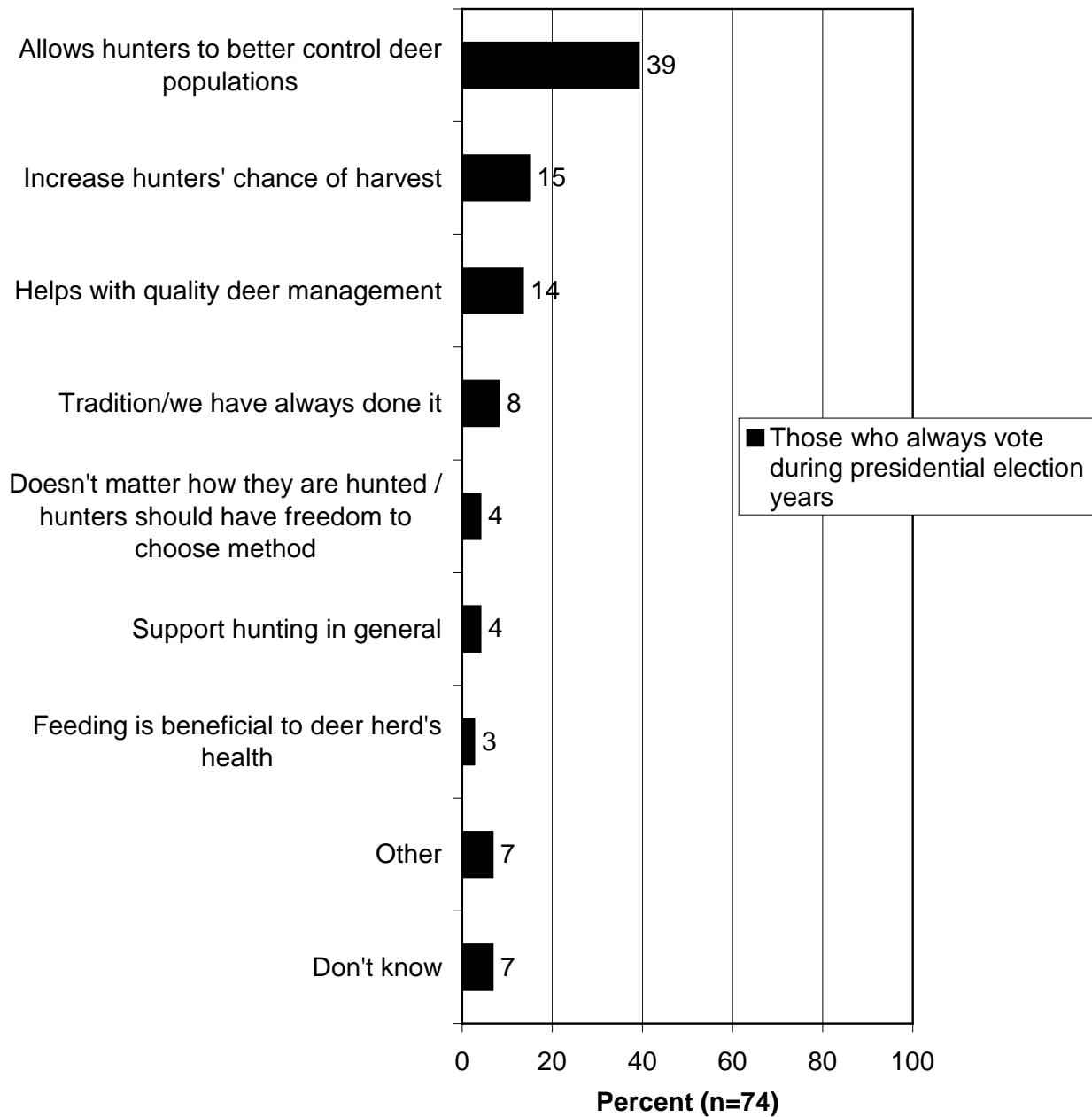
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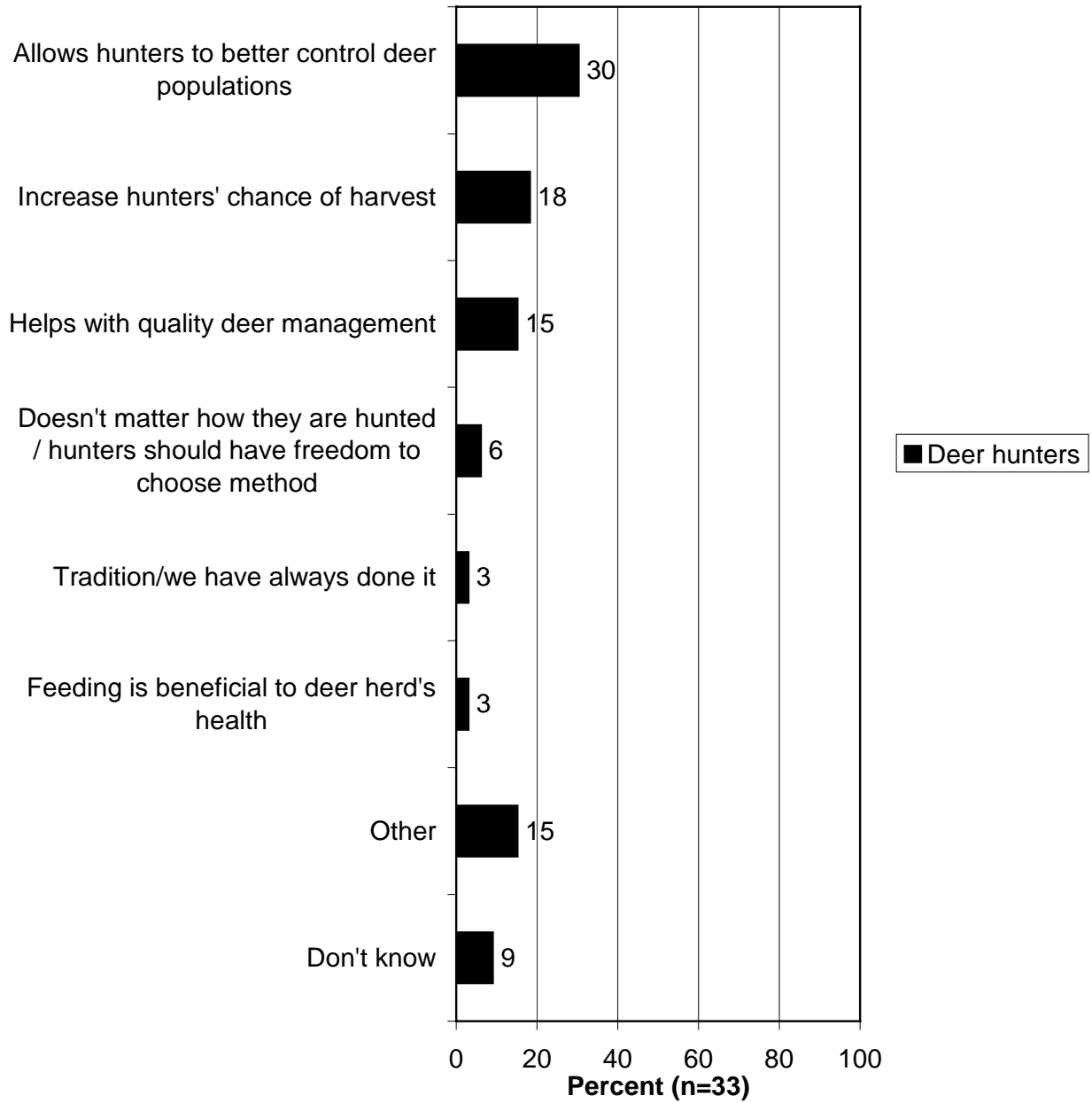
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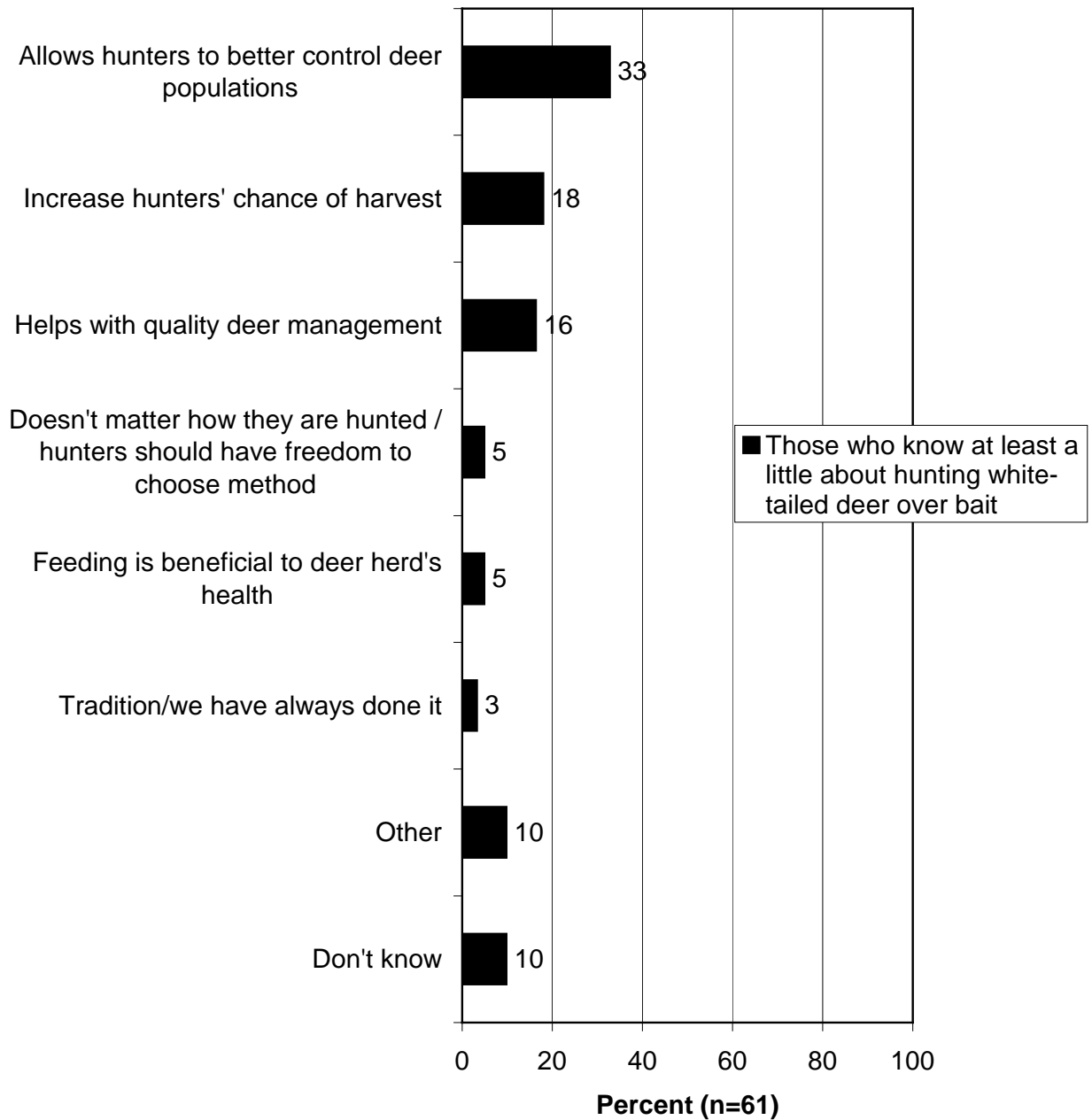
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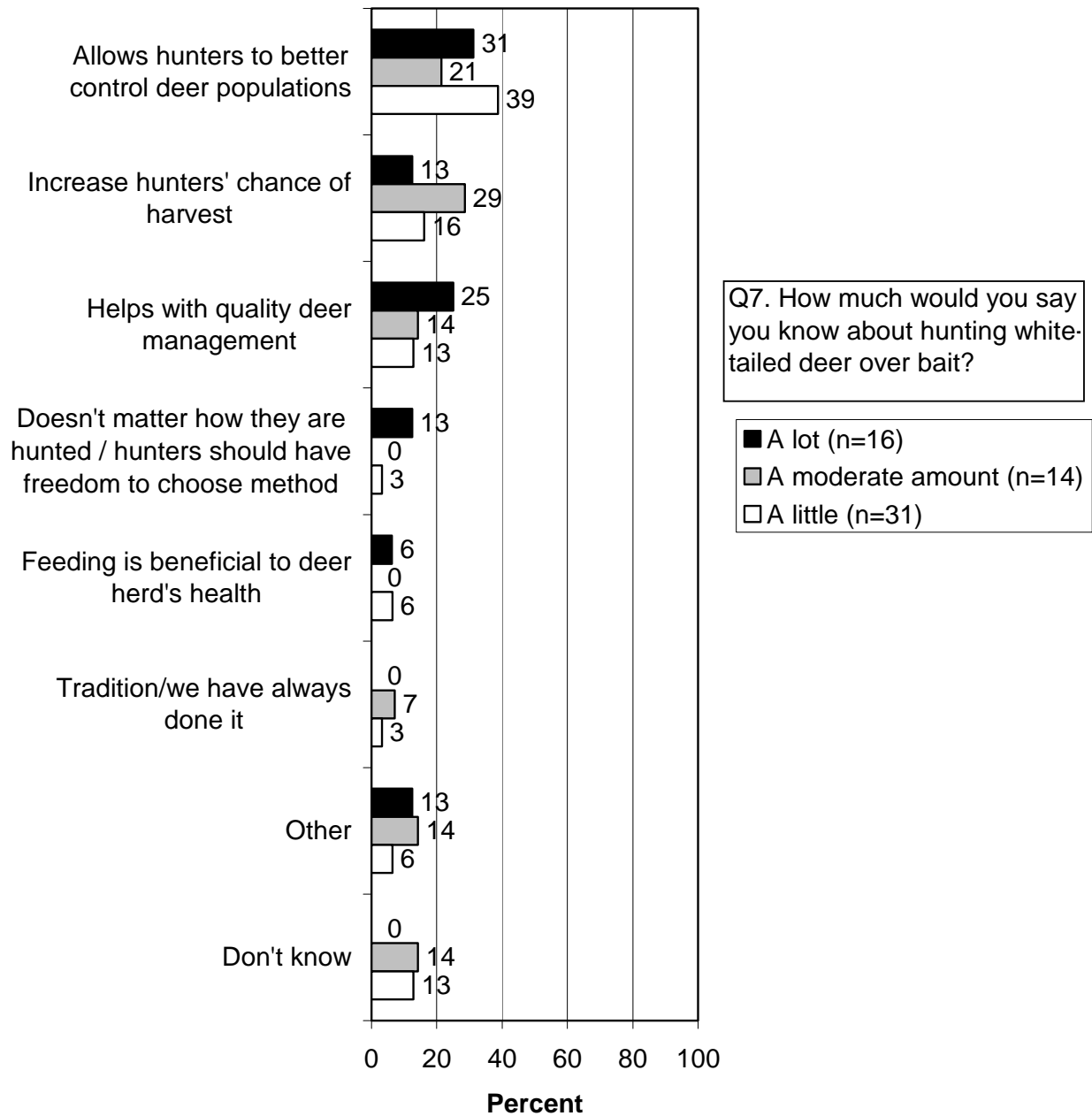
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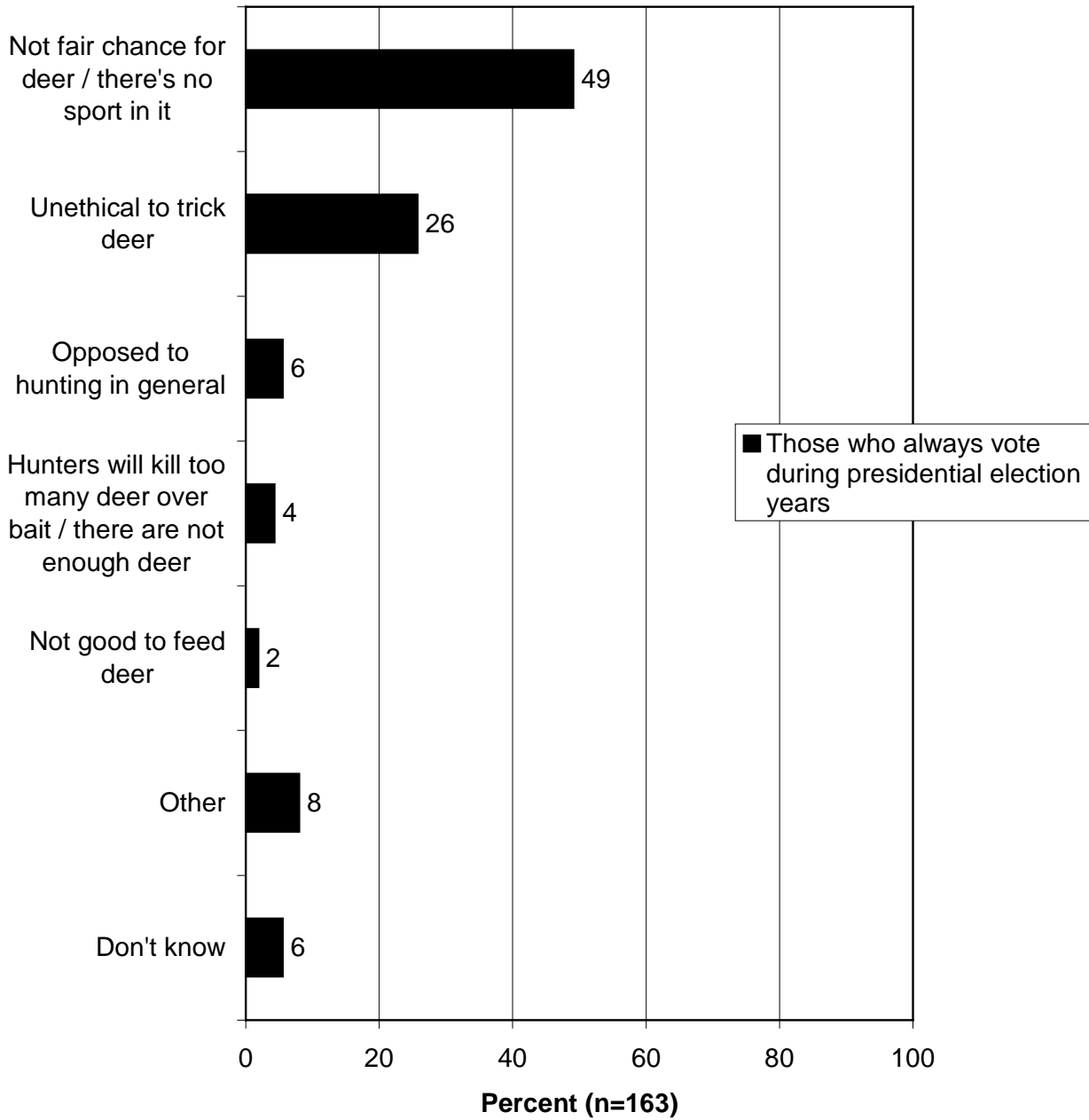
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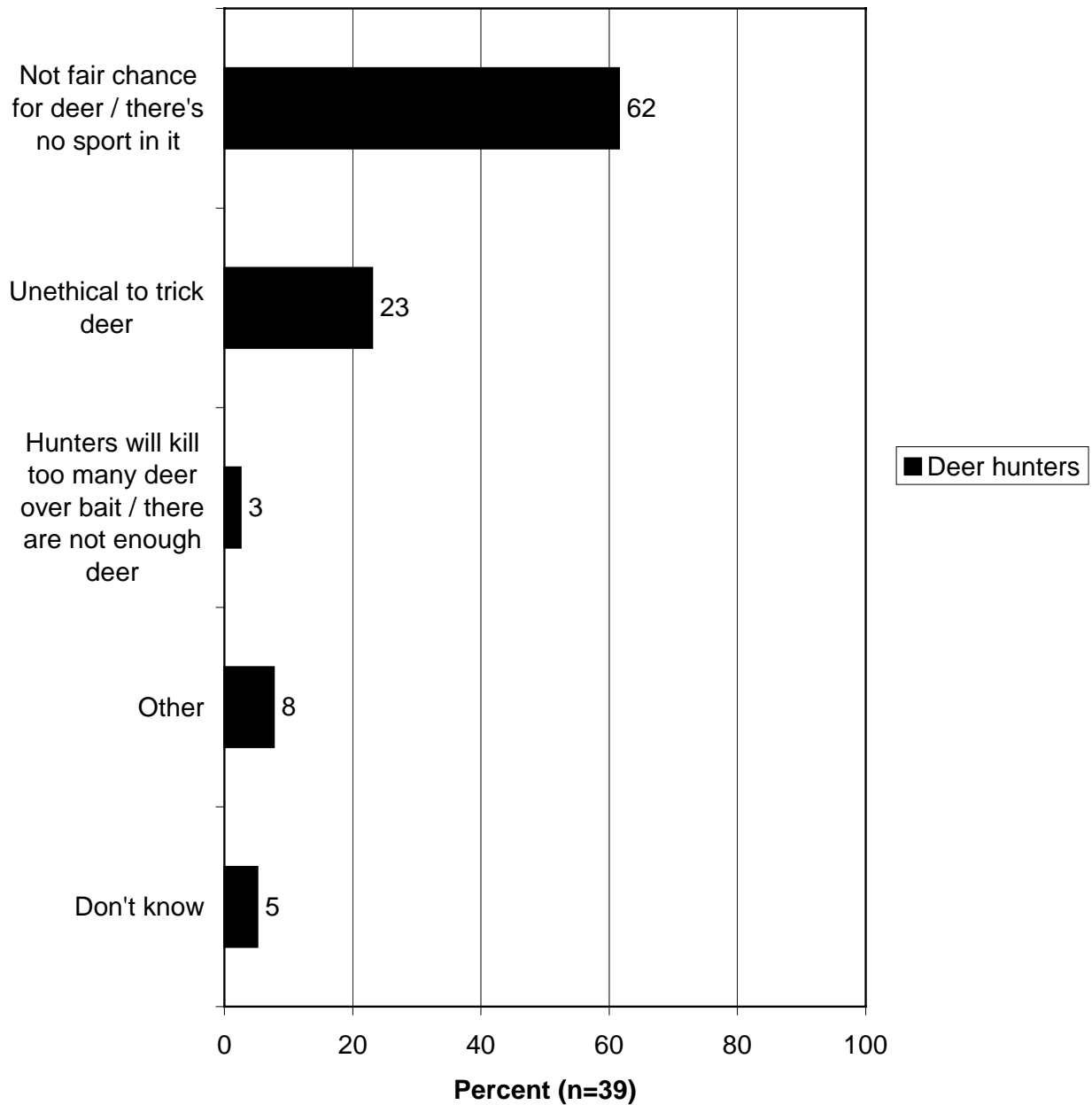
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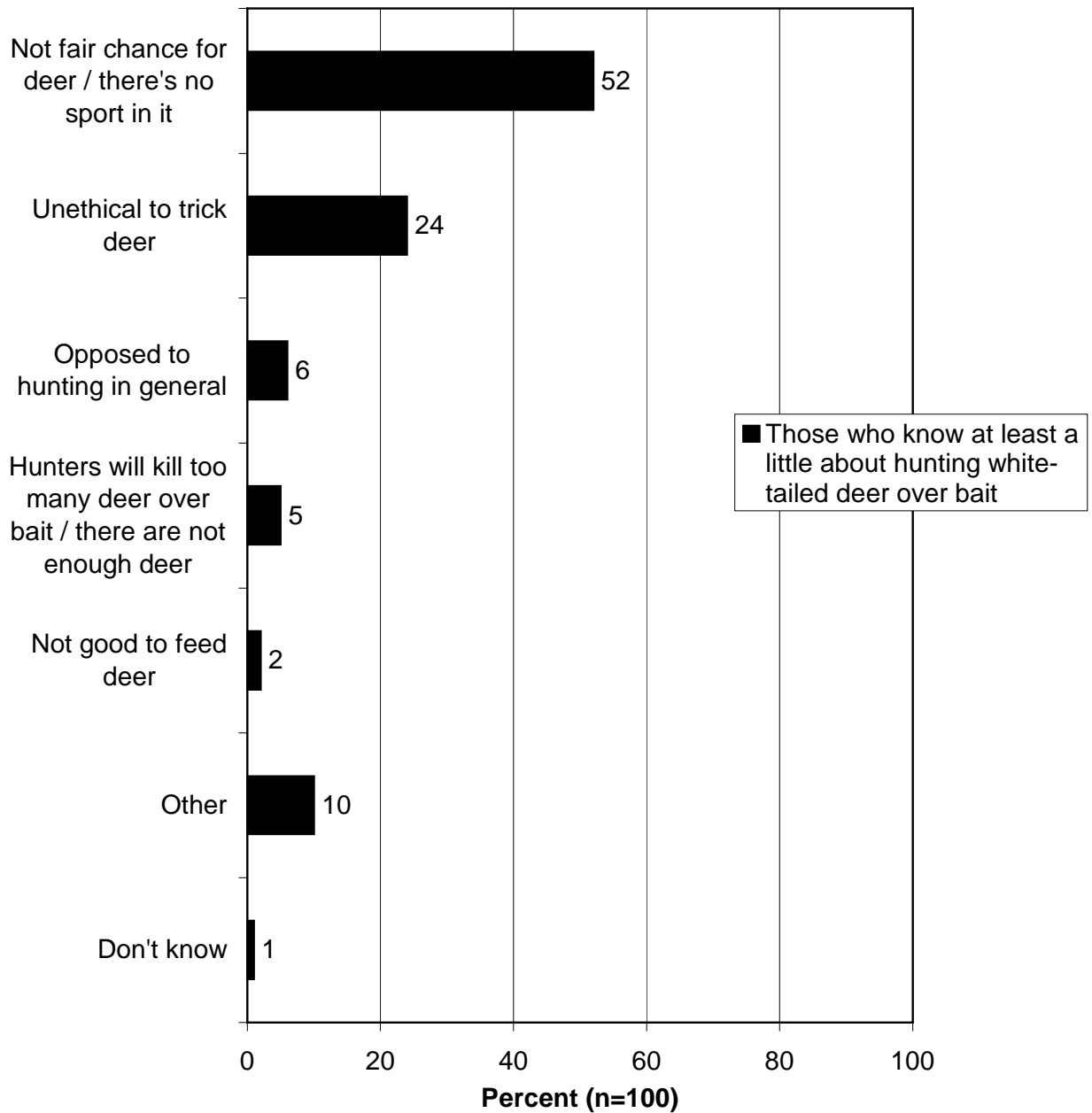
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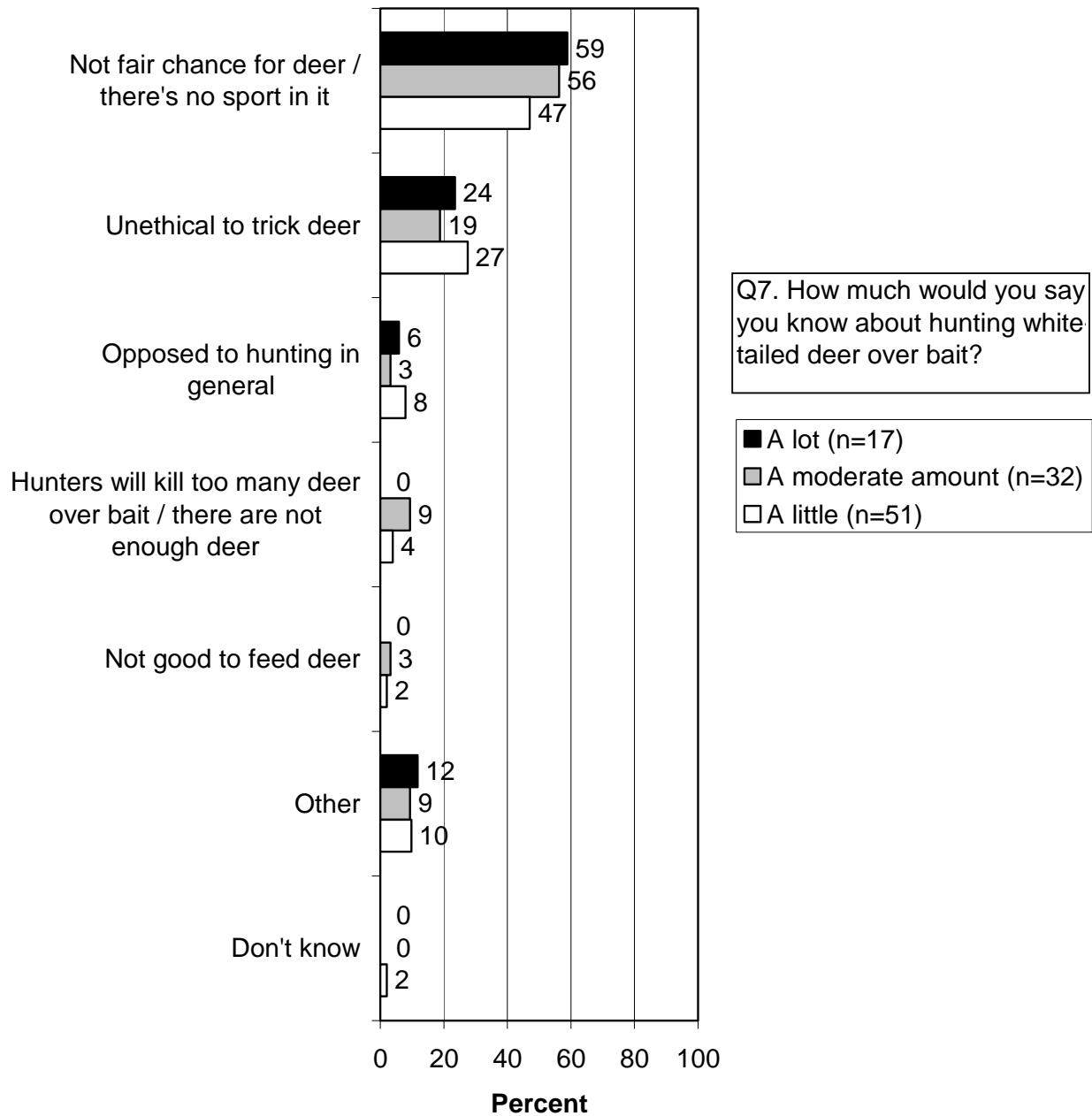
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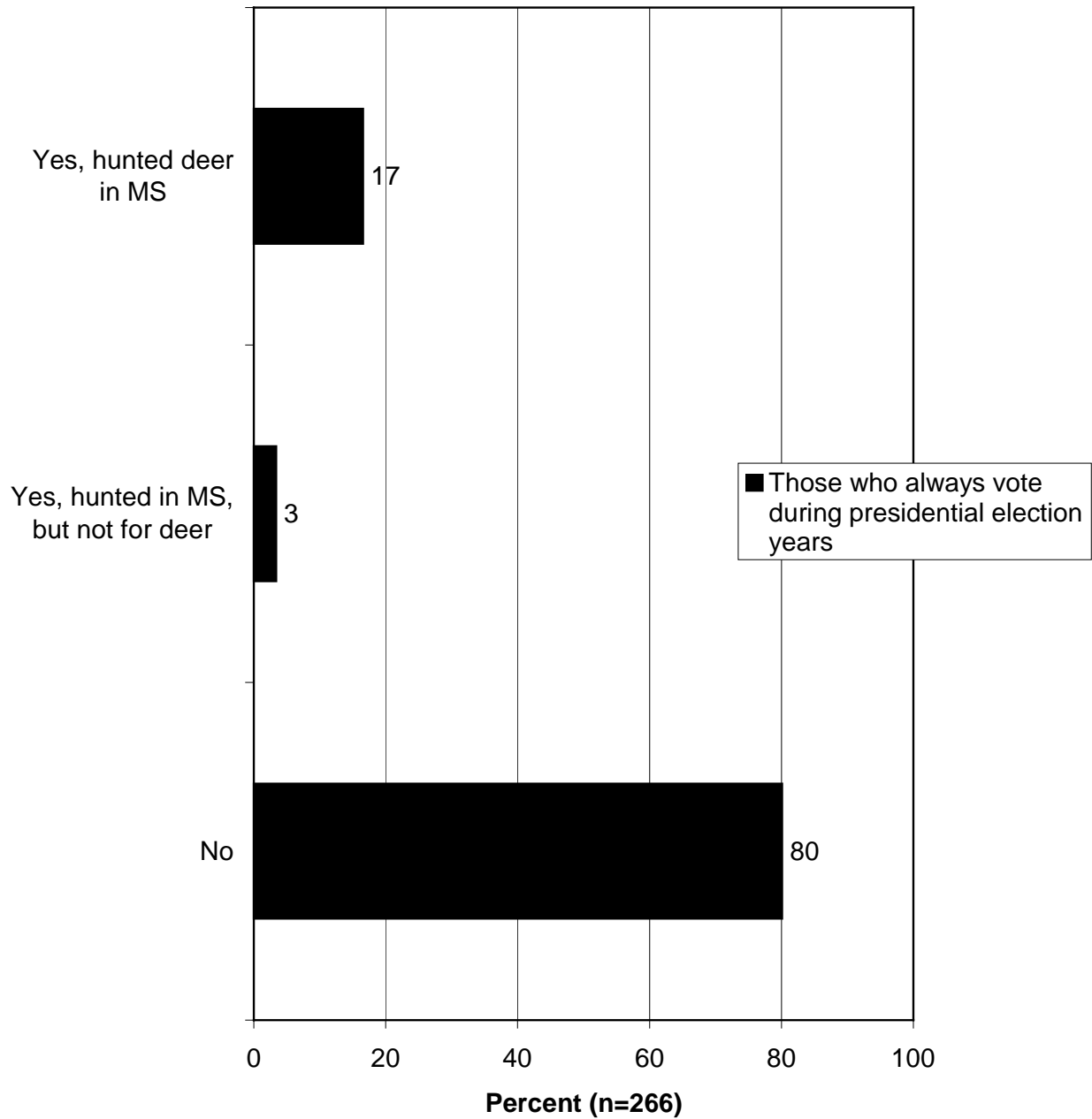
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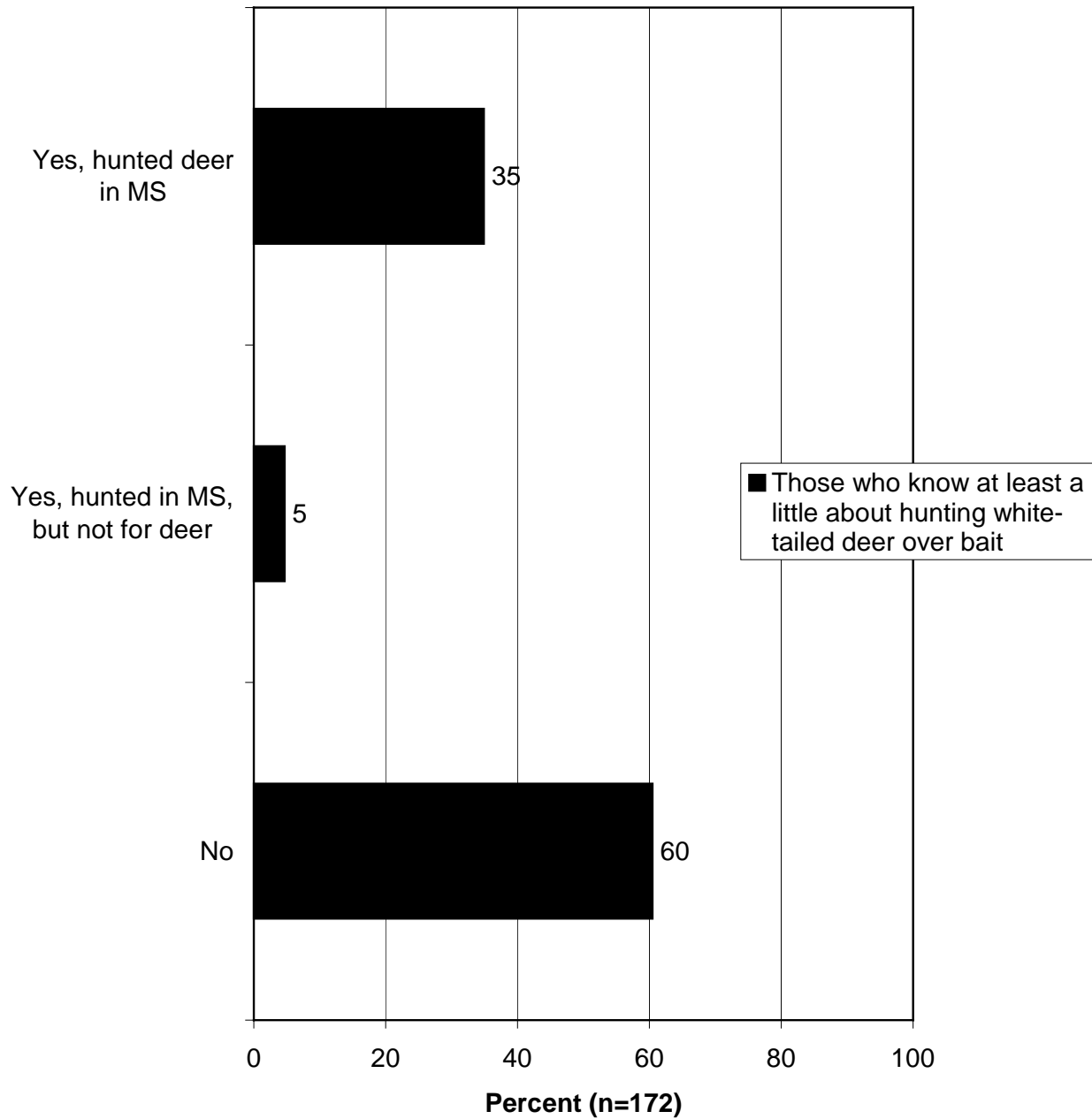
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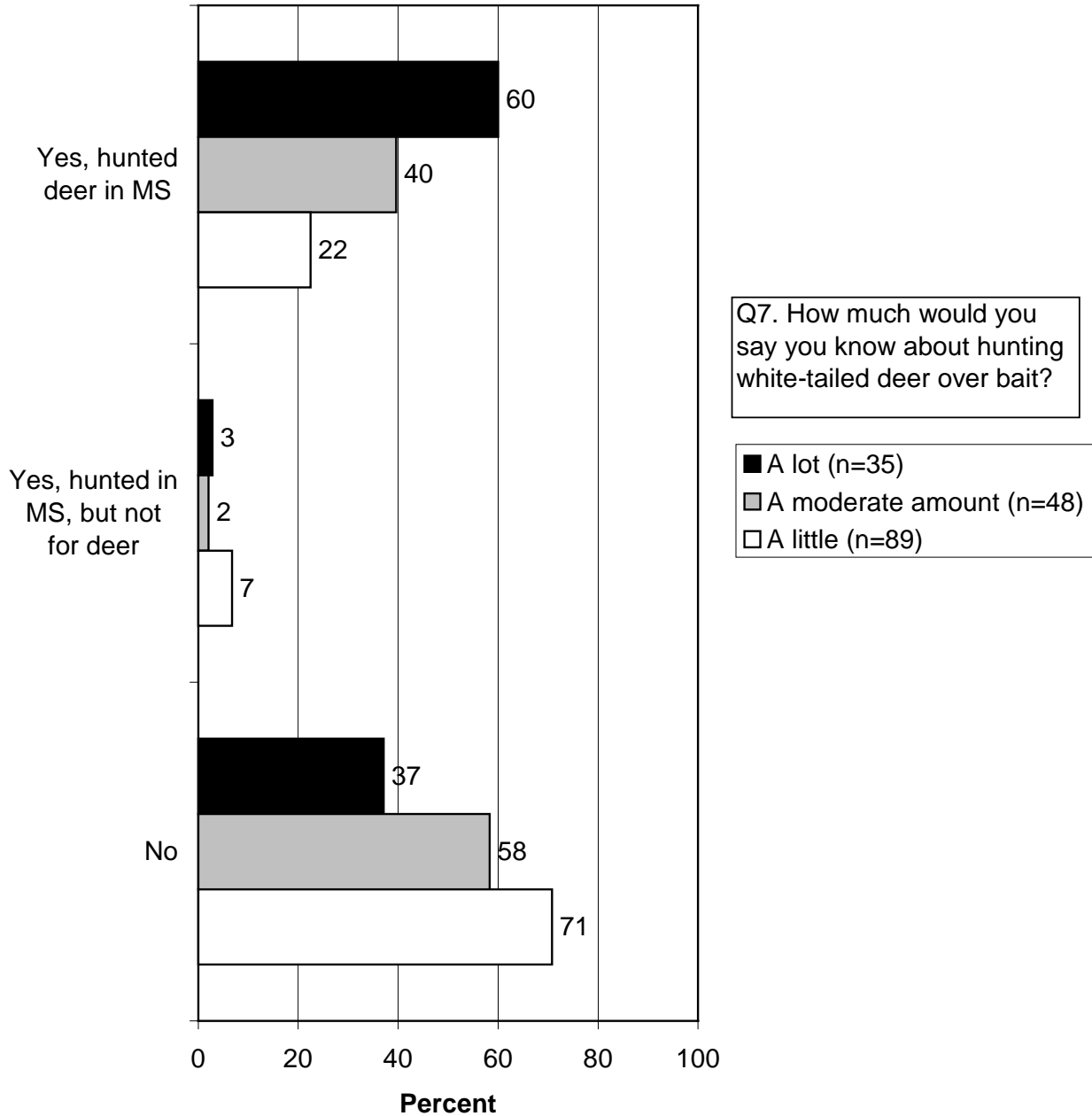
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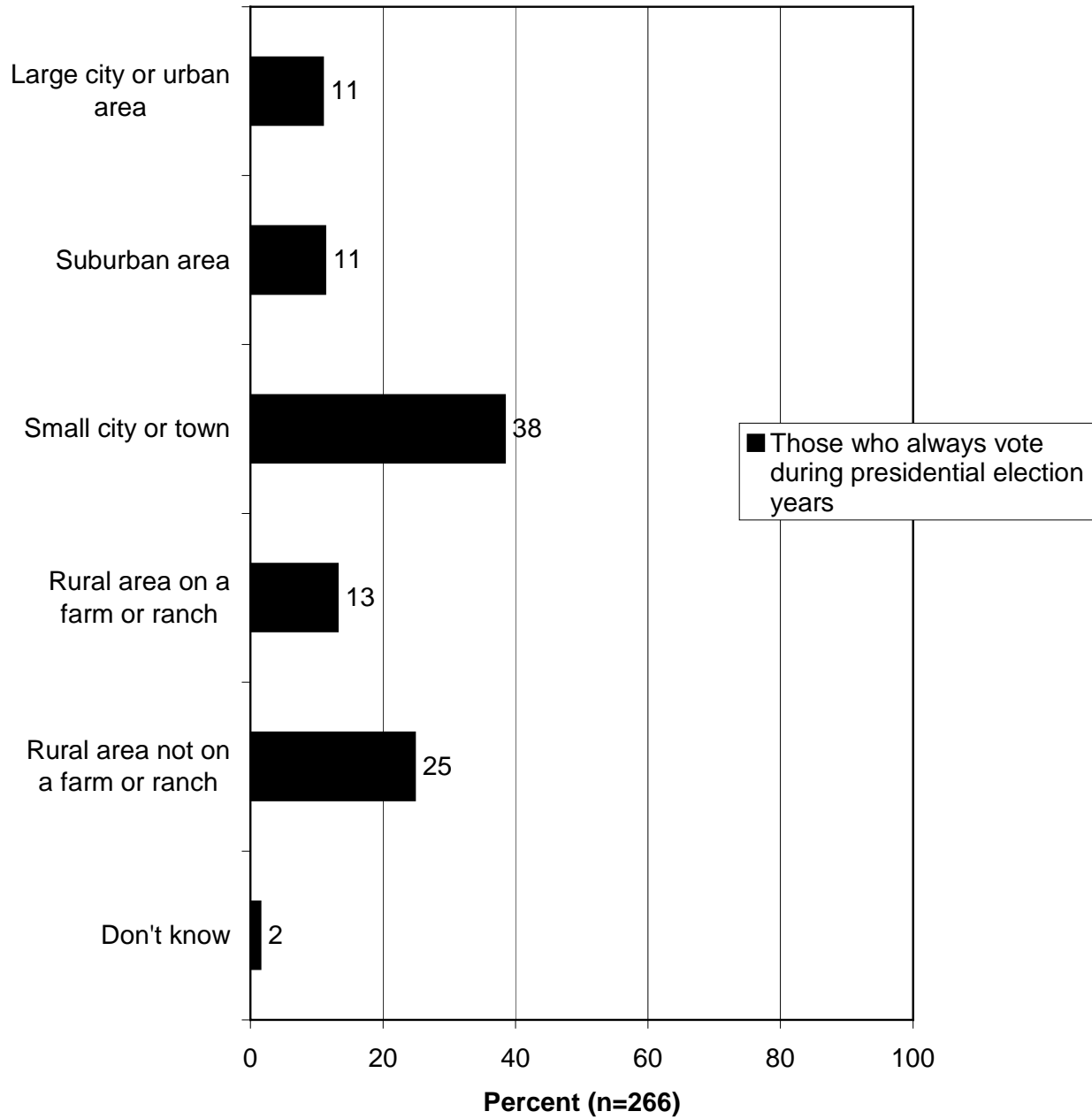
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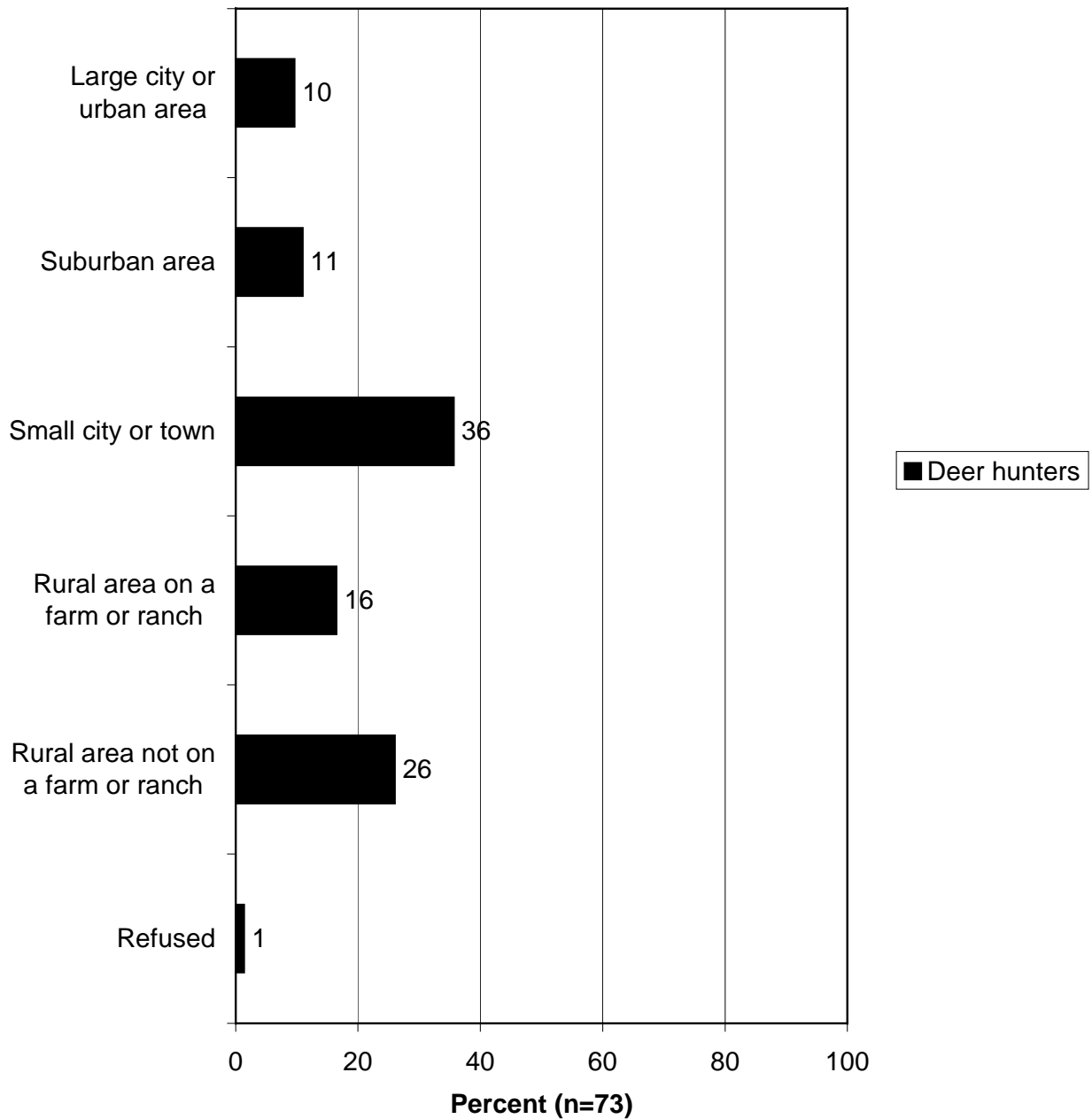
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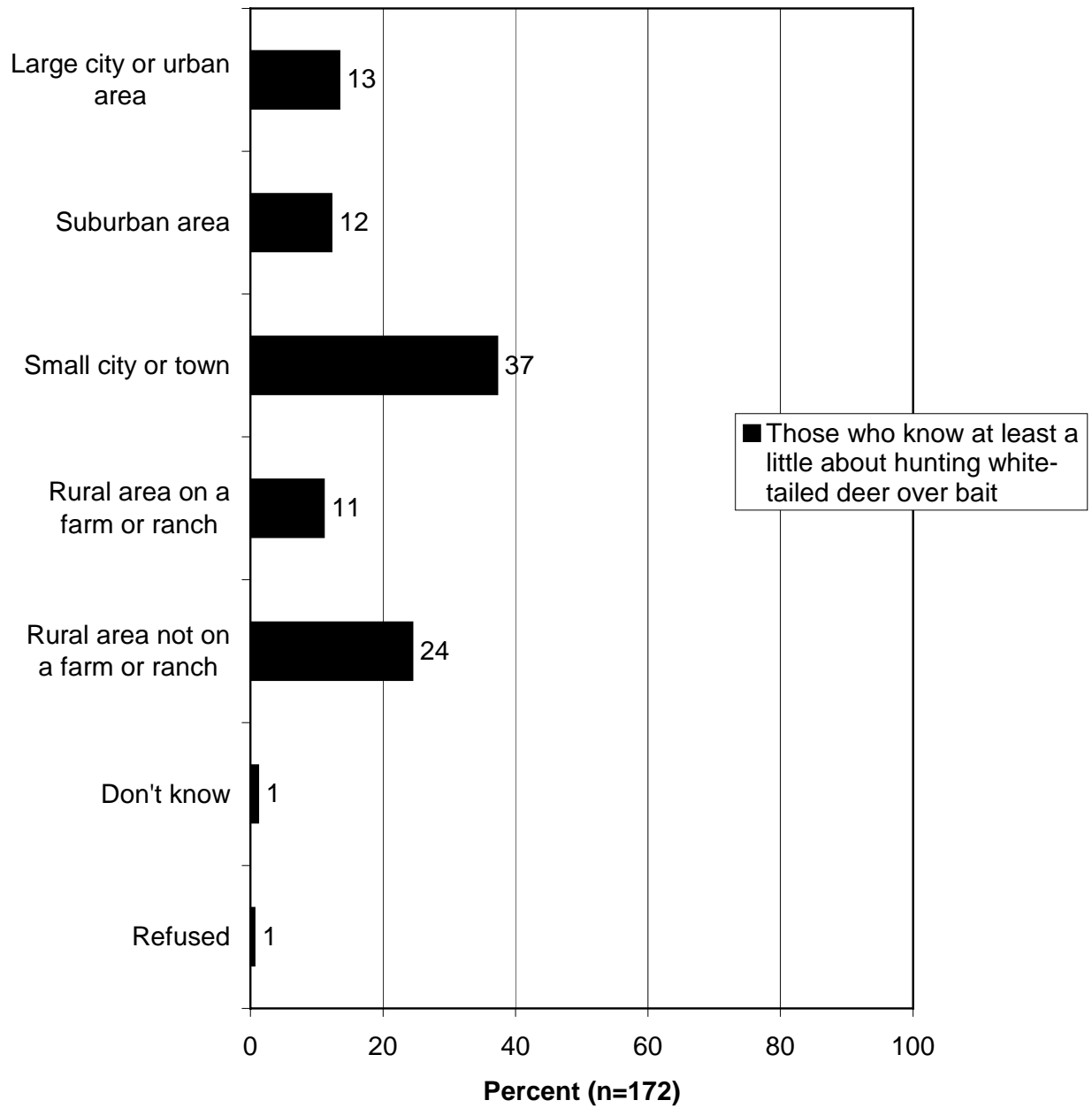
Q20. Do you consider your place of residence to be a large city or urban area, a suburban area, a small city or town, a rural area on a farm or ranch, or a rural area not on a farm or ranch?



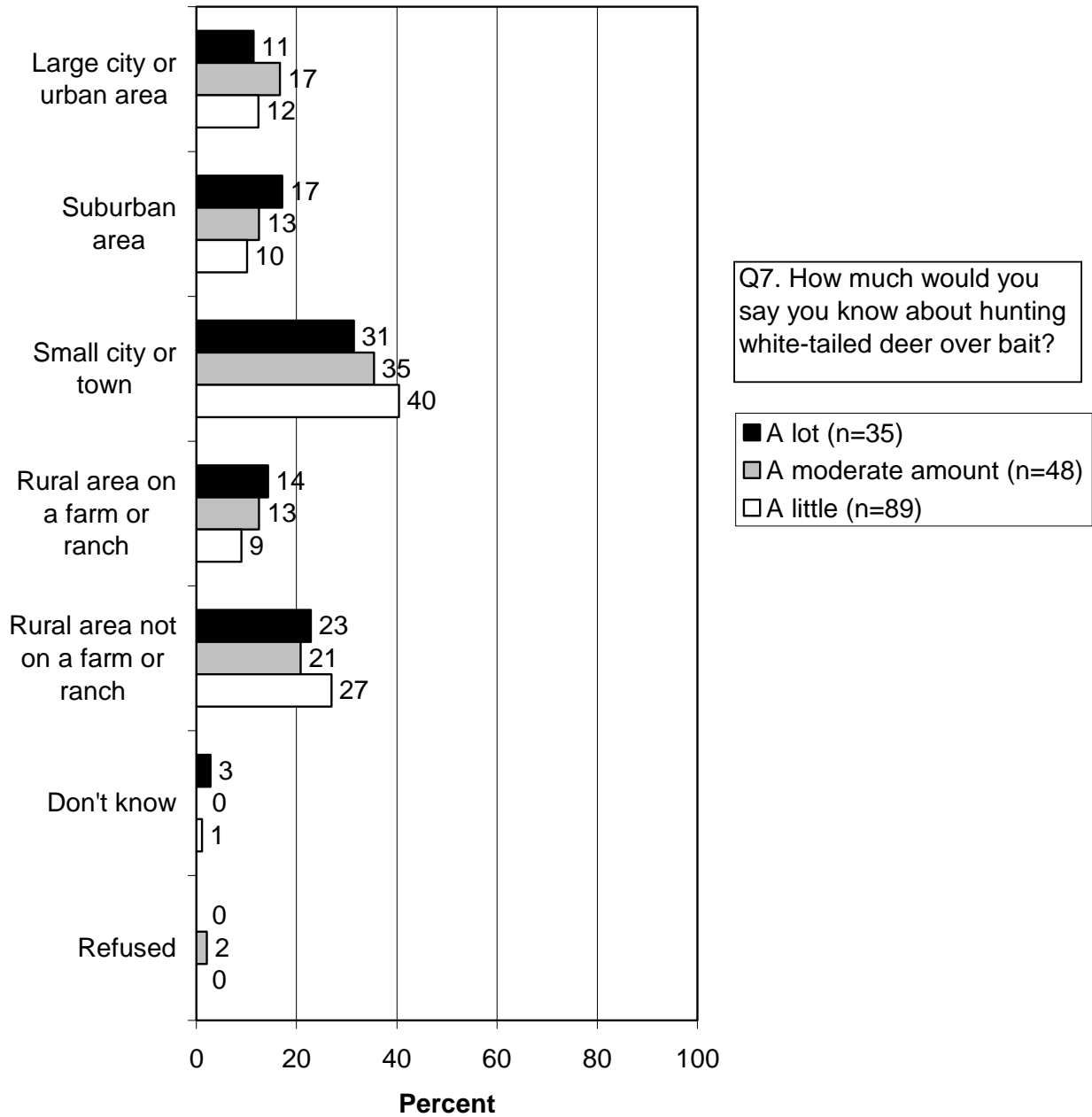
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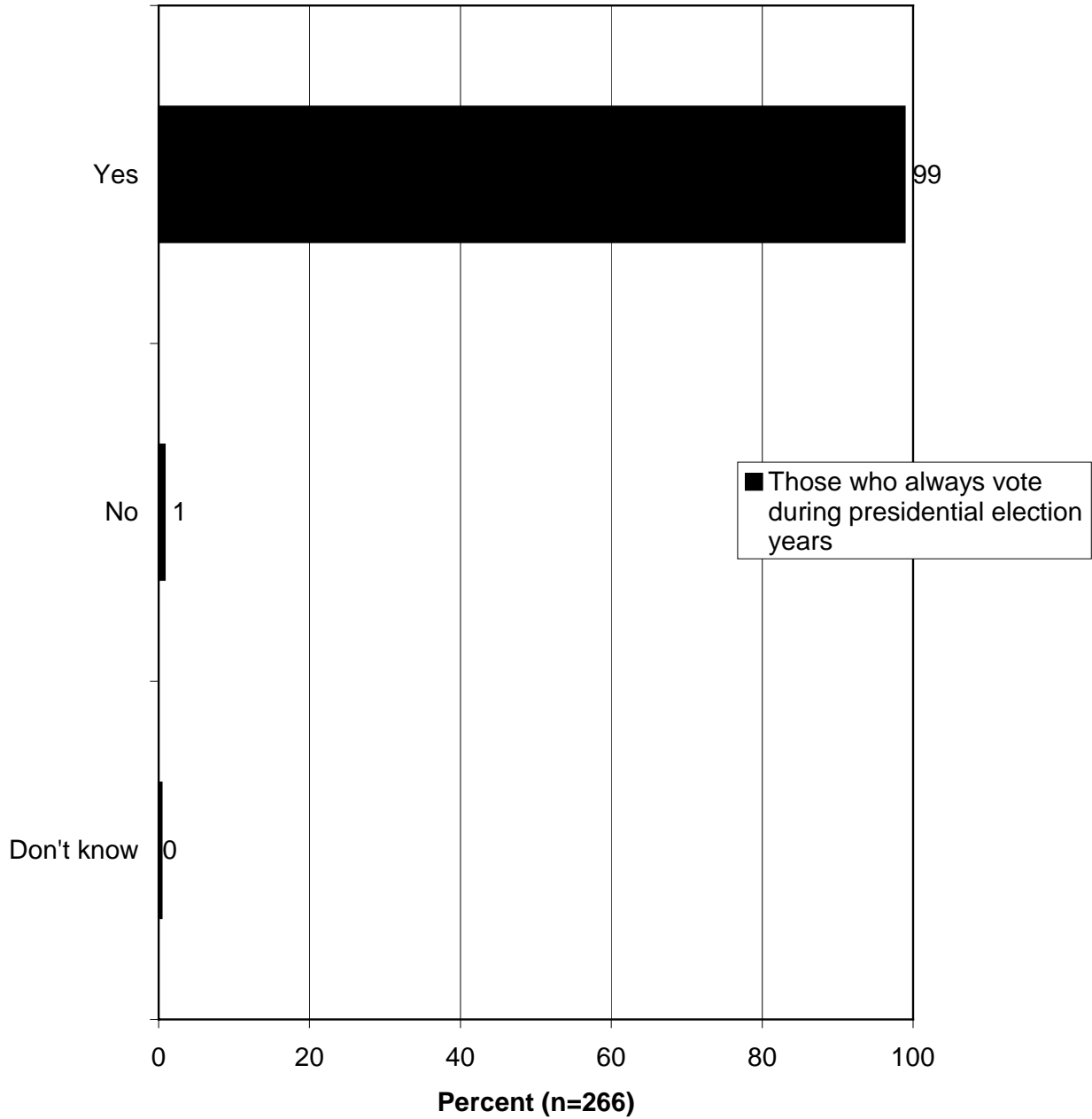
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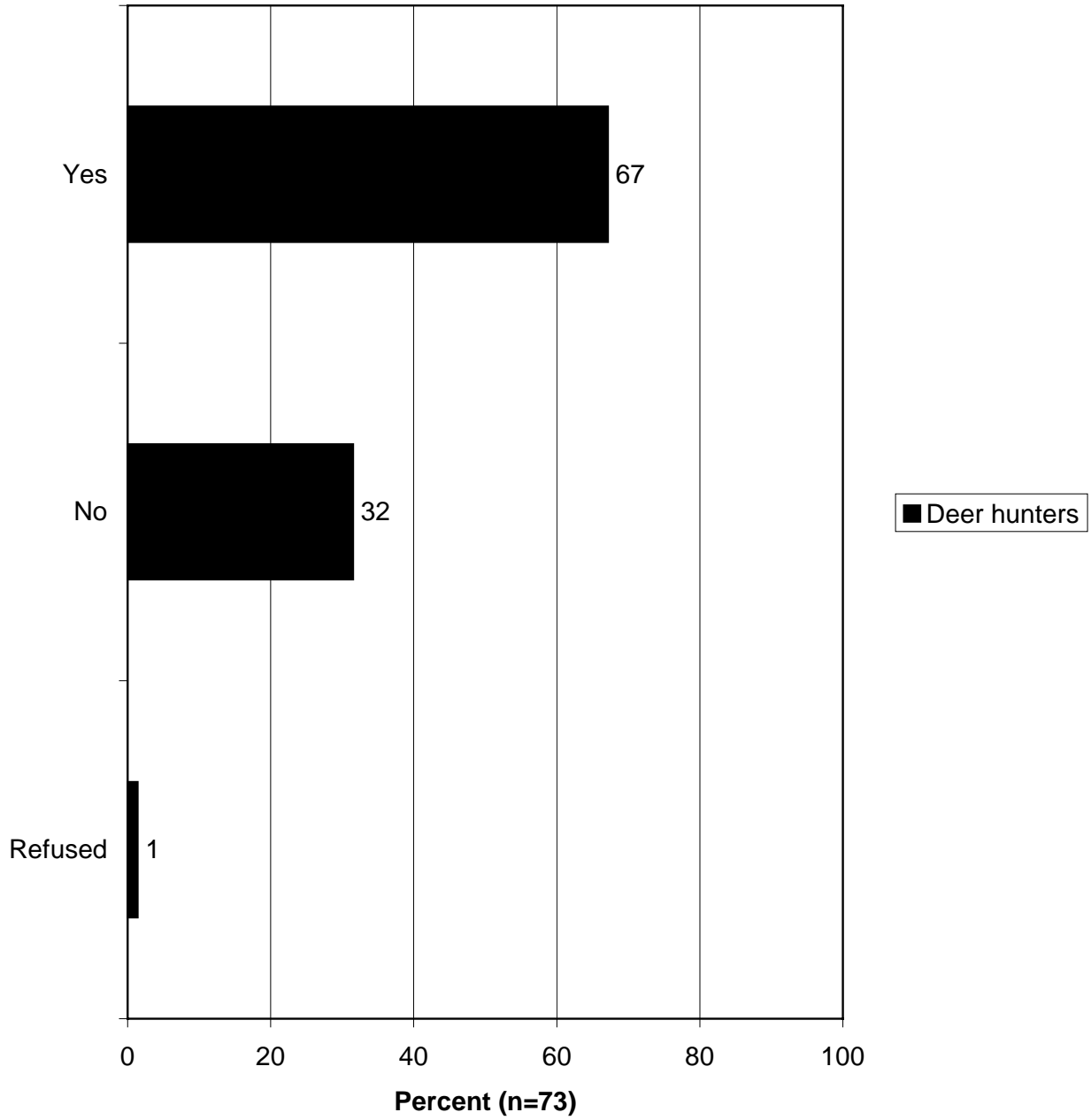
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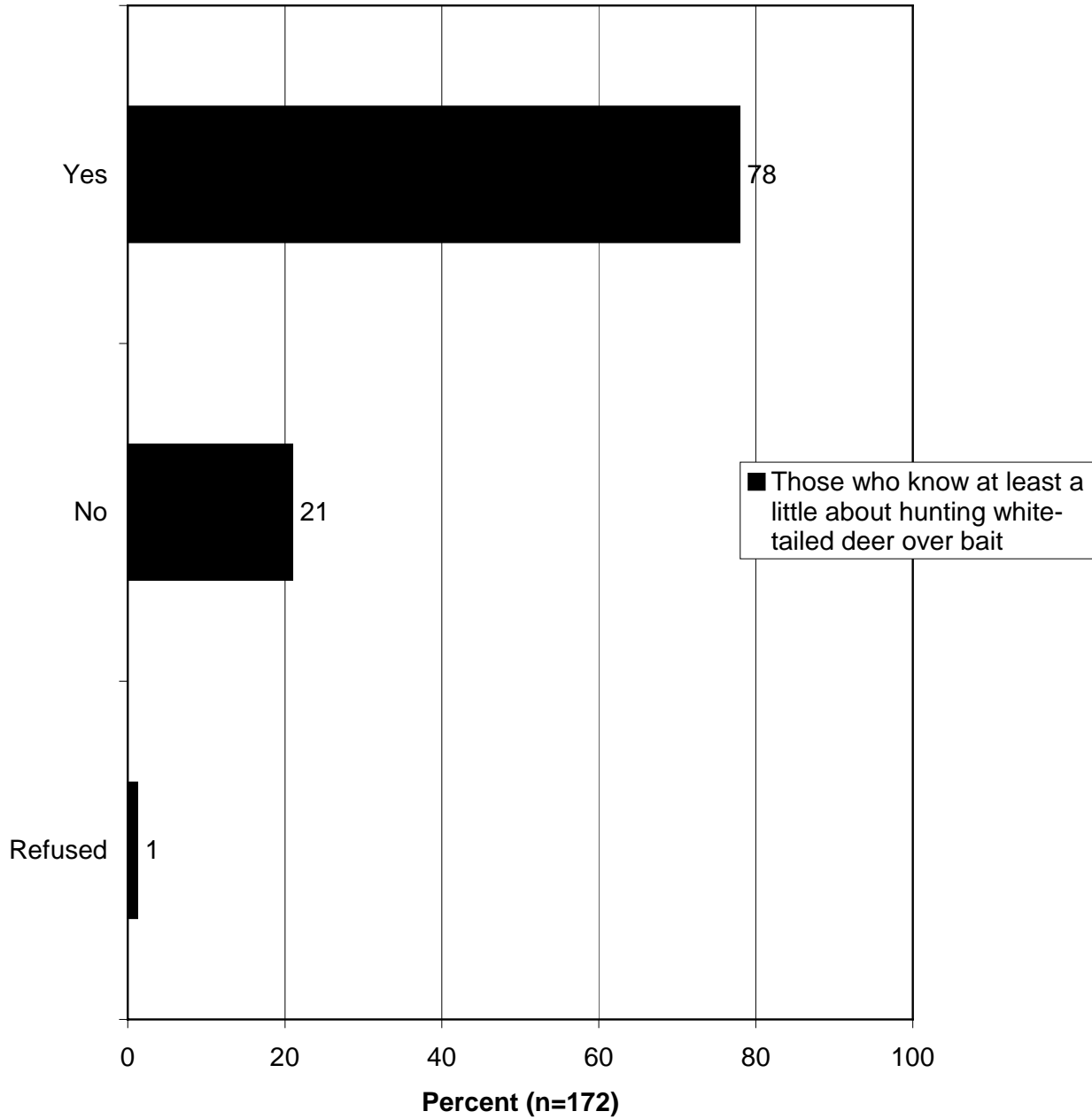
Q21. Did you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?

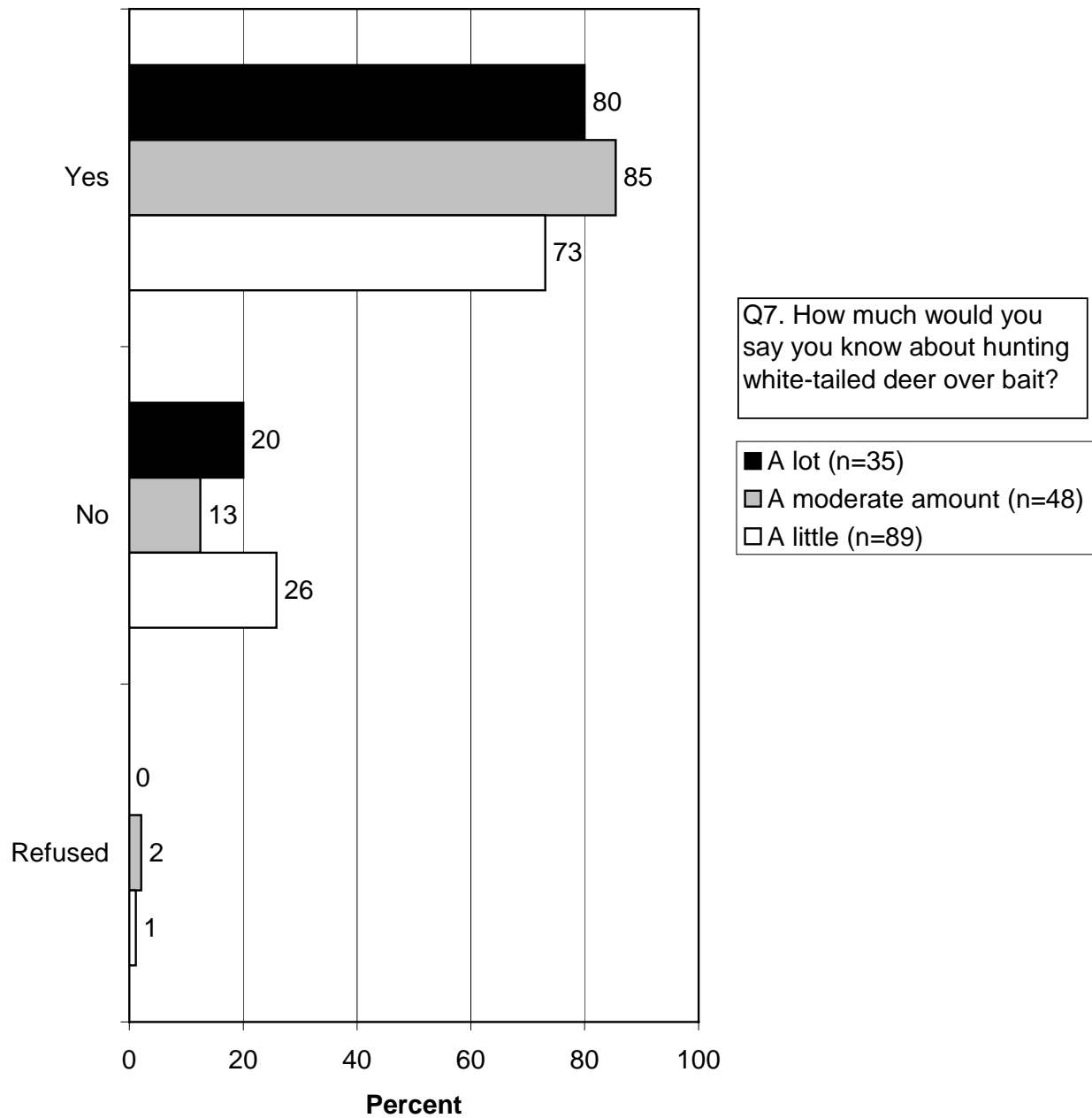


Q21. Did you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?

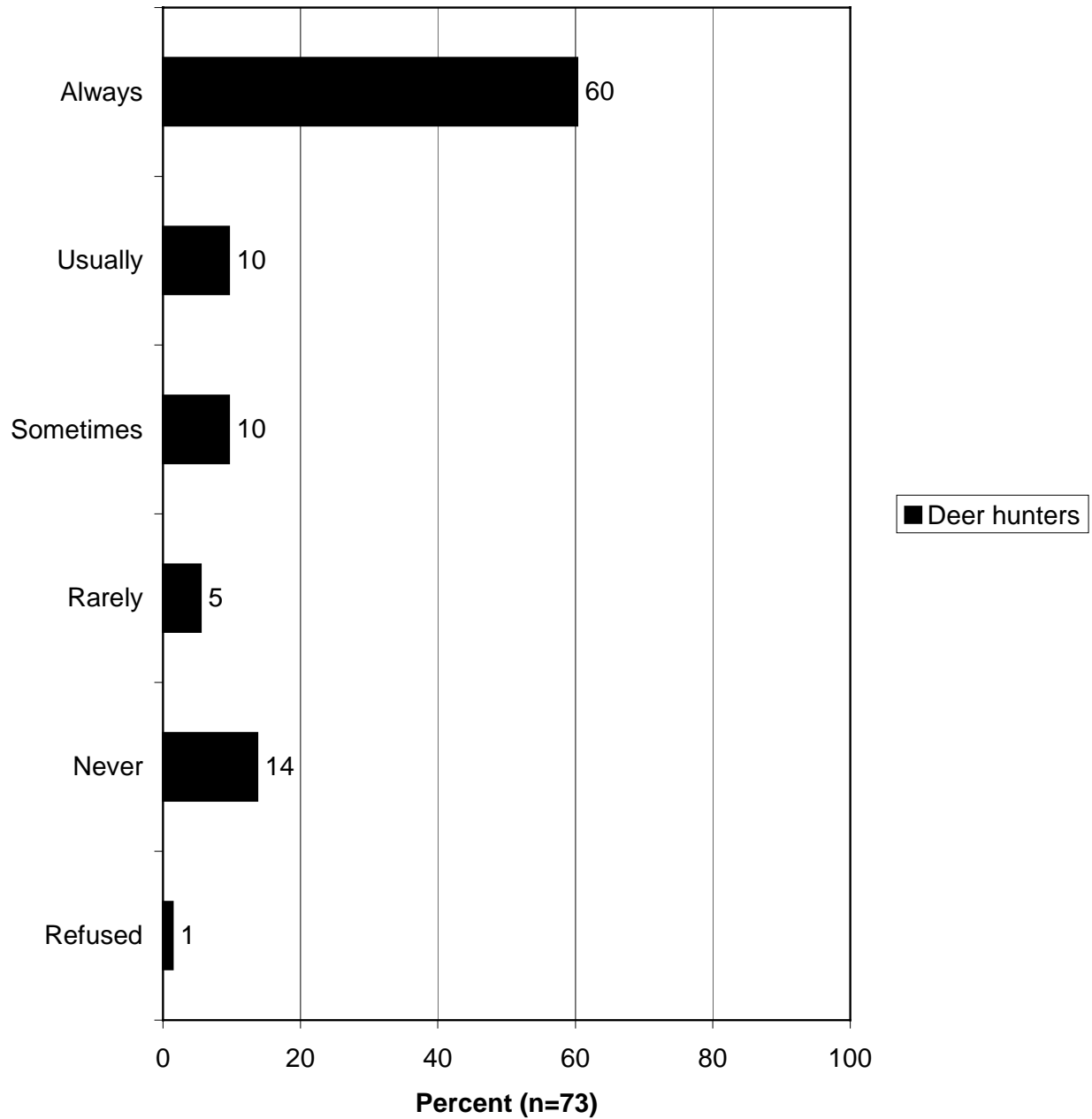


Q21. Did you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?

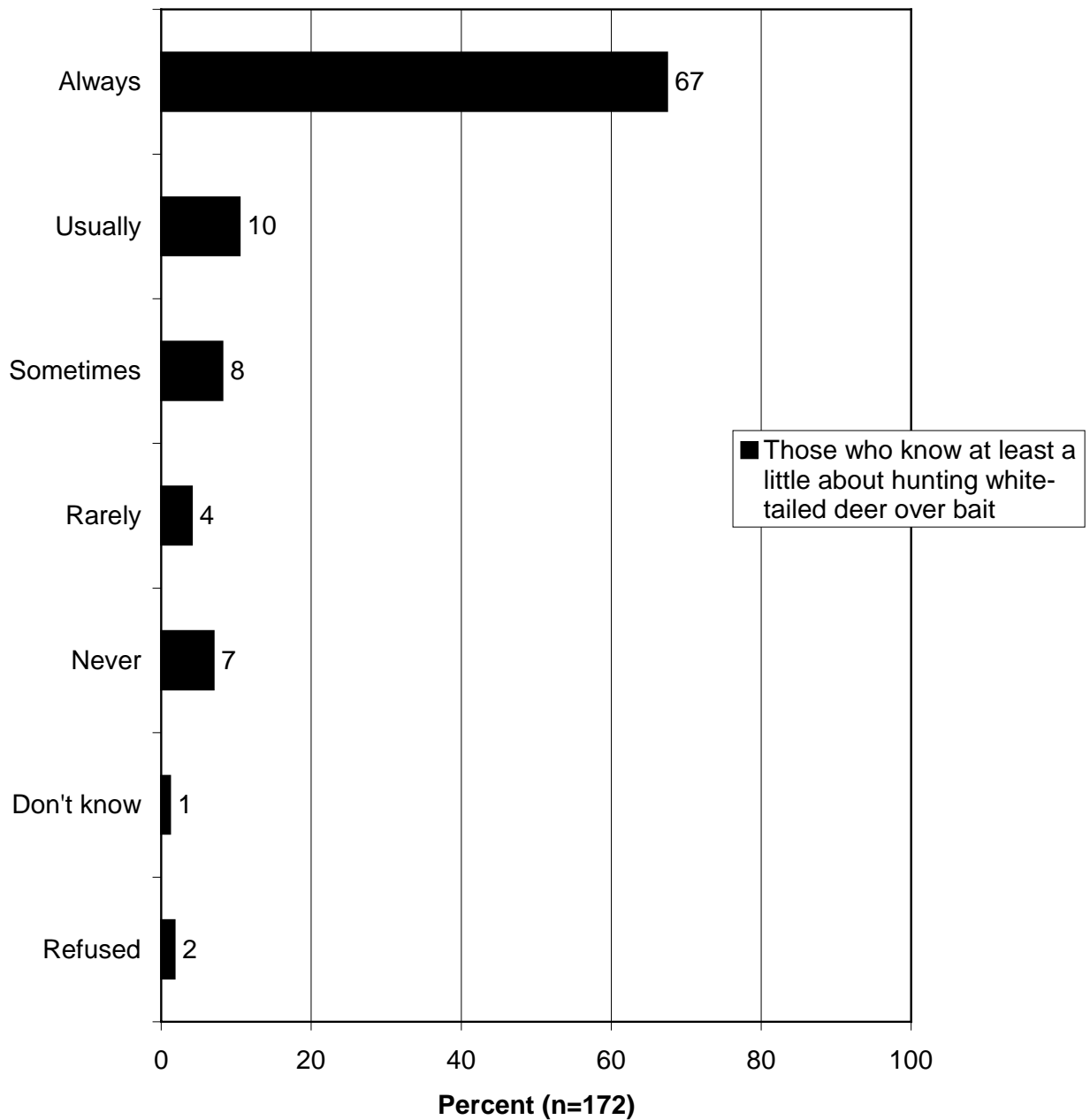


Q21. Did you vote in the 2004 Presidential election?

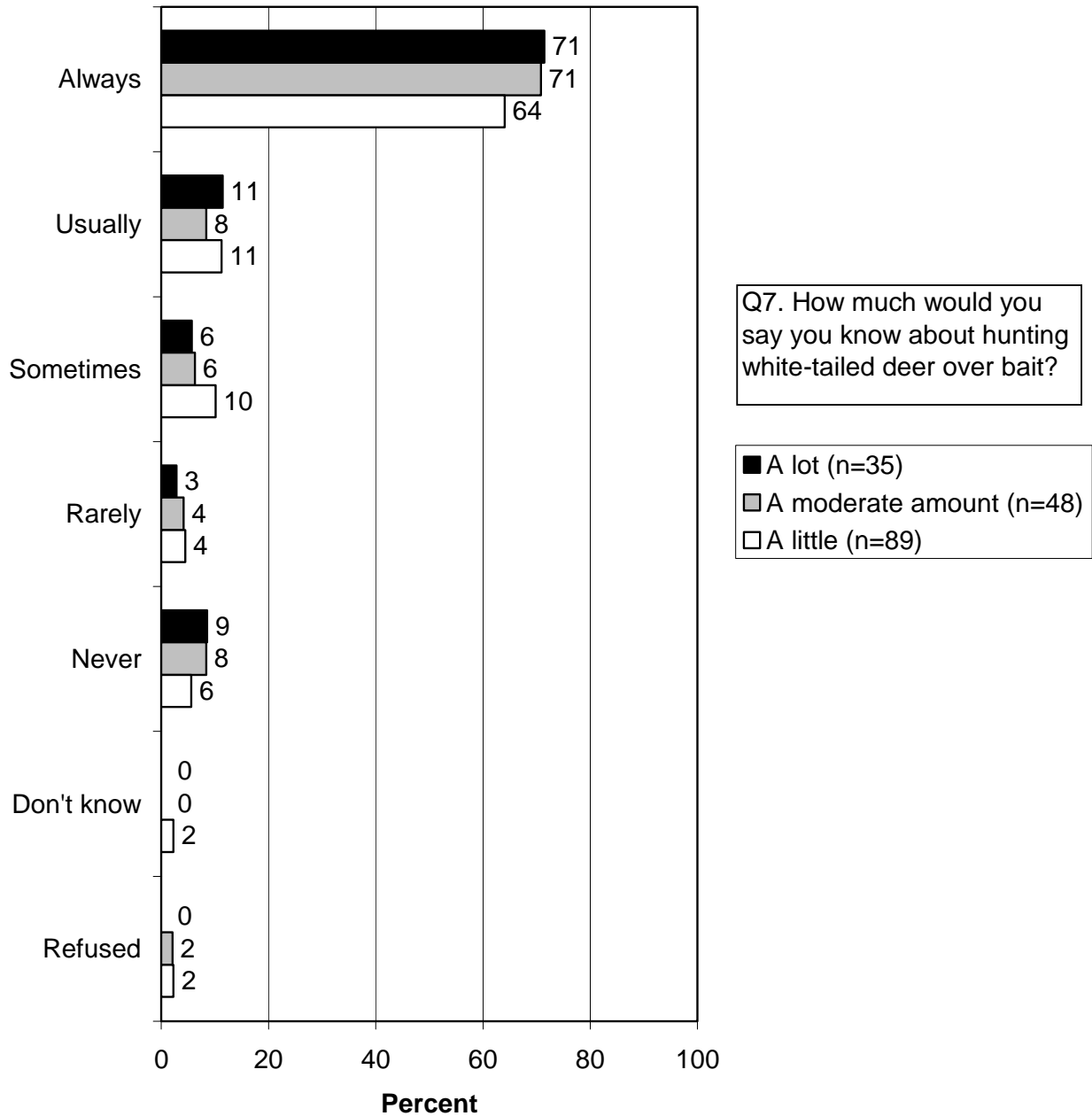
Q22. During Presidential election years, would you say that you vote always, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?

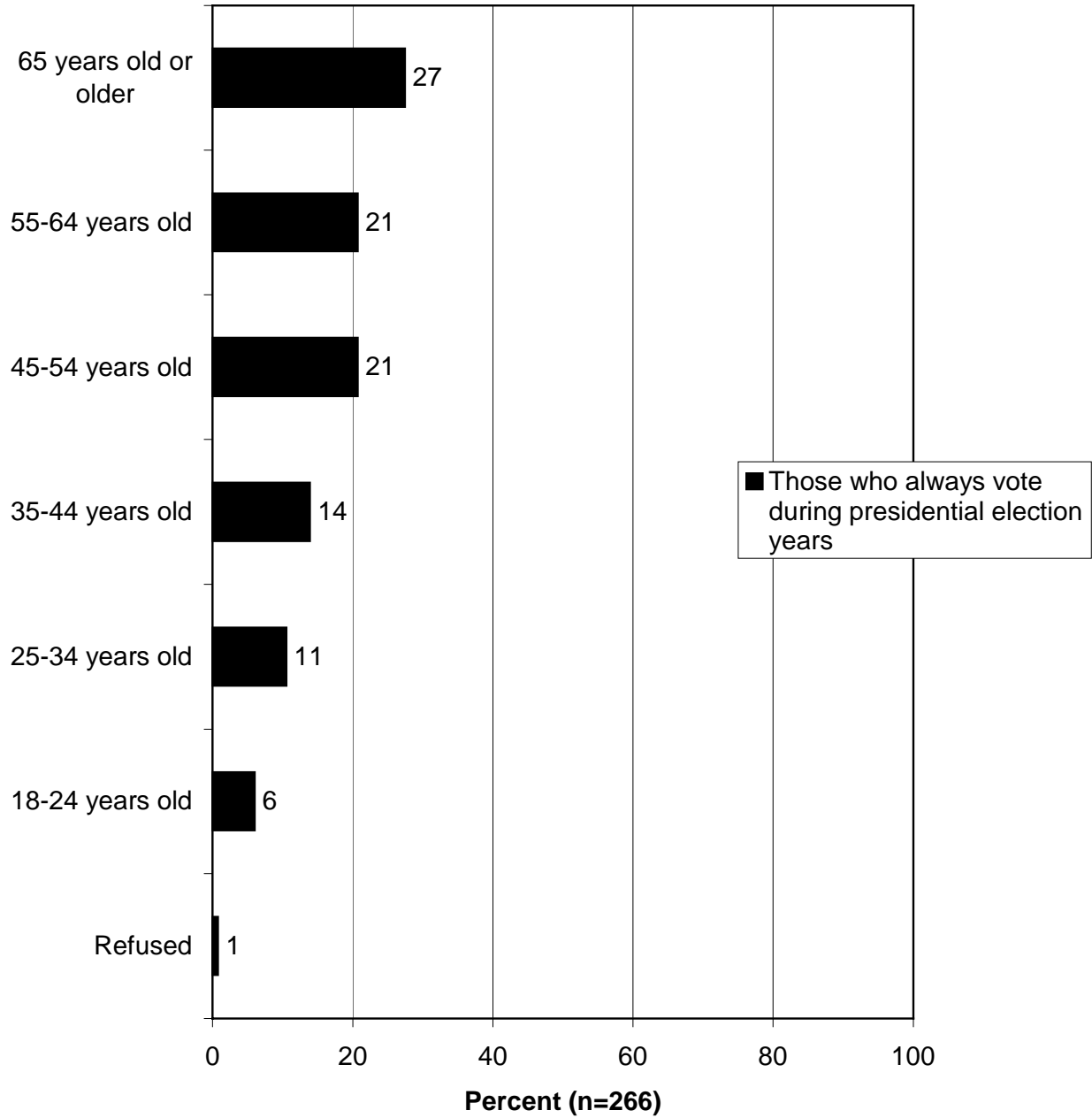


Q22. During Presidential election years, would you say that you vote always, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?

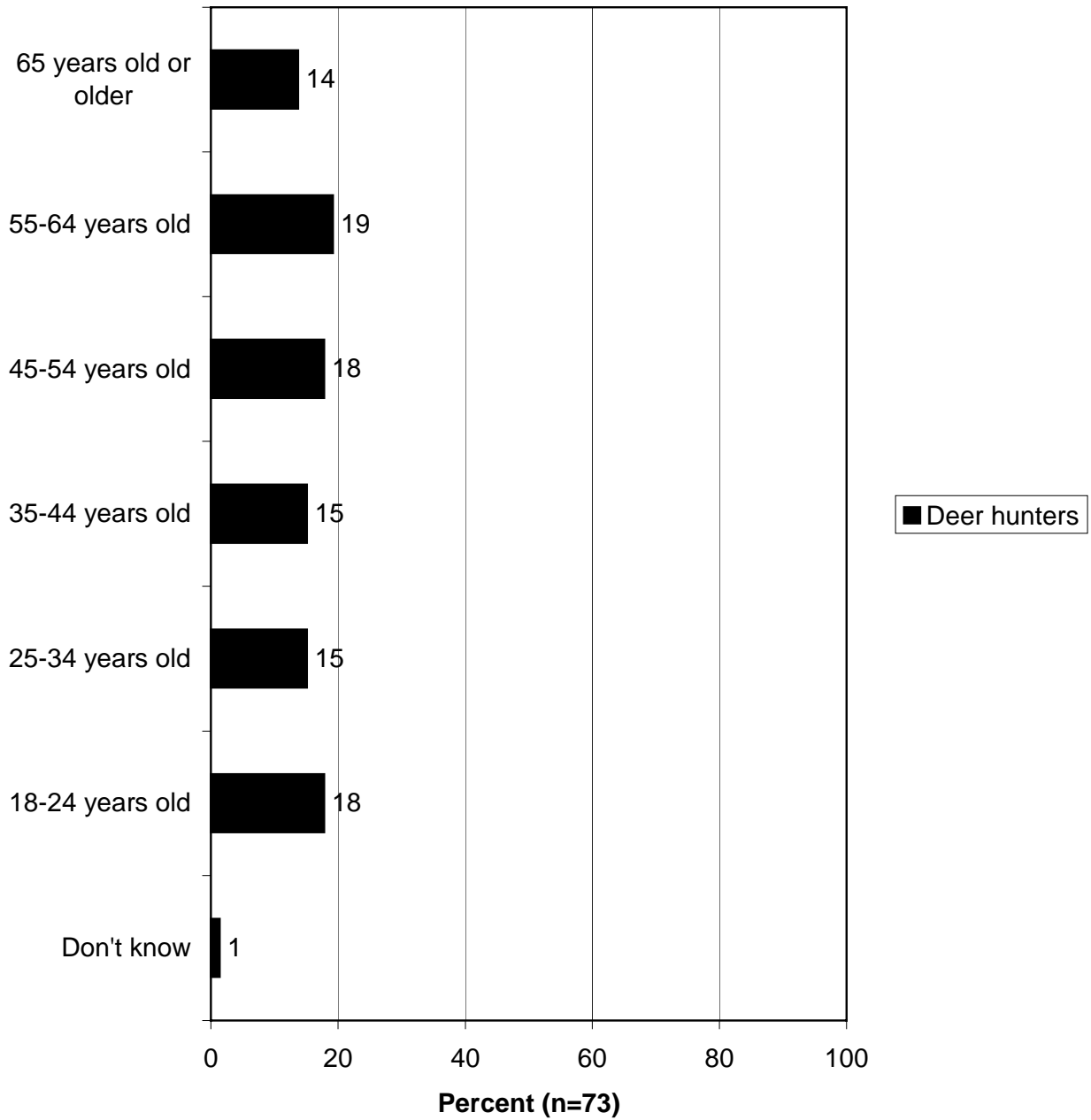


Q22. During Presidential election years, would you say that you vote always, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?

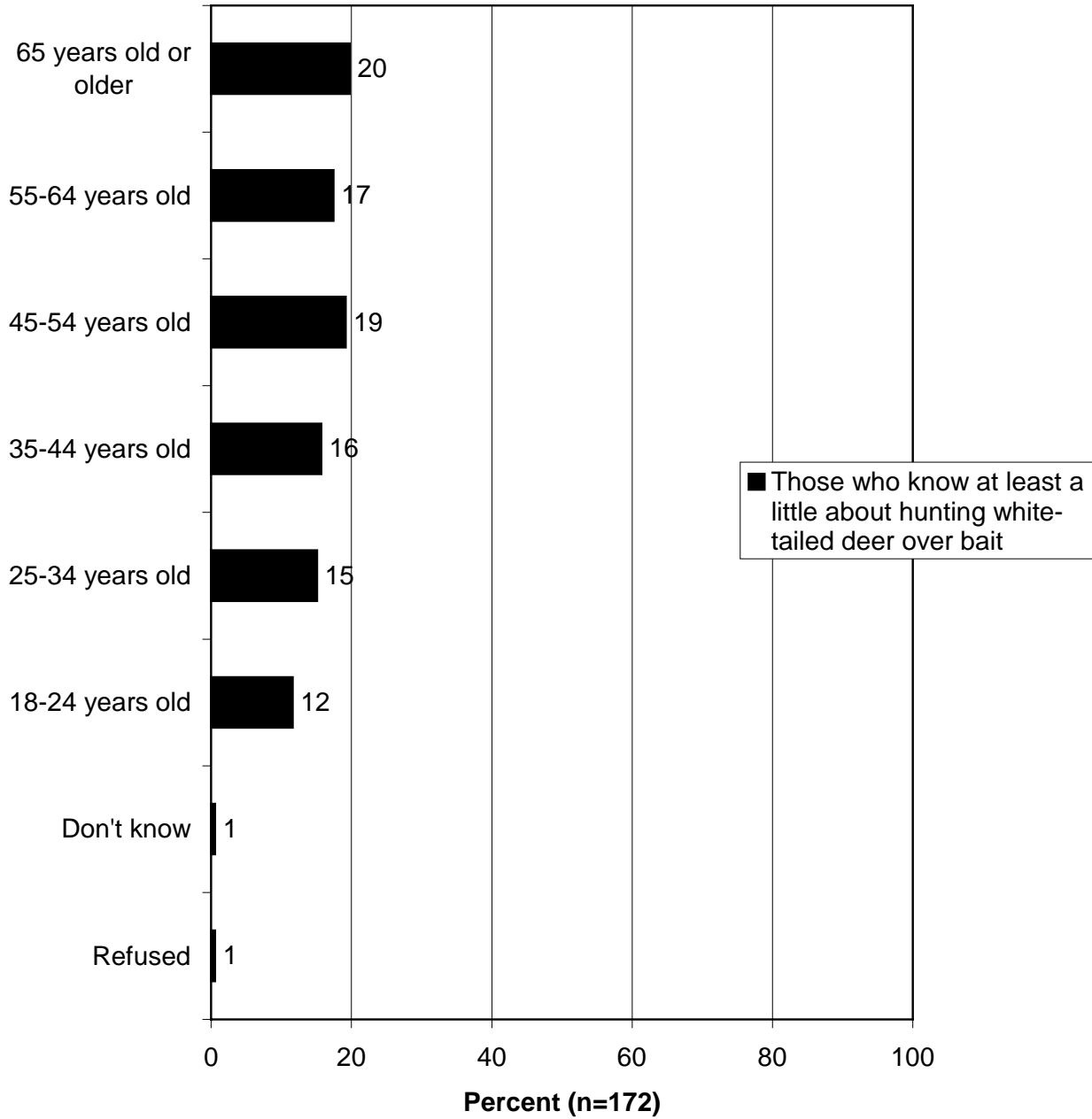


Q23. May I ask your age?

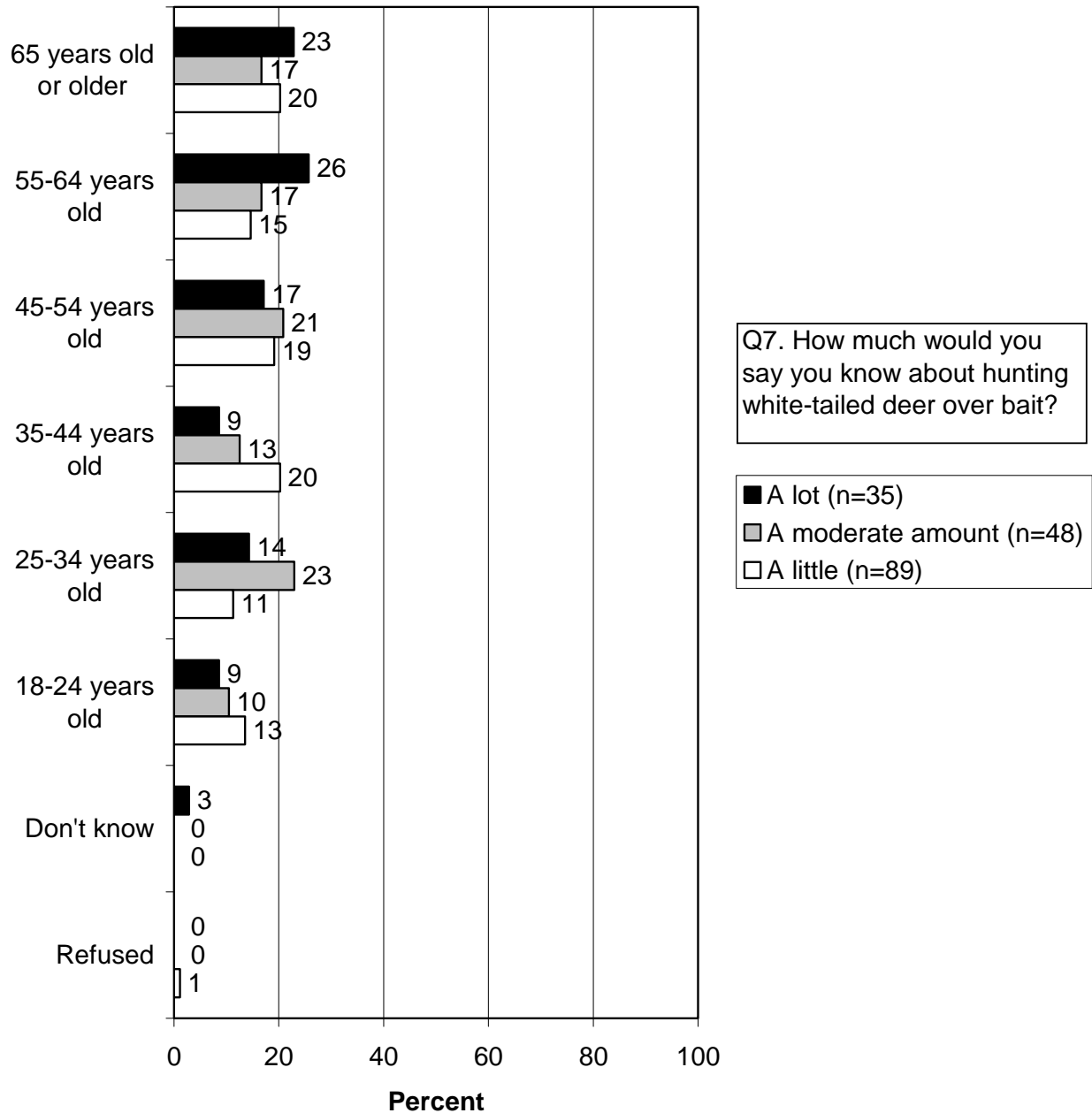
Q23. May I ask your age?



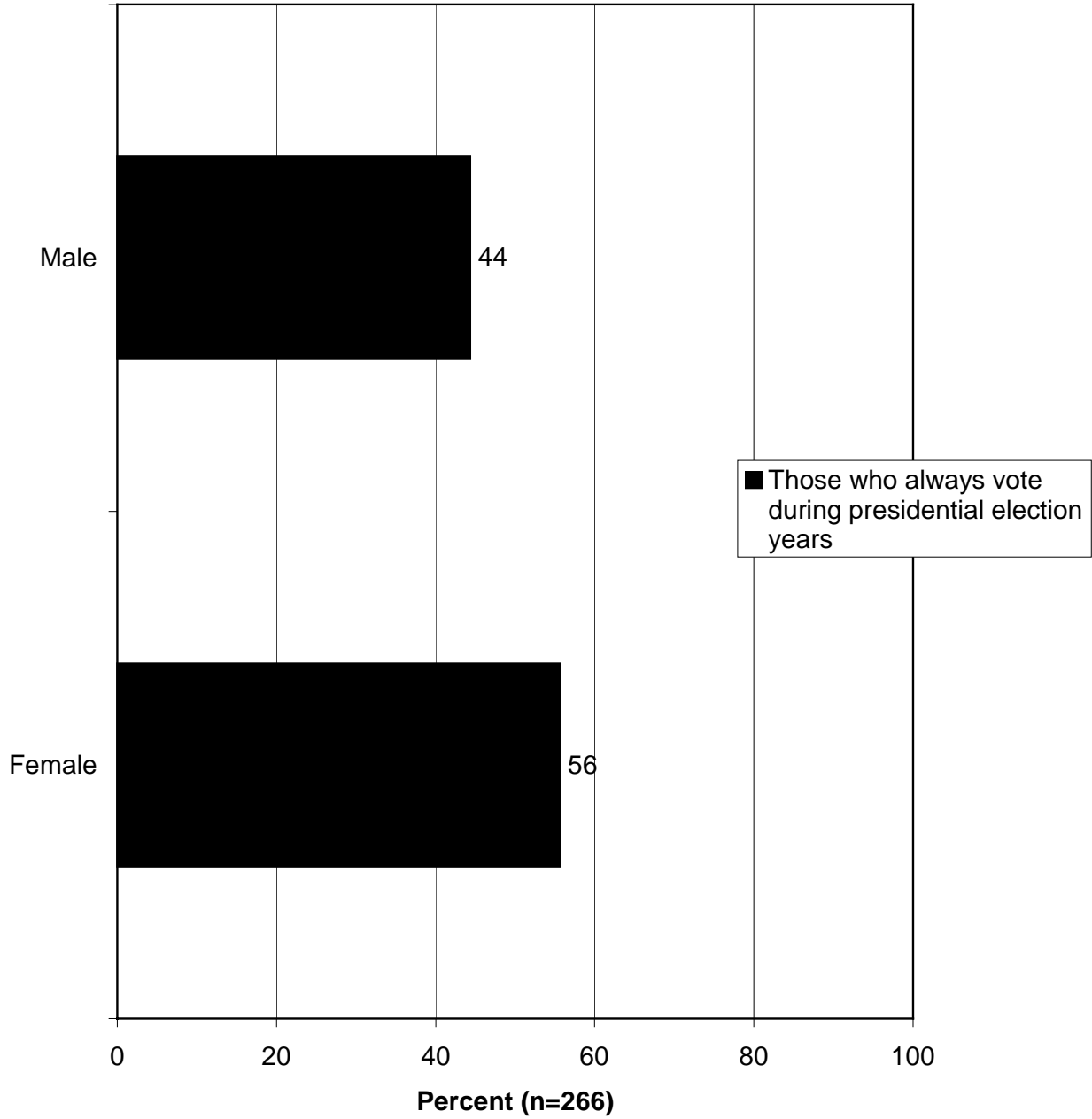
Q23. May I ask your age?



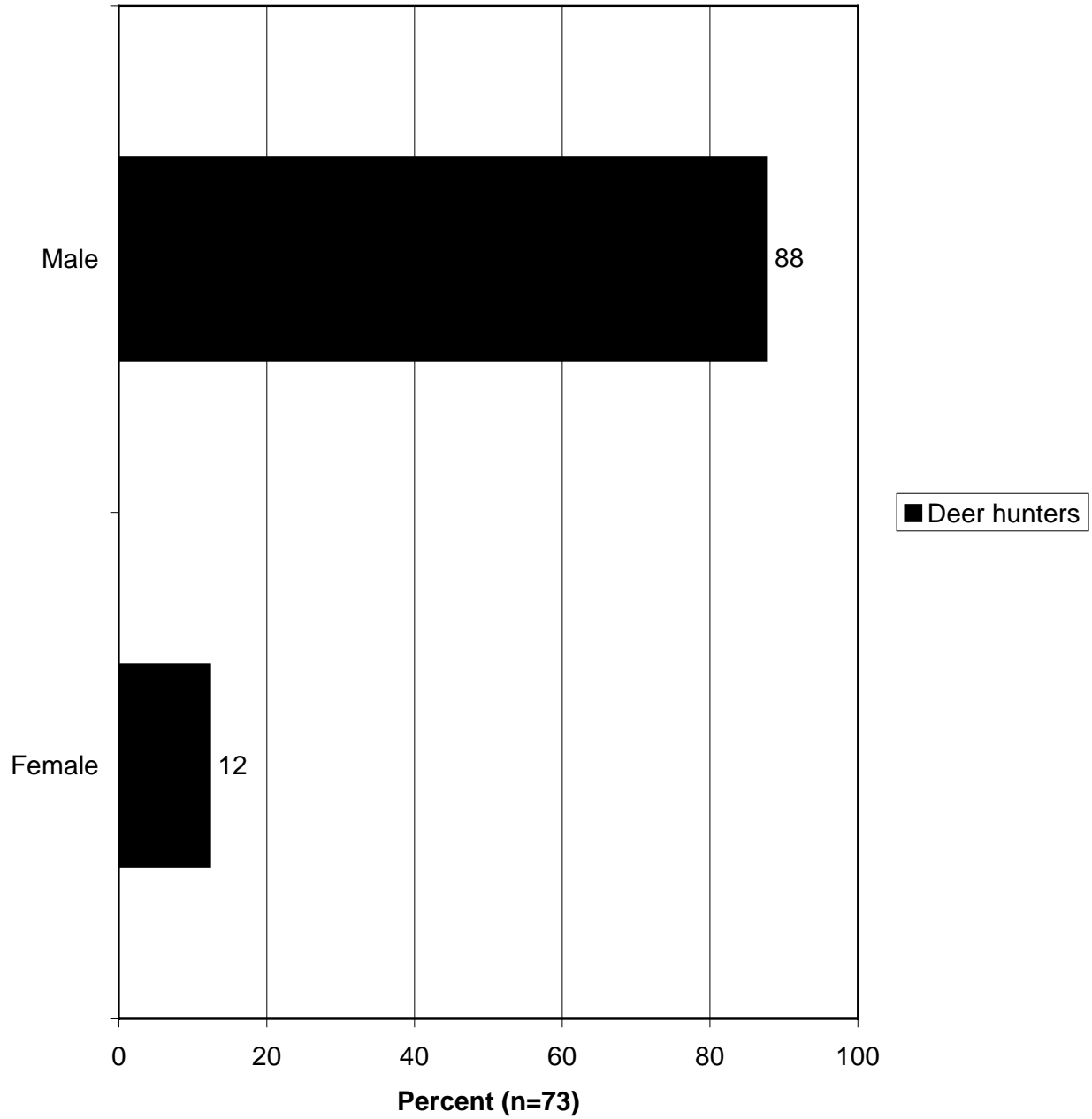
Q23. May I ask your age?



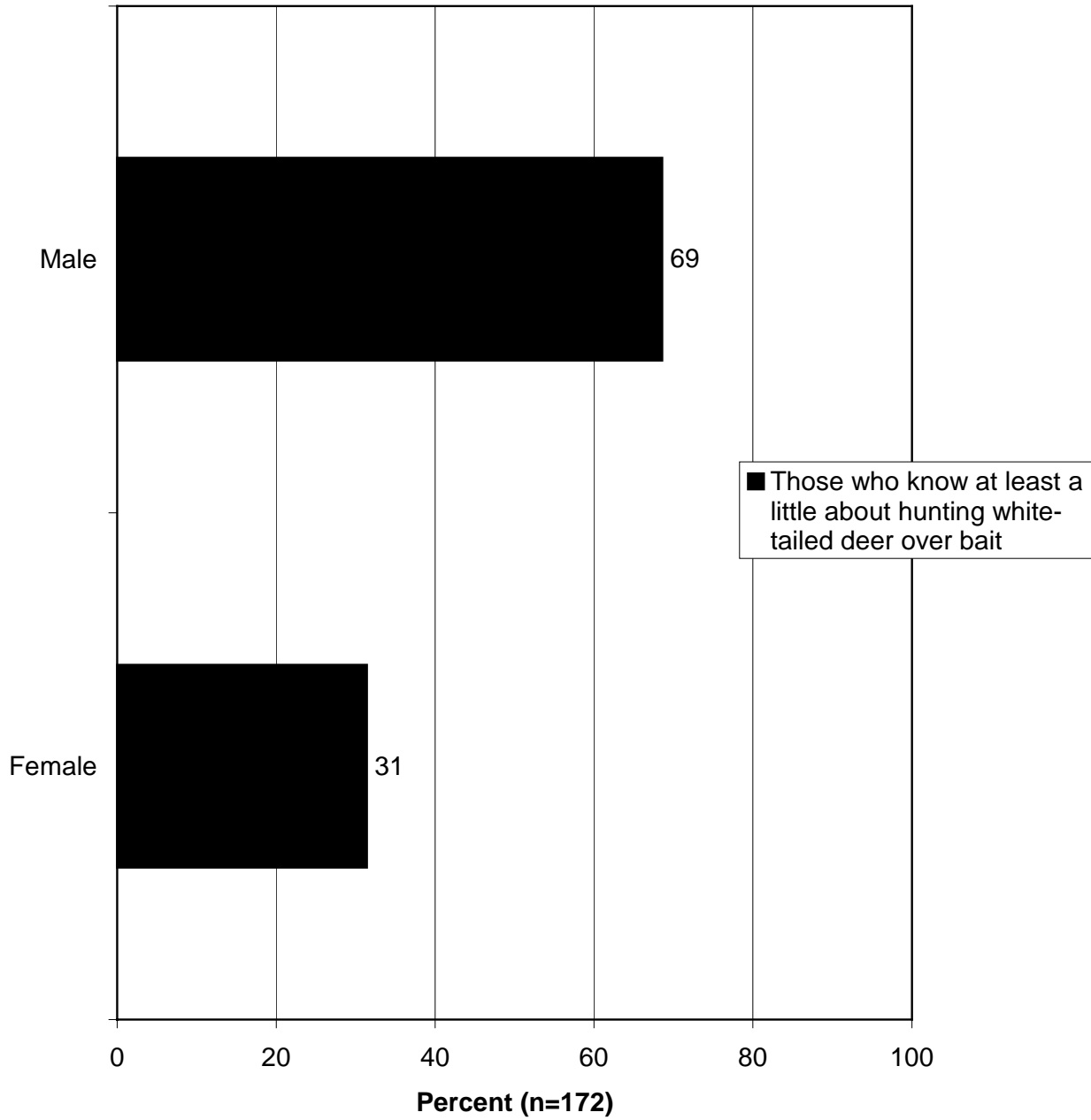
Q25. Respondent's gender (not asked, but observed by interviewer)



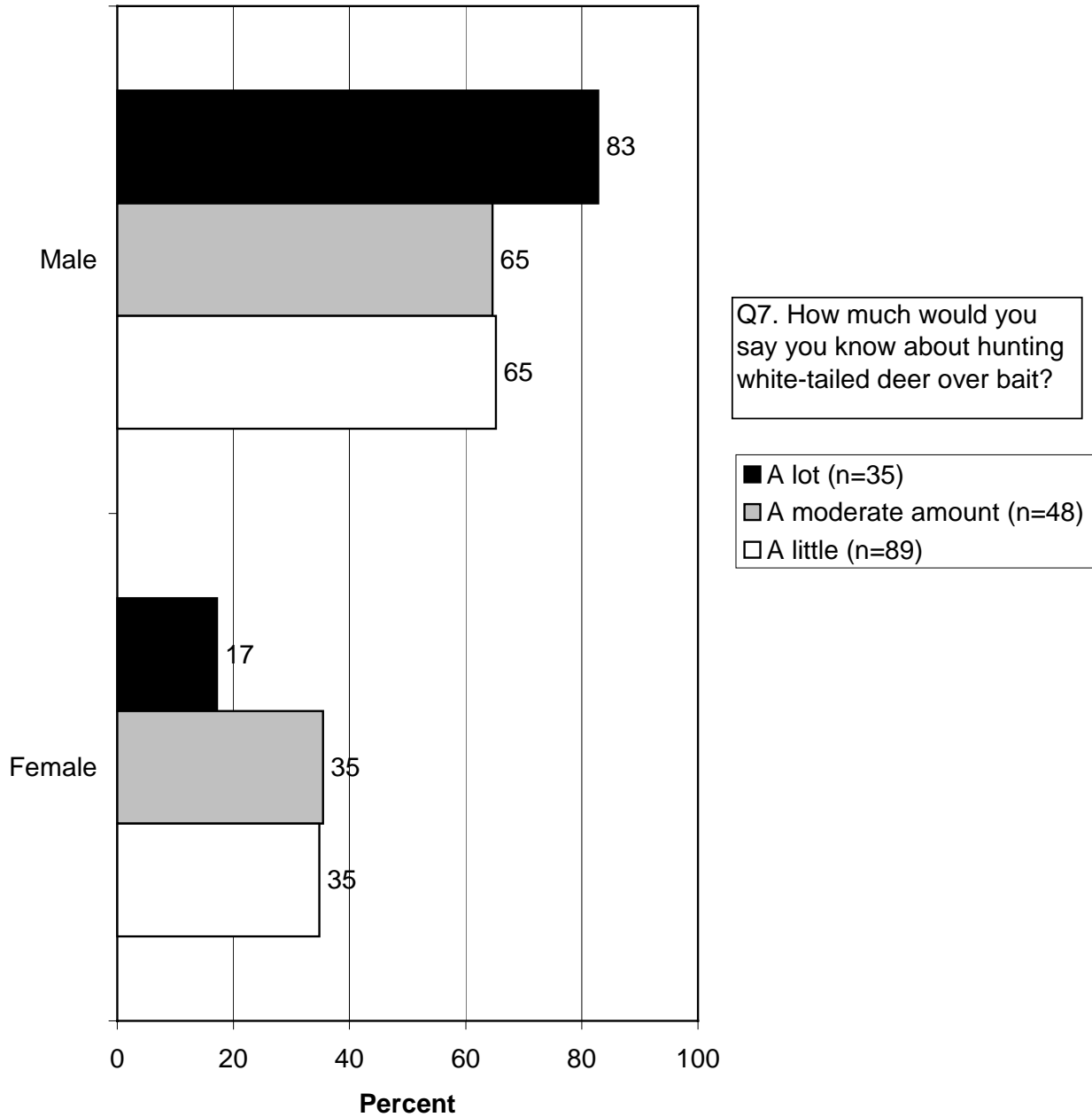
Q25. Respondent's gender (not asked, but observed by interviewer)



Q25. Respondent's gender (not asked, but observed by interviewer)



Q25. Respondent's gender (not asked, but observed by interviewer)



ABOUT RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT

Responsive Management is a nationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Its mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.

Utilizing its in-house, full-service, computer-assisted telephone and mail survey center with 65 professional interviewers, Responsive Management has conducted more than 1,000 telephone surveys, mail surveys, personal interviews, and focus groups, as well as numerous marketing and communications plans, need assessments, and program evaluations on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues.

Clients include most of the federal and state natural resource, outdoor recreation, and environmental agencies, and most of the top conservation organizations. Responsive Management also collects attitude and opinion data for many of the nation's top universities, including the University of Southern California, Virginia Tech, Colorado State University, Auburn, Texas Tech, the University of California—Davis, Michigan State University, the University of Florida, North Carolina State University, Penn State, West Virginia University, and others.

Among the wide range of work Responsive Management has completed during the past 15 years are studies on how the general population values natural resources and outdoor recreation, and their opinions on and attitudes toward an array of natural resource-related issues. Responsive Management has conducted dozens of studies of selected groups of outdoor recreationists, including anglers, boaters, hunters, wildlife watchers, birdwatchers, park visitors, historic site visitors, hikers, and campers, as well as selected groups within the general population, such as landowners, farmers, urban and rural residents, women, senior citizens, children, Hispanics, Asians, and African-Americans. Responsive Management has conducted studies on environmental education, endangered species, waterfowl, wetlands, water quality, and the reintroduction of numerous species such as wolves, grizzly bears, the California condor, and the Florida panther.

Responsive Management has conducted research on numerous natural resource ballot initiatives and referenda and helped agencies and organizations find alternative funding and increase their memberships and donations. Responsive Management has conducted major agency and organizational program needs assessments and helped develop more effective programs based upon a solid foundation of fact. Responsive Management has developed Web sites for natural resource organizations, conducted training workshops on the human dimensions of natural resources, and presented numerous studies each year in presentations and as keynote speakers at major natural resource, outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental conferences and meetings.

Responsive Management has conducted research on public attitudes toward natural resources and outdoor recreation in almost every state in the United States, as well as in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan. Responsive Management routinely conducts surveys in Spanish and has also conducted surveys and focus groups in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese.

Responsive Management's research has been featured in most of the nation's major media, including CNN's *Crossfire*, ESPN, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and on the front page of *USA Today*.

Visit the Responsive Management Website at:
www.responsivemanagement.com