

Responsive Management



SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS IN PENNSYLVANIA'S PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM: LANDOWNER SURVEY

Conducted for the Pennsylvania Game Commission

by Responsive Management



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has a reputation as one of the premier wildlife management agencies in the world. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has always had a strong hunting culture. From its inception in 1895, the Pennsylvania Game Commission has recognized the importance of providing hunting opportunities to all segments of society. The formation of the State Game Land system, the Public Access Program and Cooperative State/Federal Management Areas have resulted in excellent hunting opportunities by providing almost 6 million acres of public hunting areas in addition to hunting acreage in most of Pennsylvania's State Forest system containing 2.4 million acres.

The State Game Land system is composed of 302 blocks of land throughout the Commonwealth containing over 1.4 million acres. The Public Access Program contains over 4.5 million acres combined in three separate sub-programs, Farm Game, Safety Zone, and Forest Game. Specific aspects of these programs are discussed below.

Farm Game Cooperators (also sometimes referred to as participants in this report) may sign into the program if they are located within the boundaries of a Farm Game Project. This is essentially a conglomeration of properties providing a manageable block of acreage similar to a State Game Land. This project area is then managed by Pennsylvania Game Commission staff to provide the necessary habitat components for the intended game species occurring in that project area or for which the Pennsylvania Game Commission would like to increase the species population. These larger project areas provide for enhanced efficiency of habitat management activities and operations, provided at no cost to the cooperator by Pennsylvania Game Commission staff, over a greater geographic area.

Safety Zone Cooperators may sign into the Public Access Program in those areas of the state where no Farm Game Project areas exist. These properties are managed by the landowners with aid from the Pennsylvania Game Commission in the form of wildlife

habitat management advice, as well as the provision of tree and shrub seedlings and wildlife food plot seed mix free of charge to the cooperator for use on that property.

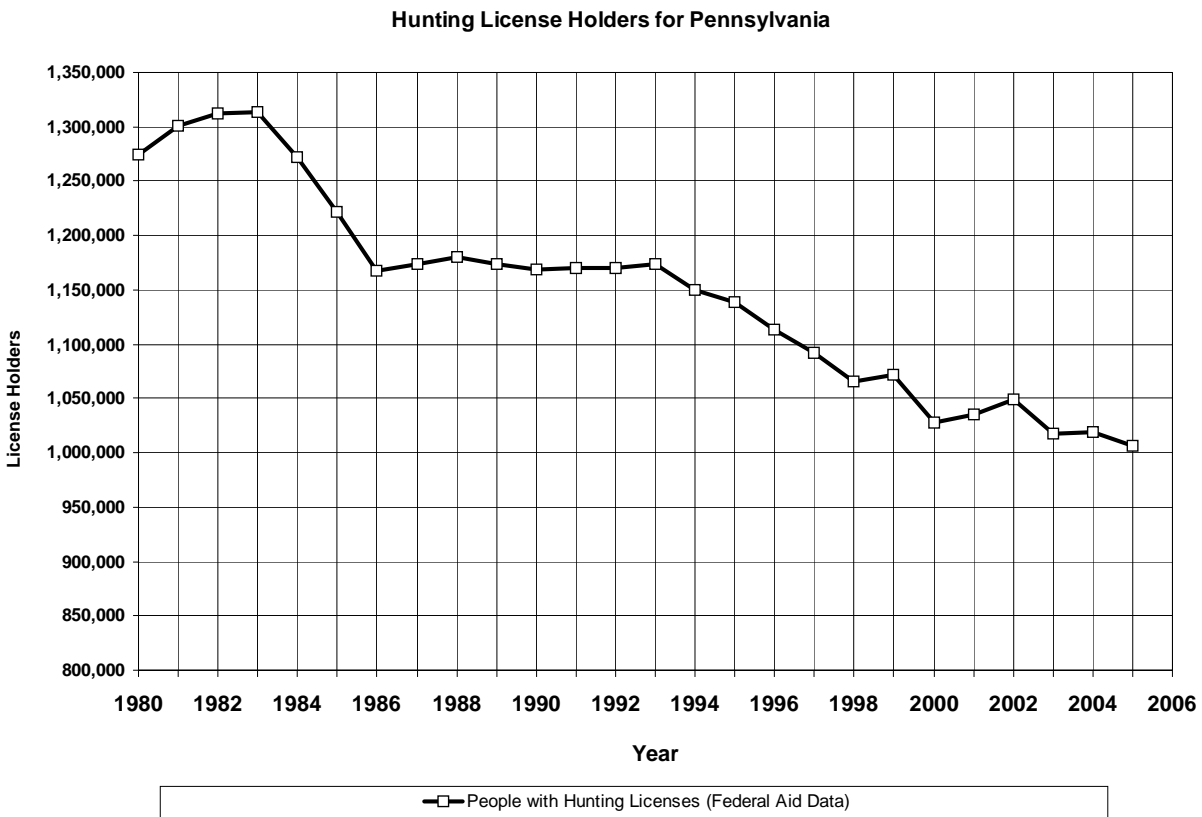
Forest Game Cooperators may sign into the program if their properties are of a sufficient size and usually include habitat consistent with a single management practice such as commercial forestry, undeveloped successional woodlands or grasslands. The general rule for inclusion of properties in this program is that these properties should contain at least 1,000 acres of land.

All Public Access Program cooperators receive or did receive at one time, at no cost, 1.) The Pennsylvania *Game News* (the Pennsylvania Game Commission's monthly magazine), 2.) Pennsylvania Game Commission law enforcement protection by Wildlife Conservation Officers concerning vandalism and inappropriate use by unauthorized persons engaged in activities such as ATV, trail bike and horseback riding, in addition to Wildlife Code enforcement activities throughout the year, 3.) Special hunt and wildlife population control programs such as the Deer Management Assistance Program, Green Tag and Red Tag programs and 4.) Relief from frivolous lawsuits by persons engaged in any activity on their properties through the Landowner Liability Act, as appropriate.

Cooperative State/Federal Management areas include properties such as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and military lands that are managed for wildlife by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and provide hunting access. Approximately 80,000 acres are provided to Pennsylvania's hunters through this program.

Pennsylvania has an aging population. What was once a thriving industrial and agriculturally based state economy has been eroded by a reduction of land in farming and closing of manufacturing companies, coal mining activities, and the steel industry, to name a few. The difficulty of small farms surviving in today's economy along with suburban expansion into rural areas has eliminated land that once provided prime hunting opportunities. These issues impact how frequently and where people can hunt in a given period of time. The Pennsylvania Game Commission is also one of a handful of wildlife agencies that does not receive funding from the

state legislature, and survives solely on license fees, program income, and Pittman-Robertson funding through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The graph below illustrates the decline in Pennsylvania hunting license holders between 1980 and 2005:



With additional funding through the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the Pennsylvania Game Commission contracted Responsive Management to conduct a detailed human dimensions survey of active and recently discontinued cooperators in the Public Access Program to determine how their perception of Pennsylvania Game Commission programs impacts their willingness to begin, continue, or end participation in Pennsylvania Game Commission Public Access Programs. It is hoped that this effort will result in a measurable increase in hunters in the Commonwealth and more days of hunting by those hunters. This in turn may stimulate Pennsylvania's economy in those more rural areas of the state where hunting was once responsible for economic stability. Additionally, the study of the Public Access Program will assist in efforts to enhance access to hunting lands, one of the top issues affecting hunting

participation in Pennsylvania (see “*Factors Related to Hunting Participation in Pennsylvania*,” a 2004 study conducted for the Pennsylvania Game Commission by Responsive Management).

This study was conducted for the Pennsylvania Game Commission to assess ways to increase the number of hunters and days hunted in Pennsylvania by evaluating existing Pennsylvania Game Commission strategies and the Public Access Program, and to make recommendations for improvements as necessary. The results of this survey and recommendations will show other states whether or not to pursue these selected avenues for increasing the number of hunters and hunter days in the field through the provision of additional private lands made available for hunting.

SURVEY RESULTS

FAMILIARITY WITH AND PARTICIPATION IN PENNSYLVANIA’S PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM

- Familiarity with the Pennsylvania Game Commission’s Public Access Program varies widely among the groups, with Forest Game participants the most familiar (76% of them are *very* familiar, and 91% are very or somewhat familiar). Farm Game program participants and Safety Zone program participants are less familiar with the Public Access Program: 37% and 36%, respectively, are *very* familiar; 78% and 75% are very or somewhat familiar.
- Those in the Farm Game program and the Safety Zone program who indicated awareness of the Public Access Program were asked what year they began participation: the results show a fairly even distribution of starting dates through the decades.

MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN PENNSYLVANIA’S PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM AND DESIRED CHANGES TO PROGRAM

- The three groups are quite similar in their motivations for participating in the Public Access Program (with one exception to be discussed below). The most common reasons overall are to share land/make land available for hunting, for the free benefits (magazine, seed mix, etc.), and for conservation of habitat and wildlife. The exception is that Forest Game participants

are much more likely than are the other two groups to be motivated by wanting protection against trespassing.

- In a direct question about protection against trespassing (asked of those who indicated awareness of the Public Access Program), 40% of both Farm Game participants and Safety Zone participants say this factor was important in their decision to participate in the program; 72% of Forest Game participants say this factor was important. The differences among these groups are further highlighted by the percent saying that this factor was *very* important: 18% and 19% of Farm Game and Safety Zone participants say this was *very* important, but 51% of Forest Game participants say this was *very* important in their decision to participate.
- The majority of Farm Game participants and Safety Zone participants say, when asked if they would like to see any changes to the Public Access Program, that they want no changes (53% and 51%, respectively). Otherwise, these two groups most commonly want to see the reinstatement of prior benefits (magazines, etc.). While a substantial percentage of Forest Game participants also want the reinstatement of prior benefits, they most commonly want greater enforcement of laws/patrolling of property and greater enforcement of ATV laws. Note that 34% of Forest Game participants answer that they want no changes.

ENDING PARTICIPATION IN PENNSYLVANIA'S PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM AND REASONS FOR ENDING PARTICIPATION

- Some respondents in the Pennsylvania Game Commission data records no longer participate in the program. These respondents were not interviewed, other than the questions discussed in this section, and these respondents are *not* part of the telephone survey results given elsewhere in the report. Common reasons for leaving the program include the poor behavior of hunters, because the benefits stopped (e.g., the magazine), or because of the sale or transfer of the property.

OWNERSHIP AND RESIDENCY ON LAND

- Most of the Farm Game and Safety Zone participants indicated that the property in the program is privately owned. Among Forest Game participants, only 10% say the property is

privately owned; instead, most of the Forest Game respondents say the land is owned by a business or corporation (46%) or a public agency or organization (37%).

- Large majorities of Farm Game and Safety Zone participants indicated that residents live on the property enrolled in the Public Access Program (89% and 83%, respectively); only 17% of Forest Game participants said a resident lives on the property. Among Farm Game and Safety Zone participants who indicated that residents live on the property, large majorities indicated that it was their own primary residence.
- Most respondents in all three groups do not rent out or lease the property (only 28% of Farm Game participants, 23% of Safety Zone participants, and 34% of Forest Game participants do so).
- Acreage of the individual properties in the Public Access Program varies widely, with smaller tracts in the Farm Game and Safety Zone groups. Most commonly, for Farm Game participants and Safety Zone participants, the acreage is 50-99 acres, while the most common acreage for Forest Game participants is 1,000 to 9,999 acres.

USES OF LAND AND LIKELIHOOD FOR LAND TO BE DEVELOPED

- The survey asked about eight possible primary uses of the property in the Public Access Program (multiple responses allowed). Majorities of Farm Game program and Safety Zone program participants say the land is used for farming and for their primary residence. Other common uses among these two groups include non-commercial forest and recreation. Among Forest Game program participants, only 2% say a primary use is farming, and none say it is their primary residence; instead, this land is most commonly used as undeveloped land holdings, recreation, investment, and for commercial forest production.
- The landowners were asked if any farmland is on the property in the Public Access Program. The overwhelming majority of landowners in the Farm Game program and the Safety Zone program (89% and 82%, respectively) indicate that there is farmland on the property. Among the Forest Game group, 37% indicate that there is farmland on the property. In

follow-up, those with farmland on the property were asked if they farm the land themselves: slight majorities of those with farmland on the property in the Farm Game group and the Safety Zone group (59% and 56% respectively) farm the land themselves (none of the Forest Game group do so).

- The landowners were asked if any forested land is on the property in the Public Access Program. The overwhelming majority of landowners in the Farm Game program and the Safety Zone program (76% and 84%, respectively), and *all* those in the Forest Game program, indicate that there is forested land on the property. While most Forest Game participants (80%) say that they have a forest or timber management plan, only 22% and 32%, respectively, of Farm Game and Safety Zone participants (those who have forested land) have a forest or timber management plan. Interestingly, majorities of all three groups who have forested land on the property have had timber harvested (66%, 72%, and 80% of Farm Game participants, Safety Zone participants, and Forest Game participants, respectively). Furthermore, a large majority of Forest Game participants say that they plan future harvests (only 23% and 21% of the Farm Game and Safety Zone groups plan future harvests).

- Fortunately for hunters, most of the landowners in the Public Access Program do not anticipate that the property will be developed in the foreseeable future (from 79% to 83% of the groups).

HUNTERS' USE OF LAND

- Nearly all the respondents in the three groups, ranging from 95% to 100%, say that the property in the Public Access Program has been used for hunting in the past 2 years. The species hunted varies, however, by group: while deer is the most common species for all three groups, a high percentage of Forest Game participants also say that hunted species include turkey, bear, and grouse. Put in terms of type of hunter, big game hunters predominate in all three groups. With so many hunters visiting their lands, nearly all Forest Game program participants have had hunters with every type of equipment used on the property (rifles, shotguns, archery, and muzzleloaders). When asked which type of

equipment is most commonly used, large majorities of all groups indicated rifles are most commonly used.

- The majority of Farm Game program participants and Safety Zone program participants indicate that less than 30 hunters use the property in a typical year; Forest Game program respondents most commonly do not know the number, and they also have a relatively high percentage saying that 60 or more hunters use the land in a typical year. Overwhelming majorities of all three groups say that the number of hunters who use the land is about the right amount.
- When asked which type of people most often use the property, respondents from the three groups had quite varied responses. Approximately 2 in 5 of Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants say that family/friends are the most common type of people using the land (none of the Forest Game group say that); conversely, Forest Game participants are the most likely to say that strangers most commonly use the land.
- The survey asked about use of the land by hunters without permission: the majority of Forest Game program participants (54%) say that hunters without permission *always* use the property, while only 10% and 11% of Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants, respectively, say this. For those latter groups, the most common response is that hunters *sometimes* use the land without permission.
- Regarding property damage, while most Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants (74% and 79%, respectively) *have not* had problems or damage from hunters, a slight majority of Forest Game participants (54%) *have* had problems or damage. The type of damage varied by group, but littering and damage to forests, vegetation, and/or crops were common. Among Forest Game participants, damage to paths and trails was also fairly common.

OTHER RECREATIONISTS' USE OF LAND

- The survey asked about other recreationists' use of the property. Nearly all of the Forest Game group indicate that other recreationists have used the land, but less of the other groups indicated this use (41% of Farm Game program participants and 52% of Safety Zone program participants). Those who indicated that other recreationists used the land were asked about the type of recreationist: ATV riders led the list (from 79% to 88% of the samples). Among the Forest Game group, wildlife viewers/photographers, horseback riders, and anglers were also quite common.

- Regarding whether these other recreationists use the property without permission, the answers are well distributed in the Farm Game group and the Safety Zone group; however, in the Forest Game group, the most common answer is "always." Furthermore, the majority of Forest Game program participants (80%) say that they have experienced problems or damage from other recreationists, while much less of the other groups say they have had problems or damage (42% and 35%, respectively, of Farm Game program participants and Safety Zone program participants). ATV riders are, by far, the most common types of other recreationists who have caused damage (from 89% to 94% of those who have had problems or damage attribute it to ATV riders). The type of damage varied among groups: for instance, Forest Game program participants most commonly say the damage was to paths and trails, and Farm Game participants most commonly say the damage was to crops.

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS ON LAND

- The majority of all three groups rarely or never restrict access to the property in the Public Access Program (66% of both Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants and 56% of Forest Game program participants). Forest Game program participants are the most likely, however, to always restrict access (17% do so). ATVs are the leading reason that program participants restrict access. Safety and liability concerns and to protect crops or livestock are also common reasons for restricting access, among those who do so.

CONTACT WITH PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION STAFF

- Pennsylvania Game Commission employees visit property in the Forest Game program fairly often (according to perceptions of program participants), less often to property in the Farm Game and Safety Zone programs. Fortunately, only 2% of Farm Game program participants and 7% of Safety Zone program participants say that Pennsylvania Game Commission employees never visit the property (none of the Forest Game program participants said never). Of those whose property was visited by a Pennsylvania Game Commission employee, half or less say that the visit actually concerned the Public Access Program (51% of Farm Game program participants, 38% of Safety Zone program participants, and 39% of Forest Game program participants say this). Quite often the visit was for another reason, including to provide information or assistance (unspecified in the survey), to deliver seedlings or plant trees, or because of problems with hunters and/or trappers, and because of problems with wildlife. Among Forest Game program participants, contact was often for general patrolling/law enforcement. Finally, the survey asked the three groups how often they would like to have Pennsylvania Game Commission employees visit the property in the program: the Forest Game group, by and large, want frequent visits (32% said once a week, and another 32% said once a month); Farm Game program participants most commonly want visits once a year (43% of them gave this answer).

SIGNAGE DISPLAYS ON LAND AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION REGARDING LAND

- While most of the participants in the Public Access Program say that they display Pennsylvania Game Commission signage on their property, there are substantial percentages of all three groups who say that they do not display signage. Safety Zone program participants are the least likely to display signage. In all three groups, the most common reason given for *not* displaying signage is that none were provided.
- When asked if they would support or oppose having the participating property identified on a countywide hunting map (even without property address nor owner's name), the groups were split: most Forest Game participants support (59%, with 49% *strongly* supporting) having their property identified on these maps, but most Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants oppose this, mostly *strongly* opposing (57% and 56% of these groups oppose).

ASSISTANCE FROM PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION IN HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

- A third or just less of each group (27% to 33%) say that they have received assistance from the Pennsylvania Game Commission planning and/or implementing habitat improvements on their property. The most common habitat improvement, by far, was the provision of plant seedlings and/or seeds. The most typical size of the habitat improvements is less than 10 acres of improved habitat. Satisfaction is very high with the habitat improvements that have been implemented, ranging from 82% of both the Farm Game and Safety Zone groups to 100% of the Forest Game group.

- The survey asked about interest in future habitat improvements: more than a third of Forest Game participants (34%) are *very* interested. Overall interest (very and somewhat) is at 63% of the Forest Game group, but less for the Farm Game and Safety Zone groups (29% and 28%, respectively). Those improvements in which interest is expressed most commonly are obtaining from the Commission plant seedlings/seeds, wildlife food plot mixes, or bird nest boxes. Substantial percentages of the groups also express interest in border edge cutting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As demonstrated by the results of the telephone survey and the focus groups of Program cooperators, the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program was, and remains, an excellent tool for conserving hunting land and habitat and providing hunting opportunities. However, due to the Commission's shift in focus to various other priorities in recent years, the Public Access Program faces several challenges: there is relatively low awareness of the Program among hunters (Responsive Management's 2004 telephone survey of licensed hunters found that 74% knew a little or nothing about the Public Access Program, and that just 11% of licensed hunters had actually hunted on Public Access land in the 5 years prior to that survey in 2004); there is a lack of clear understanding and awareness among cooperators of the Program benefits as they are stated and implied by Program documentation; there is a growing need for increased attention to patrolling and enforcement issues, especially as they relate to ATV and

4-wheeler trespassing protection; and there is a need for the Commission to improve its communication and contact efforts with landowner cooperators throughout the state.

Despite these challenges, the overwhelming sentiment among cooperators, even former cooperators, is to keep the Program intact and to maintain its existence: the Access Program is viewed by nearly everyone involved as a benefit to the state of Pennsylvania, its landowners, hunters, and conservationists, and to hunting itself. The survey data and focus group findings suggest a rededication by the Commission to a few important areas of the Public Access Program.

First, the data suggest that the Commission should remain aware that some cooperators in the Public Access Program are more knowledgeable than others about the workings of the Program and its responsibilities and obligations; this is owing largely to the varying time periods during which cooperator agreements were initially signed. The Commission might also work to address Program benefits in greater detail, including landowner liability issues, habitat improvements and enhancements, and the provision of signs to landowners. If it is at all financially feasible for the Commission, *Game News* subscriptions should be reinstated to cooperators. Additionally, patrolling and enforcement on Public Access land could be addressed in greater detail for Program cooperators, who are experiencing trespassing and property damage issues, especially involving ATVs and 4-wheelers. Finally, and most importantly, the findings suggest that the Pennsylvania Game Commission make communication and contact with Program cooperators its number one priority. Adequate levels of contact between landowners and the Commission will allow the Program to run smoothly, as the Commission will be able to stay abreast of situations before they grow into major issues that cooperators must face on their own. A rededication to communicative efforts will contribute to the overarching goal of ensuring the provision of quality hunting opportunities in Pennsylvania.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM COOPERATORS

Perhaps the issue of greatest concern related to cooperators' satisfaction with the Public Access Program is the perceived lack of effort made by the Pennsylvania Game Commission to maintain

contact with cooperators and to stay in touch with the diverse needs and opinions of landowners in various parts of the state. The issue of communication was cited more than any other during the focus groups of landowners; note as well that in the telephone survey, 21% of Farm-Game cooperators and 23% of Safety Zone cooperators said that they were not at all familiar with the Public Access Program before the survey. Additionally, concerns about other issues—the cancellation of *Game News*, landowner liability concerns, trespassing and property damage, and related enforcement issues—tended to relate back to the overarching problem of inadequate communication between the Commission and Program cooperators, meaning that many landowner concerns could potentially be addressed preemptively by the Commission if communication and contact efforts were improved.

Cooperators are sympathetic to the personnel and staffing capabilities of the Commission—the landowner focus groups revealed significant understanding of the fact that the Commission is able to visit properties and meet with landowners only so often and with a relatively fixed rate of consistency. Even so, a substantial number of cooperators stated that even a single annual visit to a property would likely be sufficient for cooperators to address relevant concerns related to the program (33% of Farm-Game cooperators reported that their property had last been visited by a Game Commission employee more than 12 months ago at the time of the telephone survey; 35% of Safety Zone cooperators said the same).

The cancellation of *Game News* subscriptions was viewed by cooperators as a regrettable decision by the Commission not only because of the level of enjoyment many landowners derived from the publication, but also because numerous cooperators in the focus groups viewed *Game News* as having strong potential as a forum or bulletin for updates, news items, and other pertinent information from the Commission. (In this regard, several focus group participants noted that the *Game News* publication came to represent their household's only "proof" of membership in the Public Access Program, as it was the single means through which the Commission stayed in contact.)

With the inception of the Farm-Game program in 1936 and the Safety Zone program in 1954, initial agreements between cooperators and the Pennsylvania Game Commission can stretch

back decades: note that 35% of Safety Zone cooperators were unable to identify the year in which they began participating in the Program; likewise, 26% of Farm-Game respondents did not know when they began participating. Several focus group participants accounted for this by pointing hypothetically to grandparents and parents signing into the Program before passing on the membership to their children, for whom enrollment in the Public Access Program may have remained unknown. It is therefore recommended that the Commission keep abreast of the potential for these types of situations—naturally, the issue of uninformed cooperators relates back to the broader issue of improved communication and outreach by the Commission among its constituents.

ADDRESS PROGRAM BENEFITS WITH GREATER DETAIL AND CLARITY

There is a disconnect between Program benefits as they are listed in the Public Access Program literature (Farm-Game, Safety Zone, and Forest Game documentation) and Program benefits as they are perceived by the cooperators themselves. Cooperators indicated frustration first and foremost over the cancellation of the *Game News* publication—note that the free subscription to *Game News* is still listed among the regular benefits of the Public Access Program in current documentation. Additionally, numerous cooperators have expressed strong support for a clarified definition of landowner liability, most especially in the wake of a recent Pennsylvania court settlement involving a landowner who was found partially responsible for a hunting accident that had occurred on his property. The Commission may wish to rededicate itself to helping landowners plan and implement habitat improvements; or, at the very least, the Commission should consider taking steps to make landowners aware that such wildlife food and habitat enhancements are available to them. Finally, it is suggested that the Commission work to ensure that all Program cooperators who want or need signs on their properties are supplied with them.

Reinstate *Game News* Subscriptions

It is widely thought among Public Access Program cooperators (particularly Farm-Game and Safety Zone landowners) that the opening of one's property for hunting by the public (as well as all responsibilities and obligations implied by such an agreement) far outweighs the price of a yearly subscription to *Game News*. Indeed, notable percentages of Farm-Game and Safety Zone

respondents to the telephone survey (21% of Farm-Game cooperators; 23% of Safety Zone cooperators) indicated that the free benefits—chief among these, a subscription to *Game News*—were among the main reasons they decided to enroll in the Public Access Program in the first place. Additionally, cooperators who participated in focus groups voiced similar, nearly uniform enthusiasm for the *Game News* magazine—the decision to cancel cooperator subscriptions to *Game News* was viewed by several landowners as regrettable, considering what cooperators viewed as rather substantial contributions in the opening of their lands to public hunting. If there is any possibility whatsoever within the budgetary constraints of the Commission, it is recommended that *Game News* subscriptions be reinstated to Public Access Program cooperators.

Address Landowner Liability and Lawsuit Concerns

Greater efforts may need to be made to provide basic information and clarification on landowner liability, especially in light of the recent settlement involving the injury of a North Whitehall Township woman and the landowner who was found 10% liable for damages. (A report on this incident can be found at the following link: www.redorbit.com/news/science/842350/hunting_straybullet_lawsuit_settled_injured_north_whitehall_woman_agrees_to/index.html#.) Cited by numerous focus group participants in the discussions on Program improvements and liability concerns, this case in particular has left many Program cooperators skeptical of the efficacy of the Pennsylvania Landowner Liability Act. The Commission may consider communicating to its constituents the ramifications of these recent developments in appropriate detail. Current Public Access Program documentation cites the Pennsylvania Landowner Liability Act as an encouragement to landowners to make their property available to hunters and other recreationists, but several cooperators have noted that this inclusion seems incongruous with the reality as demonstrated by recent events in Pennsylvania.

Habitat Improvements as a Means of Lessening Landowner Financial Burdens

Although majorities of cooperators have not received assistance from the Commission in planning or implementing habitat improvements on their properties, substantial percentages of landowners (33% of Farm-Game cooperators, 27% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 32% of Forest Game cooperators) have improved their properties with help from the Commission.

Indeed, the Commission lists in its Program documentation extensive options through which landowners may receive assistance, including food and cover seedlings for wildlife, the cutting of woodland borders and hedgerows, and advice on soil conservation practices for farmers. Satisfaction among those who have received such benefits is high, as overwhelming majorities of cooperators among each group were satisfied with the land improvements following their implementation.

However, landowner focus groups suggest that not all cooperators are aware of the full range of assistance available from the Commission. For example, many focus group participants mentioned the financial burden of having to provide their own grain, feed, and seed mix for wildlife—cooperators further noted that the wildlife on their land are then harvested by a public that does nothing to contribute to the cost of sustaining such wildlife. Coupled with this sentiment was a substantial level of feedback indicating that some cooperators are not aware of any benefits whatsoever—the information on Program benefits they learned during the focus groups was completely new to these individuals.

Additionally, substantial percentages (67% of Farm-Game cooperators, 65% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 34% of Forest Game cooperators) of telephone survey respondents not at all interested in planning or implementing habitat improvements on their properties may indicate that not all cooperators are aware that they are to be provided such benefits free of charge from the Commission, or that they are aware of the full range of benefits available to them. The Commission could therefore work to make known to cooperators the landscape and habitat benefits they may receive, which may also potentially lessen the financial burdens of landowners to maintain their properties. This again demonstrates an opportunity for the Commission to maintain at least a moderate level of communication and contact with landowners enrolled in the Public Access Program.

Ensure Provision of Signage to Cooperators

Substantial percentages of Farm-Game and Safety Zone cooperators do not display Public Access Program signs on their properties (45% and 63%, respectively). When these respondents were asked about their reasons for not displaying signs, sizable percentages reported that they

had not been provided any (52% of Farm-Game respondents and 53% of Safety Zone respondents). The Commission should work to assess Farm-Game and Safety Zone properties in particular for any necessary or requested signage—not only is provided signage one of the benefits explicitly stated in Program documentation, but the addition of official Pennsylvania Game Commission signage may also be important in deterring future instances of trespassing, hunting without permission, and property damage. Finally, in positively identifying properties as hunting lands, signs will be fulfilling a primary goal of the Program to enhance hunting opportunities in the most general sense.

ADDRESS PATROLLING OF AND ENFORCEMENT ON PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM LAND

Relating to the necessity of addressing Program benefits in greater detail, the Commission should work to ensure clarity in constituents' understanding of the power and duties of Commission enforcement officers with regard to trespassing and enforcement on landowner properties. Speaking in focus groups, many Program cooperators indicated their resignation to the fact that enforcement of trespassing is something that the Pennsylvania Game Commission is unable to do (bound by the provisions in Chapter 9 of Title 34 Game and Wildlife Code) and that Pennsylvania State Police are unable to feasibly do (because of perceived personnel constraints). As a result, many landowners view trespassing—particularly by ATVs and 4-wheelers—on Public Access lands as a persistent problem without a solution. Though it may be out of their immediate means, the Commission could nonetheless make an effort to retool its policies and practices regarding the “protection to life and property through patrolling and enforcement of law,” as stated in current Program documentation.

Demand for protection is greatest among Forest Game cooperators, many of whom possess financial stakes in their Public Access lands (44% of Forest Game cooperators' properties constitute commercial forests or other investments). Specifically, 51% of Forest Game respondents to the telephone survey cited protection against trespassing as a general reason for enrolling in the Public Access Program, with 72% of Forest Game respondents ranking protection against trespassing as a very or somewhat important reason for enrolling.

(Conversely, just 40% of both Farm-Game landowners and Safety Zone landowners considered trespassing protection a very or somewhat important reason for Program enrollment.)

However, Program cooperators in each of the three programs are uniform in their need for greater enforcement and protection from ATVs and 4-wheelers. Private landowners cited property damage including structural issues such as broken gates and fences, ruined trails and paths, and damage to trees as some of the residual effects of reckless ATV and 4-wheeler operation on properties. Similarly, there was near unanimous agreement in focus groups that ATV and 4-wheeler operation on Public Access lands represented an issue in need of more Commission attention.

Trespassing by Hunters

Cooperator concern over trespassing just by hunters (that is, excepting concerns over ATV and 4-wheeler trespassing) on Public Access Program lands is not exceedingly high. While it should be noted that most landowners report some level of hunters hunting without permission (62% of Farm-Game cooperators, 55% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 81% of Forest Game cooperators said during the telephone survey that their property is utilized by hunters without permission at least sometimes) most of the landowners appear to agree that hunter-only trespassing is not a great concern. Some cooperators participating in focus groups acknowledged as well that the “mandatory permission” concept may be near unenforceable, considering the practice of opening one’s land to public hunting. Further, many landowners indicated during focus groups that they no longer reasonably expect every hunter on their land to ask permission before hunting. With this in mind, the issue of hunters hunting without permission becomes something of a moot point. Note, however, that this observation applies only to the issue of hunters themselves utilizing land without permission—concern rises considerably when such unauthorized use extends to include property damage and ATV and 4-wheeler-related problems.

Trespassing by ATVs and 4-Wheelers

ATV and 4-wheeler trespassing represents a resounding issue for landowners. Overwhelming majorities in each of the programs (79% of Farm-Game cooperators; 78% of Safety Zone cooperators; and 88% of Forest Game cooperators) reported that ATVs and 4-wheelers

accounted for some of the other recreationists besides hunters who had utilized their properties in the 2 years prior to the survey. Further, substantial percentages (68% of Farm-Game cooperators, 60% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 79% of Forest Game cooperators) of the same cooperators said that recreationists such as ATV riders utilized their properties without permission at least sometimes. Property damage such as damage to paths and trails, crops, and vegetation, as well as structural damage to gates, fences, and houses, was overwhelmingly attributed to ATVs and 4-wheelers. Only slight percentages of cooperators have restricted access on their properties in the past; when they did, they most commonly cited ATVs as a reason for doing so.

Focus group participants mentioned the possibility of the Commission spearheading an effort to pass more stringent fines and penalties for reckless ATV riders and 4-wheelers. (Such an effort would presumably involve the state legislature.) However, it was noted more than once in response to this suggestion that if the hypothetical ATV rider has the finances to purchase the vehicle in question, it is doubtful he will be much deterred by what would surely amount to a monetary slap on the wrist. As such, a solution for the immediate future to the ATV and 4-wheeler issue may simply depend on increased enforcement and patrolling by Commission officers.

It was further noted in focus groups that Pennsylvania landowners are often at a loss as to whom to report issues involving trespassing and reckless ATVs and 4-wheelers: it was widely agreed that the majority of such calls are transferred to the authority of the state and local police, whose personnel constraints rarely allow them to investigate these situations adequately. It is therefore recommended that the Commission rededicate itself to this recurring, problematic issue for Program cooperators, examining such aspects as current cooperative efforts and potential for future partnerships with state and local police and consistency in rates of geographic and Program area coverage (Forest Game lands appear to be patrolled more frequently than are Farm-Game and Safety Zone lands).

Property Damage

Although much of the property damage discussed in focus groups and cited during the telephone survey can be attributed to careless ATV and 4-wheeler operation, so too does property damage stand on its own as a problematic issue for landowners. Though relating to the broader issue of trespassing, property damage in and of itself represents a regrettable ongoing issue for some landowners, who open their land to public hunting but who are then forced to pay for any repairs due to damages caused by the same public. Variations on this general type of situation were cited more than once during cooperator focus groups, in which some participants noted that the “protection to life and property through patrolling and enforcement of law by Wildlife Conservation Offices” (Farm-Game documentation) could stand to be improved.

HUNTER AWARENESS AND USAGE LEVELS OF THE PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM

There were relatively low percentages of licensed hunters in Pennsylvania who in 2004 indicated a solid awareness of the Public Access Program: 74% of licensed hunters knew a little or nothing about the Public Access Program, and only 11% of licensed hunters had actually hunted on Public Access land in the 5 years prior to 2004. It is recommended that the Commission remain aware of the potential for increased awareness of the Program among hunters.

With the above recommendation in mind, the Pennsylvania Game Commission must also consider that 57% of Farm-Game cooperators and 56% of Safety Zone cooperators strongly or moderately oppose identifying their properties as open for some type of public hunting on a map (37% of Forest Game cooperators oppose identifying their hunting lands on a map). Further, cooperators overwhelmingly agree (79% of Farm-Game cooperators, 82% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 88% of Forest Game cooperators) that the amount of hunters utilizing their properties in an average year represents about the right amount. Finally, cooperator sentiments expressed in focus groups aligned closely with the survey results, indicating no great additional desire among landowners for Program advertising. (Cooperators in focus groups speculated that most people likely learned about the Program through word-of-mouth from friends and other hunters, and from the Commission itself.)

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has a reputation as one of the premier wildlife management agencies in the world. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has always had a strong hunting culture. From its inception in 1895, the Pennsylvania Game Commission has recognized the importance of providing hunting opportunities to all segments of society. The formation of the State Game Land system, the Public Access Program and Cooperative State/Federal Management Areas have resulted in excellent hunting opportunities by providing almost 6 million acres of public hunting areas in addition to hunting acreage in most of Pennsylvania's State Forest system containing 2.4 million acres.

The State Game Land system is composed of 302 blocks of land throughout the Commonwealth containing over 1.4 million acres. The Public Access Program contains over 4.5 million acres combined in three separate sub-programs, Farm Game, Safety Zone, and Forest Game. Specific aspects of these programs are discussed below.

Farm Game Cooperators (also sometimes referred to as participants in this report) may sign into the program if they are located within the boundaries of a Farm Game Project. This is essentially a conglomeration of properties providing a manageable block of acreage similar to a State Game Land. This project area is then managed by Pennsylvania Game Commission staff to provide the necessary habitat components for the intended game species occurring in that project area or for which the Pennsylvania Game Commission would like to increase the species population. These larger project areas provide for enhanced efficiency of habitat management activities and operations, provided at no cost to the cooperator by Pennsylvania Game Commission staff, over a greater geographic area.

Safety Zone Cooperators may sign into the Public Access Program in those areas of the state where no Farm Game Project areas exist. These properties are managed by the landowners with aid from the Pennsylvania Game Commission in the form of wildlife habitat management advice, as well as the provision of tree and shrub seedlings and wildlife food plot seed mix free of charge to the cooperator for use on that property.

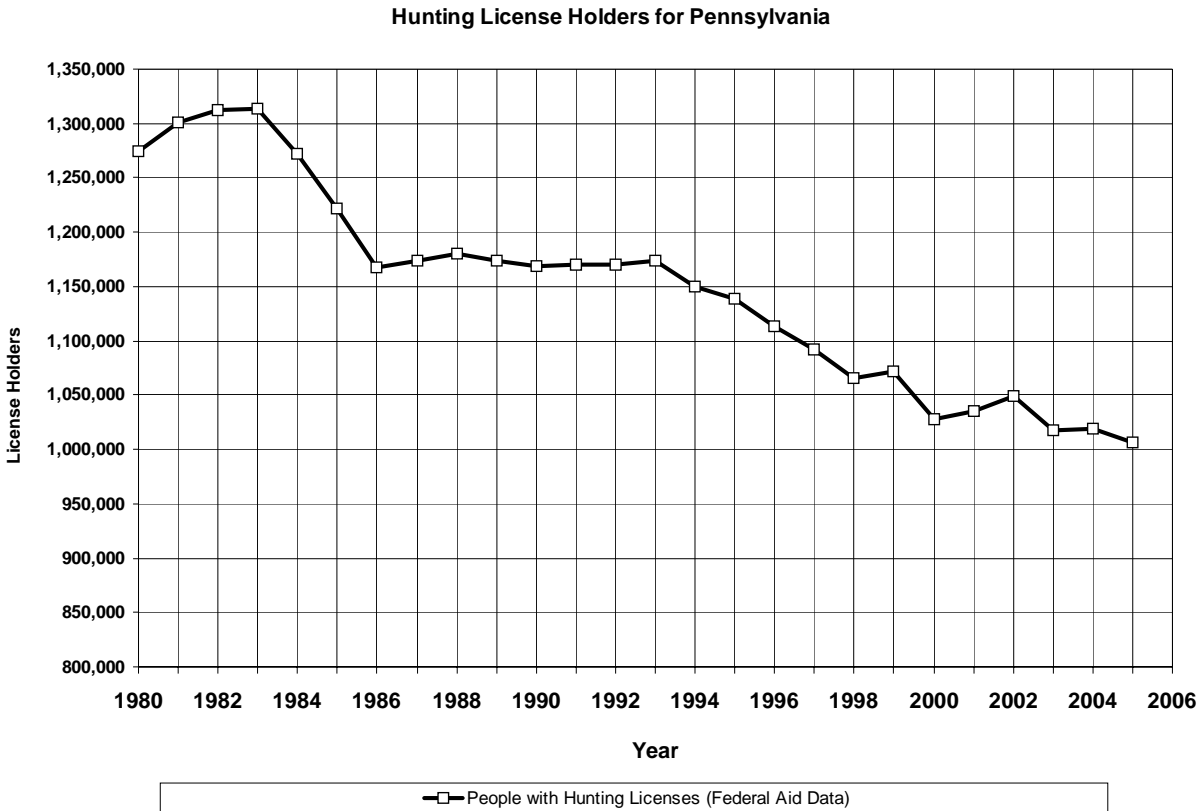
Forest Game Cooperators may sign into the program if their properties are of a sufficient size and usually include habitat consistent with a single management practice such as commercial forestry, undeveloped successional woodlands or grasslands. The general rule for inclusion of properties in this program is that these properties should contain at least 1,000 acres of land.

All Public Access Program cooperators receive, or did receive at one time, at no cost, 1.) The Pennsylvania *Game News* (the Pennsylvania Game Commission's monthly magazine), 2.) Pennsylvania Game Commission law enforcement protection by Wildlife Conservation Officers concerning vandalism and inappropriate use by unauthorized persons engaged in activities such as ATV, trail bike and horseback riding, in addition to Wildlife Code enforcement activities throughout the year, 3.) Special hunt and wildlife population control programs such as the Deer Management Assistance Program, Green Tag and Red Tag programs and 4.) Relief from frivolous lawsuits by persons engaged in any activity on their properties through the Landowner Liability Act, as appropriate.

Cooperative State/Federal Management areas include properties such as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and military lands that are managed for wildlife by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and provide hunting access. Approximately 80,000 acres are provided to Pennsylvania's hunters through this program.

Pennsylvania has an aging population. What was once a thriving industrial and agriculturally based state economy has been eroded by a reduction of land in farming and closing of manufacturing companies, coal mining activities, and the steel industry, to name a few. The difficulty of small farms surviving in today's economy along with suburban expansion into rural areas has eliminated land that once provided prime hunting opportunities. These issues impact how frequently and where people can hunt in a given period of time. The Pennsylvania Game Commission is also one of a handful of wildlife agencies that does not receive funding from the state legislature, and survives solely on license fees, program income, and Pittman-Robertson

funding through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The graph below illustrates the decline in Pennsylvania hunting license holders between 1980 and 2005:



With additional funding through the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the Pennsylvania Game Commission contracted Responsive Management to conduct a detailed human dimensions survey of active and recently discontinued cooperators in the Public Access Program to determine how their perception of Pennsylvania Game Commission programs impacts their willingness to begin, continue, or end participation in Pennsylvania Game Commission Public Access Programs. It is hoped that this effort will result in a measurable increase in hunters in the Commonwealth and more days of hunting by those hunters. This in turn may stimulate Pennsylvania's economy in those more rural areas of the state where hunting was once responsible for economic stability. Additionally, the study of the Public Access Program will assist in efforts to enhance access to hunting lands, one of the top issues affecting hunting

participation in Pennsylvania (see “Factors Related to Hunting Participation in Pennsylvania,” a 2004 study conducted for the Pennsylvania Game Commission by Responsive Management).

This study was conducted for the Pennsylvania Game Commission to increase the number of hunters and days hunted in Pennsylvania by evaluating existing Pennsylvania Game Commission strategies and the Public Access Program, and to make recommendations for improvements as necessary. The results of this survey and recommendations will show other states whether or not to pursue these selected avenues for increasing the number of hunters and hunter days in the field through the provision of additional private lands made available for hunting.

The study entailed a telephone survey of landowners who allow hunting on their land and follow-up focus groups about several issues. 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 Commission. Responsive Management conducted a pre-test of the questionnaire, and revisions were made to the questionnaire based on the pre-test.

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 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday noon to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 5:00 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 different days of the week and at different times of the day. The survey was conducted in January 2007. Responsive Management obtained a total of 721 surveys with Farm Game program participants, 184 surveys with Safety Zone program participants, and 41 surveys with Forest Game program participants.

The software used for data collection in the telephone survey 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. The sampling errors are shown in the tabulation on the following page, calculated using the formula that is also described on the following page.

	Size of Database Provided	Sample	Sampling error
Farm-Game program	21,637	721	3.6
Safety Zone program	7,197	184	7.1
Forest Game program	92	41	11.5

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 support” and “moderately support” are summed to determine the total percentage in support).

In addition to the telephone survey, focus groups were conducted with current and past cooperators in each of the three sub-programs (Farm-Game, Safety Zone, Forest Game). The purpose of the focus groups was to provide qualitative data to augment the findings of the telephone survey. During the telephone survey interviews, respondents were asked whether they would be interested in participating in a focus group at a later date to discuss topics related to the Public Access Program. Interested individuals were then contacted at a later date to schedule participation in the focus group of their particular program; focus group participants were monetarily compensated for their time and assistance. The Farm-Game focus group consisted of seven current cooperators and two former cooperators. The Safety Zone program focus group consisted of six current cooperators and two former cooperators. The Forest Game focus group

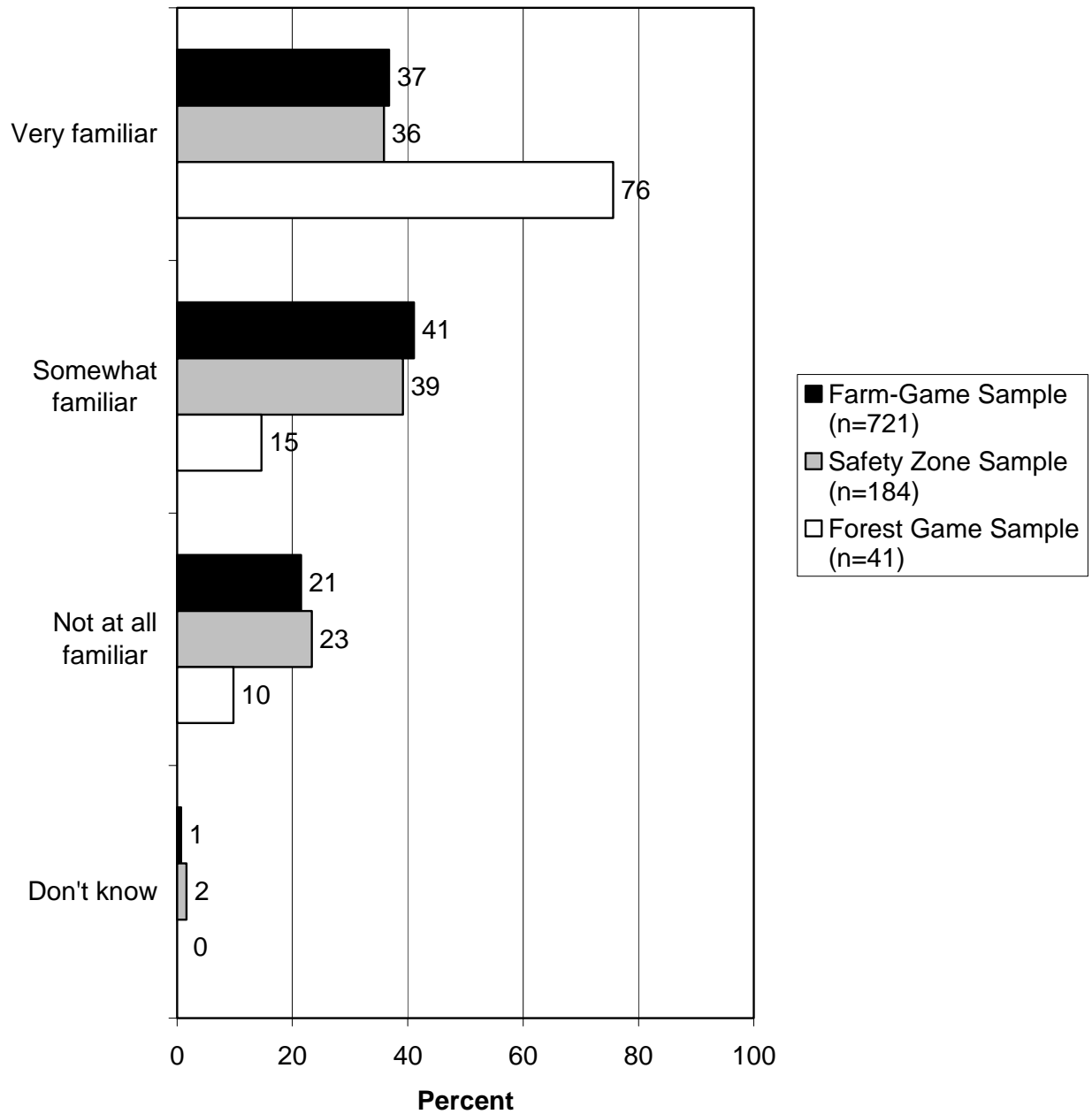
consisted of three current cooperators (due to the overall small sample size of Forest Game cooperators). Focus groups were conducted by telephone through conference calls; they began at 7:00 p.m., and were conducted on March 14th (Safety Zone), 15th (Forest Game), and 16th (Farm-Game). The Public Access Program focus groups lasted about an hour.

FAMILIARITY WITH AND PARTICIPATION IN PENNSYLVANIA'S PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM

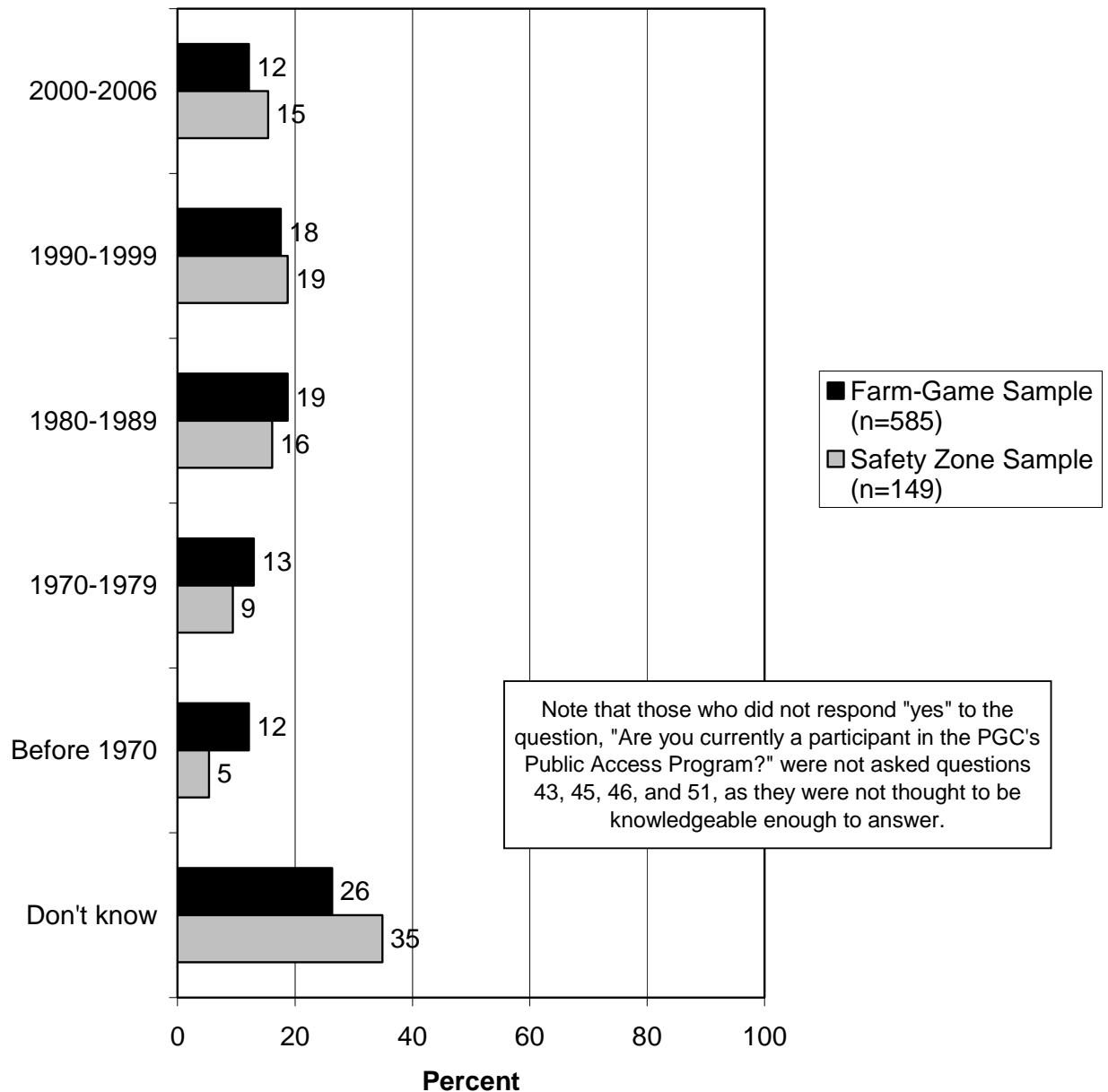
FAMILIARITY AND PARTICIPATION

- Familiarity with the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program varies widely among the groups, with Forest Game participants the most familiar (76% of them are *very* familiar, and 91% are very or somewhat familiar). Farm Game program participants and Safety Zone program participants are less familiar with the Public Access Program: 37% and 36%, respectively, are *very* familiar; 78% and 75% are very or somewhat familiar.
- Those in the Farm Game program and the Safety Zone program who indicated awareness of the Public Access Program were asked what year they began participation: the results show a fairly even distribution of starting dates through the decades.

Q29. Before this survey, were you very, somewhat, or not at all familiar with the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program?



Q46. What year did you begin participating in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program? (Asked of respondents in the Farm-Game and Safety Zone samples; asked only of those who indicated awareness of being a program participant.)



MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN PENNSYLVANIA'S PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM AND DESIRED CHANGES TO PROGRAM

- The three groups are quite similar in their motivations for participating in the Public Access Program (with one exception to be discussed below). The most common reasons overall are to share land/make land available for hunting, for the free benefits (magazine, seed mix, etc.), and for conservation of habitat and wildlife. The exception is that Forest Game participants are much more likely than are the other two groups to be motivated by wanting protection against trespassing.

“Well, I think the best thing for us is that since a lot of these tracks are so far away from us—chopped up and a lot of them, averaging 50-100 acres—is the security that we’re able to leave them open to the public and still know that someone is looking at them. We have a big problem with four-wheelers, so the security of that, and knowing that we can leave it open for the public.”

-- Forest Game cooperator

“What I like best about the Program is that they gave trees, Game News, and signs, but the main reason I went in is because they told me I was protected from lawsuits if anybody got hurt on my property. But as of last year I found out that doesn’t hold true. Another reason is that the deer population is getting rapidly out of control, and without hunting, they just devour my crops. The worst part is that there aren’t enough game wardens.”

-- Farm Game landowner

“We were asked to sign up and we just wanted to continue [allowing people to hunt on the property]. We’ve always had a good relationship with the Game Commission. We’ve taken advantage of some of the tree programs, gotten the seedlings, so that’s been an advantage.”

-- Farm Game landowner

“We’ve always had our land open, since about 1972. I like the [Game] News, the trees [supplied by the Pennsylvania Game Commission], and the cover. [The Game Commission] did put up our signs. The only thing I don’t like is [the occasional overcrowding of hunters].”

-- Farm Game landowner

“As far as the incentives for farmers to go into the Program, there’s not many. It’s more about wanting to control the deer and wanting to help the hunters out.”

-- Farm Game landowner

“The number one thing [motivating] us [to join] was protection from the ATVs by the Game Commission.”

-- Safety Zone landowner

- In a direct question about protection against trespassing (asked of those who indicated awareness of the Public Access Program), 40% of both Farm Game participants and Safety Zone participants say this factor was important in their decision to participate in the program; 72% of Forest Game participants say this factor was important. The differences among these groups are further highlighted by the percent saying that this factor was *very* important: 18% and 19% of Farm Game and Safety Zone participants say this was *very* important, but 51% of Forest Game participants say this was *very* important in their decision to participate.

“Signs for the property and protection from trespassing is what got me involved.”

-- Safety Zone landowner

“As far as trespassing goes, that’s my biggest problem. Hunters buy a license and they think that gives them the right to go everywhere.”

-- Farm Game landowner

- The majority of Farm Game participants and Safety Zone participants say, when asked if they would like to see any changes to the Public Access Program, that they want no changes (53% and 51%, respectively). Otherwise, these two groups most commonly want to see the reinstatement of prior benefits (magazines, etc.). While a substantial percentage of Forest Game participants also want the reinstatement of prior benefits, they most commonly want greater enforcement of laws/patrolling of property and greater enforcement of ATV laws. Note that 34% of Forest Game participants answer that they want no changes. (Although only 2% to 5% mentioned liability protection in the survey, this concern was raised frequently in the focus groups. Also, although not a commonly named issue in the survey, communications improvements were frequently mentioned in the focus groups, as well.)

“I think [the Public Access Program] should be continued. The only thing I would like to see more of are penalties: if someone’s caught, all they get is a \$20 or \$30 ticket. If someone can afford the ATV, if they’re running around out there, they can afford that ticket.”

-- Forest Game cooperator

"We've had trouble here and there from the ATVs. But it's an enforcement thing. Enforcement needs to be ramped up."

-- Safety Zone landowner

[In terms of improvements to the Program], maybe via e-mail or some publication, something once a quarter to let people know what's going on."

-- Forest Game cooperator

"Well, liability needs to be addressed. That's really a concern. Anyone opening up their land for recreational use is entitled to some protection. So I think they ought to address liability a little more."

-- Safety Zone landowner

"Liability, as the previous person said. And communication from the Commission—if we had information sent out about programs and what benefits were available to the landowners. There seems to be a communication gap there."

-- Farm Game landowner

"They should protect the landowner more from lawsuits. That's my number one concern right now."

-- Farm Game landowner

"I am concerned about the liability thing. Not only liability for the farmer, but the animals being killed or whatever, being paid for. Not just being sued by somebody, but if your animals are dead, you have to pay for them. Nobody else is going too."

-- Farm Game landowner

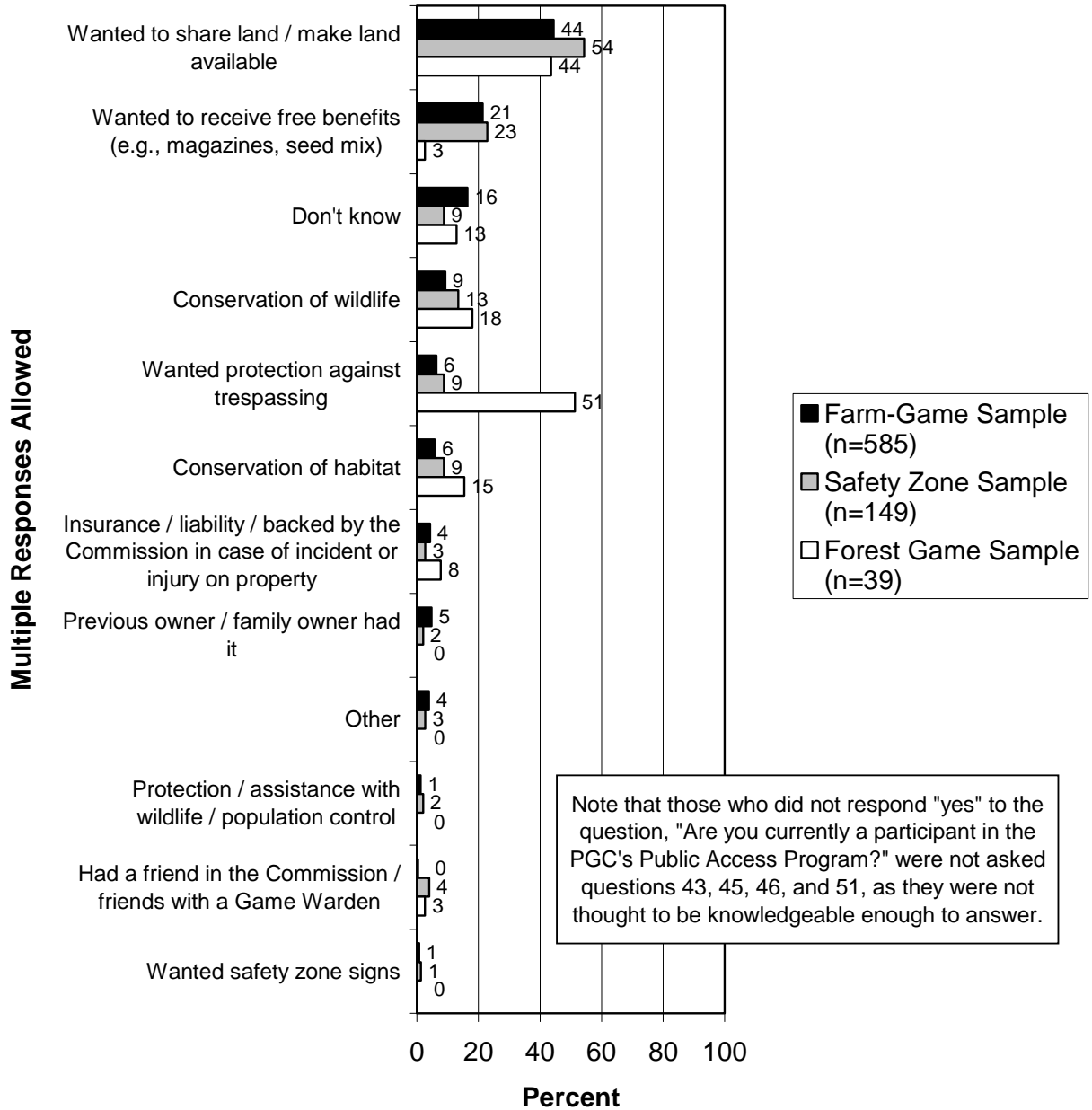
"If [the Pennsylvania Game Commission] wants to improve the Program now, they should certainly address the liability issue and they should certainly address communication."

-- Farm Game landowner

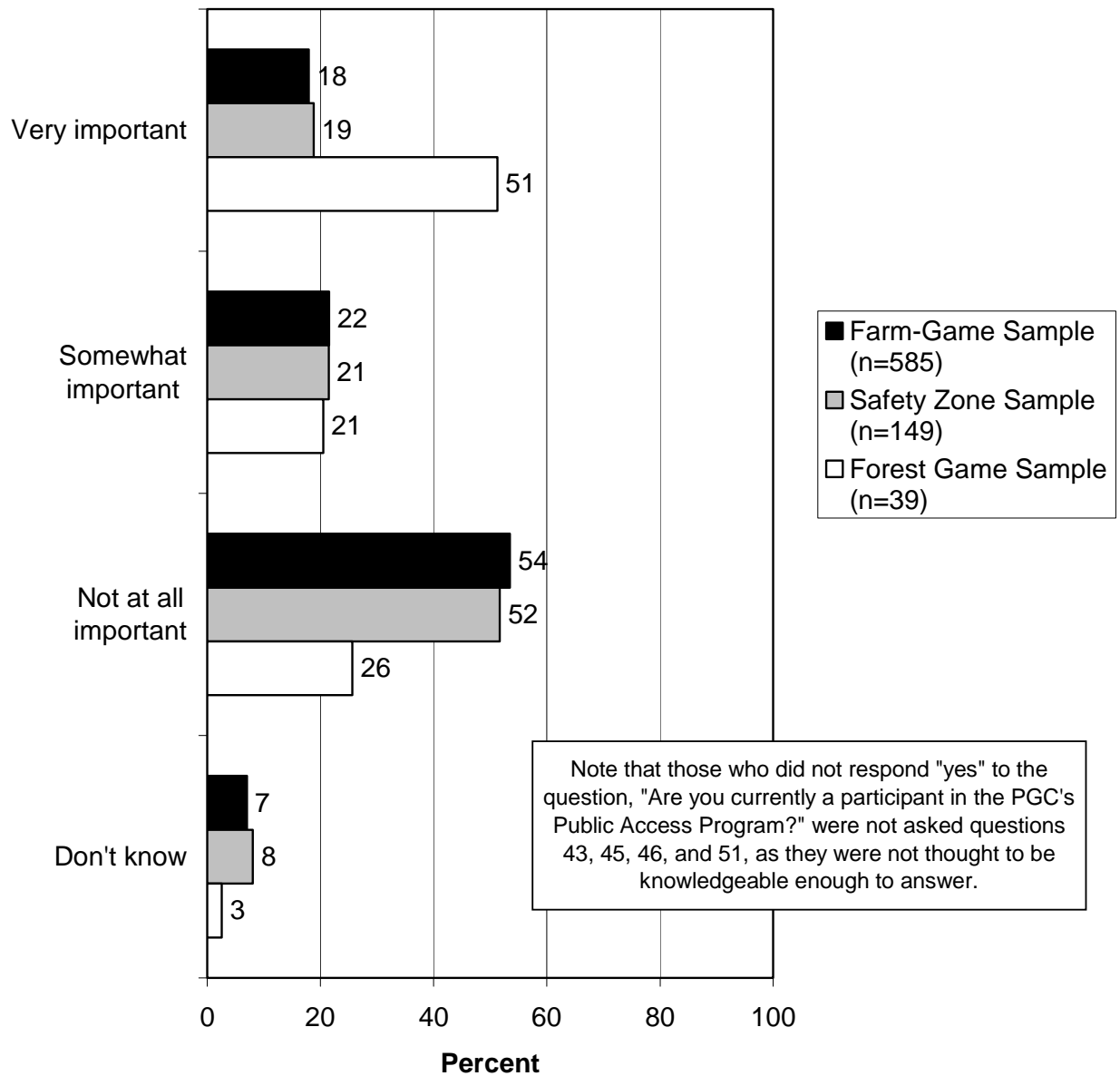
"I think [the Public Access Program] definitely should be continued. It's a big benefit for us to have other people watching out for the properties for us. We have not had our properties leased, and would prefer to leave them open to the public. Our communications with the [Pennsylvania Game Commission] personnel could be better, they seem to be running a little thin, maybe, and don't always respond in a timely manner. But overall, it's a good program, for sure."

-- Forest Game cooperator

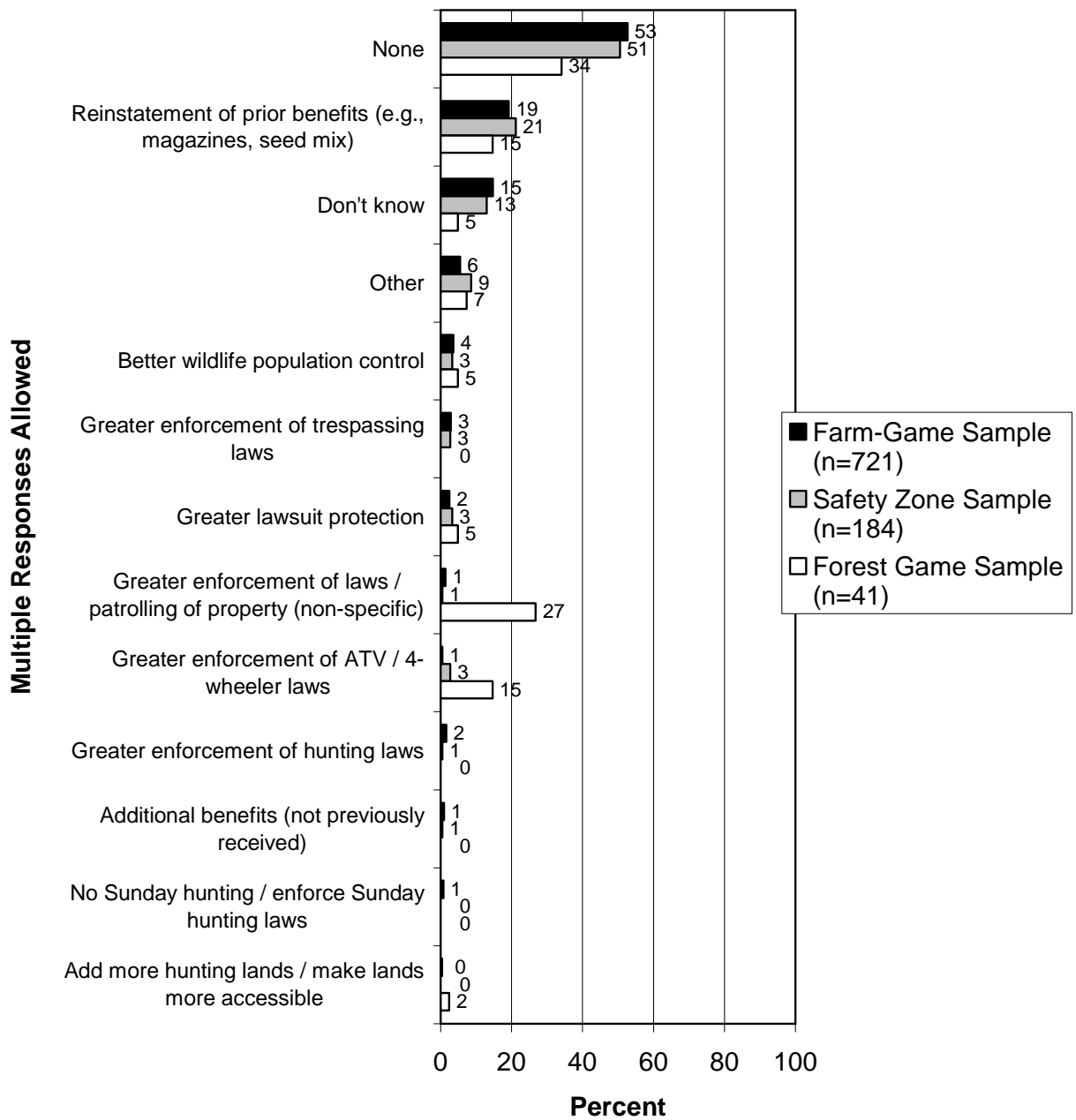
Q43. What are the reasons you decided to enroll in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program? (Asked of those who indicated awareness of being a program participant.)



Q45. How important was protection against trespassing as a reason for enrolling in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program? (Asked of those who indicated awareness of being a program participant.)



Q88. What changes would you like to see made to the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program?

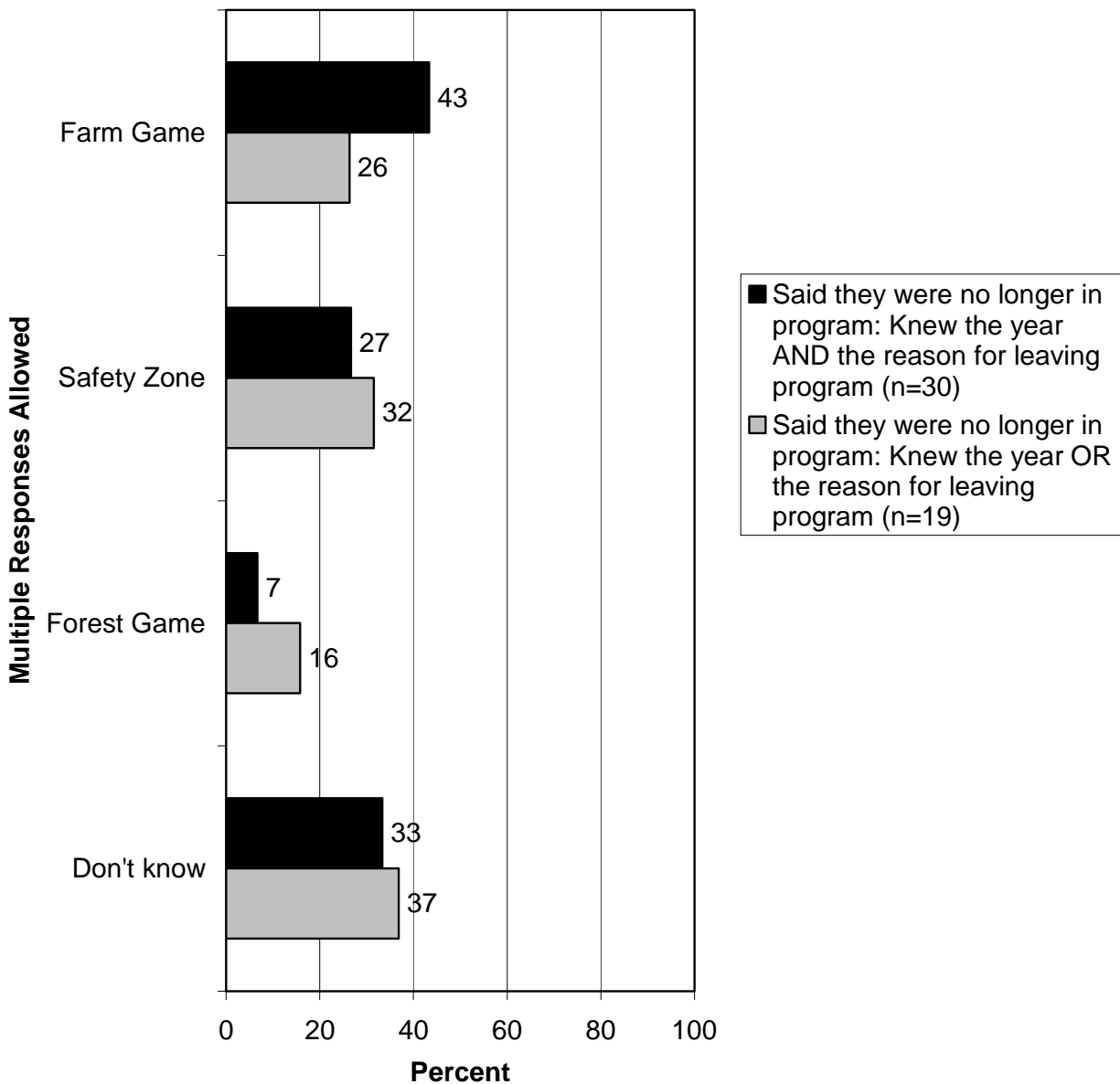


ENDING PARTICIPATION IN PENNSYLVANIA'S PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM AND REASONS FOR ENDING PARTICIPATION

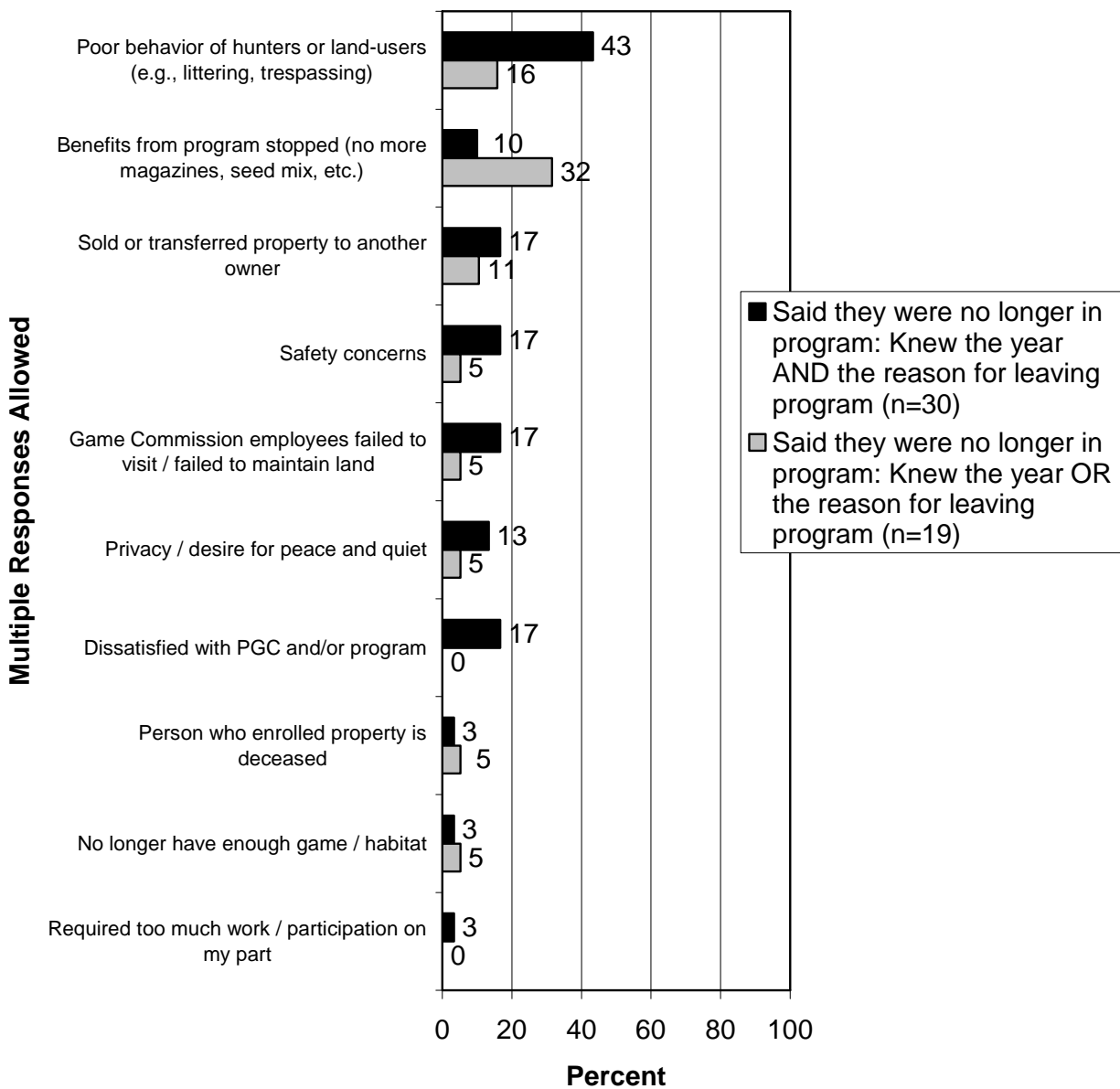
- Some respondents in the Pennsylvania Game Commission data records no longer participate in the program. These respondents were not interviewed, other than the questions discussed in this section, and these respondents are *not* part of the telephone survey results given elsewhere in the report.

- The distribution of ex-participants from among the three Public Access Programs is shown. Common reasons for leaving the program include the poor behavior of hunters, because the benefits stopped (e.g., the magazine), or because of the sale or transfer of the property. The years that the ex-participant indicates he/she left the program are shown.

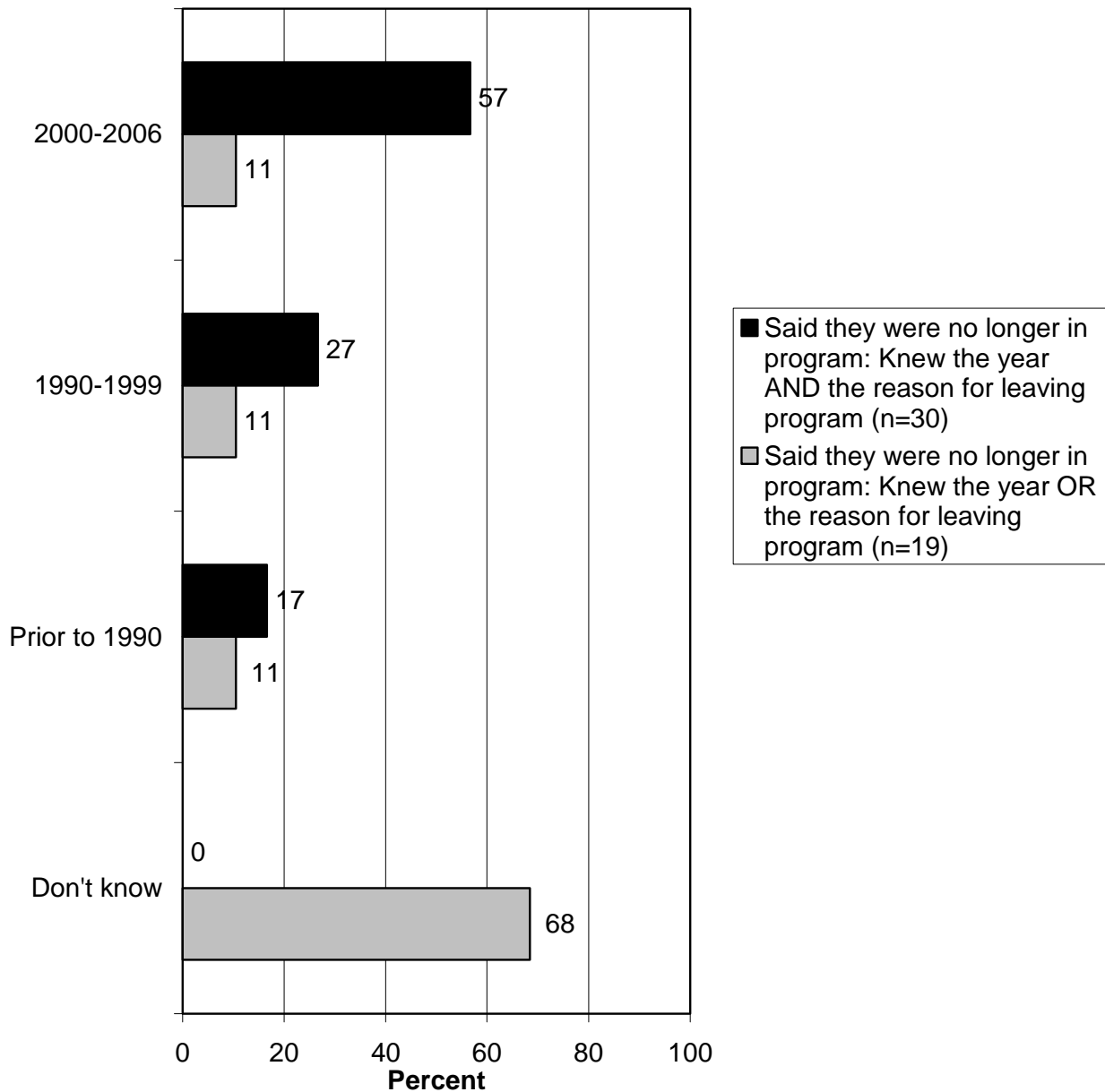
Q40. Which program were you enrolled in? (Asked of those not currently participating in the Public Access Program, but recall having participated in the past.)



Q36. What are the reasons you ended your participation in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program? (Asked of those not currently participating in the Public Access Program, but recall having participated in the past.)



Q32. What year did you end your participation in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program? (Asked of those not currently participating in the Public Access Program, but recall having participated in the past.)



OWNERSHIP, RESIDENCY, AND LAND USES

OWNERSHIP AND RESIDENCY ON LAND

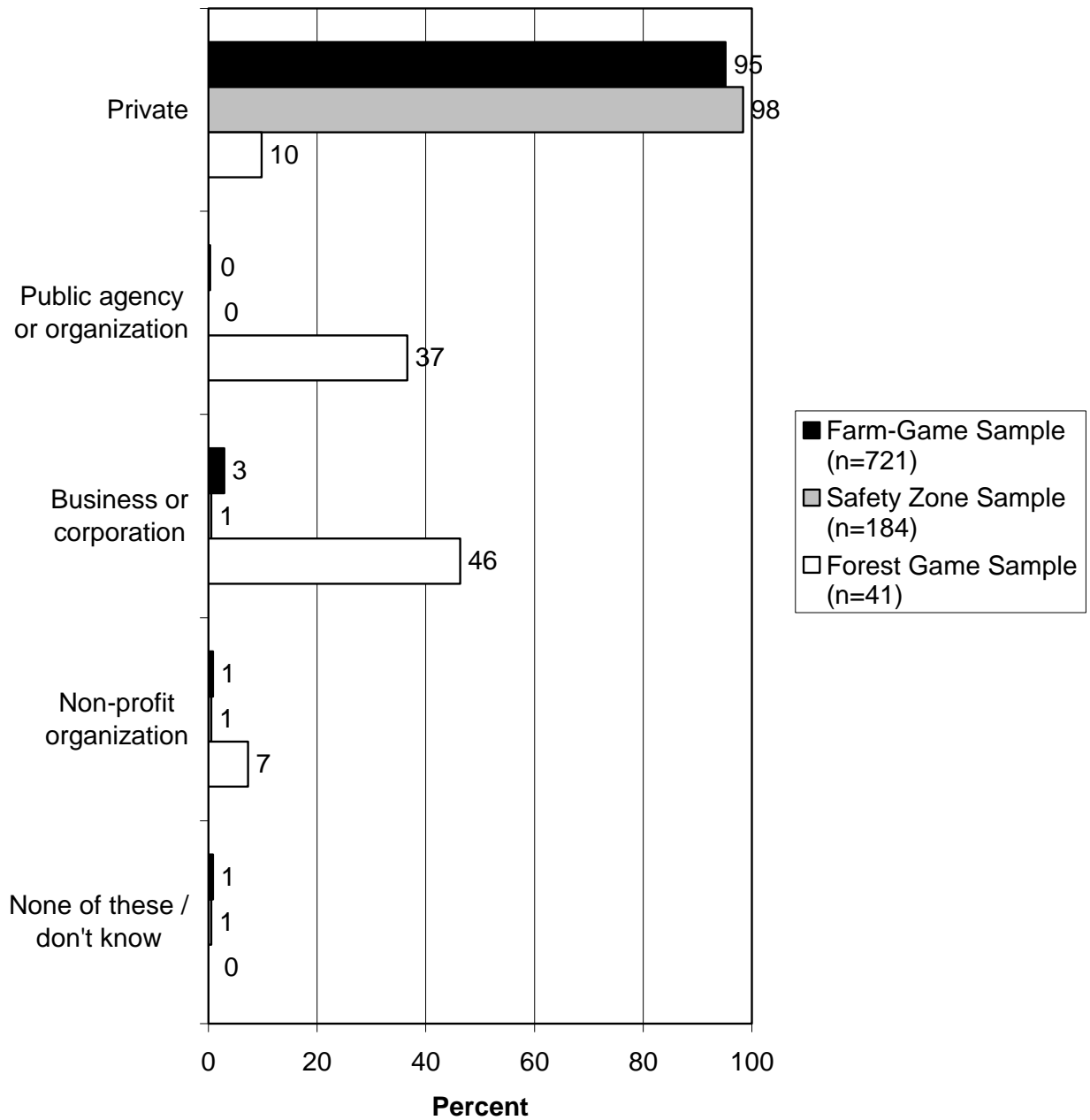
- Most of the Farm Game and Safety Zone participants indicated that the property in the program is privately owned. Among Forest Game participants, only 10% say the property is privately owned; instead, most of the Forest Game respondents say the land is owned by a business or corporation (46%) or a public agency or organization (37%).

- Large majorities of Farm Game and Safety Zone participants indicated that residents live on the property enrolled in the Public Access Program (89% and 83%, respectively); only 17% of Forest Game participants said a resident lives on the property. Among Farm Game and Safety Zone participants who indicated that residents live on the property, large majorities indicated that it was their own primary residence.

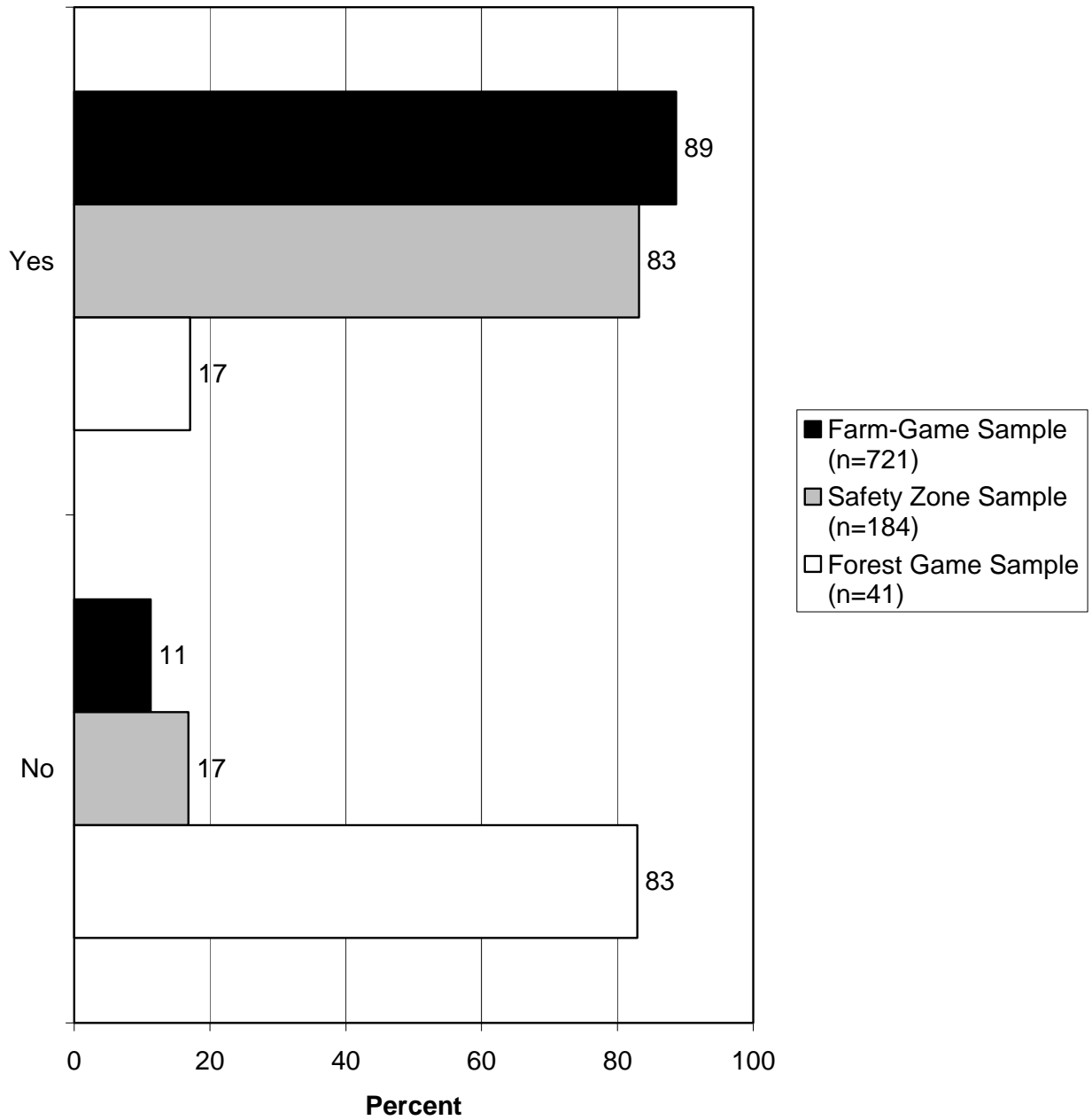
- Most respondents in all three groups do not rent out or lease the property (only 28% of Farm Game participants, 23% of Safety Zone participants, and 34% of Forest Game participants do so).

- Acreage of the individual properties in the Public Access Program varies widely, with smaller tracts in the Farm Game and Safety Zone groups. Most commonly, for Farm Game participants and Safety Zone participants, the acreage is 50-99 acres, while the most common acreage for Forest Game participants is 1,000 to 9,999 acres.

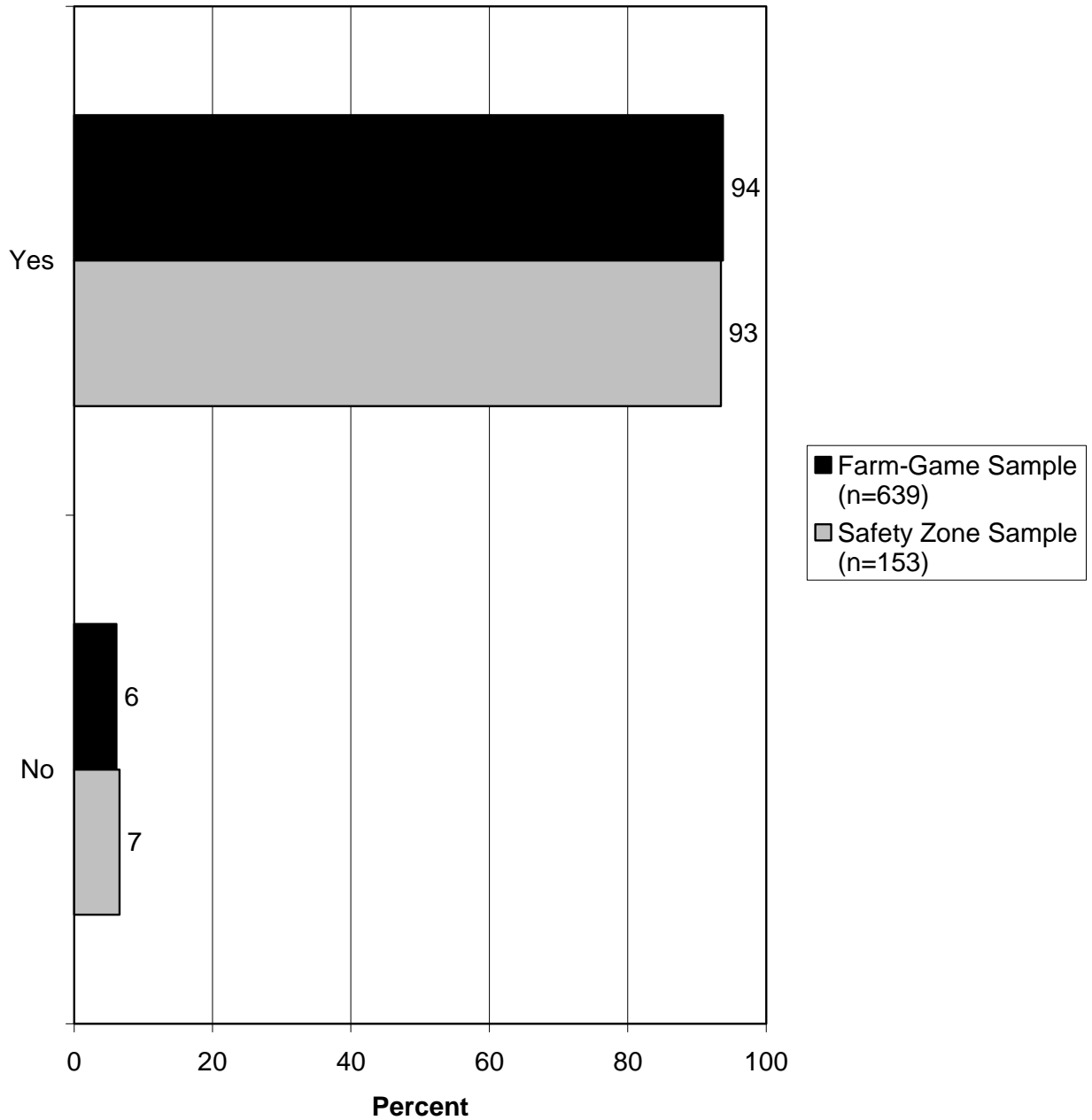
Q14. Which of the following best describes the ownership of the land?



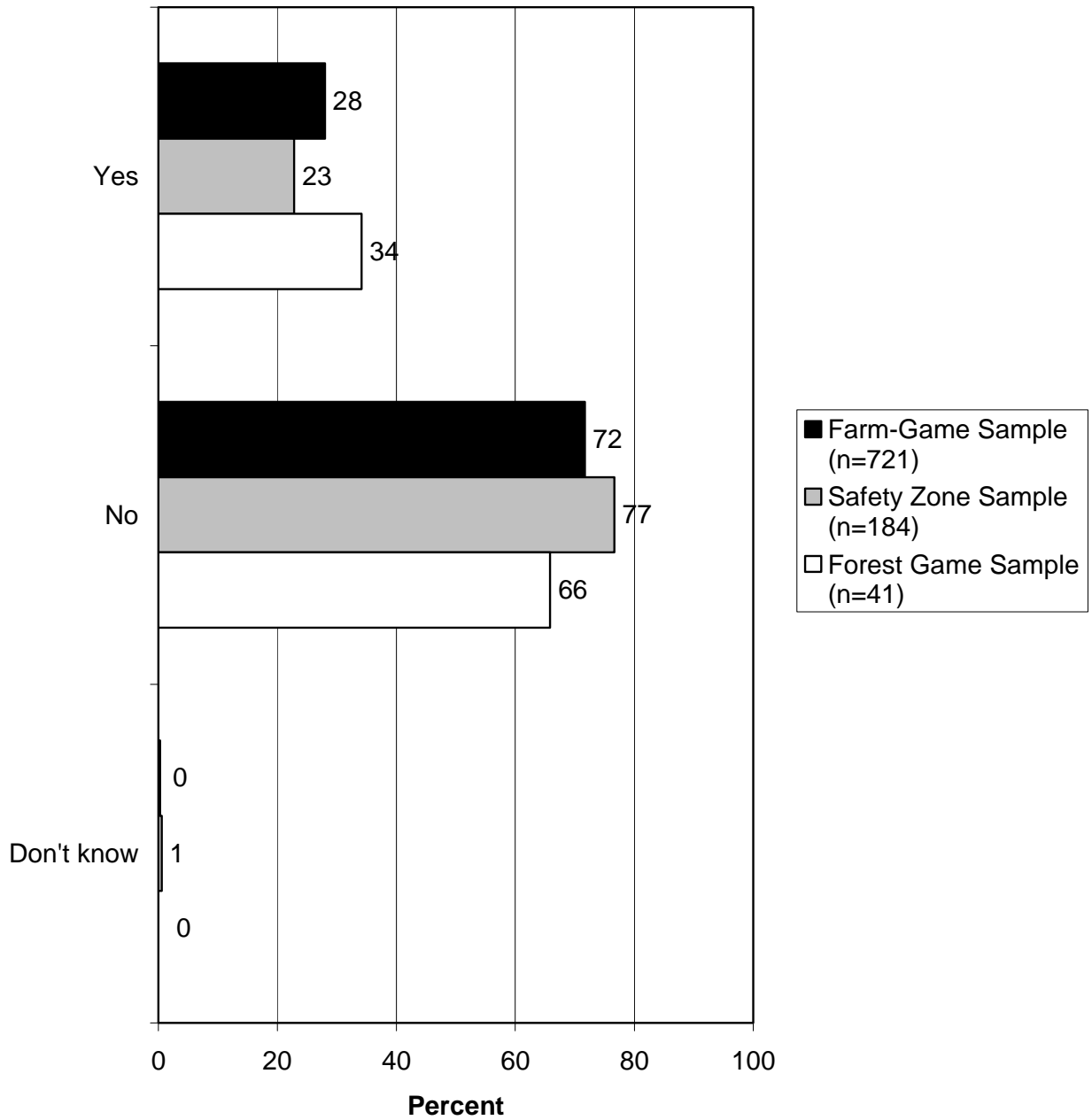
Q10. Does anyone live on the property?



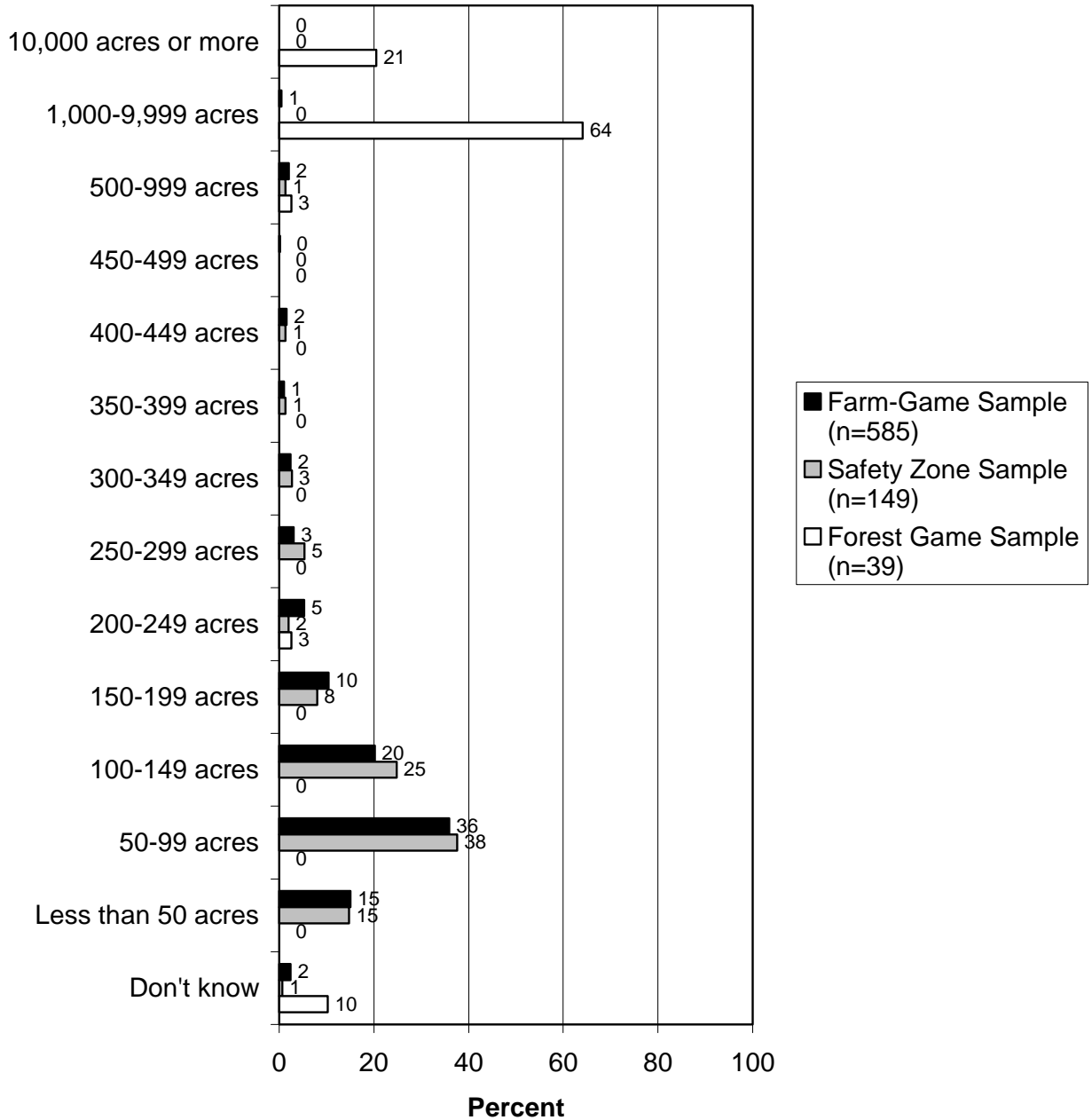
Q12. Is your primary residence located on the property? (Asked of respondents in the Farm-Game and Safety Zone samples who indicated residency on the property.)



Q13. Do you rent out or lease out the property?



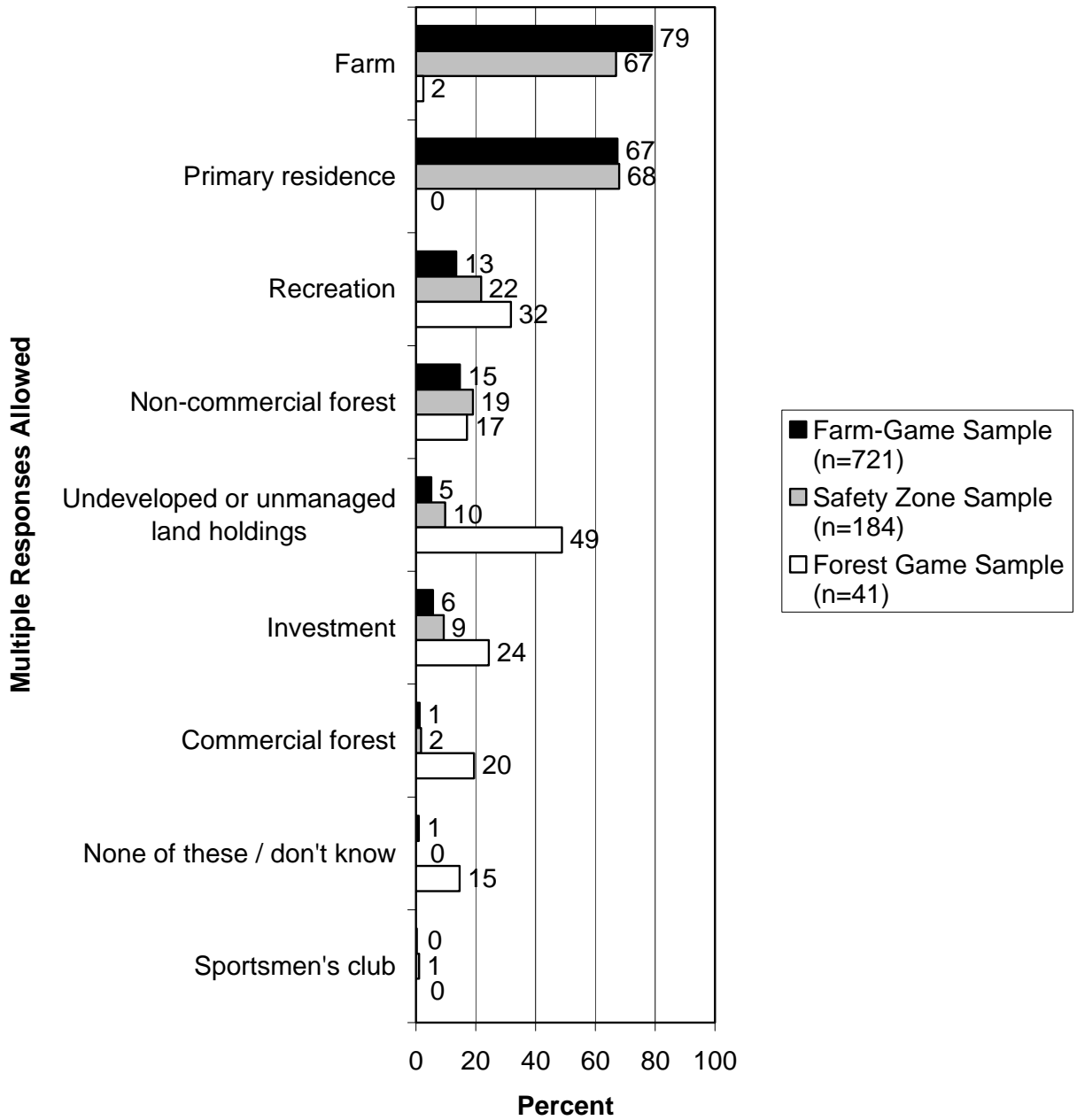
Q51. Approximately how many acres do you have enrolled in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program? (Asked of those who indicated awareness of being a program participant.)



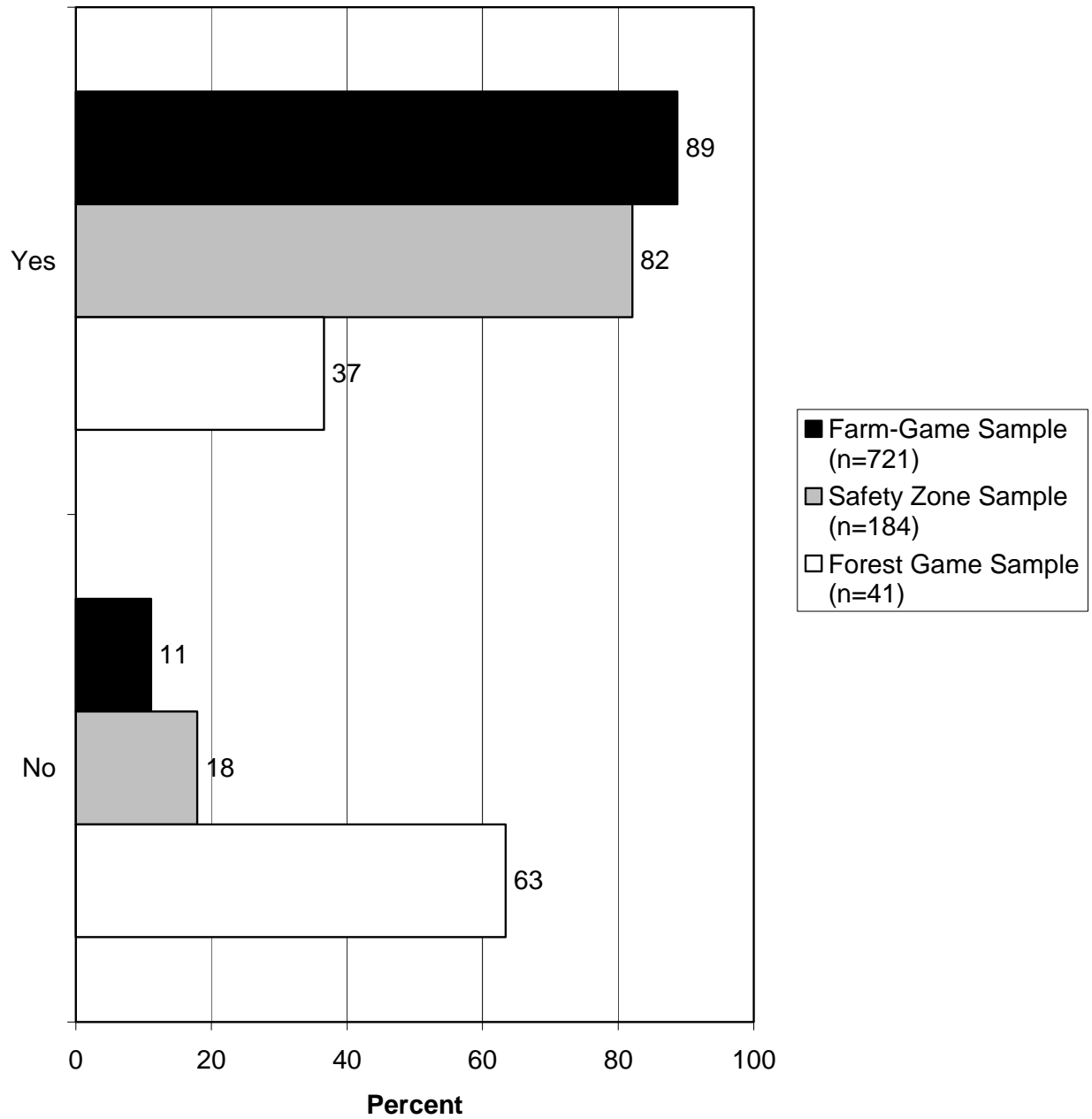
USES OF LAND AND LIKELIHOOD FOR LAND TO BE DEVELOPED

- The survey asked about eight possible primary uses of the property in the Public Access Program (multiple responses allowed). Majorities of Farm Game program and Safety Zone program participants say the land is used for farming and for their primary residence. Other common uses among these two groups include non-commercial forest and recreation. Among Forest Game program participants, only 2% say a primary use is farming, and none say it is their primary residence; instead, this land is most commonly used as undeveloped land holdings, recreation, investment, and for commercial forest production.
- The landowners were asked if any farmland is on the property in the Public Access Program. The overwhelming majority of landowners in the Farm Game program and the Safety Zone program (89% and 82%, respectively) indicate that there is farmland on the property. Among the Forest Game group, 37% indicate that there is farmland on the property. In follow-up, those with farmland on the property were asked if they farm the land themselves: slight majorities of those with farmland on the property in the Farm Game group and the Safety Zone group (59% and 56% respectively) farm the land themselves (none of the Forest Game group do so).
- The landowners were asked if any forested land is on the property in the Public Access Program. The overwhelming majority of landowners in the Farm Game program and the Safety Zone program (76% and 84%, respectively), and *all* those in the Forest Game program, indicate that there is forested land on the property. While most Forest Game participants (80%) say that they have a forest or timber management plan, only 22% and 32%, respectively, of Farm Game and Safety Zone participants (those who have forested land) have a forest or timber management plan. Interestingly, majorities of all three groups who have forested land on the property have had timber harvested (66%, 72%, and 80% of Farm Game participants, Safety Zone participants, and Forest Game participants, respectively). Furthermore, a large majority of Forest Game participants say that they plan future harvests (only 23% and 21% of the Farm Game and Safety Zone groups plan future harvests).
- Fortunately for hunters, most of the landowners in the Public Access Program do not anticipate that the property will be developed in the foreseeable future (from 79% to 83% of the groups).

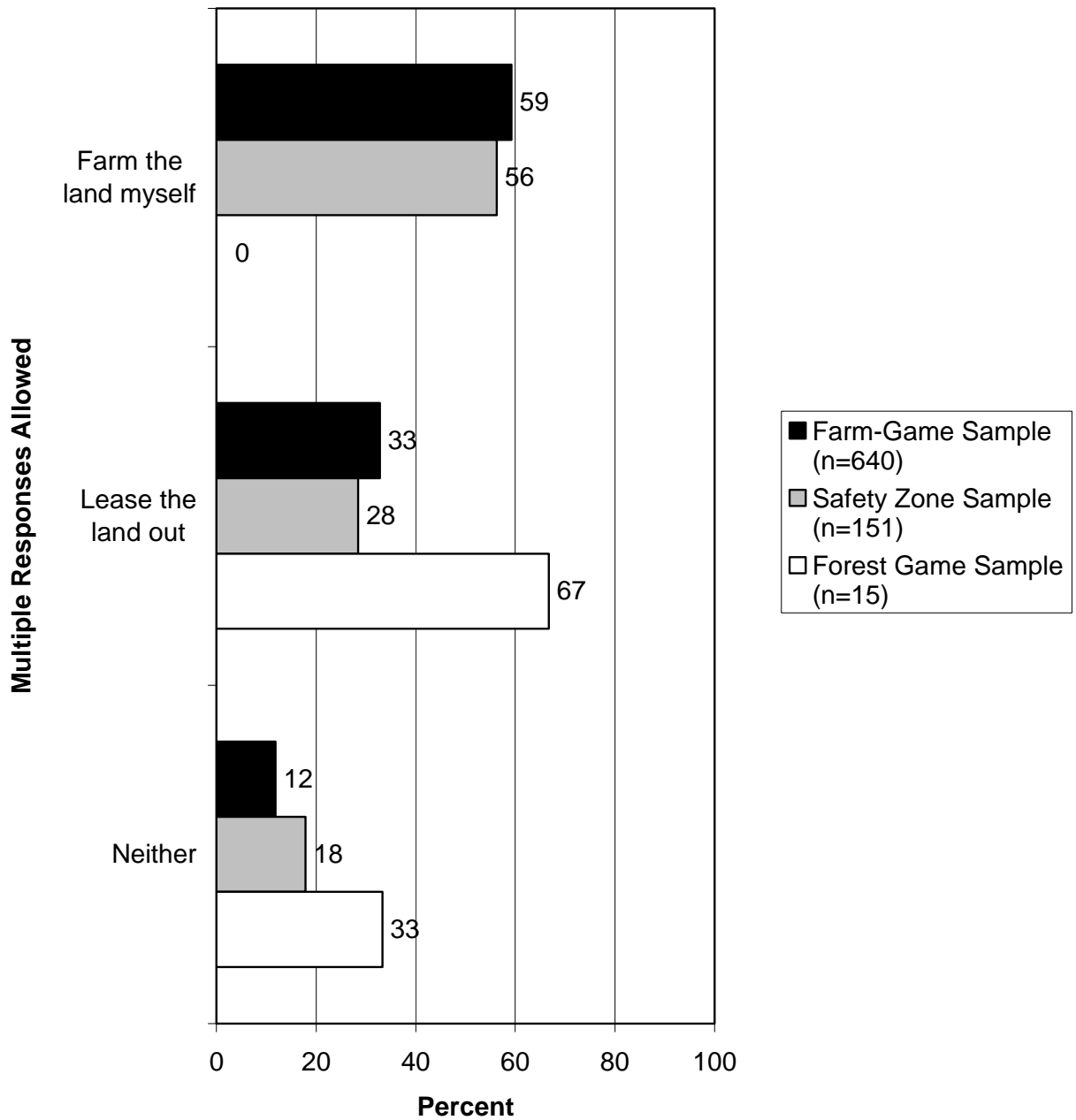
Q27. What are the primary uses of your property?



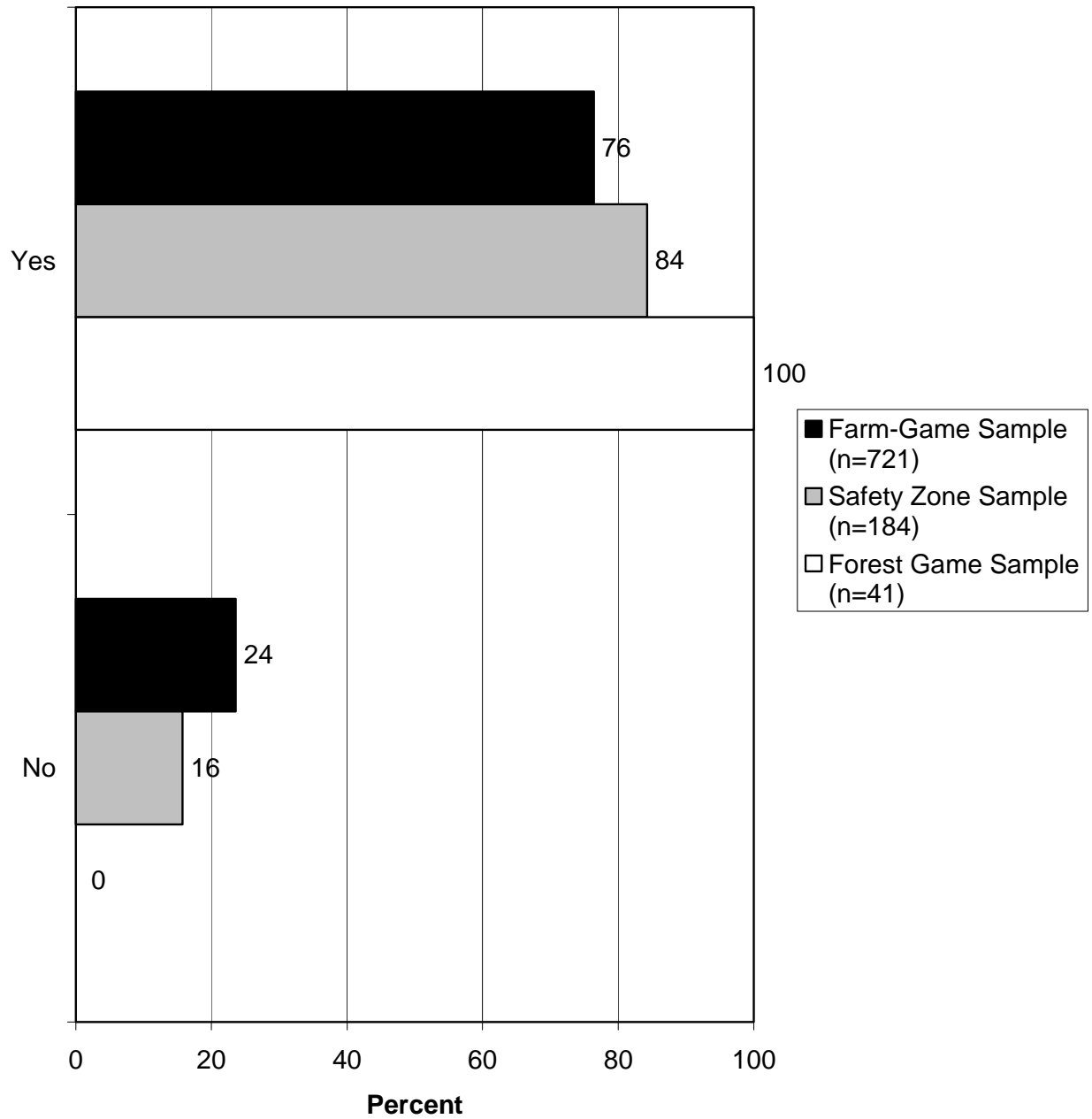
Q16. Does your property contain farmland?



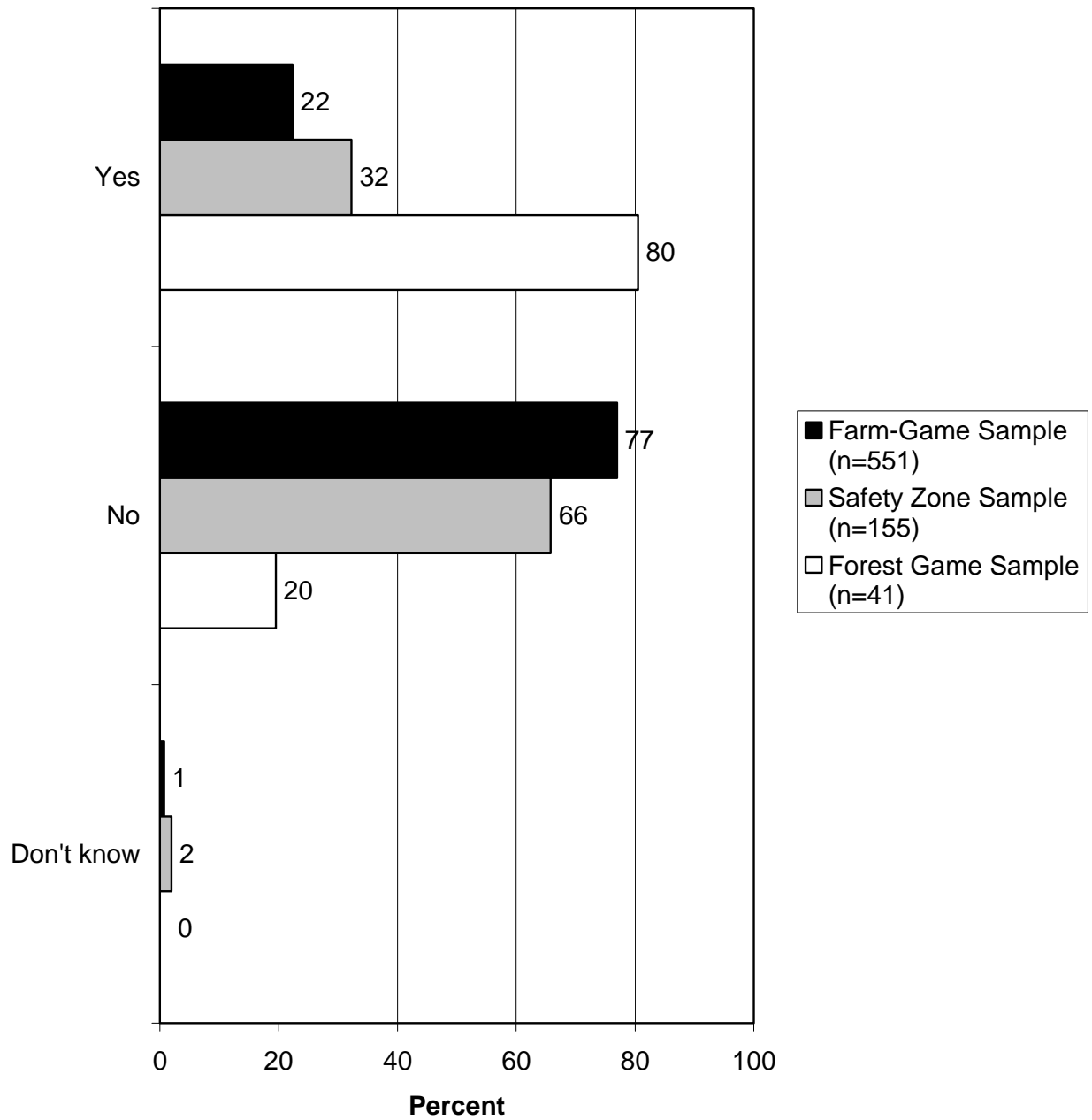
Q19. Do you farm the land yourself, or do you lease it out? (Asked of those whose property contains farmland.)



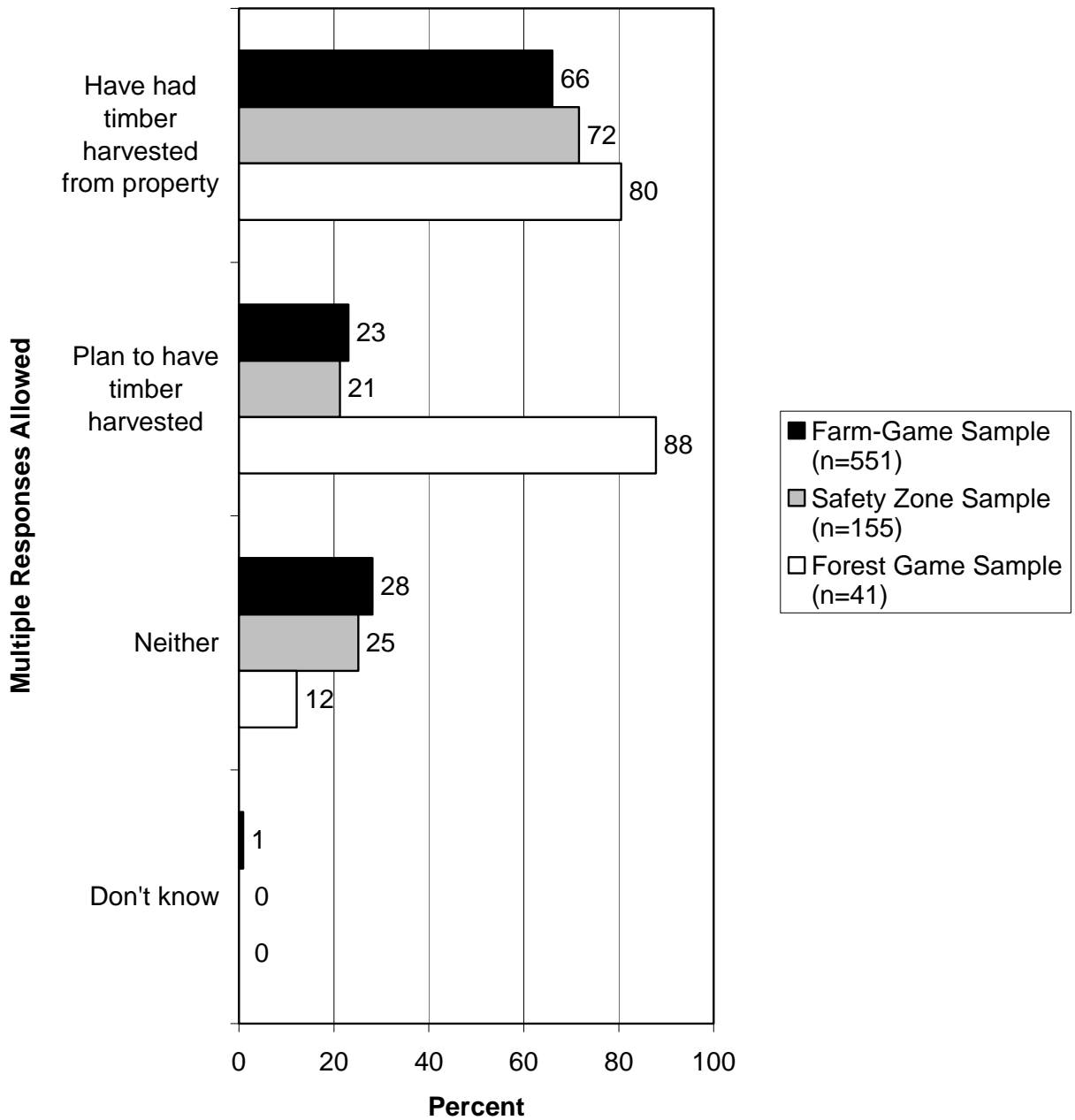
Q20. Does your property contain forested land?



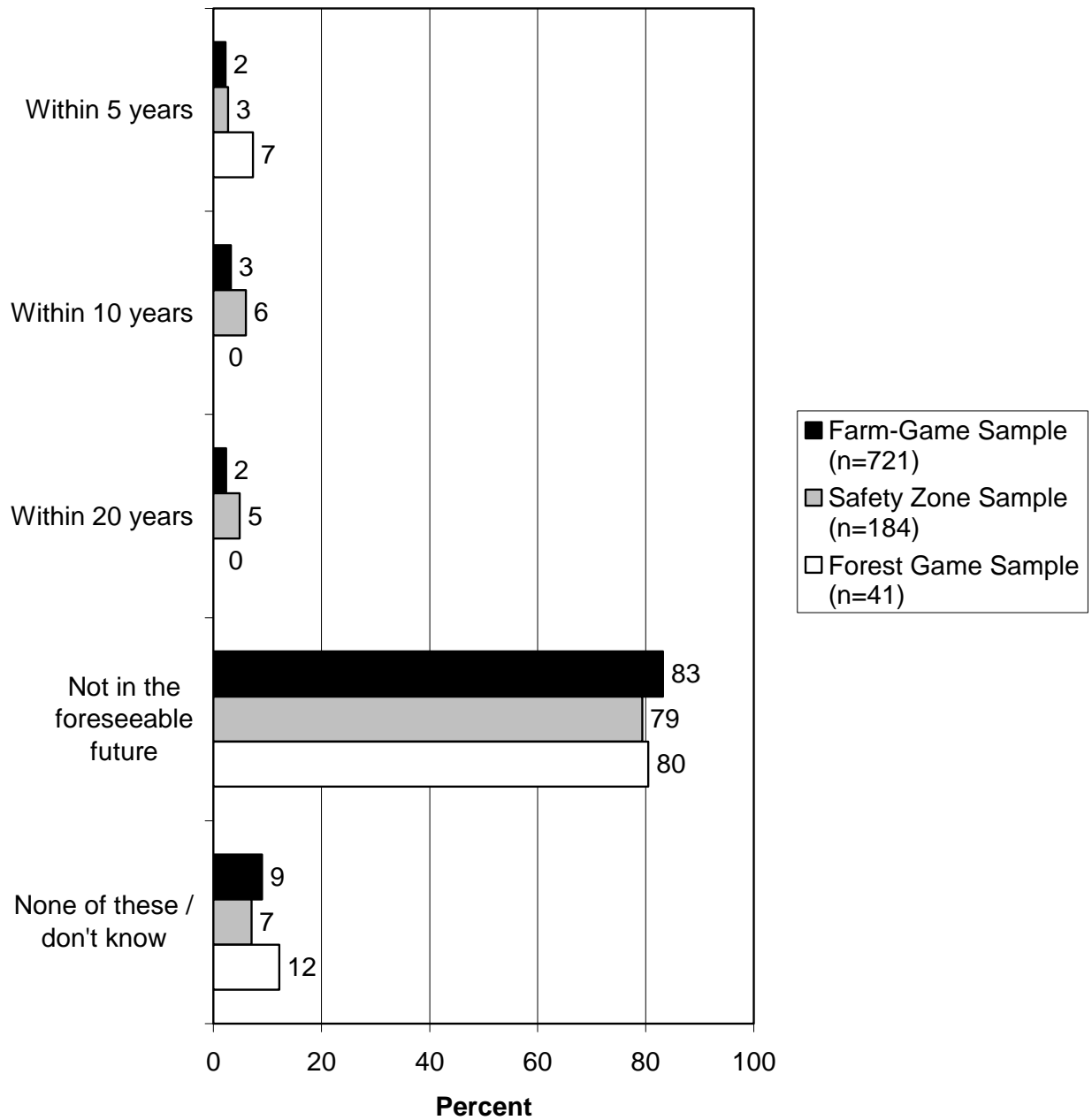
Q21. Do you have a forest or timber management plan? (Asked of those whose property contains forested land.)



Q24. Do you plan to or have you had timber harvested from your property? (Asked of those whose property contains forested land.)



Q15. Would you consider your property likely to be developed ...?



HUNTERS' USE OF LAND

- Nearly all the respondents in the three groups, ranging from 95% to 100%, say that the property in the Public Access Program has been used for hunting in the past 2 years. The species hunted varies, however, by group: while deer is the most common species for all three groups, a high percentage of Forest Game participants also say that hunted species include turkey, bear, and grouse. In fact, for just about every species named, a higher percentage of Forest Game participants say that the particular species is hunted on the property. Put in terms of type of hunter, big game hunters predominate in all three groups. With so many hunters visiting their lands, nearly all Forest Game program participants have had hunters with every type of equipment used on the property (rifles, shotguns, archery, and muzzleloaders). When asked which type of equipment is most commonly used, large majorities of all groups indicated rifles are most commonly used.

- Respondents who indicated that hunting had taken place on the property in the previous 2 years were asked to estimate the number of hunters who used the property. Again, there are marked differences among the groups. The majority of Farm Game program participants and Safety Zone program participants indicate that less than 30 hunters use the property in a typical year; Forest Game program respondents most commonly do not know the number, and they also have a relatively high percentage saying that 60 or more hunters use the land in a typical year. Overwhelming majorities of all three groups say that the number of hunters who use the land is about the right amount. Finally, the number of requests received in the previous 12 months is shown; interestingly, although Forest Game program participants often have very large tracts and often accommodate many hunters, they are the most likely to say that they received no requests in the previous 12 months.

- When asked which type of people most often use the property, respondents from the three groups had quite varied responses. Approximately 2 in 5 of Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants say that family/friends are the most common type of people using the land (none of the Forest Game group say that); conversely, Forest Game participants are the most likely to say that strangers most commonly use the land.

- The survey asked about use of the land by hunters without permission: the majority of Forest Game program participants (54%) say that hunters without permission *always* use the property, while only 10% and 11% of Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants, respectively, say this. For those latter groups, the most common response is that hunters *sometimes* use the land without permission.

“Like the gentleman said, we want them to hunt. Still, yeah, it’d be nice if they stopped and asked. But it’s better now than it used to be.”

-- Safety Zone landowner

- Regarding property damage, while most Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants (74% and 79%, respectively) *have not* had problems or damage from hunters, a slight majority of Forest Game participants (54%) *have* had problems or damage. The type of damage varied by group, but littering and damage to forests, vegetation, and/or crops were common. Among Forest Game participants, damage to paths and trails was also fairly common.

“[Hunters hunting without permission] is not a problem here. We want people to go in and hunt.”

-- Safety Zone landowner

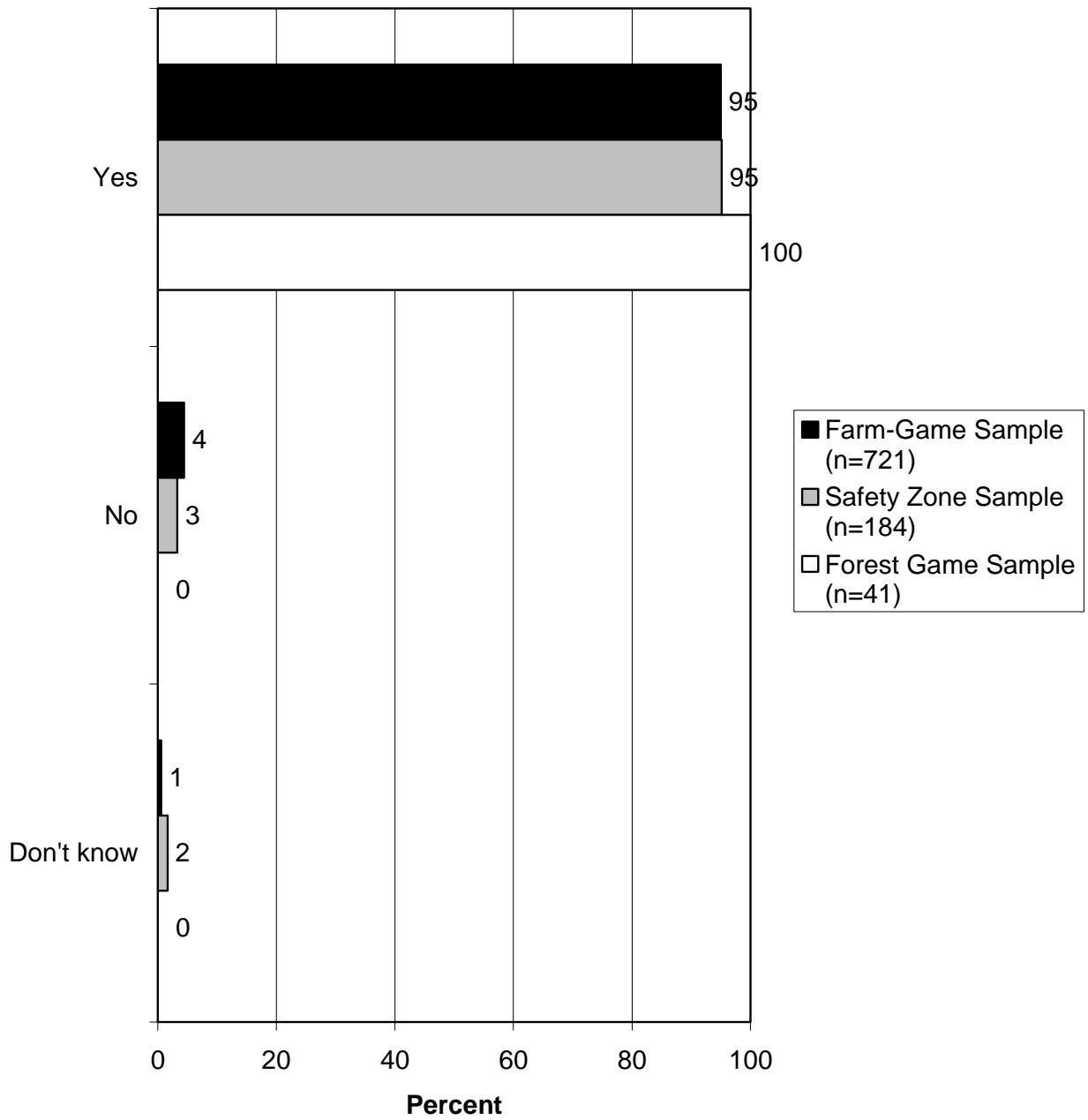
“[Hunters trespassing] is not really an issue. We don’t consider someone on the property trespassing. It’s not a problem, not an issue for us. Everybody’s free to use the property. The vandalism and the ATV use, those are issues, because in essence they cost us money at some point. But just someone using the property, that’s fine with us.”

-- Forest Game cooperator

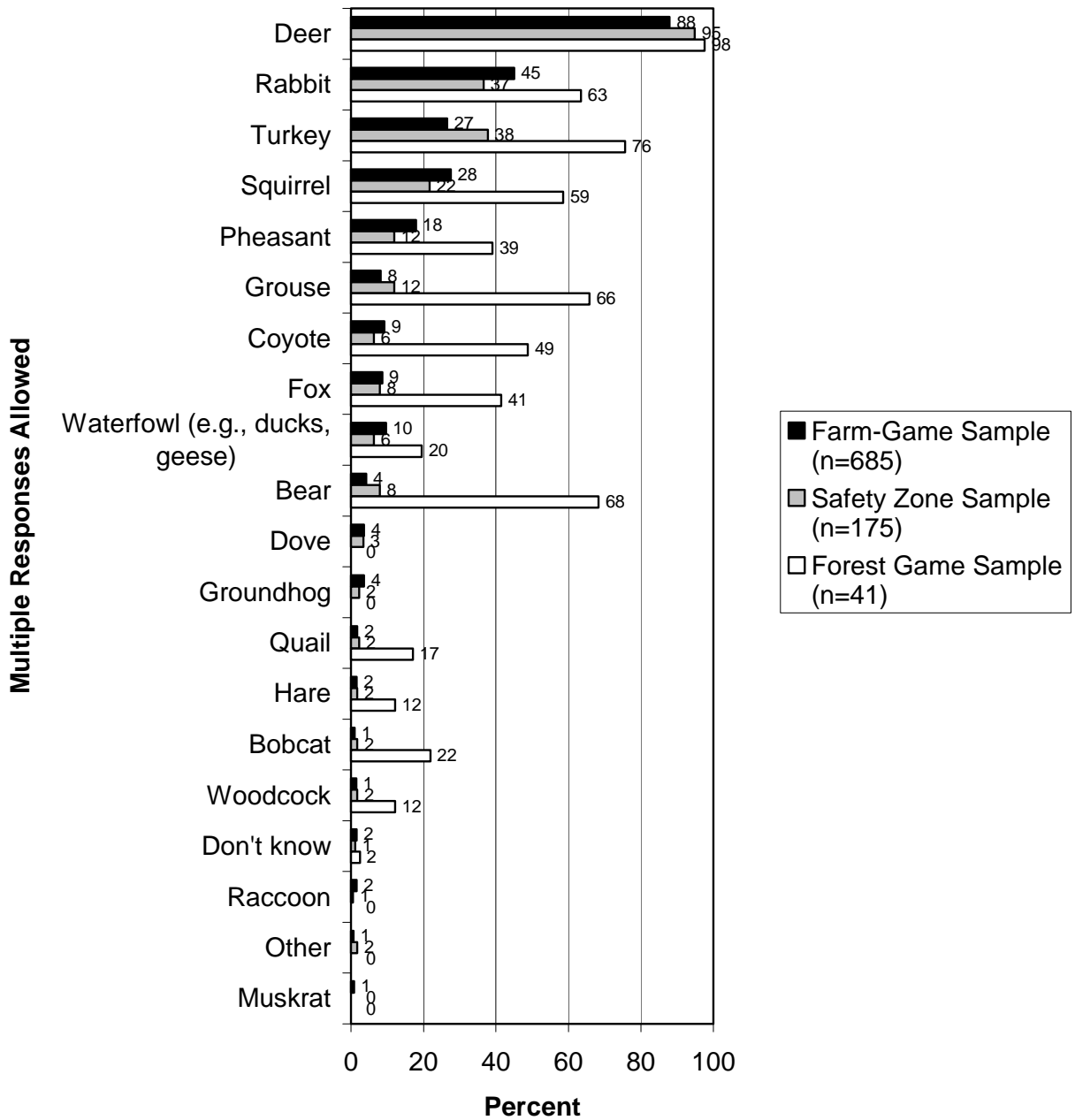
“[Hunters trespassing] is pretty much a non-issue.”

-- Forest Game cooperator

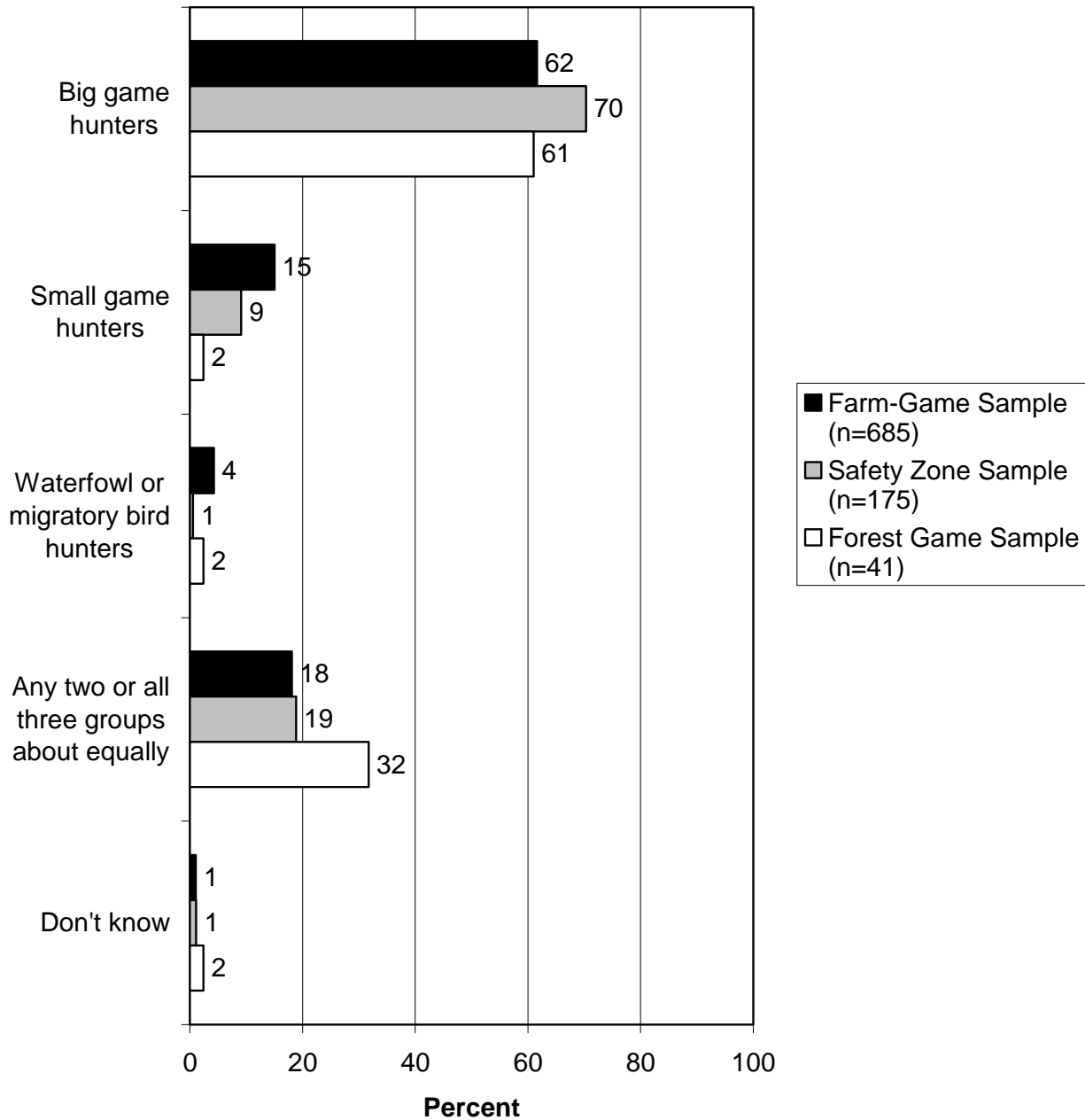
Q91. In the past 2 years, has your property been utilized for hunting?



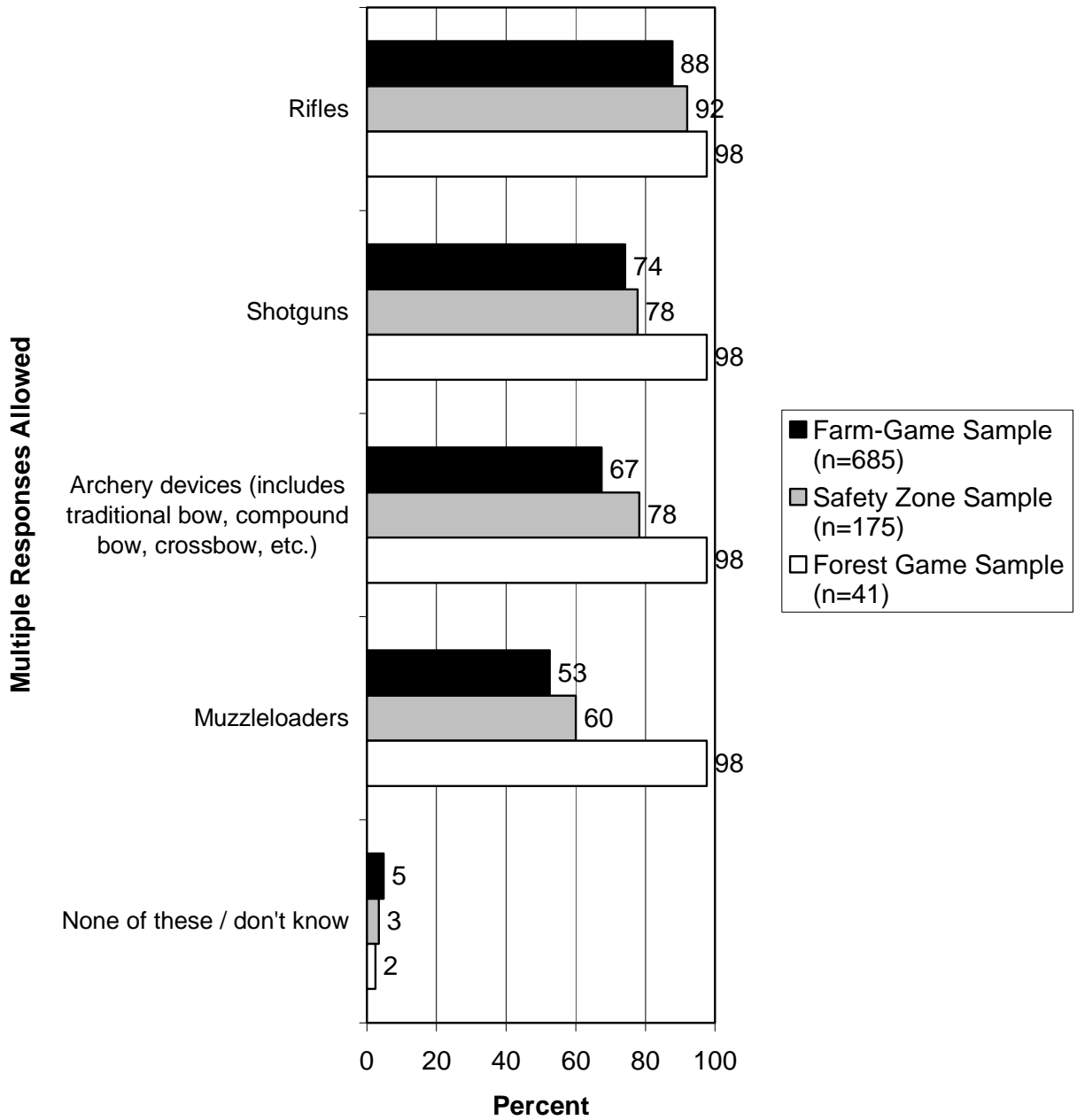
Q94. For what species do people hunt on your property? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



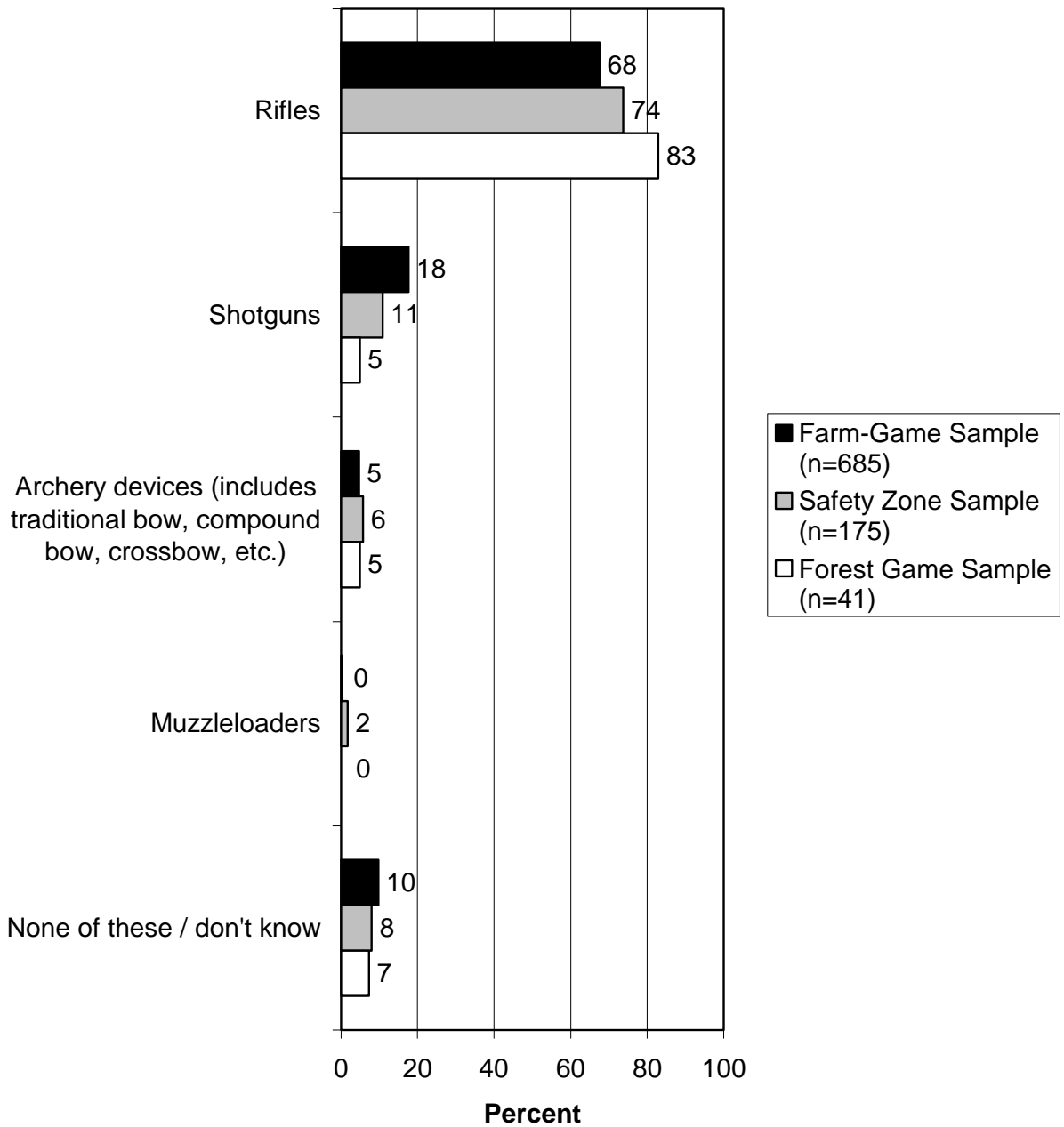
Q105. Which one of the following types of hunters most often utilizes your property? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



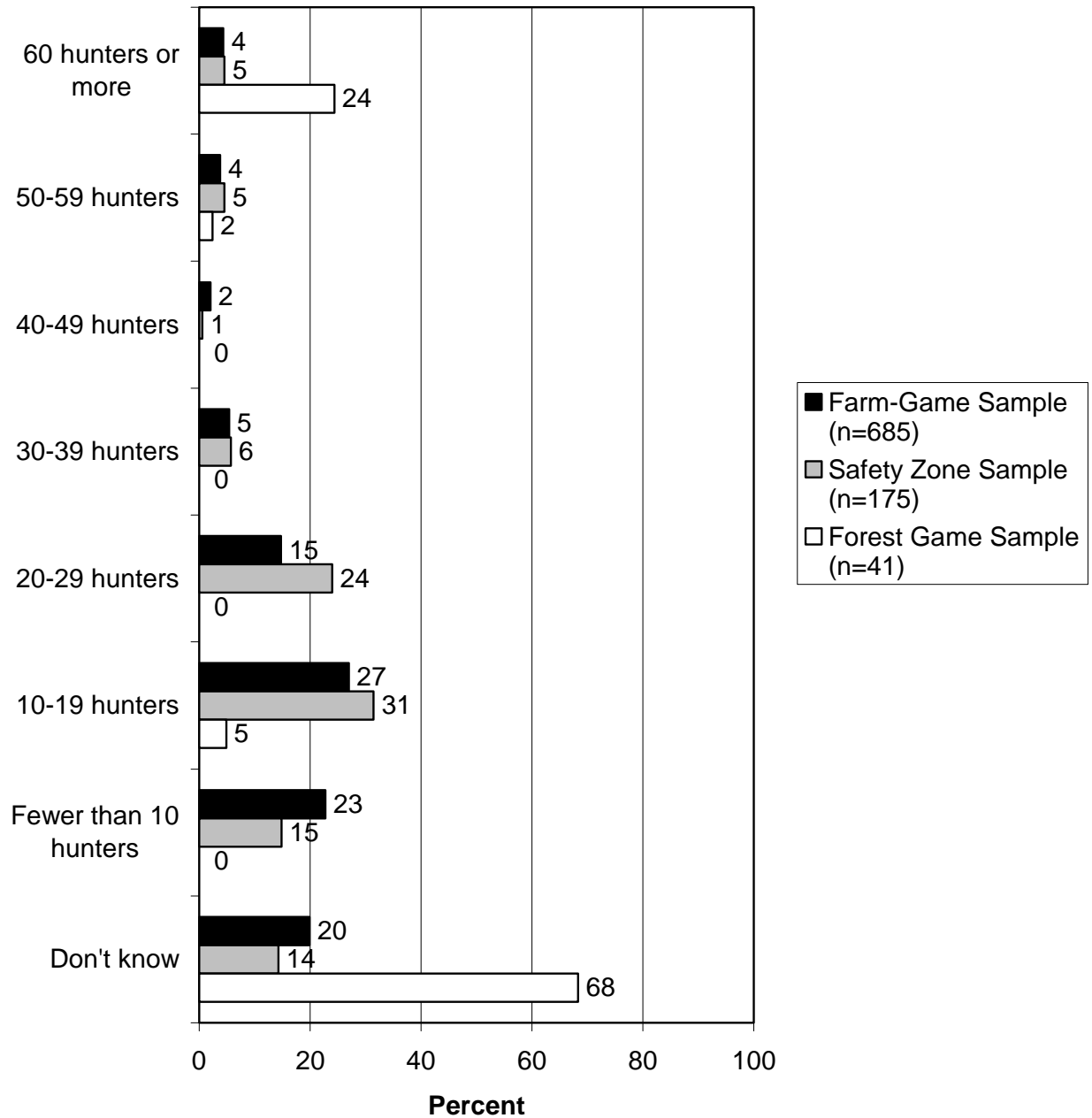
Q98. Which of the following firearms are utilized by hunters on your property? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



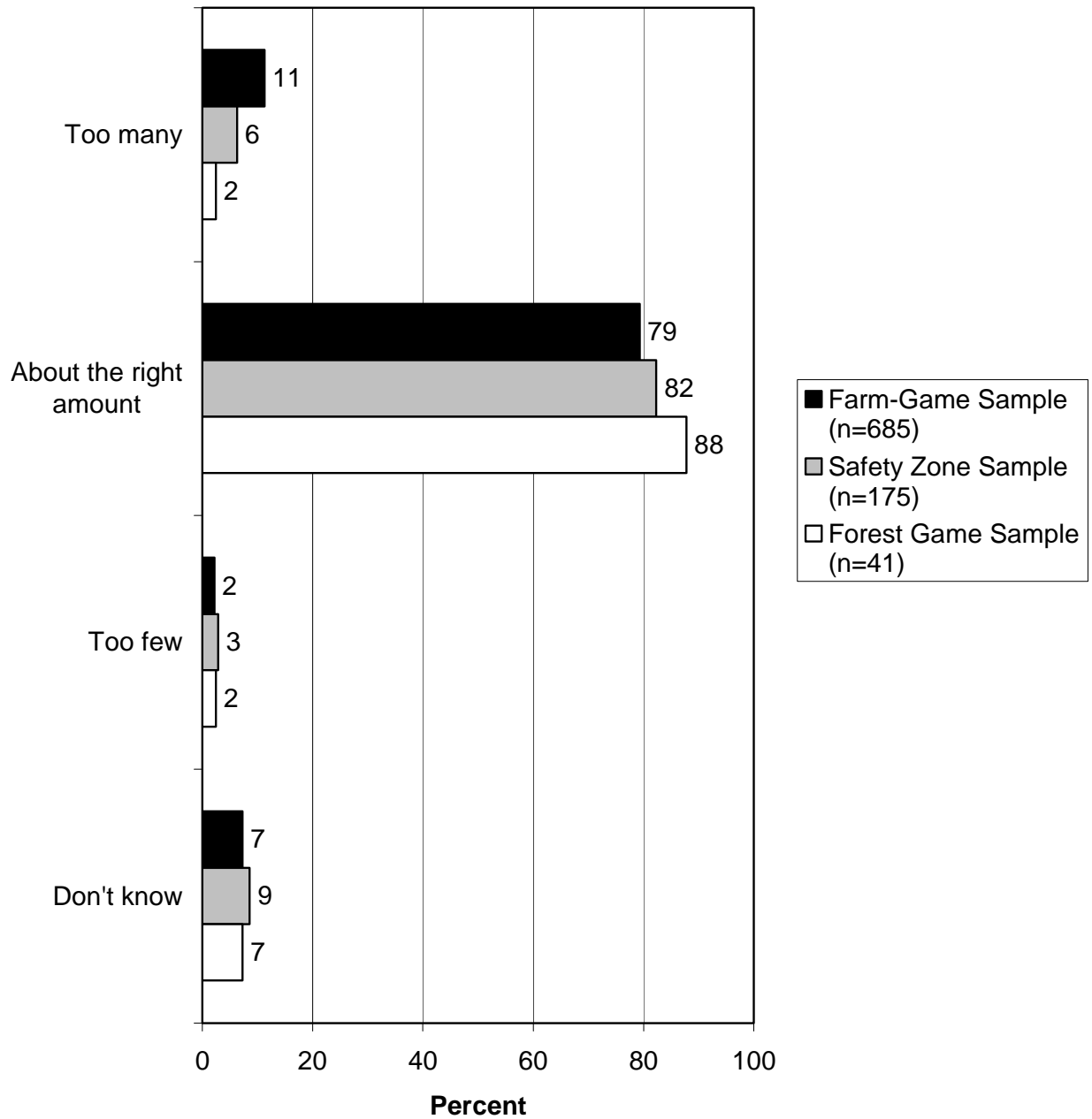
**Q99. Which of the following firearms is most commonly utilized by hunters on your property?
(Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)**



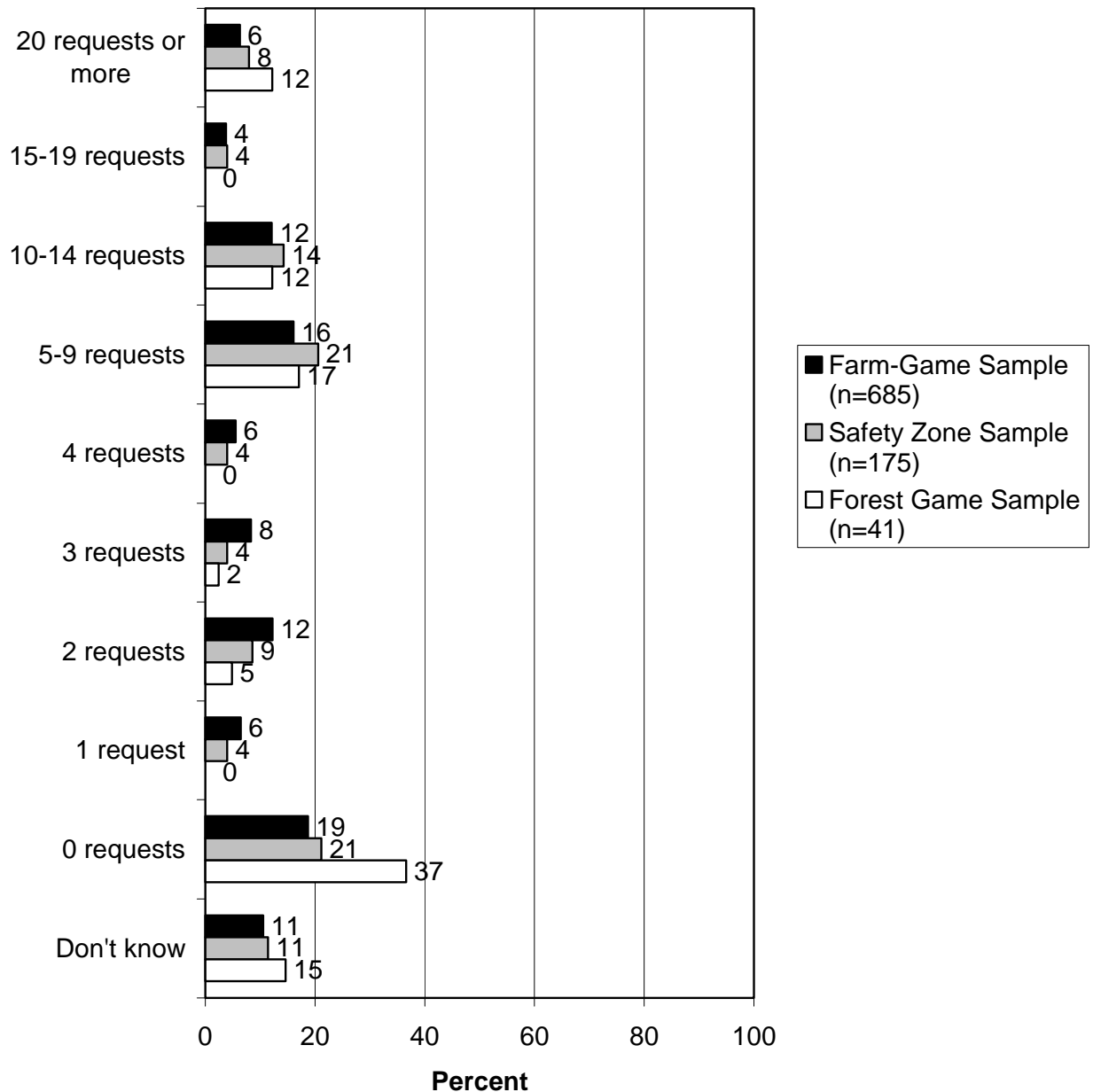
Q100. About how many hunters would you say utilize your property during an average year? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



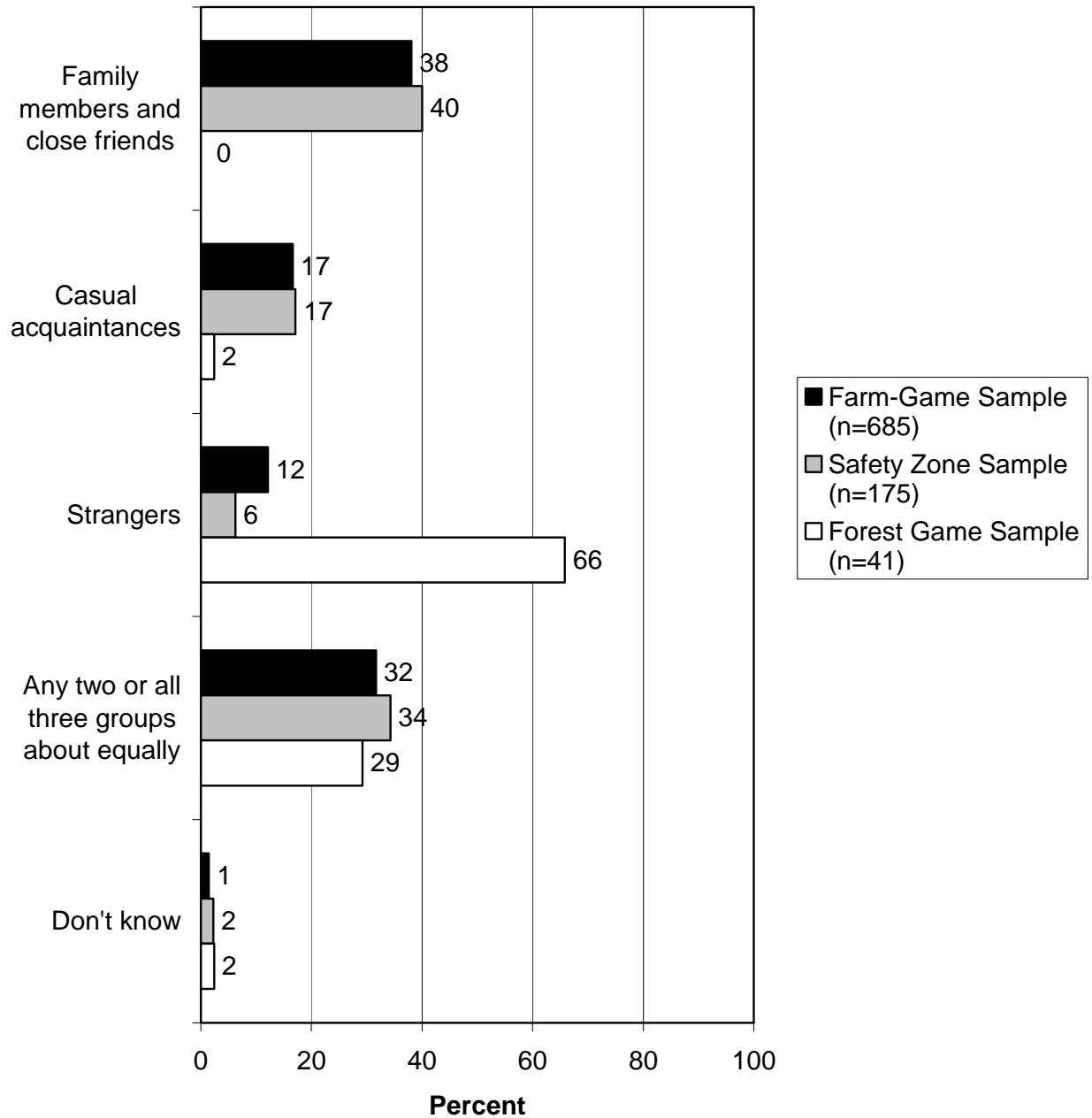
Q102. Would you say the amount of hunters who utilize your property in an average year is...? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



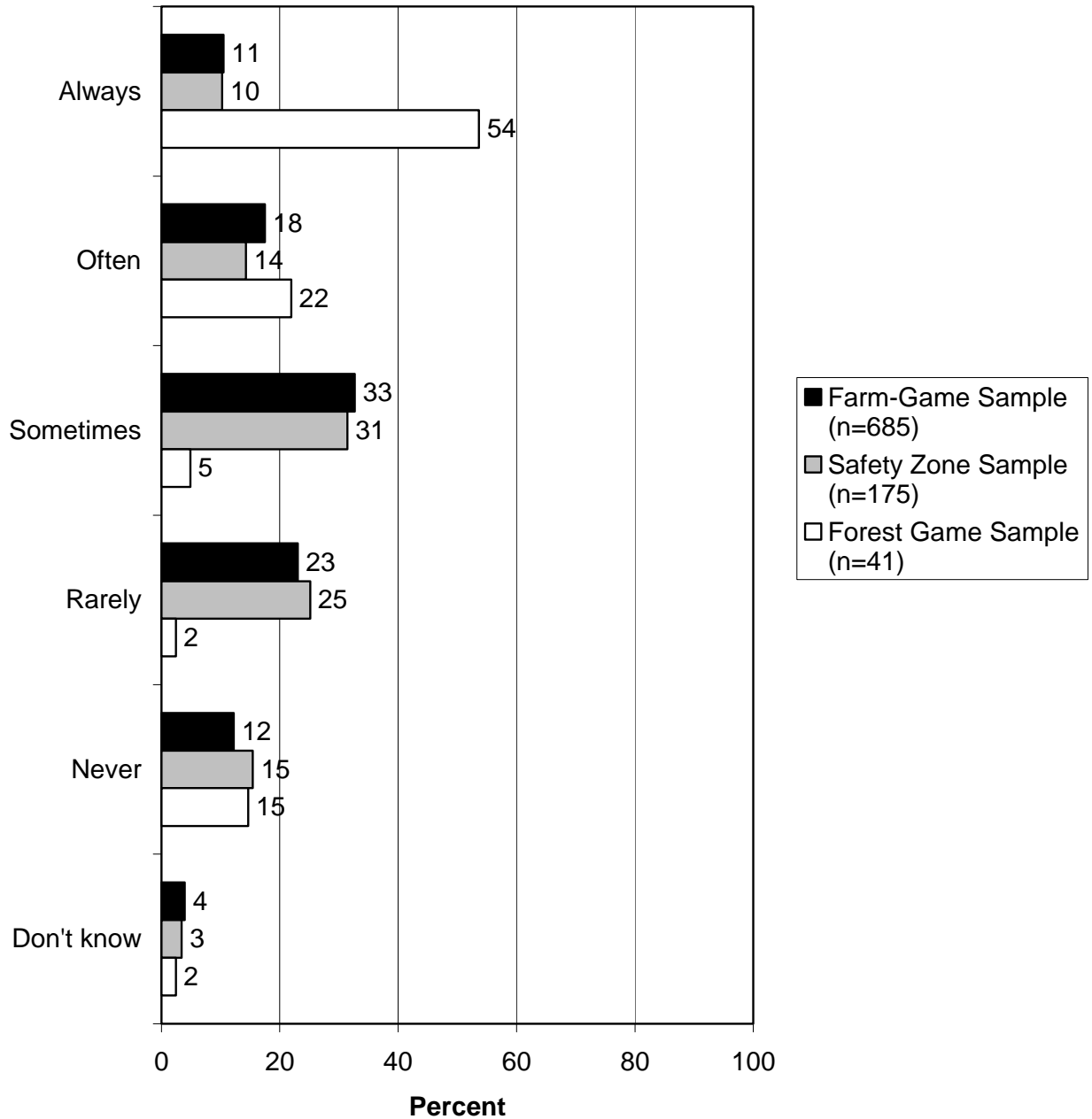
Q103. About how many requests have you received in the past 12 months from hunters seeking to utilize your property? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



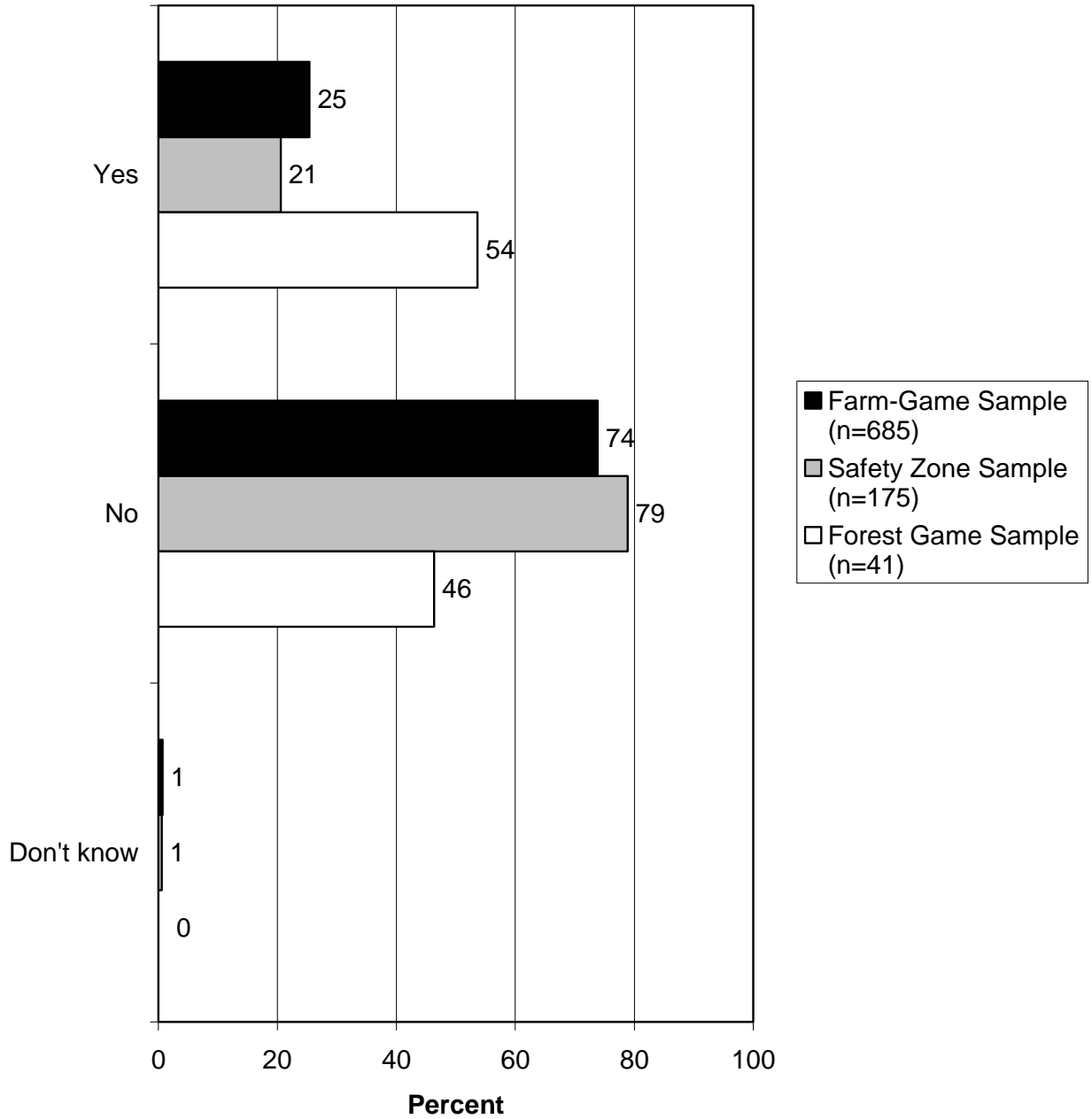
Q106. Which one of the following groups most often utilizes your property for hunting? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



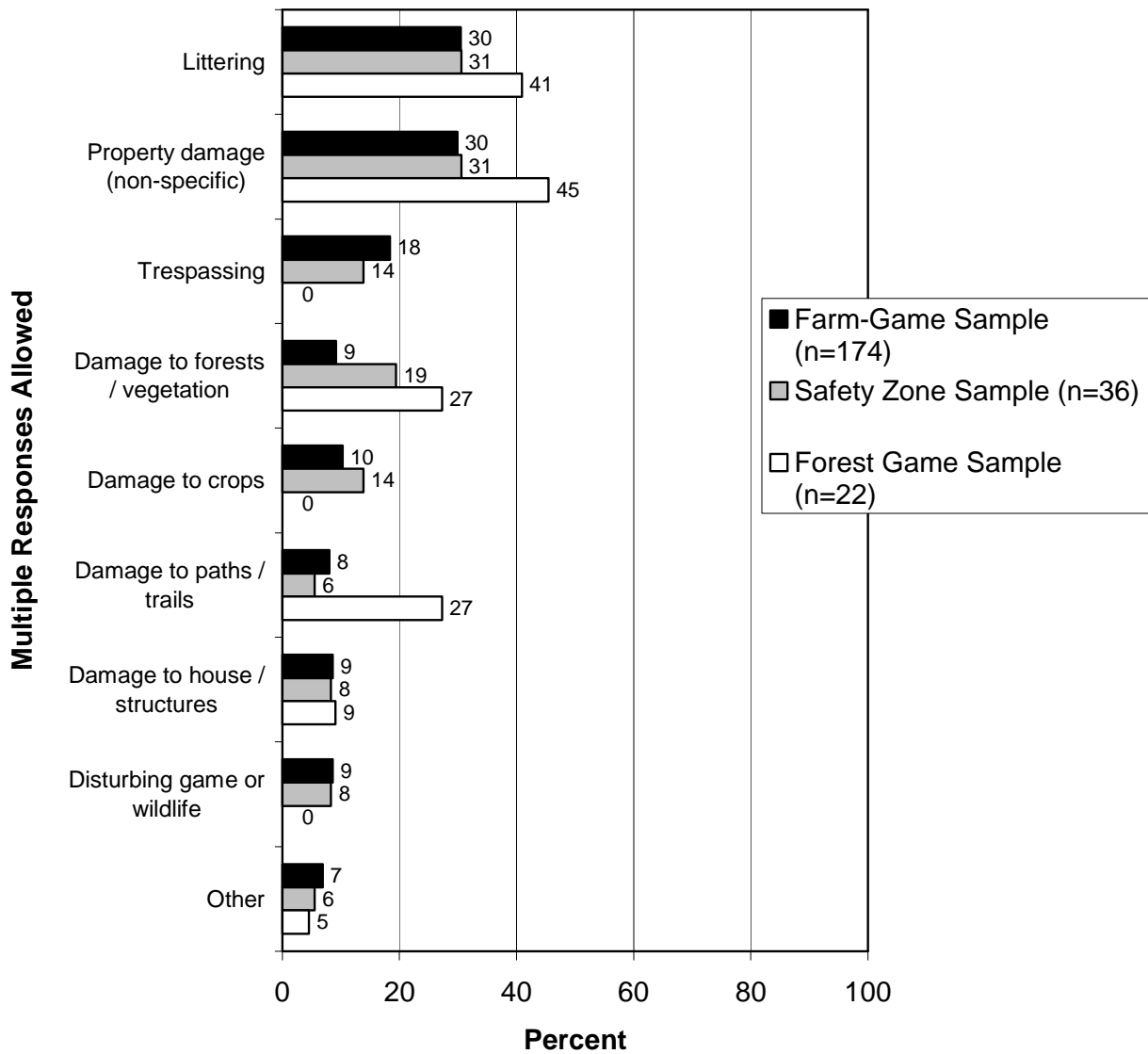
Q107. Would you say hunters utilize your property without permission...? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



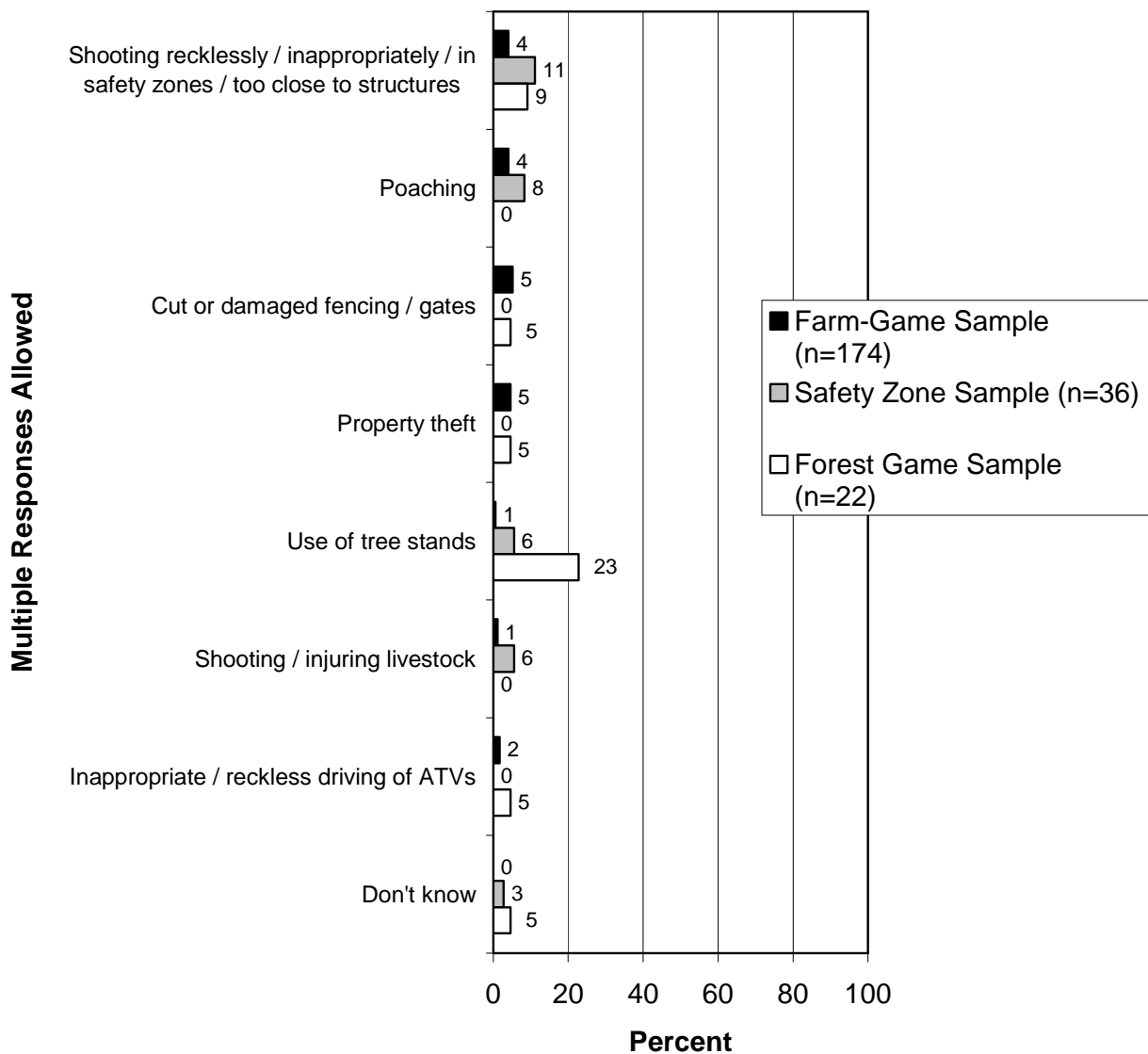
Q108. Have you ever experienced problems or damage to your property caused by hunters? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years.)



**Q111. What problems or damage to your property caused by hunters have you experienced? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years and who have experienced problems or damage to their property caused by hunters.)
(Part 1.)**



Q111. What problems or damage to your property caused by hunters have you experienced? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized for hunting in the past 2 years and who have experienced problems or damage to their property caused by hunters.)
(Part 2.)



OTHER RECREATIONISTS' USE OF LAND

- The survey asked about other recreationists' use of the property. Nearly all of the Forest Game group indicate that other recreationists have used the land, but less of the other groups indicated this use (41% of Farm Game program participants and 52% of Safety Zone program participants). Those who indicated that other recreationists used the land were asked about the type of recreationist: ATV riders led the list (from 79% to 88% of the samples). Among the Forest Game group, wildlife viewers/photographers, horseback riders, and anglers were also quite common.
- Regarding whether these other recreationists use the property without permission, the answers are well distributed in the Farm Game group and the Safety Zone group; however, in the Forest Game group, the most common answer is "always." Furthermore, the majority of Forest Game program participants (80%) say that they have experienced problems or damage from other recreationists, while much less of the other groups say they have had problems or damage (42% and 35%, respectively, of Farm Game program participants and Safety Zone program participants). ATV riders are, by far, the most common types of other recreationists who have caused damage (from 89% to 94% of those who have had problems or damage attribute it to ATV riders). The type of damage varied among groups: for instance, Forest Game program participants most commonly say the damage was to paths and trails, and Farm Game participants most commonly say the damage was to crops.

"I do have a lot of trouble with ATVs, and...I don't think the Game Commission can do anything to stop them. [As] far as I'm concerned, [ATVs] are the worst thing they ever came out with for kids."

-- Farm Game landowner

"[T]hese guys are being sold vehicles where they don't have a lick of a place to ride them. So maybe they should start to address it there."

-- Safety Zone landowner

"ATVs are a problem. They'll create paths and erosion. We try to minimize erosion to keep our water supply clean, but [ATVs] create more mud and particulates in the water."

-- Forest Game cooperator

“Well, for me it’s always been more about the snowmobilers. With the recent snow, my property looks like some kind of race track, and they can’t see some of these small trees. They go and tear up everything, and at night too. Well, I had a snowmobile once, too; they’re having fun. But a little more enforcement would be good.”

-- Former Safety Zone landowner

“The ATVs are a huge problem for us. They take land out of production, land where we should be growing trees. If someone drives by with an ATV and they see someone riding on that property, they think it’s okay to ride there. I would hope that if we had signs up that say ‘No motorized vehicles’—and that means any motorized vehicles—that we wouldn’t allow any of them. The ATV is the biggest problem for us, because they not only start new roads, they’ll run over your road when it’s muddy, and we’ve got a lot of money in those roads.”

-- Forest Game cooperator

“[ATVs] have become more of an issue for us here in the last few years. The ATVs are a huge problem. I’m not sure how you solve that—I think it’s going to take more than the Pennsylvania Game Commission. I think it’s going to take the state legislature to enact some kind of legislation, something with more teeth than what we have now, because what we have now is pretty much worthless. But it is a huge problem: our road maintenance cost has gone out of the roof. [ATV riders] run the center of a road right out of it, pretty soon you end up with a ditch and erosion problems. What happened a few years ago was tree stands all over the place, and now they’ve started cutting the locks on our gates. We’ve had a huge problem with keeping gates locked..”

-- Forest Game cooperator

“We’ve had problems with the ATVs, too. Problem is, once there’s a bike path, it becomes a path for ATVs. Then there’s the four-wheelers, and then they’re dumping trash. So we’ve tried to restrict the ATVs and even built fences on places they habitually go in.”

-- Farm Game landowner

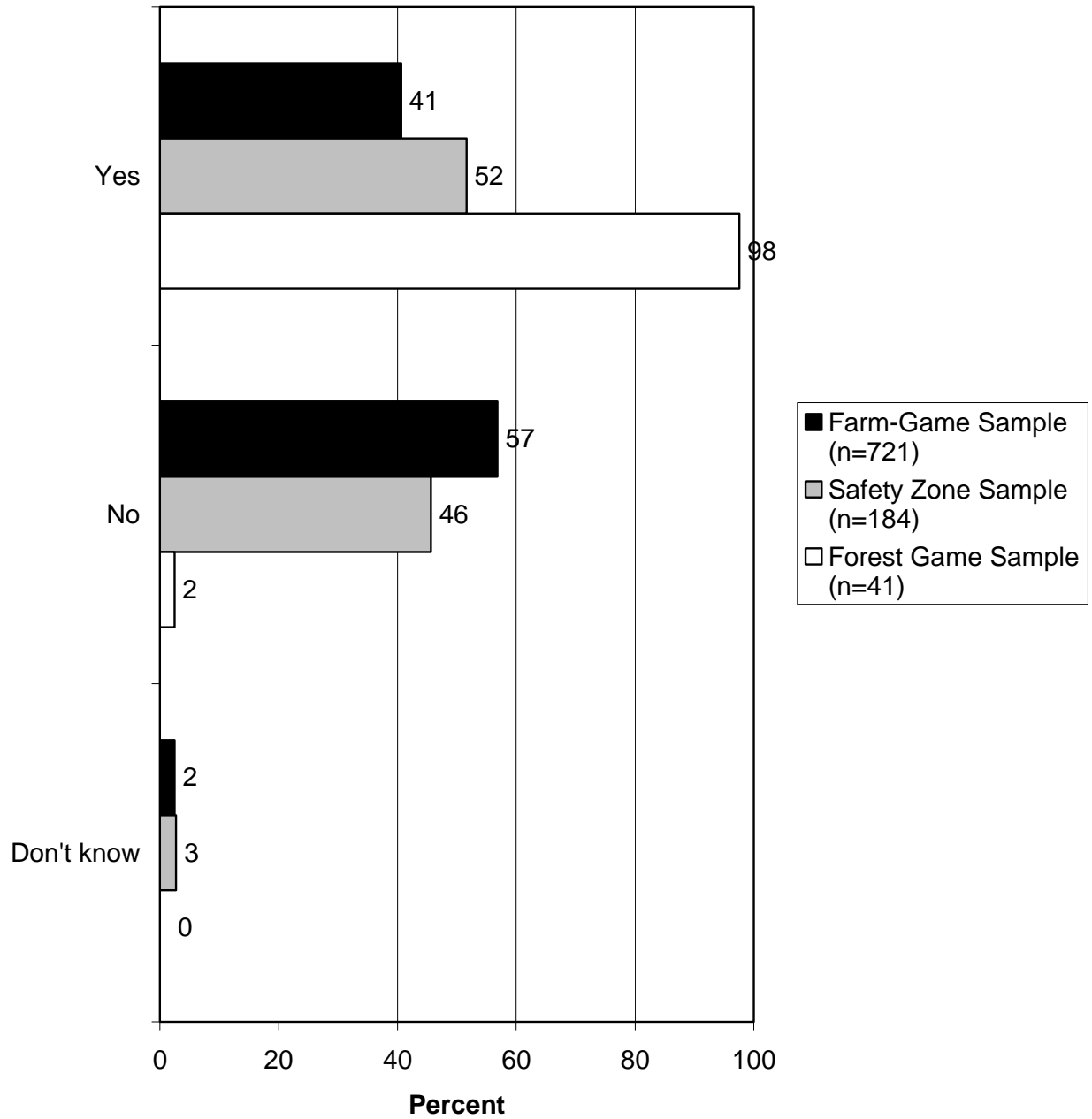
“The ATV thing, I’ve gave up on it. I allowed them to come down, created some roads through the woods, I let the kids come down there, and it was only a matter of about a month before they decided the roads weren’t good enough. So I don’t allow them anymore.”

-- Farm Game landowner

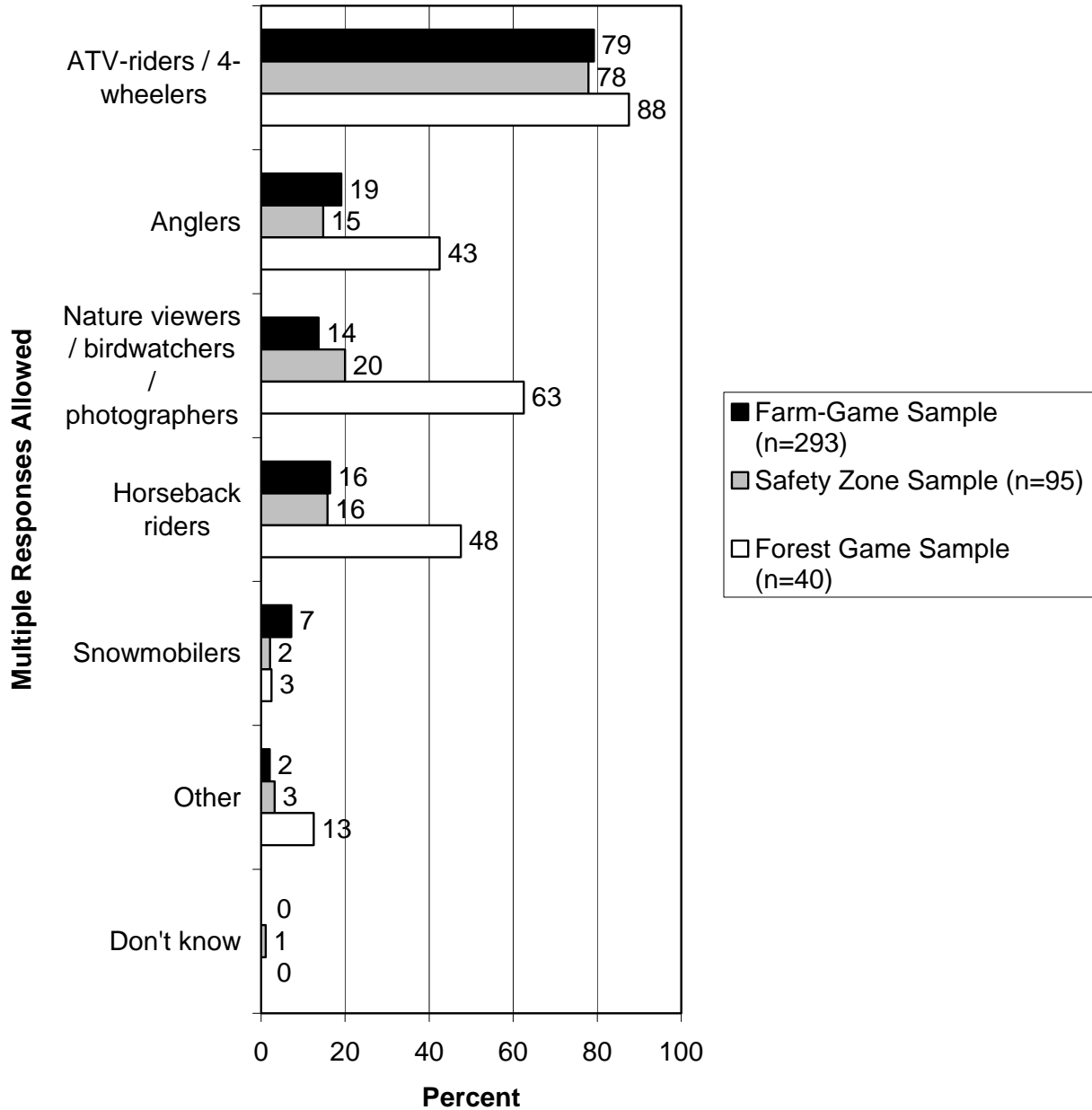
“I had some problem with guys coming in with their ATVs and making their own trails, but I don’t see where the Game Commission can do you any good there. It has to be with the state police.”

-- Farm Game landowner

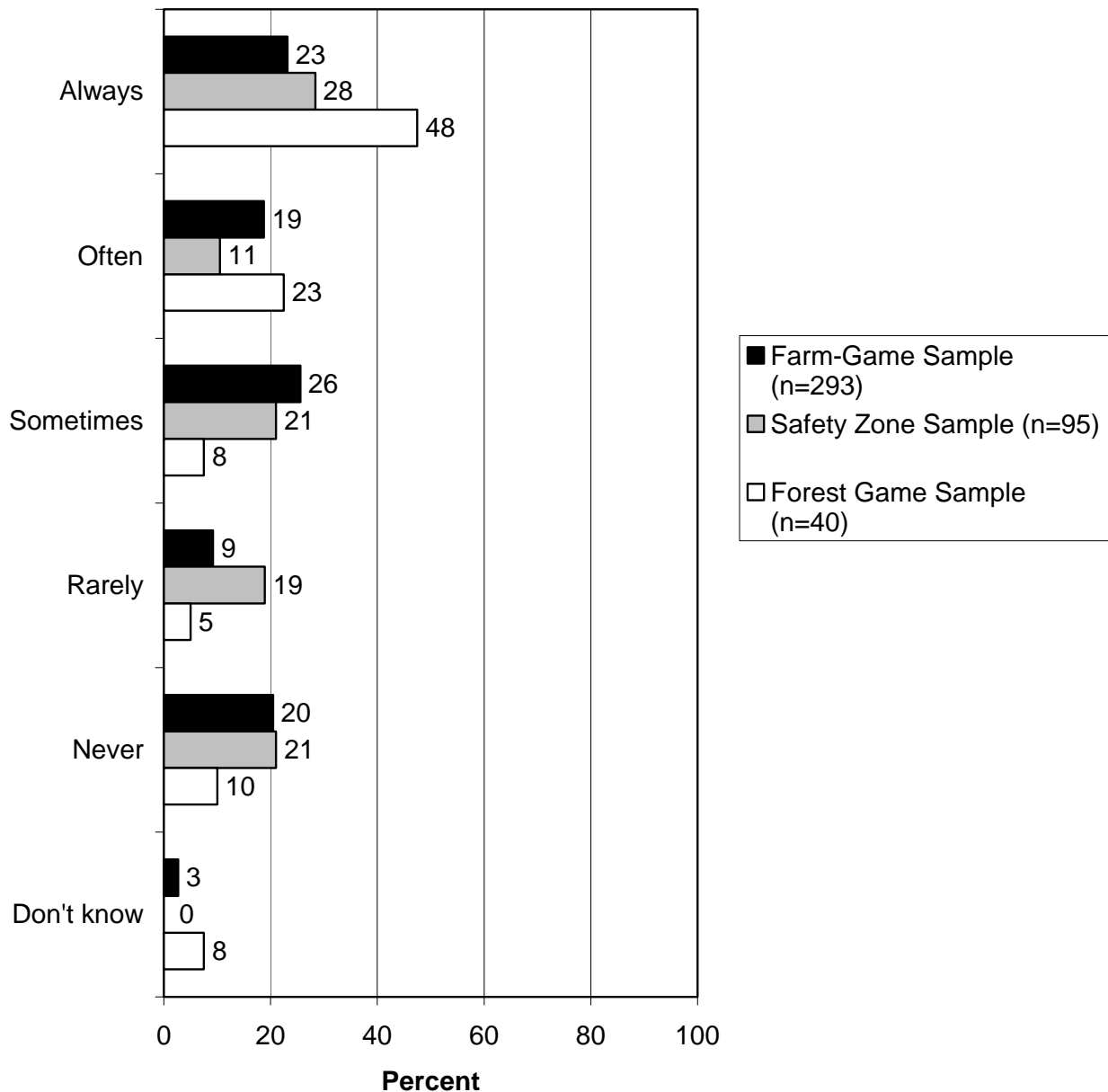
Q113. In the past 2 years, has your property been utilized by other recreationists, such as ATV-riders, anglers, or nature viewers?



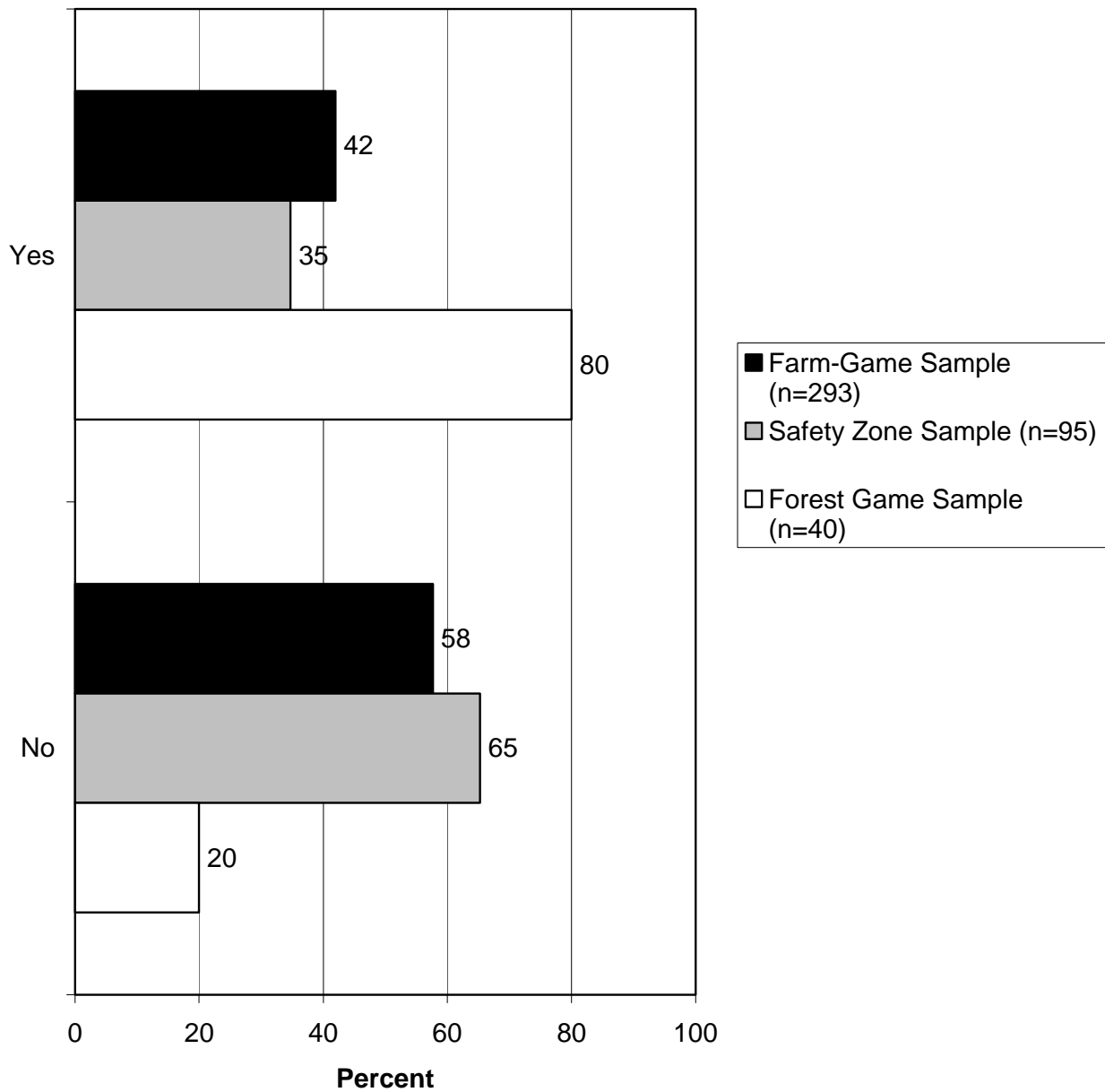
Q116. What other recreationists utilize your property? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized by other recreationists in the past 2 years.)



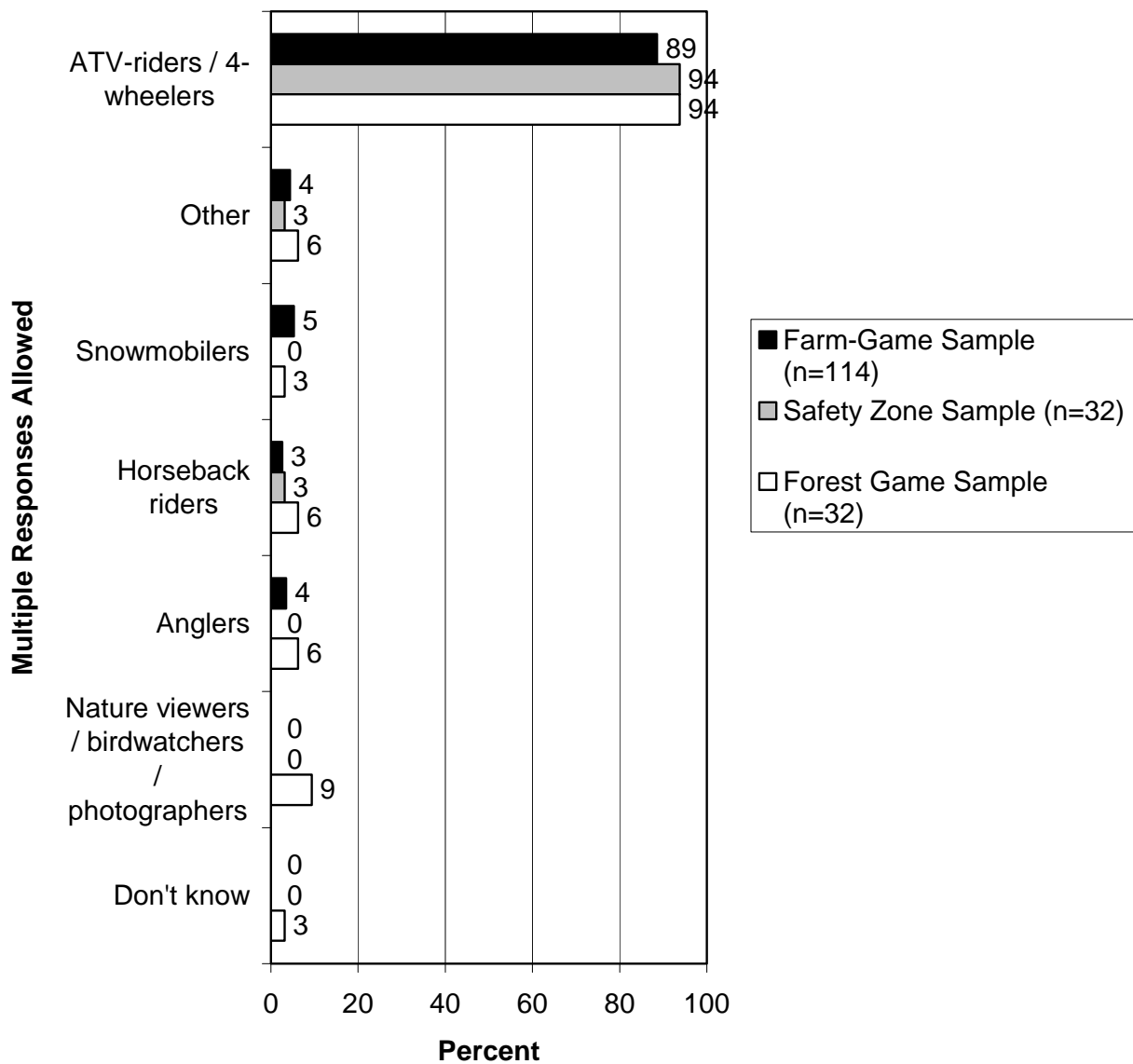
Q118. Would you say other recreationists, such as ATV riders, anglers, or nature viewers, utilize your property without permission...? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized by other recreationists in the past 2 years.)



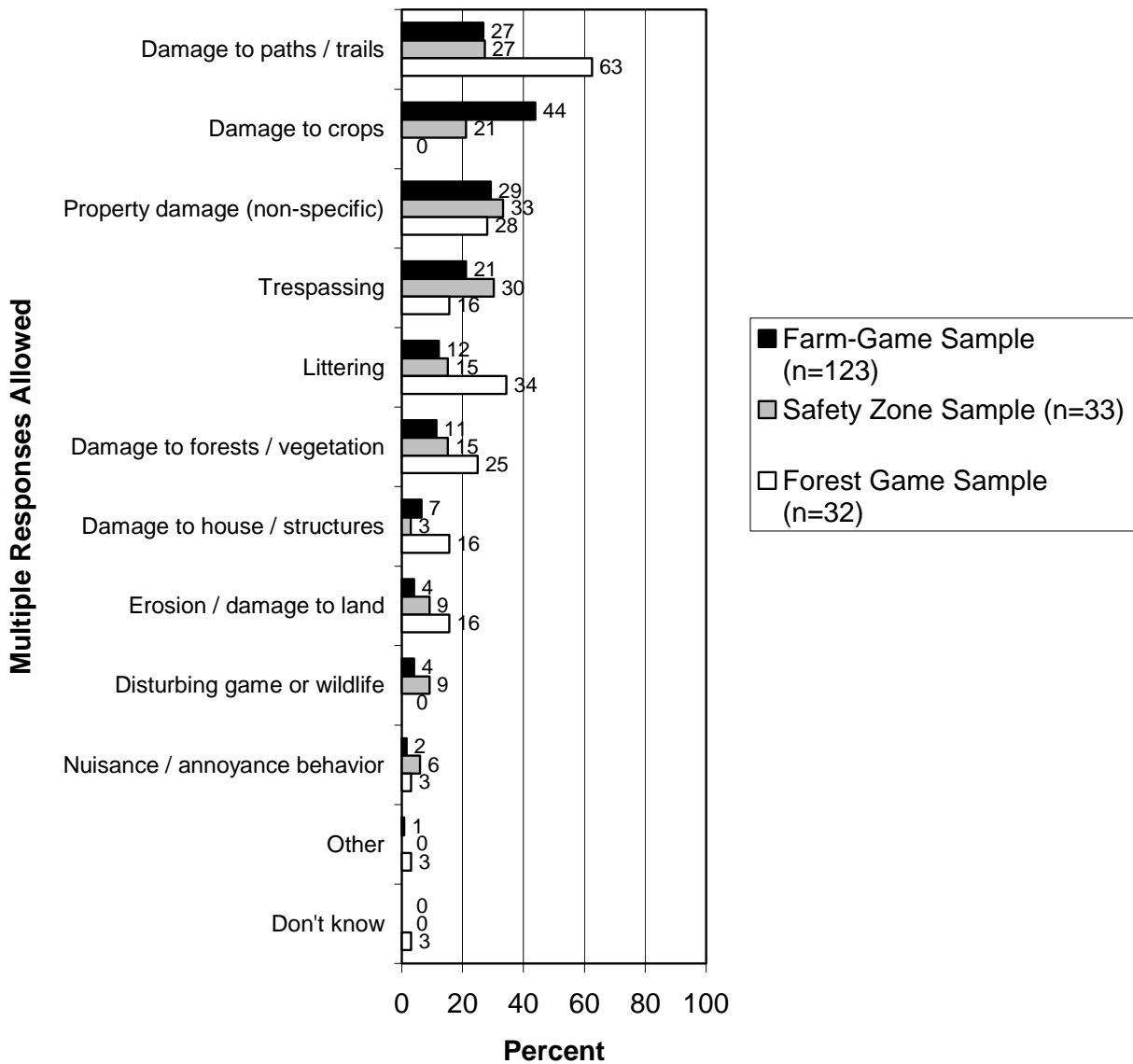
Q119. Have you ever experienced problems or damage to your property caused by recreationists, excluding hunters? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized by other recreationists in the past 2 years.)



Q122. Which types of recreationists cause problems or damage to your property? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized by other recreationists in the past 2 years and who have experienced problems or damage to their property caused by the recreationists.)



Q126. What problems or damage to your property caused by recreationists have you experienced? (Asked of those whose property has been utilized by other recreationists in the past 2 years and who have experienced problems or damage to their property caused by the recreationists.)



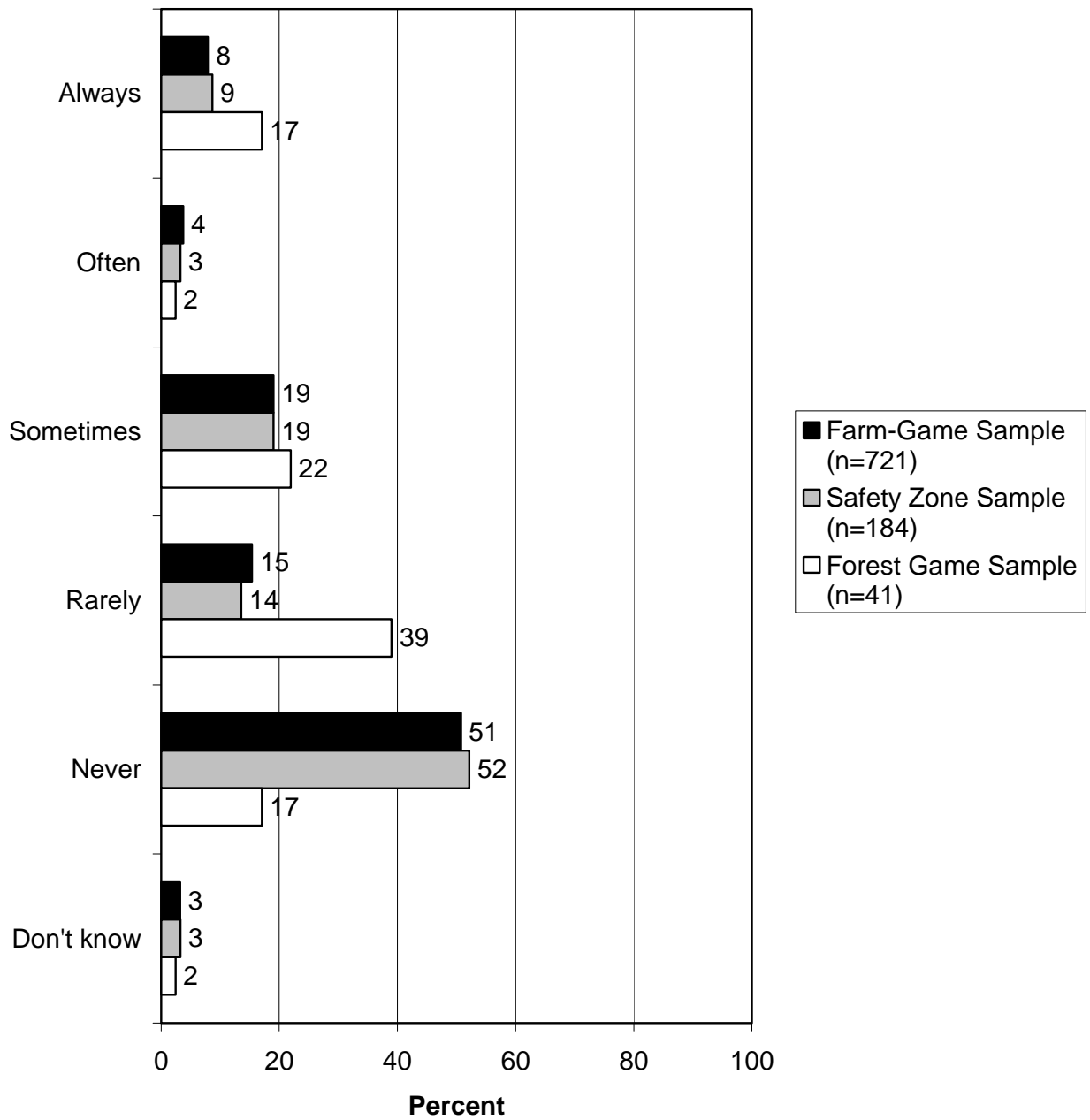
ACCESS RESTRICTIONS ON LAND

- The majority of all three groups rarely or never restrict access to the property in the Public Access Program (66% of both Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants and 56% of Forest Game program participants). Forest Game program participants are the most likely, however, to always restrict access (17% do so). ATVs are the leading reason that program participants restrict access. Safety and liability concerns and to protect crops or livestock are also common reasons for restricting access, among those who do so.

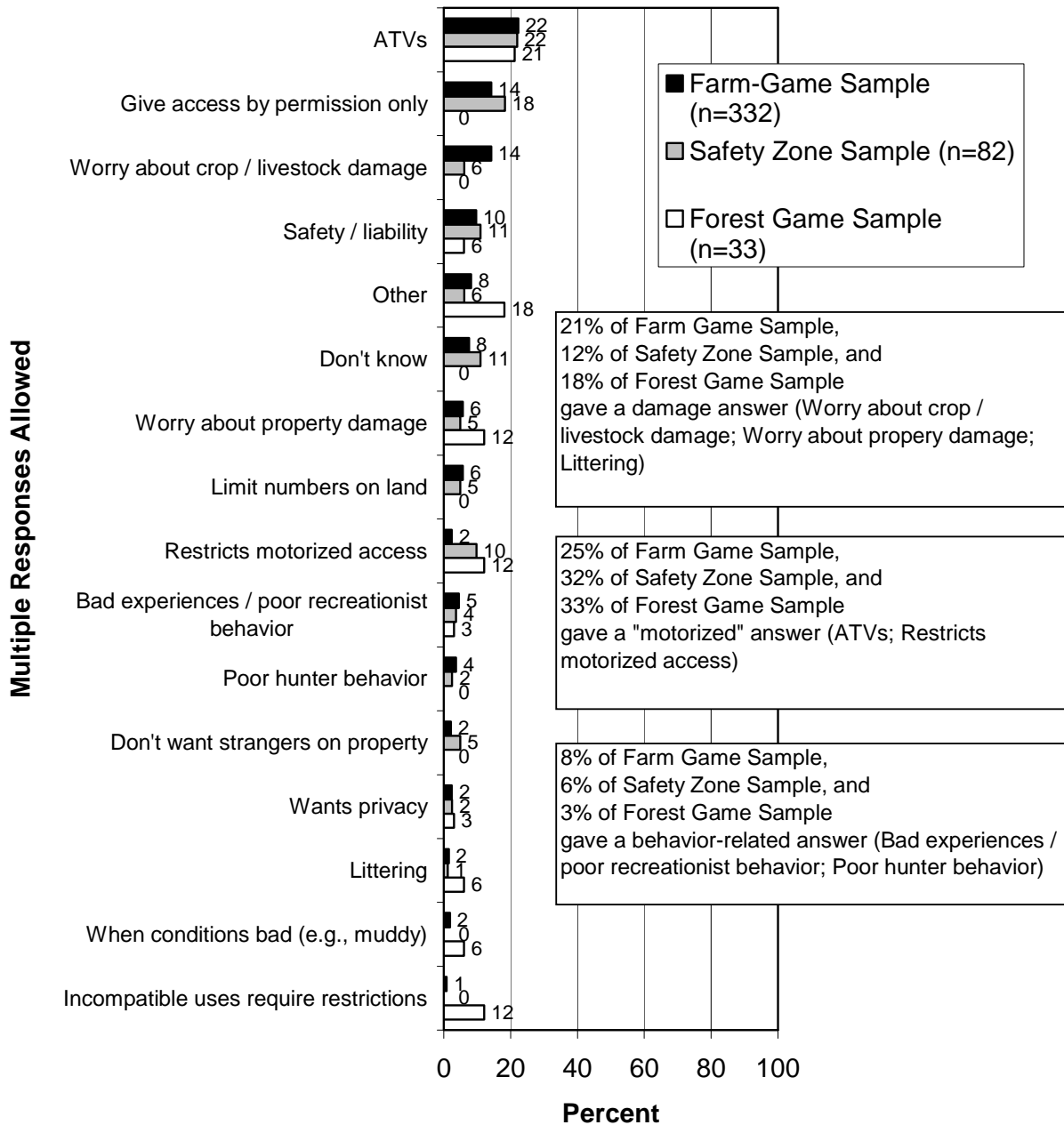
“I don’t know that we’d want to [restrict access]. We’re talking forested land that isn’t used for anything else. So I don’t think so. If [the land] is open for hunting, it’s open for hunting.”

-- Forest Game cooperator

Q128. Do you restrict access to your property?



Q129. For what reasons do you restrict access to your property? (Asked of those who restrict access to their property.)



CONTACT WITH PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION STAFF

- Pennsylvania Game Commission employees visit property in the Forest Game program fairly often (according to perceptions of program participants), less often to property in the Farm Game and Safety Zone programs. Fortunately, only 2% of Farm Game program participants and 7% of Safety Zone program participants say that Pennsylvania Game Commission employees never visit the property (none of the Forest Game program participants said never). Of those whose property was visited by a Pennsylvania Game Commission employee, half or less say that the visit actually concerned the Public Access Program (51% of Farm Game program participants, 38% of Safety Zone program participants, and 39% of Forest Game program participants say this). Quite often the visit was for another reason, including to provide information or assistance (unspecified in the survey), to deliver seedlings or plant trees, or because of problems with hunters and/or trappers, and because of problems with wildlife. Among Forest Game program participants, contact was often for general patrolling/law enforcement. (It may be that some of the contacts that were thought to be for other reasons may have actually been for the Public Access Program, based on the reasons given for the visit.) Finally, the survey asked the three groups how often they would like to have Pennsylvania Game Commission employees visit the property in the program: the Forest Game group, by and large, want frequent visits (32% said once a week, and another 32% said once a month); Farm Game program participants most commonly want visits once a year (43% of them gave this answer).

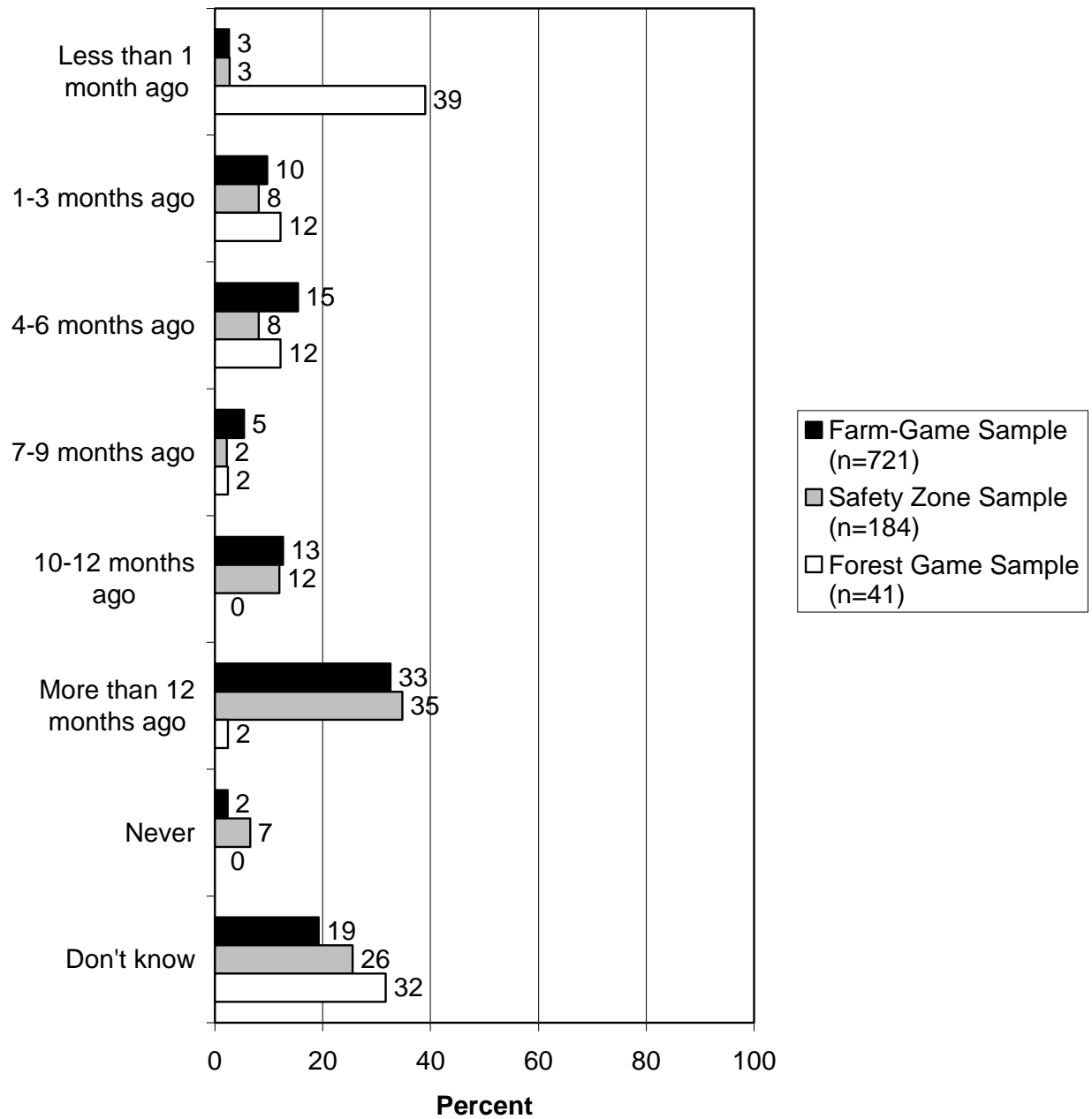
“I’d say we’ve had absolutely no contact with the Game Commission in thirty or forty years, other than dropping off a notice in the fall that seedlings are available.”

-- Farm Game landowner

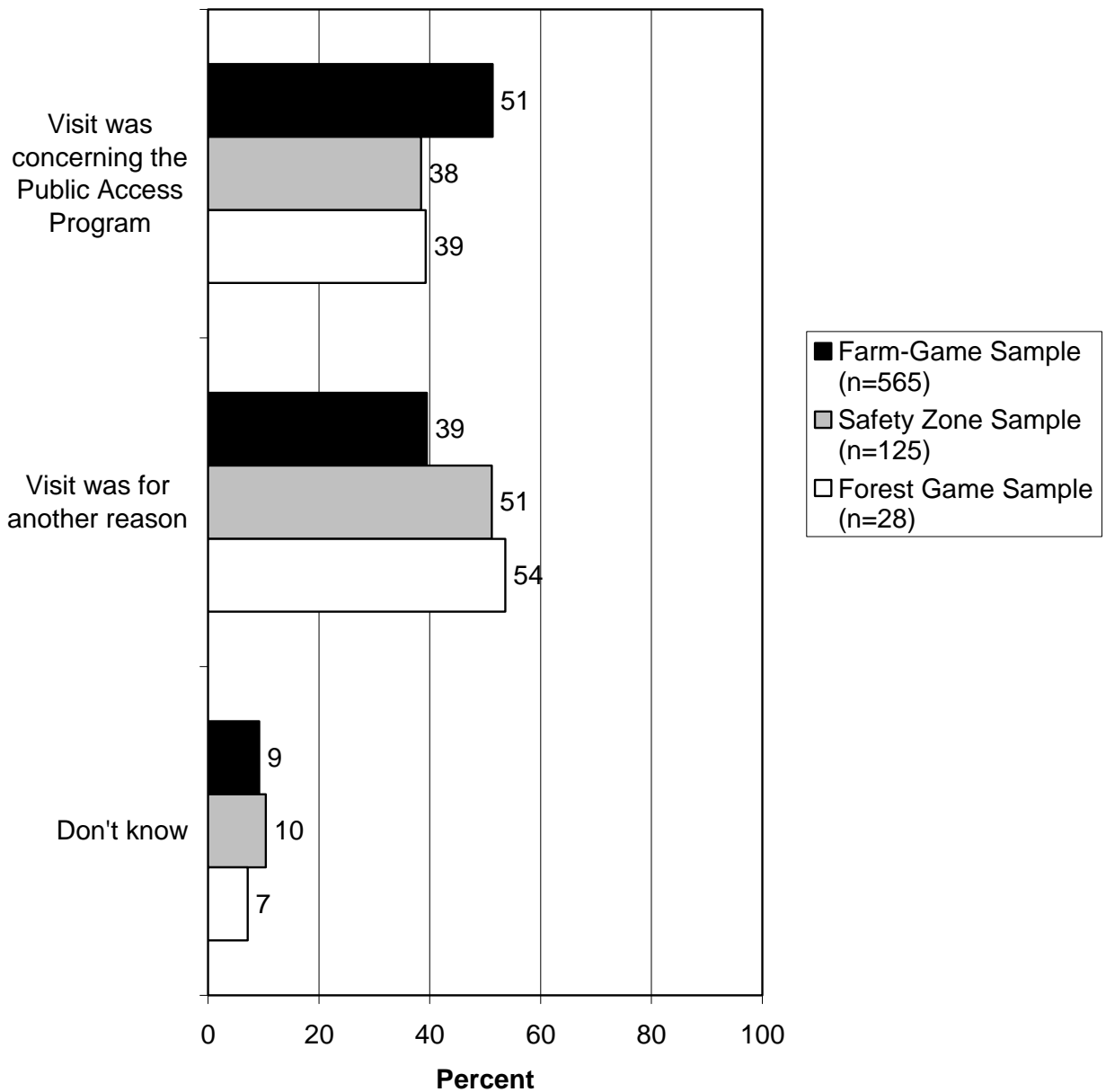
“Now we had the magazine [Game News], we had the signs, but once those visits stop, you’ve got no contact with the Commission.”

-- Safety Zone landowner

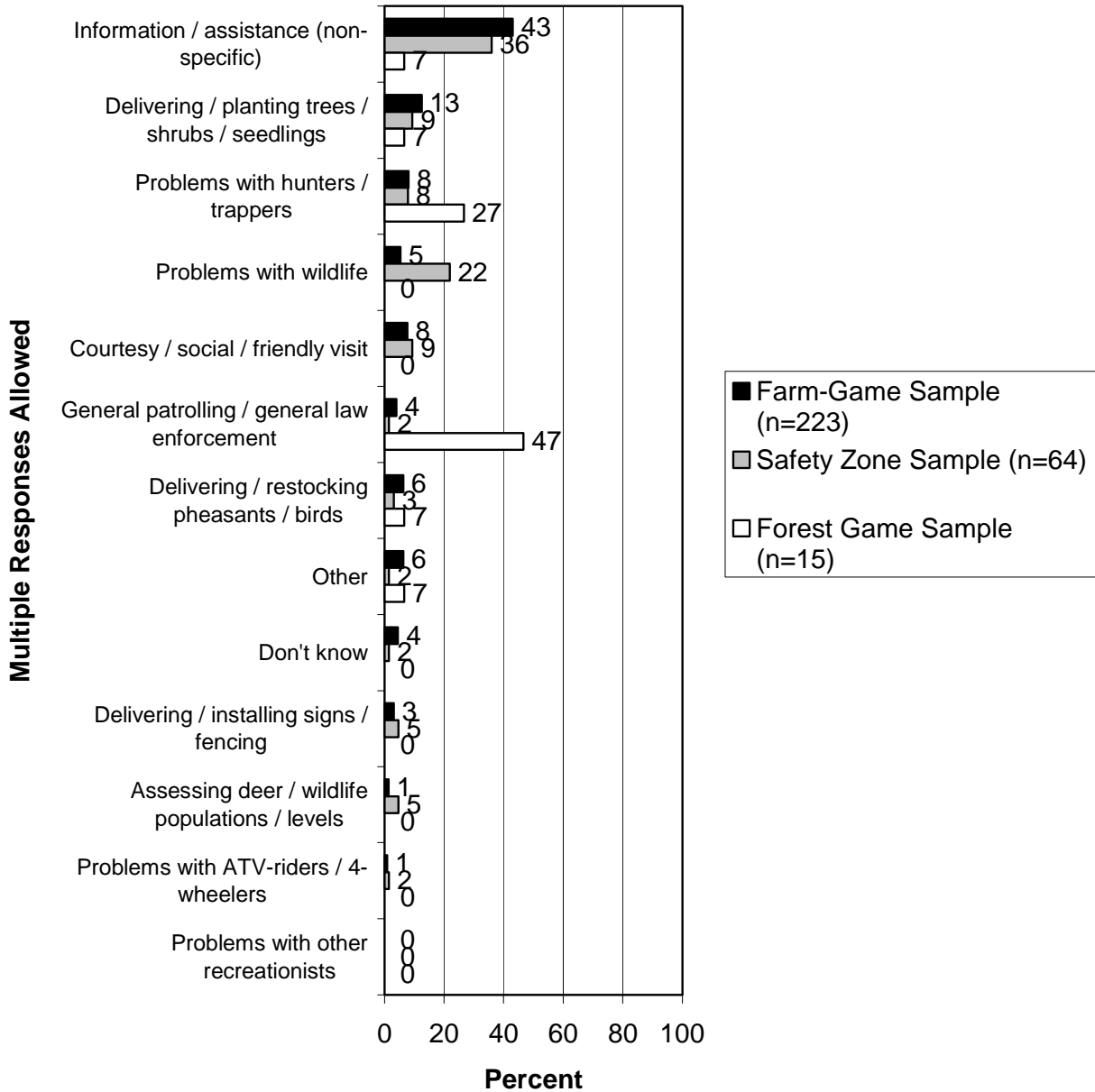
Q60. When was your property last visited by a Pennsylvania Game Commission employee?



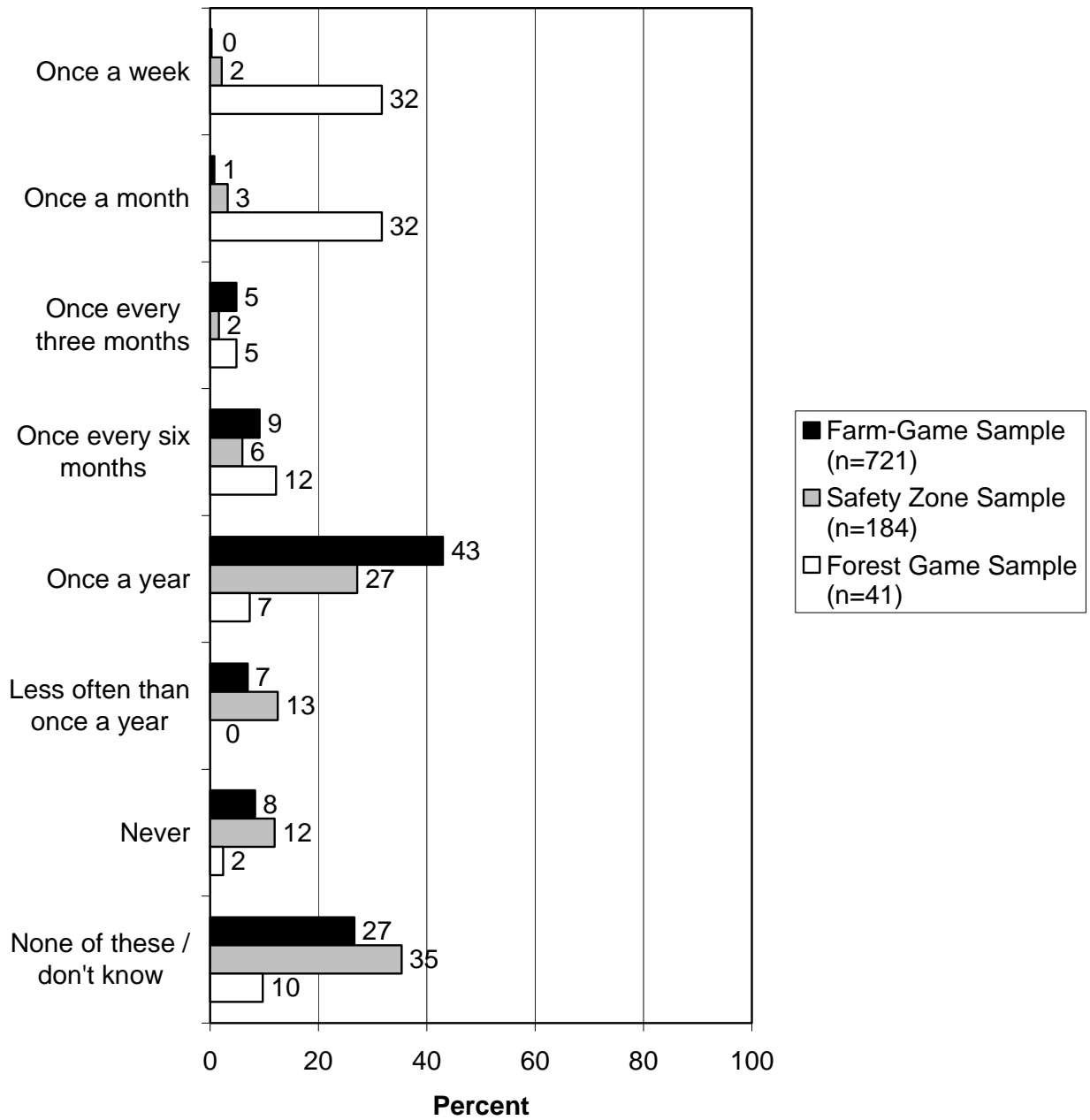
**Q61. Was the most recent visit to your property by the Pennsylvania Game Commission employee concerning the Public Access Program, or for another reason?
(Asked of those whose property has been visited by a Pennsylvania Game Commission employee.)**



Q64. What was the reason your property was visited by a Pennsylvania Game Commission employee? (Asked of those whose most recent visit by a Pennsylvania Game Commission employee was for a reason other than the Public Access Program.)



Q66. How often would you like your property to be visited by a Pennsylvania Game Commission employee?



SIGNAGE DISPLAYS ON LAND AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION REGARDING LAND

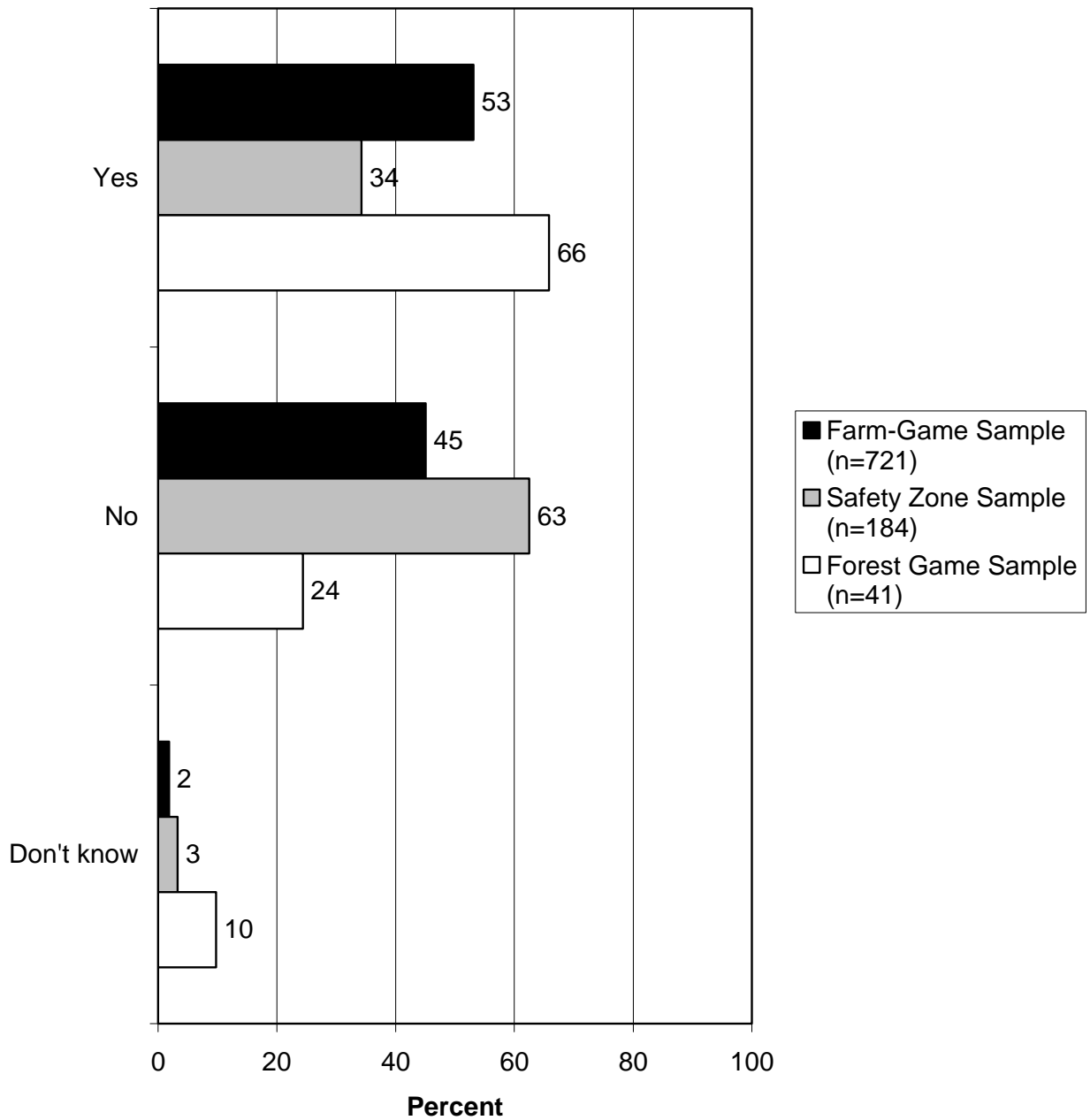
- While most of the participants in the Public Access Program say that they display Pennsylvania Game Commission signage on their property, there are substantial percentages of all three groups who say that they do not display signage. Safety Zone program participants are the least likely to display signage. In all three groups, the most common reason given for *not* displaying signage is that none were provided.

- When asked if they would support or oppose having the participating property identified on a countywide hunting map (even without property address nor owner's name), the groups were split: most Forest Game participants support (59%, with 49% *strongly* supporting) having their property identified on these maps, but most Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants oppose this, mostly *strongly* opposing (57% and 56% of these groups oppose).

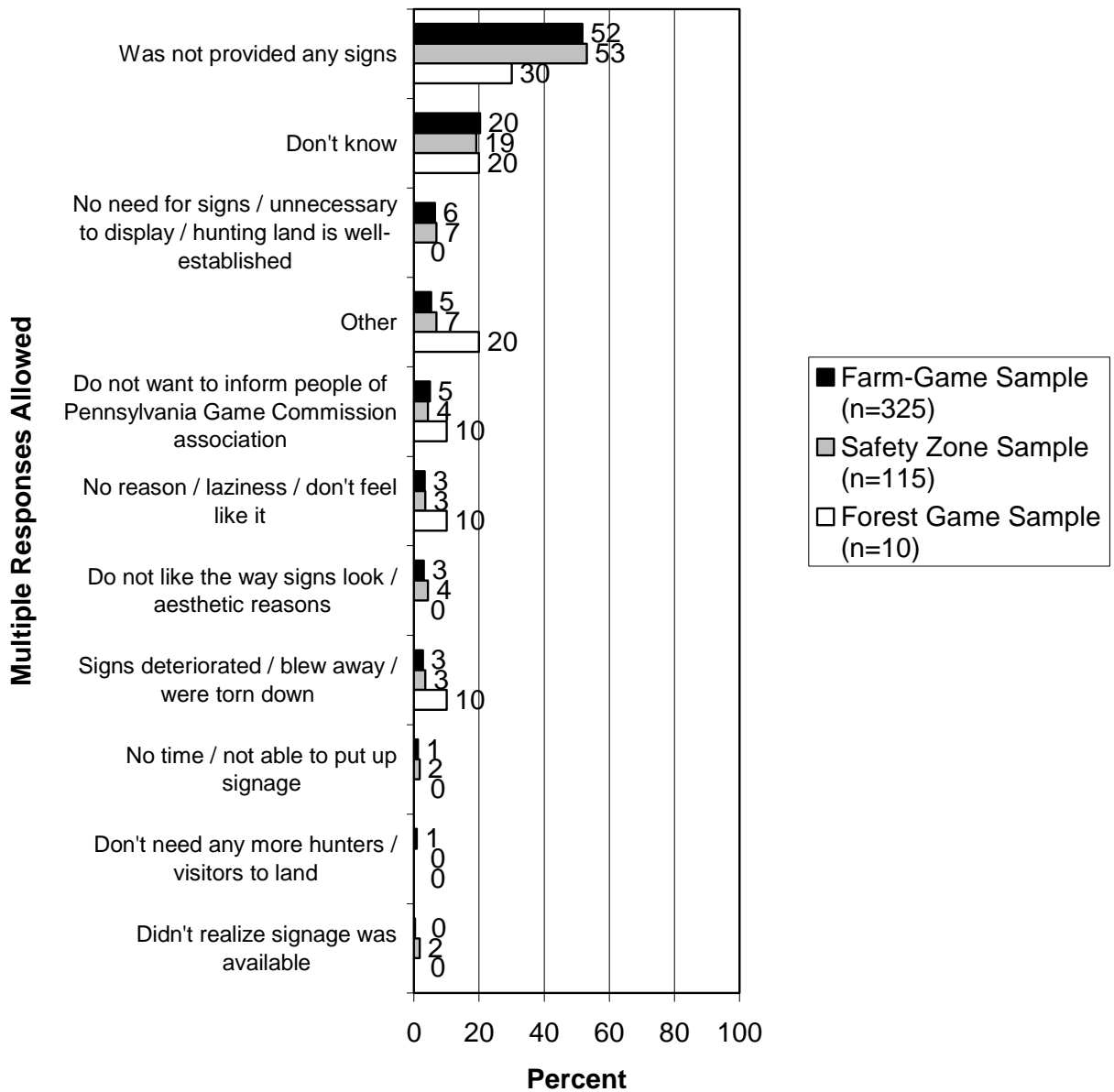
“I know they were talking about putting the names and addresses on the Internet, and I do not want that. Like everybody else, I try to limit the number of people I have here.”

-- Farm Game landowner

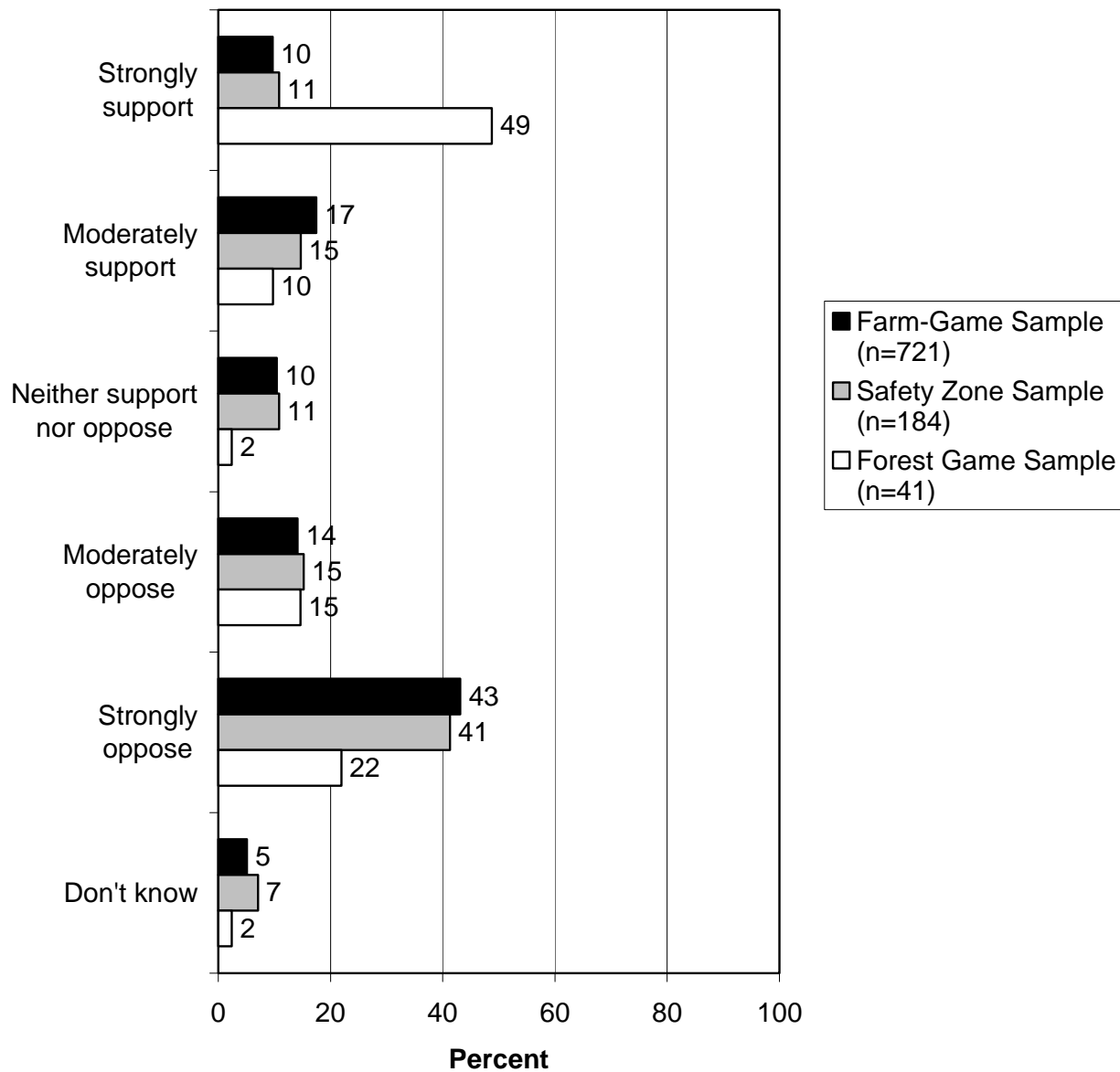
Q54. Do you display any Pennsylvania Game Commission signage on your property?



Q57. What are the reasons you do not display Pennsylvania Game Commission signage on your property? (Asked of those who do not display Pennsylvania Game Commission signage on their property.)



Q59. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has maps that identify public hunting areas. Would you support or oppose identifying your property as a cooperator property open for some type of public hunting on a countywide Public Hunting Map, if your property address and name are not included on the map?



ASSISTANCE FROM PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION IN HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

- A third or just less of each group (27% to 33%) say that they have received assistance from the Pennsylvania Game Commission planning and/or implementing habitat improvements on their property. The most common habitat improvement, by far, was the provision of plant seedlings and/or seeds. The most typical size of the habitat improvements is less than 10 acres of improved habitat. Satisfaction is very high with the habitat improvements that have been implemented, ranging from 82% of both the Farm Game and Safety Zone groups to 100% of the Forest Game group.

“I think it’s a good idea, I know about fifteen years ago [the Pennsylvania Game Commission] came in and did some fencerow cutting for me. And then one year we tried experimenting with some different kinds of grassroots, and they came in and planted a couple of fields of that. Turned out pretty decent. I think [habitat improvements] are a good idea, depending on your type of operation.”

-- Farm Game landowner

“Well, we’ve used the seedlings, we’ve used some cover, but we’ve never had any actual help—other than getting the plants—from the Game Commission.”

-- Farm Game landowner

“We...had strip-mine areas that were done, and now they’ve reclaimed them; right now we’re involved in the CREP [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program]. So that kind of improvement is fine.”

-- Farm Game landowner

“A while back they did fence my pond and helped clear a path for cattle. They also planted 1,800 trees on the property.”

-- Safety Zone landowner

- The survey asked about interest in future habitat improvements: more than a third of Forest Game participants (34%) are *very* interested. Overall interest (very and somewhat) is at 63% of the Forest Game group, but less for the Farm Game and Safety Zone groups (29% and 28%, respectively). Those improvements in which interest is expressed most commonly are obtaining from the Commission plant seedlings/seeds, wildlife food plot mixes, or bird nest boxes. Substantial percentages of the groups also express interest in border edge cutting.
 - Note that those who have already had habitat improvements on their property show more interest in future improvements than do those who have *not* had improvements.

"I think it's a worthwhile thing. I had the Game Commission up here a number of years ago. I just don't have anything that needs to be done right now, but [habitat improvements] are good for the game."

-- Farm Game landowner

"I guess it depends on the type of farming you do. If you have a job away from town, just have the farm, or don't make a living off it, or you're utilizing the ground yourself—in my case, I can't see that I would have any room for habitat improvements."

-- Farm Game landowner

"Probably not something we'd be interested in. It would probably be a conflict for us— we'd have to operate around those areas. We have considered cover to enhance the wildlife opportunities. We would be interested in discussing [wildlife cover] with the Game Commission as far as any help they could provide, if that's even a feasible thing to do. But in general, we're trying to grow trees, and to do something else with the land would be a conflict."

-- Forest Game cooperator

"Well, the main reason is our number one goal is to grow big trees. And if you plant any feed or cover, it's going to take land out of production for trees. There are some places where we've allowed people to go in and put small strips of game feed in, but I don't think [we'd be interested in planning habitat improvements]."

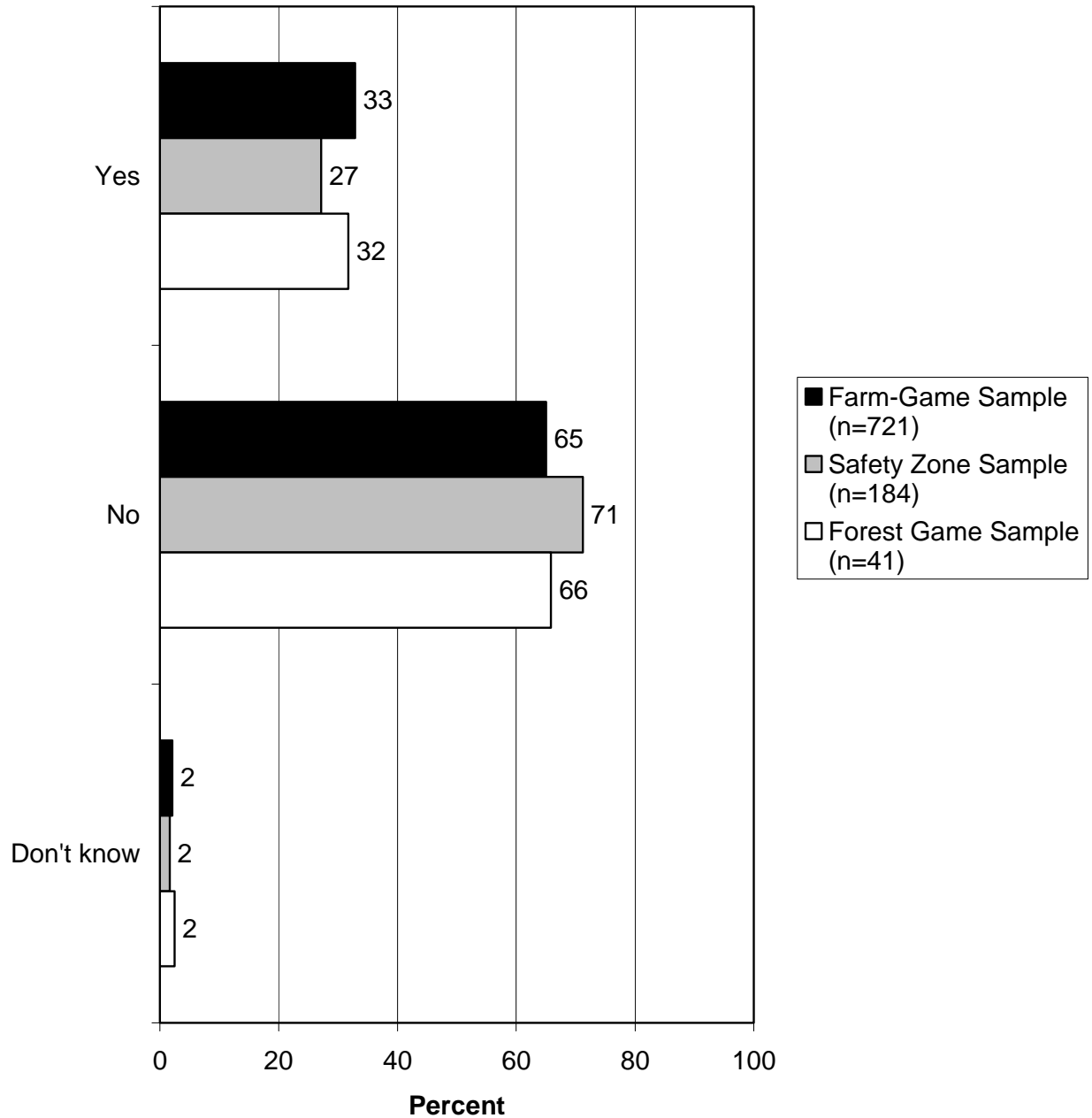
-- Forest Game cooperator

"My land isn't exactly conducive to a lot of work like that, but sure, I would be interested. If they could come and accommodate some of the things I have that I need work on, yeah, I would call them."

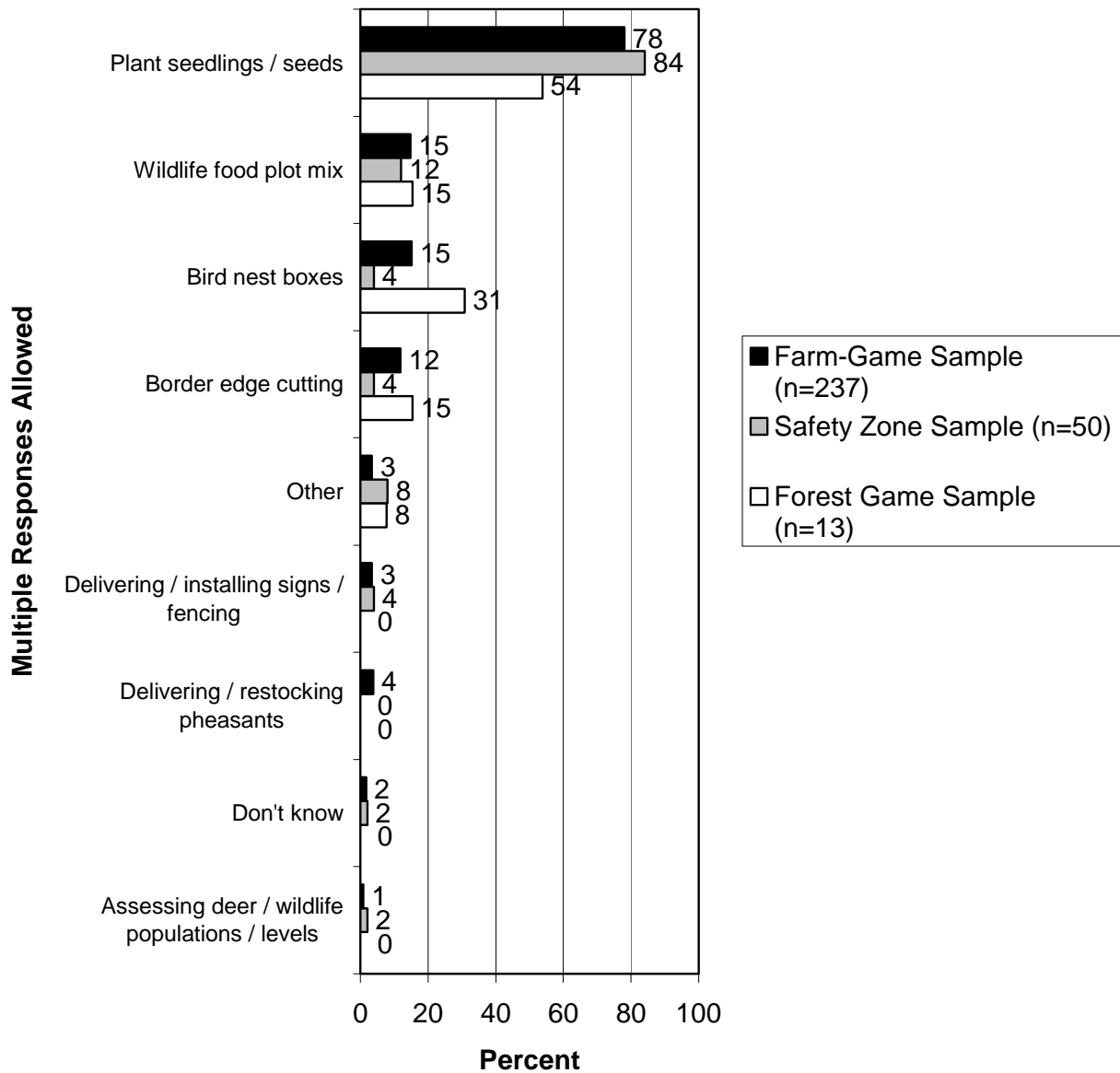
-- Safety Zone landowner

- There is a small, but not insubstantial, demand for (additional) information or assistance from the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program: 16%, 15%, and 27% of Farm Game, Safety Zone, and Forest Game participants, respectively, would like (additional) information or assistance. In follow-up, those expressing interest were asked what they wanted: common answers include reinstatement of *Game News*, information and assistance on land/property maintenance, and information on conservation, wildlife, and/or hunting.

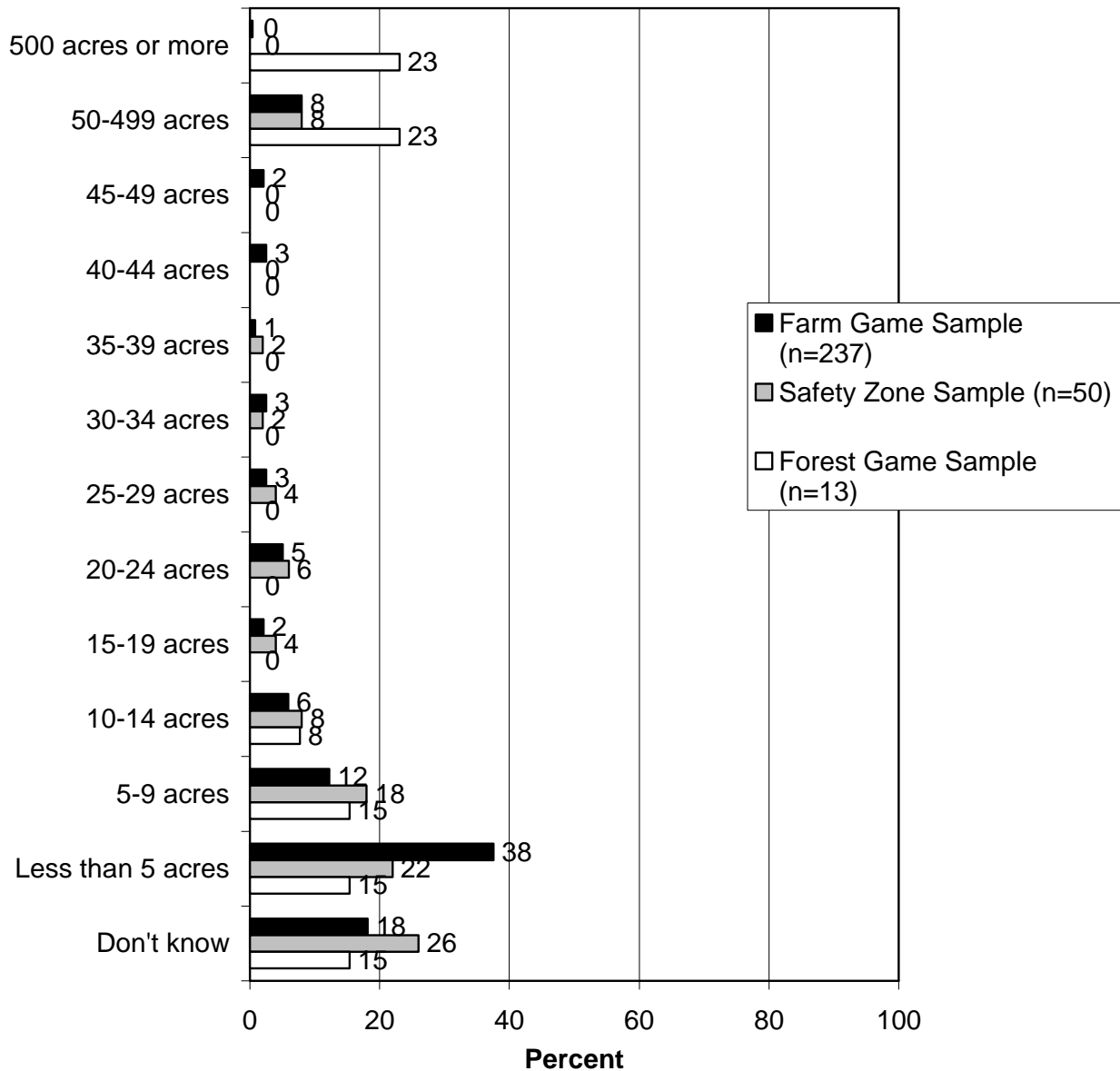
Q67. Have you received assistance from the Pennsylvania Game Commission in planning or implementing habitat improvements on your property?



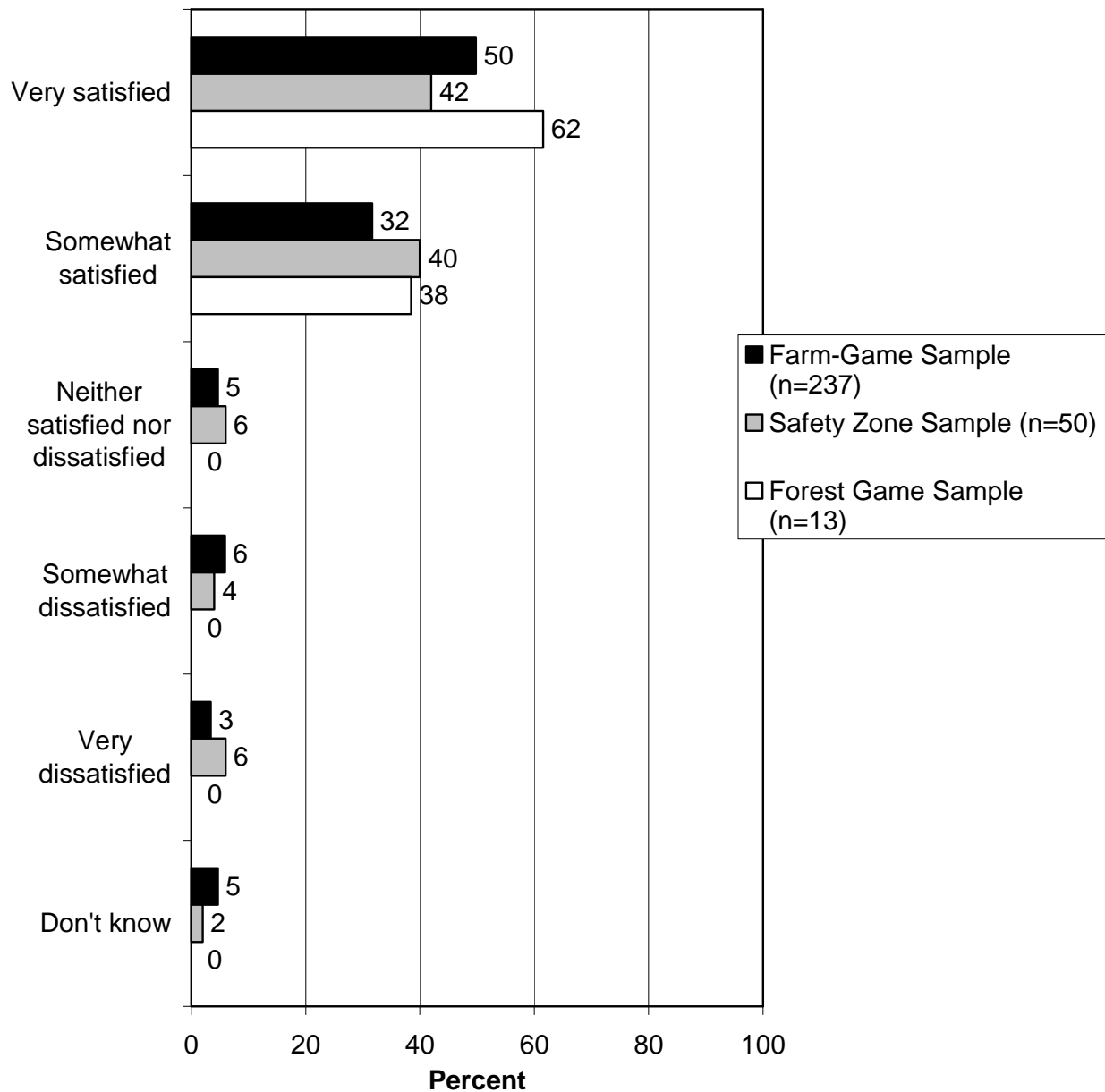
Q70. What habitat improvements have the Pennsylvania Game Commission helped to plan and implement on your property? (Asked of those who have received assistance from the Pennsylvania Game Commission in planning and/or implementing habitat improvements on their property.)



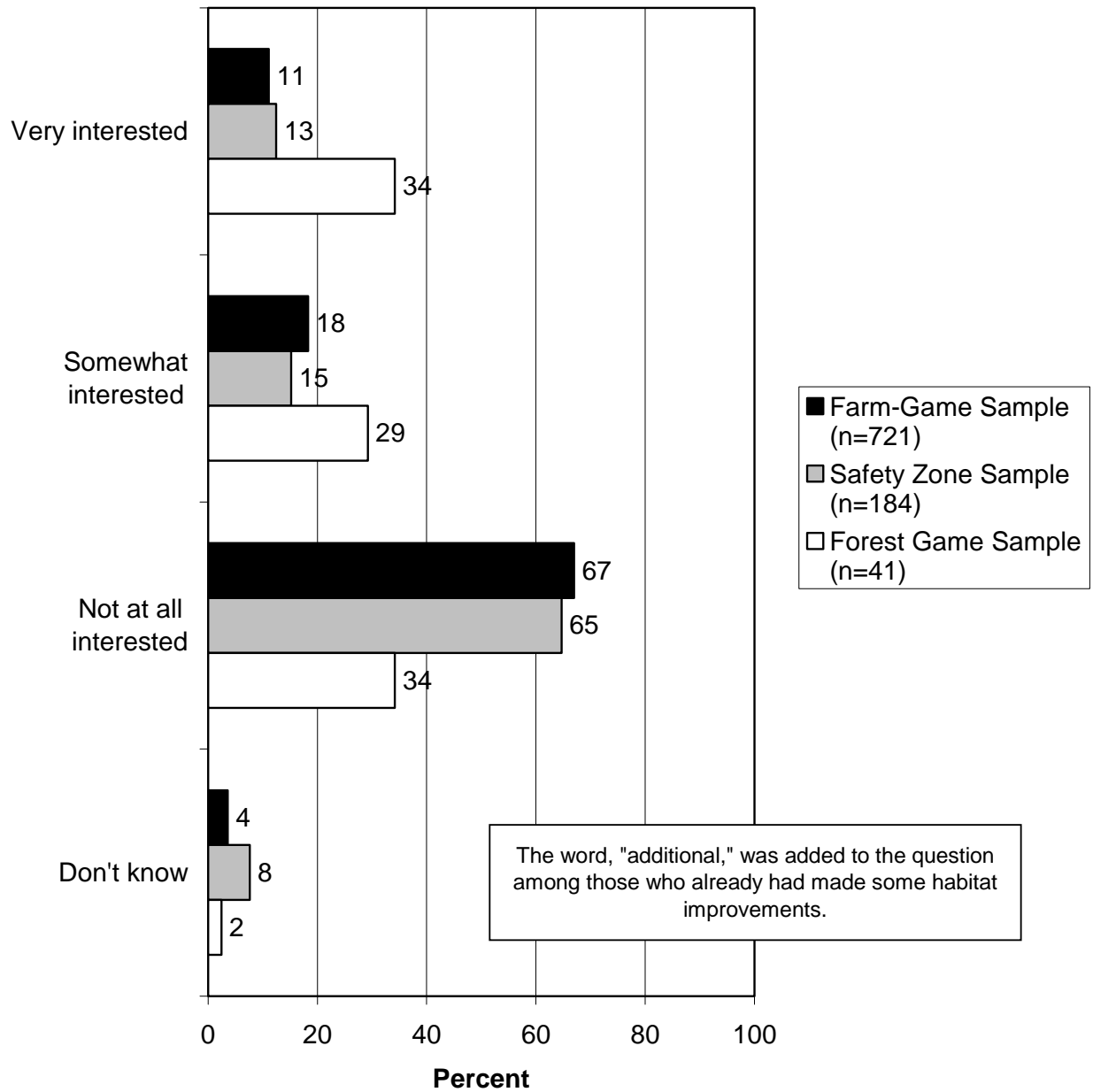
Q72. How many acres of your property have undergone habitat improvements planned and implemented by the Pennsylvania Game Commission? (Asked of those who have received assistance from the Pennsylvania Game Commission in planning or implementing habitat improvements on their property.)



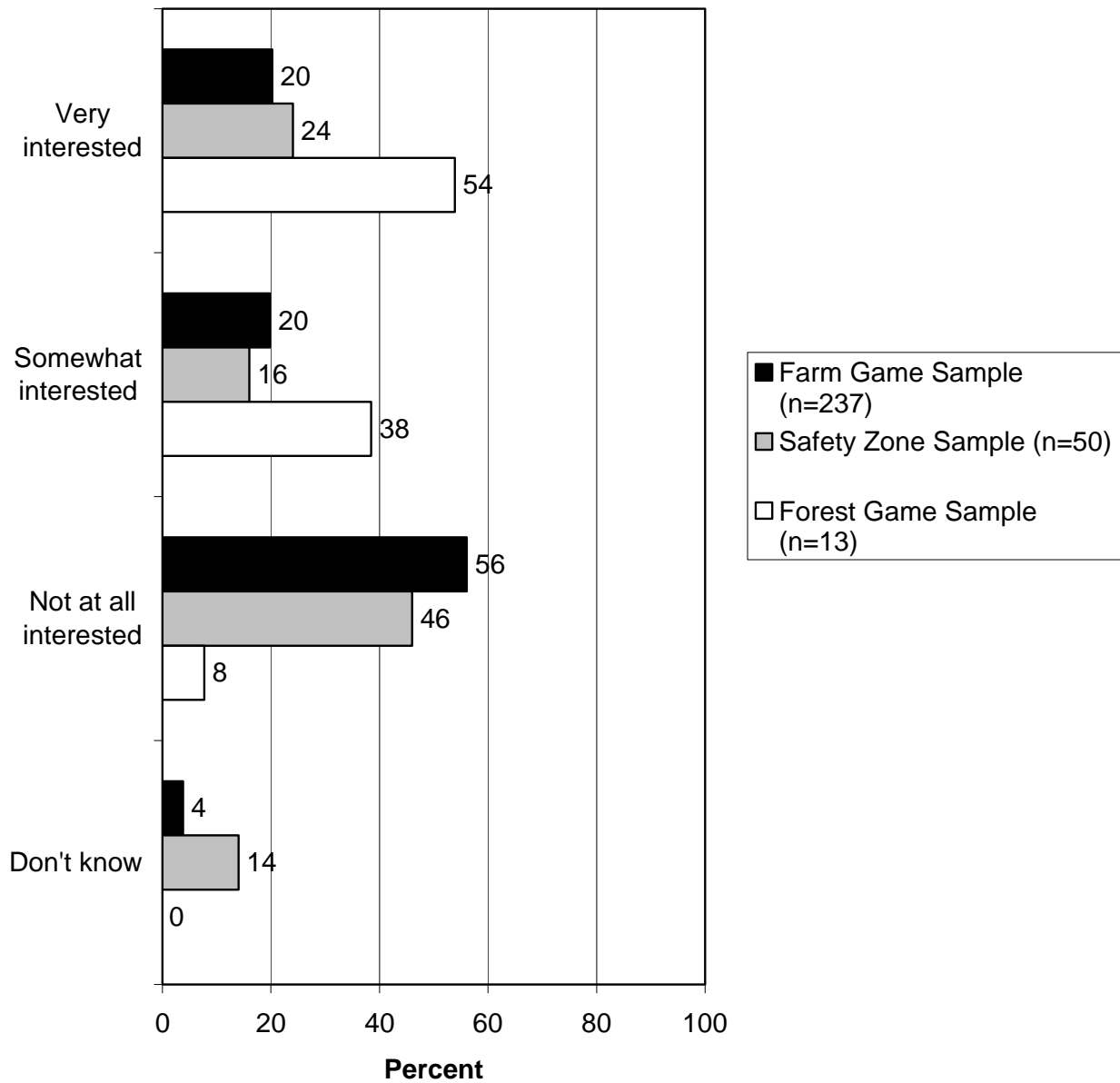
Q74. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the planned improvements following their implementation? (Asked of those who have received assistance from the Pennsylvania Game Commission in planning or implementing habitat improvements on their property.)



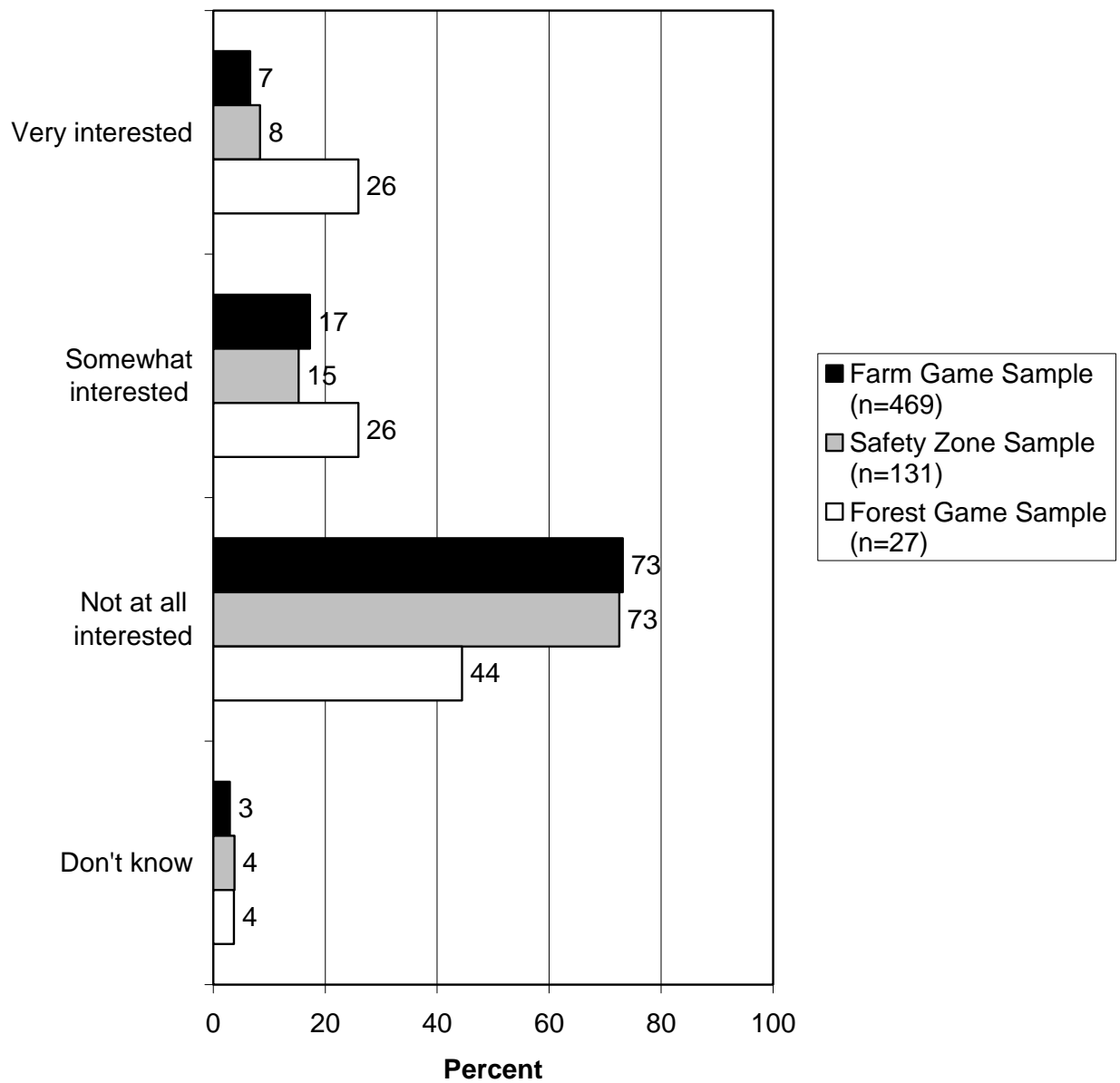
Q76. Are you very, somewhat, or not at all interested in planning or implementing [additional] habitat improvements on your property?



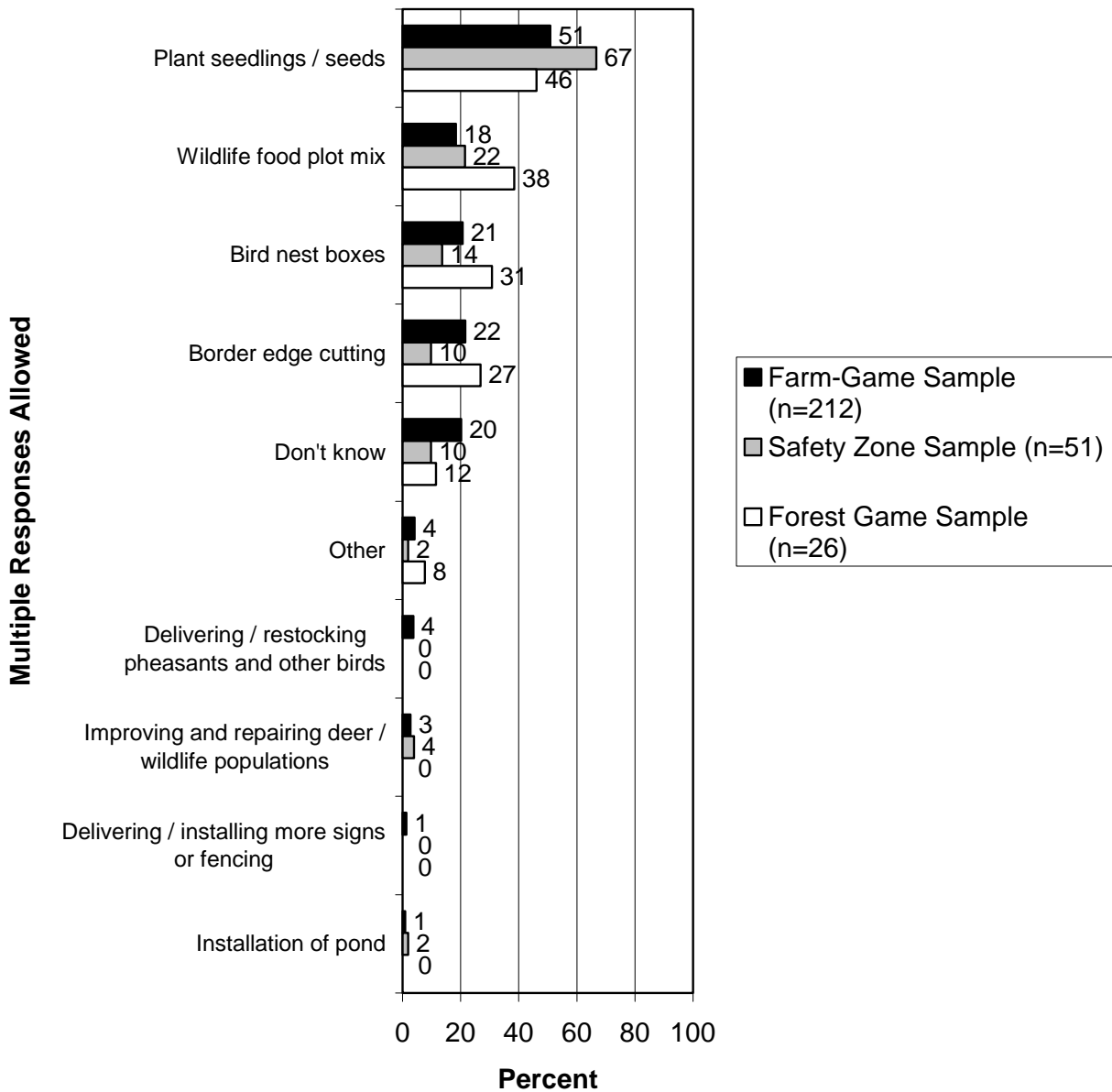
Q76. Are you very, somewhat, or not at all interested in planning or implementing additional habitat improvements on your property? (Those who have already received assistance with habitat improvements.)



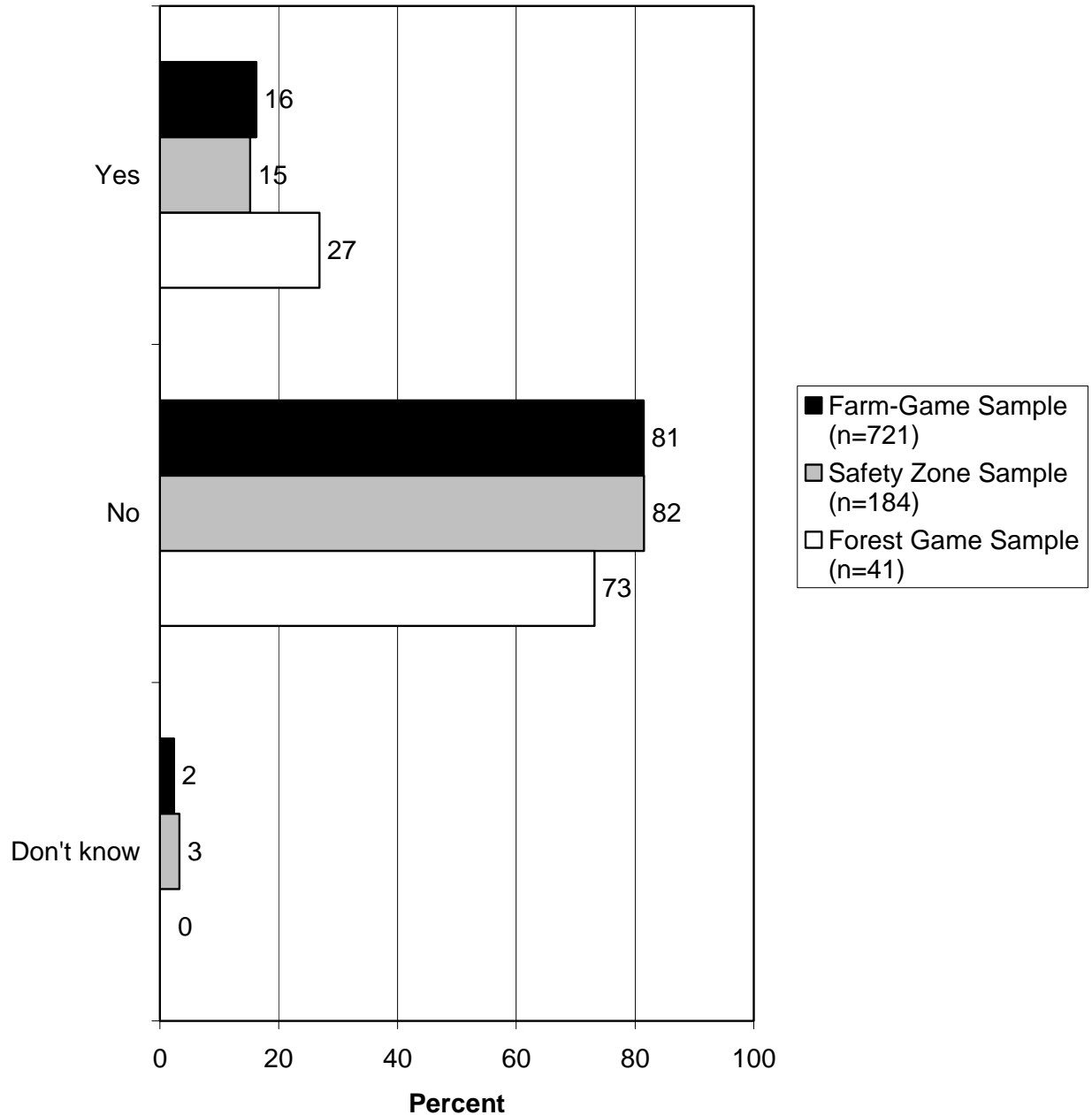
Q76. Are you very, somewhat, or not at all interested in planning or implementing habitat improvements on your property? (Those who have not already received assistance with habitat improvements.)



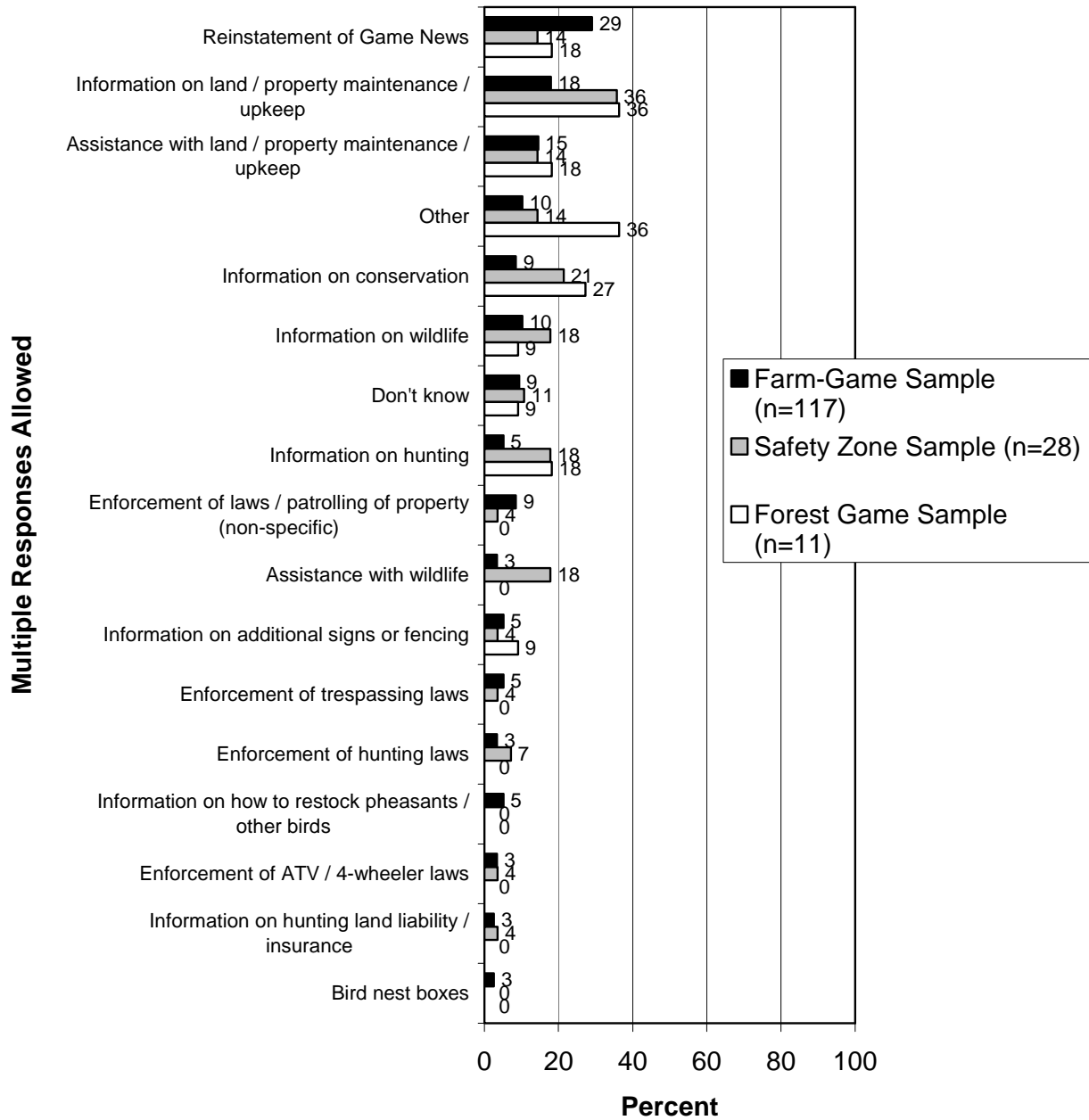
Q79. Which habitat improvements are you interested in planning or implementing on your property? (Asked of those who are interested in planning or implementing habitat improvements on their property.)



Q81. Is there additional information or assistance you would like to receive from the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program?



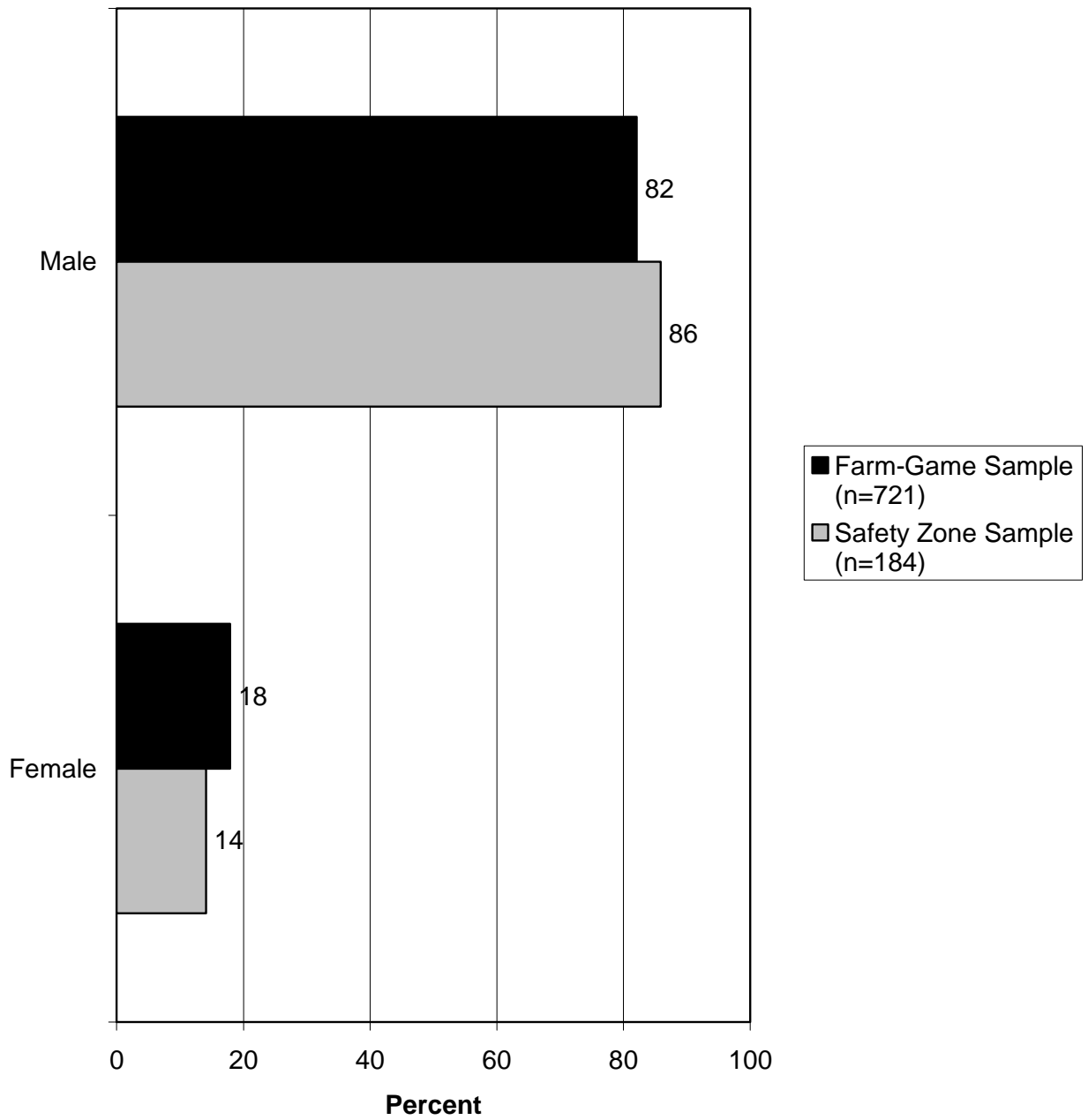
Q84. What additional information or assistance would you like to receive from the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program? (Asked of those who would like to receive additional information or assistance.)

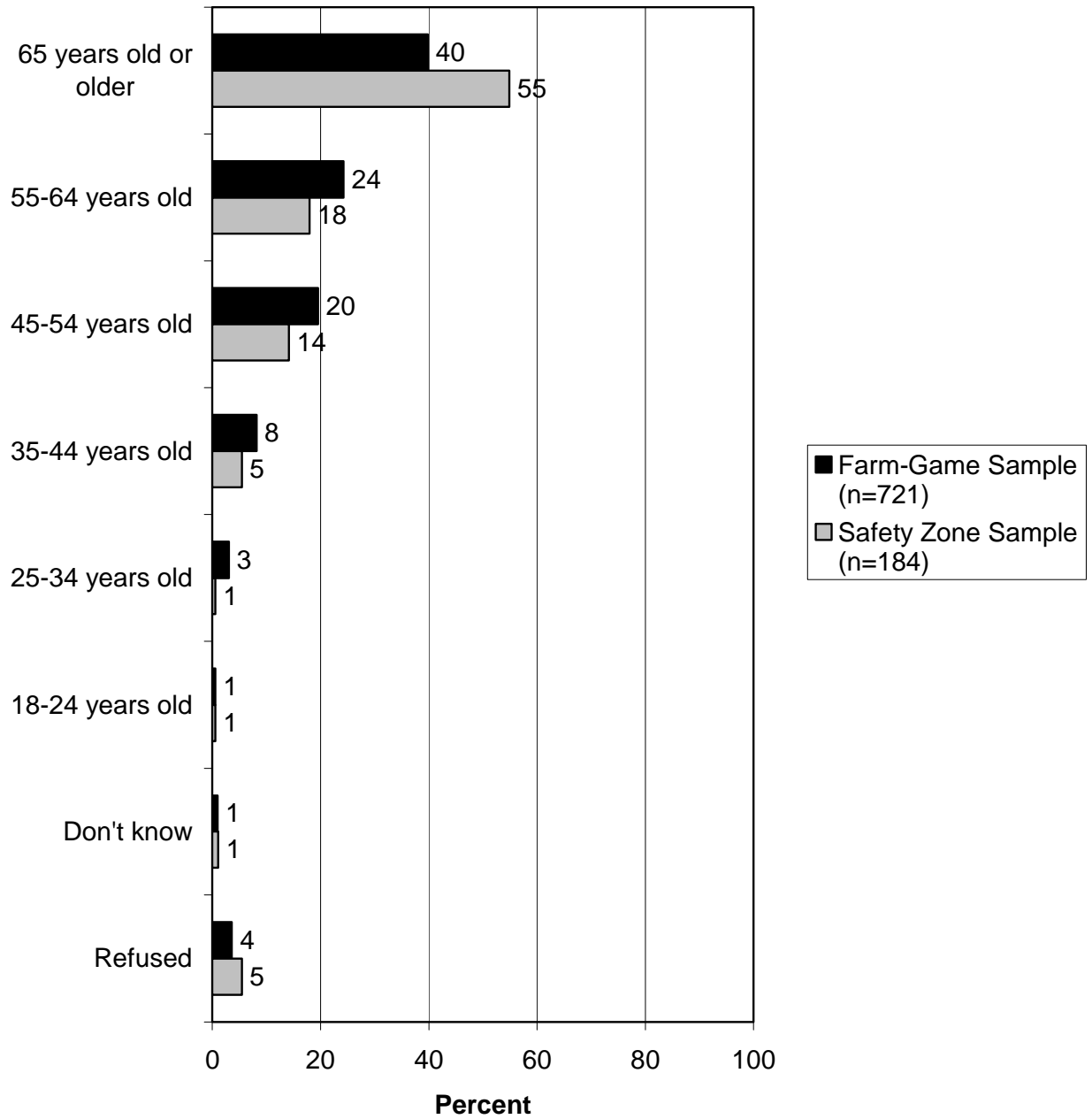


DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

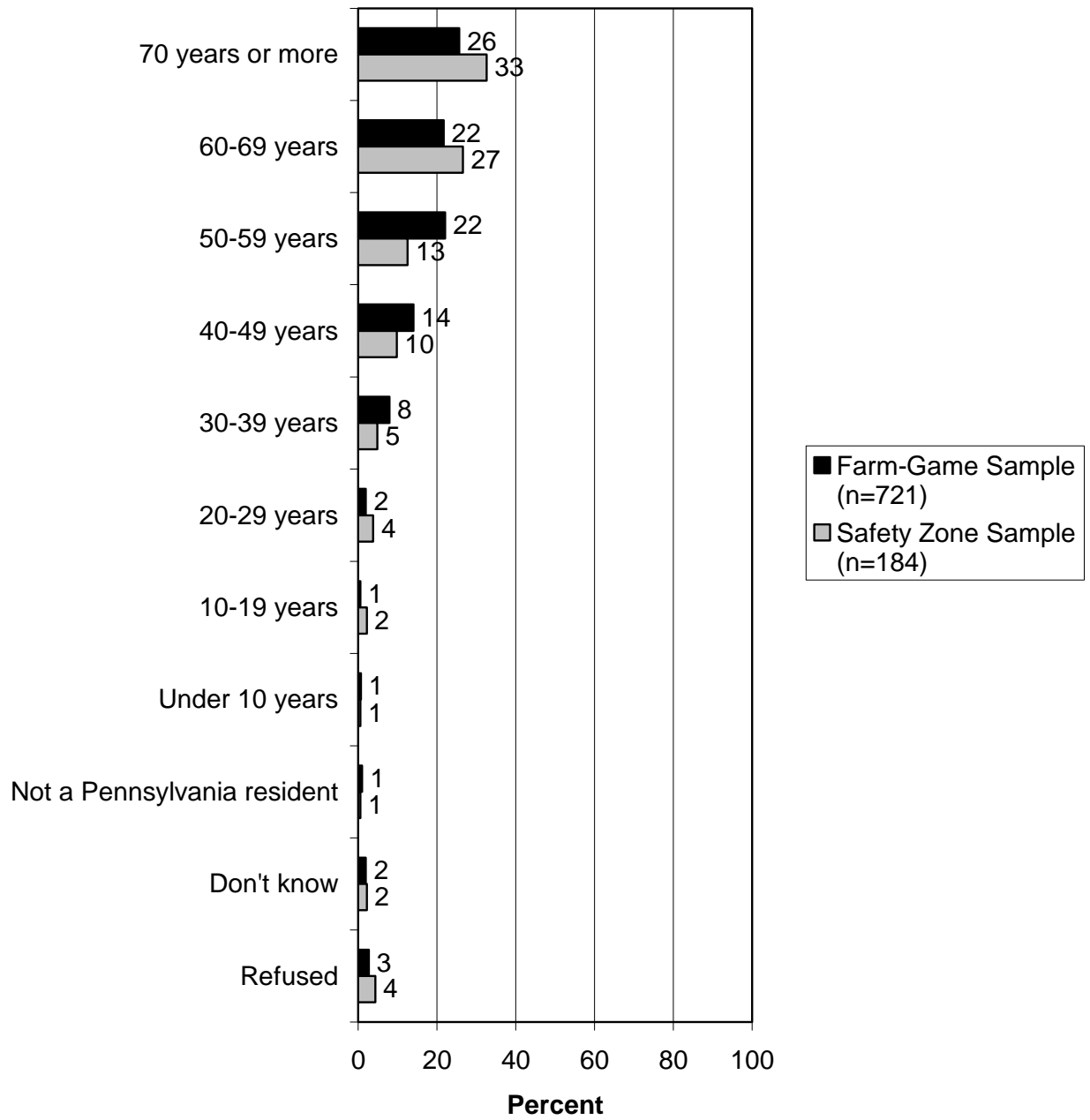
- Note that demographic data is shown only for Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants (because many of the Forest Game program respondents represented corporate owners or other owners who were not individuals).
- The overwhelming majority of Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants are male.
- Participants in the Public Access Program are relatively old—the majority being older than 55 years of age.
- Public Access Program participants, in general, have lived in Pennsylvania for a relatively long time.
- The ethnic background of Farm Game and Safety Zone program participants is predominantly white/Caucasian.
- Incomes of respondents are shown.
- As would be expected, nearly all the program participants live in rural areas.
- Counties in which participants reside are shown. Crawford, Lancaster, and Franklin Counties are the leading counties among Farm Game program participants; Butler, Venango, Crawford, and Mifflin Counties are the leading counties among Safety Zone program participants.

Q148. Respondent's gender (not asked, but observed by interviewer).

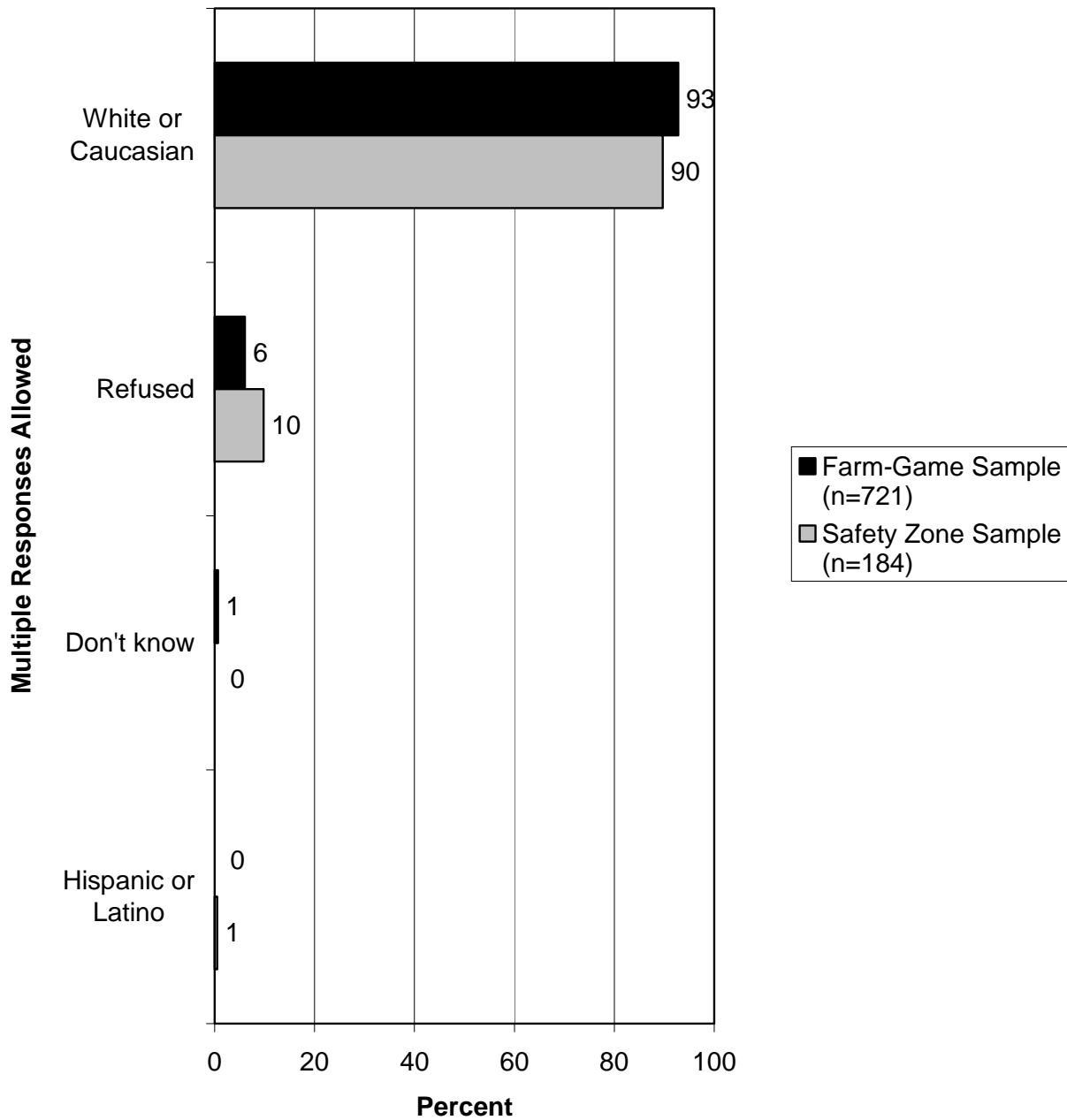


Q142. May I ask your age?

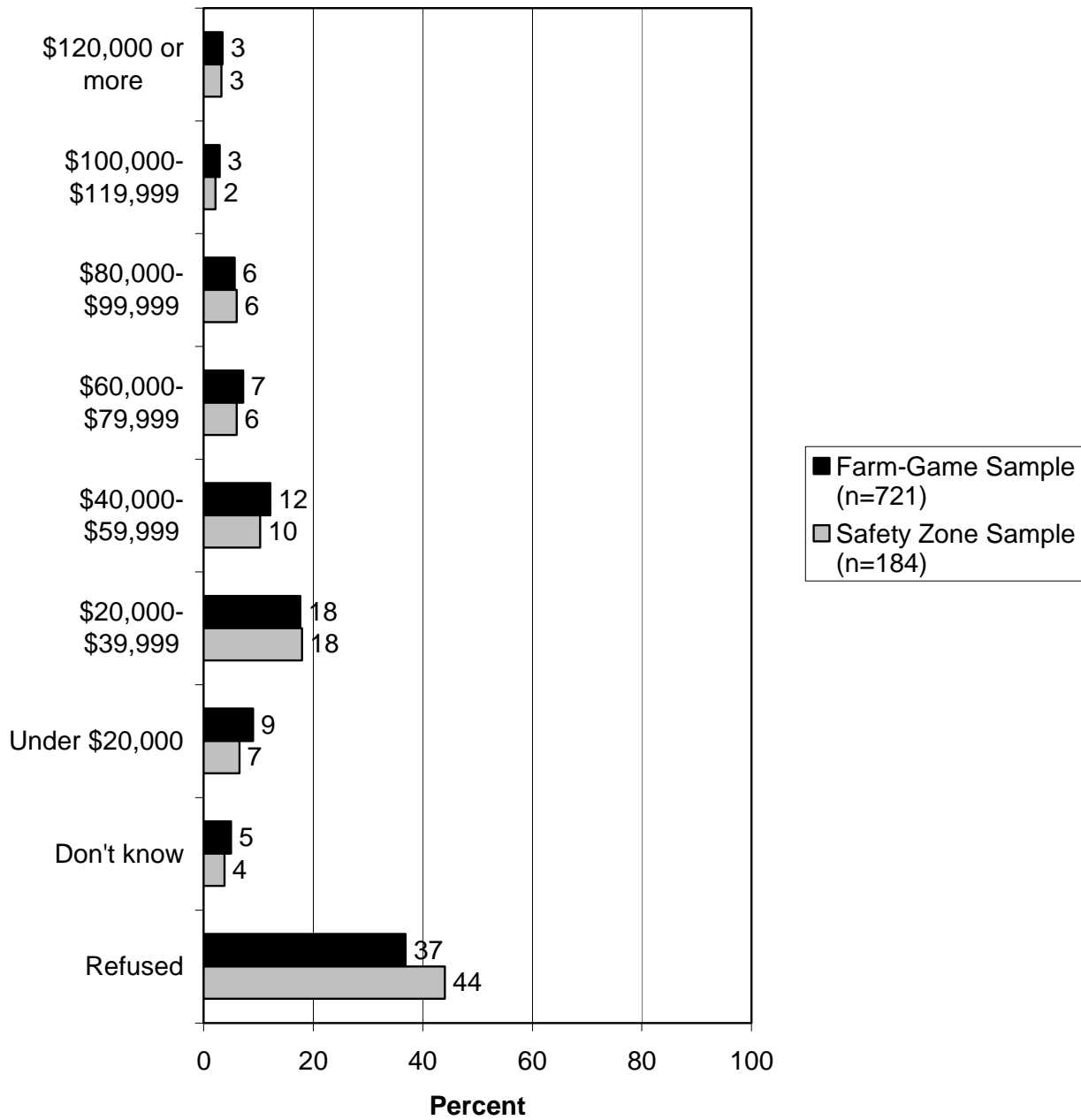
Q132. How many years have you lived in Pennsylvania?



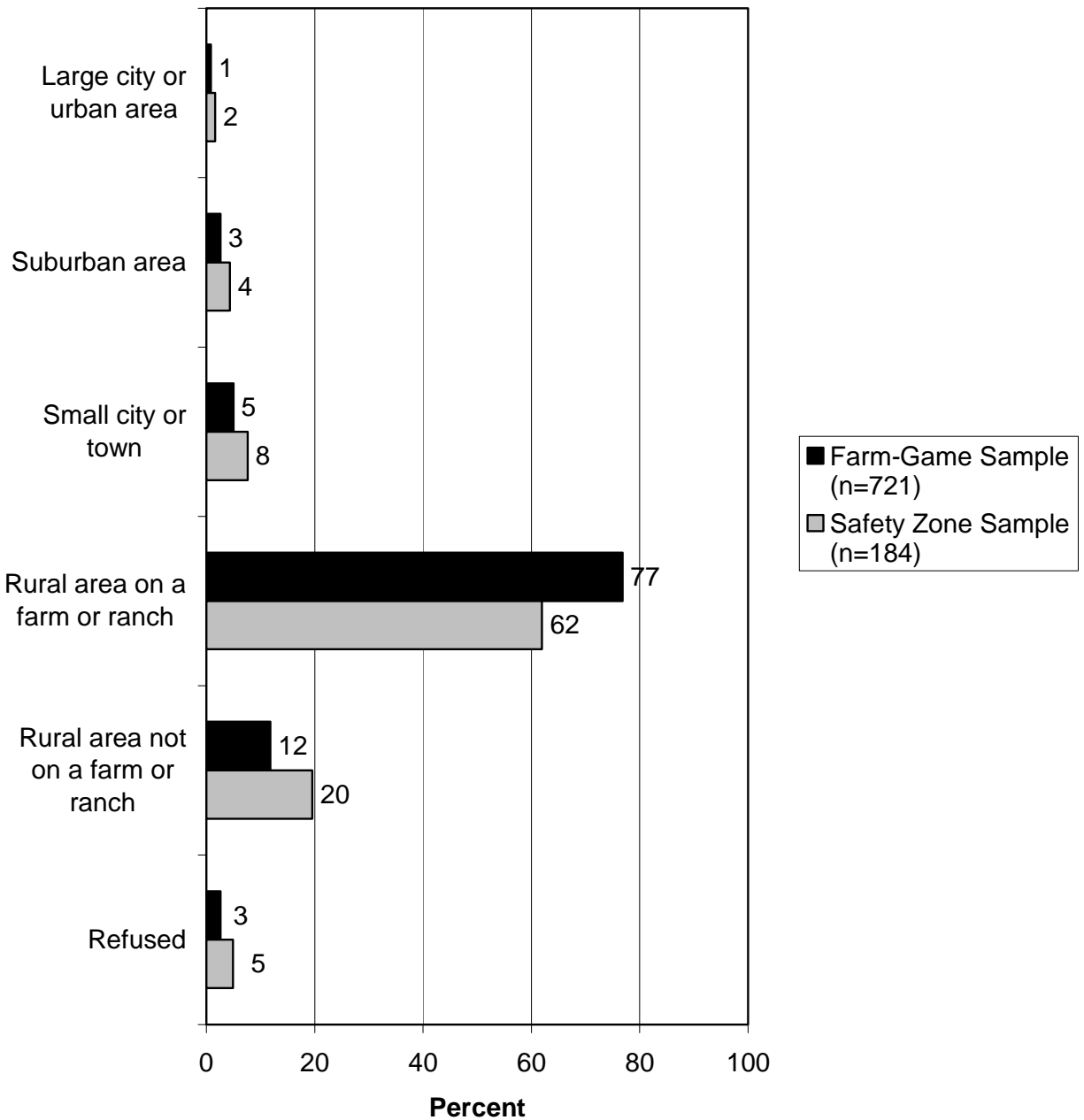
Q140. What races or ethnic backgrounds do you consider yourself? Please name all that you think apply.



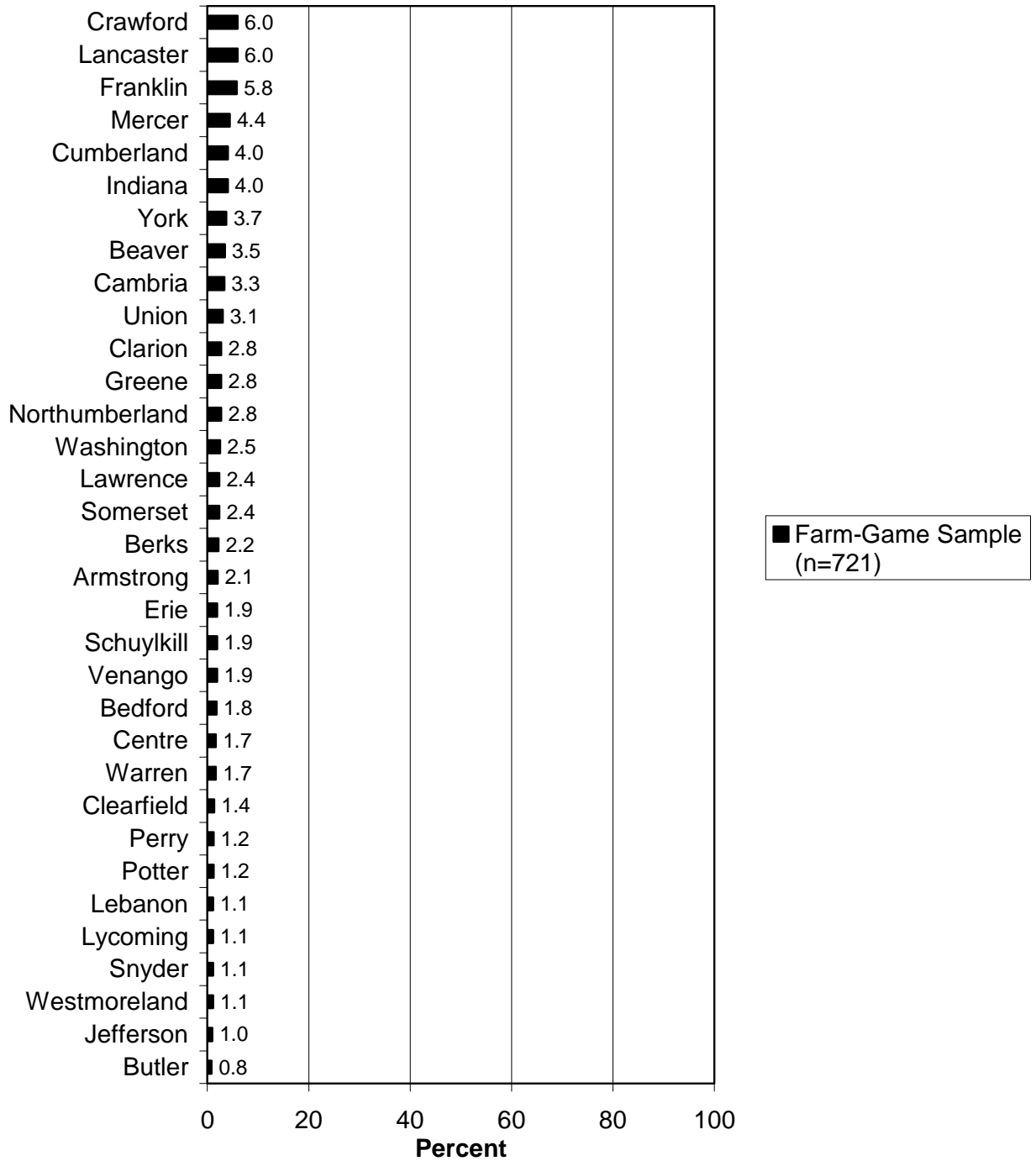
Q137. Which of these categories best describes your total household income before taxes last year?



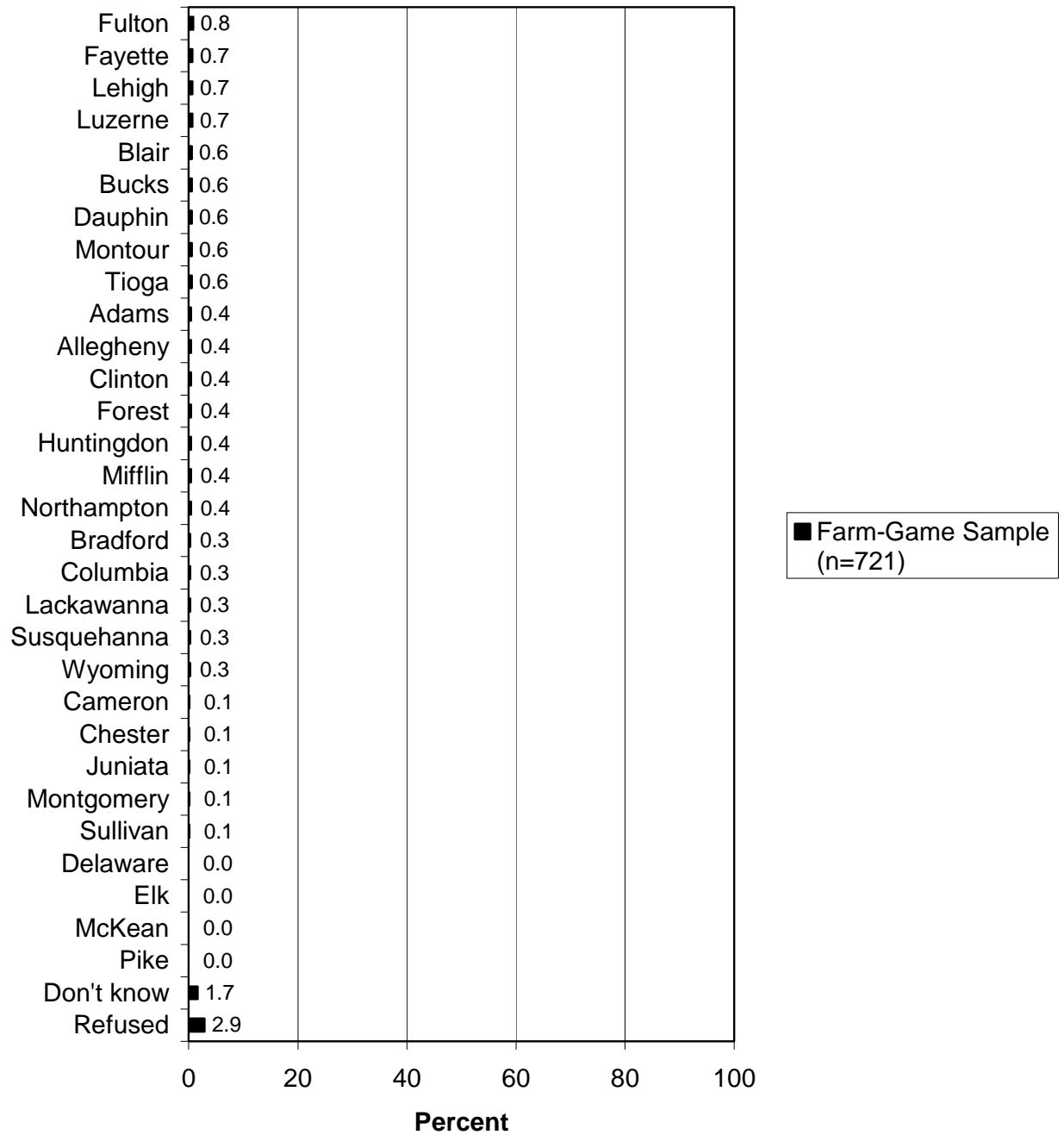
Q136. Do you consider your place of residence to be a large city or urban area, a suburban area, a small city or town, a rural area on a farm or ranch, or a rural area not on a farm or ranch?



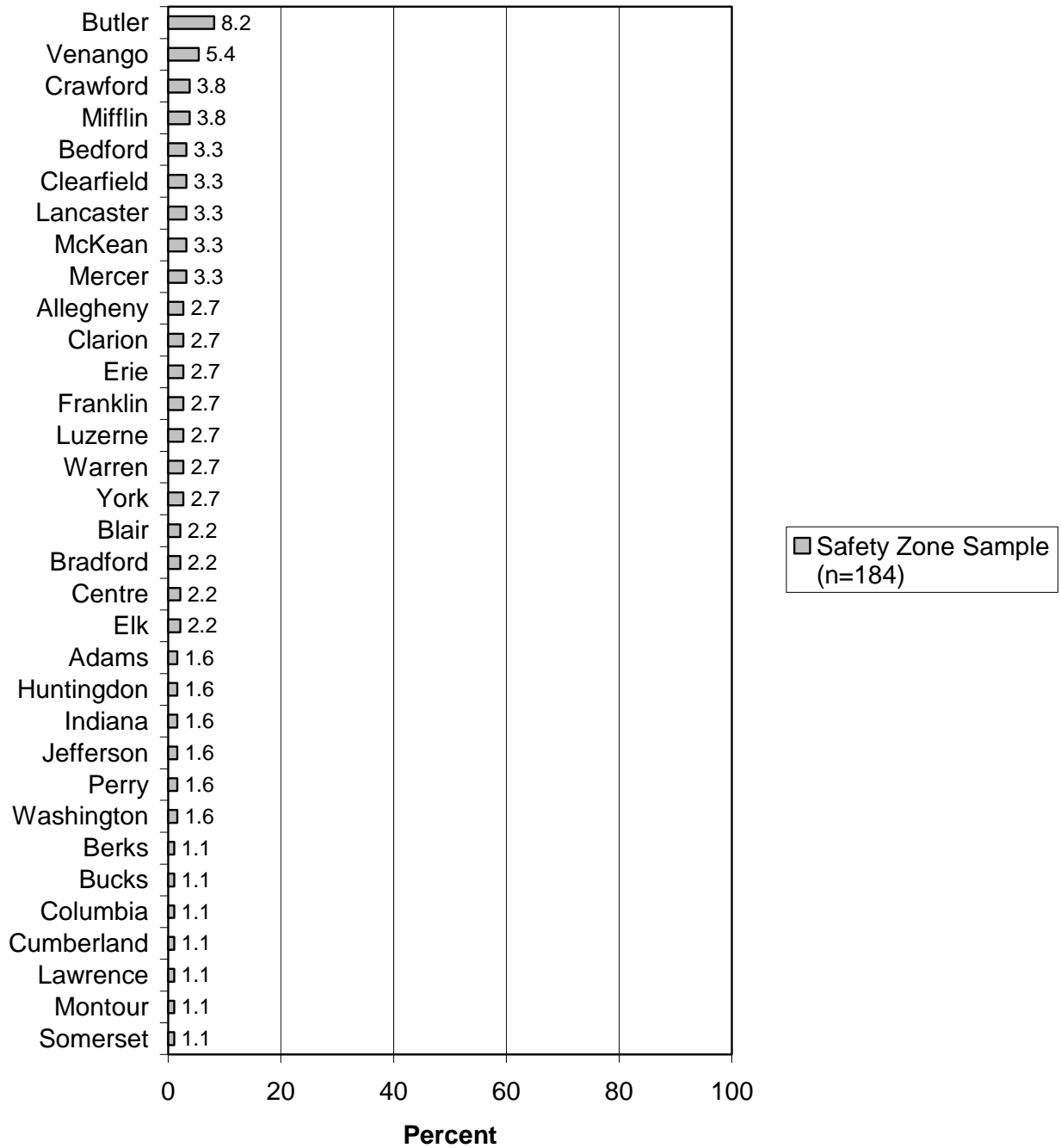
Q135. In what county do you live? (Part 1.)

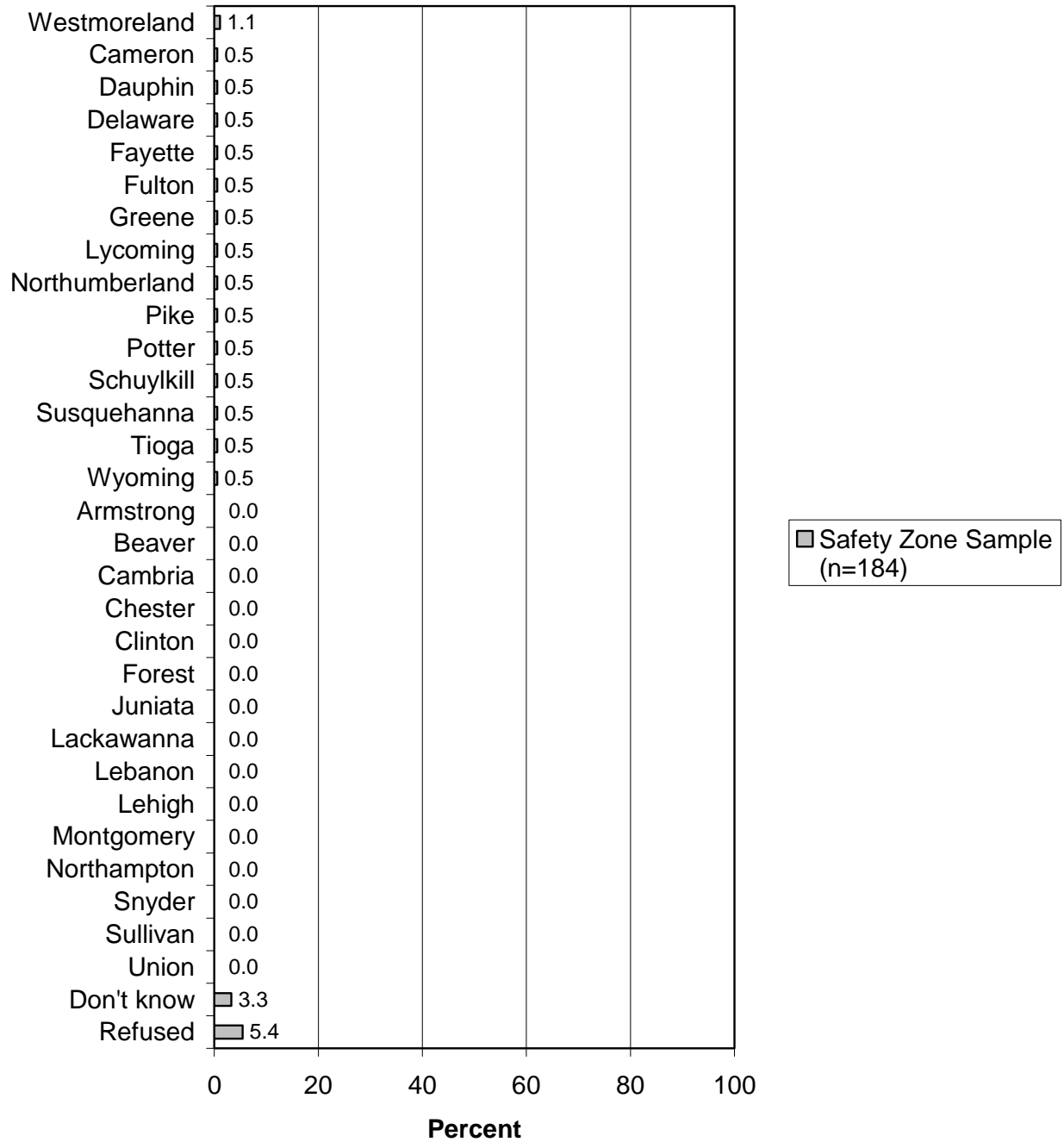


Q135. In what county do you live? (Part 2.)



Q135. In what county do you live? (Part 1.)



Q135. In what county do you live? (Part 2.)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Farm Game Sample

I want the Commission to respond to issues such as trespassing and complaints.
I am disappointed in not receiving the <i>Game News</i> anymore.
There should be no hunting license for those who post their ground. Stop all snowmobilers. Have the Game Commission admit that they brought in coyotes to kill big and small game. I would like to see them [Game Commission employees] more often.
Try to do something about the Game Commission, please. Don't hand out permits for people; there are no deer.
I've kind of lost respect for the Game Commission. They haven't been helping us out.
I want to know what the Commission is doing to protect landowners from being sued from hunters shooting people on their property. Why should I offer my land if I will get sued for an accident that occurs that was no fault of my own?
Deer are overpopulated, not enough killed. We need better population control.
Send the magazine.
Game Commission officers and deputies are too interested in fining people instead of educating people.
I experienced many problems from the deer; there needs to be a better population control.
I am not opposed to Sunday hunting, but I would post all my property if they were to allow Sunday hunting. It's the only day without dogs, trucks, noise, etc.
I want pheasants; I want the deer limit higher.
Open season on redwing blackbirds, which cause crop troubles.
Spotlighting should be outlawed. [Analyst note: It is already against the law. See note below this table.]
Send a Game Commissioner out here; I'll give him an earful.
Hunting season is too long. We need greater legal protection for landowners.
I am very unhappy about no longer receiving <i>Game News</i> .
Crack down on people who break laws. And open up lands for horseback riding.
Doe season should be 3 days.
Other years I got pheasants from the Game Commission, but not last year. I would like to again.
I would like more trees and fertilizer.
Why does PGC stock predators and not game animals?
I'd like greater protection against lawsuits if accidents happen and for the Commission to stand behind property owners if they occur.
They should drop regulations on the number of points on bucks; they are destroying fruit trees (in the hundreds).
My grandfather has had a farm since 1930s, and I remember having <i>Game News</i> when I was young. I don't know when we started in program. I would like to see <i>Game News</i> reinstated.
I want to get the <i>Game News</i> again.
I would like to get <i>Game News</i> or any other information.
I am against Sunday hunting. I work with landowners, and 19 out of 20 landowners are against Sunday hunters. I am also against Pennsylvania Game Lands being open to Sunday hunting.
Need to start sending out the <i>Game News</i> magazine again.

It should be a law that hunters should carry written permission from the landowner. Stock pheasants again.
We'd love to see fish habitat improvement. Our creek gets stocked, but it really could use some cleaning up both for the fish and to stop flooding.
We obey the rules and have no problem with the Game Commission.
The Coal Co. has easements and are timbering here, and we're changing farm plans so we prefer just family hunting here now. We'll call if we need help from the PGC.
Four-wheelers and littering are my only problems.
If ATV riders came onto the property, I would restrict them.
I think the deer management is gone to hell. There are no deer left. There are no hens (pheasants) left either. I'm disappointed with the whole program. The people are rude.
The Game Commission does a poor job; they introduced coyotes, which are a menace; no signs are given; there are no pheasants or grouse; hunters do not respect safety zones or ask permission.
I miss having <i>Game News</i> . Not too many Safety Zone signs anymore. Get the deer population back up again.
I would love to get the magazine back, and a higher presence of Commission employees would be nice.
I no longer get <i>Game News</i> .
Need to disallow Sunday hunting.
Need legislation to protect property owners from lawsuits.
I object to the Game Commission's restrictions on horseback riding on game lands.
Aren't seeing many deer nowadays.
I want my <i>Game News</i> ! I want my free feed! I want the quail they used to provide me with.
My land is opened to hunters who ask permission first.
Cut back on quantity of doe permits.
I want the game warden to catch poachers and other lawbreakers.
I really despise the deer program right now, and I'd really like to see it changed.
I think you'd get more enrollment if the signs would insist on asking the property owner for permission.
I miss having <i>Game News</i> .
The Game Commission mishandled the game with coyotes and does.
I would definitely like someone contacting me about bringing some wildlife/predatory birds/barn owls to my high school environmental biology class I teach.
They need to give out the game book; otherwise, people are going to start quitting.
I don't agree with their deer management program.
I'd like to see them split up the buck and doe season again.
At Harrisburg Airport, they're going after cormorants just to kill them off; you think that a conservation agency would have better means to resolve the population, such as relocation or developing habitat. This shows poor leadership.
So far it's been an enjoyable experience. I am strictly against Sunday hunting.
I am really concerned about the landowner's rights when an accident occurs on my land. I am not aware of the current liabilities concerning others hunting on the land.
More people need to be conservation minded because if you don't protect it, we will lose it.
The public hunting map on the web is not usable.

The Game Commission is giving away too many doe permits, and now they do not have any deer left. The antler restriction was to cover up the amount of doe tags given out; no deer are left. I want the <i>Game News</i> ; I do not want hunting on Sundays.
I suspect that hunters get permission from the farmer leasing some of my land; only one asked me personally last year.
I would like to receive information about the possibility of getting sued for accidents occurring on property.
I've had a lack of response from the Game Commission: for trespassing, road hunters, people in yard hunting and telling me I can't make them get out, a drug dealer's dogs running deer, someone with automatic weapons in summer, poachers.
I'm very upset about them taking the <i>Game News</i> from us, and public relations is what the Game Commission needs to work on most! I almost think of the Game Commission as being a thing of the past.
Too many licenses; money poorly spent.
Property owners should not be liable for hunters on their property.
I want <i>Game News</i> back.
I think the discontinued programs should be reinstated as benefits; I'd like to know the results of this survey.
I would like to get quail.
No Sunday hunting!
I think it's good to have a survey.
Do Something about the CREP Program's thistles, which have spread over at least 20 acres.
I wish they could be more like they were in the old days. They were more helpful. They have cut back their service.
We got into the program when my dad ran the farm, so I'm really not sure about details.
I understand tight budgets, but I really think reinstating <i>Game News</i> is a small price to pay people who give so much to hunters who find habitat and access disappearing all over the state. We do most of our habitat improvement through DNRC.
I think I'm going to have post my ground; hunters are careless and should be asking, not like they used to be.
I want to receive the <i>Game News</i> .
Control red hawks better—there are too many.
Stiffen penalties on ATVs.
Send me the damn <i>Game News</i> .
Stop shooting does during first week of buck season.
I support the purchase of Rattlesnake Swamp; my property runs up along that property.
I want hunters to have courtesy for property owners; if hunters don't know the owners, let the property owners get to know you.
I want to get the magazine back.
I don't mind leaving land open, but current lawsuits worry me about liability with regard to hunting accidents on my property. If I could be held liable, I will refrain from keeping land open.
I think the deer hunting season should go back to the way it was, more days on bucks, fewer days on does, and less days on archery. Small game could be opened for at least three months; turkey could be opened longer—the flocks are too big.

Should not shoot towards house; the Commission makes it hard when they transfer land to housing and leave hunting land around it.
No Sunday hunting; way too many doe licenses are being allotted; one deer per person per year.
I think this a very good thing. I see things happening in the PGC by representatives not in rural areas. If hunting goes public on Sunday, this place will be closed. Game and people need rest. I no longer receive <i>Game News</i> .
I would like to have a little more contact with the Game Commission.
Start stocking quail instead of pheasants—more economical for the Game Commission. It would get more young people out because quail are more of a target and more sport involved. It would boost license sales and get people interested.
I oppose Sunday hunting.
Making landowners liable for hunting accidents is problematic; we should be protected from such liabilities.
I wish they would put deer season back the way it was. Too few deer now.
I signed up a long time ago, and most of my signs are worn out or gone.
I am concerned about the increase in coyotes on our property.

Regarding spotlighting:

Sec. 2310. Unlawful use of lights while hunting.

(a) General rule. - Except as set forth in subsection (b), it is unlawful for any person or group of persons to engage in any of the following activities to any degree:

- (1) Cast the rays of an artificial light of any kind on any game or wildlife or in an attempt to locate any game or wildlife while on foot, in any vehicle or its attachments, or any watercraft or any airborne craft while in possession of a firearm of any kind, or a bow or arrow, or any implement or device with which any game or wildlife could be killed or taken even though no game or wildlife is shot at, injured or killed.
- (2) Aid, assist or conspire either in the killing or taking or in an attempt to kill, take, possess, transport or conceal any game or wildlife or a part thereof which has been killed or taken by use of any artificial light.
- (3) Operate, allow or permit any vehicle or its attachments, any watercraft or any airborne craft to be used for killing or taking or attempting to kill or take any game or wildlife by using the rays of any artificial light.

(b) Exceptions. - The provisions of subsection (a) shall not apply to:

- (1) A person on foot may use an artificial light normally carried on the person to take raccoons, skunks, opossum or foxes.
- (2) Any political subdivision, its employees or agents, which has a valid deer control permit issued under section 2902(c) (relating to special categories of permits).

Safety Zone Sample

The Commission should provide vests and hats for the safety of the property owners, even if at a discounted cost. I am interested in posters forbidding ATVs.
If they allow hunting on Sunday, I will not let hunters hunt on that day.
Do something about this doe season.
Why close state parks to ATVs and snowmobiles during the off season. I would like access to that. Too many hawks, foxes, and coyotes.
I miss having the magazine, <i>Game News</i> .
I really would like to see the <i>Game News</i> publication, and I think that it is a great benefit and incentive of the program.

I want my <i>Game News</i> back; it was a part of the contract! I'm sure the magazine didn't cost that much. I believe in what the Commission is doing.
I think we need to know our legal rights if people are injured on our land.
The Pennsylvania Game Commission has cooperated with me in dealing with trespassers.
I would be interested in making my land open only to Junior hunters for the first two weeks, and then available to everyone else. The juniors are the future and need experiences of the sport.
I have too many coyotes.
I support the antler restrictions, oppose antlerless season at the same time as the antlerless-doe season—they should be separate seasons.
Take away Sunday hunting.
Go easy on the hunters; don't harass them; they pay your salary.
Bring in some elk!
I am concerned about the liability issues if an accident were to occur by hunters on my land—the landowner should not be responsible. ATVs need to be restricted; they are scaring off deer.
Keep PR efforts up on the deer management program.
I am distressed with the number of does being hunted; I think we are losing too many. I will withdraw from the program if this continues.
We appreciate the game policies that are reducing the deer herd.
I want the pheasant program, want free bags of seeds for food plots, want the deer hunt time to end the time it does now, not 1/2 hour later. I want guaranteed doe tag between husband and wife.
No Sunday hunting.
I would like to have the magazines, seeds, etc., again.
Sunday hunting: I'm against it.
My brother does most of the work around here and probably got me signed up when he enrolled his adjacent property. He would have handled contact with the Game Commission. I just remember getting <i>Game News</i> .
Listen to farmers more.
I miss getting <i>Games News</i> . We need more information on liability.

Forest Game Sample

I have a problem with the program. The Game Commission employees do not do enough patrolling, controlling camping and littering, nor communicate often enough.
They do a good job with deer management; I support the map and antler programs.
I'd like to see more enforcement from Pottsville east.
I am a hunter myself, and I appreciate the Game Commission's position. I would like to see more patrolling, especially during hunting season, and more contact when property is patrolled. Watch for 4-wheelers off access roads.
I appreciate the interest and the help improving our grounds.
If the liability lawsuit is not settled so as to protect the landowner, we will post all of our property.

There needs to be more access to GC and DCNR property by public without having to walk great distances. Better communication between GC and DCNR about access. Better patrolling of ATV riders.
Cut down number of deer you can shoot and get herd back up.
We have a watershed property; program is great.
The program has worked quite well for us.
Problems have been decreasing since we enrolled; the PGC doing great, and I would like to enroll other properties, 250-500 acres in all.
They (the Game Commission) are doing a wonderful job.
My company owns 127,000 acres across multi-counties; we already offer maps of property for hunters.
I think it's a good program for all the property hunters to be on; I wish that there were more presence by Game Commission employees to patrol the properties.
I want my <i>Game News</i> ! Also no quads [ATVs]; they destroy the land.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As demonstrated by the results of the telephone survey and the focus groups of Program cooperators, the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Public Access Program was, and remains, an excellent tool for conserving hunting land and habitat and providing hunting opportunities. However, due to the Commission's shift in focus to various other priorities in recent years, the Public Access Program faces several challenges: there is relatively low awareness of the Program among hunters (Responsive Management's 2004 telephone survey of licensed hunters found that 74% knew a little or nothing about the Public Access Program, and that just 11% of licensed hunters had actually hunted on Public Access land in the 5 years prior to that survey in 2004); there is a lack of clear understanding and awareness among cooperators of the Program benefits as they are stated and implied by Program documentation; there is a growing need for increased attention to patrolling and enforcement issues, especially as they relate to ATV and 4-wheeler trespassing protection; and there is a need for the Commission to improve its communication and contact efforts with landowner cooperators throughout the state.

Despite these challenges, the overwhelming sentiment among cooperators, even former cooperators, is to keep the Program intact and to maintain its existence: the Access Program is viewed by nearly everyone involved as a benefit to the state of Pennsylvania, its landowners, hunters, and conservationists, and to hunting itself. The survey data and focus group findings suggest a rededication by the Commission to a few important areas of the Public Access Program.

First, the data suggest that the Commission should remain aware that some cooperators in the Public Access Program are more knowledgeable than others about the workings of the Program and its responsibilities and obligations; this is owing largely to the varying time periods during which cooperator agreements were initially signed. The Commission might also work to address Program benefits in greater detail, including landowner liability issues, habitat improvements and enhancements, and provision of signs to landowners. If it is at all financially feasible for the Commission, *Game News* subscriptions should be reinstated to cooperators. Additionally, patrolling and enforcement on Public Access land could be addressed in greater detail for Program cooperators, who are experiencing trespassing and property damage issues, especially

involving ATVs and 4-wheelers. Finally, and most importantly, the findings suggest that the Pennsylvania Game Commission make communication and contact with Program cooperators its number one priority. Adequate levels of contact between landowners and the Commission will allow the Program to run smoothly, as the Commission will be able to stay abreast of situations before they grow into major issues that cooperators must face on their own. A rededication to communicative efforts will contribute to the overarching goal of ensuring the provision of quality hunting opportunities in Pennsylvania.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM COOPERATORS

Perhaps the issue of greatest concern related to cooperators' satisfaction with the Public Access Program is the perceived lack of effort made by the Pennsylvania Game Commission to maintain contact with cooperators and to stay in touch with the diverse needs and opinions of landowners in various parts of the state. The issue of communication was cited more than any other during the focus groups of landowners; note as well that in the telephone survey, 21% of Farm-Game cooperators and 23% of Safety Zone cooperators said that they were not at all familiar with the Public Access Program before the survey. Additionally, concerns about other issues—the cancellation of *Game News*, landowner liability concerns, trespassing and property damage, and related enforcement issues—tended to relate back to the overarching problem of inadequate communication between the Commission and Program cooperators, meaning that many landowner concerns could potentially be addressed preemptively by the Commission if communication and contact efforts were improved.

Cooperators are sympathetic to the personnel and staffing capabilities of the Commission—the landowner focus groups revealed significant understanding of the fact that the Commission is able to visit properties and meet with landowners only so often and with a relatively fixed rate of consistency. Even so, a substantial number of cooperators stated that even a single annual visit to a property would likely be sufficient for cooperators to address relevant concerns related to the program (33% of Farm-Game cooperators reported that their property had last been visited by a Game Commission employee more than 12 months ago at the time of the telephone survey; 35% of Safety Zone cooperators said the same).

The cancellation of *Game News* subscriptions was viewed by cooperators as a regrettable decision by the Commission not only because of the level of enjoyment many landowners derived from the publication, but also because numerous cooperators in the focus groups viewed *Game News* as having strong potential as a forum or bulletin for updates, news items, and other pertinent information from the Commission. (In this regard, several focus group participants noted that the *Game News* publication came to represent their household's only "proof" of membership in the Public Access Program, as it was the single means through which the Commission stayed in contact.)

With the inception of the Farm-Game program in 1936 and the Safety Zone program in 1954, initial agreements between cooperators and the Pennsylvania Game Commission can stretch back decades: note that 35% of Safety Zone cooperators were unable to identify the year in which they began participating in the Program; likewise, 26% of Farm-Game respondents did not know when they began participating. Several focus group participants accounted for this by pointing hypothetically to grandparents and parents signing into the Program before passing on the membership to their children, for whom enrollment in the Public Access Program may have remained unknown. It is therefore recommended that the Commission keep abreast of the potential for these types of situations—naturally, the issue of uninformed cooperators relates back to the broader issue of improved communication and outreach by the Commission among its constituents.

ADDRESS PROGRAM BENEFITS WITH GREATER DETAIL AND CLARITY

There is a disconnect between Program benefits as they are listed in the Public Access Program literature (Farm-Game, Safety Zone, and Forest Game documentation) and Program benefits as they are perceived by the cooperators themselves. Cooperators indicated frustration first and foremost over the cancellation of the *Game News* publication—note that the free subscription to *Game News* is still listed among the regular benefits of the Public Access Program in current documentation. Additionally, numerous cooperators have expressed strong support for a clarified definition of landowner liability, most especially in the wake of a recent Pennsylvania court settlement involving a landowner who was found partially responsible for a hunting accident that had occurred on his property. The Commission may wish to rededicate itself to

helping landowners plan and implement habitat improvements; or, at the very least, the Commission should consider taking steps to make landowners aware that such wildlife food and habitat enhancements are available to them. Finally, it is suggested that the Commission work to ensure that all Program cooperators who want or need signs on their properties are supplied with them.

Reinstate *Game News* Subscriptions

It is widely thought among Public Access Program cooperators (particularly Farm-Game and Safety Zone landowners) that the opening of one's property for hunting by the public (as well as all responsibilities and obligations implied by such an agreement) far outweighs the price of a yearly subscription to *Game News*. Indeed, notable percentages of Farm-Game and Safety Zone respondents to the telephone survey (21% of Farm-Game cooperators; 23% of Safety Zone cooperators) indicated that the free benefits—chief among these, a subscription to *Game News*—were among the main reasons they decided to enroll in the Public Access Program in the first place. Additionally, cooperators who participated in focus groups voiced similar, nearly uniform enthusiasm for the *Game News* magazine—the decision to cancel cooperator subscriptions to *Game News* was viewed by several landowners as regrettable, considering what cooperators viewed as rather substantial contributions in the opening of their lands to public hunting. If there is any possibility whatsoever within the budgetary constraints of the Commission, it is recommended that *Game News* subscriptions be reinstated to Public Access Program cooperators.

Address Landowner Liability and Lawsuit Concerns

Greater efforts may need to be made to provide basic information and clarification on landowner liability, especially in light of the recent settlement involving the injury of a North Whitehall Township woman and the landowner who was found 10% liable for damages. (Reporting on this incident can be found at the following link: www.redorbit.com/news/science/842350/hunting_straybullet_lawsuit_settled_injured_north_whitehall_woman_agrees_to/index.html#) Cited by numerous focus group participants in the discussions on Program improvements and liability concerns, this case in particular has left many Program cooperators skeptical of the efficacy of the Pennsylvania Landowner Liability Act. The Commission may consider

communicating to its constituents the ramifications of these recent developments in appropriate detail. Current Public Access Program documentation cites the Pennsylvania Landowner Liability Act as an encouragement to landowners to make their property available to hunters and other recreationists, but several cooperators have noted that this inclusion seems incongruous with the reality as demonstrated by recent events in Pennsylvania.

Habitat Improvements as a Means of Lessening Landowner Financial Burdens

Although majorities of cooperators have not received assistance from the Commission in planning or implementing habitat improvements on their properties, substantial percentages of landowners (33% of Farm-Game cooperators, 27% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 32% of Forest Game cooperators) have improved their properties with help from the Commission. Indeed, the Commission lists in its Program documentation extensive options through which landowners may receive assistance, including food and cover seedlings for wildlife, the cutting of woodland borders and hedgerows, and advice on soil conservation practices for farmers. Satisfaction among those who have received such benefits is high, as overwhelming majorities of cooperators in each program were satisfied with the land improvements following their implementation.

However, landowner focus groups suggest that not all cooperators are aware of the full range of assistance available from the Commission. For example, many focus group participants mentioned the financial burden of having to provide their own grain, feed, and seed mix for wildlife—cooperators further noted that the wildlife on their land are then harvested by a public that does nothing to contribute to the cost of sustaining such wildlife. Coupled with this sentiment was a substantial level of feedback indicating that some cooperators are not aware of any benefits whatsoever—the information on Program benefits they learned during the focus groups was completely new to these individuals.

Additionally, substantial percentages (67% of Farm-Game cooperators, 65% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 34% of Forest Game cooperators) of telephone survey respondents not at all interested in planning or implementing habitat improvements on their properties may indicate that not all cooperators are aware that they are to be provided such benefits free of charge from

the Commission, or that they are aware of the full range of benefits available to them. The Commission could therefore work to make known to cooperators the landscape and habitat benefits they may receive, which may also potentially lessen the financial burdens of landowners to maintain their properties. This again demonstrates an opportunity for the Commission to maintain at least a moderate level of communication and contact with landowners enrolled in the Public Access Program.

Ensure Provision of Signage to Cooperators

Substantial percentages of Farm-Game and Safety Zone cooperators do not display Public Access Program signs on their properties (45% and 63%, respectively). When these respondents were asked about their reasons for not displaying signs, sizable percentages reported that they had not been provided any (52% of Farm-Game respondents and 53% of Safety Zone respondents). The Commission should work to assess Farm-Game and Safety Zone properties in particular for any necessary or requested signage—not only is provided signage one of the benefits explicitly stated in Program documentation, but the addition of official Pennsylvania Game Commission signage may also be important in deterring future instances of trespassing, hunting without permission, and property damage. Finally, in positively identifying properties as hunting lands, signs will be fulfilling a primary goal of the Program to enhance hunting opportunities in the most general sense.

ADDRESS PATROLLING OF AND ENFORCEMENT ON PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM LAND

Relating to the necessity of addressing Program benefits in greater detail, the Commission should work to ensure clarity in constituents' understanding of the power and duties of Commission enforcement officers with regard to trespassing and enforcement on landowner properties. Speaking in focus groups, many Program cooperators indicated their resignation to the fact that enforcement of trespassing is something that the Pennsylvania Game Commission is unable to do (bound by the provisions in Chapter 9 of Title 34 Game and Wildlife Code) and that Pennsylvania State Police are unwilling to do (due to perceived personnel constraints). As a result, many landowners view trespassing—particularly by ATVs and 4-wheelers—on Public Access lands as a persistent problem without a solution. Though it may be out of their immediate means, the Commission could nonetheless make an effort to retool its policies and

practices regarding the “protection to life and property through patrolling and enforcement of law,” as stated in current Program documentation.

Demand for protection is greatest among Forest Game cooperators, many of whom possess financial stakes in their Public Access lands (44% of Forest Game cooperators' properties constitute commercial forests or other investments). Specifically, 51% of Forest Game respondents to the telephone survey cited protection against trespassing as a general reason for enrolling in the Public Access Program, with 72% of Forest Game respondents ranking protection against trespassing as a very or somewhat important reason for enrolling. (Conversely, just 40% of both Farm-Game landowners and Safety Zone landowners considered trespassing protection a very or somewhat important reason for Program enrollment.)

However, Program cooperators in each of the three programs are uniform in their need for greater enforcement and protection from ATVs and 4-wheelers. Private landowners cited property damage including structural issues such as broken gates and fences, ruined trails and paths, and damage to trees as some of the residual effects of reckless ATV and 4-wheeler operation on properties. Similarly, there was near unanimous agreement in focus groups that ATV and 4-wheeler operation on Public Access lands represented an issue in need of more Commission attention.

Trespassing by Hunters

Cooperator concern over trespassing just by hunters (that is, excepting concerns over ATV and 4-wheeler trespassing) on Public Access Program lands is not exceedingly high. While it should be noted that most landowners report some level of hunters hunting without permission (62% of Farm-Game cooperators, 55% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 81% of Forest Game cooperators said during the telephone survey that their property is utilized by hunters without permission at least sometimes) most of the landowners appear to agree that hunter-only trespassing is not a great concern. Some cooperators participating in focus groups acknowledged as well that the “mandatory permission” concept may be near unenforceable, considering the practice of opening one's land to public hunting. Further, many landowners indicated during focus groups that they no longer reasonably expect every hunter on their land to ask permission before hunting. With

this in mind, the issue of hunters hunting without permission becomes something of a moot point. Note, however, that this observation applies only to the issue of hunters themselves utilizing land without permission—concern rises considerably when such unauthorized use extends to include property damage and ATV and 4-wheeler-related problems.

Trespassing by ATVs and 4-Wheelers

ATV and 4-wheeler trespassing represents a resounding issue for landowners. Overwhelming majorities in each of the programs (79% of Farm-Game cooperators; 78% of Safety Zone cooperators; and 88% of Forest Game cooperators) reported that ATVs and 4-wheelers accounted for some of the other recreationists besides hunters who had utilized their properties in the 2 years prior to the survey. Further, substantial percentages (68% of Farm-Game cooperators, 60% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 79% of Forest Game cooperators) of the same cooperators said that recreationists such as ATV riders utilized their properties without permission at least sometimes. Property damage such as damage to paths and trails, crops, and vegetation, as well as structural damage to gates, fences, and houses, was overwhelmingly attributed to ATVs and 4-wheelers. Only slight percentages of cooperators have restricted access on their properties in the past; when they did, they most commonly cited ATVs as a reason for doing so.

Focus group participants mentioned the possibility of the Commission spearheading an effort to pass more stringent fines and penalties for reckless ATV riders and 4-wheelers. (Such an effort would presumably involve the state legislature.) However, it was noted more than once in response to this suggestion that if the hypothetical ATV rider has the finances to purchase the vehicle in question, it is doubtful he will be much deterred by what would surely amount to a monetary slap on the wrist. As such, a solution for the immediate future to the ATV and 4-wheeler issue may simply depend on increased enforcement and patrolling by Commission officers.

It was further noted in focus groups that Pennsylvania landowners are often at a loss as to whom to report issues involving trespassing and reckless ATVs and 4-wheelers: it was widely agreed that the majority of such calls are transferred to the authority of the state and local police, whose

personnel constraints rarely allow them to investigate these situations adequately. It is therefore recommended that the Commission rededicate itself to this recurring, problematic issue for Program cooperators, examining such aspects as current cooperative efforts and potential for future partnerships with state and local police and consistency in rates of geographic and Program area coverage (Forest Game lands appear to be patrolled more frequently than are Farm-Game and Safety Zone lands).

Property Damage

Although much of the property damage discussed in focus groups and cited during the telephone survey can be attributed to careless ATV and 4-wheeler operation, so too does property damage stand on its own as a problematic issue for landowners. Though relating to the broader issue of trespassing, property damage in and of itself represents a regrettable ongoing issue for some landowners, who open their land to public hunting but who are then forced to pay for any repairs due to damages caused by the same public. Variations on this general type of situation were cited more than once during cooperator focus groups, in which some participants noted that the “protection to life and property through patrolling and enforcement of law by Wildlife Conservation Offices” (Farm-Game documentation) could stand to be improved.

HUNTER AWARENESS AND USAGE LEVELS OF THE PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM

There were relatively low percentages of licensed hunters in Pennsylvania who in 2004 indicated a solid awareness of the Public Access Program: 74% of licensed hunters knew a little or nothing about the Public Access Program, and only 11% of licensed hunters had actually hunted on Public Access land in the 5 years prior to 2004. It is recommended that the Commission remain aware of the potential for increased awareness of the Program among hunters.

With the above recommendation in mind, the Pennsylvania Game Commission also must consider that 57% of Farm-Game cooperators and 56% of Safety Zone cooperators strongly or moderately oppose identifying their properties as open for some type of public hunting on a map (37% of Forest Game cooperators oppose identifying their hunting lands on a map). Further, cooperators overwhelmingly agree (79% of Farm-Game cooperators, 82% of Safety Zone cooperators, and 88% of Forest Game cooperators) that the amount of hunters utilizing their

properties in an average year represents about the right amount. Finally, cooperator sentiments expressed in focus groups aligned closely with the survey results, indicating no great additional desire among landowners for Program advertising. (Cooperators in focus groups speculated that most people likely learned about the Program through word-of-mouth from friends and other hunters, and from the Commission itself.)

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 45 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 20 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*.

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