

Fostering Public Confidence

In Aquaculture

The Project



**Develop a strategy to
increase public
confidence in
aquaculture**

Why Public Confidence?

- ▶ Public concern about aquaculture is impediment to industry growth
- ▶ Proposed leases face strong, well-organized community opposition
- ▶ People who fear impact on local community rally others to oppose
- ▶ Use of communications material from BC conflict
- ▶ Process of getting a lease becomes expensive in time and money

What we did

- ▶ Best Practices review
- ▶ Survey of Nova Scotians
- ▶ Focus Groups
- ▶ Interviews
- ▶ Developed recommendations

What I Will Present

- ▶ Some interesting findings of the research
 - Macro
 - Micro
- ▶ A high-level analysis of where we are in public confidence
- ▶ Recommendations for moving forward
- ▶ Quick list of some initiatives under way

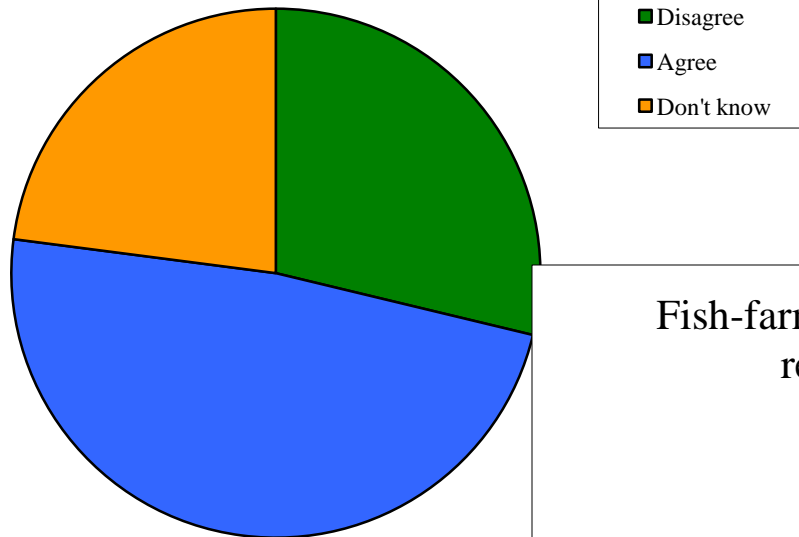
Findings – Macro

We wanted to find out:

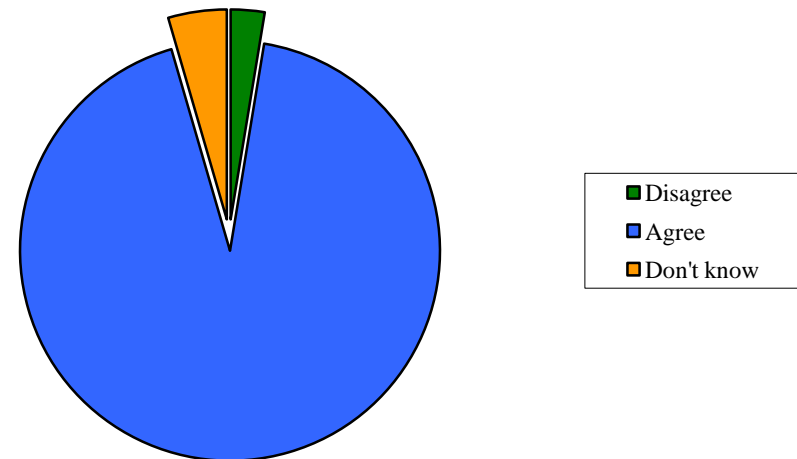
- ▶ General perceptions of aquaculture
- ▶ People's priorities with respect to aquaculture

Concerns & Perceptions

Fish Farming is a clean operation that is safe for the environment

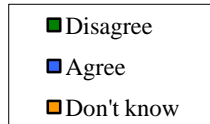
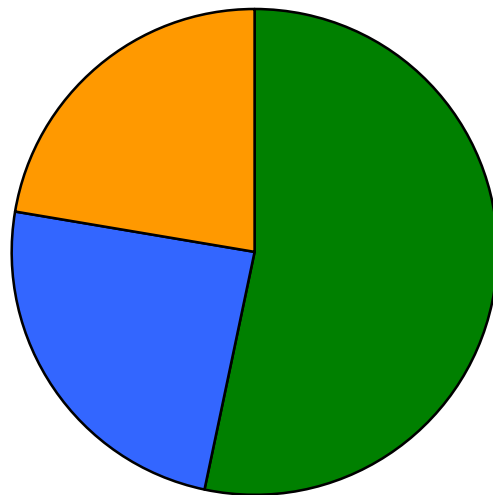


Fish-farms must be placed in areas that do not result in environmental damage

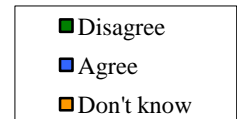
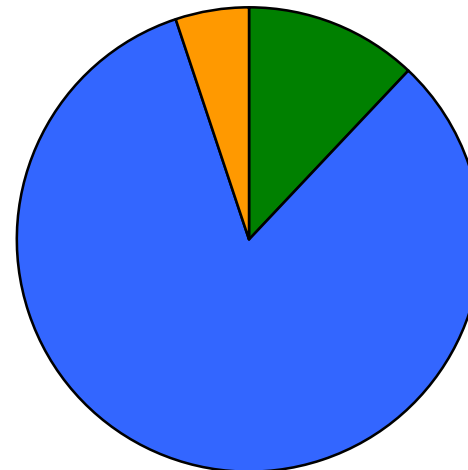


Concerns & Perceptions

Fish-farming has a negative impact on the traditional commercial fishery

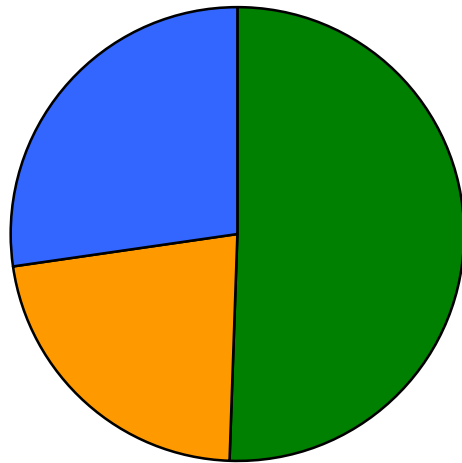


Fish-farms should not be placed in areas which interfere with commercial fishing



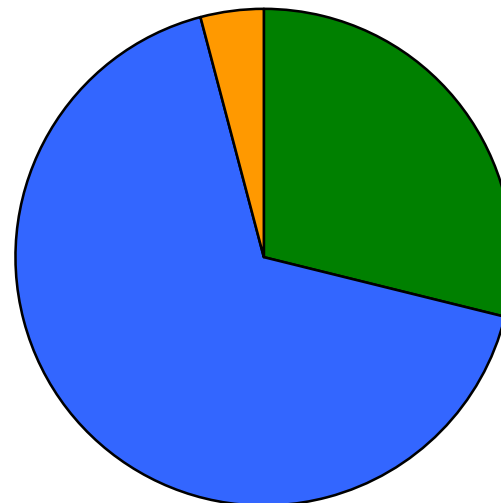
Concerns & Perceptions

Fish-farming operations bring down the value of nearby properties



■ Disagree
■ Agree
■ Don't know

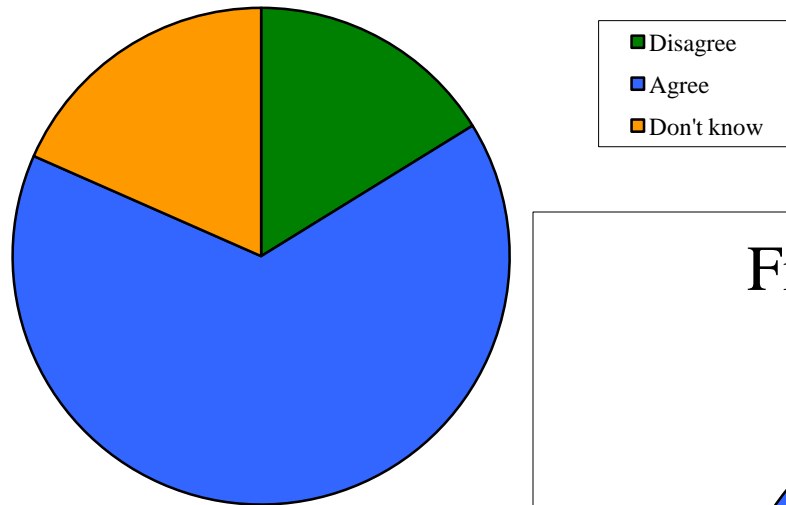
Fish-farms should not be placed in areas which interfere with recreation or a view



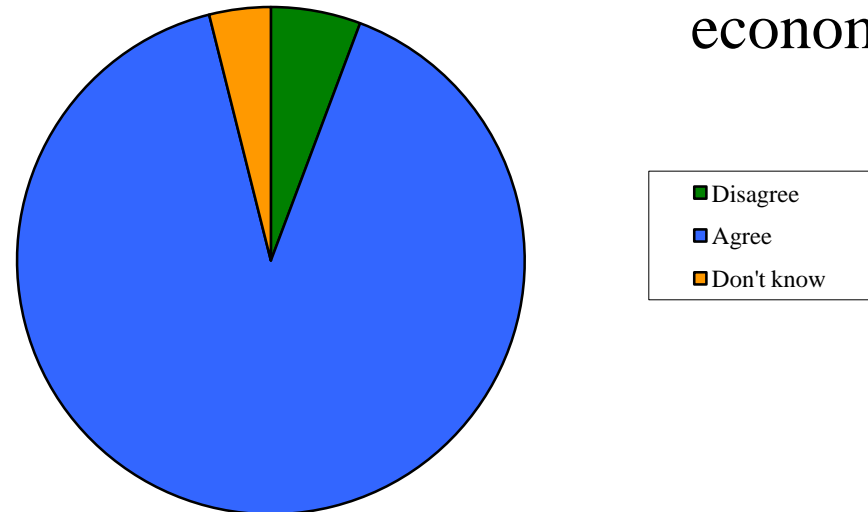
■ Disagree
■ Agree
■ Don't know

Concerns & Perceptions

Fish Farming Produces high quality food that is safe to eat

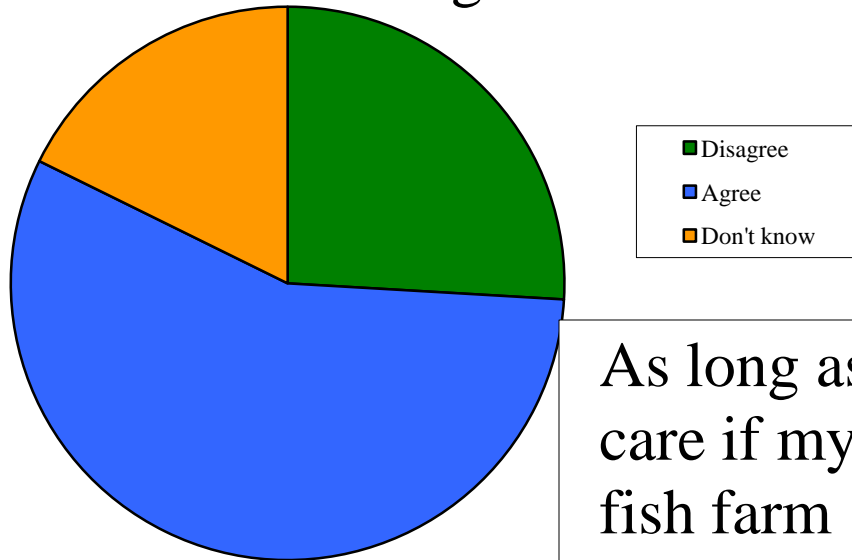


Fish farming provides jobs in rural communities and supports our economy

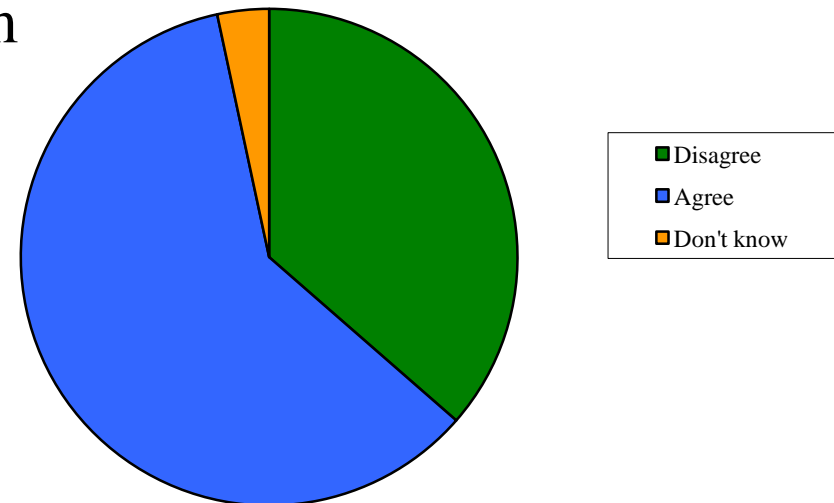


Concerns & Perceptions

Establishing fish farms in our coastal waters is a good idea

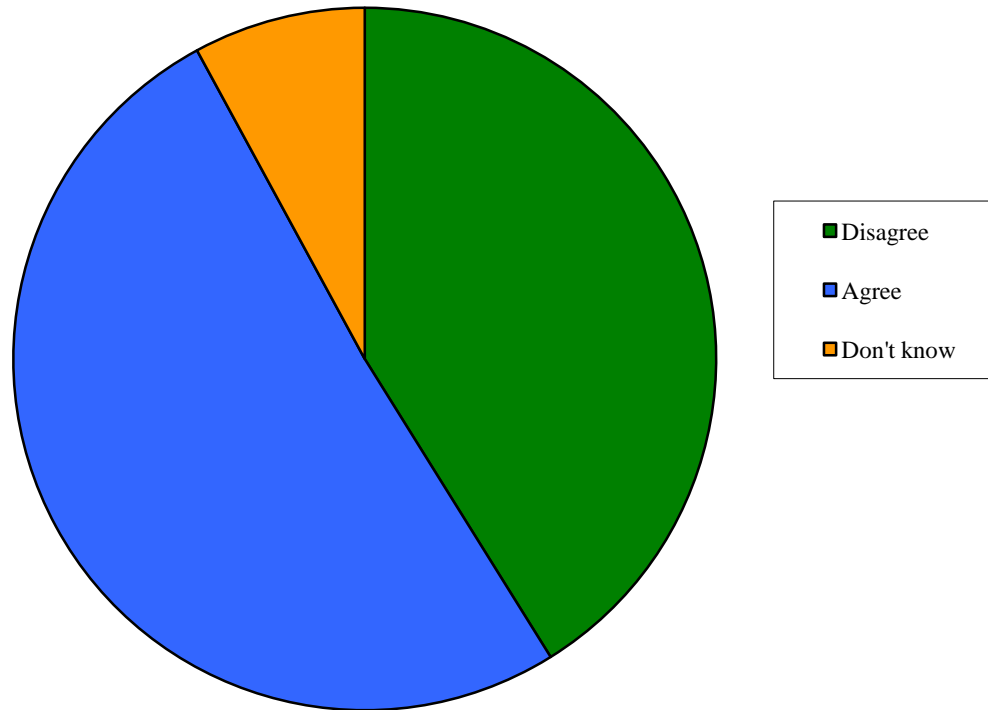


As long as it tastes good, I don't care if my fish is wild or from a fish farm



Concerns & Perceptions

The fact that the government regulates fish farming makes me more comfortable with it



Findings – Macro

- ▶ Nova Scotians are supportive of aquaculture
 - Environmentally, economically, socially
 - See it as important job creator in rural coastal communities
 - An important provider of seafood
- ▶ 75% of Nova Scotians eat Atlantic Salmon, but only 1 in 3 reports eating farmed seafood
- ▶ 66% eat mussels, only 1 in 3 report eating farmed seafood
- ▶ People are unaware of aquaculture

Findings – Micro

We wanted to find out:

- ▶ People's perceptions of local operations
- ▶ How they viewed aquaculture in their community
- ▶ Their level of knowledge
- ▶ Their priorities

Findings – Micro

- ▶ People are concerned about environmental impacts, conflicts
- ▶ People are concerned about impact on their community – fear
- ▶ They like the jobs, and appreciate the economic benefits
 - They want processing jobs!
- ▶ They want monitoring, and are generally unaware of the monitoring that is going on
- ▶ They want access to the product!

Synthesis

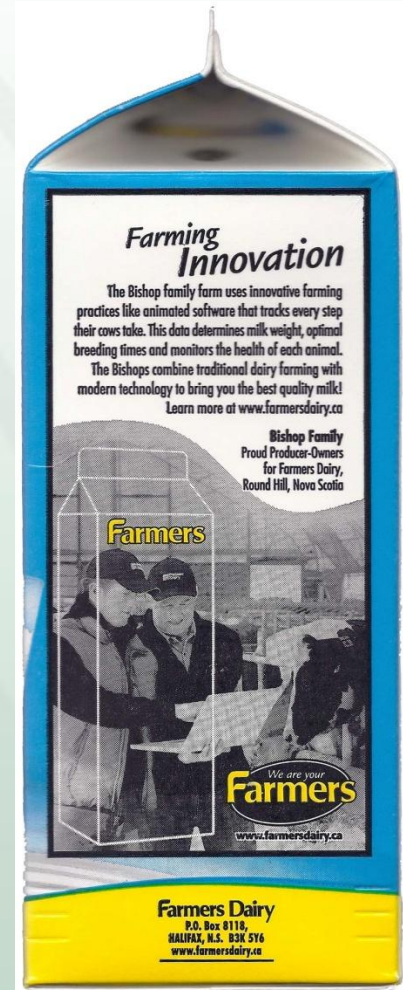
- ▶ Recurring themes:
 - Environment
 - Economy
 - Shared use of ocean resource (social licence)
- ▶ Lack of trust, fear
- ▶ Customers want the product
- ▶ Industry wants more leadership from government, and quicker process for lease applications

Recommendations

- ▶ Strive for an increasingly sustainable industry
 - Triple bottom-line
 - Environmentally responsible
 - Economically vibrant
 - Socially responsible
- ▶ Research and adopt best management practices
 - Continually strive to be cutting-edge
- ▶ Government and Industry together should publicly declare their commitment to a sustainable aquaculture industry

Recommendations

- ▶ Make aquaculture a social norm
 - Get the message out that there is aquaculture everywhere, put up signs
 - Connect the plate to the farm
 - 2/3 are eating aquaculture products but don't know it
 - Put a face on the industry
 - Promote as a local business employing local people
 - Arrange tours of aquaculture sites
 - Be more visible, signage, etc.



Recommendations

- ▶ Environmental monitoring
 - Have to get the message out that monitoring is happening, it is rigorous, and that the results are transparent
 - Explain what happens when a site is not compliant
 - Get the word out on the true impact of sites by showing video, publishing results
- ▶ Fish health
 - Must be better understood by people

Recommendations

- ▶ Promote the successes of the industry, and commit to not repeat the failures
- ▶ Government must speed up the approval process for lease applications
 - Be rigorous, but be timely
- ▶ Elected officials need to show leadership in promoting and supporting a sustainable industry
- ▶ Industry needs to engage communities when pursuing leases and continue to engage after establishing operation

Current Initiatives

- ▶ **Public Confidence Steering Committee**
 - Developing a demo site with video, measurement and putting it on the web
 - Developing public consultation manual for operators
 - Changing look of booth, tent to promote sustainability
 - Connecting food to industry at booth
 - Connecting industry to community through events – farm day, tours

More info

- ▶ Reports
 - www.gov.ns.ca/fish/aquaculture
- ▶ Contact me
 - Ken Donnelly
 - 902-422-8088
 - kdonnelly@lura.ca