



Research Question

Is public acceptance of animal-based research affected by having a regulatory system in place?

Methods

- Using an interactive web-based survey we asked participants: "Do you support the use of 100 pigs for research to reduce phosphorous pollution?"
 - Participants were asked to answer yes or no (quantitative data) and to comment on why they answered as they did (qualitative data)
- Three scenarios were used to explore their views:
- Pigs fed two different natural grain diets
 - Pigs surgically implanted with a fistula to determine the effects of two diets
 - Pigs genetically modified (GM) to produce less phosphorous in their manure
- Participants that supported scenario 1 were randomised to either scenario 2 or 3, and then asked if they continued to support the research
 - For the results presented below, participants were initially told that the experiments were *unregulated*. Those who did not support the research were directed to the same scenario, but with the research now *regulated*.



Results: Quantitative

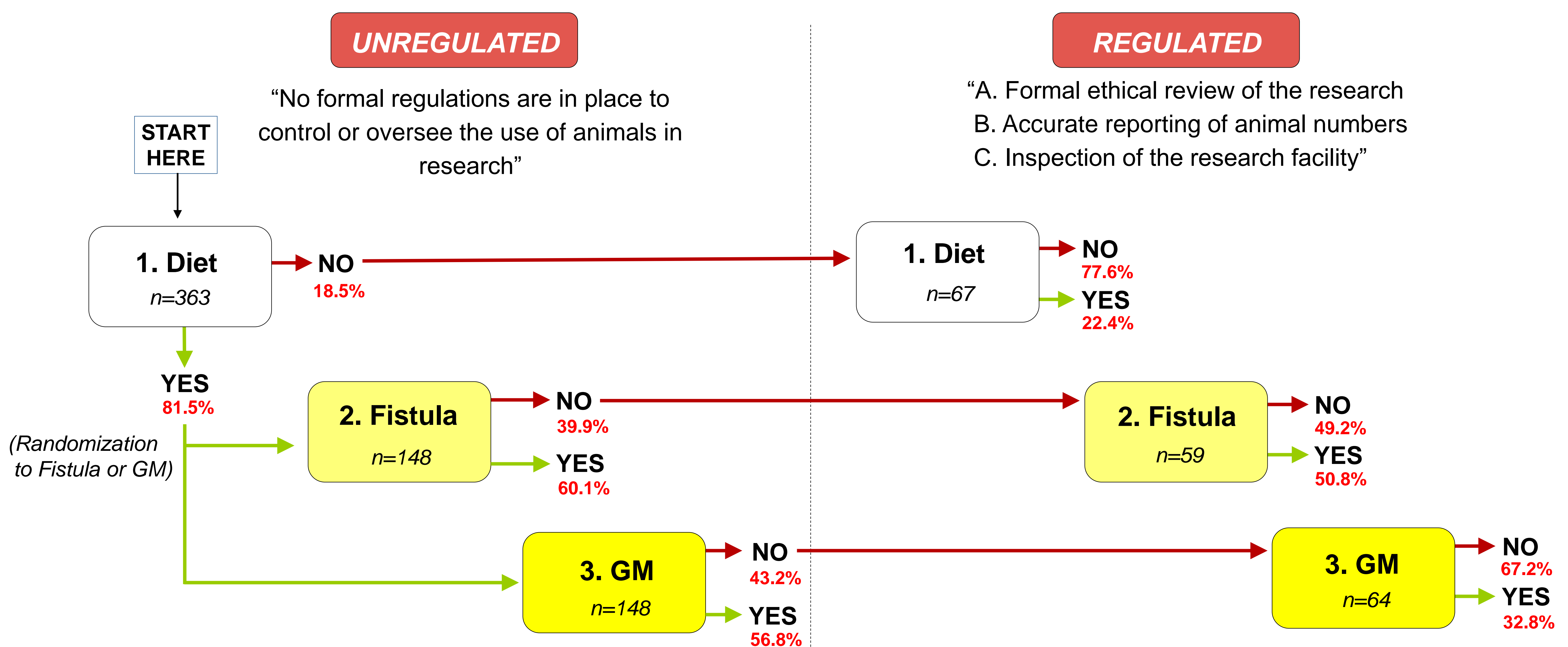


Figure 1: Paths through the survey for participants randomly assigned to scenario 1 in the unregulated treatment group

Results: Qualitative

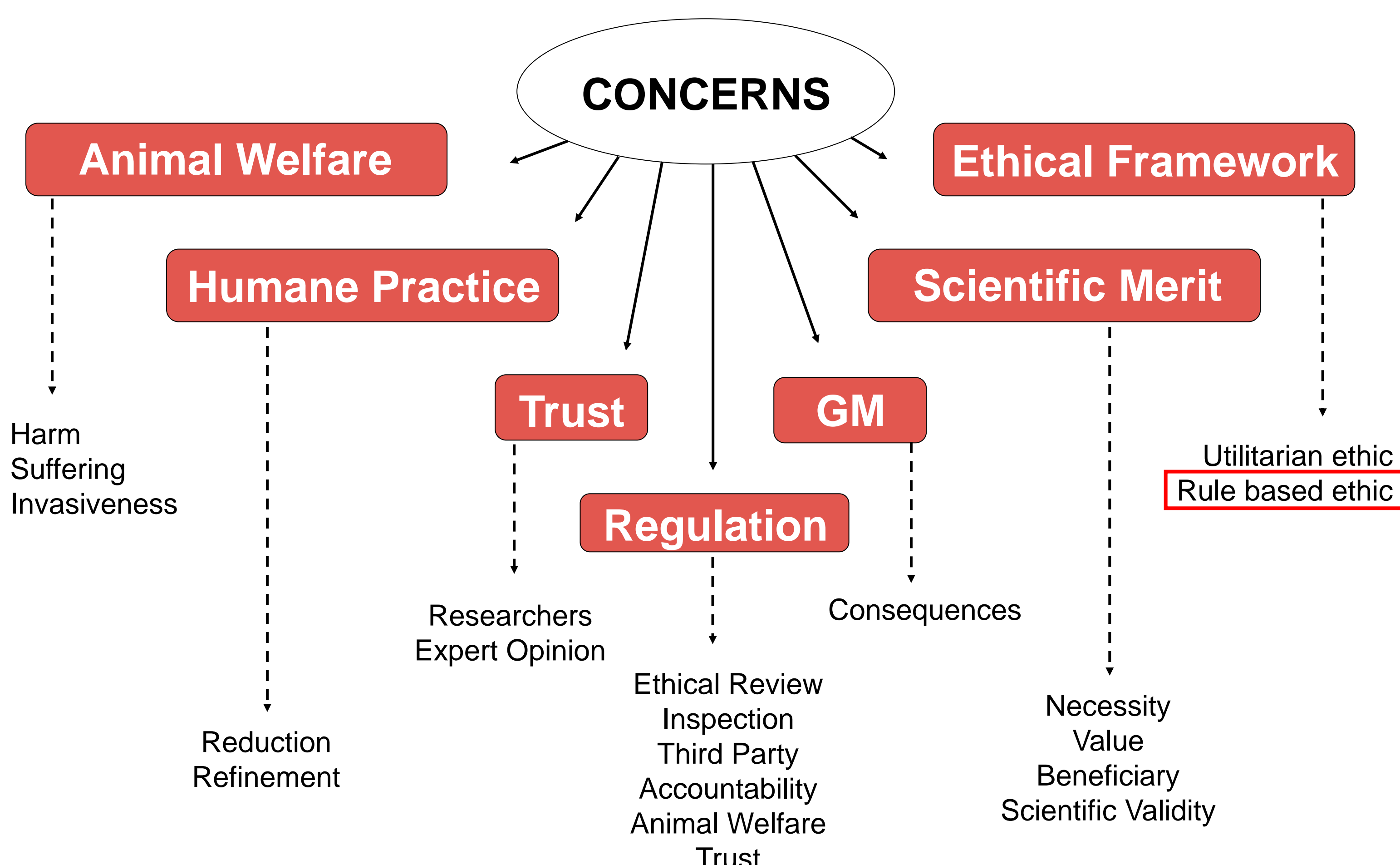


Figure 2: Qualitative results from survey

Key points from qualitative comment data:

- Participants either stated conditions under which they would support the proposed research, or reasons for their support/opposition
- 56% of participants opposed to the scenario involving GM pigs expressed a rule based ethic (i.e. "GM is wrong")
- A rule based ethic was only expressed by:
 - participants opposed to all use of animals in research
 - participants opposed to the use of GM animals

Conclusions

- Invasiveness and GM decrease public acceptance of research on animals
- Willingness to accept animal research increases when regulation is in place
- Much opposition to research involving GM animals stems from rule based approaches to ethical decision making