

# Nanotechnology & Food: The Public Knows “Nano”

By

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Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies

An initiative of the

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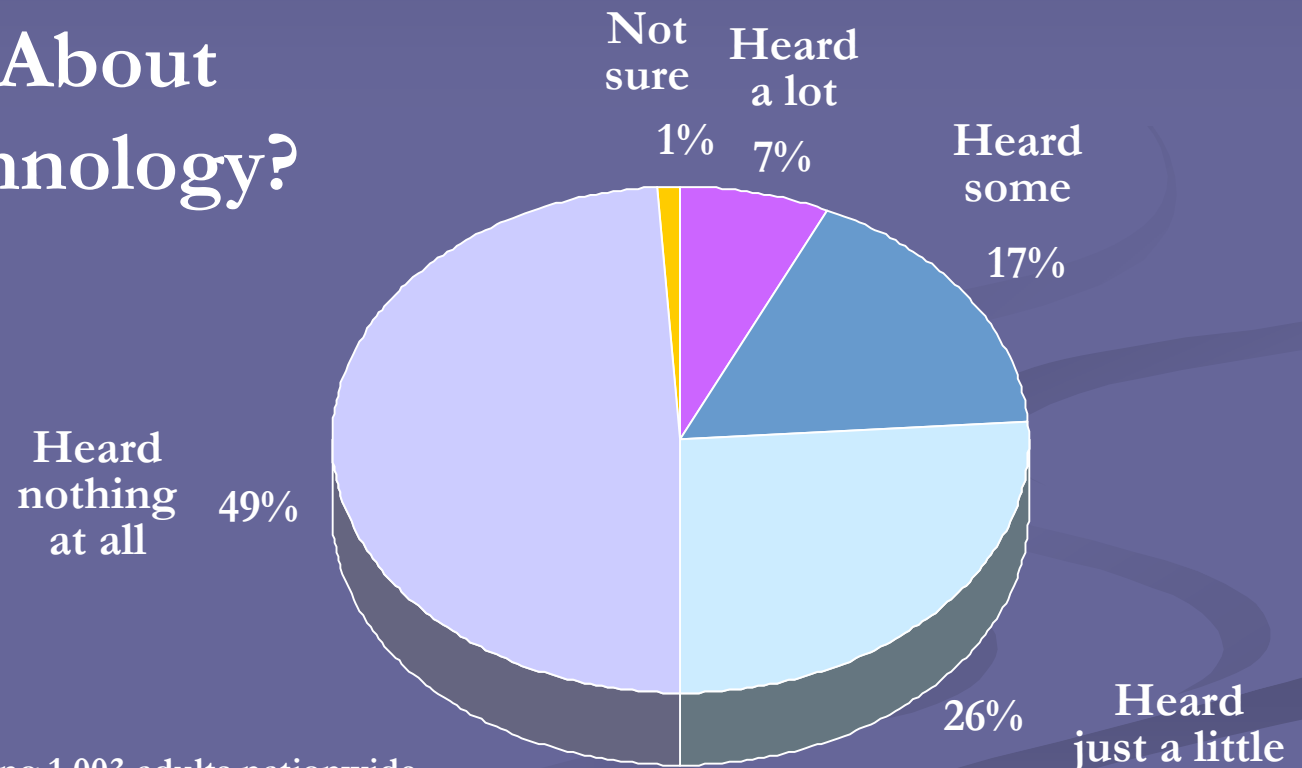
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# Public Awareness of Nanotechnology

How Much Have You Heard About Nanotechnology?



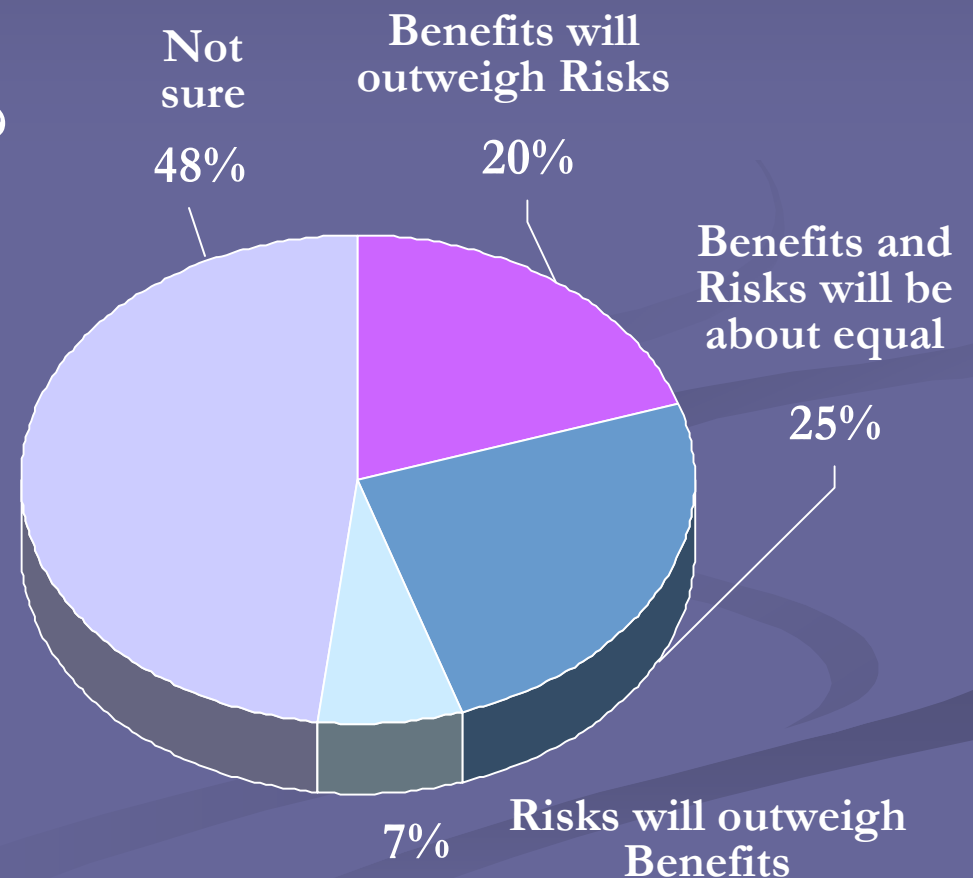
Key findings from a survey among 1,003 adults nationwide  
Conducted August 20-25, 2008 by Peter D. Hart Research Associates

# Initial Impression of Risks and Benefits of Nanotechnology

Which will outweigh:  
benefits, risks, or equal?

Impact of Familiarity Prior to Survey

	Heard a lot	Heard Some	Heard a little	Heard nothing
Benefits outweigh	49	41	24	8
Benefits/risks equal	33	26	29	22
Risks outweigh	8	8	8	5
Not sure	10	25	39	65



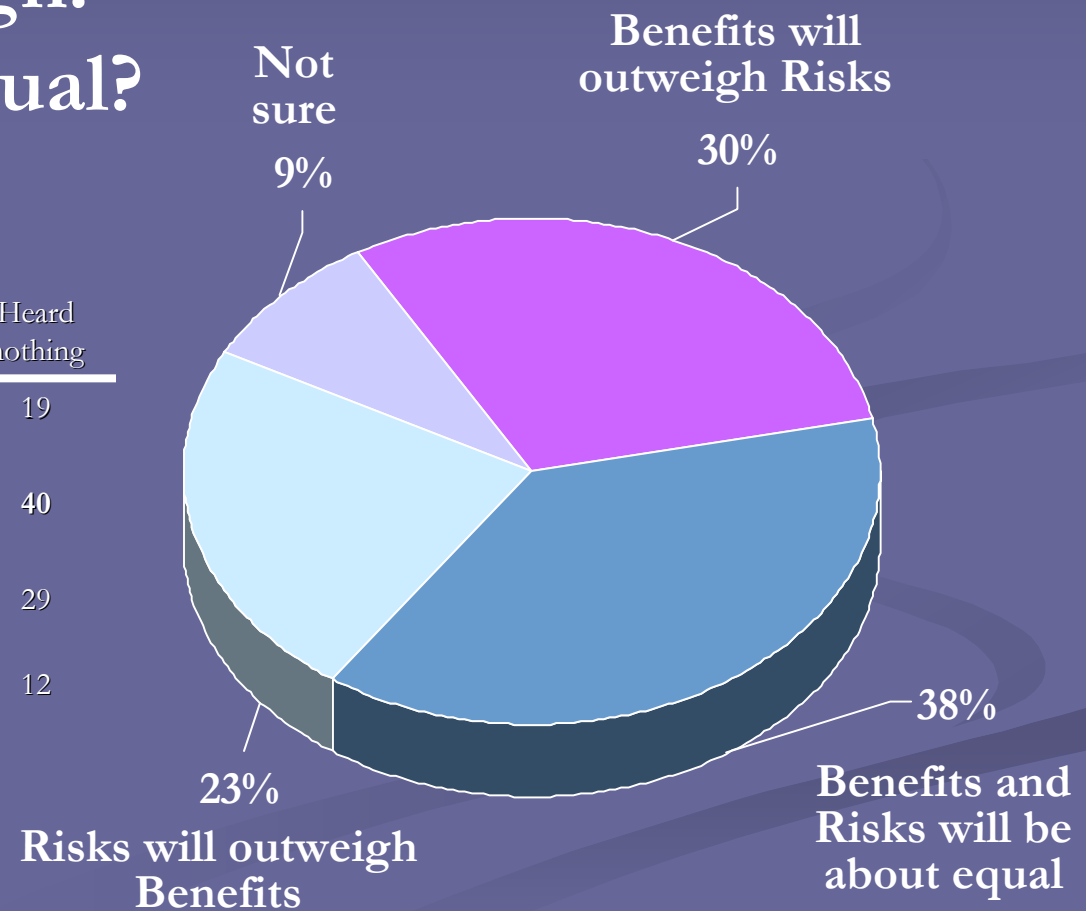
Source: Peter D. Hart Research, Inc. "Awareness Of And Attitudes Toward Nanotechnology And Federal Regulatory Agencies," 2008.

# Informed Impression of Risks and Benefits of Nanotechnology

Which will outweigh:  
benefits, risks, or equal?

Impact of Familiarity Prior to Survey

	Heard a lot	Heard Some	Heard a little	Heard nothing
Benefits outweigh	55	45	32	19
Benefits/risks equal	26	28	44	40
Risks outweigh	16	18	17	29
Not sure	3	9	7	12



Source: Peter D. Hart Research, Inc. "Awareness Of And Attitudes Toward Nanotechnology And Federal Regulatory Agencies," 2008.

# U.S. Public Perceptions

- Most important potential benefits:
  - Medical applications (31%)
  - Better consumer products (27%)
  - General progress, better life (12%)
  - Environmental protection (8%)
  - Food and nutrition (6%)
  - Economy, jobs (4%)

# Consumer Products

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## Consumer Products

An inventory of nanotechnology-based consumer products currently on the market.

After more than twenty years of basic and applied research, nanotechnologies are gaining in commercial use. Nanoscale materials now are in electronic, cosmetics, automotive and medical products. But it has been difficult to find out how many "nano" consumer products are on the market and which merchandise could be called "nano."

While not comprehensive, this inventory gives the public the best available look at the 500+ manufacturer-identified nanotechnology-based consumer products currently on the market.

Continue by selecting an item below

### **Browse**

Browse products by name, category, company, or country

### **Search Inventory**

Search for products with keywords, categories, countries, companies, and more

### **Background**

How we decide what is in, and what is out



### WELCOME

The inventory is an essential resource for consumers, citizens, policymakers, and others who are interested in learning about how nanotechnology is entering the marketplace. It is meant to be international and expanding. Users are encouraged to submit new and updated information to [nano@wilsoncenter.org](mailto:nano@wilsoncenter.org).

### STATISTICS

In the Consumer

## inventories

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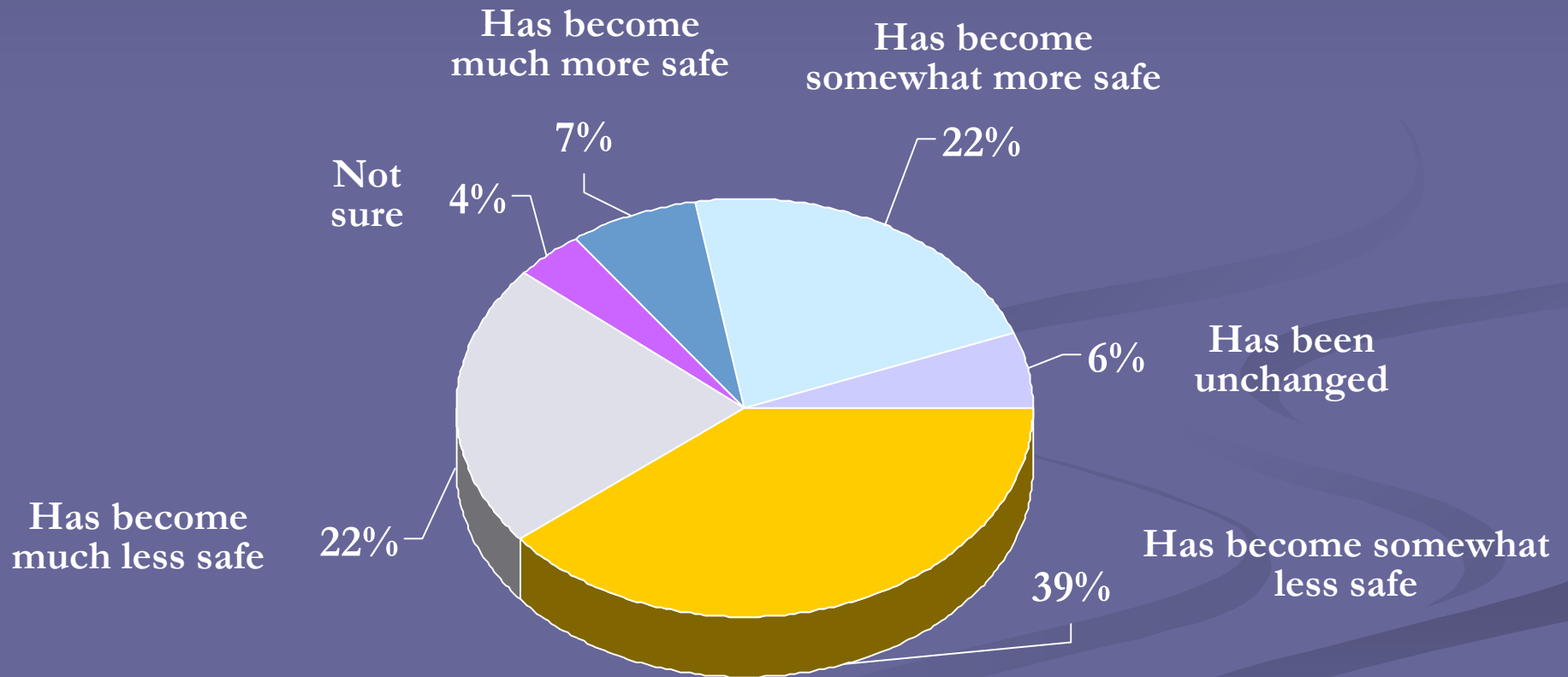
[US NanoMetro Map](#)

[Agriculture and Food](#)

[Medicine](#)

# Safety of the Food Supply

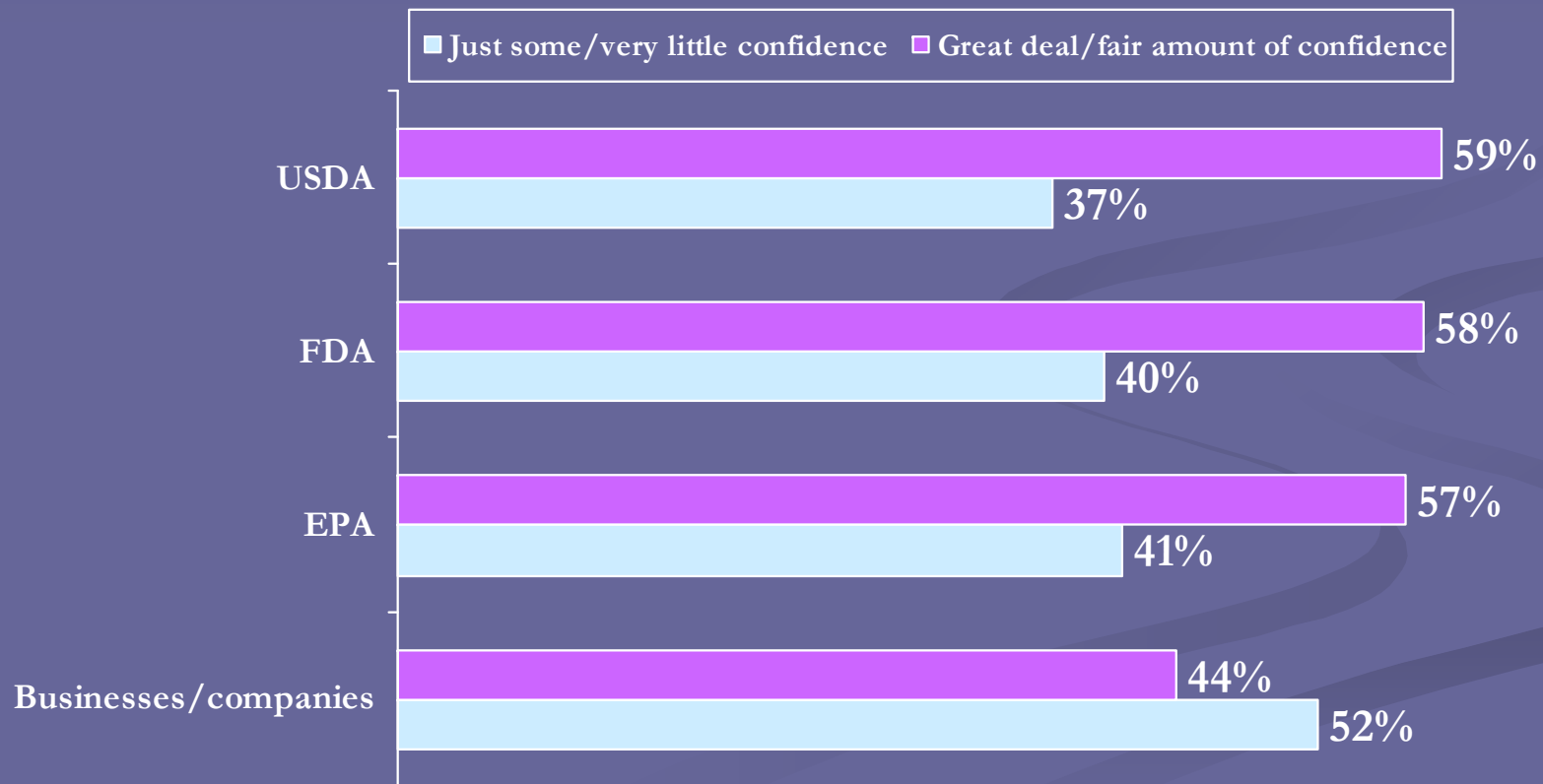
*Over the past five years, the food supply:*



Source: Peter D. Hart Research, Inc. "Awareness Of And Attitudes Toward Nanotechnology And Federal Regulatory Agencies," 2007.

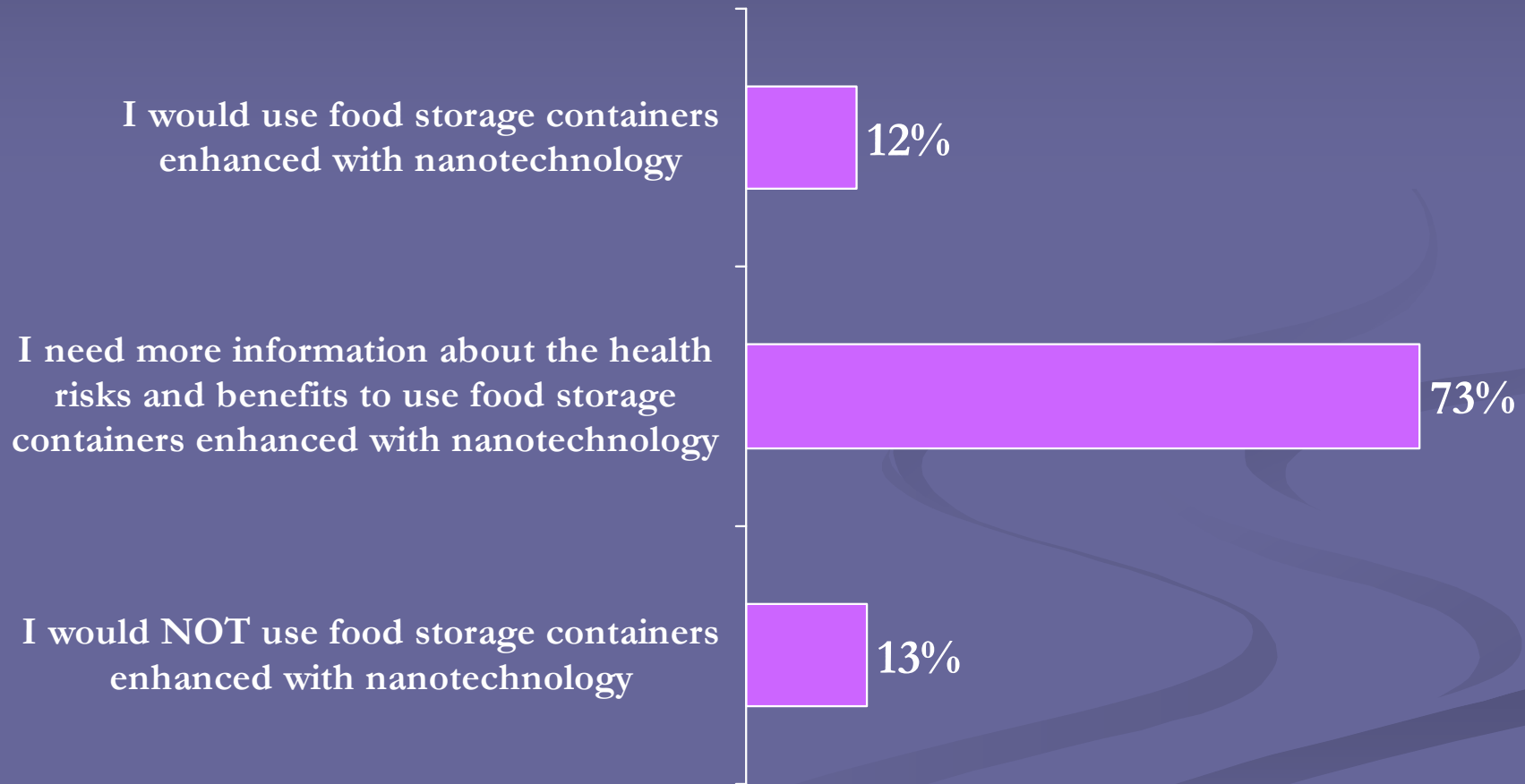
# Public Confidence in Agencies/Business

*Confidence in Each to Maximize Benefits & Minimize  
Risks of Scientific/Technological Advancements*



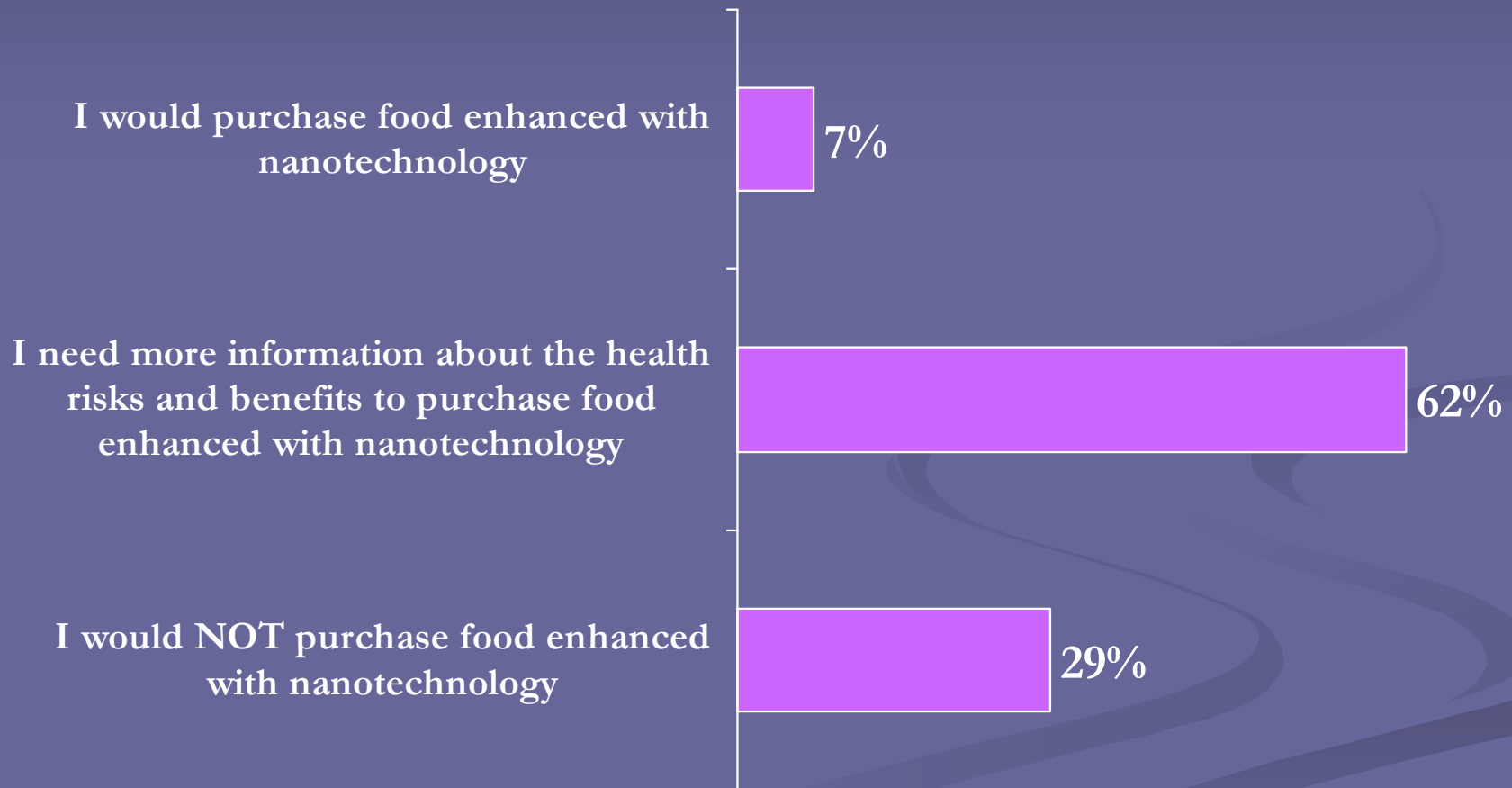
Source: Peter D. Hart Research, Inc. "Awareness Of And Attitudes Toward Nanotechnology And Federal Regulatory Agencies," 2007.

# Use of Food Storage Products Enhanced With Nanotechnology



Source: Peter D. Hart Research, Inc. "Awareness Of And Attitudes Toward Nanotechnology And Federal Regulatory Agencies," 2007.

# Purchase of Food Enhanced With Nanotechnology



Source: Peter D. Hart Research, Inc. "Awareness Of And Attitudes Toward Nanotechnology And Federal Regulatory Agencies," 2007.

# Conclusions

- Large majority of Americans still have heard little or nothing
- Large portion of public does not have an opinion of the trade-offs between risks and benefits
- Public more comfortable with government or independent oversight than of industry self-regulation of new technologies
- Current lack of awareness presents an opportunity for the government and industry to establish confidence in nanotechnology
- Public values nanotechnology medical benefits over food and nutrition

# From Agbiotech to Nanotech: Lessons Learned

- Build public trust in a strong, credible US and international oversight process
- Make sure nanotechnology's environmental and health benefits and safety are confirmed by independent research
- Demonstrate concern for consumer choice and provide good consumer information
- Offer opportunities for public input into the technology's development and regulation

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