Connecting Producers and Consumers in Short Food Supply Chains

Klaus Grunert
Professor of Marketing & Founder of the MAPP Research Centre / Aarhus University

Connecting Producers and Consumers:
Promoting Short Food Supply Chains

Klaus G. Grunert
MAPP Centre, Aarhus University

1. Short supply chains and consumer engagement

2. Communication about local processing technologies and locally processed products

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Short supply chains as networks

A short food supply chain, as defined by the EU, is a supply chain involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to cooperation, local economic development, and maintaining close geographical and social relations between food producers, processors and consumers.

The FOX project enables short supply chains by supporting the local processing of food products.

Short supply chains require that all actors – farmers, processors, intermediaries, **consumers** – are *engaged* in the supply chain
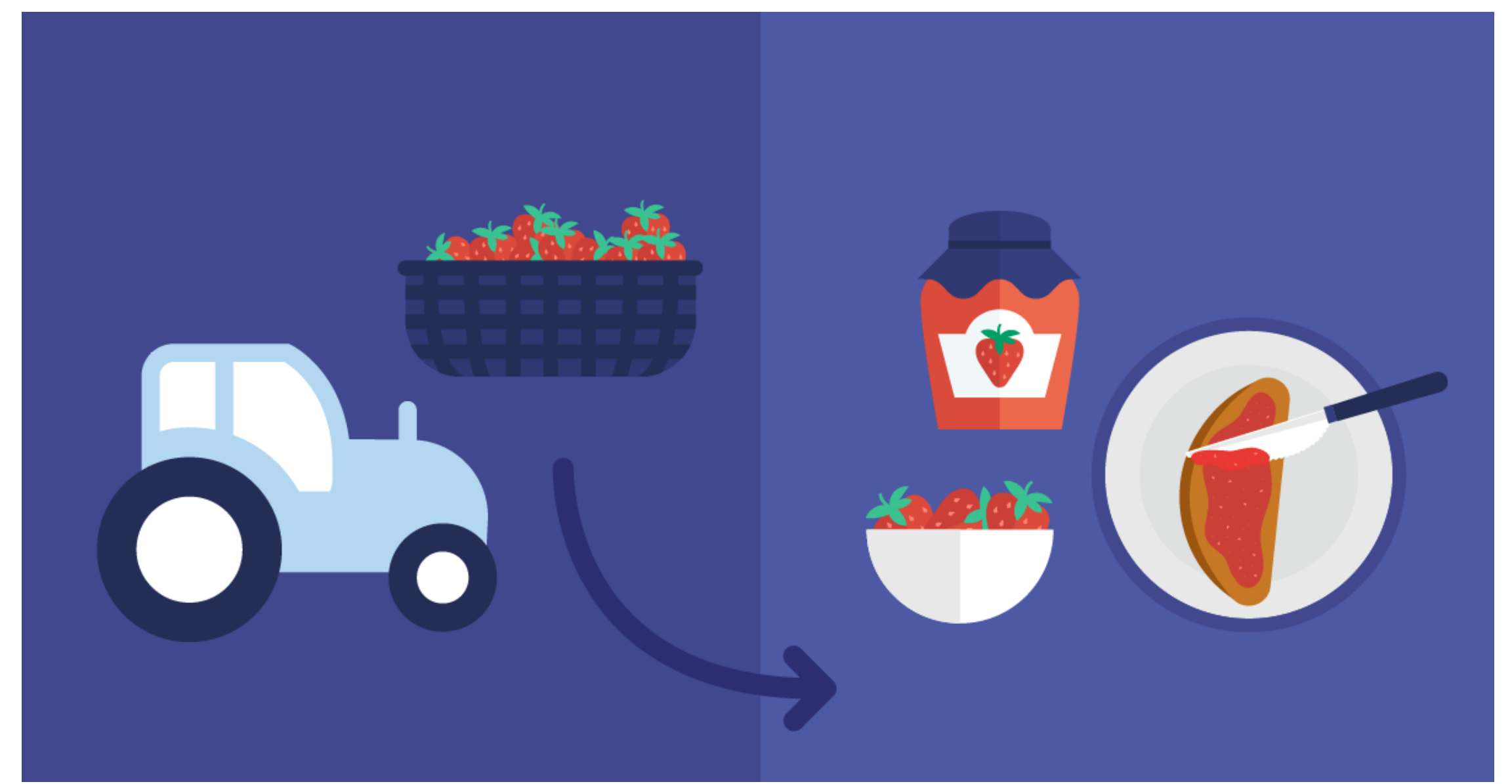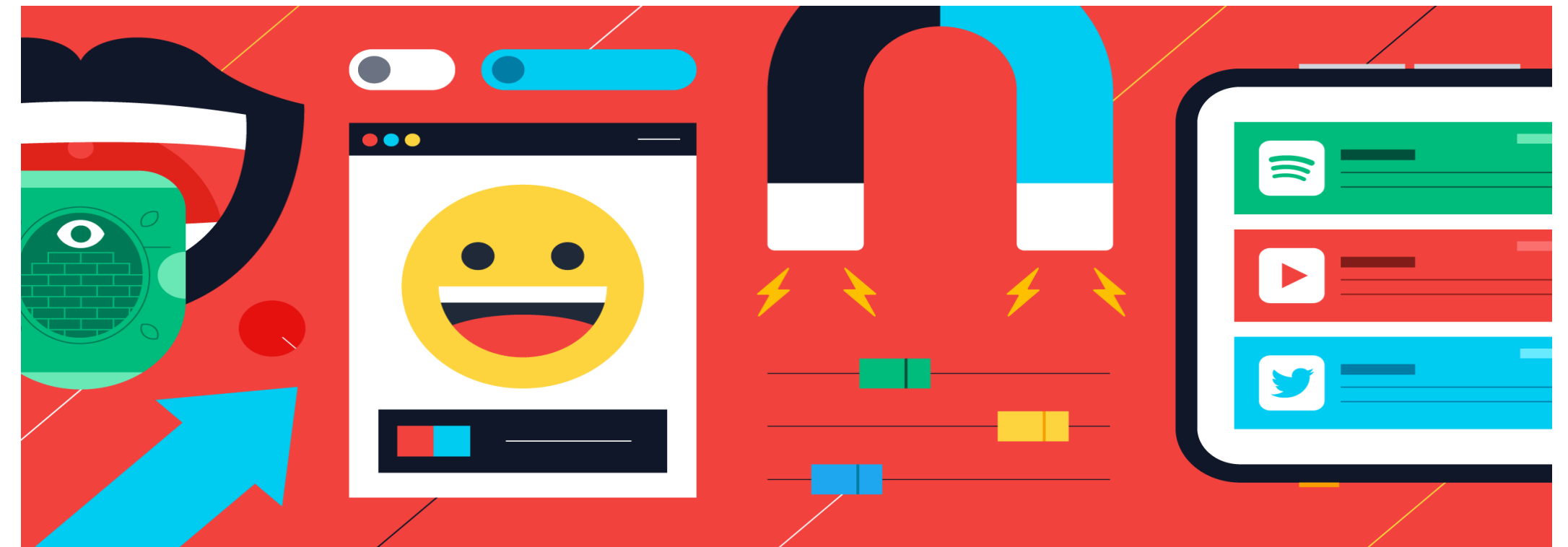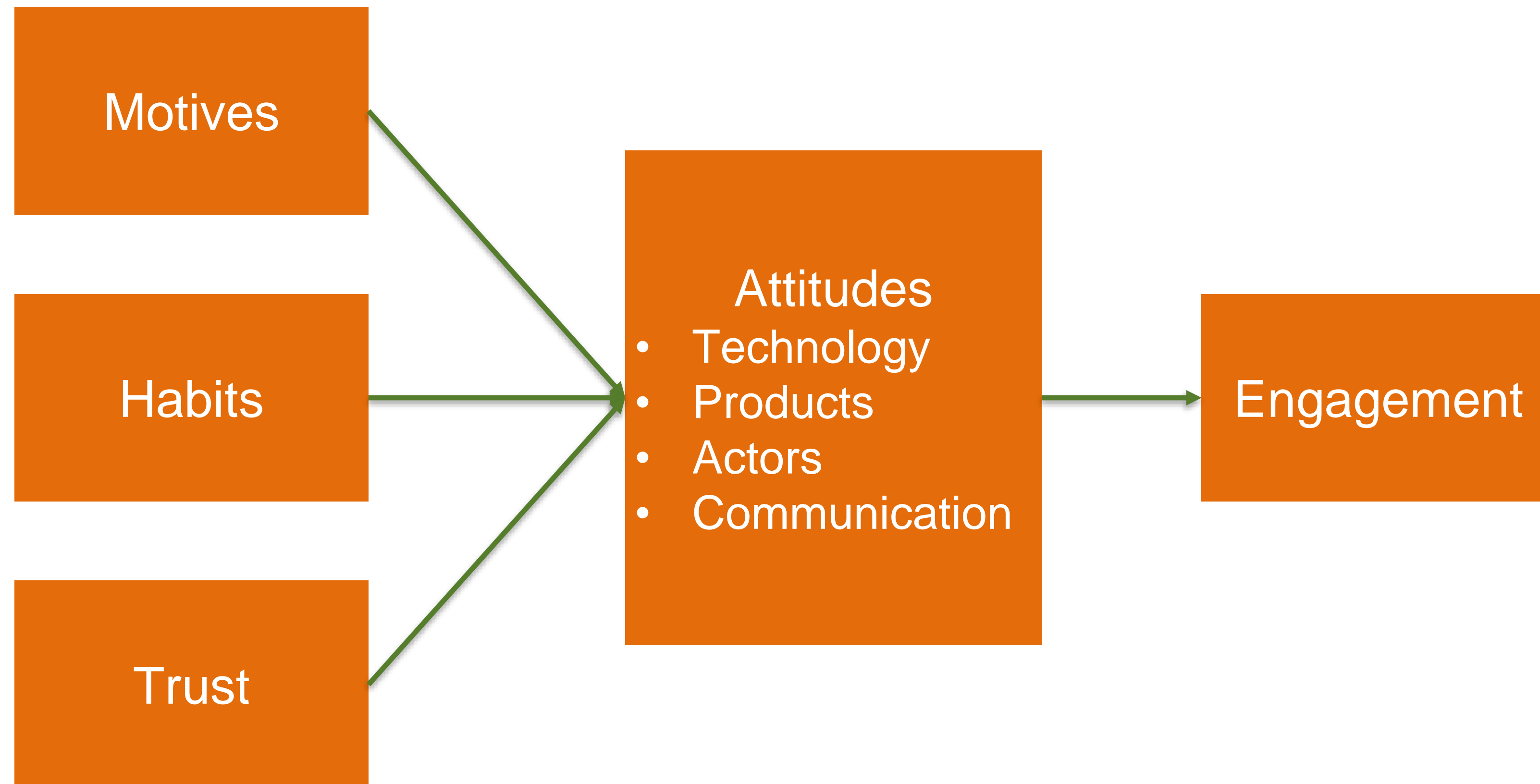
Consumer engagement

- Consumer engagement is said to exist when a consumer interacts with a supplier outside the context of a product-related transaction.

- Consumer engagement is a prerequisite for a successful short supply chain

- Consumer enagement in a short supply chain can, among other topics, relate to the farming and processing methods used, to the quality of the products, to the localness of the supply of products

- Social media and apps are the most widely used tool for consumer engagement

Baseline measures of food- and media-related motives

Variables	Baseline (N=3036)	Endline (N=3128)	Overall (N=6163)
Food- and media-related motives			
Green consumption values	5.01	4.91	4.96
Locavorism			
Lionization	4.64	4.78	4.71
Opposition	3.96	4.00	3.98
Communalization	5.43	5.38	5.40
Global (Local identity)	3.73	3.69	3.71
Food choice motives			
Health	5.82	5.92	5.87
Convenience	5.25	5.42	5.33
Natural content	5.69	5.90	5.80
Price	5.41	5.60	5.50
Familiarity	4.83	5.13	4.98
Desire for food authenticity	5.08	5.12	5.10
Trust			
Trust in food chain	3.84	4.09	3.97

Opportunities

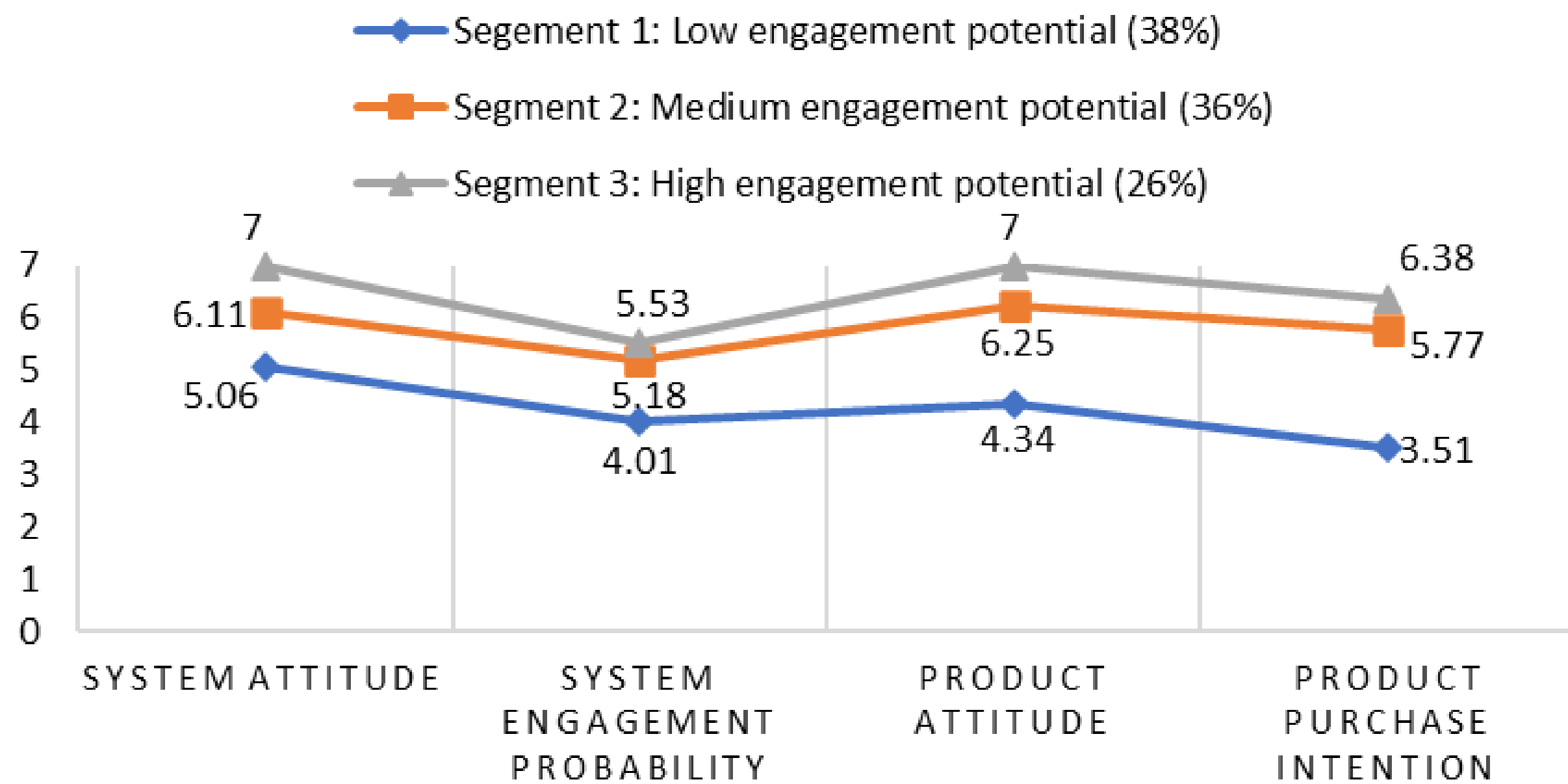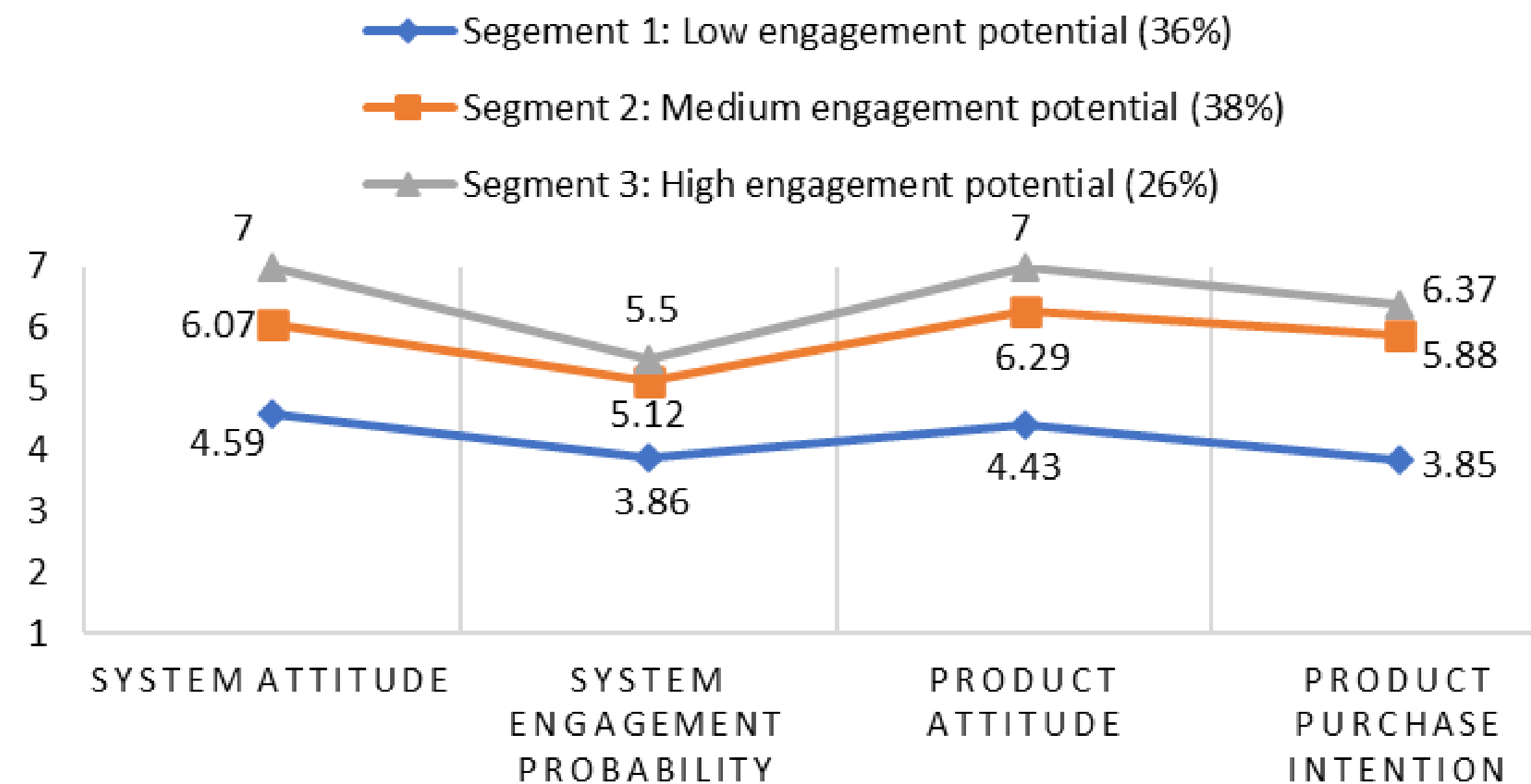**Challenges**

The consumer engagement potential in the FOX regions

Major determinants of consumer engagement in the local food circles

Food-related motives – the strongest predictors of consumer engagement:

- Green consumption values (+)
- Desire for food authenticity (+)

- Opposition to long-distance food-chains (+)
- Communalization of food economies (i.e., building and supporting one's own/local community dimension) (+)

- Health (+)
- Convenience (+)

High trust in the food chain (+)

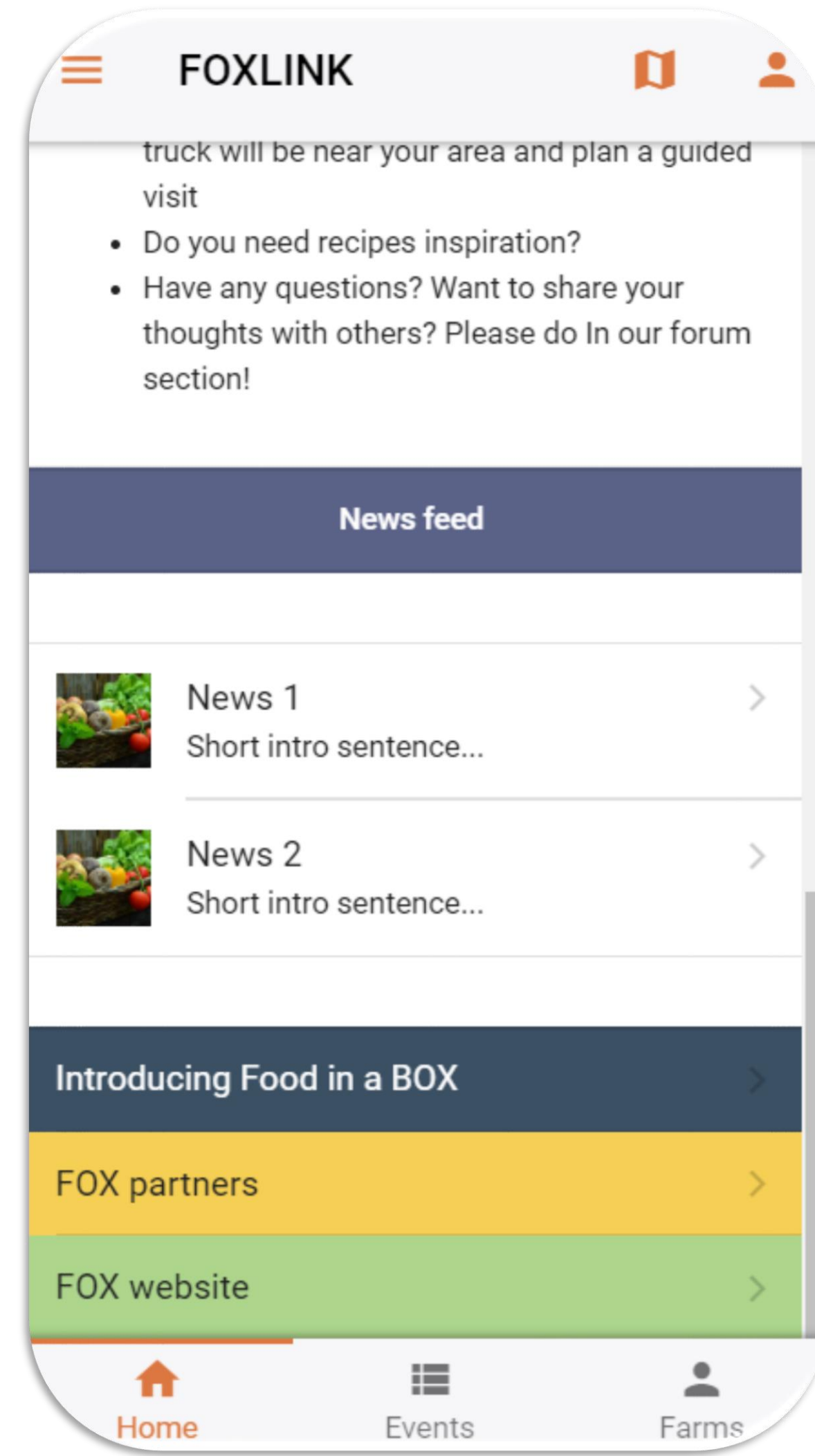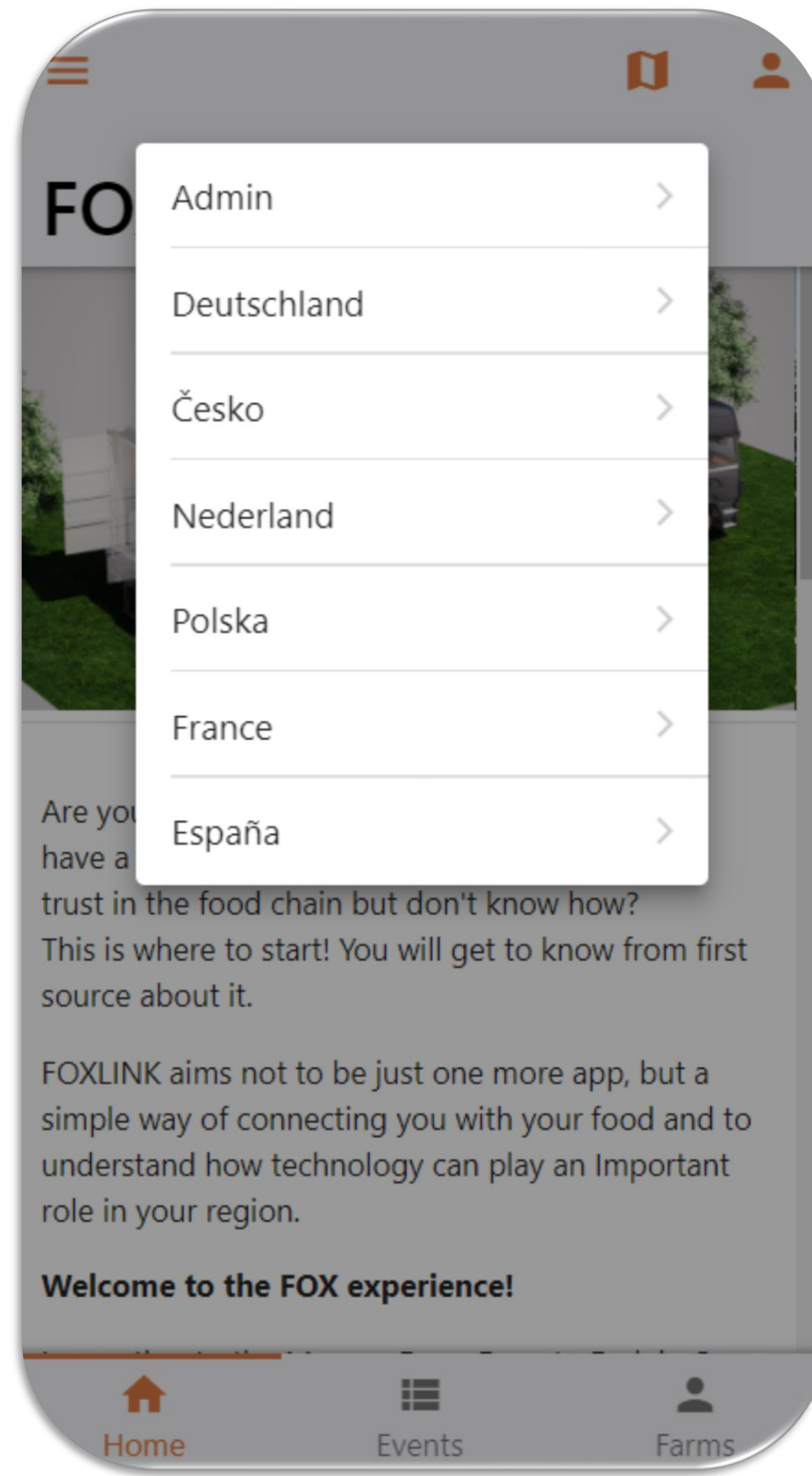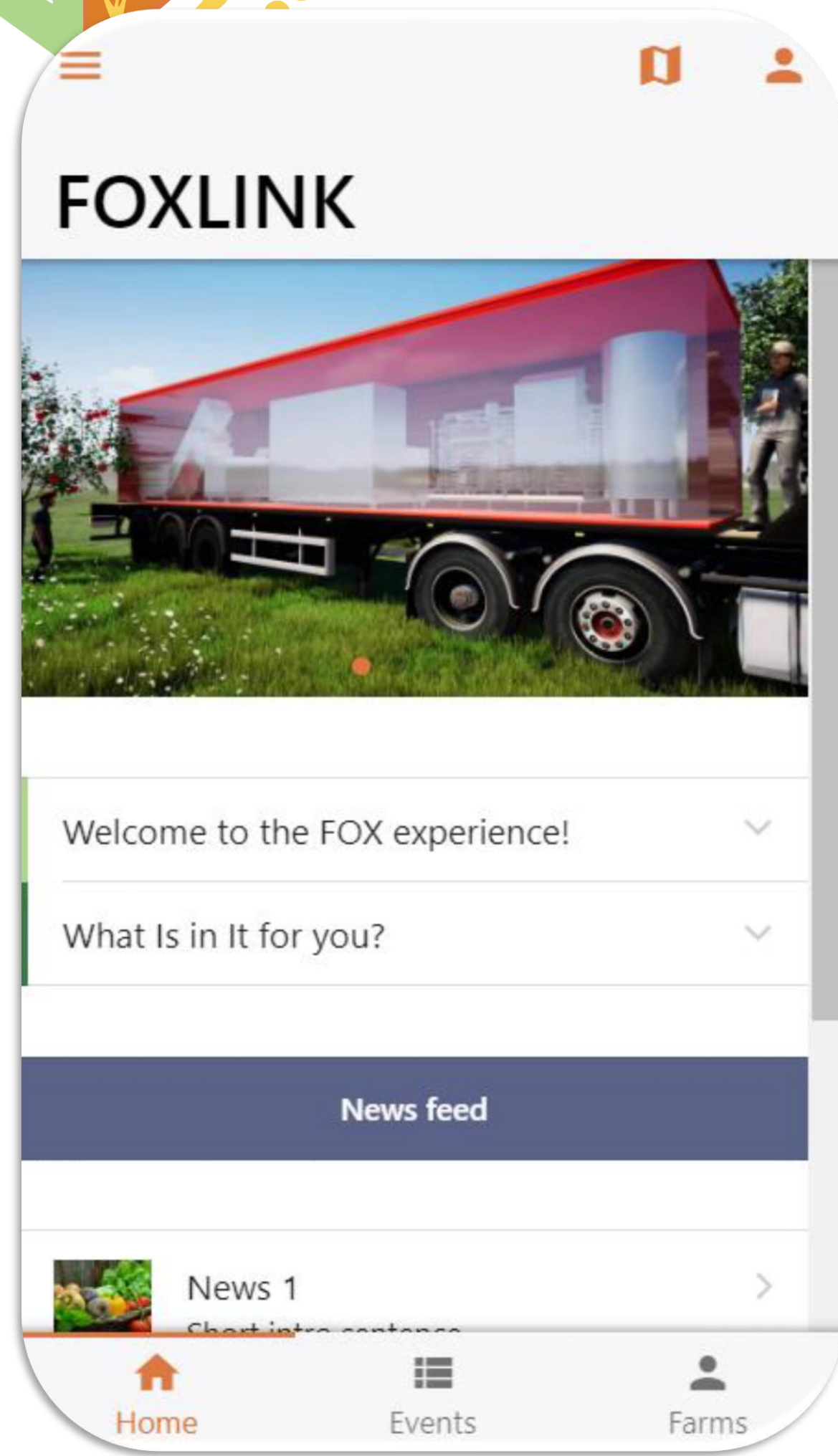**Socio-demographic characteristics (+):**

- Gender (female)
- Age (higher)
- Presence of children (yes)
- Education (higher)
- Financial situation (good)

Food Ethnocentrism (+)

The FOXLINK app:
Tool for consumer engagement

Consumer engagement is not enough!

Engagement is a network activity

- Engagement requires commitment from all stakeholders – farmers, processors, researchers, consumers

Technology focus vs. value creation focus

- Technology needs to be developed, but consumers are interested in the value it creates

Right timing in the innovation process

- Engaging consumers early on is good, but enagement becomes easier when there are tangible, purchase and consumption related outcomes

Short supply chains and consumer engagement

- There is potential for consumer engagement in local short food supply chains

- Engagement potential is mainly related to food-related motives, attitudes to local food and a desire for health and convenience

- Social media and apps can be used to further engagement

- However, consumer engagement requires commitment by all actors in the local food area and a careful timing

1. Short supply chains and consumer engagement

2. Communication about local processing technologies and locally processed products

The need to explain

- It necessary to be prepared to explain to consumers what the technology does

- This is even more important in the light of the current discussion about possible deficiencies of highly processed foods and the well-known consumer affinity for 'naturally' produced food

- Communication can be done in many ways and needs to be adapted to the target group

- The resulting attitude is more important than the resulting knowledge

- 'Framing' of messages is known to affect the attitude that people develop

Communicating the use of mobile food processing units in local food circles

Your local farmers are developing a **sustainable food production system**, where they will be able to take advantage of mobile food processing units. Local fruit and vegetables can be processed on the spot – right in your neighborhood. Producers of fruit and vegetables bring fresh goods and processing happens on the spot. The short-chain approach creates business opportunities while consumers revalue the benefits of locally processed foods. As a result, farmers will be able to produce fresher, more sustainable products with better nutritional and sensorial characteristics for the local communities.

Affective Negative

Cognitive Negative

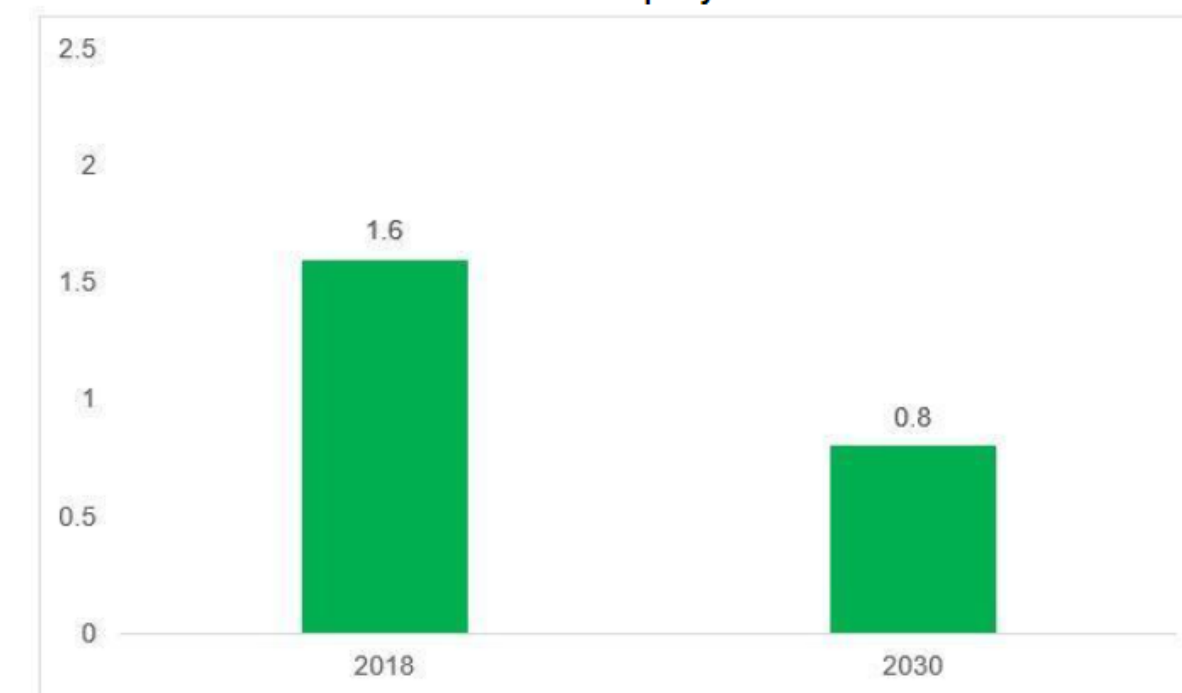"Projected Increase of Global Food Waste Generation according to the UN, billion tons per year"
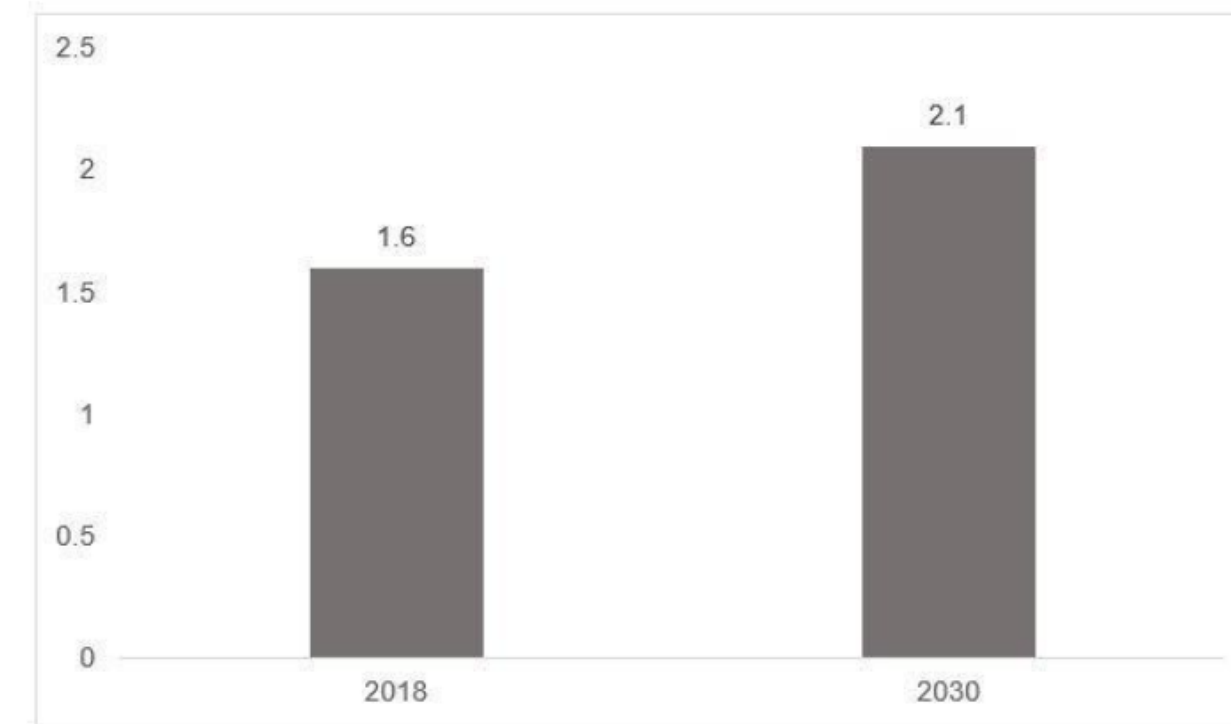
Affective Positive

Cognitive Positive

"Planned Decrease Global Food Waste Generation based on the United Nation's Agenda 2030, billion tons per year"

Effective message framing


Nostalgic (familiarity) ✅ vs **Sensory (Indulgence)**

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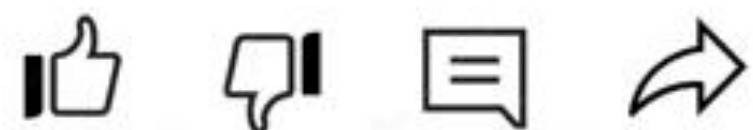
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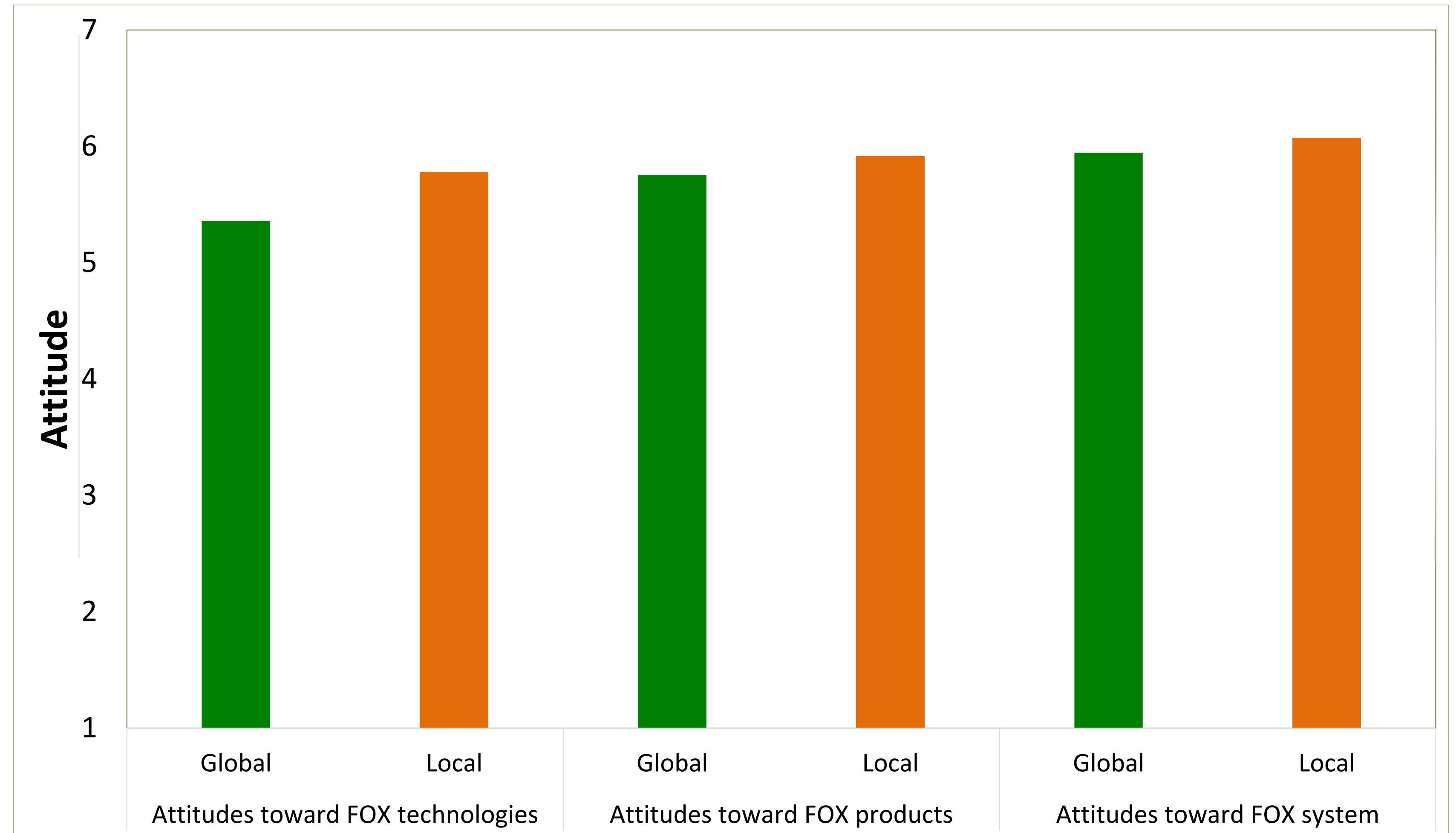
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Local is good – also in the context of technology

Effect of 'local farmers' as opposed to 'farmers worldwide' on consumer attitudes toward food technologies, FOX products, and the food system as a whole

Communication about local processing technologies and locally processed products

- Incorporating positive and emotionally engaging content when communicating about the food system is useful

- Highlighting success stories, positive impacts, and optimistic visions related to sustainable agriculture, food security, or community initiatives, showcasing joyful, enthusiastic, and optimistic scenarios associated with the food system, such as happy individuals enjoying locally sourced or sustainably produced food

- When communicating about the food system and local products, it's helpful to emphasize elements of tradition, nostalgia, familiarity, and classic tastiness to create a compelling message and tap into the heritage connecting with consumers on a deep and emotional level

Thank you!

Questions?