

# How understanding producer and public views can help inform animal welfare science

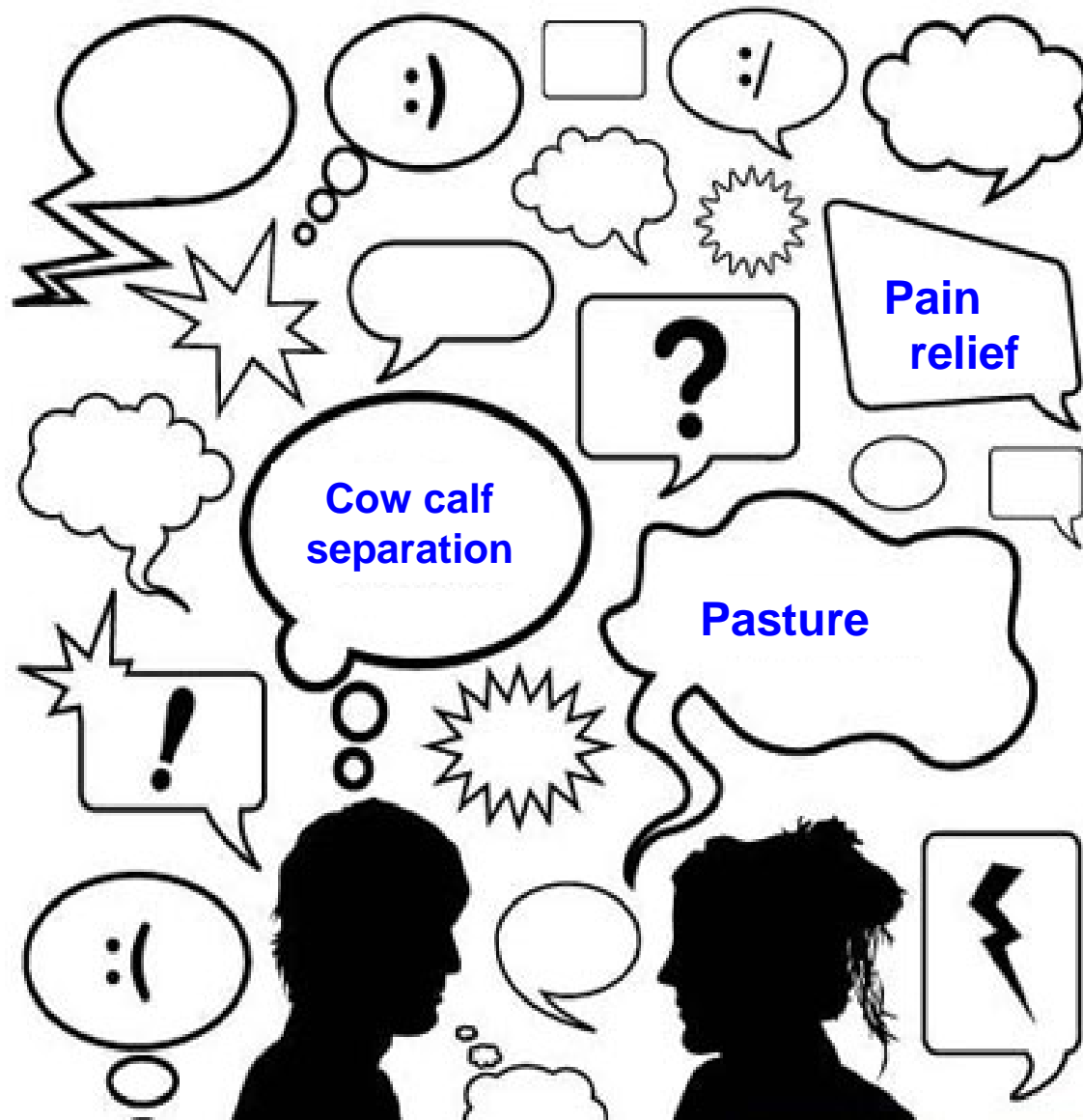
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Dan Weary



animal welfare  
program

# Engagement on contentious topics



Home

## Cow Views



### Welcome to Cow Views

Cow Views is a place to discuss hot topics related to dairy production. State your views, vote on the views of other participants, and let the best arguments float to the top.



Cow Views is also a platform for... record the views that you express... and also increase our understanding of...

We would like to hear your view... pain relieving drugs for horn removal... ask if you are willing to support this... decision and vote on the reasons provided...

Participating will take about 10 to 20 minutes... website, please [register](#) or if you are already...

*A safe place to discuss 'hot'*

*We build virtual town hall meetings and record the views you express*

*production  
ote of the  
nts*



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# Context

## Treating pain due to dehorning and disbudding

The developing horns of dairy calves are typically removed to reduce the risk of injuries to farm workers or other cattle that can be caused by horned cattle. Horns of calves three months of age or older are normally removed surgically (“dehorning”) by scooping, shearing or sawing. Horn buds of younger calves are typically removed (“disbudding”) using a caustic paste or a hot iron.

There is considerable scientific evidence that all of these procedures cause pain. The immediate pain can be reduced using a local anesthetic to provide a nerve block – this procedure has been used safely for decades and costs just pennies a shot. Pain can persist 24 hours or more; this longer lasting pain can be reduced using non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (like the ibuprofen you take for a headache). Providing calves a sedative before the procedure can reduce handling stress and make the procedure easier to carry out.

In many countries some pain relief is required. For example, Canada’s new Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle requires that pain control be used. Approximately 18% of dairy farms in the United States report using pain relieving drugs for disbudding or dehorning dairy calves.

# Context

## Treating pain due to dehorning and disbudding

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There is considerable scientific evidence that all pain can be reduced using a local anesthetic to provide pain relief for decades and costs just pennies a shot. Pain can also be reduced using non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Providing calves a sedative before the procedure makes it easier to carry out.

In many countries some pain relief is required. For example, Canada's new Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle requires that pain control be used. Approximately 18% of dairy farms in the United States report using pain relieving drugs for disbudding or dehorning dairy calves.

Done to reduce risk of injury to animals and people

# Context

## Treating pain due to d

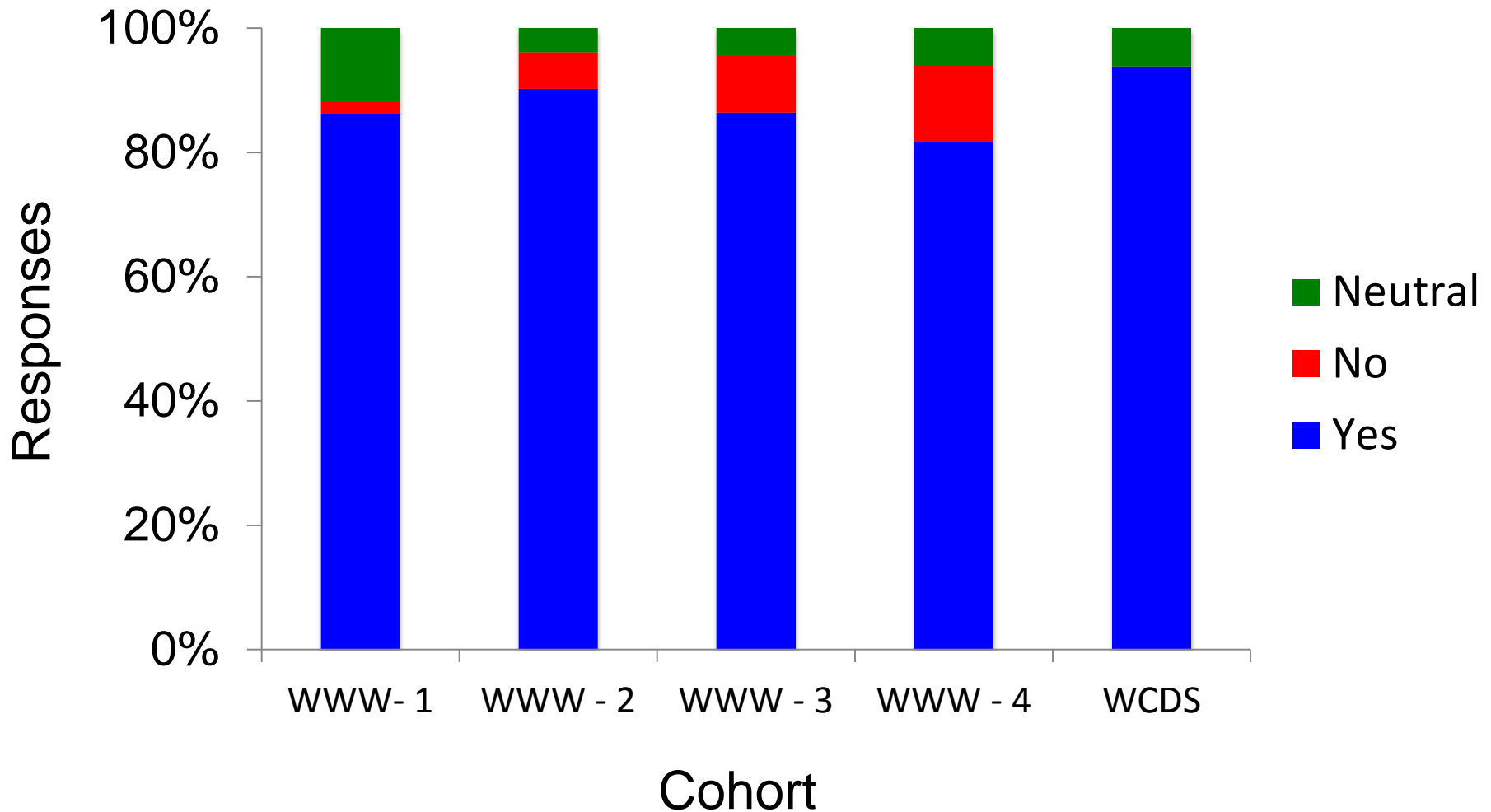
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calves are typically removed (“

Procedure causes pain;  
this pain can be treated  
using a local block, etc.

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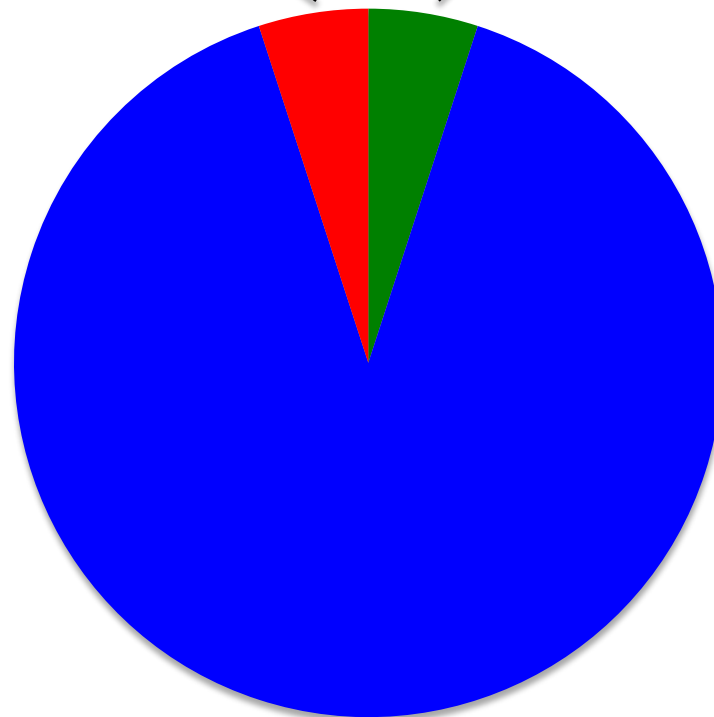
*“Should we provide pain control when disbudding and dehorning dairy calves?”*



*“Should we provide pain control when disbudding and dehorning dairy calves?”*

5% “No”

5% “Neutral”



90% “Yes”



# *“Should we provide pain control when disbudding and dehorning dairy calves?”*

Yes,  
because  
...

“there is pain involved and the means are readily available to address the pain...”

“because we should try to alleviate pain in animals whenever possible”

“dehorning is painful and anesthesia for young dairy calves is simple, inexpensive, and effective”



# *“Should we provide pain control when disbudding and dehorning dairy calves?”*

No,  
because

...

“the pain is short term and we should be more concerned about long-term health issues, like lameness. Plus, the pain relief suggested is topical and has minimal impact on the calf”

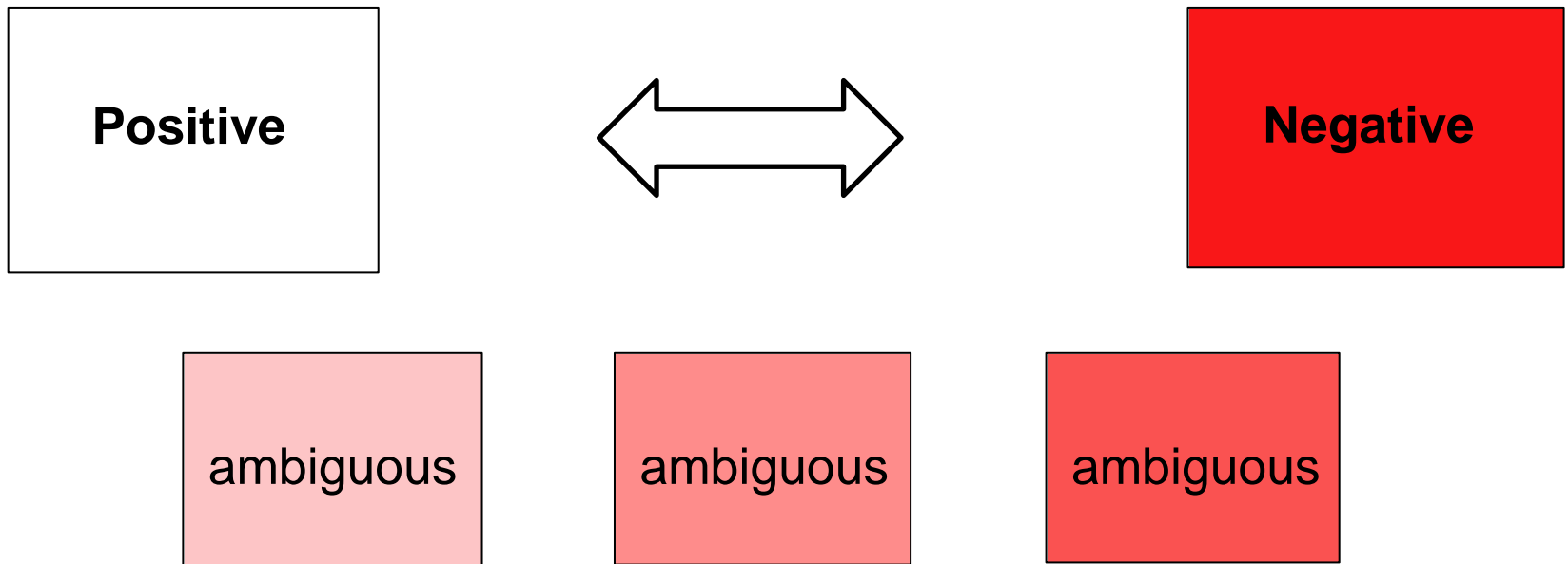
“the pain is temporary and administration of pain medications means more time the animal is restrained and under stress. It also represents a greater cost burden to the producer”



Does the pain matter to the  
calf?



# Does the pain matter to the calf?

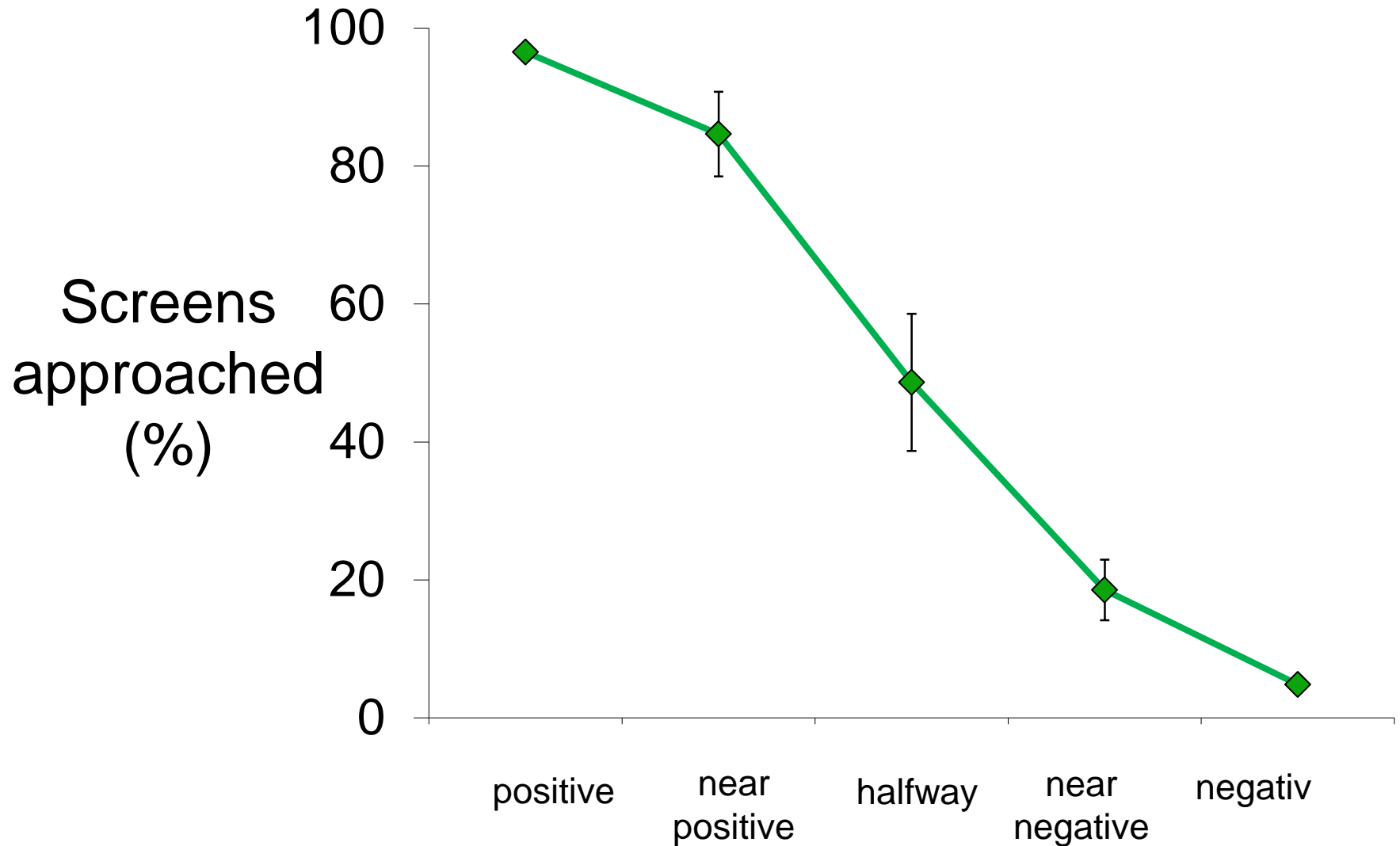


**Do calves approach the ambiguous screens?**

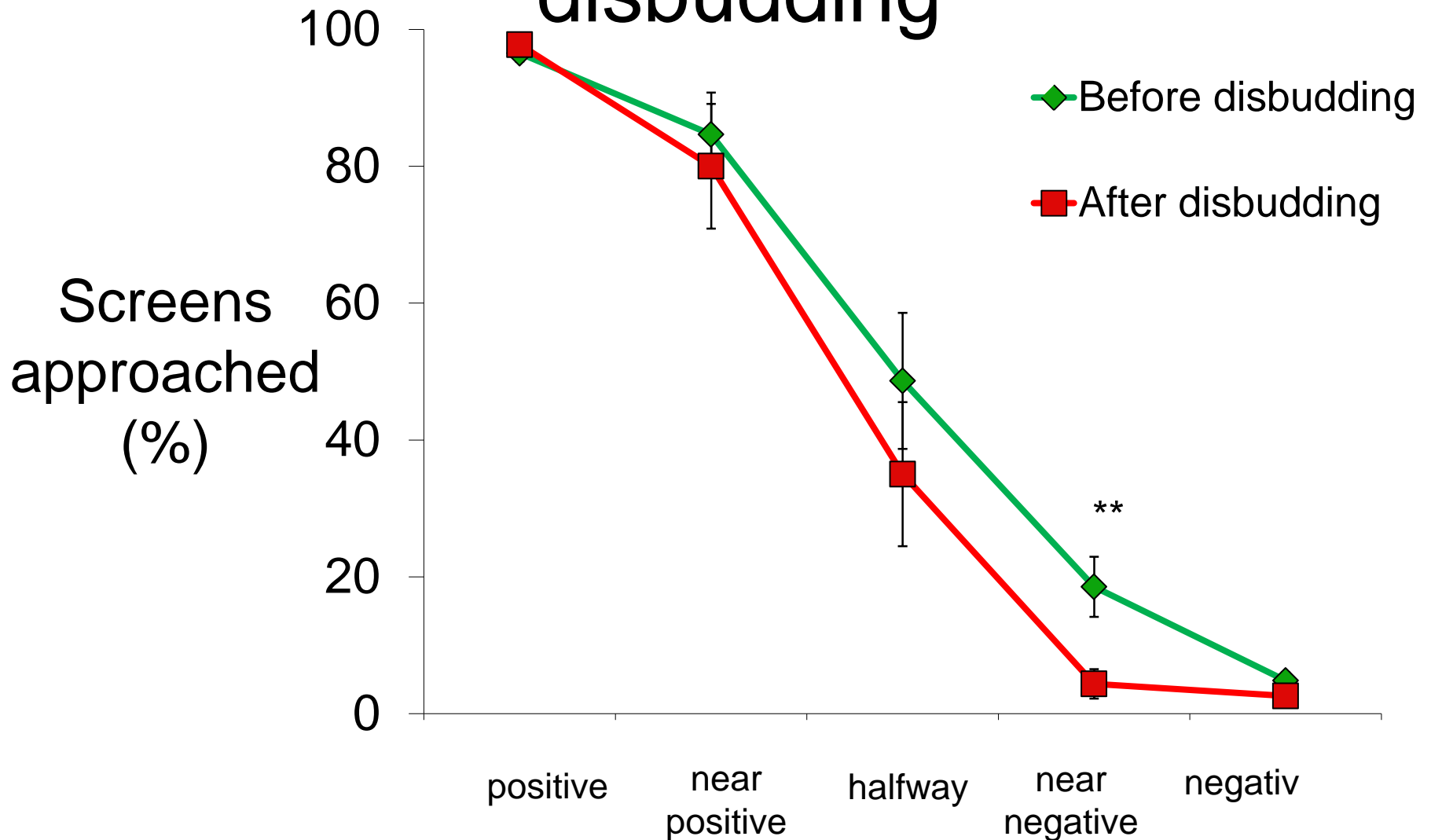




# Before disbudding



# Cognitive bias after disbudding



## **Values:**

- Shared values regarding pain

## **Perceived facts:**

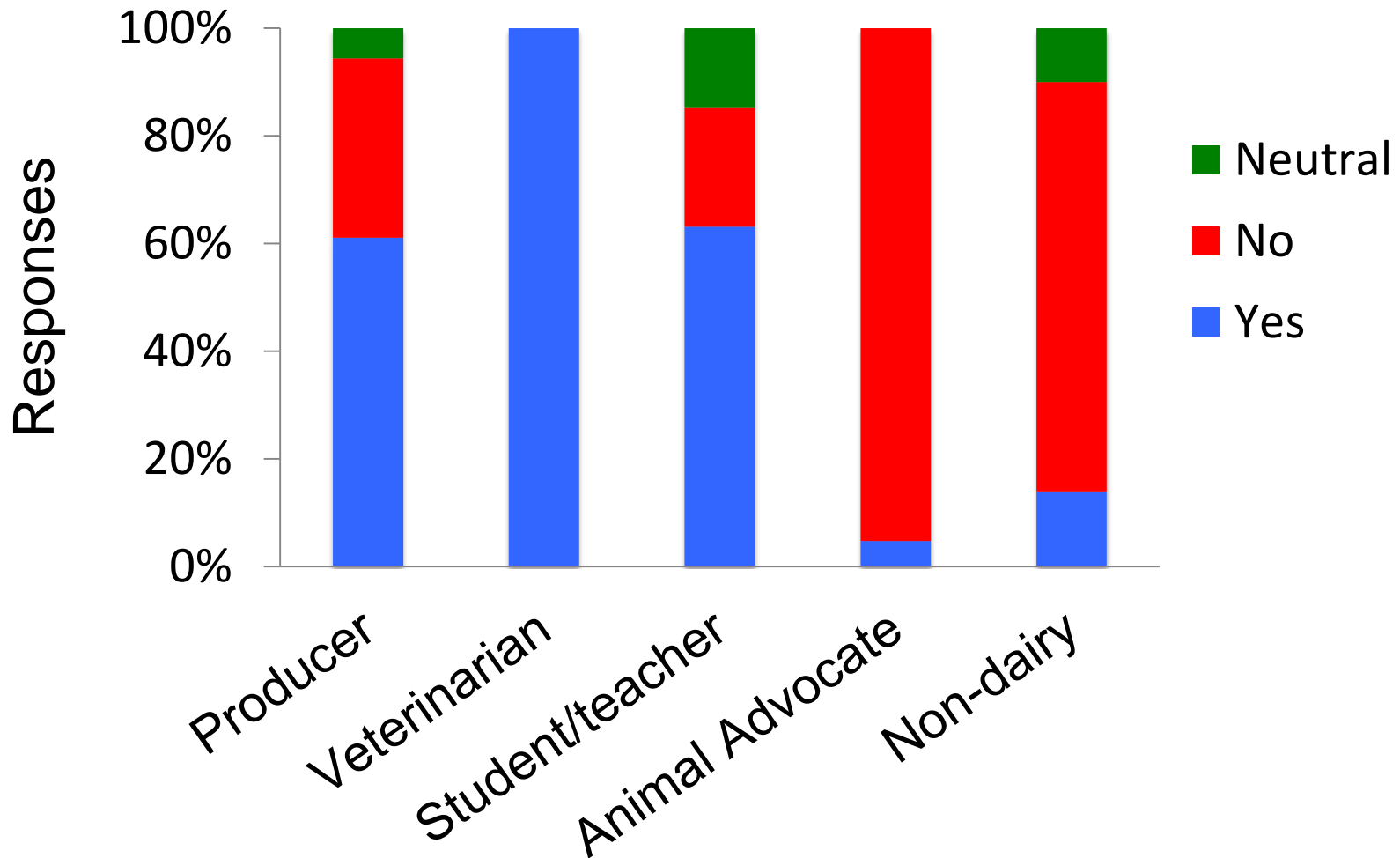
- Pain is brief
- Pain is of minimal consequence

## **Perceived barriers:**

- Lack effective means to control pain
- Pain control is expensive



*“Should dairy calves be separated from the cow within the first few hours after birth?”*



*“Should dairy calves be separated from the cow within the first few hours after birth?”*

“YES,  
because...separating  
calves from cows at  
birth provides a means  
to break disease  
transmission”



*“Should dairy calves be separated from the cow within the first few hours after birth?”*

“YES,  
because...separating  
calves from cows at  
birth provides a means  
to break disease  
transmission”

“NO, because...early  
separation does not work in  
preventing disease; current  
methods of management  
still result in high levels of  
disease in dairy calves”



*“Should dairy calves be separated from the cow within the first few hours after birth?”*

“YES, because...it’s better for both the calf and the mom to separate sooner because otherwise there is too much attachment, and it’s very hard on the mother!”



*“Should dairy calves be separated from the cow within the first few hours after birth?”*

“YES, because...it’s better for both the calf and the mom to separate sooner because otherwise there is too much attachment, and it’s very hard on the mother!”

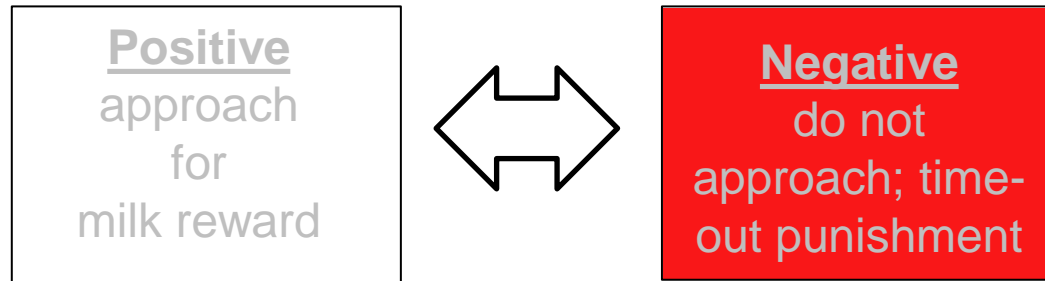
“NO, because...immediate separation causes trauma... especially for the mother”



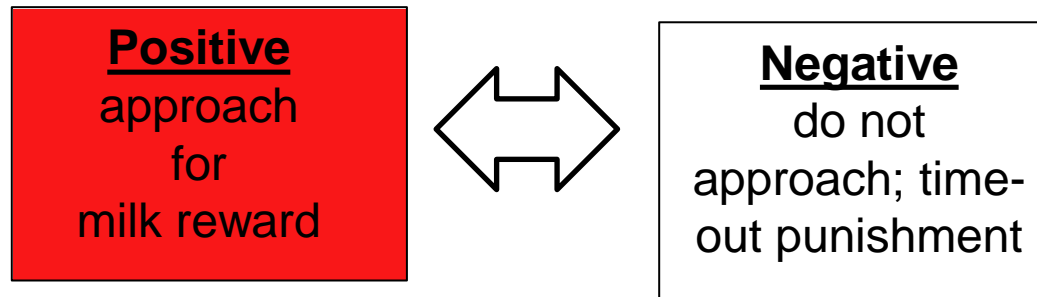


# Effects of social rearing on cognition

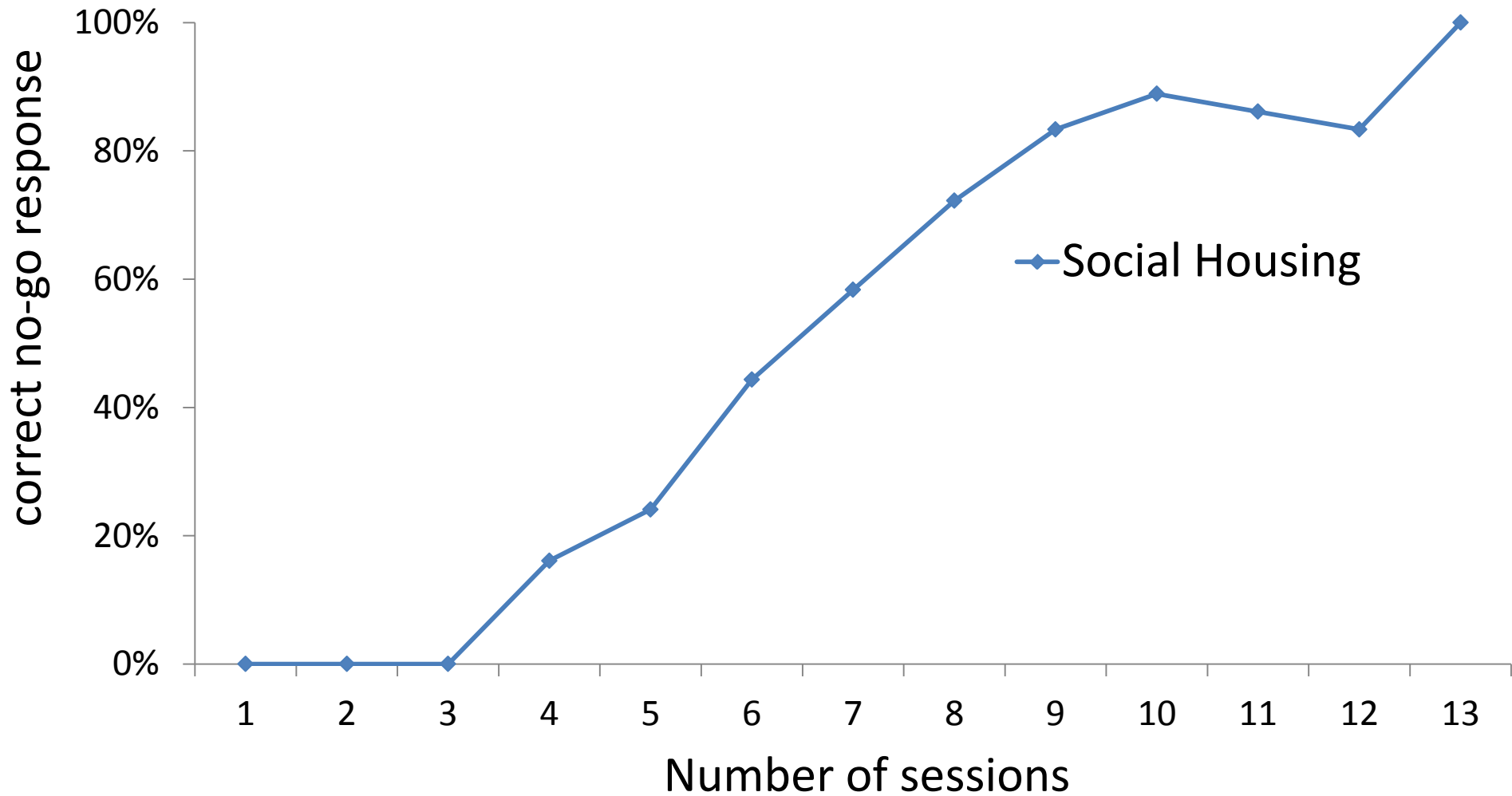
## Initial Discrimination



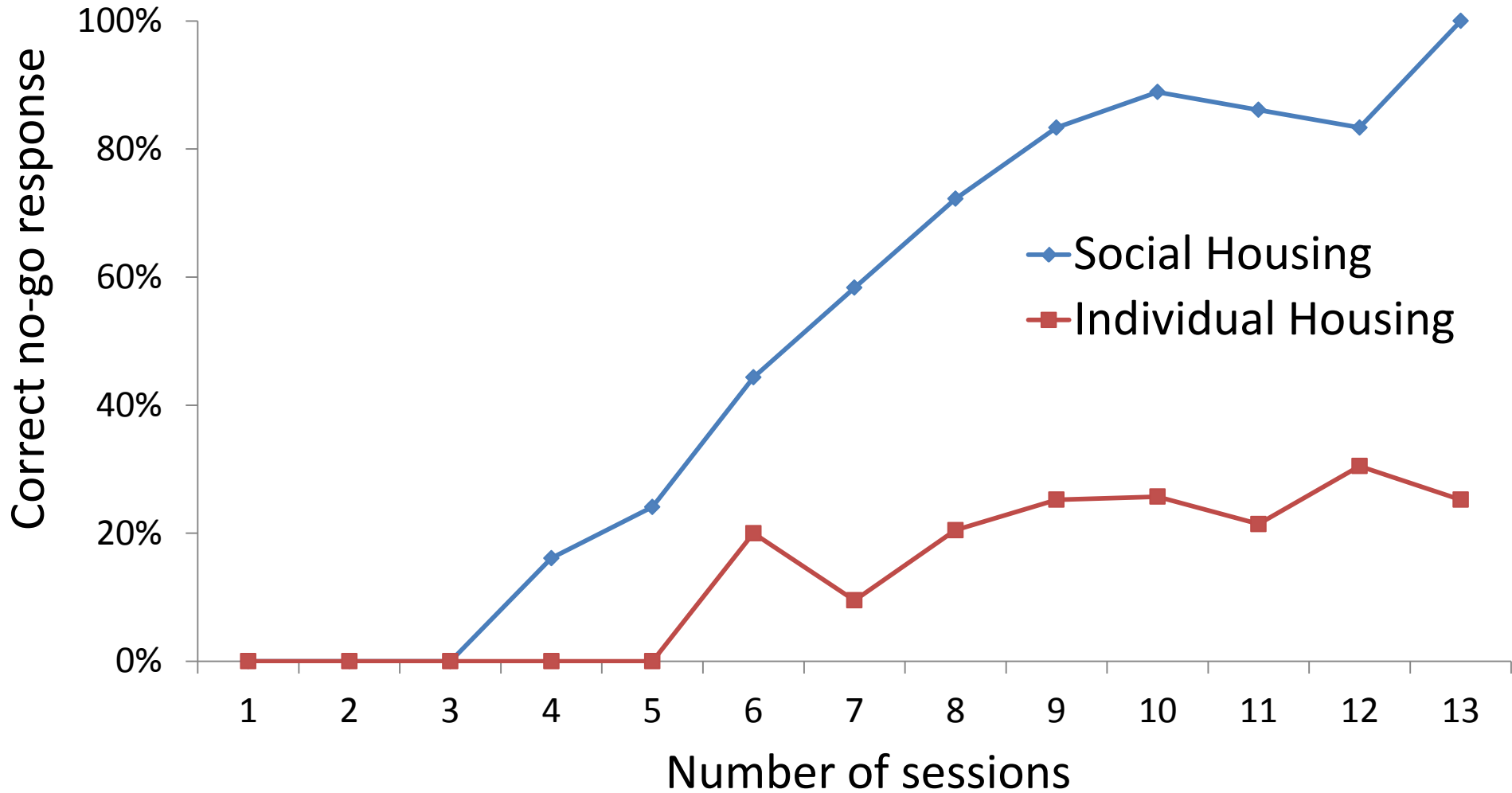
## Reversal



# *Reversal learning*



# *Reversal learning*



## **Values:**

- Share values (health and affect) but disagree on weighting

## **Perceived facts:**

- Early separation = less disease
- Early separation = less suffering

## **Barriers:**

- Lack practical methods for social housing
- Lack knowledge on positive effects of contact

*V. Carle*



**Dairy cow feeding and management**

Informational poster with text and images.

**Dairy Cows in British Columbia**

Informational poster with text and images.

**DAIRY COWS**

- The dairy cow is a type of cow that is bred for milk production.
- Dairy cows are typically kept in barns and are milked twice a day.
- Dairy cows are usually kept in groups and are fed a diet of hay and grain.
- Dairy cows are usually kept in a clean and dry environment.
- Dairy cows are usually kept in a well-ventilated barn.
- Dairy cows are usually kept in a well-lit barn.
- Dairy cows are usually kept in a well-watered barn.
- Dairy cows are usually kept in a well-maintained barn.

Engage

Apply

Reflect

Research