

# Perceptions and challenges – bioplastics at their turning point to consumer communications

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BiNa „Communications“

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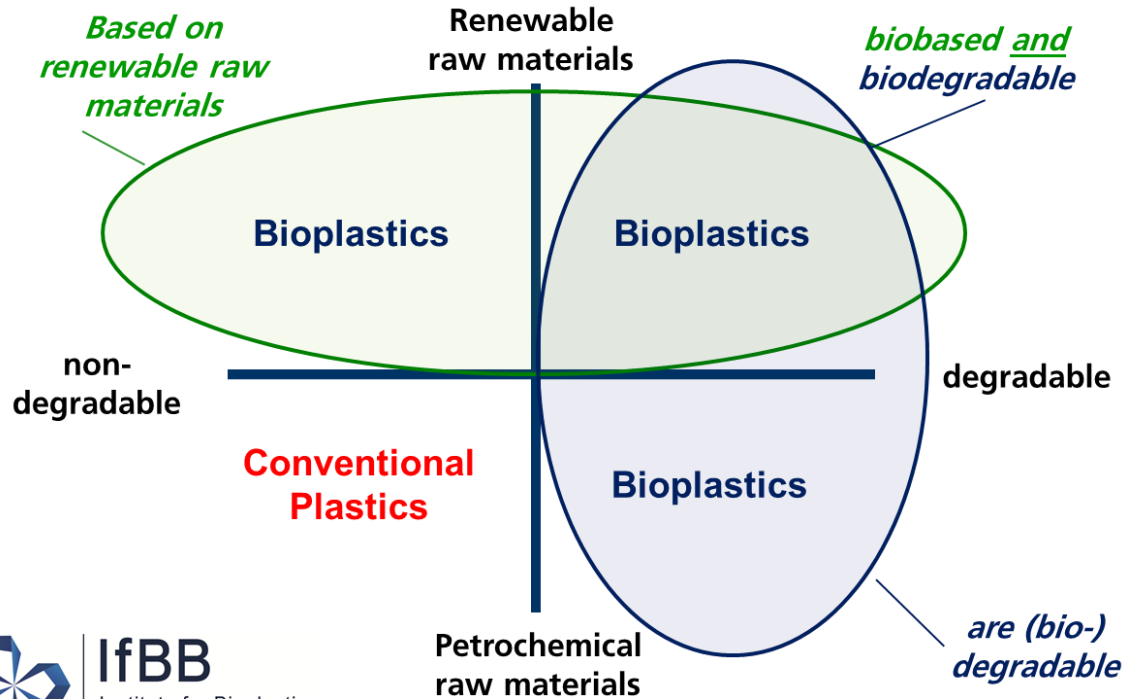
BiNa: Perceptions and challenges – bioplastics at their turning point to consumer communications. A presentation by Blesin, J.-M. & Klein, F. at 2. Webinar Communication Network on Bio-Based Products. 19.10.2017.

# Introducing: BiNa Project



Political framework	
Sustainability	
Ecology	Socio-economy
Communications	
<b>Public perception &amp; communication</b> TU Dortmund/Hochschule Hannover <i>Prof. Dr. Wiebke Möhring</i> <i>M.A. Julia-Maria Blesin</i>	<b>Information &amp; consumer</b> Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf <i>Prof. Dr. Klaus Menrad</i> <i>Dr. Agnes Emberger Klein</i> <i>Florian Klein</i>
<b>Perceptions of bioplastics among the German public and economic, political and society actors</b>	<b>Consumers perception and product-experience regarding bioplastic products, means of communication, strategies</b>
<b>public survey via online-access-panel (n=1.673)</b>	
focus groups (n=24)	expert group (n=8)
website analysis (n=31)	focus groups (n=14)
expert interviews (n=20)	experiment (n=276)

# Introducing: Bioplastics

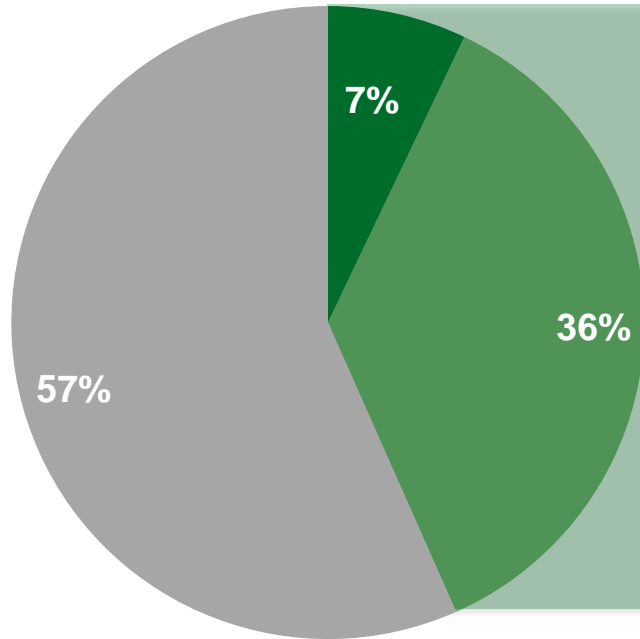


*FINDINGS & CHALLENGES*

# **PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF BIOPLASTICS**

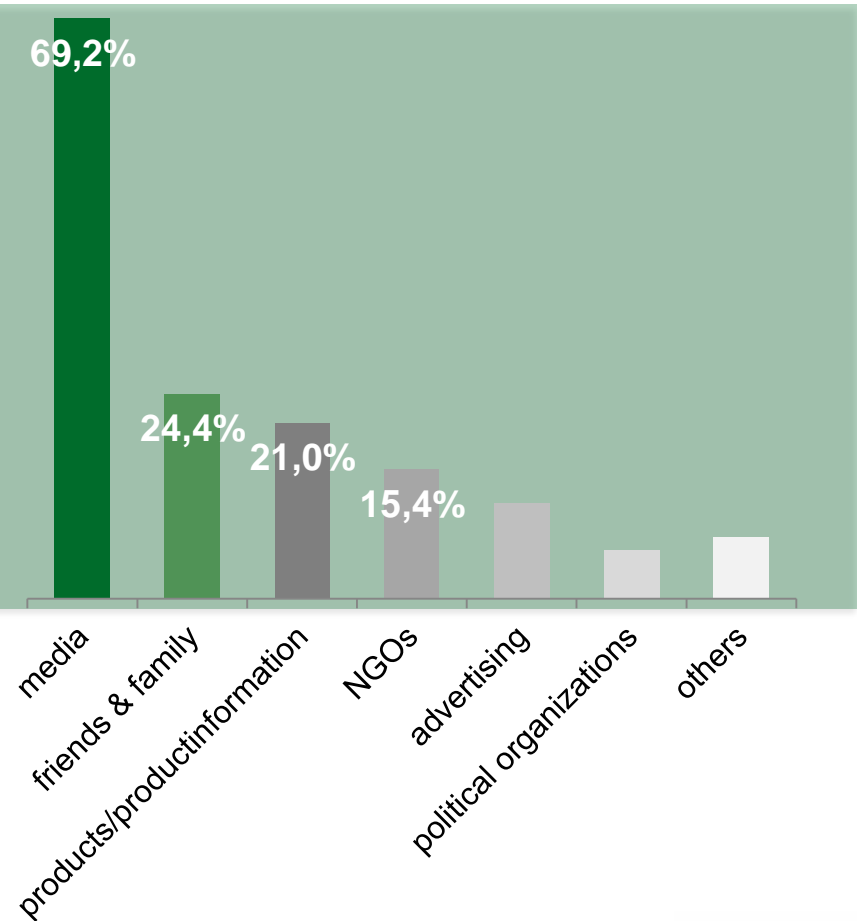
# Public perception: Low awareness, media No. 1 source.

„Did you ever hear of bioplastics before?“  
(n=1.673)



- Yes, I have heard of bioplastics, and I know exactly what they are.
- Yes, I have heard of them before.
- No, I have never heard of them.

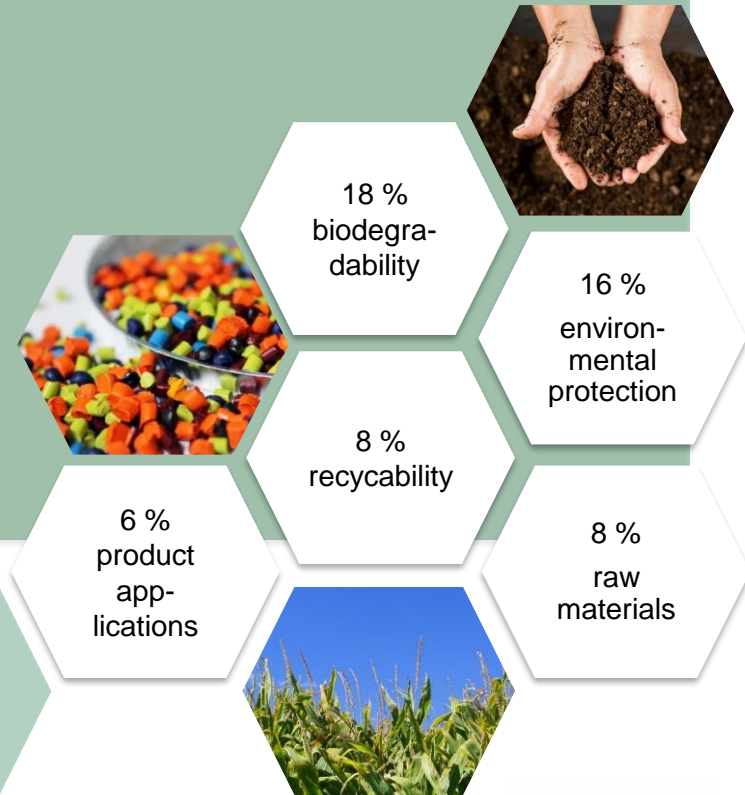
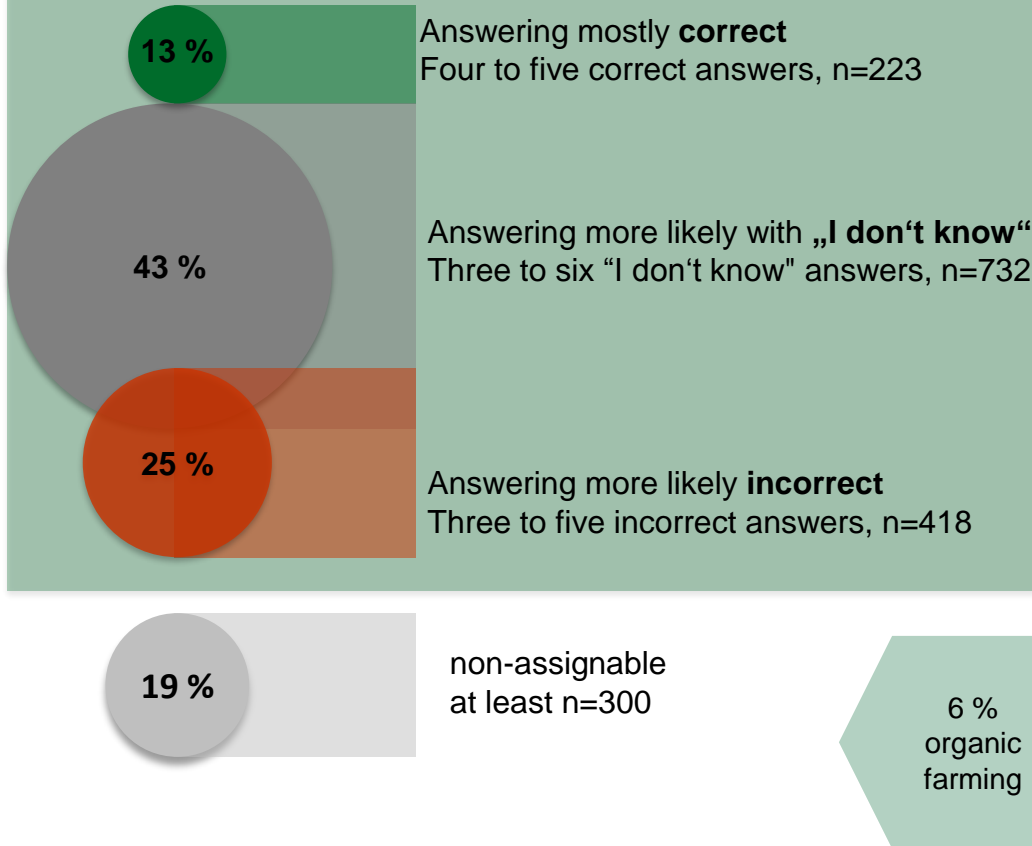
„Where did you hear of bioplastics before?“  
multiple choice; n=725



# Low level of knowledge, but high expectations.

„Please rate the following statements about bioplastics as wrong or right. In case you are not sure, we kindly ask you to not guess, but choose the „I don't know“ option.“ (n=1.673)

„What comes into your mind first, when you hear „bioplastics? Name up to three associations.“ (n=3.499)



# What to keep in mind when developing messages about biobased products – the example of bioplastics



## WORDING

- „Bioplastics“ lead to misunderstandings and high expectations – especially regarding sustainability/environmental benefits. Expectations will most likely be disappointed.
- Plastics labelled with „biodegradable“ are assumed to be compostable. Compostability is associated with disposal in the bio-waste bin or home compost. Expectations will most likely be disappointed.

**Note: Choose your wording based on target group perceptions.**

## CHANNEL

- Media are the number one information source regarding bioplastics. Within the media discourse different actors present different perspectives of bioplastics. The perspectives that win sovereignty of interpretation enforce either positive or negative evaluation of bioplastics.

**Note: Take a stand within media discourse to communicate messages to the broader public.**

*FINDINGS & CHALLENGES*

# CONSUMER EXPERIENCE & PERCEPTION OF BIOPLASTIC PRODUCTS



# PERCEPTION

## Usage of terms in communication I



**Confusion/  
comprehensibility of  
terms**

*“...for example **biodegradable**, to me that sounds like I could throw it into the **home-compost**, but I think that is **not meant** here.” (female, age ≈ 25)*

*“...moreover I find this term kind of confusing. Also that is what I heard consistently. **“Bio” and plastics, it actually doesn’t fit together.**“ (female, age > 50)*

**Preference for separate  
application of the terms  
„*biologisch abbaubar*“  
(biodegradable) and  
„*biobasiert*“ (bio-based)**

*“I would also prefer a separation of the two terms in the context of a description, because otherwise it is always **unclear whether bioplastics** are made from renewable resources or whether they are compostable.” (female, age ≈ 25)*

**Usage of the chemical  
term of the material (+/-)**

*“...it is very important to let the consumer know what bioplastics are. I mean the chemical contents need to be in the consumers’ memory. For example, these days anybody knows what Styrofoam is.” (male, age ≈ 25)*

*“I think it would be much more intuitive to consumers, when you could read that it is biodegradable instead of that it is made of PLA.” (female, age ≈ 25)*

**Wish of standardization  
of terms**

*“Another thing is that also the terms should be standardized somehow... .“ (female, age > 50)*

# PERCEPTION

## Usage of terms in communication II



*Which term would you choose to name plastics made from plant material?*

- “Bio-based plastics” 14,2 %
- “Plastics made from renewable resources” 85,8 %

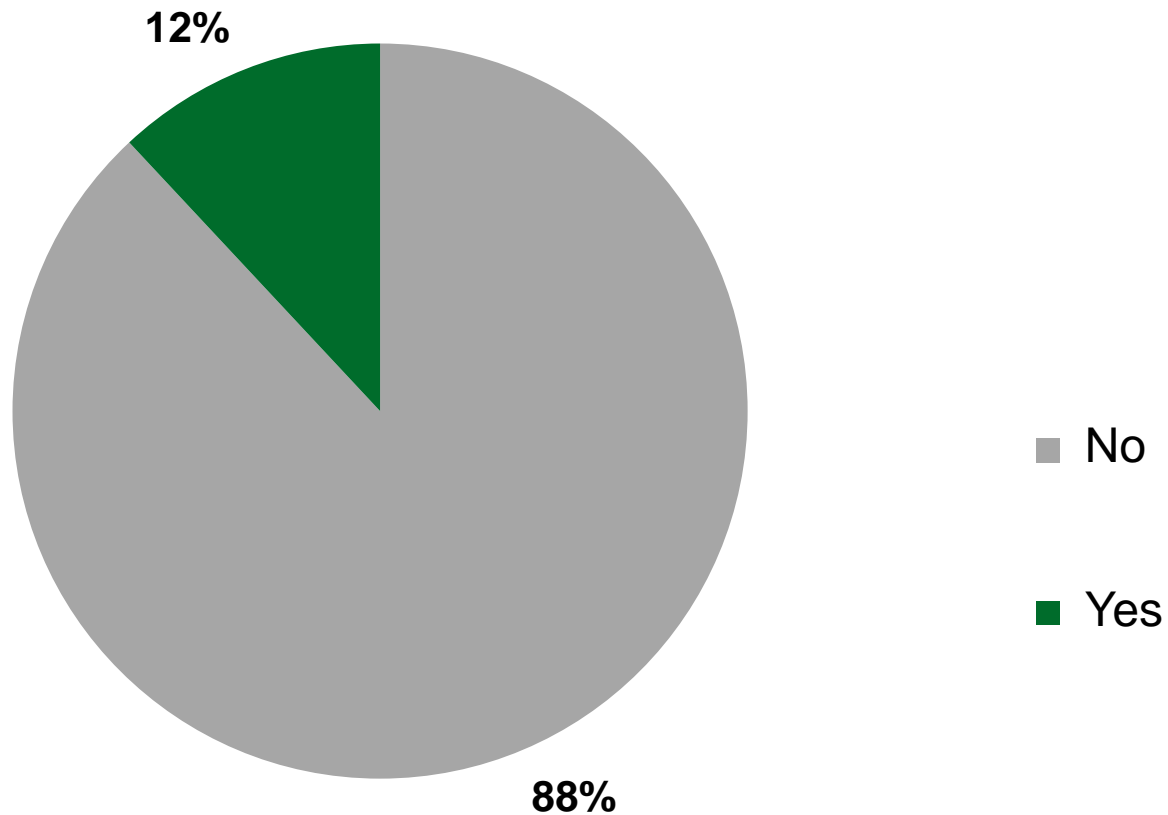
n = 1.191

Source: S. Rumm (2014)

# EXPERIENCE

## Bioplastic products I

***Have you ever consciously made a purchase decision for a product made of bioplastics?***

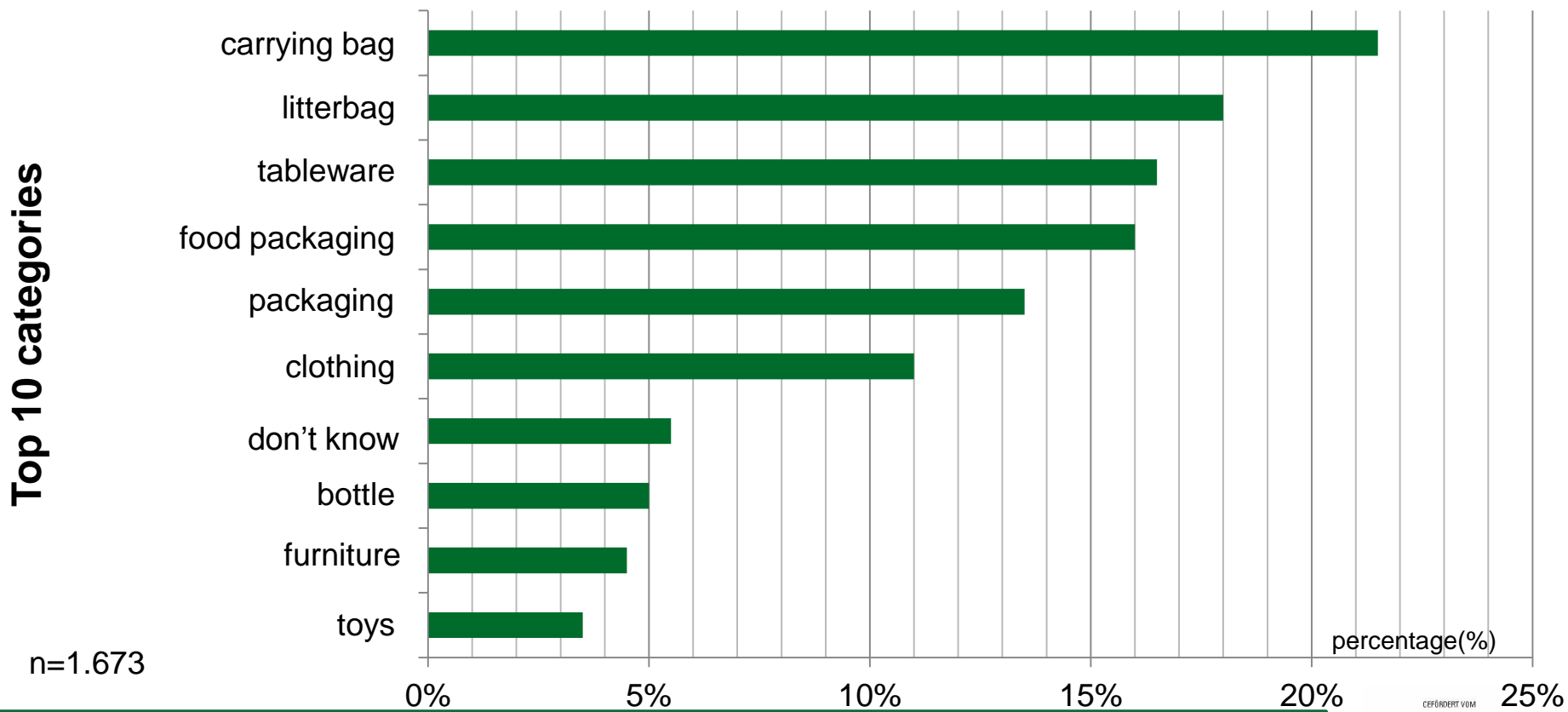


n=1.673

# EXPERIENCE

## Bioplastic products II

***What kind of bioplastic products have you ever reached a consciously purchase decision for?***



# Get in touch...



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