



Gendered experiences of food, water and energy insecurities linked to Russia's war on Ukraine—Insights from a phone survey in northern Ghana (Sep/Oct 2022)

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USAID
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FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Basic information & profile of respondents

- The data were collected through a phone survey among 517 households: 257 women and 260 men from the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions of Ghana.
- Respondents from previous in-person and phone surveys were selected for interview (137 previously surveyed households); data were supplemented with randomly selected phone numbers from GeoPolls rural mobile phone database (380 households)
- All respondents (women and men) are decision-makers in their households
- The average age of male and female respondents is 38 years and 35 years, respectively
- Average household size is 7.3 individuals

Key Findings

PRICES

- 99% of women and 96% of men observed increases in **food prices**
 - **Rice and maize** were the foods mentioned the most as having increased in price
- 97% of women and 95% of men observed increases in **fuel prices**
- 60% of women and 80% of men observed increases in **fuel prices for agricultural machinery**
- 59% of women and 76% of men observed increases in **pesticide prices**
- 72% of women and 86% of men observed increases in **fertilizer prices**

RESPONSES

- The main response to high fuel prices of both women and men was to **go less to the market** or **use different modes of transportation**
- Some of the common responses to the high food prices were to reduce expenditures, use savings, **consume less or save food**
- **Child marriage** was mentioned by 18% of women and 12% of men as a response to increases in food/fuel prices.
- Over 60% of women and men **blamed the government** for the high energy and food prices

IMPLICATIONS

- 26% of women and 45% of men **reduced the area under cultivation**
- Most respondents **expect lower crop yields** as a result of higher fertilizer and pesticide prices
- **Food insecurity levels** went up for both women and men:
 - 77% of women and 74% of men **do not have enough food**
 - 79% of women and 75% of men **ate fewer kinds of food**
 - 66% of women and 68% of men **skipped meals**

Characteristics of respondents



Credit: Miaron Billy/Shutterstock

While most men work in agriculture (48%), 40% of women mentioned having a paid job as their primary occupation

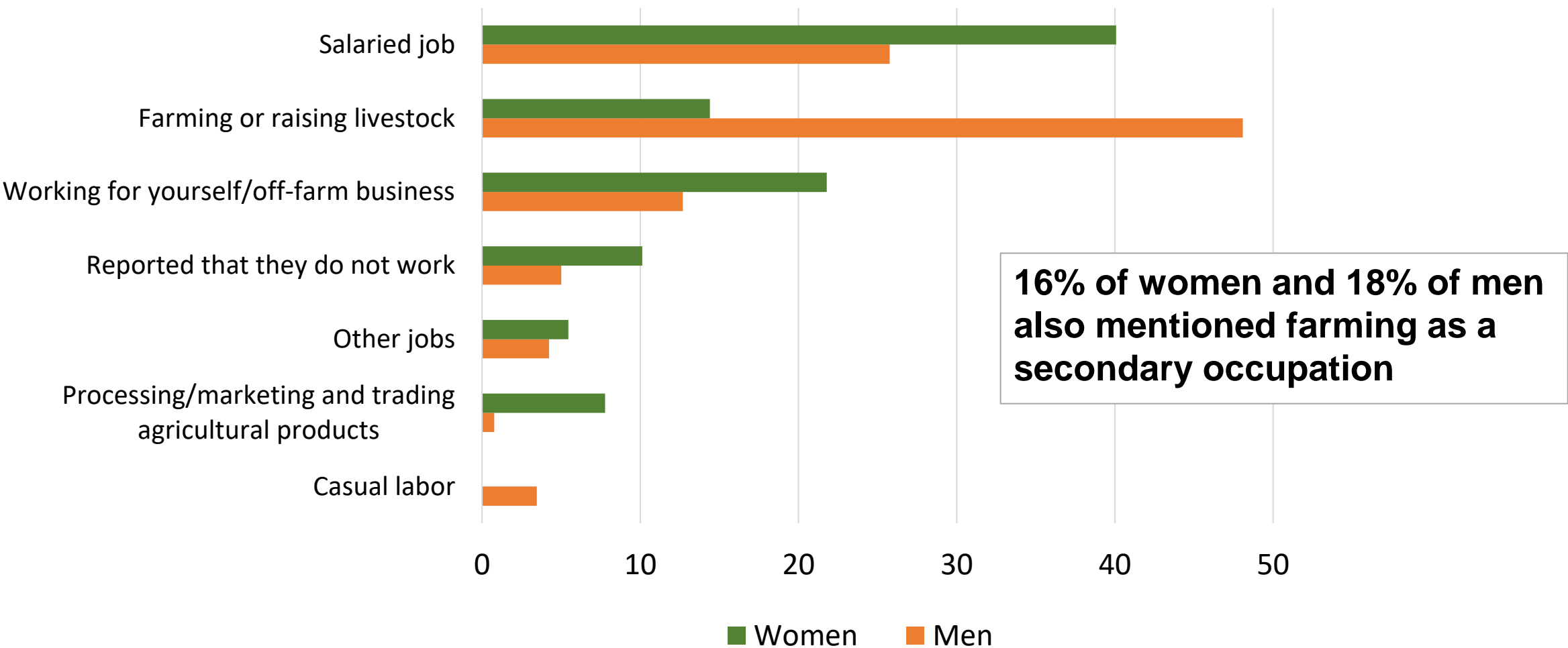


Figure 1. Main occupation (phone survey, n=571), % of respondents

Staple crops are cultivated by most women (93%) and men (88%)

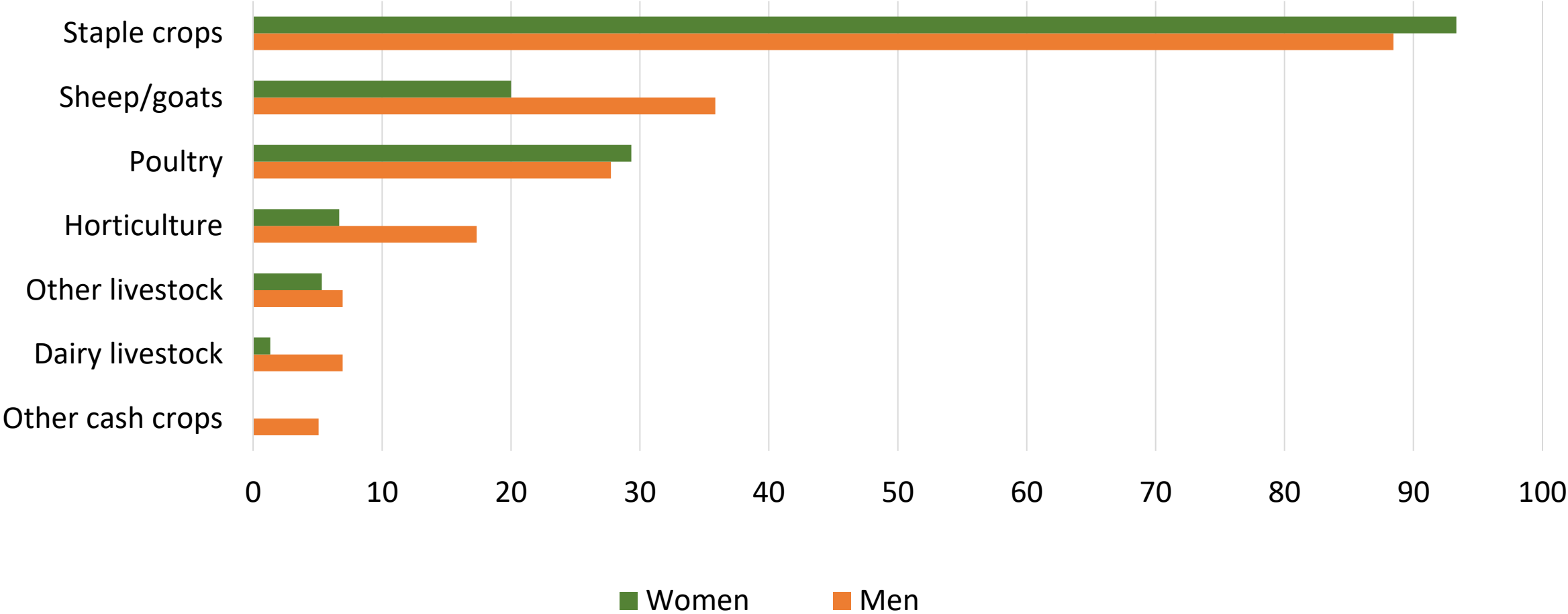
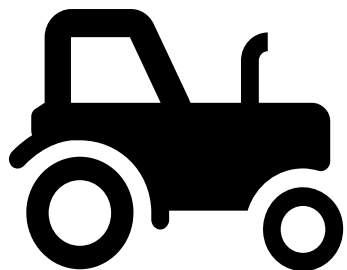


Figure 2. Farming types, % of respondents (n=248)

Among farmers, 29% of women and 59% of men reported that they have access to machinery (n=248)



Of those farmers who use farm machinery, fuel is mostly used for processing food and for tractors

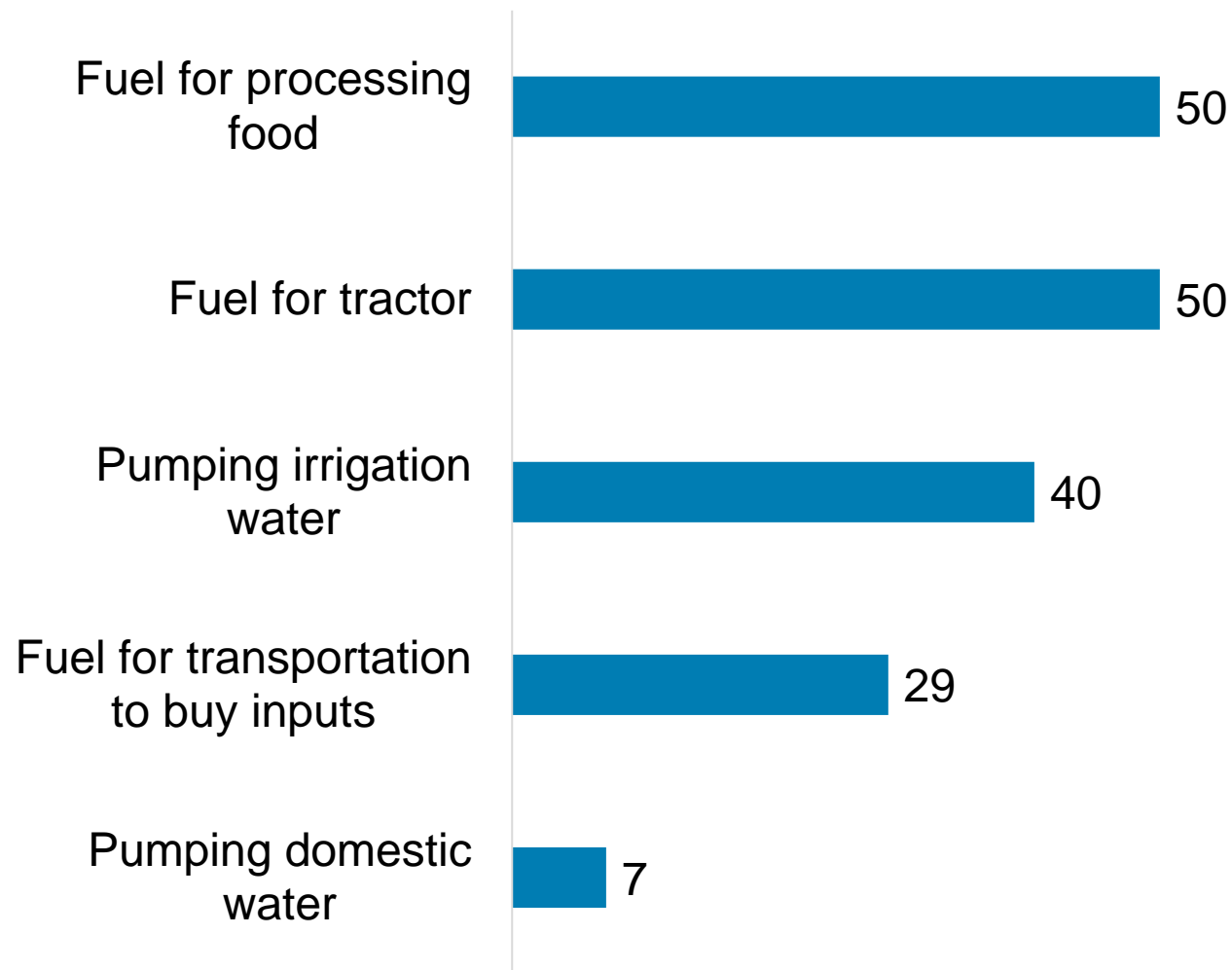


Figure 3. Fuel uses among farmers with access to farm machinery (n=124), % of respondents

**Water sources:
piped water is
the main source
for drinking
water for 49% of
women while
borehole is the
main source for
47% of men**

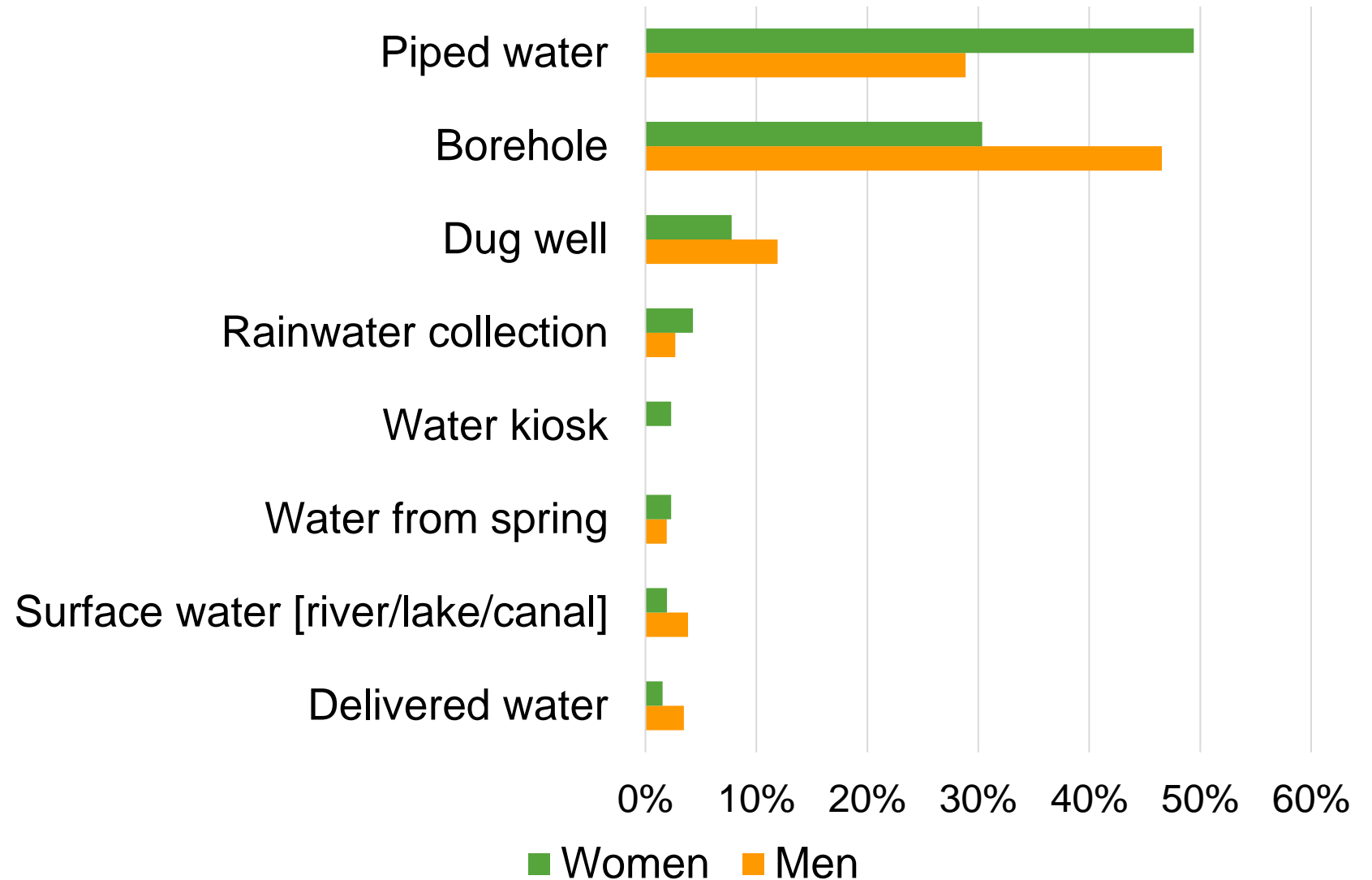


Figure 4. Water sources, % of respondents (n=517)

Perceptions of price increases



Credit: Chess Ocampo/Shutterstock

99% of women and 96% of men observed increases in food prices in the last 6 months before the survey (n=517)

Of those, 54% of women and 45% of men think prices are at least twice as high as before

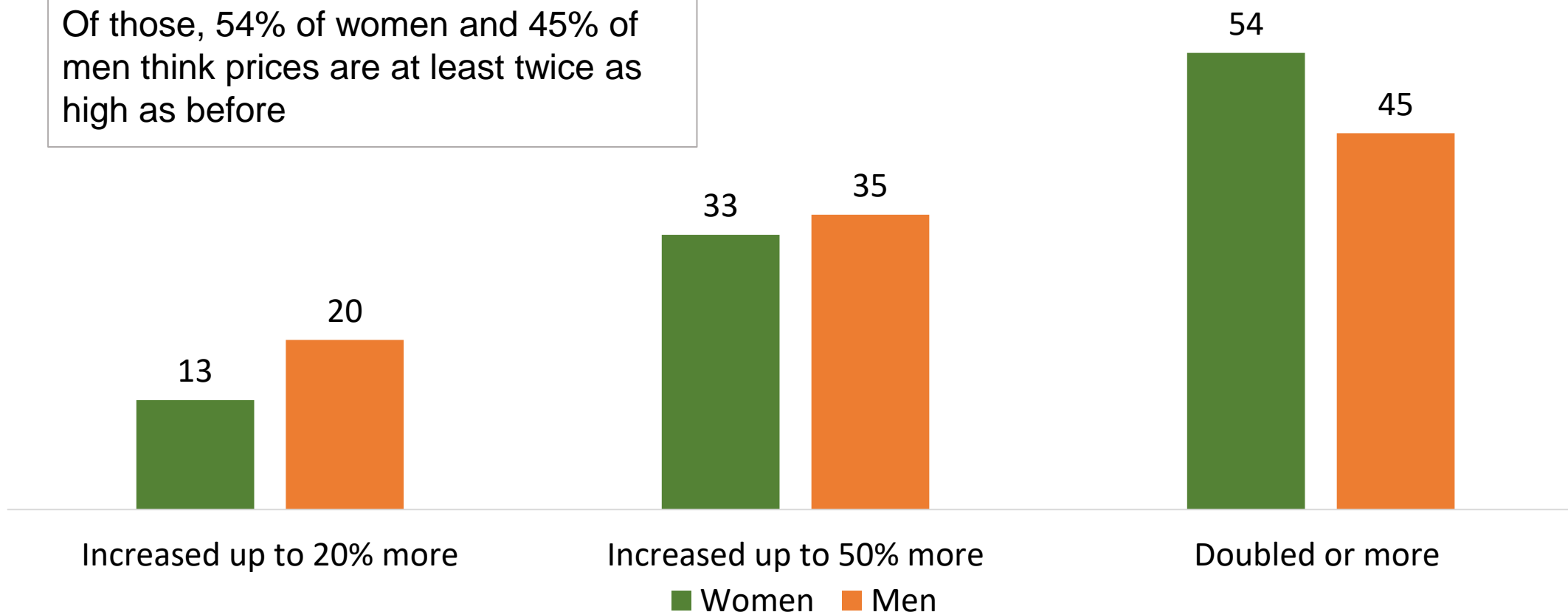
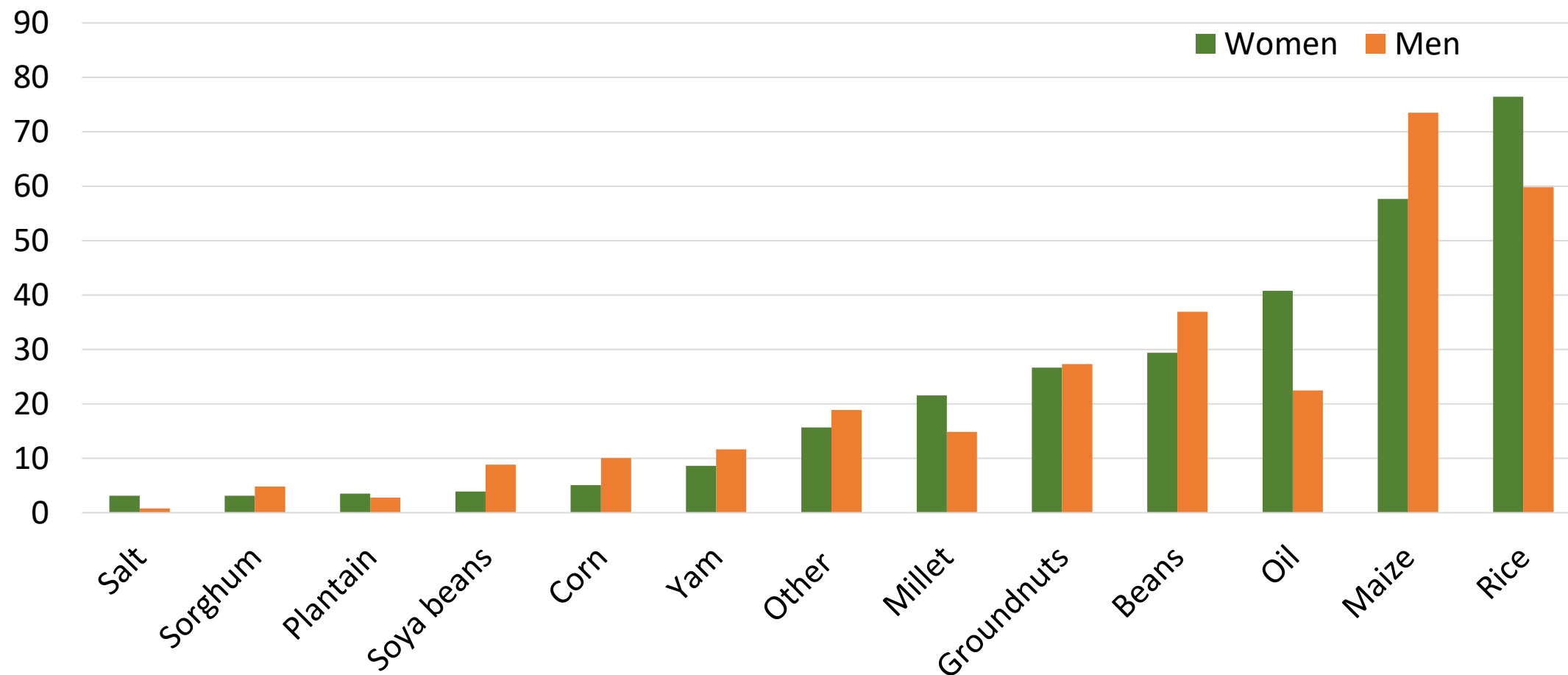


Figure 5. Perceptions of food prices among respondents who observed increases in prices compared to the last year, % (n=504)

The highest increases in prices were perceived for rice and maize



97% of women and 95% of men observed increases in fuel prices in the last 6 months before the survey (n=517)

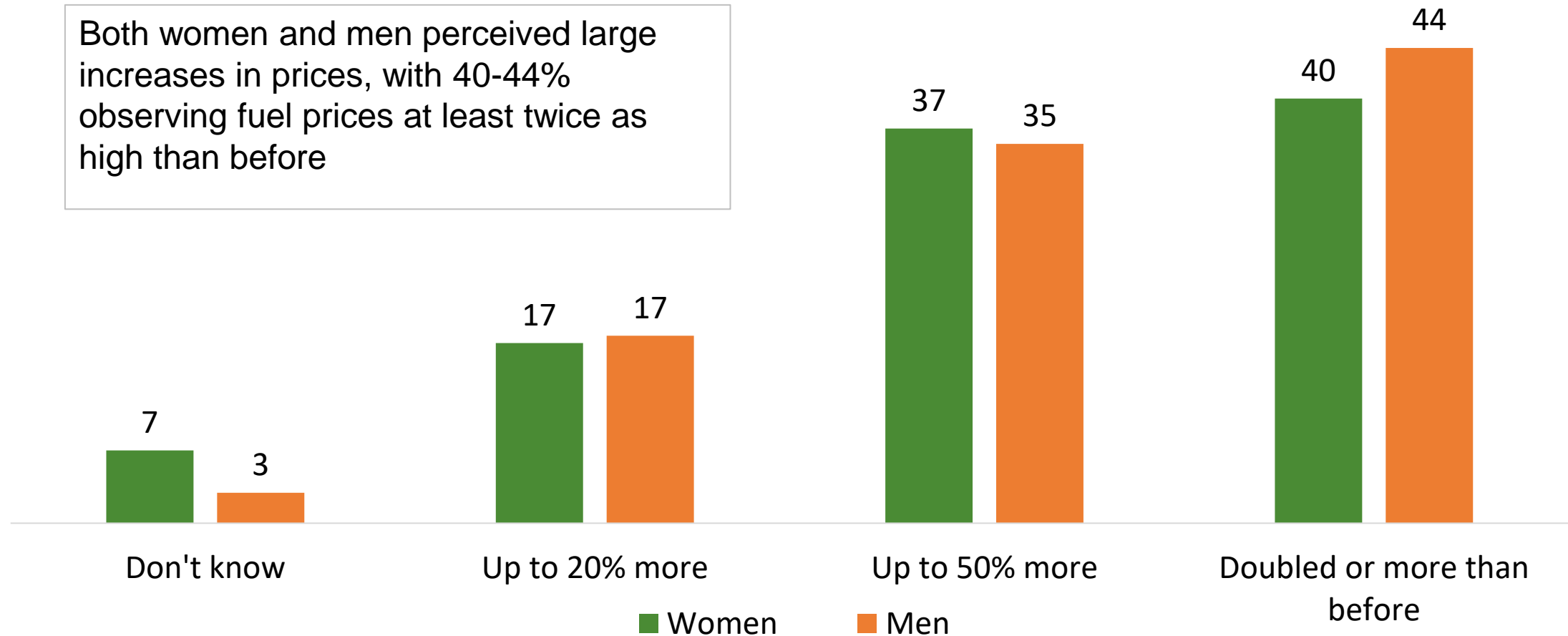


Figure 7. Perception of increases in fuel prices among respondents that observed increases in prices compared to the last year, % (n=496)

60% of women and 80% of men observed increases in fuel prices for agricultural machinery in the last 6 months before the survey (n=517)

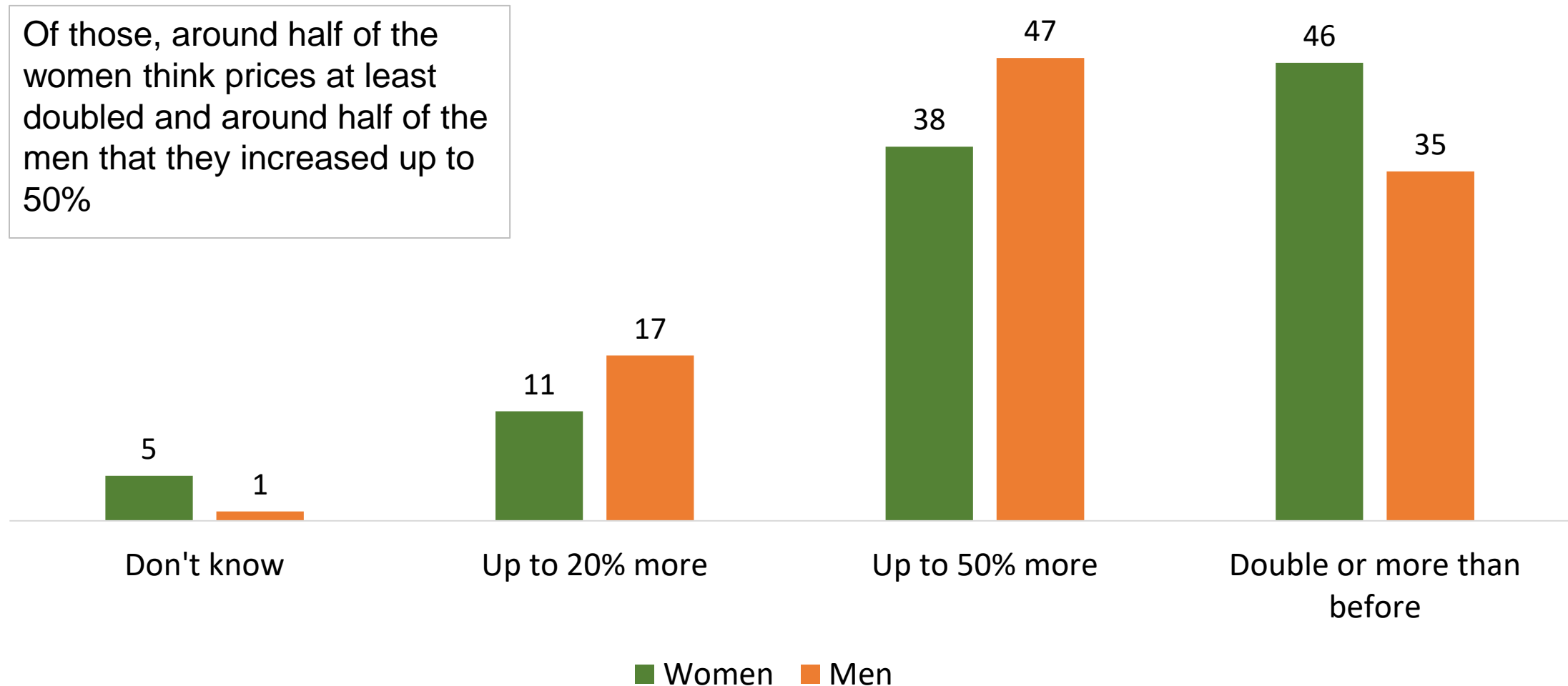


Figure 8. Perceptions of price of fuel for agricultural machinery among respondents that observed increases in prices compared to the last year (n=362), %

59% of women and 76% of men observed increases in pesticide prices in the last 6 months before the survey (n=517)

Of those, 44% of women and 37% of men observed that prices doubled or more than doubled

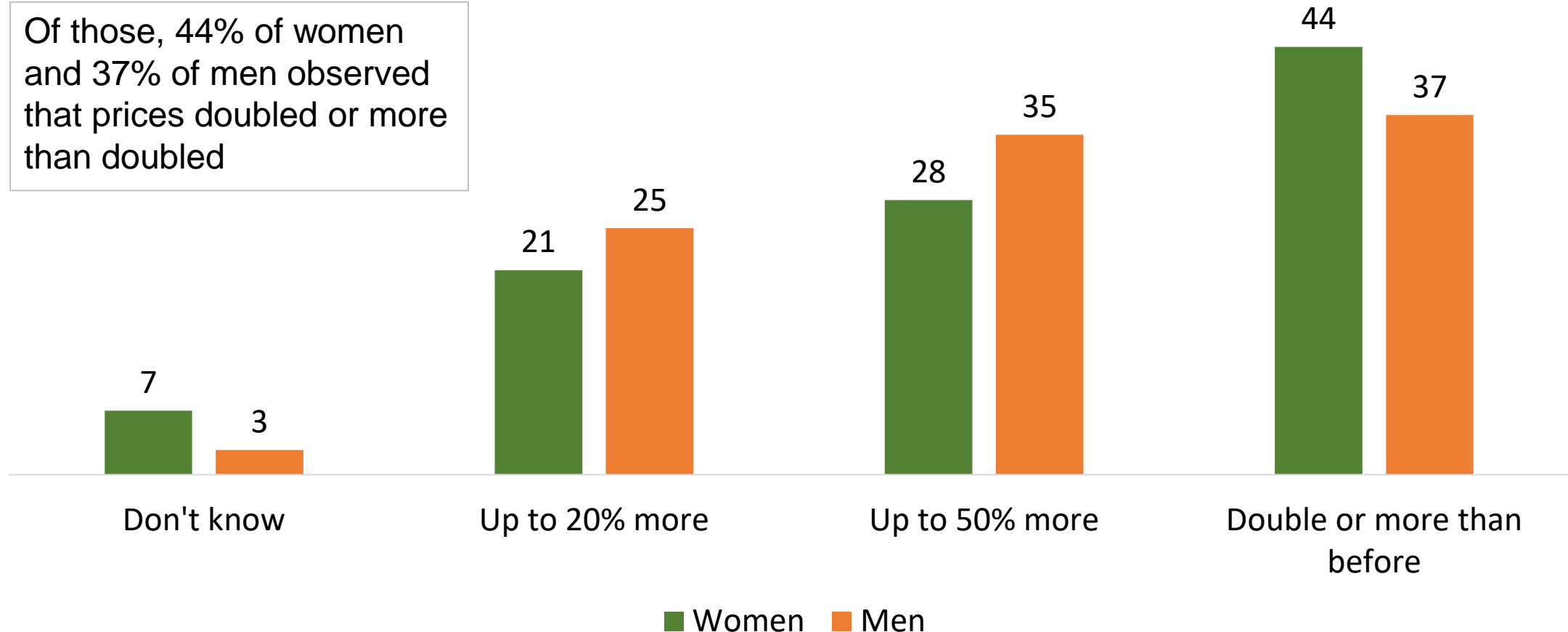


Figure 9. Perceptions of pesticide prices among respondents that observed increases in prices compared to the last year (n=349)

72% of women and 86% of men observed increases in fertilizer prices in the last 6 months before the survey (n=517)

Of those, around half of women and men think fertilizer prices doubled or more than doubled

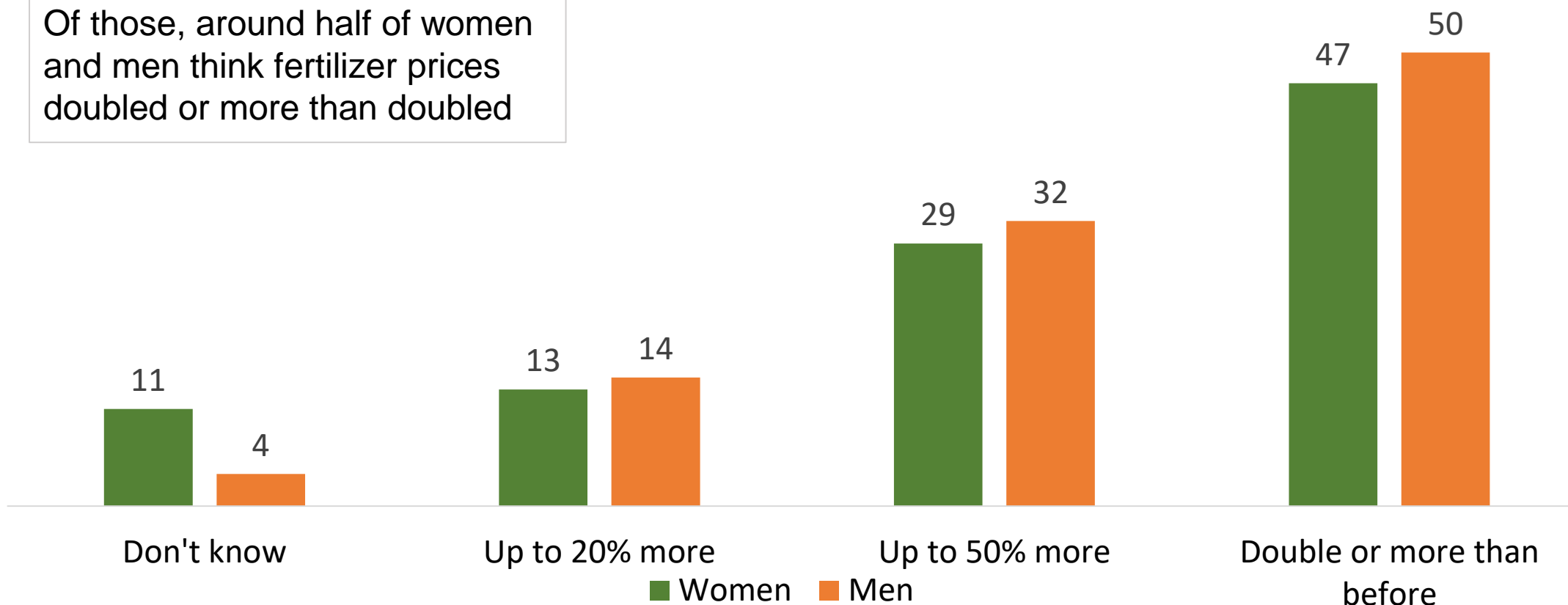


Figure 10. Perception of increases in fertilizer prices among respondents that observed increases in prices compared to the last year (n=409)

Implications for agriculture and food security



Credit: Canto-IFPRI

High fertilizers prices led 62% of farmer respondents to use less fertilizer on family plots and 25% on their own plot

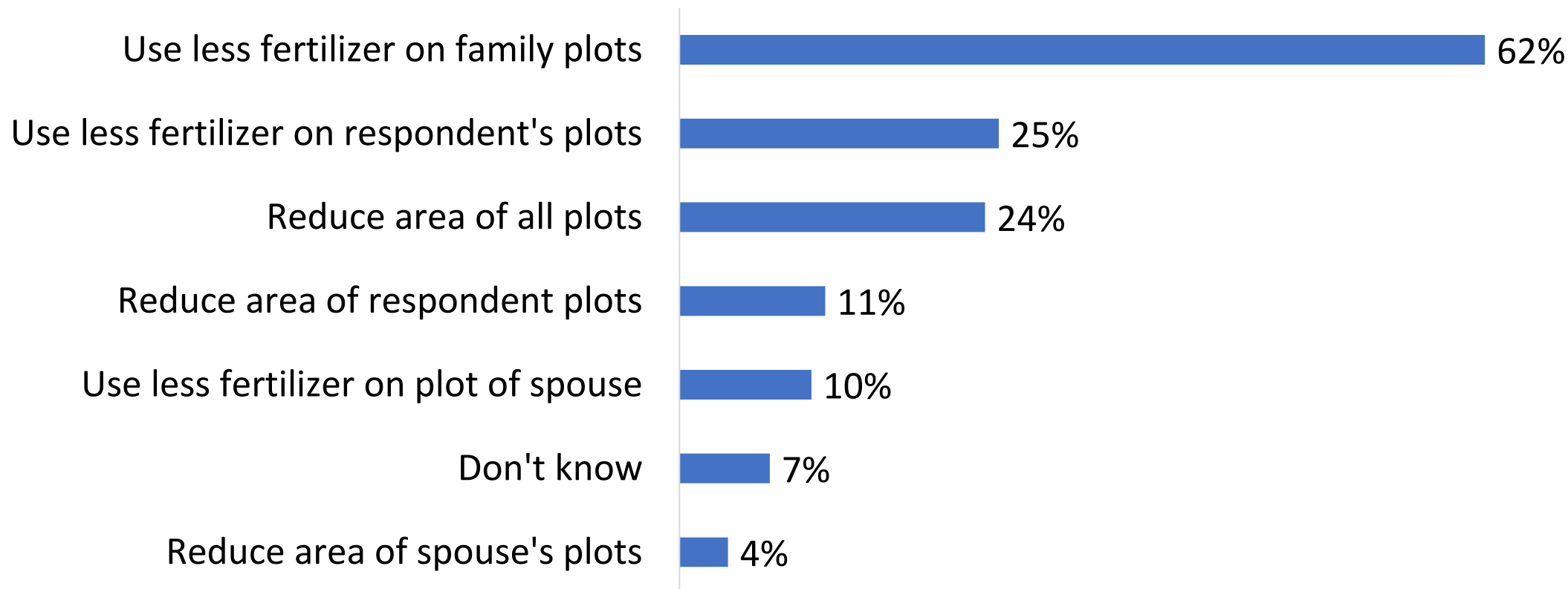


Figure 11. Responses to higher fertilizer prices, % of respondents (n=186)

26% of women farmers and 45% of men farmers **reduced their area under cultivation**

84% of farmers who perceived increases in fertilizer prices (n=186) and 83% who perceived higher pesticide prices **expect to have lower crop yields**

According to different indicators, food insecurity levels have significantly increased for both women and men

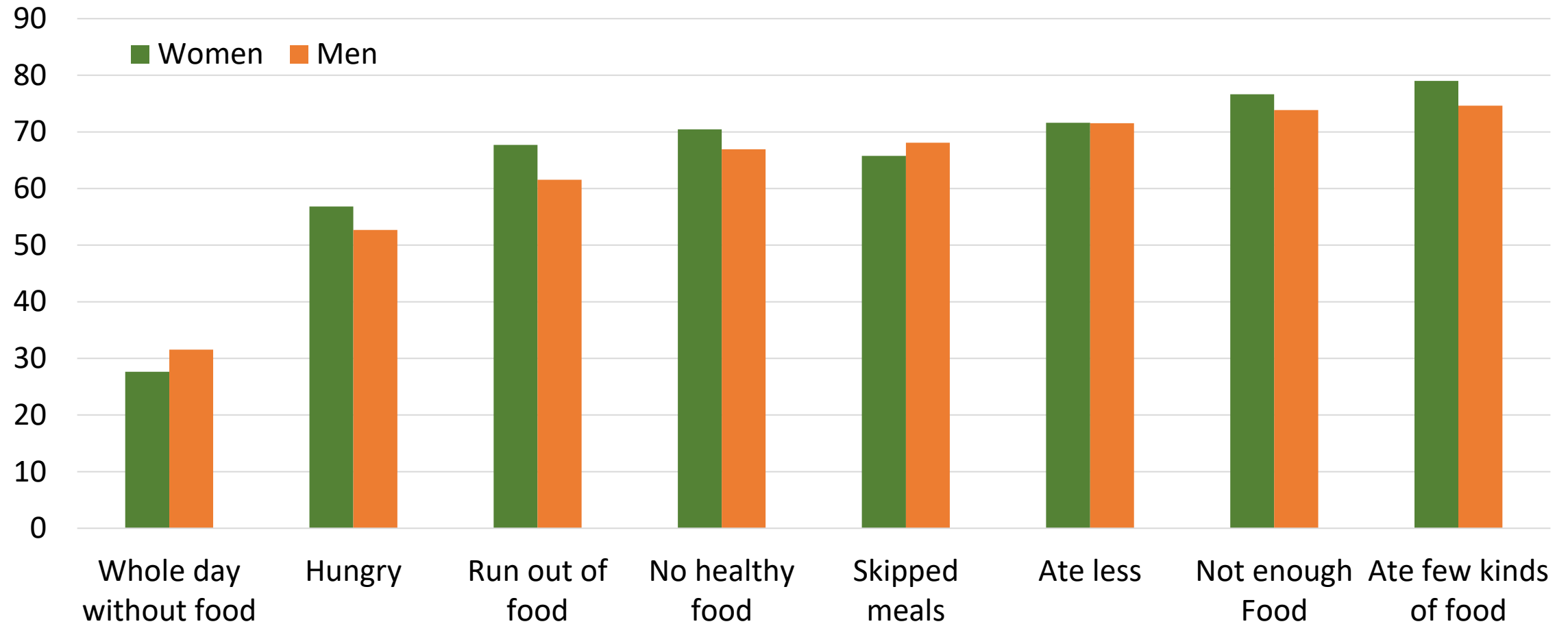


Figure 12. Food access difficulties as a result of current overlapping crises, % of respondents (n=517)

Proportionally, more men than women reported having access to protein-rich foods such as meats and eggs while most women and men consumed some type of vegetable and fruit

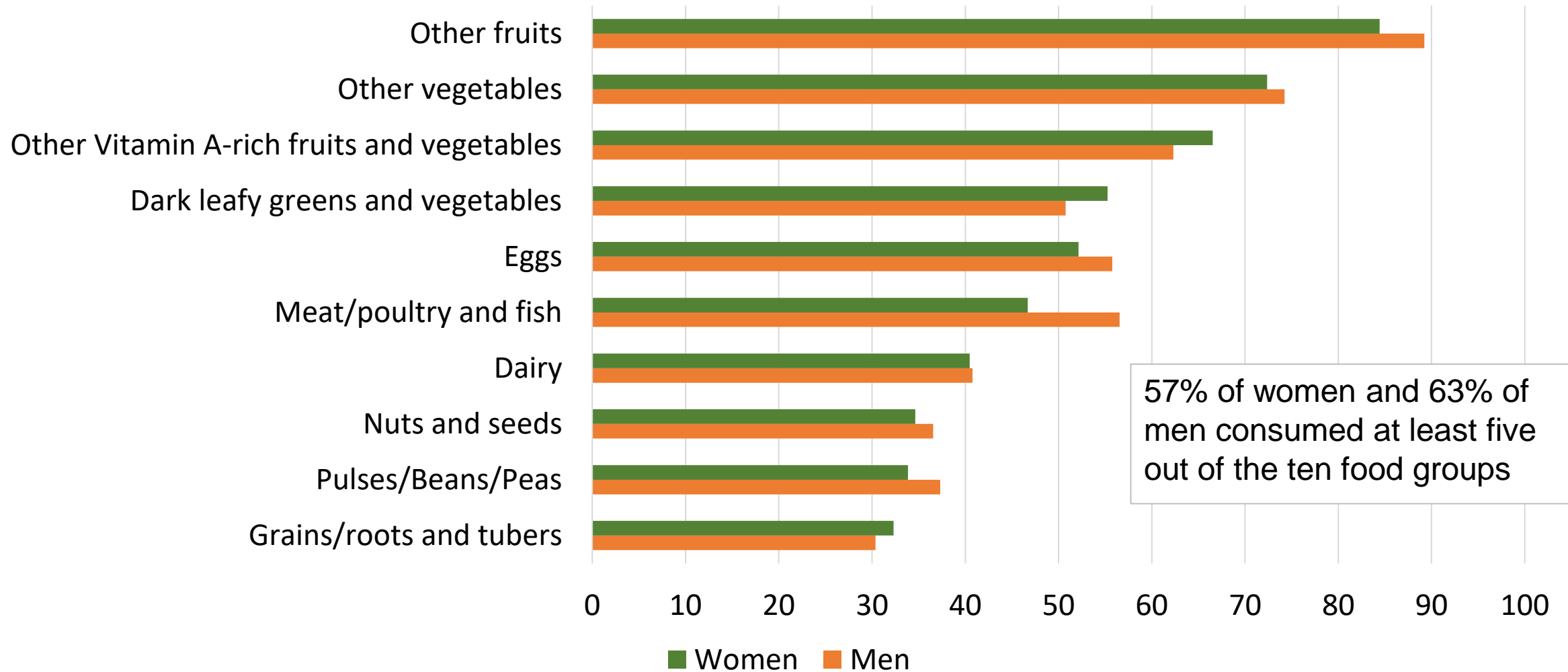


Figure 13. Food consumed in the last 24 hours, % of respondents (n=517)

Responses to high prices



Credit: Canto - IFPRI

Among those who responded to the high prices, over 85% of women and men reduced expenditures

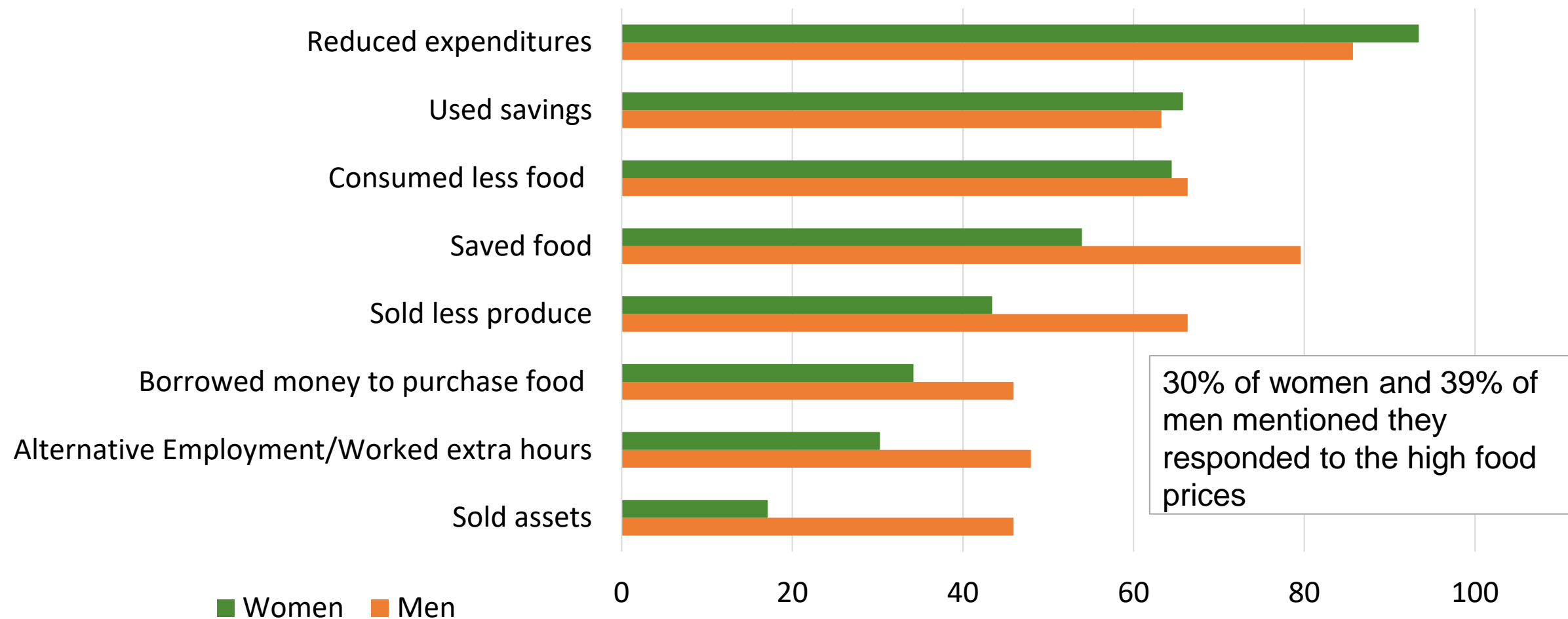


Figure 14. Responses to high food prices (n=174) of those that mentioned they did respond to increased food prices), % of respondents

Most women reduced expenditures with clothing and transportation

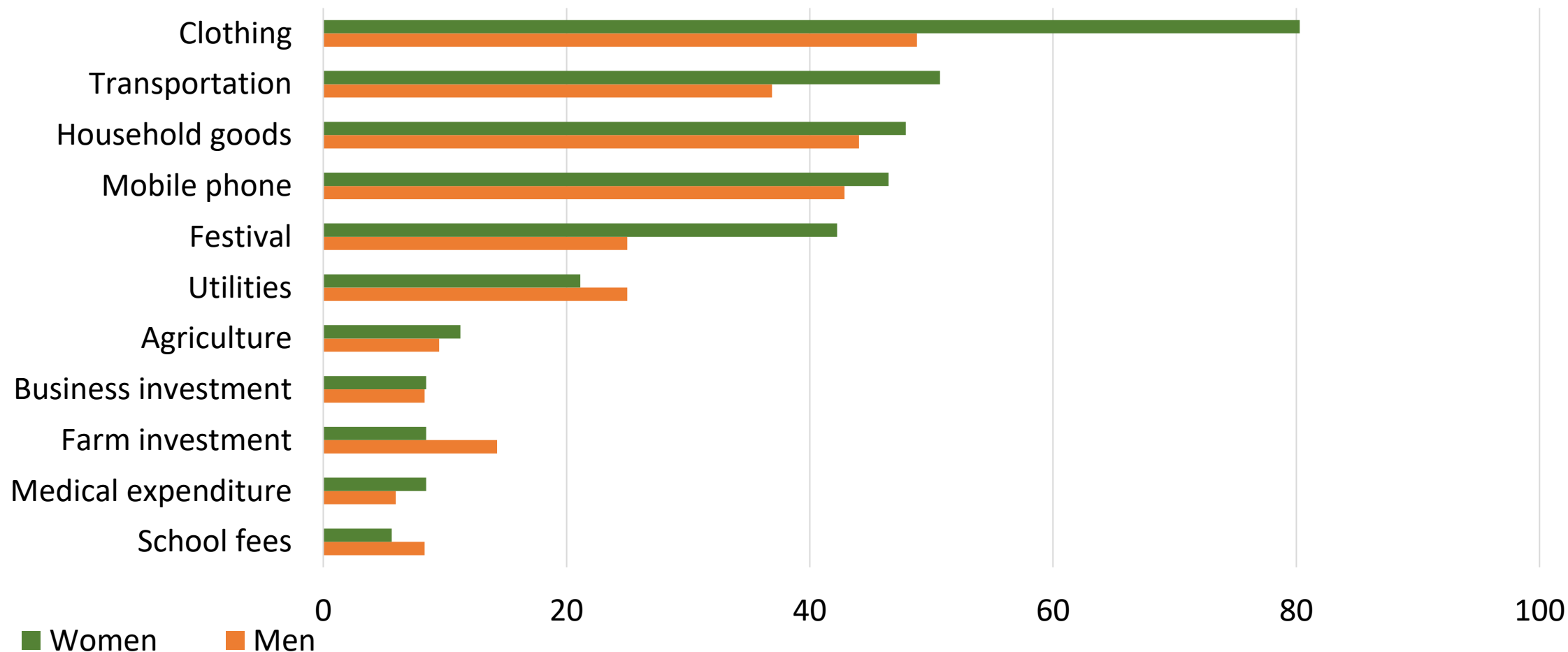


Figure 15. Reduced expenditures (n=155). Respondents that mentioned reduction of expenditure to cope with increasing food prices, % of respondents

The main response to high fuel prices was to go less to the market or use a different mode of transportation

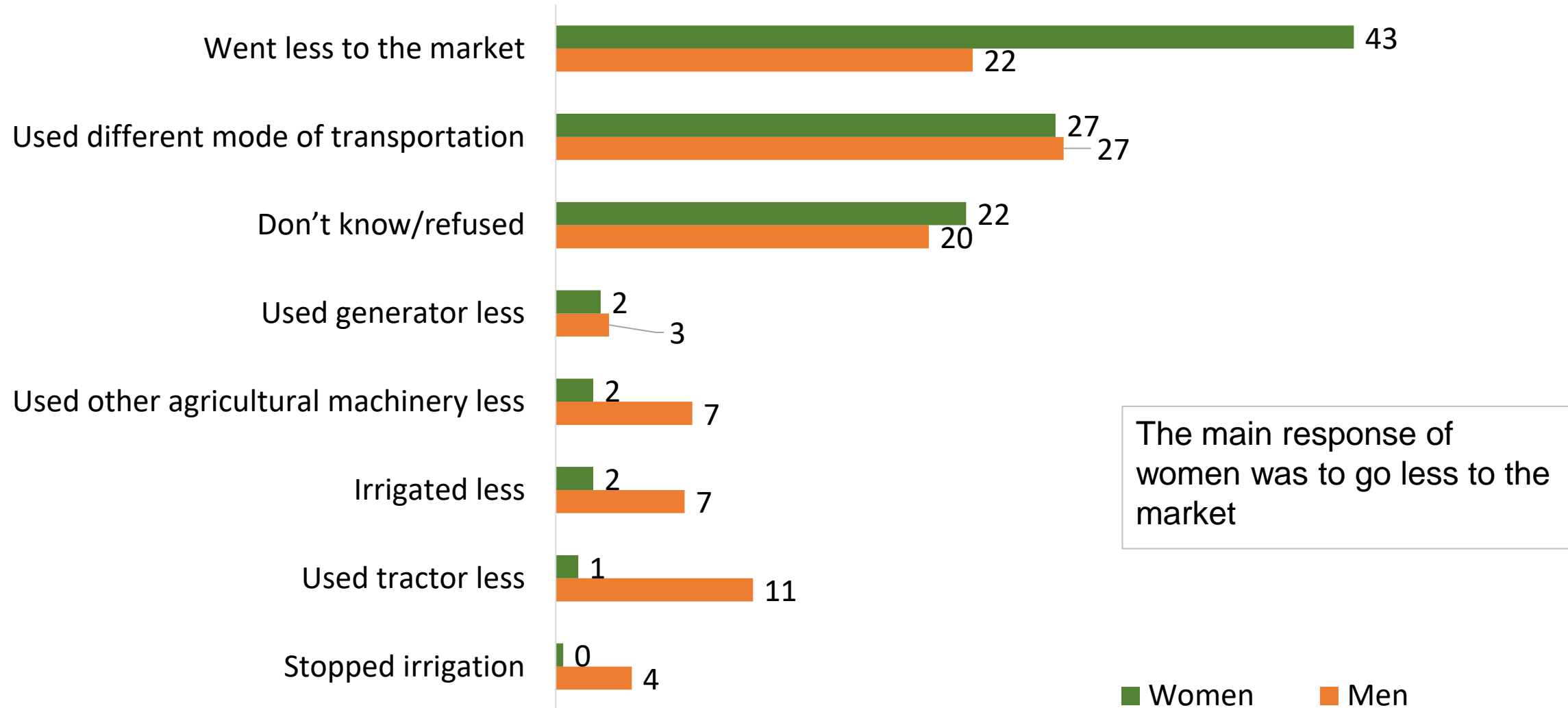


Figure 16. Main response to high fuel prices, % of respondents (n=496)

Eighteen percent of women and 12% of men reported that they heard that families in the community married their daughters under 18 years old in response to the rising prices

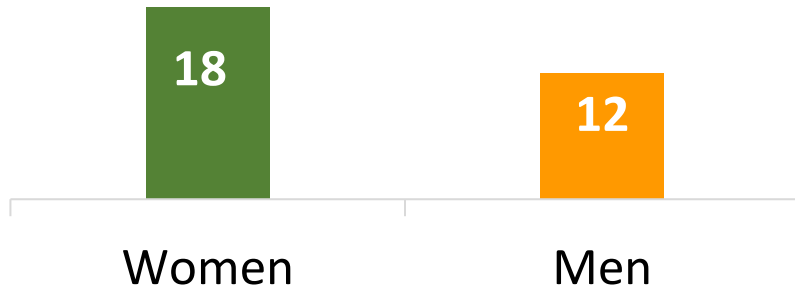


Figure 17. Observed child marriage in response to rising food and fuel prices, % of respondents (n=517).

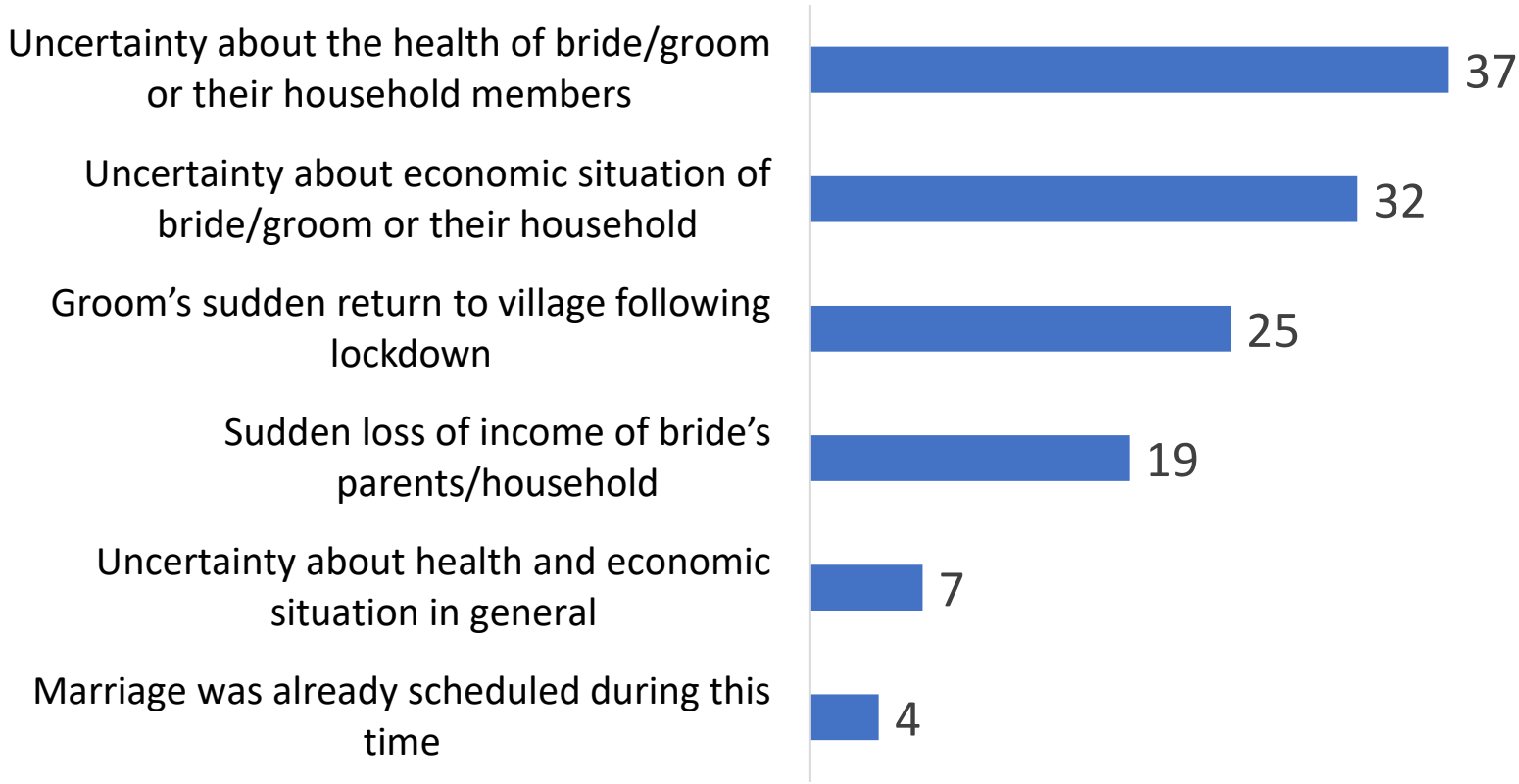


Figure 18. Reasons for child marriage, % of respondents, n=75

Perceptions of reasons for higher prices



Credit: Chaosamran_Studio/Shutterstock

Most women (69%) and men (62%) blame the government for the high food prices with the COVID-19 pandemic ranked second

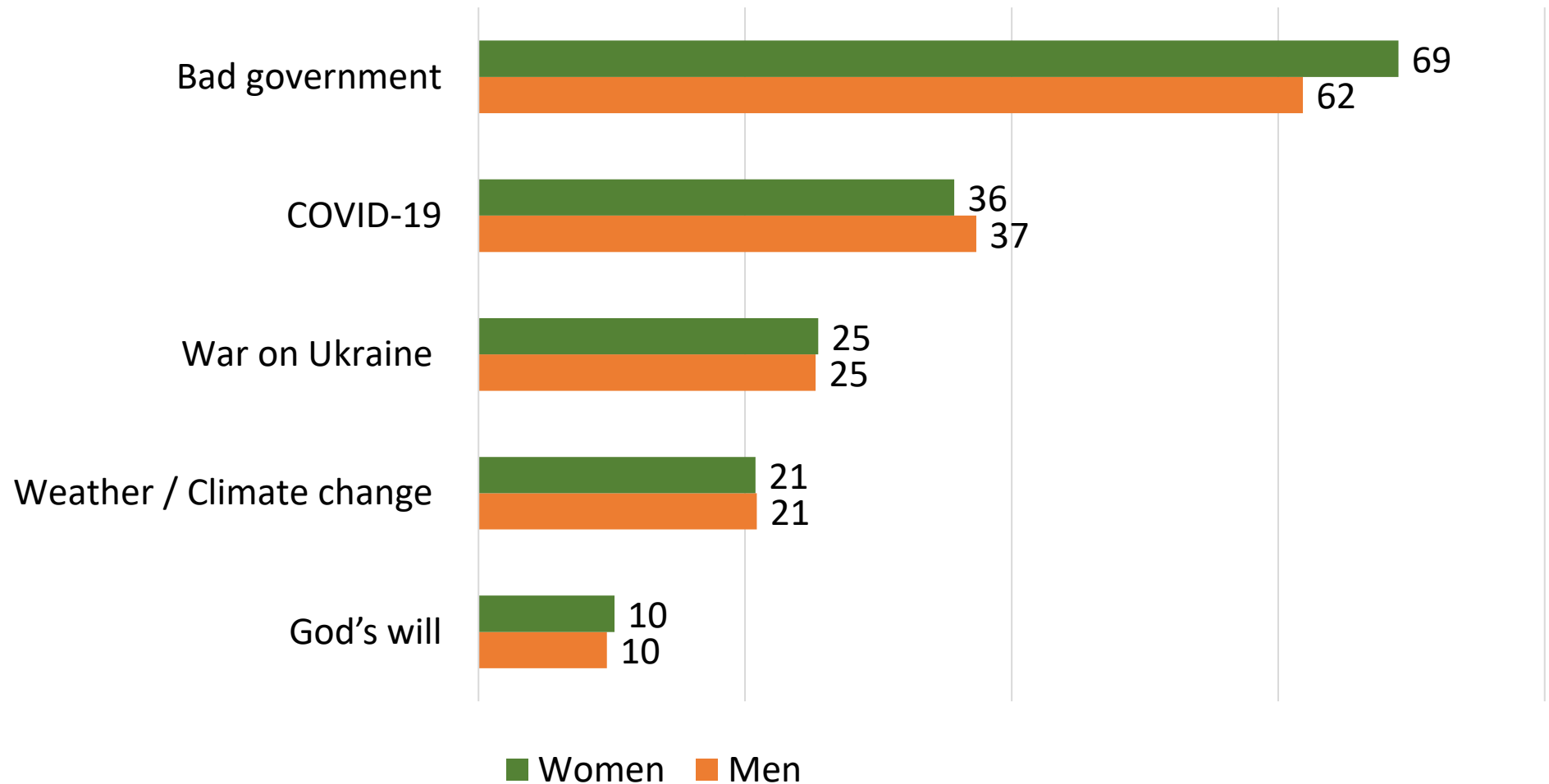


Figure 19. Reasons why food prices have increased (n=504), % of respondents

The government is also seen as the main reason for high energy prices with the war on Ukraine ranked second

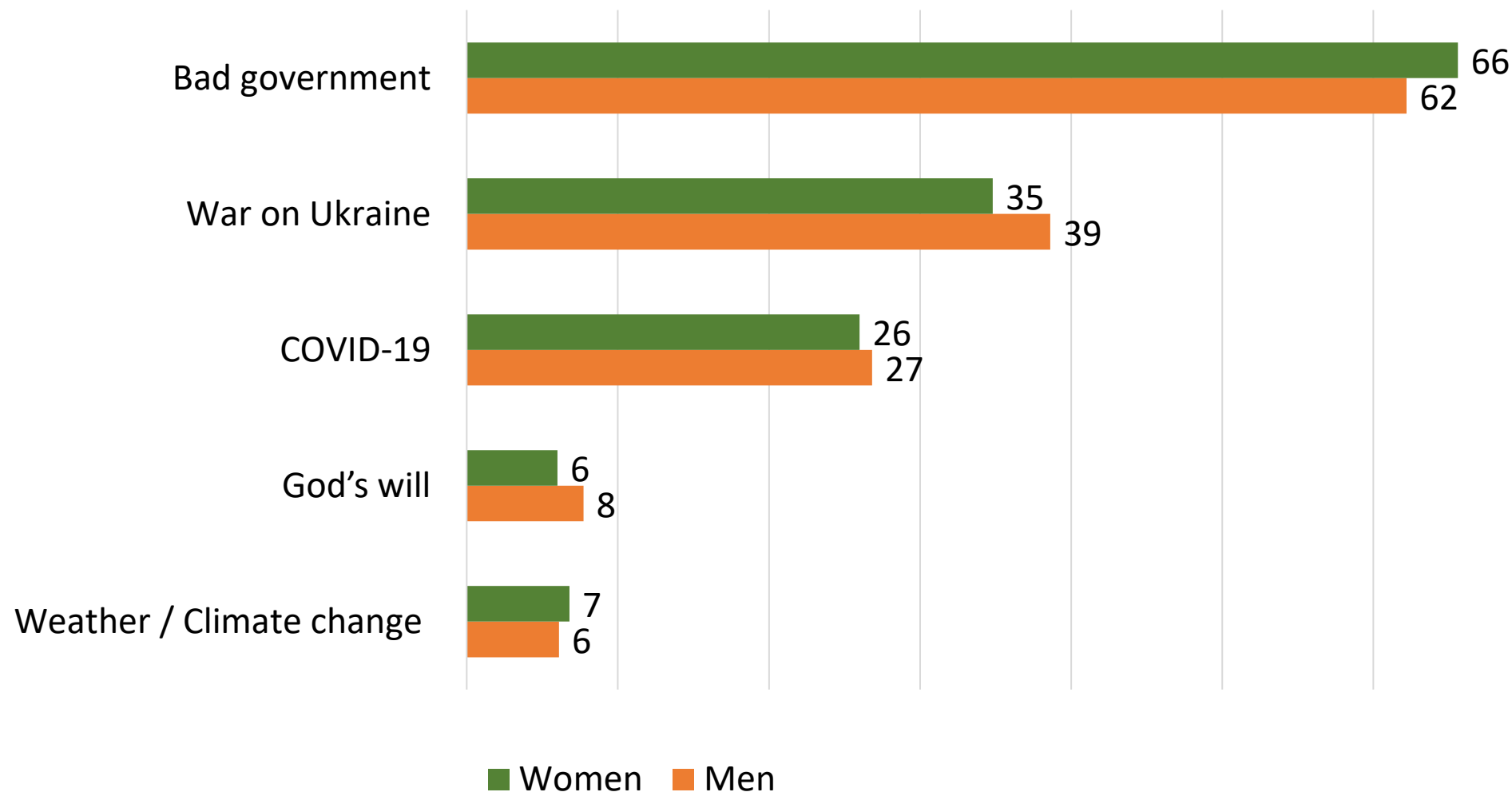


Figure 20. Reasons for high energy prices, % of respondents (n=496)

Other findings

- 83% of women and 82% of men think food prices will increase even more
- Among those who reported they had to borrow money to buy food (n=71), 35% relied on neighbors/friends, 19% on family members and 10% on formal sources (banks)
- Three percent of women and 5% of men said they received a government transfer in 2022 and 2% of women and 3% were supported by NGOs

COVID-19 pandemic related findings



Most women and men experienced income losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

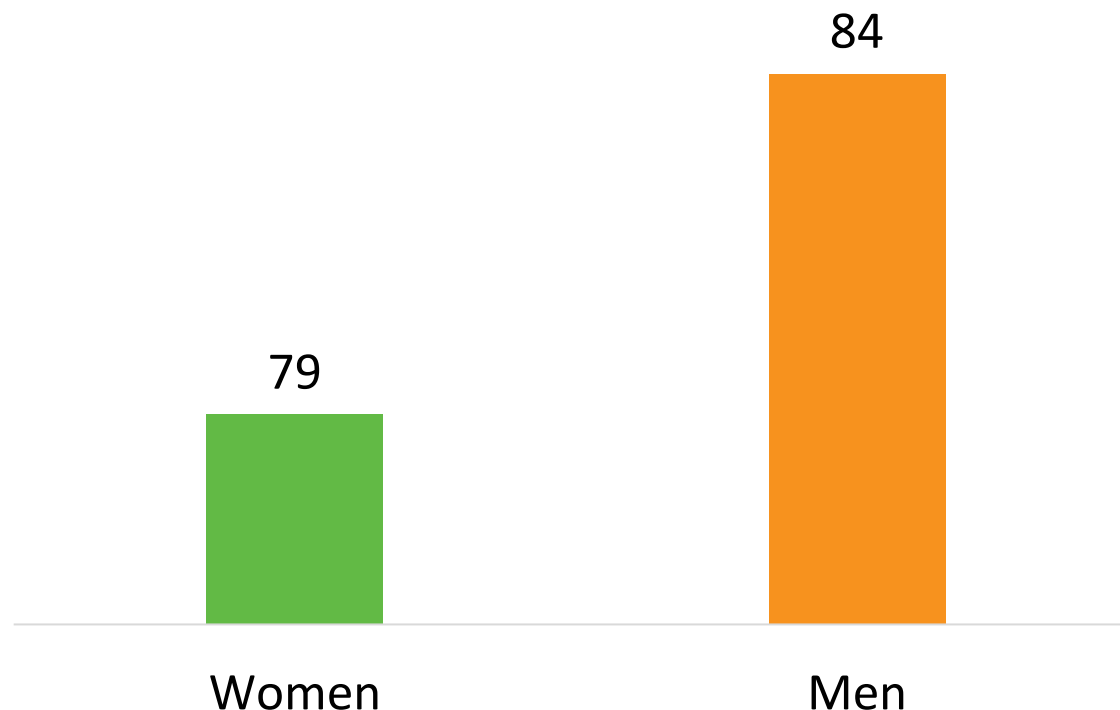


Figure 21. Experienced income loss during the Covid-19 pandemic, % of respondents

Forty-seven percent of women and 42% of men became more indebted compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic

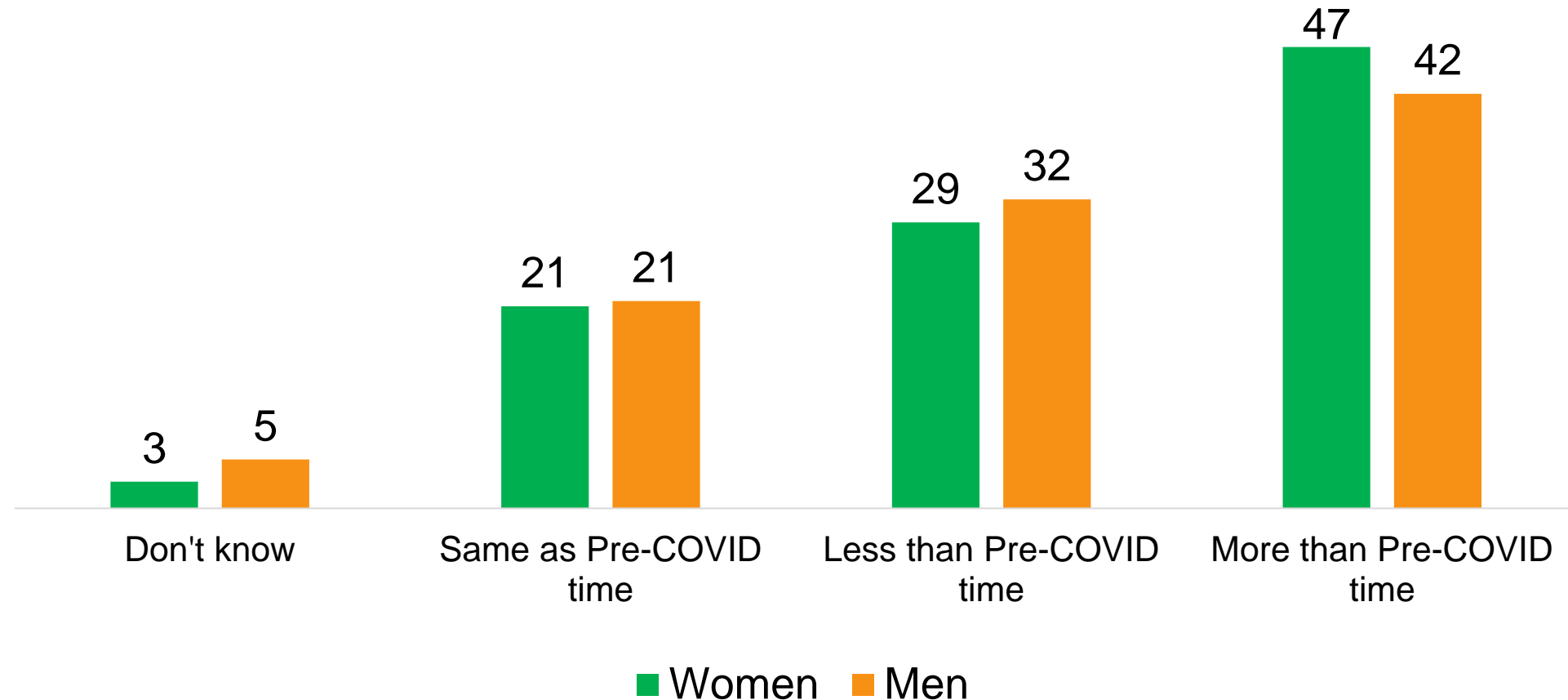


Figure 22. Debt level in comparison to before the COVID-19 pandemic, % of respondents

The most common coping mechanisms for income loss were to use savings and borrow money

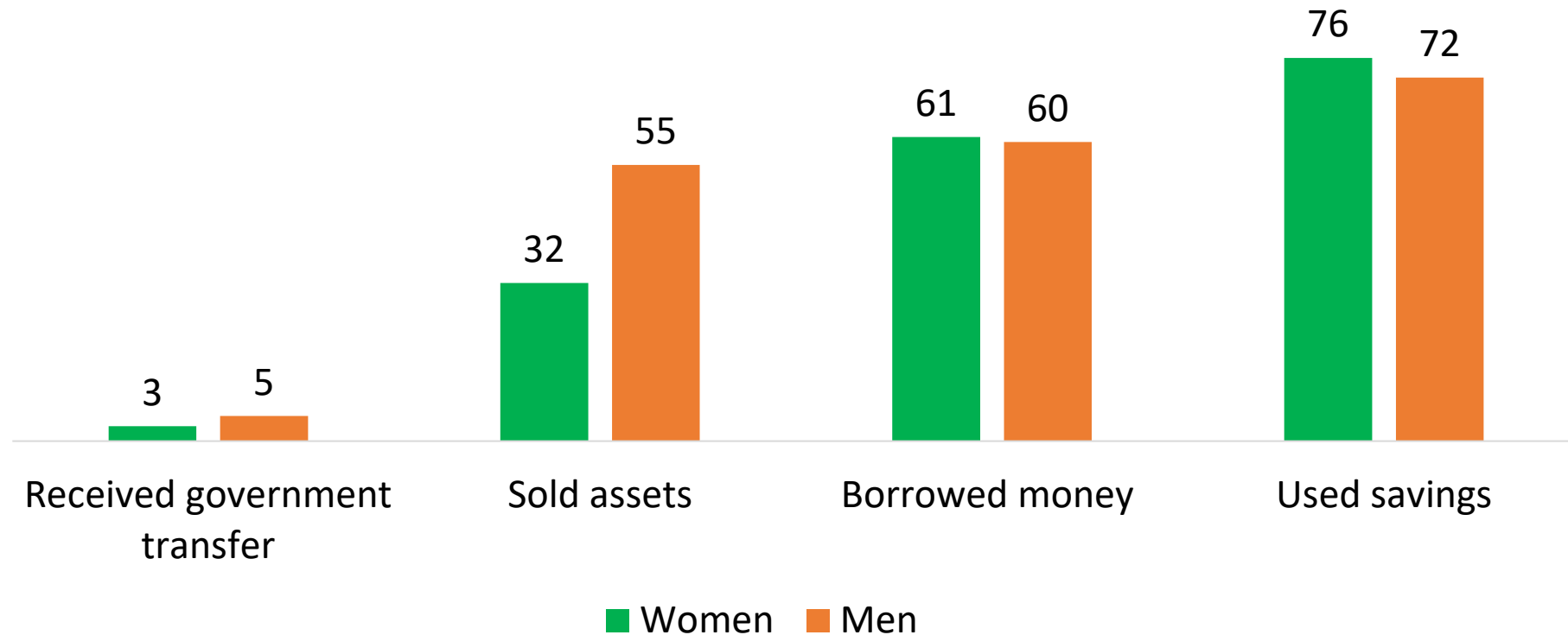


Figure 23. Coping mechanisms to address income losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic, % of respondents

Conclusions

- Recent spikes in food and energy prices were perceived by most women and men. The survey shows that the high prices had negative impacts on respondents' mobility, food consumption, and food security levels.
- Women perceived larger increases in food prices and had a lower minimum dietary diversity score.
- For some farmer respondents, impacts included reduction in the area planted, less use of fertilizer, and expected lower crop yields in the future.
- High food and fuel price inflation came on top of income losses experienced by most women and men because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Both women and men were highly impacted by the food and fuel crises with food insecurity levels increasing for both.
- The main response of women to higher fuel prices was to go less to the market; men's response was to use alternative modes of transportation.
- Overall, the government was blamed the most for the spike in prices.
- A higher share of women than men heard of increases in child marriage in the community as a result of the food crisis.

Recommendations

- Social protection programs are needed to help households to cope with multiple crises and reduce food insecurity levels, for example, school-feeding programs, food banks and cash transfer directed at mothers.
- To reduce indebtedness, it is important to target financial services to poor households and women in poor households without cumbersome requirements.
- Gender-sensitive asset programs are needed to rebuild assets after multiple crises.
- Develop rural transportation options that remain affordable during energy price spikes to ensure access to important services, such as schools, health services and markets.
- Monitor the extent to which interventions in the agricultural input space reach and benefit women and poorer farmers. (Note that reaching marginalized groups does not guarantee that they will benefit.)

Further readings

- Bryan E., C. Ringler and N. Lefore. 2022. To ease the world food crisis, focus resources on women and girls. [Nature Comment](#). 609: 28-31.
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- Quisumbing, A.R., N. Kumar, R. Meinzen-Dick and C. Ringler. [Why gender matters in COVID-19 responses: Now and in the future](#). In COVID-19 and global food security, eds. J. Swinnen and J. McDermott. Part Six: Gender, Chapter 20, Pp. 88-90. Washington, DC: IFPRI
- M. Alvi, S. Gupta, R. Meinzen-Dick and C. Ringler. 2020. [Phone surveys to understand gendered impacts of COVID-19: A cautionary note](#). IFPRI PIM Gendering Data Blog.