

What do they think about Cannabis?  
A deep dive into feelings and opinions of consumers  
from the Netherlands and newly legalized Thailand



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### Background:

Cannabis was decriminalized by the Thai Government on 9 June 2022.

For now, policy and rules are not clear set and uncontrolled sales of cannabis for recreational use takes place in Thailand.

In The Netherlands there has been a cannabis toleration policy since 1976 where consumers can possess up to five grams of marijuana or maximum five cannabis plants. Coffeeshops can sell small quantities of soft drugs without being prosecuted.

### Methodology:

- Desk research
- Store observations in Netherlands and Thailand
- 10 IDIs in Netherlands and 10 IDIs in Thailand with mainly consumers and few professionals in cannabis industry
- Three questions on social media N=100 Dutch and N=100 Thai consumers (credits to Bolt Insight)

**bolt**

### Recruitment:

- Consumers recruited through own network. Those that have heard of cannabis (preferably also cannabidiol (CBD), not necessarily users.
- Few professionals in cannabis industry such as Drugs research institute, Cannabis retailer/ seed trader and Pharmacy/Health store



# Cannabis / Coffeeshops





# But also!



- Cannabis seed bank
- Specialist health stores
- Mainstream drugstores
- Some pharmacies
- Smart shops
- Online retailers






**BBC**

# Thailand cannabis: From a war on drugs to weed curries

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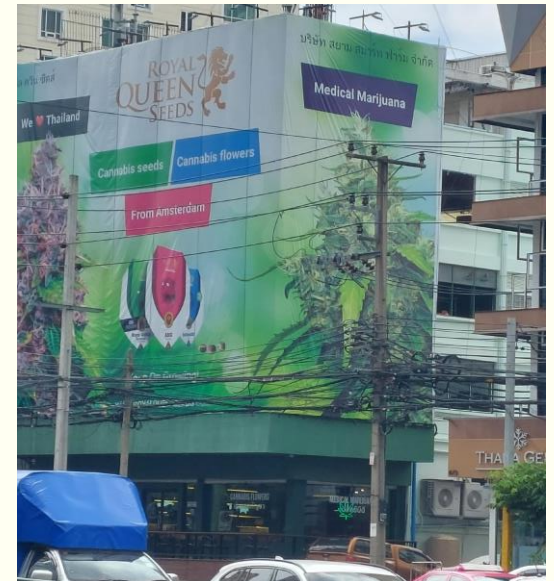
**The Washington Post**  
*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

- ‘You’re not allowed to use marijuana recreationally.’ (The Washington Post June 2022)
- 0.2% THC barrier lifted? ‘Extracts that contain more than 0.2% THC (psychoactive component) remain illegal.’ (Bangkok Post 12 November 2022) 
- ‘Showing ID when buying cannabis flower buds will be required. Only sell under license and aim to incorporate buyer information in national database to track sales and purchases’ (Nikkei Asia, Feb 2023) 
- ‘Cannabis business gets stagnant. Entrepreneurs slow down activities to wait for clearer government policy and regulation.’ (Prachanet, Feb 2023) 
- ‘The Cannabis Bill, which seeks to decriminalize the medical use of cannabis and hemp, overwhelmingly passed its first reading in the House in June last year, but opposition to it has since increased, as concerns grow over the recreational or non-medical use of cannabis and its extracts, especially among youth.’ (Thai PBS World, January 2023)



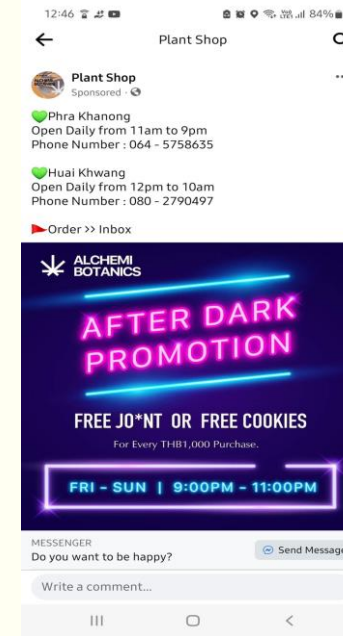


# Bangkok





# Bangkok





Thailand cannabis:  
a snapshot





And outside Bangkok



**CANNABIS MENU**  
ALL FOOD ARE CANNABIS CONTAINS

- 1. Cannabis omelette ไช้เจียวกัญชา 150
- 2. Cannabis spinach grill cheese sandwich แซนวิชชีสกระท้อนกัญชา 190
- 3. Cannabi banana pancake แพนเค้กกล้วย กัญชา น้ำผึ้ง 190
- 4. Cannabis chicken basil leave กระเพราไก่กัญชา 190
- 5. Cannabis tom yam chicken ต้มยำไก่กัญชา 230
- 6. Cannabis pad thai chicken ผัดไทยไก่กัญชา 190
- 7. Cannabis chicken curry แกงเผ็ดไก่กัญชา 190
- 8. Cannabis garlic bread / cheese ขนมปังกระเทียมกัญชา 150/190
- 9. Cannabis canape chicken ขนมปังหน้าไก่กัญชา 190
- 10. Cannabis chicken burger / cheese เบอร์เกอร์ไก่กัญชา 220/250
- 11. Cannabis papaya salad ส้มตำกัญชา 190
- 12. Banana chocolate cannabis shake 150
- 13. Banana yoghurt cannabis shake 150
- 14. Coconut snicker cannabis shake 150
- 15. Cannabis passion soda 150

\*\*\*\* Asked for more interesting \*\*\*\*

Remark : Children under 18yrs, pregnant, breastfeeding mother and THC allergic are not allowed. Drive carefully after consumption.  
หมายเหตุ : ร้องห้ามอายุต่ำกว่า 18 ปี หญิงตั้งครรภ์/ให้นมบุตร และผู้ที่มีอาการแพ้ THC  
โปรดจับใจด้วยความระมัดระวัง

One leaves of cannabis กัญชา ใบ ต่อ 1 กรัม



# What sources do you know to follow general news from your country?



- **TV news bulletin:** NOS every day at 8 pm
- **Smartphone:**
  - NOS news app
  - 'News feeds from NOS in my Facebook (FB) and Instagram. Push news alerts' (more frequently below 40 years old)
- **National and regional newspapers:** online and more often the older audience also printed press
- **News website:** [www.nu.nl](http://www.nu.nl)
- **Radio (few mentioned)**
- **News through own social network**



*Note: NOS is the Dutch Broadcasting Foundation*



- **Most Smartphone:** News feeds in FB, Instagram, Line chat app, YouTube, TikTok. Twitter not necessarily younger audience.
- **TV news bulletin**
- **National and regional newspapers:** online and very few printed press
- **Radio/ specific podcast** (very few mentioned)
- **News through own social network**



# The ones you use?



- ‘**When I scroll** through my FB/ Instagram I see NOS articles popping up. I look at those NOS articles most.’ (Female, 26-40 years old)
- ‘I watch **Nu.nl mostly on my phone for general news.**’ (Male, 41-50 years old)
- ‘I watch the NOS news broadcast daily on TV.’ (Female, 50+ years old) ‘ I watch NOS news broadcast on TV, read three national newspapers online and offline.’ (Male, 50+ years old)
- ‘I look at the **NOS app while I am commuting** and I read NRC national newspaper **print version over the weekend.**’ (Male, 26-40 years old)



- ‘**Newsfeeds** in TikTok is my main source for news. If I find the news interesting I do further research on Twitter. On Twitter many opinions which helps me analyze of what is credible and what is not.’ (Female 26-40 years old)
- ‘I use **Line** mainly to chat with my friends but they also **forward** interesting news to me. I am much time **at home so also watch the news on TV.**’ (Female, 41-50 years old)
- ‘News feeds on my FB and YouTube. Mainly online as I can access news **any time I want, it is convenient**’ (Female, 50+ years old)
- ‘**Only online:** BBC TH, TNN, ABC Live for U.S. news. BBC and CNN applications **when I cannot turn on the sound**’ (Male 41-50 years old)

Note: TNN is Thai 24 hours news channel owned by True Corporation





# Specific sources to read about health news/regulations in your country?



- **Most answer no specific sources:** If touched upon by the general news sources that I follow then I look at this.
- **When** certain health issues or questions pro-actively search mostly on google.
- Cannabis seeds trader commented: 'We say we are not in the position of explaining about health impact of cannabis, **we advise to search** on google or you have lifestyle websites such as [www.cnnbs.nl](http://www.cnnbs.nl) all around cannabis. We blog on our website concerning growing/ effects/ news cannabis and its medicinal properties.'

- **Most answer no specific sources.**
- Get this information through **own social circle.**
- **Expert/ Influencer:** 'I follow Dr. Top on YouTube. When there is an interesting feed I watch it 1-2 times per month' (Male, 41-50 years old) 'I follow Bebe and she also talks about health.' (Female, 20-25 years old)
- **E-mail subscription** to certain organizations (very few mentioned)



# What do you know about cannabis in your market?



- Cannabis is **tolerated** in the Netherlands.
- ‘I **associate cannabis with smoking a joint** which you can get at coffeeshops. **Now you also see medical cannabis coming up**: ‘I saw on Reddit a man with Parkinson smoking a joint which stopped his tremors.’ (Male, 26-40 years old)
- **Cannabis can be used for recreational or medical usage.**
- **Few respondents mention to see anything about cannabis and its regulations in the news**, those that did mention to remember:
  - Cannabis was in the news when you were no longer allowed to smoke anymore in horeca outlets.
  - You are no longer allowed to smoke weed on the street in Rotterdam.
  - Pilot study of government supervising growing of cannabis to supply to coffeeshops.

- **Cannabis regulation is not clear:**
  - ‘I thought selling of cannabis and consumption is under control but I see many shops open for smoking around Pakchong, I do not know how they get controlled.’ (Female, 26-40 years old)
  - ‘Registration is needed for growing and selling, however there is no regulation how much to sell or buy.’ (Male, 26-40 years old)
- **Cannabis is used for recreational or medical usage.**
- **Cannabis is used in food/drinks and for smoking/ direct use.**
- **Hear about cannabis (addiction) at school, news and my social network. News informed about cannabis as treatment for sickness.**



# What do you know about cannabis in your market?



- Cannabis seeds trader: '**CBD regulation is still quite changing, Bureau Medicinal Cannabis** also publishes about this. MMJDaily gives cannabis news and regulations news worldwide, our contacts post at LinkedIn and we meet at conferences/fairs.'
- 'Once cannabis is fully legal you can start to fully inform everybody that it is not worse or better than alcohol or tobacco. Now most communication is about its risks then about what solutions it can possibly provide.' (Cannabis seed trader)

- **Cannabis is trendy** 'It is a trend something your friends may ask if you tried it', (Male, 41-50 years old)



# And where did you get this information from?



- If respondents have obtained news on cannabis (regulations) in past years then mostly through **NOS-Dutch Broadcasting Foundation and national press.**
- **Through the grapevine/ own social network (mostly informed by those that feel concerned)**
- **Not much publicity on drugs/cannabis topic. Simply because this is not allowed and not everyone is concerned, neither interested.**
  - [www.drugsinfo.nl](http://www.drugsinfo.nl) [www.drugsinfoteam.nl](http://www.drugsinfoteam.nl)  
[www.drugsenuitgaan.nl](http://www.drugsenuitgaan.nl)
  - Information sessions on cannabis are now only given to parents at parents meetings at schools (school decide themselves on this how much focus or not on this) together with [www.helderopvoeden.nl](http://www.helderopvoeden.nl).
  - Growing, buying, usage of CBD products: Seed traders have a website and give information on this.
  - Bureau Medicinal Cannabis :  
<https://www.cannabisbureau.nl/>



- **Through news feeds in one's social media (FB, TikTok, YouTube, Line news feed)/ food app. News channel such as News 1.** 'News about cannabis regulation from TV, news feeds on FB but I do not care about credibility as its regulation is not stable or clear.' (Male 26-40 years old)
- **Through the grapevine/ own social network (mostly informed by those that feel concerned)**
- **Visiting cannabis retailer that explained to me about cannabis and its regulation:** 'The information I got about cannabis regulation at the cannabis store is credible because the store is a cannabis specialty store.' (Male, 20-25 years old)
- **Websites from various Thai government departments on regulation i.e. how much can be traded etc.**



# Most appropriate channels to inform about cannabis news/regulations?



## Opinion is more aligned:

- **NOS national news bulletin, national newspapers (offline and online), online also Nu.nl**
- **Dutch Government:** 'NOS news bulletin would share this but it would come from Dutch Government which could be Ministry of Health or Legal Affairs depending the topic.' (Male, 41-50 years)
- **RIVM** (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, independent agency of Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport)
- 'For cannabis in general through the Dutch Government or **GGZ, Dutch Association of Mental Health and Addiction Care**. Or for medical cannabis through **hospital or pharmacists**.' (Female, 20-25 years)



## Opinion is more spread, but most aligned on Source:

- **Social media with information how to use it:** 'Facebook would be an effective way because of lot of people in Thailand use it. Even my parents use it.' (Female, 26-40 years old) 'Instagram because it has 'story' and then use celebrity because credible and many followers.' (Female 20-25 years old)
- **Cannabis retailers:** 'If I want to know how to use it, I may go to a seller who lives nearby my house. If I want to know about the regulation, I would go to another vendor who sells higher volumes.' (Female, 41-50 years old)
- **Most agree source should be Thai National Government/ Trustworthy/Official authority** 'Source should be the Ministry of Public Health' (Female, 50+ years old) **Ministry of Health, scholar or doctor.**
- **Local authority that It can really access anyone, even the ones in rural (face-to-face)**



# Your perception about cannabis usage and appropriate regulations?



## Three camps:

- **Negative perception:** 'Cannabis is a type of drugs, why would you use that?' (Female 26-40 years old)
- **Positive and negative:**
  - 'Dutch government should explain the drawbacks of **possible addiction but also explain its positive side:** reduce pain, beneficial for Parkinson patients, mind blowing which can be seen as therapeutical.' (Male, 50+ years old)
  - '**Weed and cannabidiol can be good but its usage needs to be monitored and cannabidiol pre-scribed/** monitored by professional authorities such as GP or psychiatrist.' (Female 20-25 years old)



## Three camps:

- **Negative perception:** 'Generally against cannabis usage in Thailand. I am somewhat aware about its medical benefit but this would be **hard to control. May cause social damage which is hard to correct**' (Female, 50+ years old)
- **Positive and negative:**
  - **Appropriate medical usage:** 'Appropriate usage but education needed how to use it and how much. Appropriate regulation where can be sold and how to purchase. Need medical certificate?' (Male, 41-50 years old)
  - **Appropriate medical and recreational usage:** 'But we need regulation similar to cigarette and alcohol drinks such as minimum age, specific spaces for usage etc.' (Male, 26-40 years old) 'Effective enforcement by police needed to really implement the measurement according to the law (Male, 26-40 years old)

# Your perception about cannabis usage and appropriate regulations?



- **Positive and negative:**

- ‘I see from my own social circle that you easily can get **addicted to smoking weed and consequences are worrisome. Maybe it is a bit too accessible** with so many coffeeshops. **On the other hand** if it is forbidden it will not be less accessible but Dutch government will just lose grip to check and control it.’ (Female, 26-40 years old)

- **Positive perception:**

- ‘Cannabis is to make you more calm: ‘I cannot call it drugs, more **friendly and a better way to become calm than strong painkillers** such as morphine’ (Female, 50+ years old)
- ‘**Positive about natural cannabis**, I mean here natural marijuana not the manipulated varieties that are too strong and its is said that pesticides are used.’ (Male 41-50 years old)

- **Positive perception: Multiple purpose.**

- ‘We can use cannabis in the soup I saw in my FB feed’ (Female, 41-50 years old)
- ‘Cannabis **can be used for food, medical and also smoking**’ (Female 26-40 years old)



# Your perception about cannabis usage and appropriate regulations?



- **Dubious regulations?**

**‘Cannabis supply to coffeeshops is illegal but its sales from the coffeeshops is tolerated:** quite some money and efforts are directed towards small scale sellers and users instead of helping those that are addicted and battling the large organized crime. When fully legalized you would not have these issues.’ (Male 26-40 years old)



- **Regulations:**

- **Under prescription only:** ‘Cannabis should be made available by doctor or pharmacist prescription only, because they are more knowledgeable. Severe punishment to illegal consumption to prevent people get addicted.’ (Female, 26-40 years old)
- **Similar to alcohol and cigarette legislation with ID check and store certified by government**

# Cannabis: THC (weed) and Cannabidiol (CBD) awareness?



- **Majority of consumers have not heard of Cannabidiol (CBD) and THC.**
- **Weed, cannabis, cannabidiol is all the same?**
- A hospice worker and former nurse cancer unit hospital commented; 'CBD is not known by me and my colleagues. **Medical world is very conservative.**' (Male, 50+ years old)
- Owner specialist health store: 'Our CBD is of high quality and all tested in laboratory. Not much Marketing seen for CBD.'
- 'I think I heard first about CBD through the news when there was a **discussion if it would be fully legal or not** some years ago if it is linked to marijuana or not.' (Male 41-50 years old)
- **Those that know and have used Cannabidiol (CBD):**
  - Got referred to it by a medical professional
  - Visited a regular drugstore/ smart shop and saw CBD product to improve sleep and bought it.



- **Majority of consumers has not heard of Cannabidiol (CBD) and THC.**
- **Weed, cannabis, cannabidiol is all the same? Thai consumer in general not much informed/aware about this.**
- **Those that know about THC and CBD**
  - 'Yes CBD and THC are something that can be extracted from cannabis' (Male, 26-40 years old)
  - 'CBD products are common as you can see them everywhere. Effect is relaxation and no serious impact on body. THC is also some element of cannabis but it can provide a different effect; make the heart beat stronger.' (Male 26-40 years old)

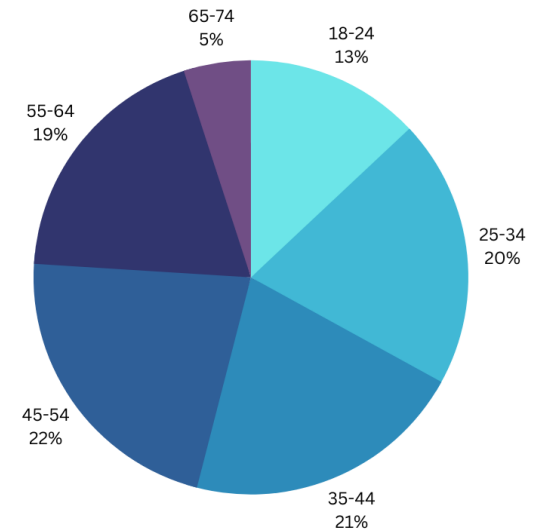
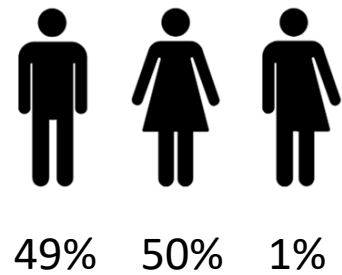
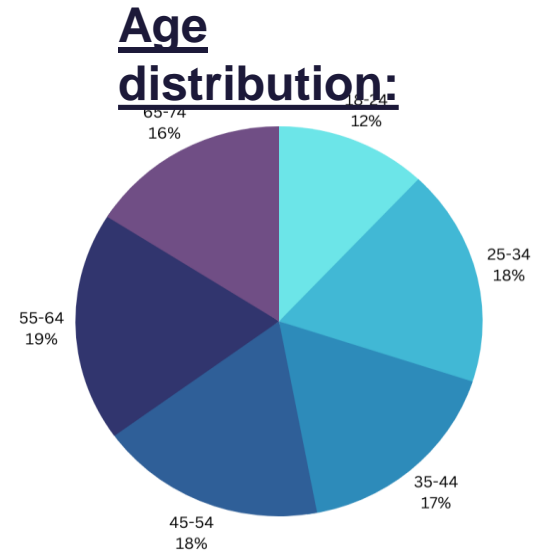


# Cannabis: Cannabidiol (CBD) perception?



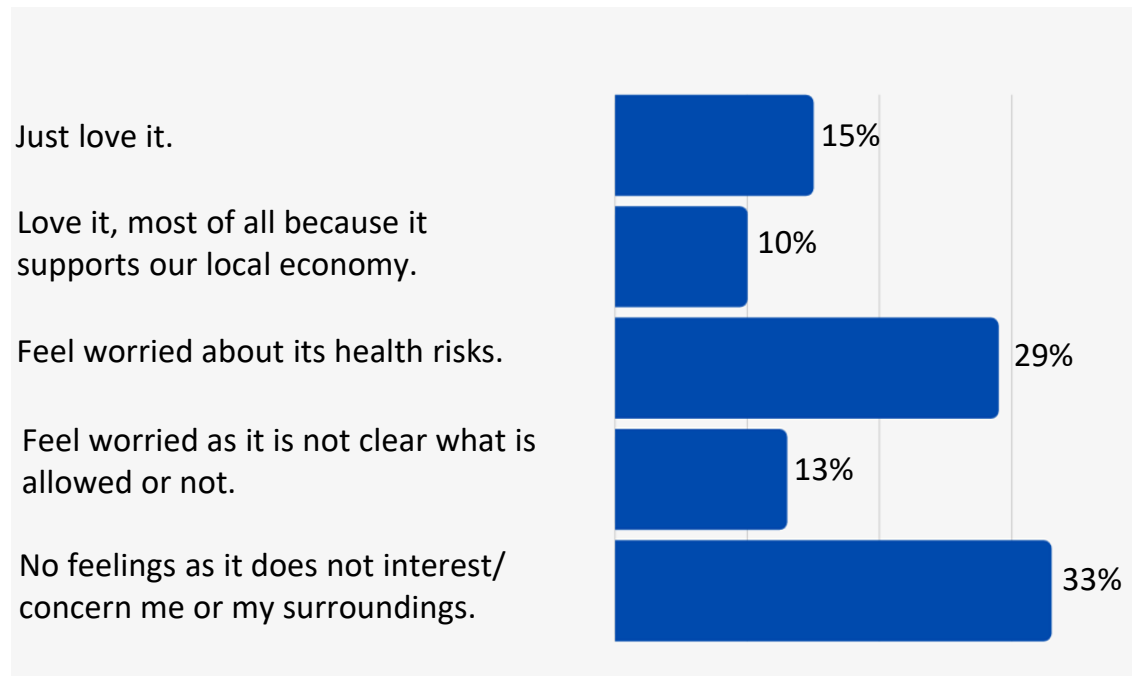
- **Many consumers do not have a perception as do not know CBD.**
  - ‘Many of our clients think that CBD is linked to weed and that it has very strong/heavy effects.’ (Leading CBD brand owner)
- Cannabis leaf on cannabidiol (CBD) packaging may give a negative association with weed.
- Limited scientific research done so far to prove CBD works.
- Those that know CBD, whether used or not comment:
  - **There are many varieties, highest quality ones seem to be made by pharmacies themselves:** ‘Low quality CBD varieties sold in regular drugstore downgraded CBD perception and demand’, comments a Cannabis Seed trader
  - **CBD associated with a calming effect/reduce stress, natural, medicinal cannabis.**
  - ‘Good if used for structural health issues but now you can buy it at just any drugstore. I think you can get some mental dependance on it so **good if can be controlled more through prescription.**’ (Female, 26-40 years old)
- **Most consumers do not have a perception as do not know CBD.**
- **Those that know CBD, whether used or not comment:**
  - It reduces stress
  - Common: something anyone can try
  - CBD not harmful

# We asked three questions on social media

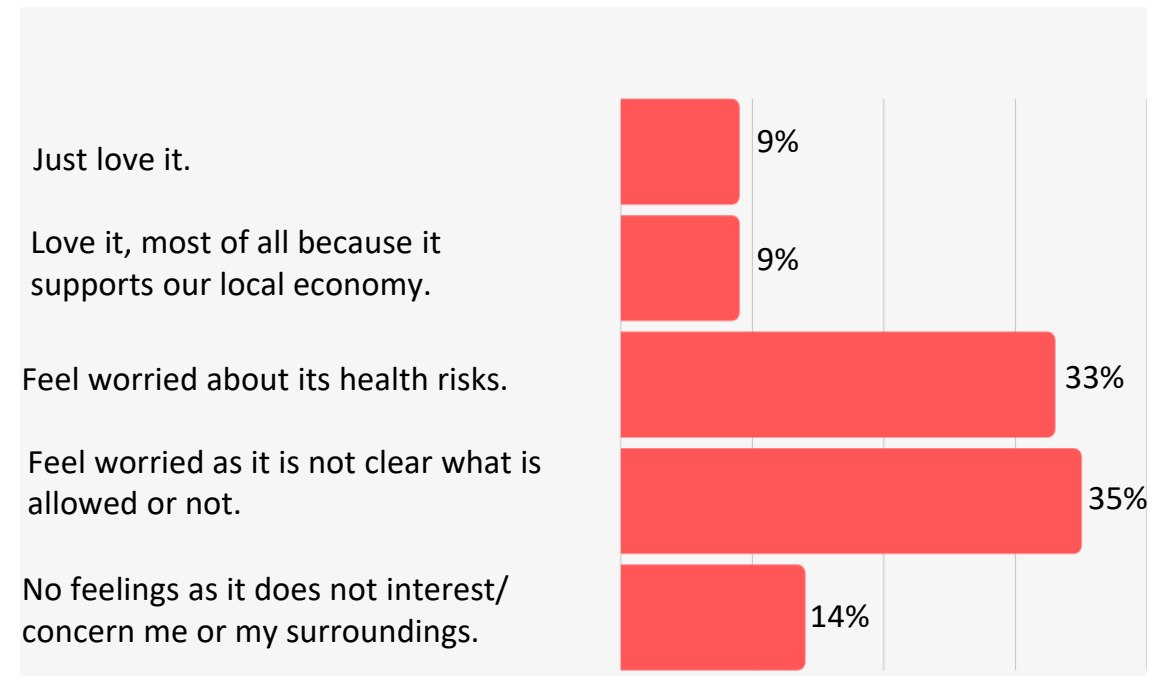




# Q1: How do you feel about cannabis sales in your country? (single answer)

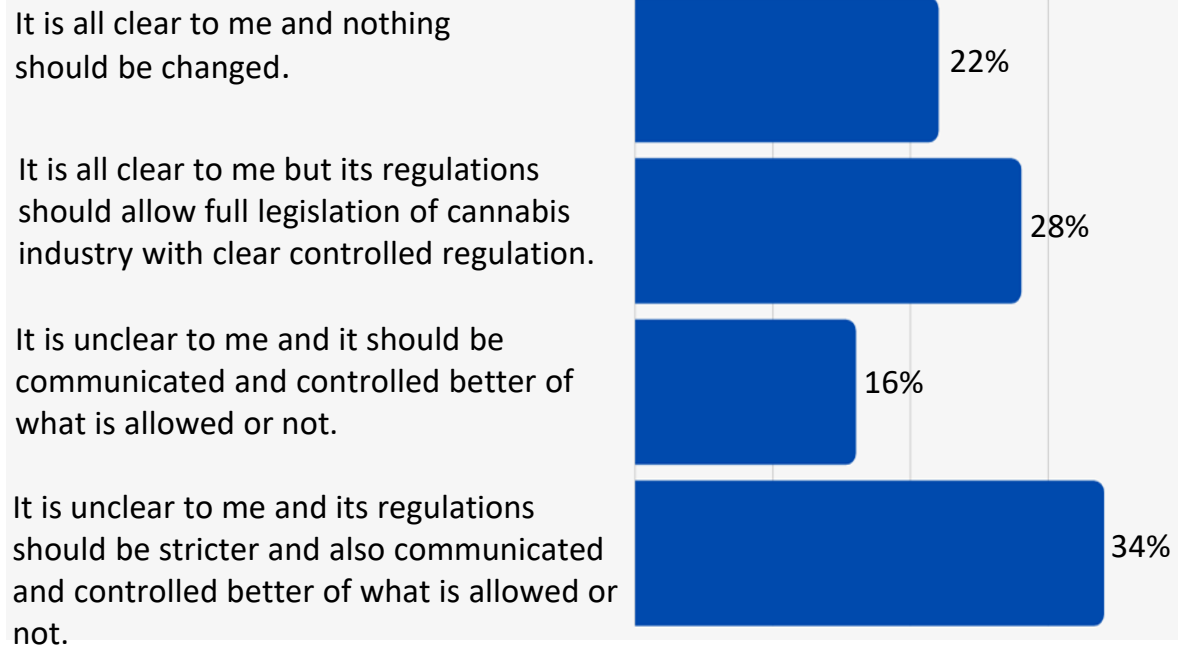


N= 100

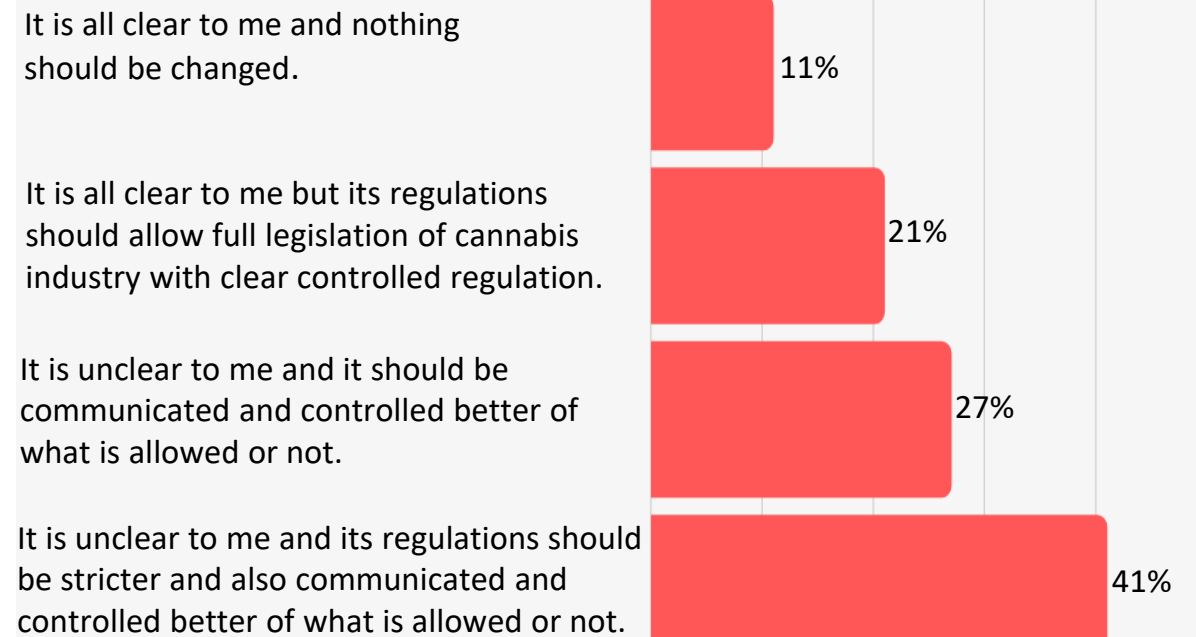


N= 100

## Q2: What do you think about cannabis regulations in your country? (single answer)



N= 100

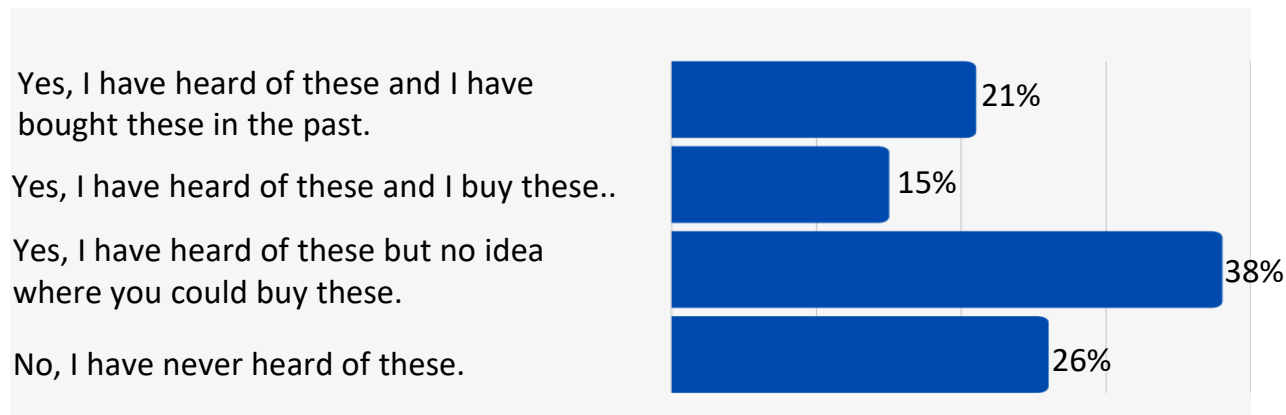


N= 100

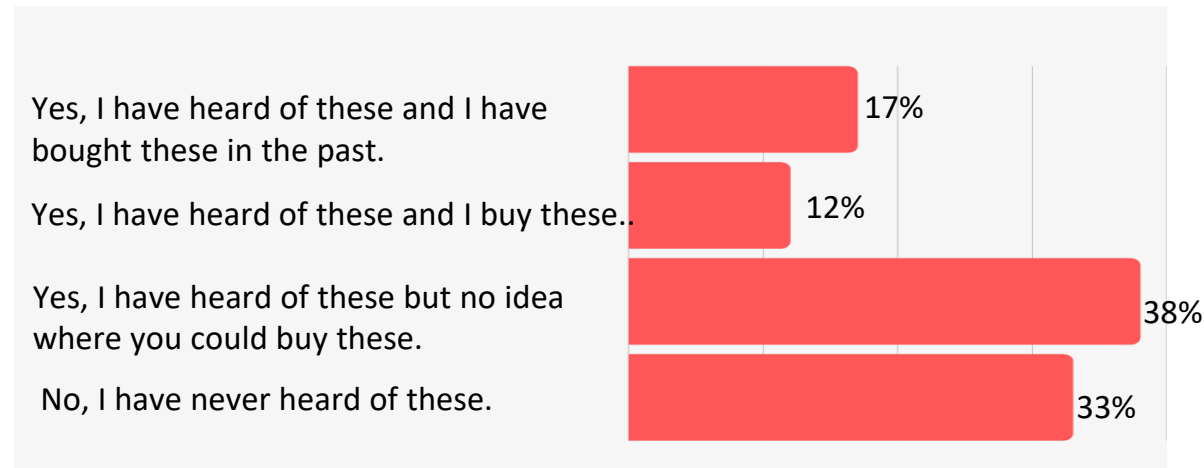


### Q3:

## Have you heard about cannabidiol (CBD) products? (single answer)



N= 100



N= 100

## Some Key Points

- **Sources to follow general news:** News feeds through social media most popular in Thailand. In Netherlands also the importance of Dutch news bulletin on TV and regional/ national newspapers.
- **Cannabis in your market:**
  - Dutch consumers: Cannabis is tolerated in the Netherlands. Cannabis can be used for medical or recreational usage. Cannabis is not much in the news.
  - Thai consumers: Cannabis is used for medical or recreational usage. Cannabis is used in food/drinks and for smoking/ direct use. Its regulation is not clear. Cannabis is trendy.
- **Most appropriate channels to inform about cannabis news/regulations:** Dutch consumers agree that news on cannabis regulations should come from Dutch government/ RIVM. Most Thai consumers agree it should come from trustworthy authority; some mention cannabis retailers.
- **Feelings towards cannabis sales:** 33% of Dutch do not have feelings towards cannabis sales (no interest/does not concern). Close to one third (29%) feels worried about its health risks. 35% of Thai feel worried about cannabis sales in Thailand as it is not clear what is allowed or not and 33% worried about its health risks.
- Opinions on what the cannabis regulations should be are divided. **Majority of Thai are not clear about cannabis regulation.**
- **Few consumers have heard about cannabidiol (CBD) and know where to buy it:** only 36% of Dutch and 29% of Thai respondents.



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Thank you!



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