

Evaluation of Professional Development: Annie's Project Educator Conferences

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ANNIE'S PROJECT
EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE



Poster Abstract

Rationale: The USDA reports 31% of all farmers/ranchers are women; yet these women are an underserved audience. A JOE article indicates a best practice for professional development is to bring educators together around a program of mutual benefit. Annie's Project is a well-established program for farm/ranch women. With this in mind, two Annie's Project national educator conferences were presented in Ames, Iowa.

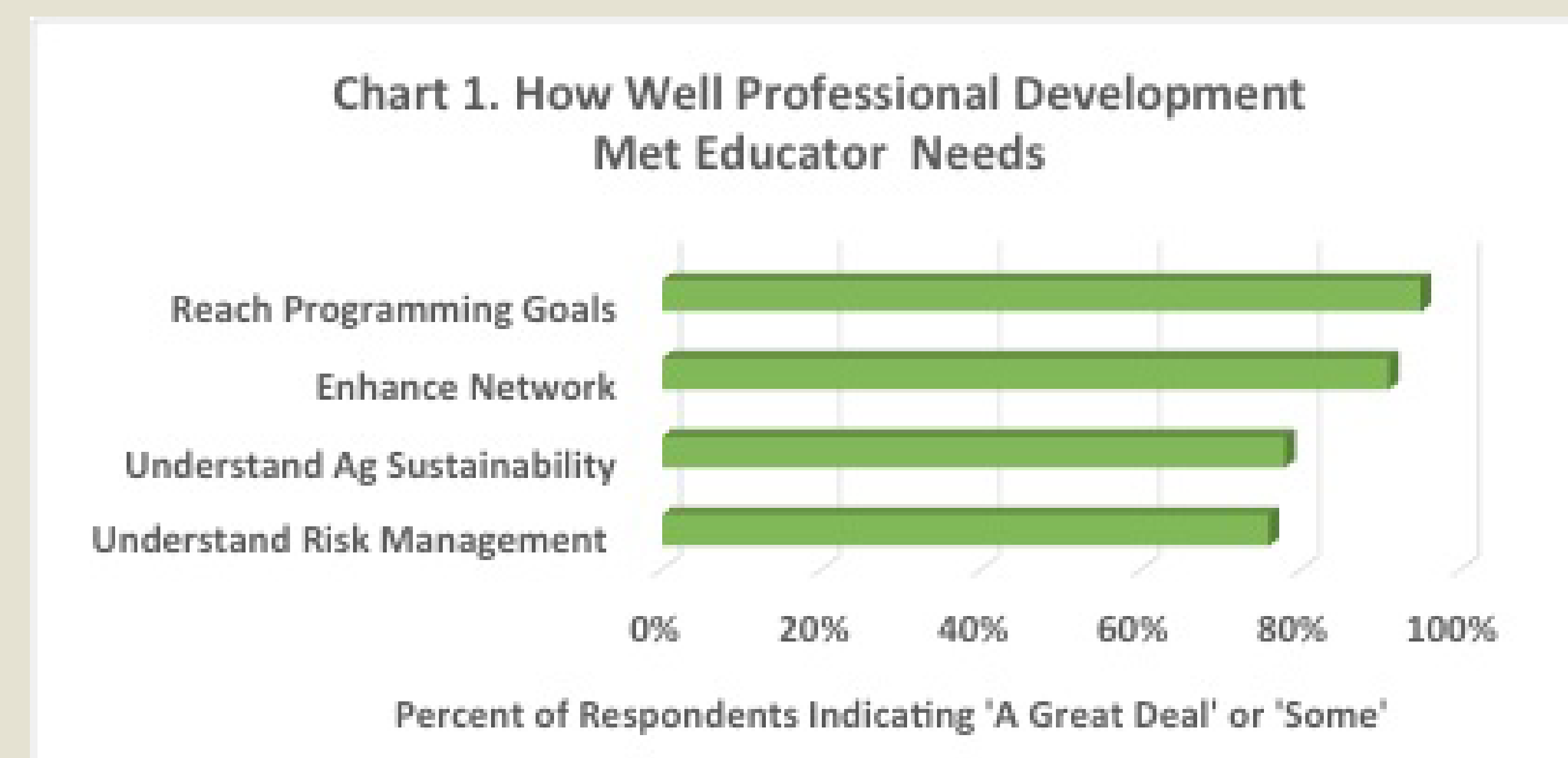
Main Objectives: The overall goal was to prepare educators to teach business management skills to farm/ranch women. Primary objectives were to: 1) meet educator needs for networking, programming and expertise, 2) present curricula and methodologies, 3) demonstrate and provide on-going support, and 4) encourage delivery of programs for farm/ranch women.

Methods: The Annie's Project leadership team and guest speakers led tours, presentations, video storytelling, panels and group discussions. The Research Institute for Studies in Education designed and conducted an independent evaluation. The survey was developed using Qualtrics (TM) online software. Educators were emailed the survey two months after the conferences.

Results: There were 54 attendees in 2014, and 57 in 2015, coming from 26 states. Participants returned 32 completed surveys in 2014, and 25 in 2015. Responses indicated 98% rated the overall quality of the professional development as above average or excellent. Respondents planned to offer 124 Annie's Project and similar courses and 75 other programs for farm/ranch women within 18 months.

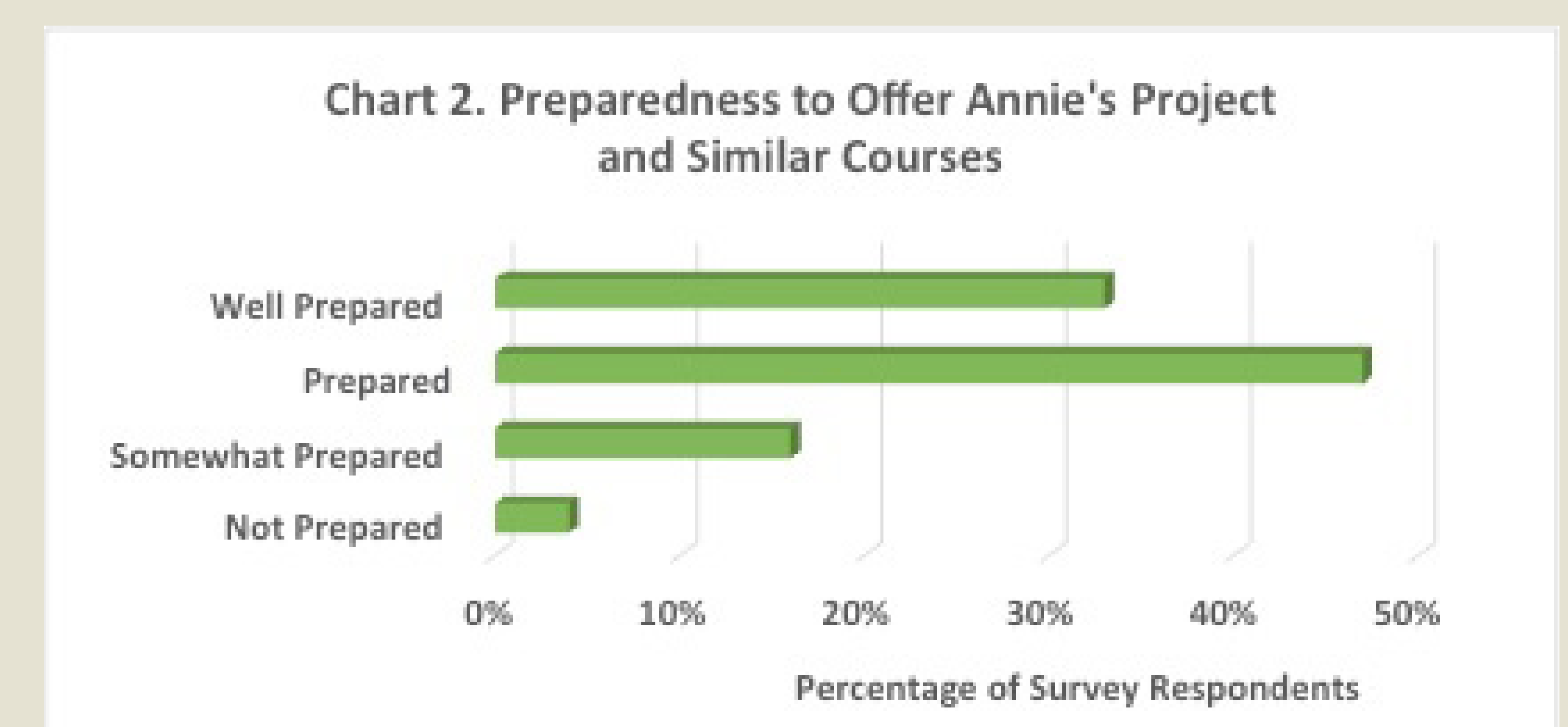
Conclusions: Survey results provide evidence the Annie's Project national professional development conferences were effective in preparing educators to teach farm/ranch women skills for managing their businesses.

Met Needs



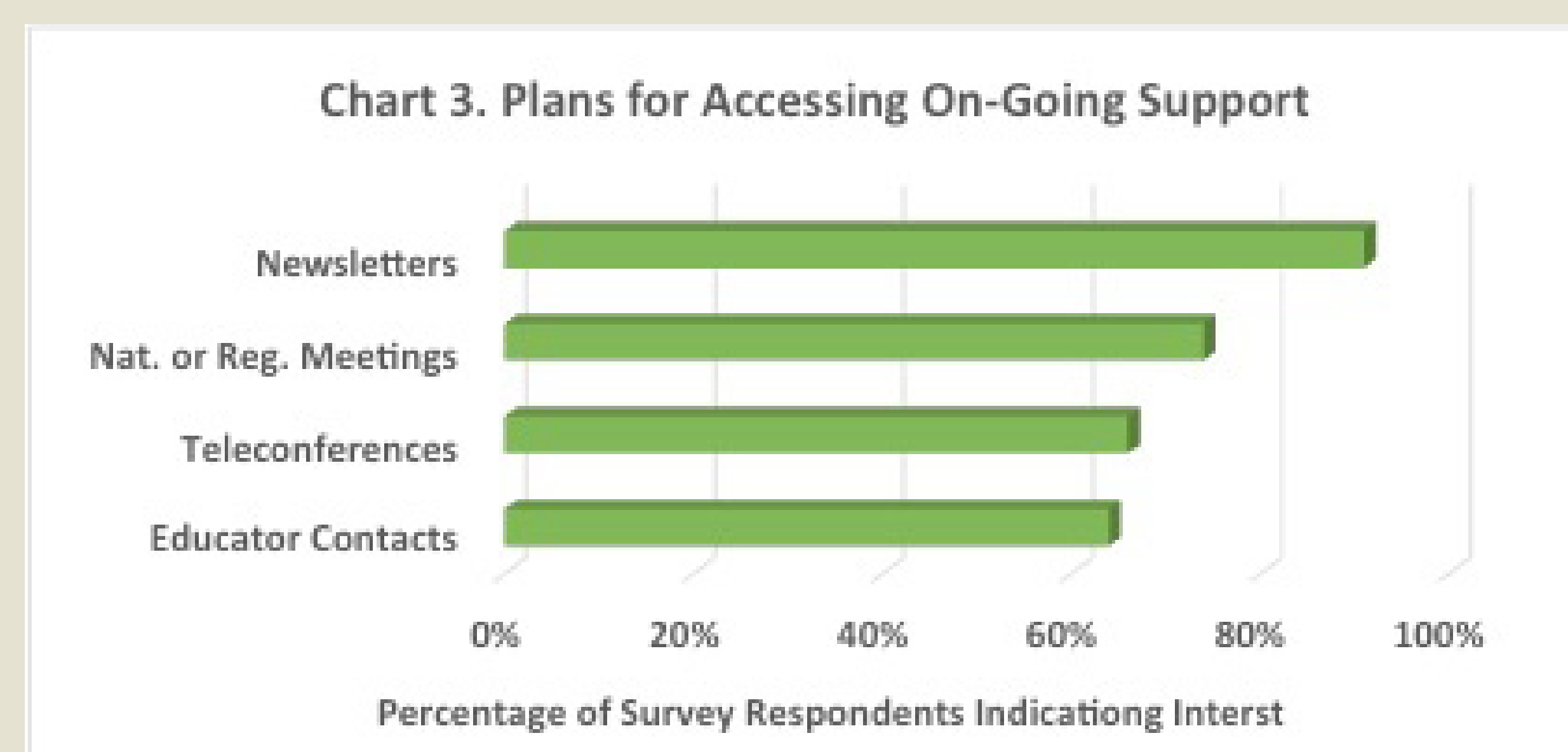
"It helped me see the bigger picture on how sustainability encompasses nearly every management decision that farmers/ranchers make on a daily basis." – Survey Response

Preparedness



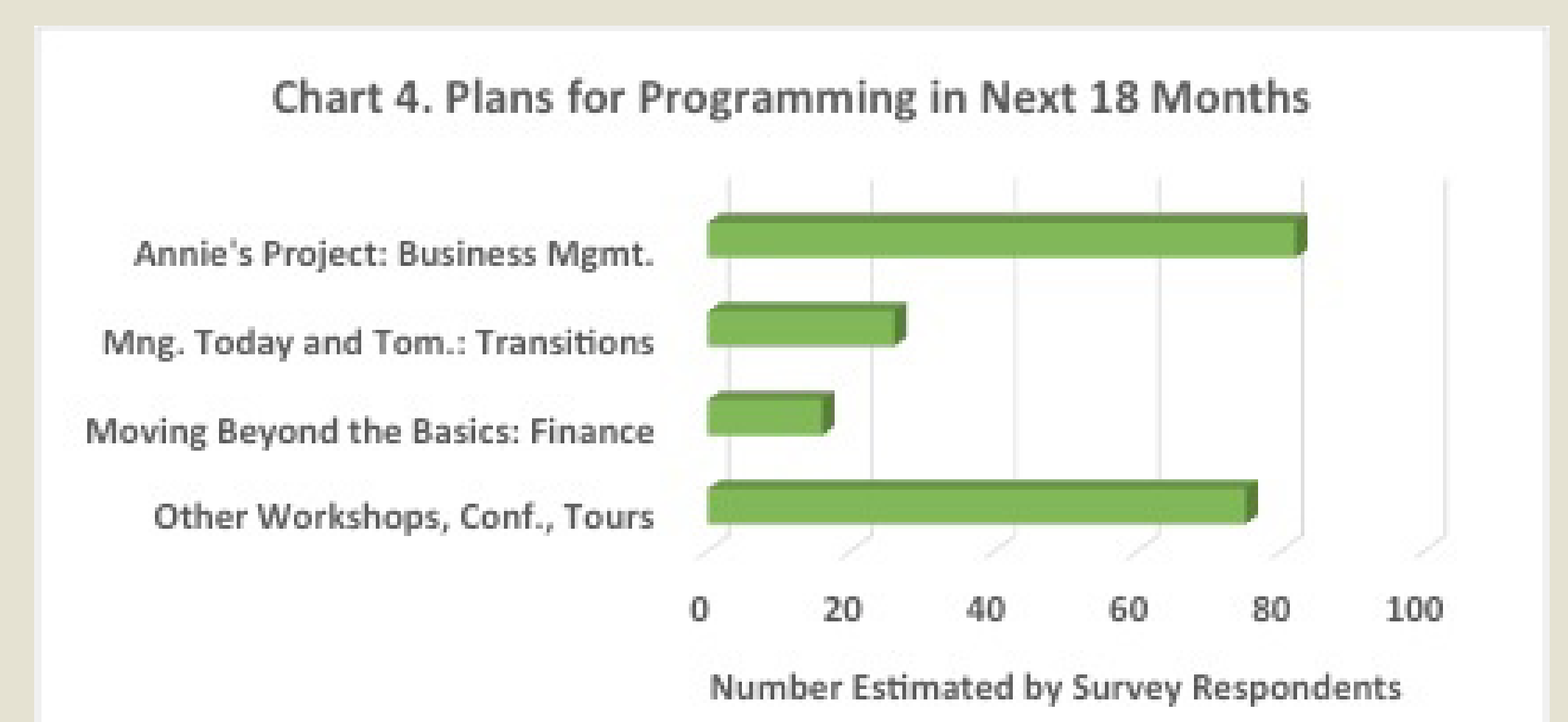
"I was unsure of how the Managing for Today and Tomorrow curriculum went and I learned a lot and feel comfortable offering this program." – Survey Response

Support



"Since the meeting, I have become more aware of additional outreach resources and ways to connect and learn from other educators." – Survey Response

Offer Programs



"I very much enjoyed the fellowship and felt supported by the national team which inspired me to go home and do a good job for my farmers." – Survey Response