

An Assessment of the Programmatic Level of Extension Agent work in Virginia

Presented on Behalf of the Virginia
Cooperative Extension District
Program Leadership Team

Bobby Clark
Senior Extension Agent
Shenandoah County Unit

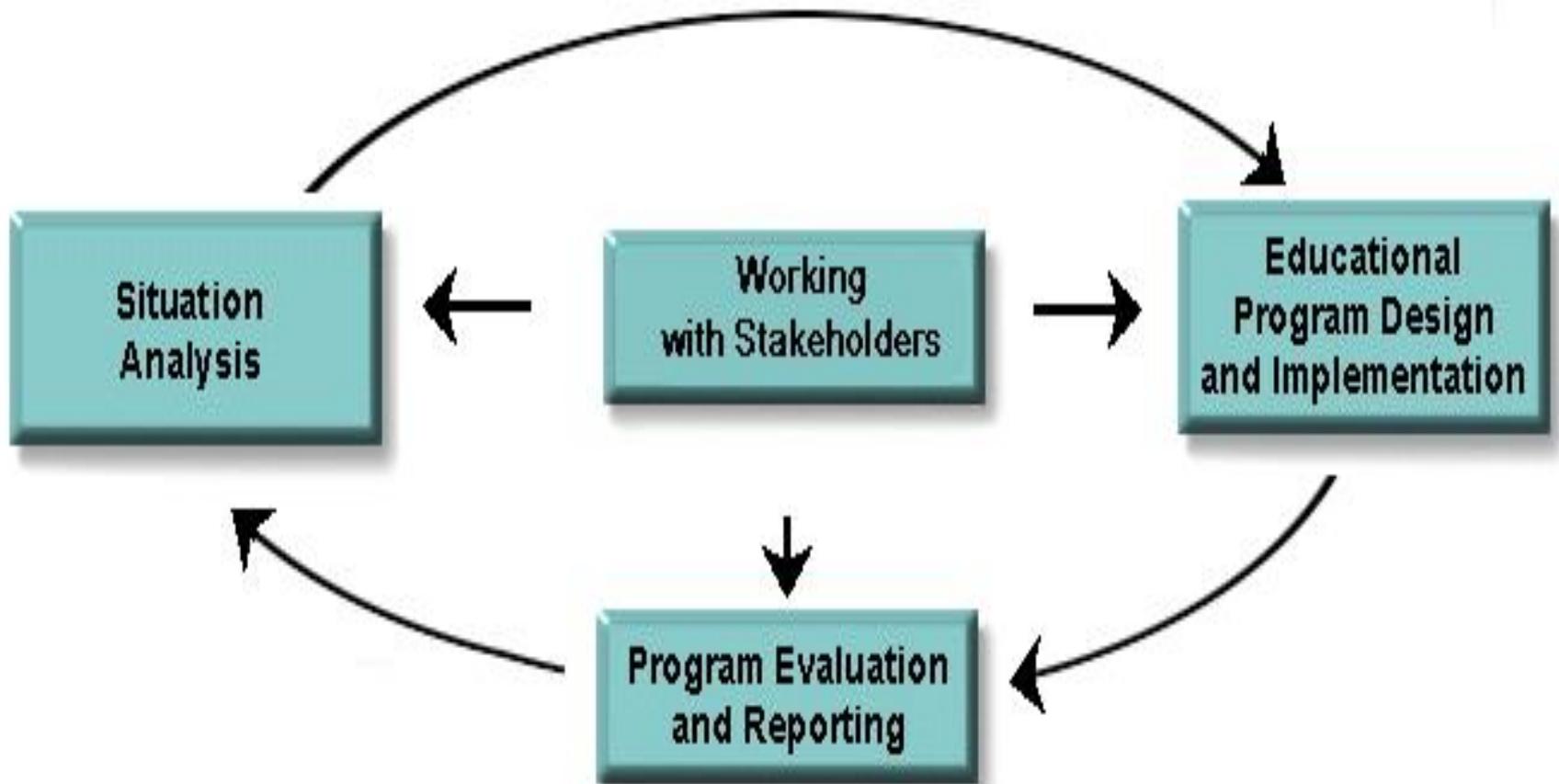


Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

The VCE Programming Model



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Background

- VCE Developed District Program Leadership Teams that started in October 2013
- 2 FCS, 2 4-H and 2 ANR Agents per District (24 agents total).
- These agents were charged with the duty of training new agents on how to conduct sound programming in their communities and to help all agents hone their programming skills.



Purpose of Assessment

- To better understand how agents are programming.
- To understand the level of programming
- The assessment **does not tell us why** agents are programming at their current level.

Methodology to Assessment

- Template Developed for Year 2014 Impacts. Field Tested in one District
- Prior to Statewide assessment of 2015 Impacts.
 - Made Revisions to Assessment Tool
 - Held a training for all evaluators (DPLT members were assessors)
 - All evaluators reviewed the same five impact statements.
 - We had a second meeting to discuss the scores and further refine our process
 - During the assessment all evaluators received the same three impacts so we could check our consistency.



Basic Format of VCE Impact Statements

Relevance	Describe the issue of problem statement in simple terms appropriate for your principal audience (1 ,500 characters maximum)
Response	Provide an action statement (1 ,500 characters maximum).
Result	Describe the impact (1 ,500 characters maximum) with an additional 2,500 characters allowed for a personal story.

Statewide Impact Assessment

- In January 2016, 228 Extension Agents submitted 792 impacts statements in their annual reports.
 - Each of the 792 were unique impacts
- 3.47 Impacts per agent



Impact Reports Evaluated (706 out of 792 were evaluated)

Natural Resource	14
FCS	116
Combined	29
ANR	257
4-H	278
Community Viability	12
	706



Type of Impact or Potential Impact

1	No Impact	Impact does not fit any category below or there is no impact.
2	Economic	The economic impact must be stated as a dollar value. The evaluator should not count an impact as having a monetary value if it is not translated into dollars. For example Kilowatts of electricity saved is not a economic benefit or an increase of 10 bushels per acre (because it is not expressed as dollars saved or increased revenue).
3	Social	Social impact is the positive effect Extension programs have on the well being of a community (e.g., improved safety, healthier youth and adults, better schools, reduced drug use, decrease in unemployment, reduction in obesity, etc.).
4	Environmental	Environmental impact is the positive effect of Extension programs on actions that negatively effect the environment (e.g., improved water quality, improved air quality, reduction in pesticide use, etc.).

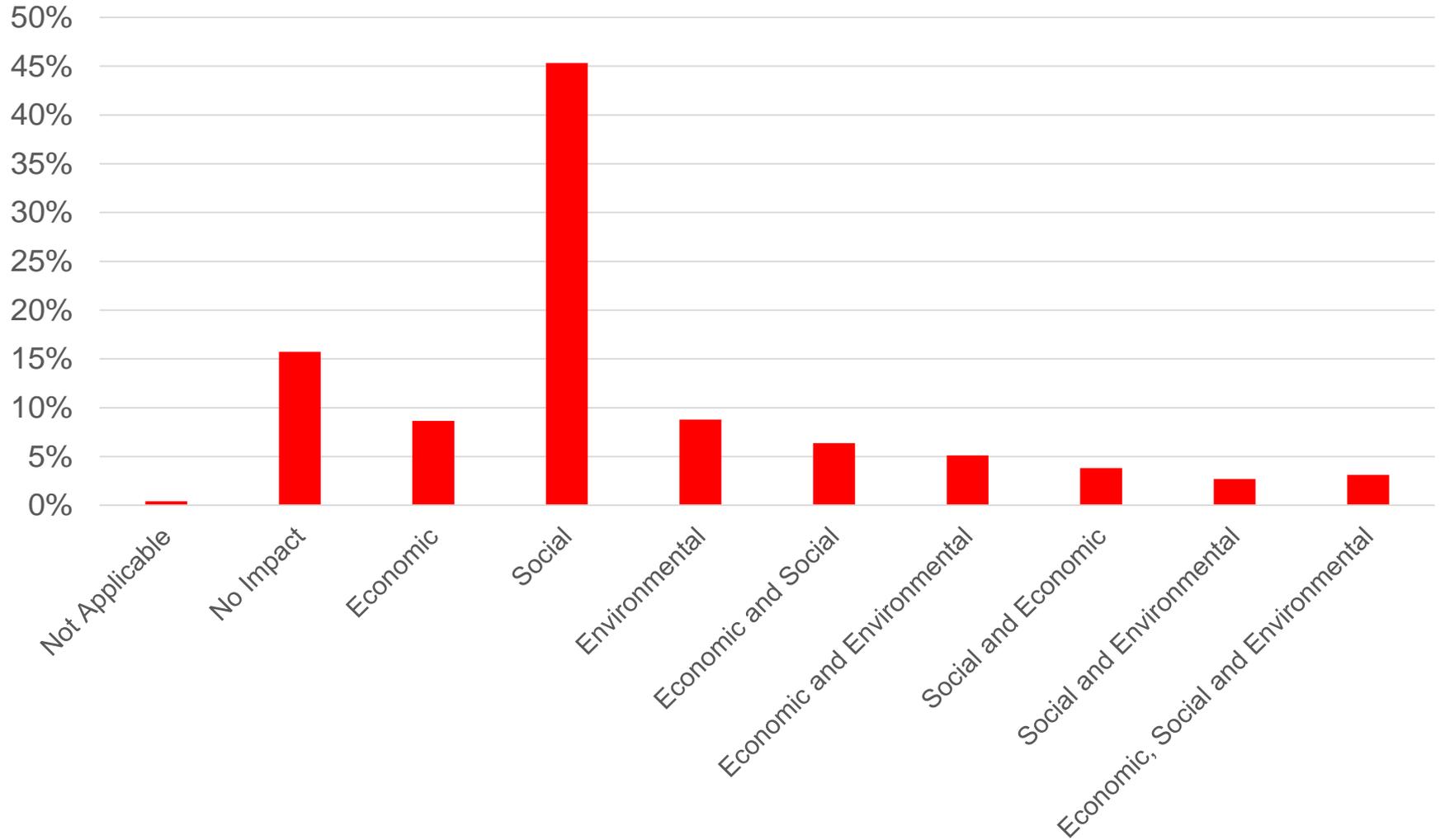


Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Type of Impact



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

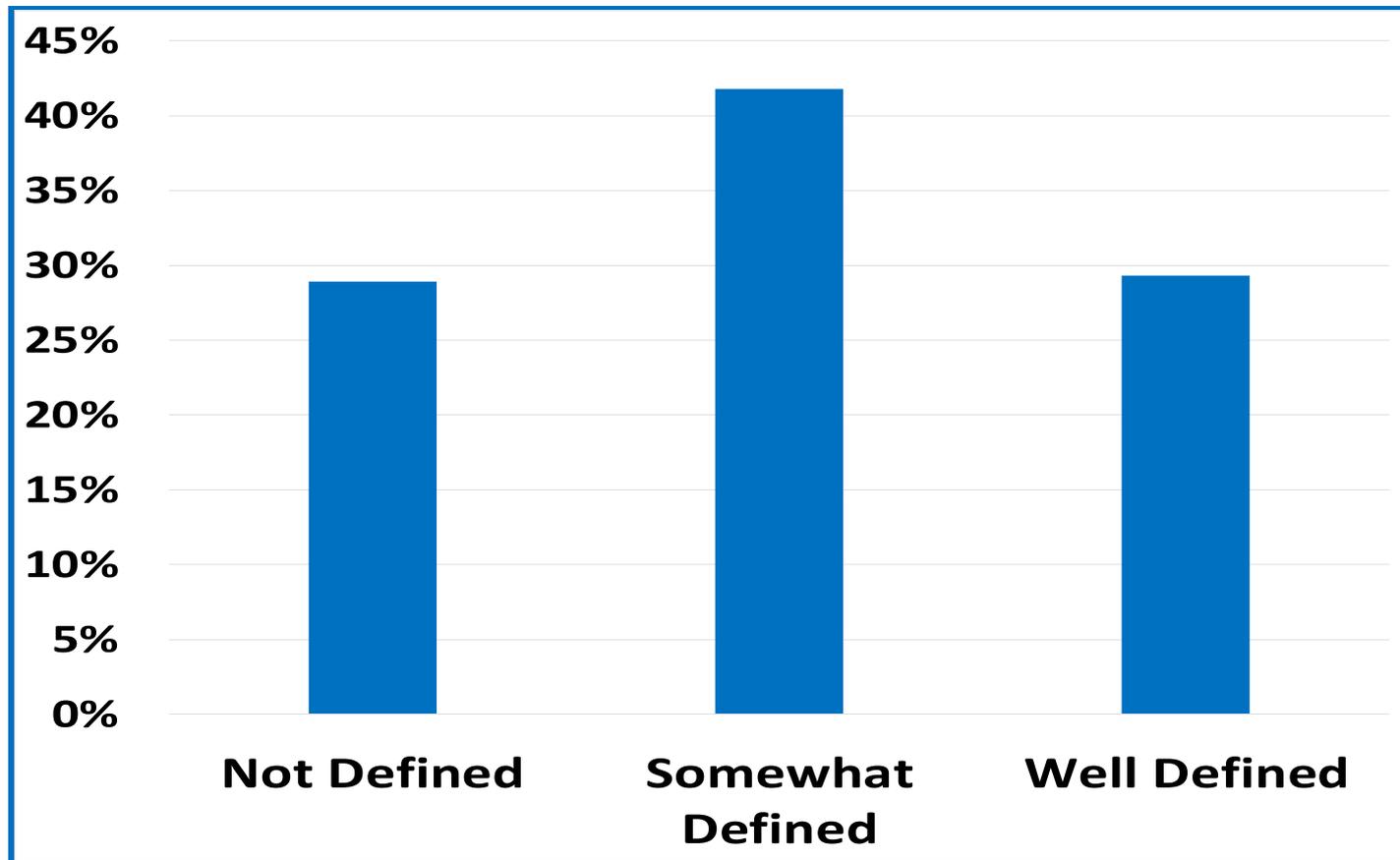
www.ext.vt.edu

Was the Local Situation Identified? (Relevance)

1	Not Defined	Local Situation not described.
2	Somewhat Defined	Local Situation described but not quantified or description was vague or the only quantifiable situation was statewide or national data.
3	Well Defined	Local Situation described and quantified.



Was the Local Situation Well Defined?



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Examples Local Situation Statements that would have received a rating of “Well Defined”

- Fifty percent of the children in Adams county are obese.
- The average weaning weight of cattle in PD12 is 450 pounds. This is 50 pounds below the state average and 20 pounds below the national average.
- Statewide bankruptcy rate is 2% and in Jones county it is 4%.

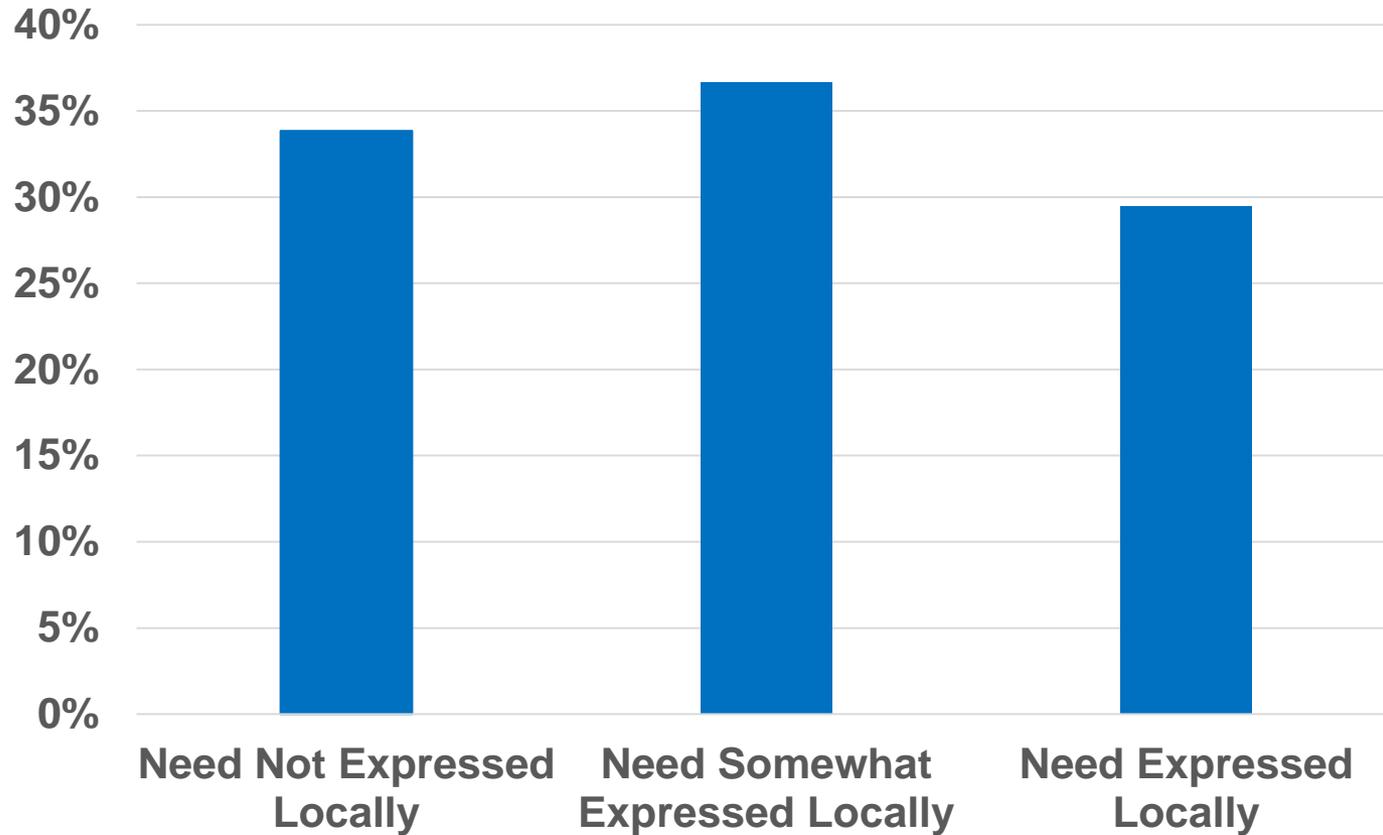


Was Need Expressed Locally? (Relevance)

1	No	No wordage that anyone (Local, State, or National) expressed that this is a need.
2	Somewhat	It is not clear if there was an expression from anyone locally that this need truly existed or the wordage was vague or need only expressed at State/National Level.
3	Yes	There was a clear expression of the local need from a few individuals or a group or from the local situation analysis or a needs assessment process.



Was the Need Expressed Locally



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Examples of “Need Expressed Locally”

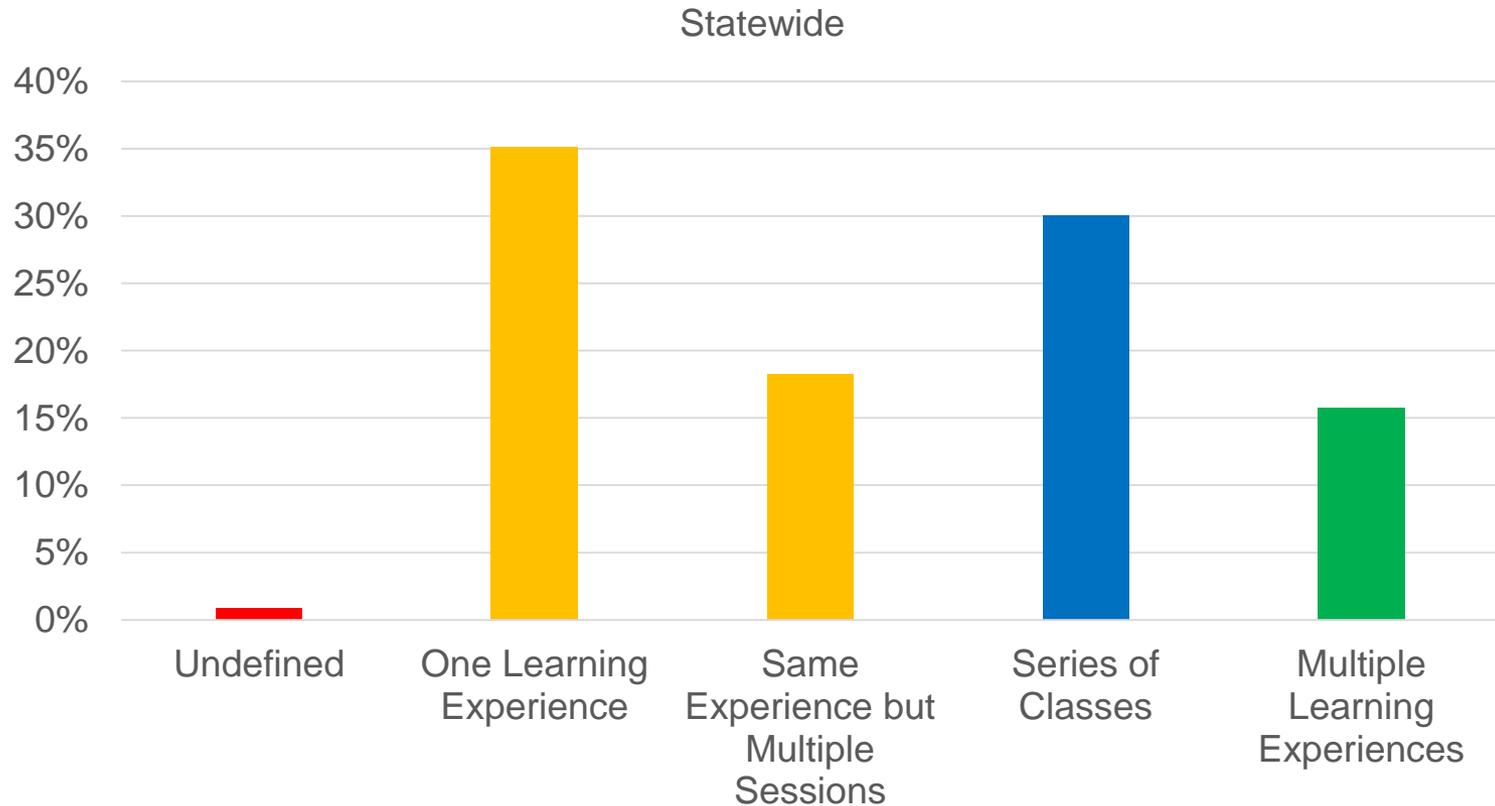
- Three pediatricians that serve Adams expressed concern about childhood obesity.
- The Extension Advisory Group for the Animal Science Agent in PD12 placed a priority goal on improving livestock profitability.
- The Jones county Board of Supervisors expressed concern that an alarming number of their citizens were having financial problems.

Type of Response

1	Only one Learning Experience such as a single meeting, or attendance at 4-H Camp or one trip to Richmond
2	The same Learning Experience Taught Multiple Times such as 4 private pesticide applicator trainings were held in PD7 in 2015 (the same class offered 4 times); or 25 classes were taught on preventing credit card fraud (the same topic 25 times).
3	Multiple Learning Experiences such as participants attending 5 different classes on a topic.
4	Multiple learning Experiences. At least three different educational experiences that collectively achieve an outcome such as educational meetings plus demonstrations plus newsletter articles plus one-on-one consultations plus television interviews plus newspaper articles.



Type of Response



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Same Experience Multiple Sessions

- We gave a presentation to every sixth grader in Adams county about healthy eating (12 classes reaching 360 children).

Multiple Learning Experiences

- We conducted a healthy snack sampling session at 6 of our 10 4-H clubs and at 4-H camp; the fair display focused on healthy snacks; our public speaking contest focused on healthy eating; we had 5 newspaper articles and blogs about healthy eating; and we provided a handout on healthy eating to all the sixth grade students.



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

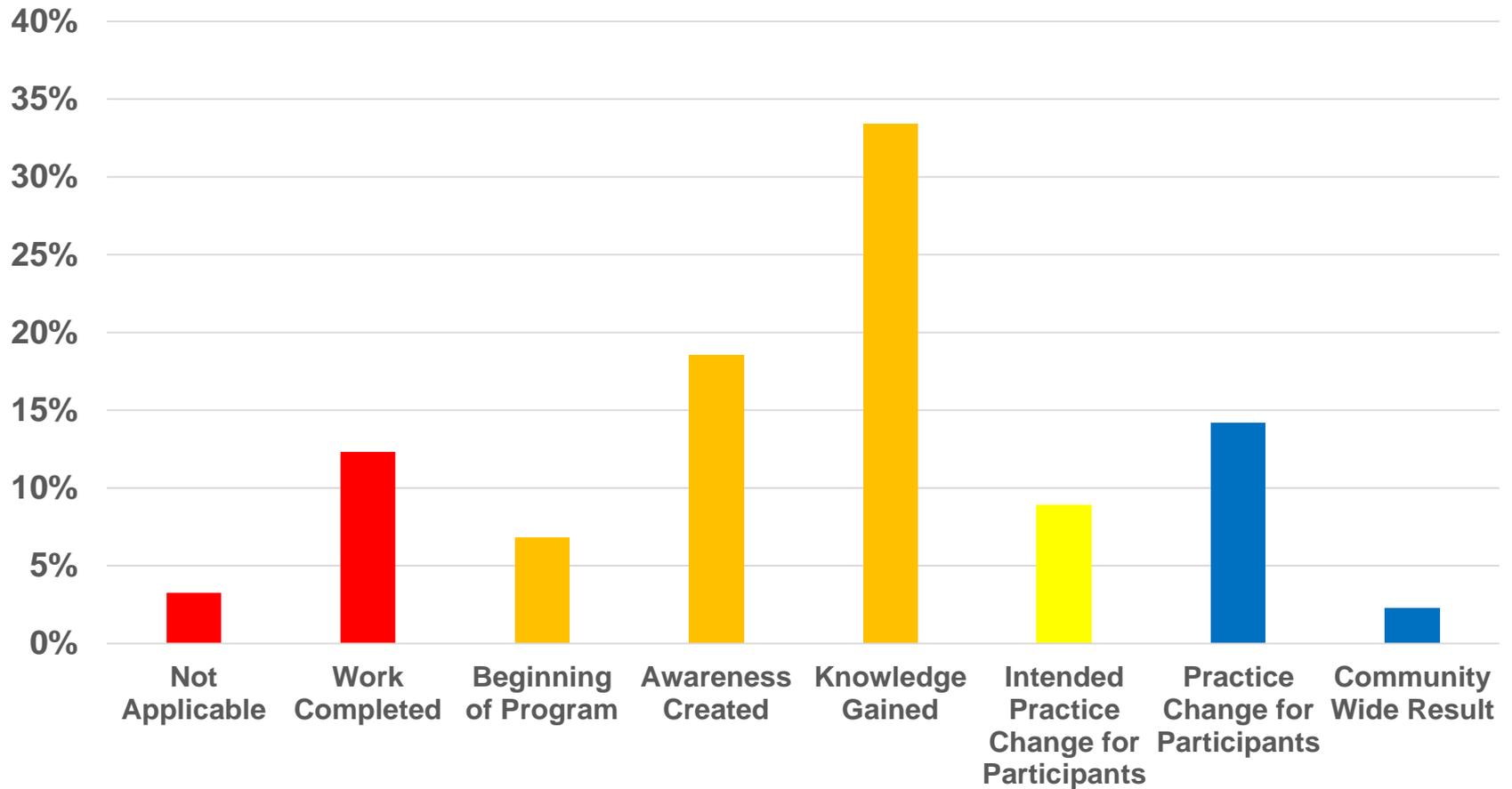
www.ext.vt.edu

Program Level	Level of Programming	
1	Unit Coordinator or Administrative Impact	Unit Coordinator or Administrative Impacts
2	Work Completed	The impact statement only reports the work that was done.
3	Beginning of Program	The impact statement is similar to level #2. However the impact statement shows evidence that it is the beginning of a programmatic effort.
4	Awareness Created	Awareness created about extension educational programs or participants learned that a new/better technology exists to make an improvement.
5	Knowledge/Skills Gained	Knowledge/Skills Gained (i.e. participants said they gained knowledge (information, facts) or skills (abilities).
6	Intended Practice Change for Participants	Participants indicate their intention to make a practice change in the future.
7	Practice Change for Participants	Actual Practice Change Reported (which can only be done following educational activities/events/efforts)
8	Practice Change for Extended Learners or Community Wide Result	Option #1 Result expressed as an action change or benefit for both direct participants and extended learners. Option #2: Result expressed in terms of direct participant action/benefit and community wide value of change.



Level of Programming

Statewide



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Example of Knowledge Gained

- At the end of the class, 30 of participants completed a survey.
 - 95% said they learned how to take a soil sample.
 - 100% said they learned about the importance of maintaining pH at the proper level.



Example of Practice Change for Participants

- Two months after the class series; participants were surveyed and reported the following:
 - 100% are choosing more lean proteins
 - 96% are choosing more leafy green and bright orange and red vegetables
 - 89% are choosing more cooking flavorings without sodium and choose low-sodium prepared foods and products



Example of Practice Change for Participants

- Over the last four years; 10 farmers have shifted 1,000 acres of their corn from conventional planting to no-till planting techniques.

Example of Community Wide Benefit:

- Since the program began in 2012 children being arrested for vandalizing or stealing has decreased from 100 arrests in year 2011 to 15 in year 2016. In addition school attendance rate has greatly improved and we believe that overall school test scores are improving. In 2011 the vandalism and theft cost town homeowners and business over \$5 million whereas the total cost from 2014 through 2016 only cost \$250,000.



Example of Community Wide Benefit:

In year 2010 less than two percent of the 5,000 sheep farmers in the region were using stool samples and the Famancha Parasite Management System to manage internal parasites in their flocks. In 2016 40% of the farmers are now using these practices. The combined savings in althelmentics (wormers) combined with improved animal performance is resulting in a net economic benefit of \$500,000 per year.



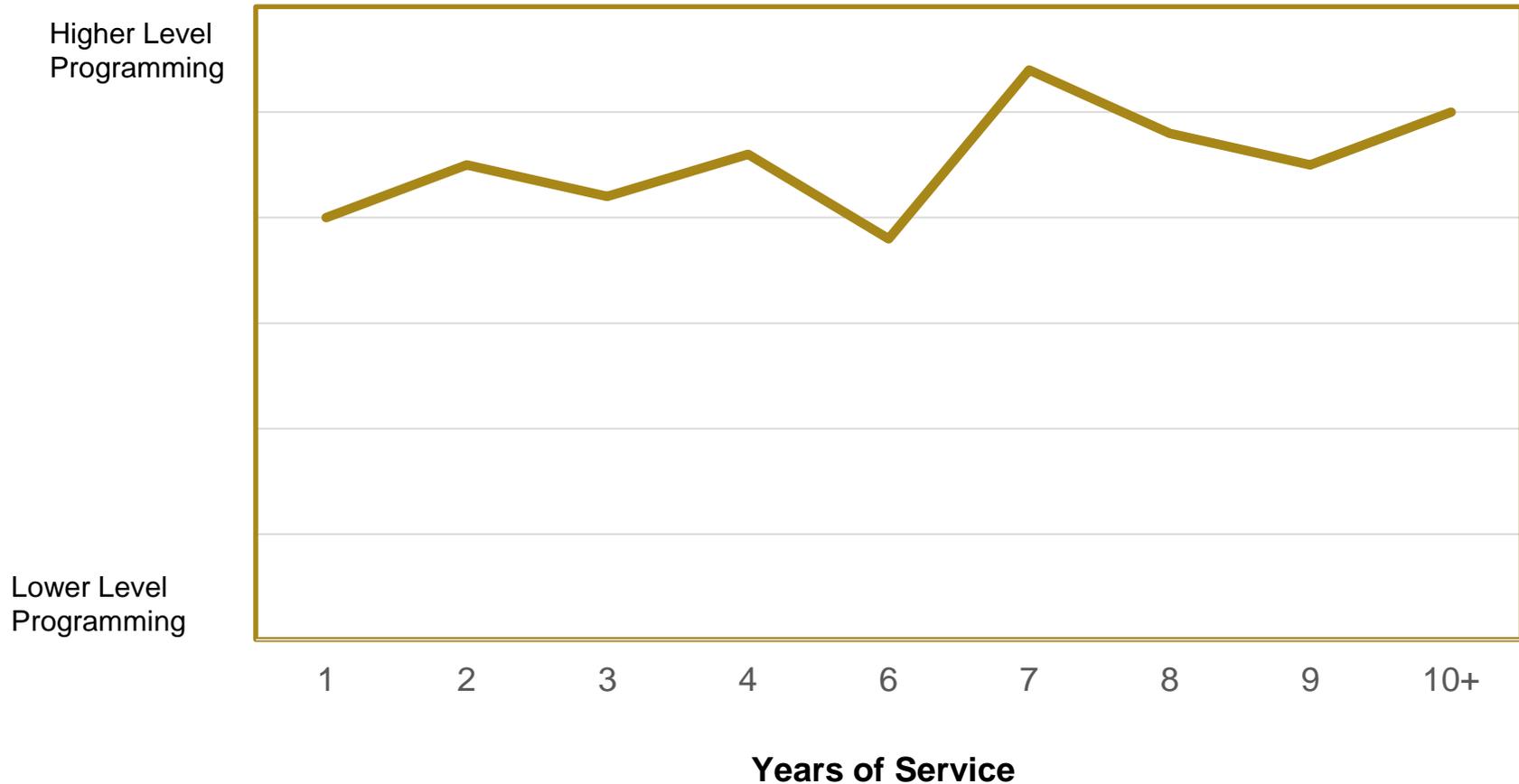
Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Northern District Year 2014 Impacts

Average Program Level**



Dollar Value of Monetary Impact

If an economic impact is stated (such as \$500 dollars saved, or \$1,000 improvement in net income, or this reduced health care cost by \$100,000 or similar concepts).... Include the dollar value. Evaluator should not determine if the statement is right or wrong.



Monetary Impact Reported

	# of Impact Statements	\$ Reported
4-H	20	\$1,935,888
ANR and Natural Resources	50	\$37,905,938
FCS	8	\$318,716
Statewide Value of Master Gardener Volunteers		\$9,590,000
Impact of tobacco Education		\$97,000,000
		\$146,750,542



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Positive Aspects of Results

- Over half of Impacts report at the level of “Knowledge Gained” or Higher
- Extension Agents reported an economic benefit in excess of \$146 million in 2015.
- While reading the impact statement I saw some impact statements that have great promise of greatly helping their communities.



What is the next step in Virginia?



Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Four Focus Areas to Improve VCE Programming and Impact Statements

#1 Twenty-nine percent of the impact statements give the reader a clear understanding of the local situation.

#2 Twenty-nine percent of the impact statements clearly reflect that the local community was expressing a need for the educational program being offered.

#3 Over 70 percent of the impact statements are written at the level of “Knowledge Gained” or a lower level of programming.

#4 Twelve-percent of the impact statements include an economic benefit.

Impact statement review issues and suggested strategies:

- **Situation Analysis:** Impact statements should give a clear understanding of the local situation. Although there are many agents who may truly understand the local situation, it is not evident in their impact statement. Conduct a survey to determine how many units have Extension Leadership Councils and/or how many agents in the office have program advisory Teams (or some type of purposeful advisory structure) and to attain relevant feedback on the topic. Some of this might involve phone calls to specific agents.
- **Situation Analysis:** Impact statements should clearly reflect that the local community was expressing a need for the educational program being offered. It is possible that many programs were requested locally but the agent did not state this in the impact statement. Develop various examples of the “Relevance” section of impact statements to show good examples that clearly reflect the local community has expressed a need.

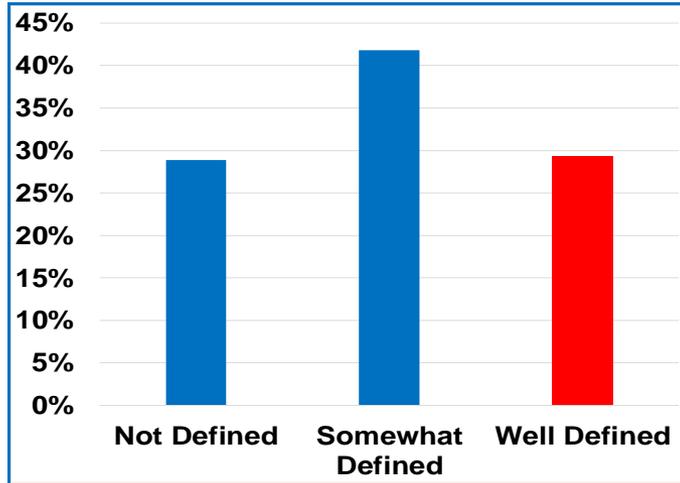


Impact statement review issues and suggested strategies

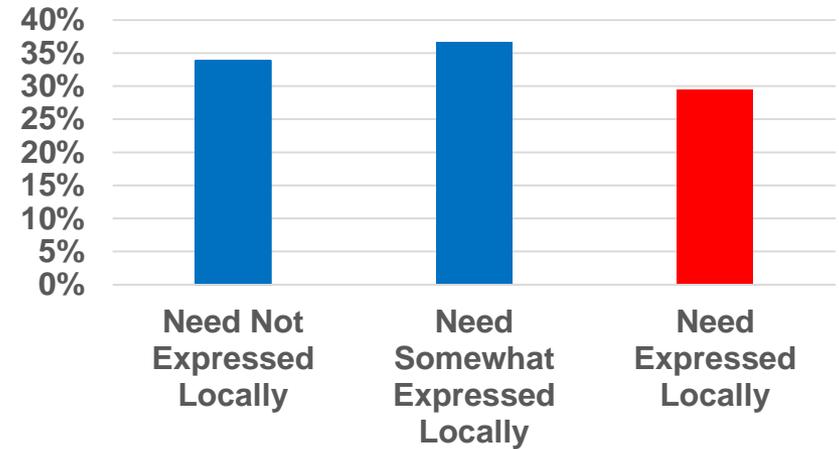
- **Programming Level:** More agents should be reporting practice change or higher for program participants. Over 70 percent of the impact statements are written at the level of “Knowledge Gained” or a lower level of programming. Training needs to be done on how to design and evaluate practice change or higher programs.
- **Economic Impact:** More impact statements should include an economic benefit, where appropriate. Provide training on how to include potential economic benefits in the goal and objectives of the program, as well as appropriate methods for determining the potential or actual benefit



Situation Analysis



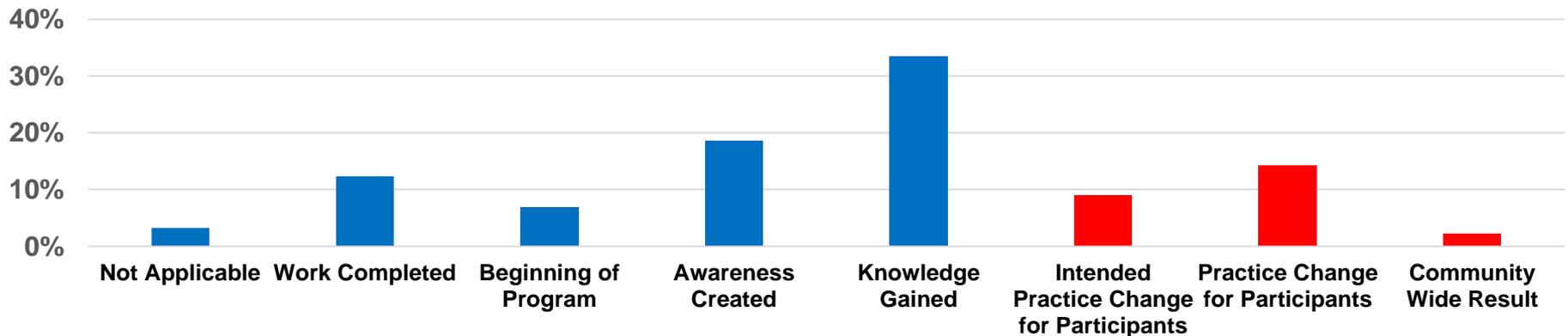
Expression of Need



Economic Impact



Level of Programming



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu

Next Steps in Virginia

- Virginia DPLT will continue
- Re-Initiate an Extension Programming Institute
 - Face-to-face and virtual (WebEx) time
 - Pre-and/or post-session assignments
 - Group work across program areas
 - Scenarios/case studies to address
 - Check sheets
 - Prelude to situation analysis system-wide update in 2018
 - No/minimum PowerPoint
 - Real life scenarios (participants could bring these)
 - Examples
 - What to focus on (from various DPLT assessments)
 - Impact statement review issues and suggested strategies:



Questions

Bobby Clark

540-459-6140

raclark@vt.edu

<http://www.intra.ext.vt.edu/support/>



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

www.ext.vt.edu