

**2014 County Commissioner  
Satisfaction Survey:  
CSU Extension Services in Colorado  
Survey Results Summary Report  
April 2015**



## Introduction: 2014 County Commissioner Survey

The seventh annual County Commissioner Satisfaction Survey was conducted from September 22 to October 31, 2014. The design and methodology were approved by the CSU Research Integrity and Compliance Review Office in 2012. A five-point scale was used for evaluation. The variables studied included: (1) the quality of programs and services provided by local Extension offices; (2) the expertise and knowledge of Extension personnel; (3) the responsiveness and service level of county Extension personnel; (4) the perceived value to citizens of Extension programs and services; and (5) respondent insights and comments regarding CSU Extension.

## Methodology

While the survey was designed by CSU Extension and the Office of the Vice President of Engagement, the survey was conducted by an independent contractor for the Office of Engagement. The confidential survey protocol allowed survey administrators to see which counties did and did not respond. Participants received a letter directly from the President containing the link to take the survey online. A hard copy of the survey and a pre-paid return envelope were also enclosed, offering the choice to complete a paper survey. The letter stressed the importance of the input, the confidential nature of the survey and the voluntary nature of the survey. Roughly two weeks after the initial letter, a second reminder letter and second hard copy survey were sent from the Chief of Staff, Office of the President, only to those counties that did not respond. A final email reminder from Colorado Counties, Inc. was sent on behalf of CSU, also only to counties that had not yet responded. All results were received, compiled, and analyzed by the independent contractor.

Surveys are sent annually to all Colorado county commissioners/council members in counties where CSU has Extension offices or provides Extension services. The survey cover letter and email, however, recommend that only commissioners who have contact with and/or knowledge of CSU Extension complete the survey. As many counties appoint one commissioner or council member to serve as the Extension liaison, this means that not every commissioner is expected to complete the CSU Extension survey.

Per-county responses ( $N = 51$ ) are calculated using the mean of all commissioner responses for that county. As begun in 2010, data is reported here as per-county response. Where relevant, commissioner responses ( $N = 86$ ) are also reported in this document. Each graphic indicates the type of data calculation used.

A total of 213 surveys were sent to all commissioners/council members in counties where CSU has Extension offices or provides Extension services. Commissioners were encouraged to complete the survey if they worked with Extension, or to forward the survey to the appropriate commissioner contact if they did not work personally with Extension. The total number of returned surveys was 86, for an overall response rate of 40%.

The per-county response rate was 82%, with 51 of the 62 counties surveyed by CSU extension responding (Lake and San Juan, two new service counties, chose not to participate in the 2014 survey and will participate in 2015). Response rates by region were also strong: Front Range

region (Front Range urban corridor), 83%; Eastern Peaks and Plains region (Southeast, Northeast Golden Plains, and the San Luis Valley), 87%; Western region (all Western Slope counties), 75%. Counties that did not respond to the survey were: Adams, Conejos, Costilla, Custer, Douglas, Garfield, Moffat, Otero, Ouray, Pitkin and Rio Blanco.

Two additional surveys were received after the postmarked deadline. These surveys were excluded from the following analysis.

### Summary of 2014 Survey Results

Overall, commissioners responded favorably to questions about Extension program value and quality, and agent expertise and responsiveness. Comparisons between commissioner level and county level data reveal no statistically significant differences, indicating a trend toward consistent scoring with no extreme highs or lows. Scores tend to cluster tightly at the positive end of the scale. Comments indicate that lower scores are likely tied to desires for additional services and related funding needs and/or better agent coverage.

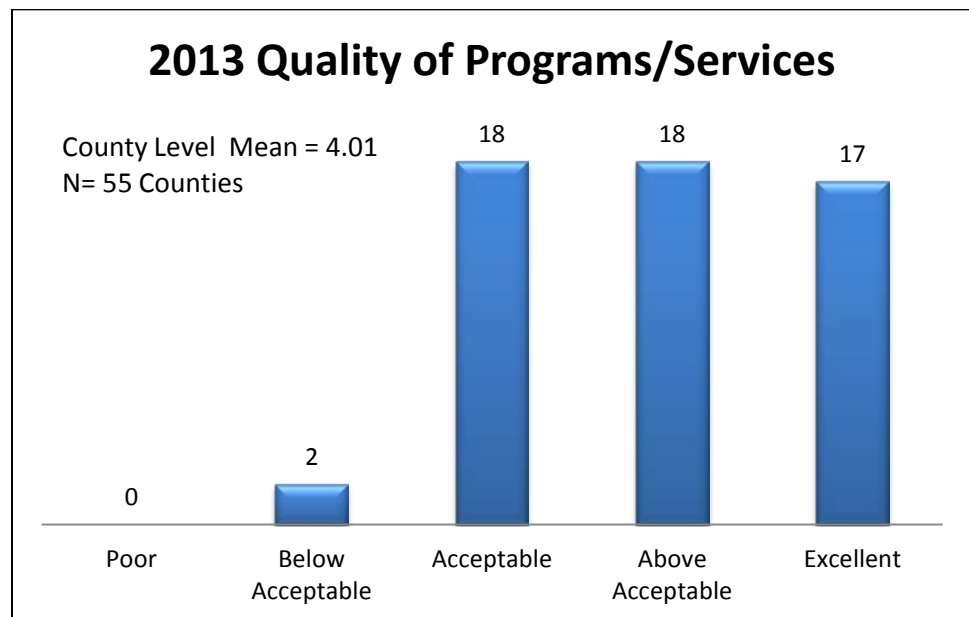
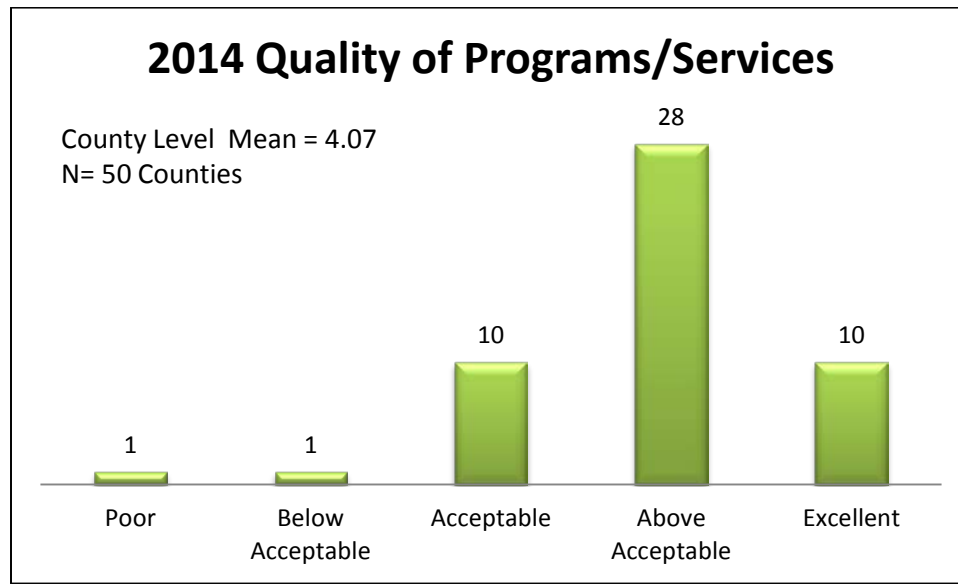
### Survey Results: 2013–2014 Key Indicator Comparison of County Responses

As begun in 2010, data is analyzed primarily at the county level. This standardizes any potential systematic bias caused by some counties having a larger number of commissioners respond versus a county in which the Board of Commissioners assigns only one member to respond to the survey. This methodology levels the playing field and allows for a survey of *county attitudes and satisfaction*, rather than *county commissioner* attitudes and satisfaction.

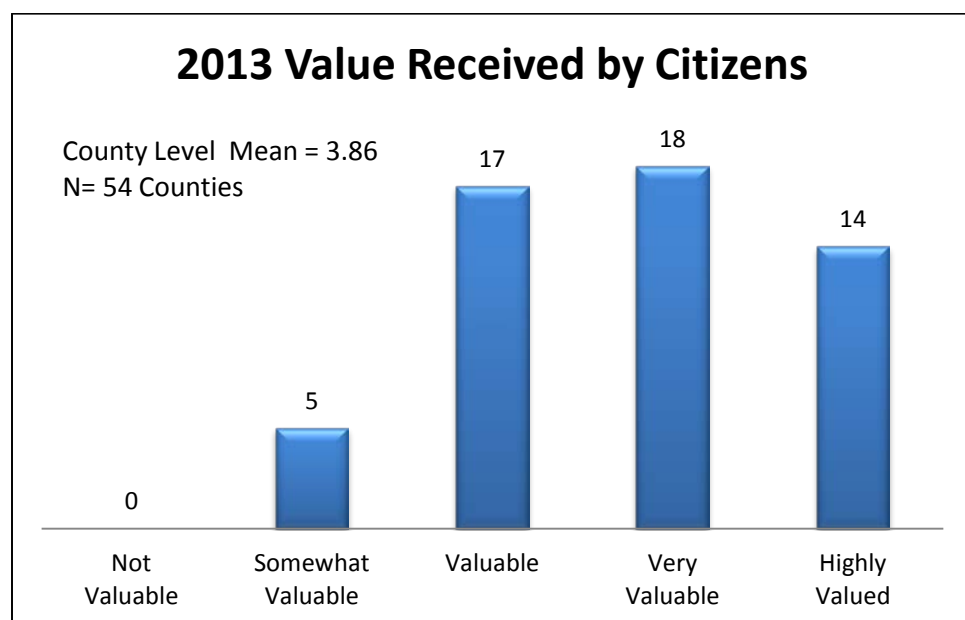
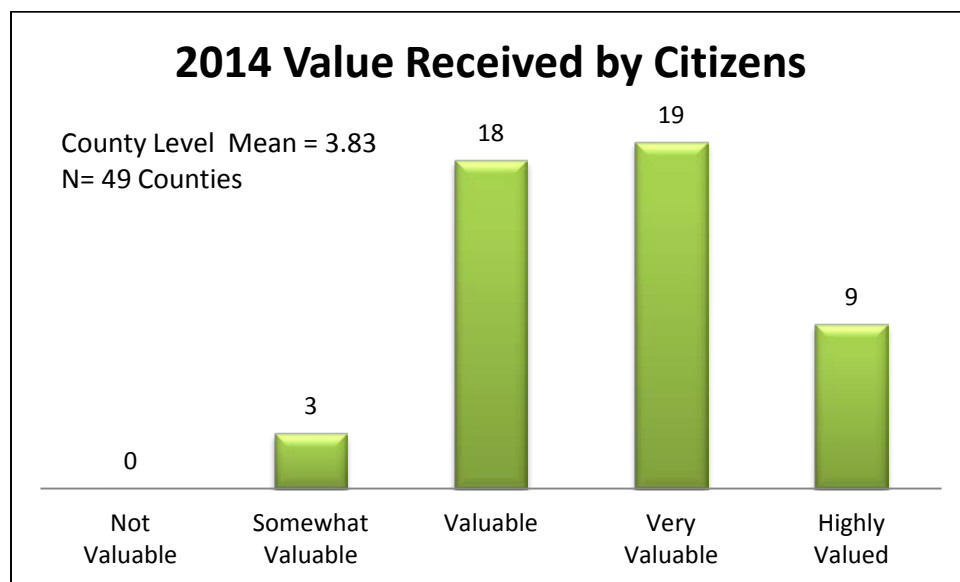
Overall, *counties* responded favorably to questions about program quality, value, responsiveness, and overall satisfaction. We compared 2014 data on four key indicators to 2013 data and found that key indicators for quality, responsiveness, and overall satisfaction trend slightly higher in 2014, while value trends slightly lower. These trends can be seen in both the averaged scores and in the graphs of individual responses below. All four score have trended consistently high since 2012; in 2014, three of four median scores are above 4.0 on a 5-point scale.

The four key indicators are graphed below for both 2014 and 2013 county responses. This includes the “overall satisfaction” question used to indicate mean satisfaction with CSU Extension. In aggregate, “Acceptable” ratings decreased in 2014, but so did “Excellent” ratings. This will be an area for follow-up conversations.

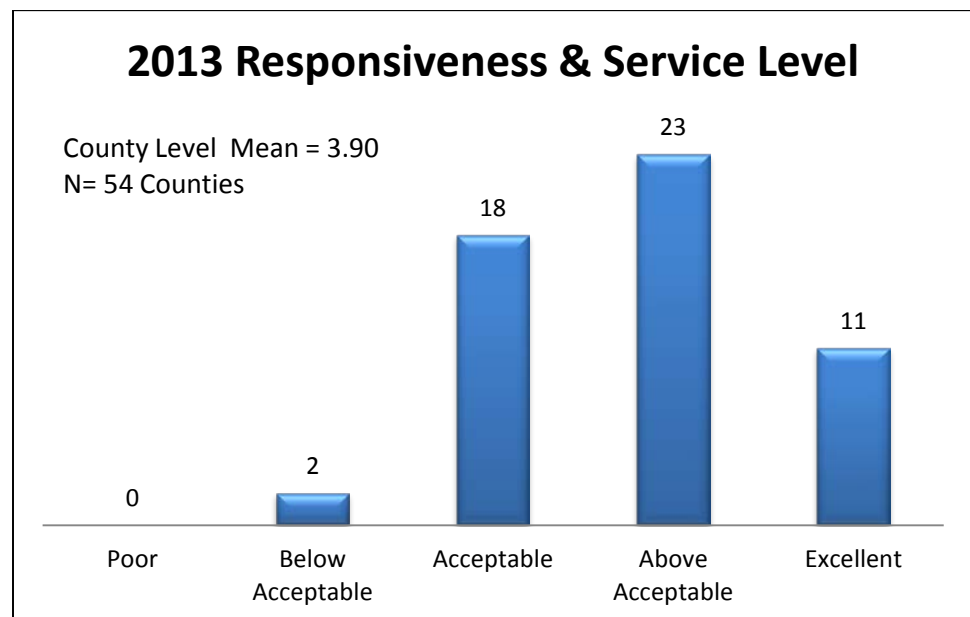
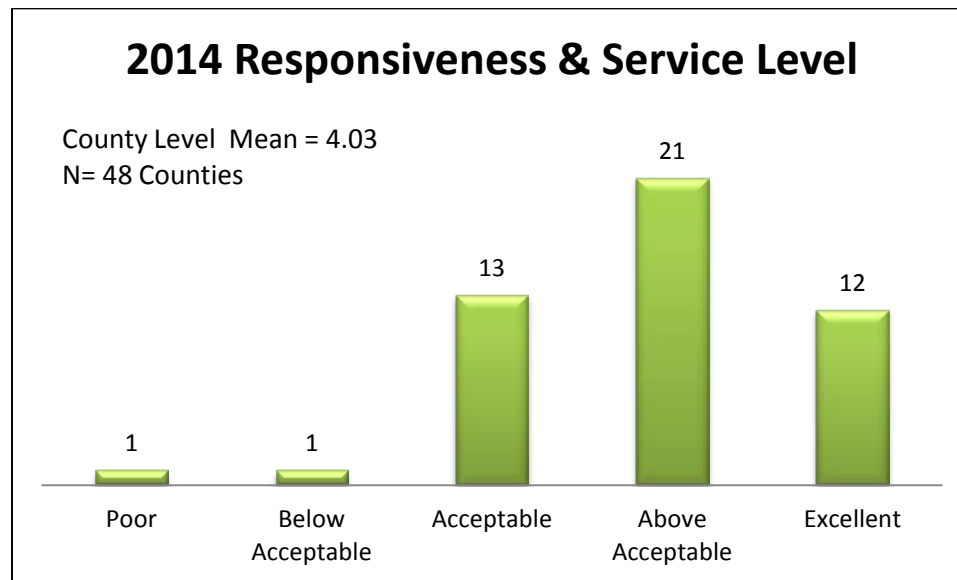
*Rate the quality of the programs and services provided from your local Extension office.*



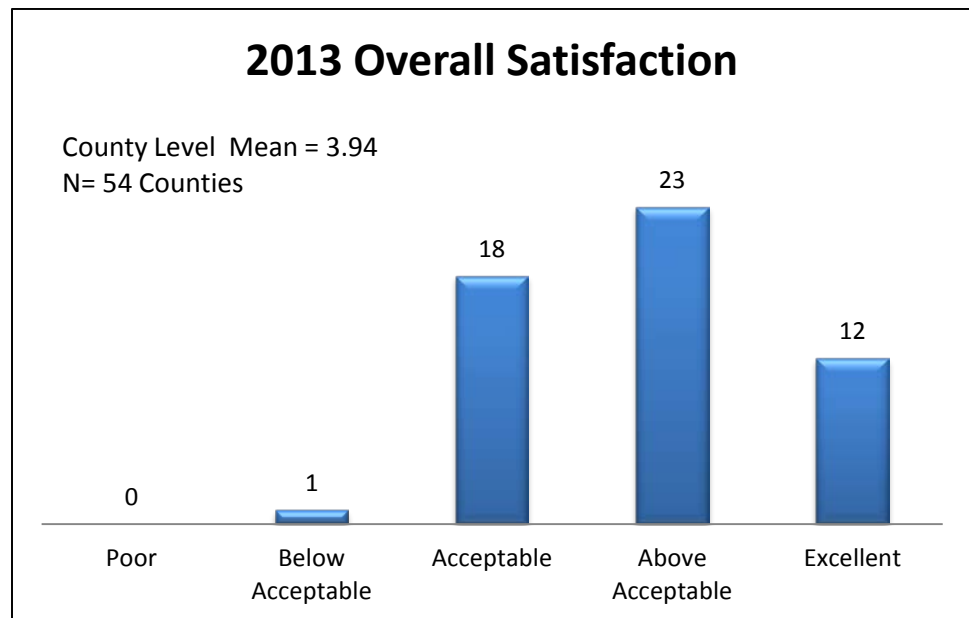
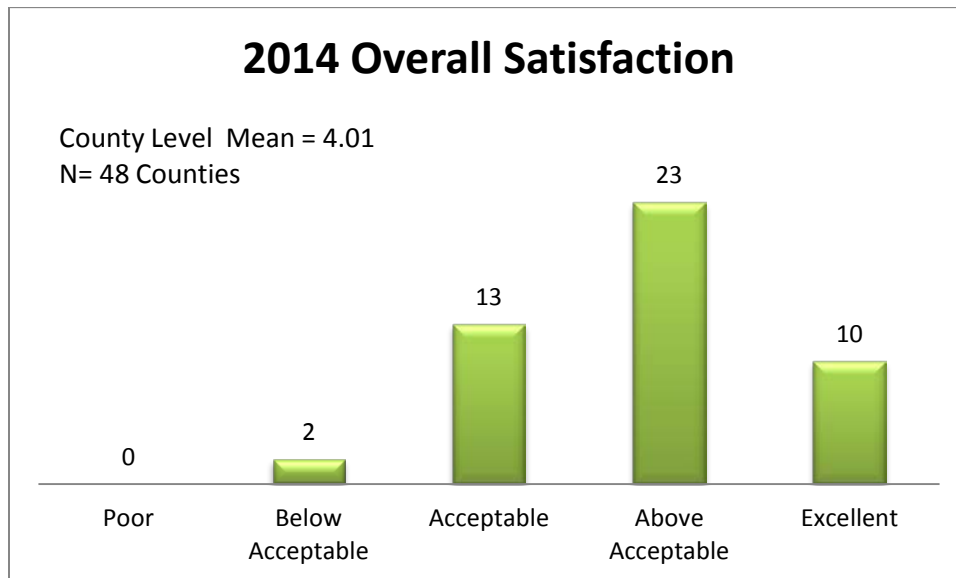
*How would you rate the value received by the citizens of your county from programs and services delivered by Extension?*



*Rate the responsiveness and service level of your county Extension personnel in meeting the needs of your county citizens.*



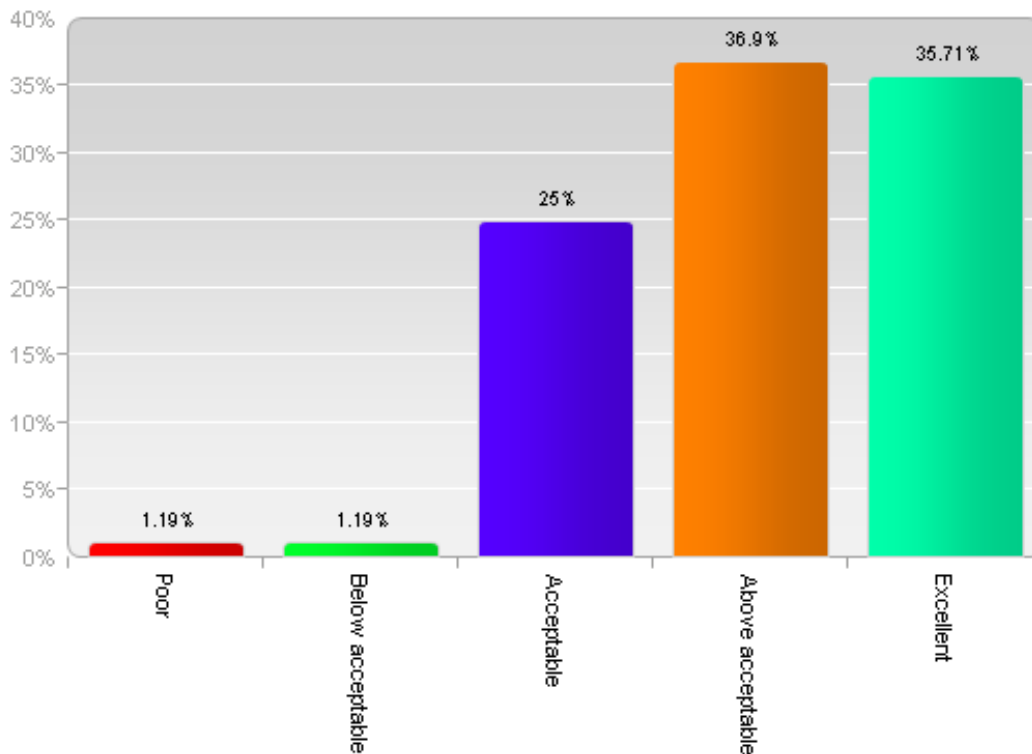
*Rate your overall satisfaction with the service the citizens receive from your local county/area Extension office.*



**Survey Results: Commissioner Level Data on Program Value and Agent Ability**

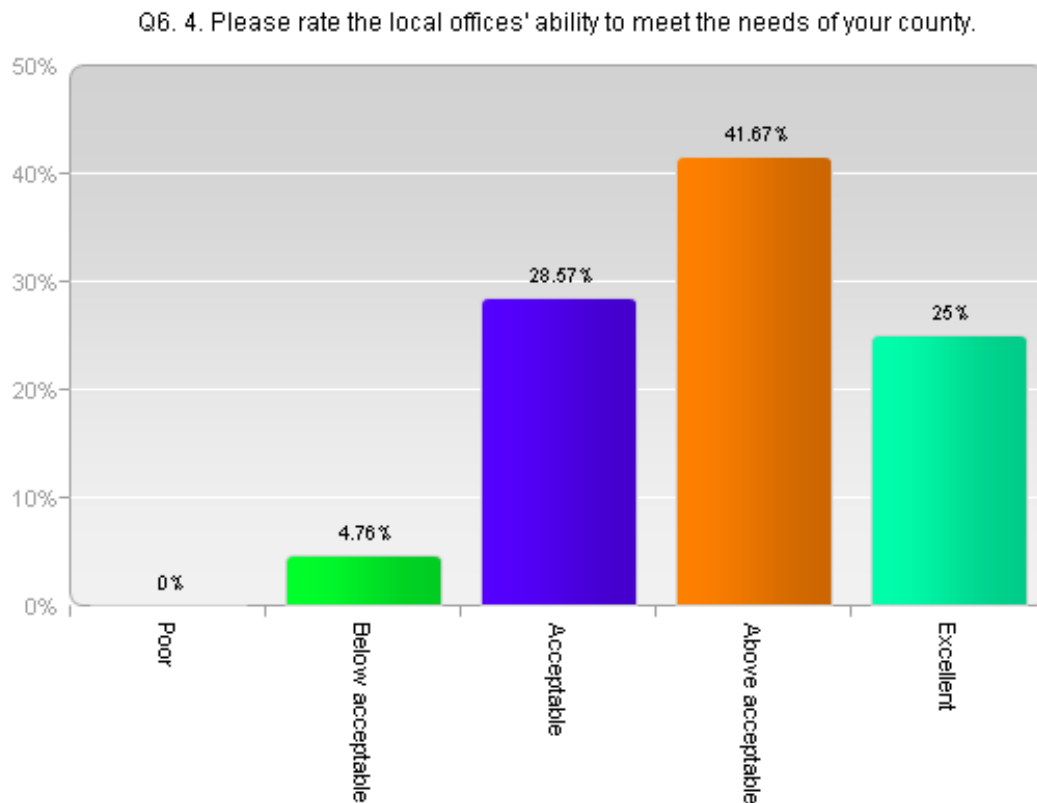
As indicated below, commissioner responses were positive about CSU Extension services, program quality, and agent expertise. The quality of CSU programs and responsiveness of local agents and county offices received particularly positive ratings.

Q4. 3. Rate the quality of the programs and services provided from your local Extension office.



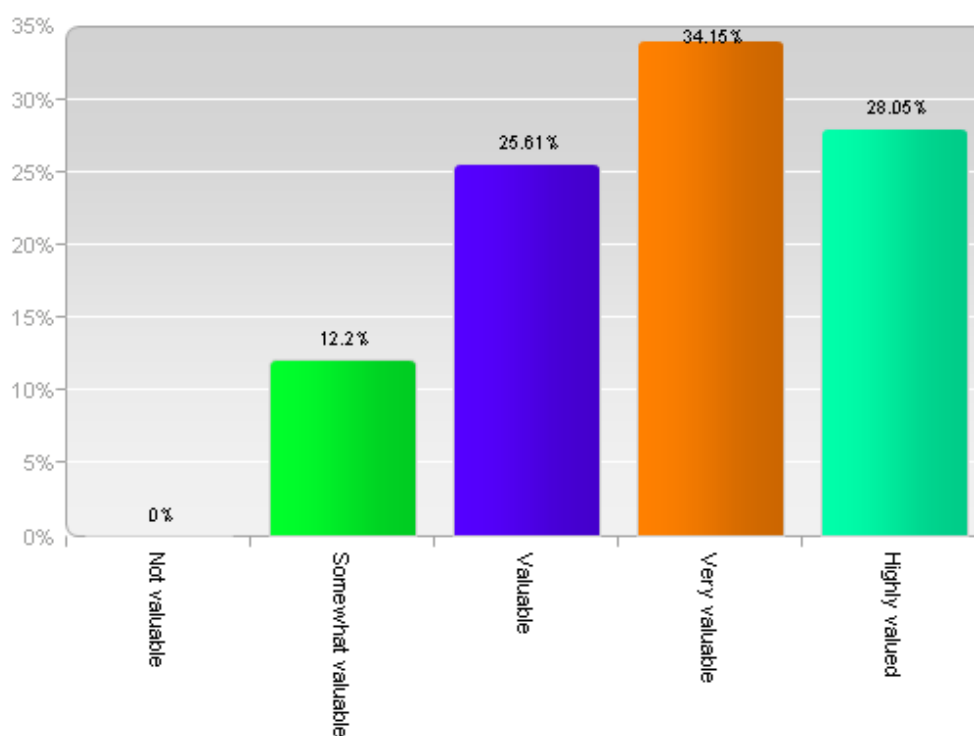
*Commissioners rated the services provided from local Extension office favorably, with 97.61% rated as acceptable, above acceptable or excellent. As one commissioner commented: "...very responsive, professional, and capable."*





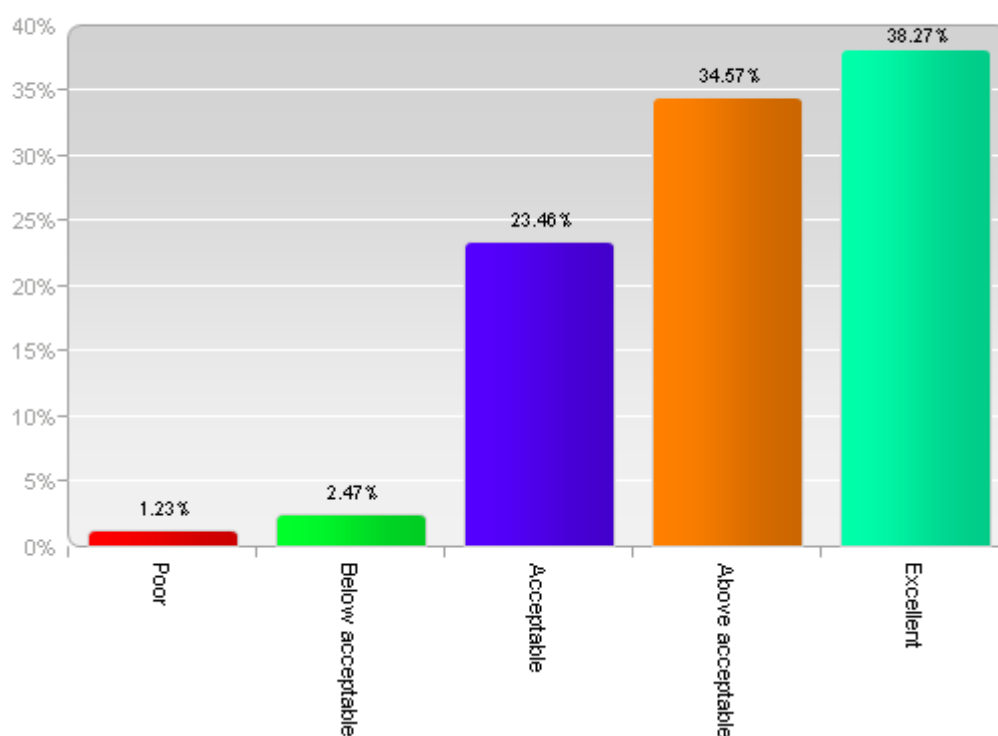
*Commissioners were satisfied with the **local offices' ability to meet the needs of each county**, with 95.24% rated acceptable, above acceptable or excellent.*

Q8. 5. How would you rate the value received by the citizens of your county from programs and services delivered by Extension?



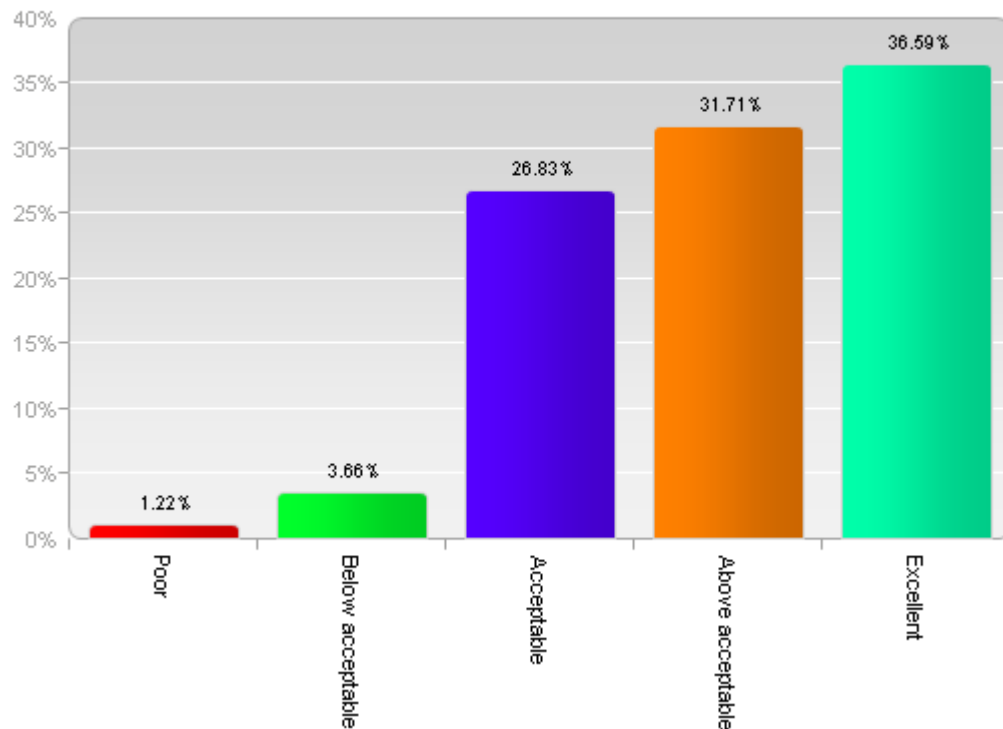
*The **value received** by the citizens from programs and services delivered by Extension was valuable, very valuable or highly valuable according to 87.81% of respondents.*

Q10. 6. Rate the expertise and knowledge of your county Extension personnel in meeting the needs of your county citizens.



*Commissioners rated the **expertise and knowledge of Extension personnel** positively, with 96.3% rated as acceptable, above acceptable or excellent. One commissioner comments: "Always available and providing great knowledge..."*

Q12. 7. Rate the responsiveness and service level of your county Extension personnel in meeting the needs of your county citizens.



*The **responsiveness and service level** of Extension personnel in meeting the needs of citizens was found to be 95.13% acceptable, above acceptable or excellent.*

### Regional Results Comparison: Commissioner Level Data

The table below reports commissioner responses divided into the three CSU Extension regions as percentages. As these percentages indicate, the three regions vary in their response trends. The Western region (all Western Slope counties) trends higher overall, while the Front Range region (Front Range urban corridor) and the Eastern Peaks and Plains region (Southeast, Northeast Golden Plains, and the San Luis Valley) trend lower on all issues. Overall, regions are most satisfied with program quality, responsiveness, and agent knowledge; scores trend lowest with regard to program value.

2014 Regional Results Comparison									
	Excellent/Above Acceptable			Acceptable			Below Acceptable/Poor		
	Front Range	West	East	Front Range	West	East	Front Range	West	East
Program Quality	79%	83%	64%	21%	13%	33%	0%	4%	2%
Capacity	63%	78%	62%	26%	17%	36%	11%	4%	2%
Value	61%	83%	51%	22%	13%	34%	17%	4%	15%
Knowledge	67%	83%	70%	28%	13%	28%	6%	4%	3%
Responsiveness	59%	78%	67%	41%	17%	26%	0%	4%	7%
Satisfaction	59%	87%	61%	41%	9%	32%	0%	4%	7%

### Survey Comments: Kudos and Concerns

Each question on the survey allowed unlimited space for comments. Comments on local agents and offices were generally very positive. Many comments reflected positive perceptions of local agents and reported leveraging Extension resources to partner with county efforts in Open Space/recreation, animal shelters, lawns and gardens, fire mitigation, water usage, and youth services. Comments also, however, raised concerns about lack of awareness and/or the need to adapt programming to changing needs.

### Praise for Extension Agents and Services

- I didn't know what a great Extension office looked like until I met these folks.
- Our Extension director is friendly, hard-working, and a team player. He has a lot of great ideas, and works in partnership with the county in a variety of roles.
- We are very pleased to be a part of and have this program continue in our county!
- Thanks for asking our opinion. We want to continue working with CSU Extension to maximize our community's involvement.

**Concerns: Appropriate Programming and Awareness**

- Many suburban citizens don't know that CSU Extension has programs for them, too.
- I continue to think that Extension needs to partner with industry more and more.
- We wonder if Extension might be useful in areas which are largely unknown to our citizens (e.g., the Idea 2 Print Lab).
- I would like to see more widespread knowledge of what's offered and why it is important.

**Recommendations from Respondents**

Multiple respondents recommended adapting Extension programming to fit changing needs. At the same time, several respondents requested information to help counties understand how to use Extension in "non-traditional" areas.

**Conclusion**

The 2014 survey data indicate that commissioners feel very positively about their agents and are highly satisfied with CSU Extension overall. Current county revenues continue to be based on property values that lowered during the recession, and on severance taxes on the Western Slope. Continued and increasing county financial commitment is a strong sign of support. Counties particularly affected by water issues continue to appreciate the support received from the Colorado Water Institute and the three regular water specialists in CSU Extension.

The Office of Engagement and the Office of Community and Economic Development are working with CSU Extension to explore how best to meet some of the requests and recommendations from respondents, such as those that advocate for additional community services or partnering with local resources.

This report will be made publicly available on the CSU website, through the CSU Extension and VP Engagement web pages. A link to the report is also mailed to all survey participants, with thanks for their interest and participation. The survey results are shared with CSU Extension program leaders and regional directors, to be used in planning and recommendations for 2016.