

Native Grass Perceptions: Producers and Professionals Surveys in Tennessee

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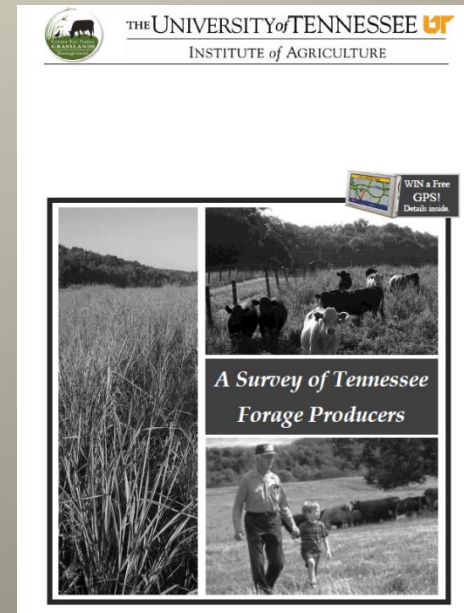


Background

- NWSG research and extension programs need to target knowledge gaps/management needs of producers
- Very little information available on producer attitudes and knowledge with regard to NWSG
- What is our starting point?
- What are the misconceptions (if any)?

Methods

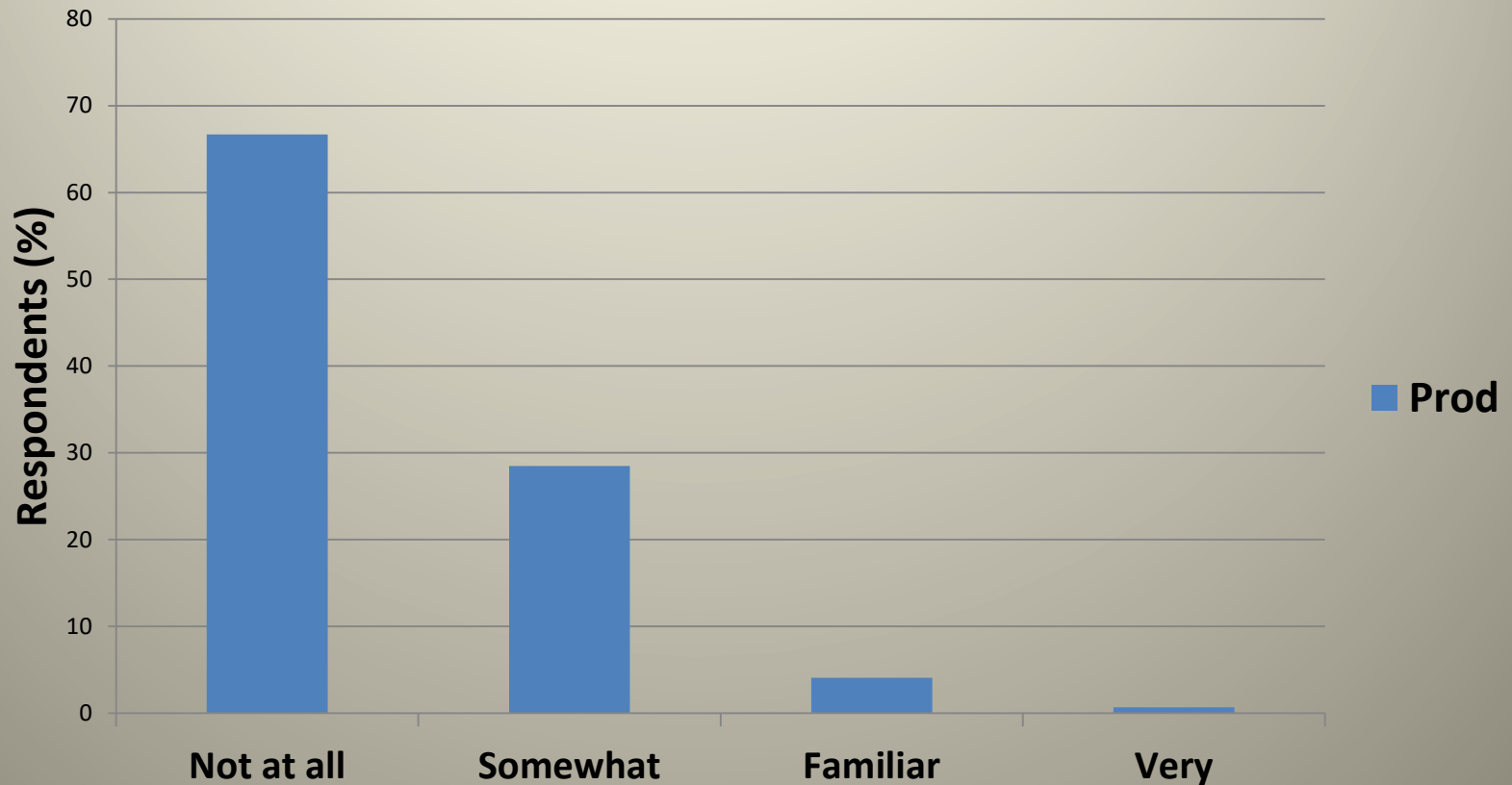
- Randomly sampled 1,620 TN beef producers (20-499 head; 80% of TN farms)
- NASS
- 609 completed surveys (37.6% response rate)
- Survey pre-test Feb, 2011
- Three waves, summer 2011



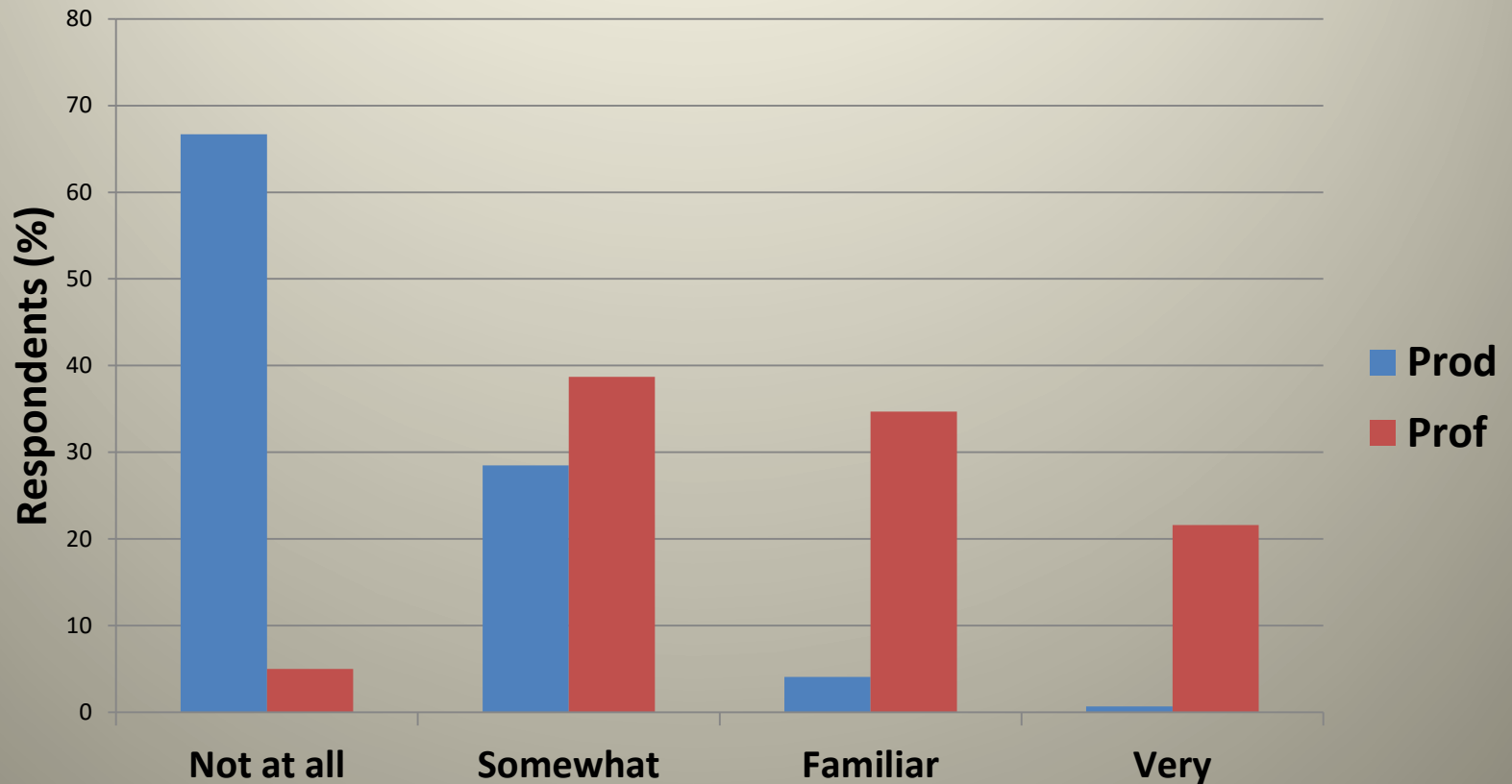
Methods II

- Compare producer knowledge, attitudes, perceptions to professionals
- Sampled 312 agents, NRCS and SWCD field staff using on-line survey
- Three waves (February 2014)
- 252 responded (80.1% response rate)
- 222 useable responses

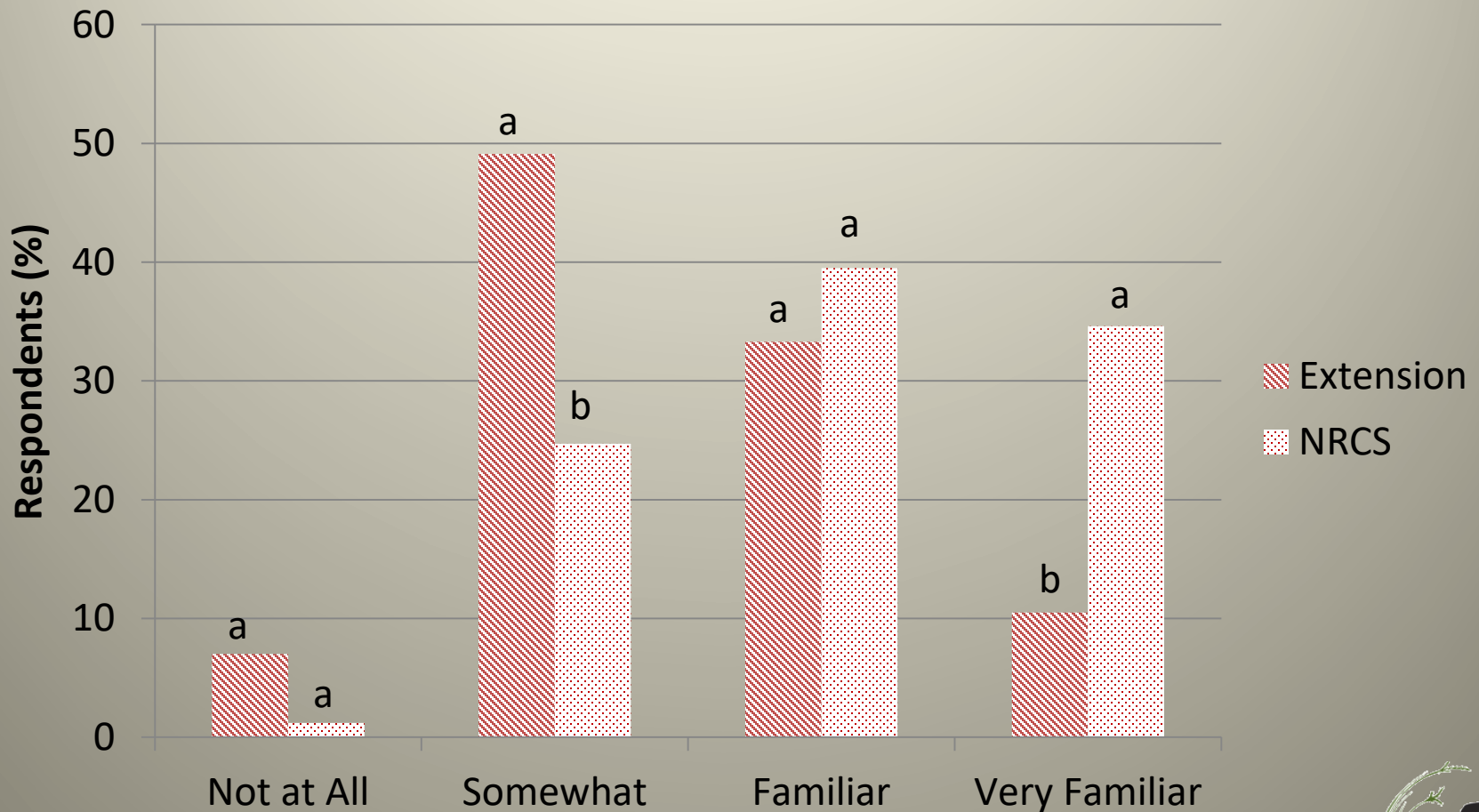
Familiarity with NWSG



Familiarity with NWSG

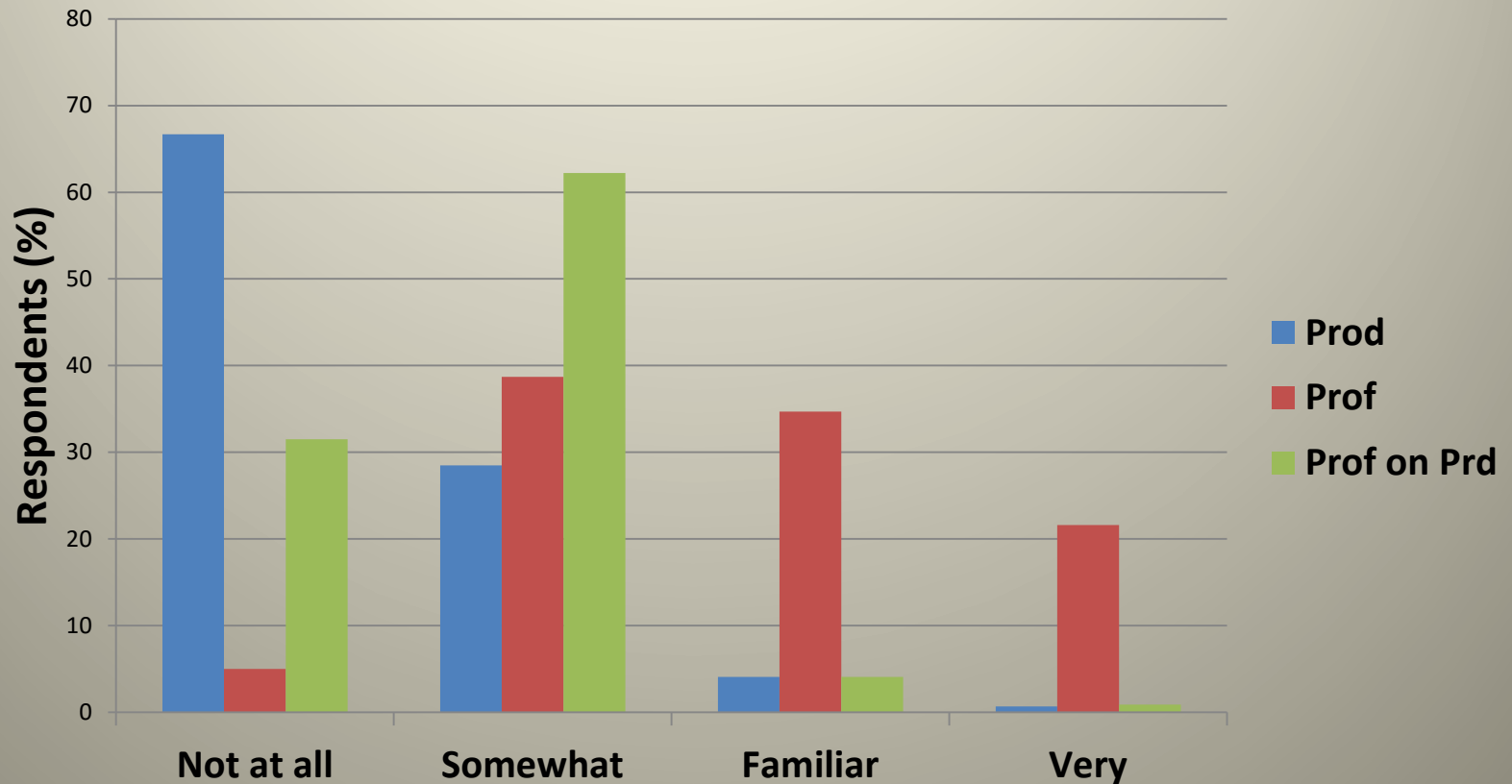


Familiarity with NWSG



n = 114 (Ext); n = 81 (NRCS)

Familiarity with NWSG



Factors Related to Familiarity

- familiarity with NWSG related to:
 - farm size:
 - small (0-50 ac) = 80.5% not familiar
 - med (51 - 150) = 70.2%
 - large (>150) = 51.4%
 - replacement heifers ($p < 0.001$)
 - but not stocker steers ($p = 0.79$)
 - full vs. part-time farming ($p = 0.011$)
 - full-time 57.3% not familiar
 - part-time 69.1% not familiar

How Good Are NWSG for Forage?

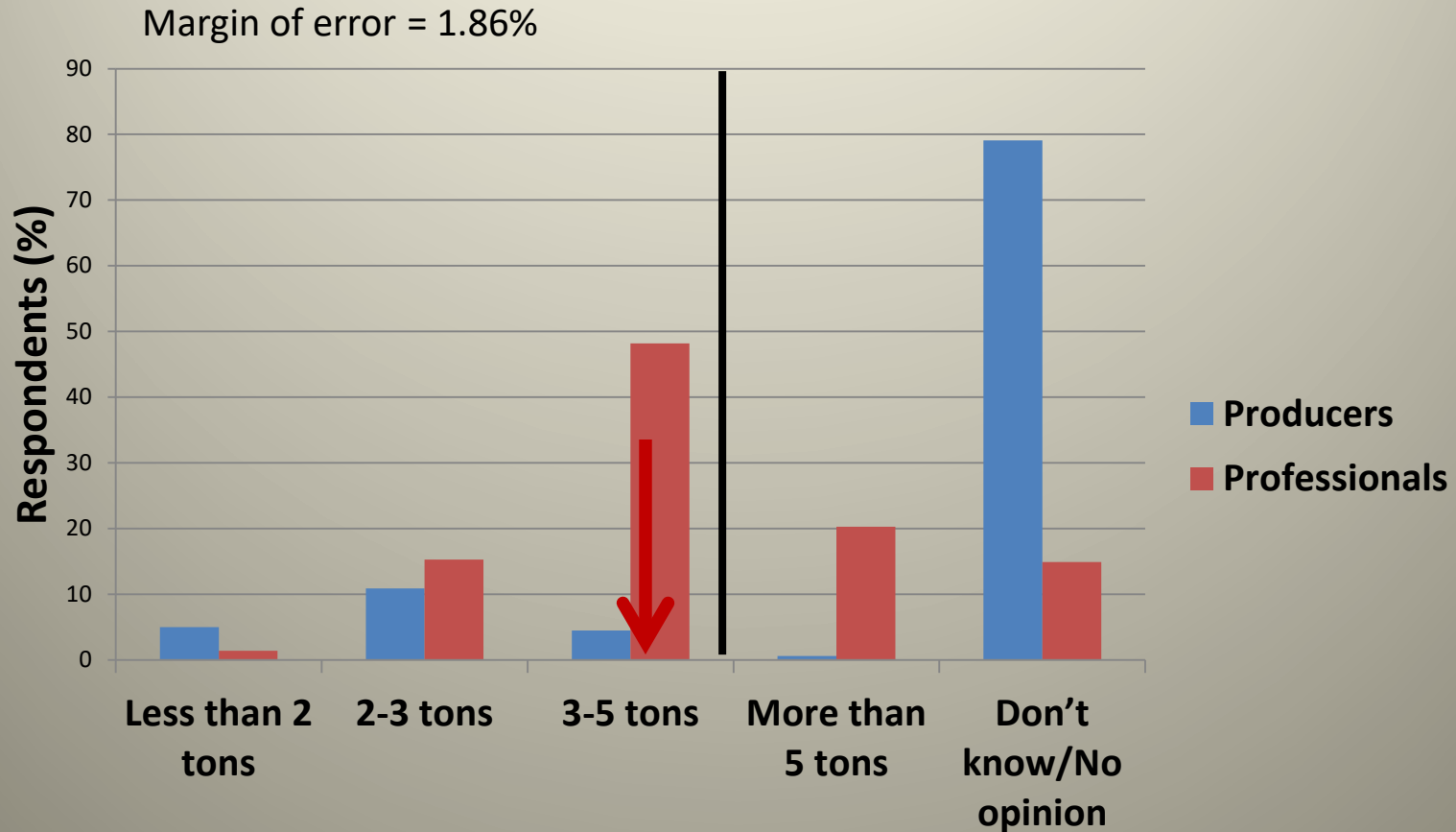


Rounded-off, both NRCS (dotted) and Extension (dashed) consider NWSG “Good” forages

How Good Are NWSG for Forage?



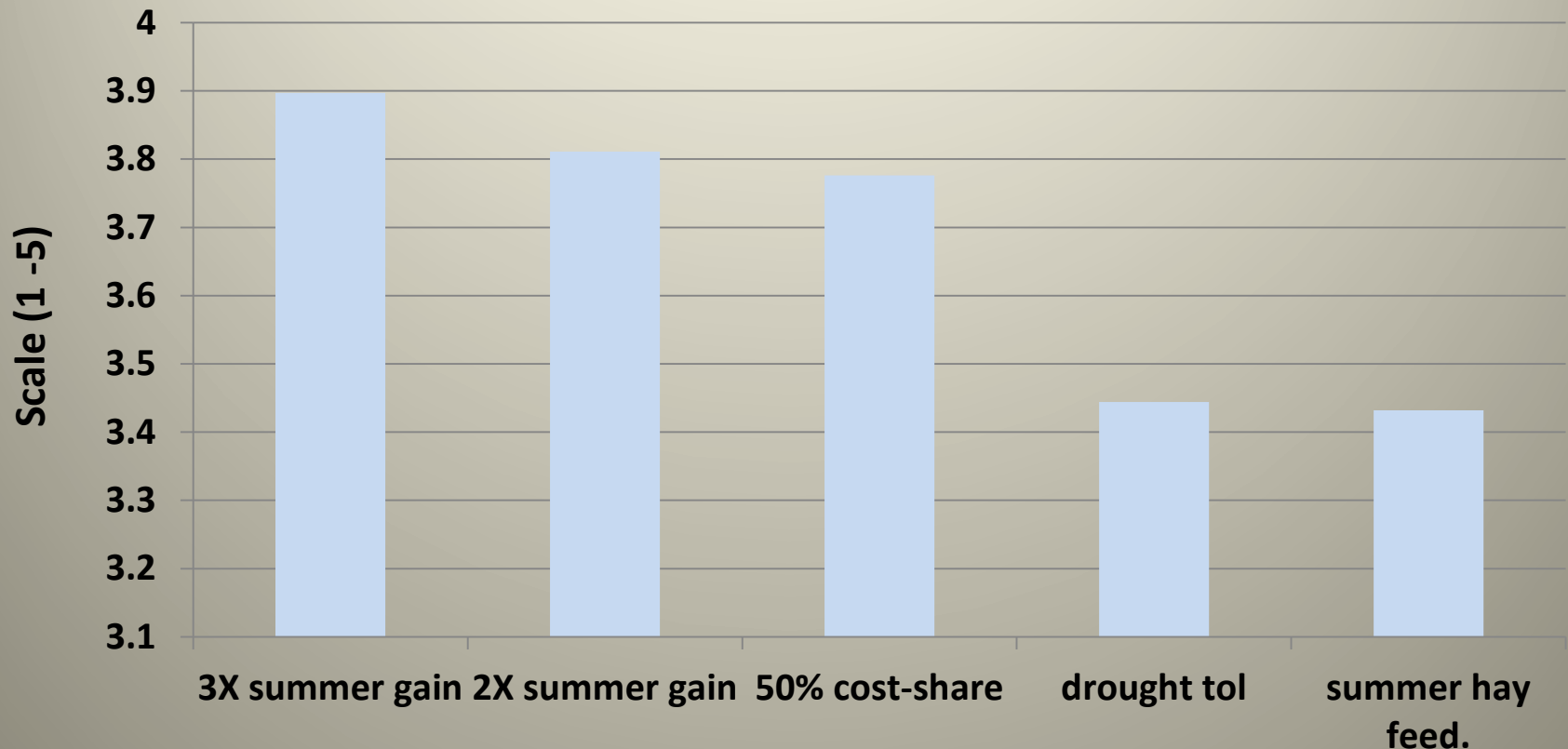
How Much Do NWSG Yield?



Interest in Improving Summer Forage



Increased Management (move cattle 2-3 times/month) to Achieve Outcomes

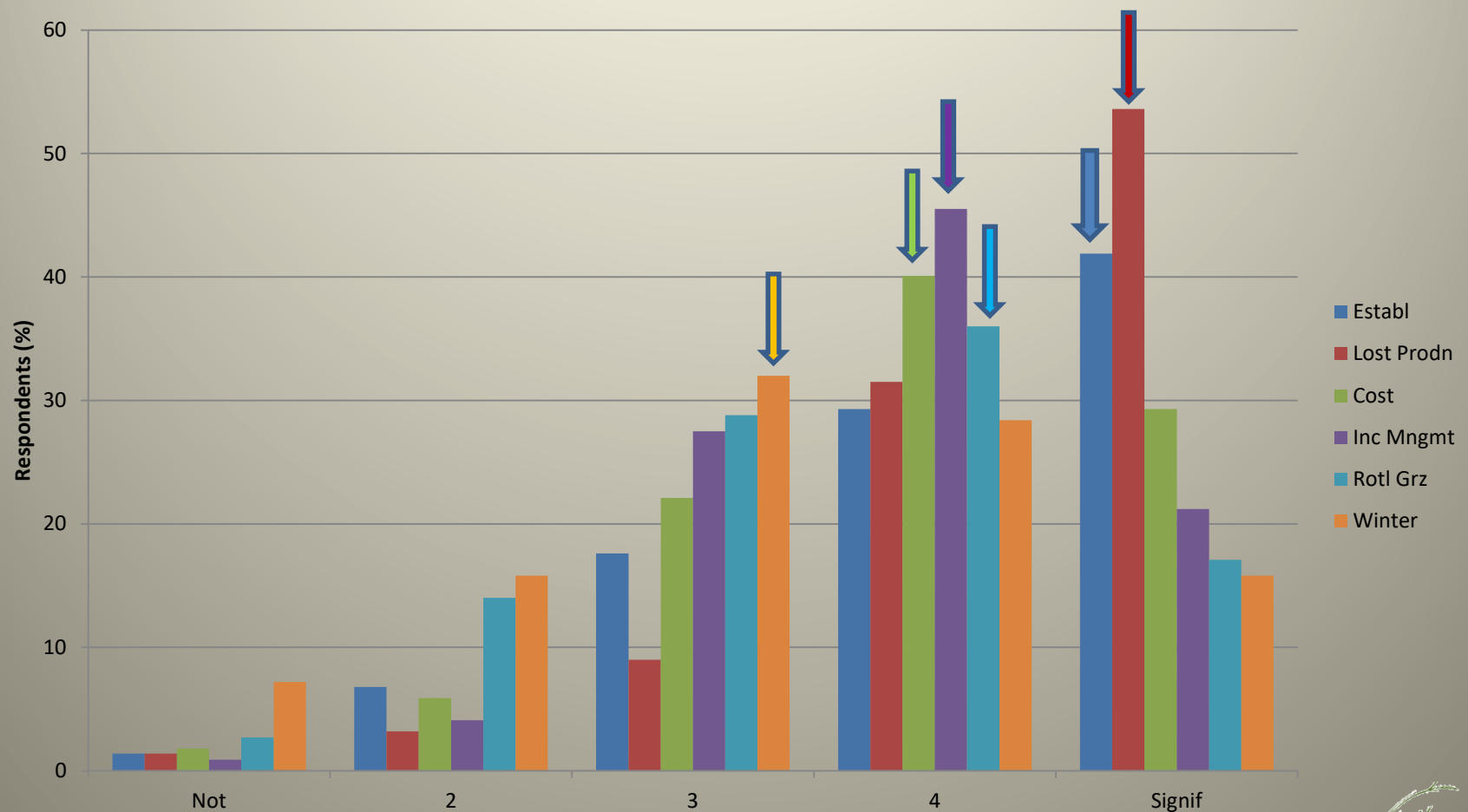


- Scale: 1 = "Would not move", 5 = "Would certainly move"

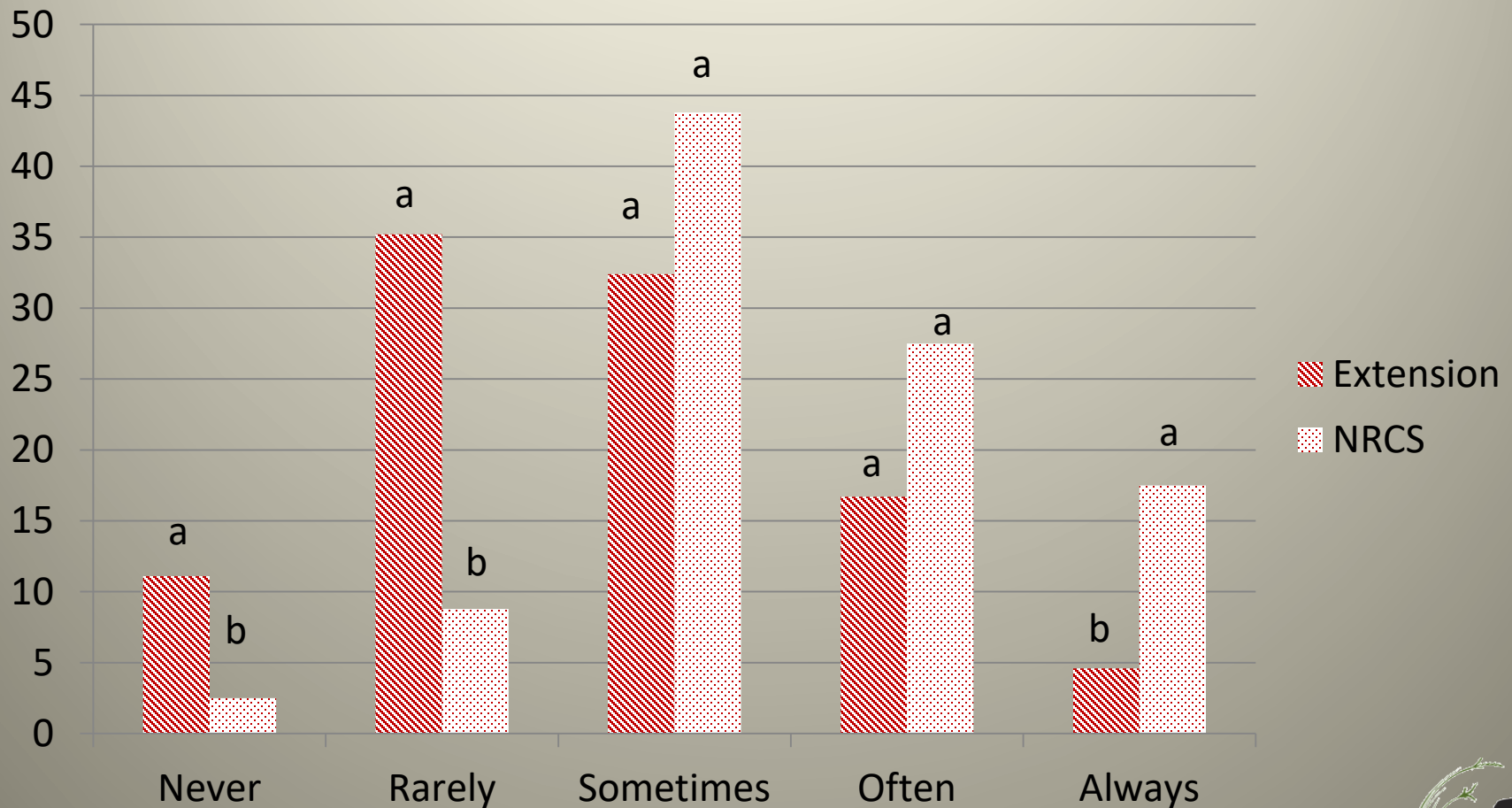
Willing to Increase Management to Achieve Improved Outcomes?

- Willingness to move cattle 2-3 X/mo in order to double summer weight gains is not related to:
 - off-farm income ($p = 0.16$)
 - full-time vs. part-time farmers ($p = 0.71$)
 - growing bermuda ($p = 0.87$)
 - summer hay feeding ($p = 0.11$)
- But is related to:
 - interest in improving summer forage prodn ($p < 0.001$)
 - willingness to pay to est summer forage ($p < 0.001$)

Obstacles to Using NWSG

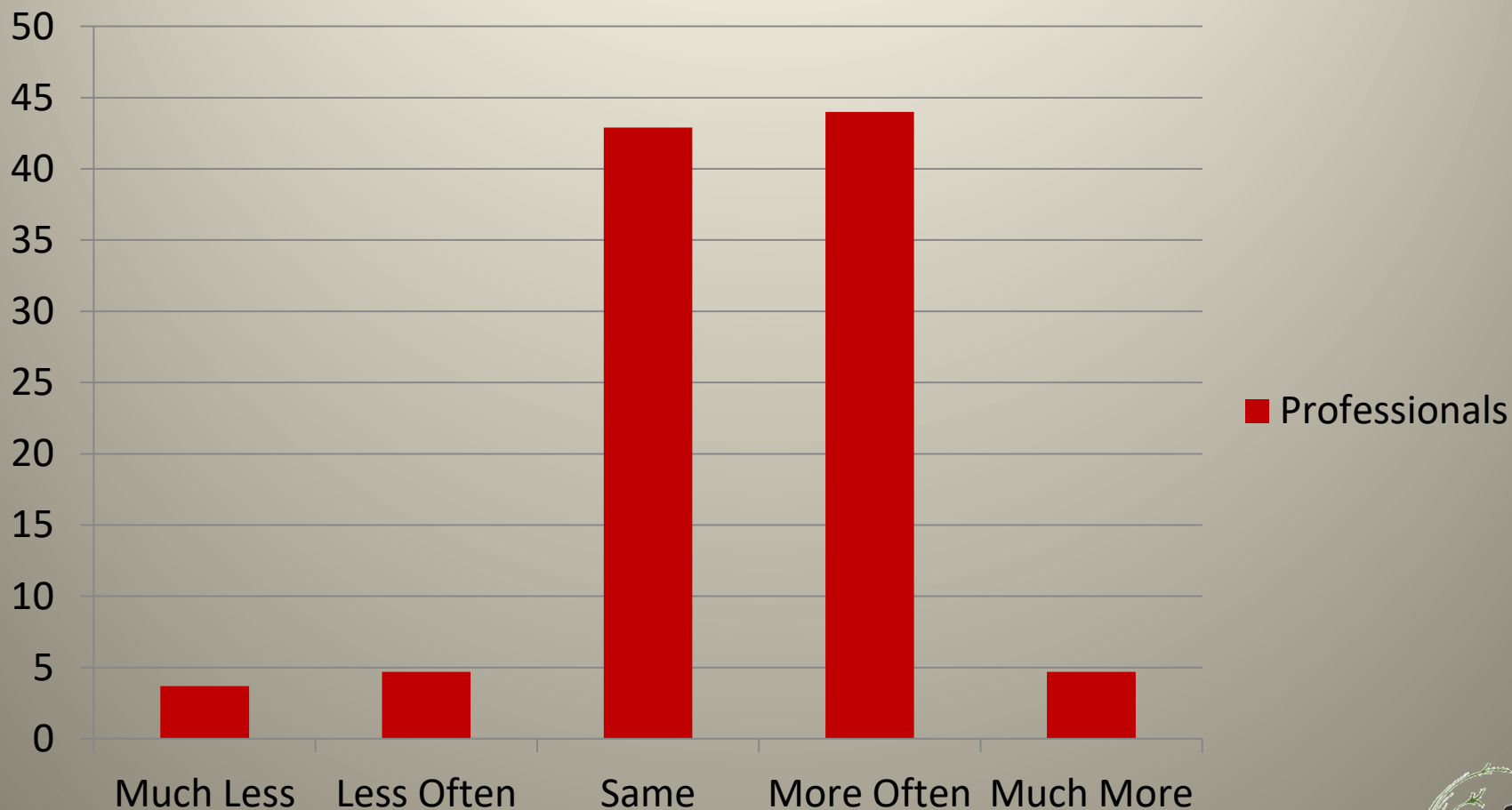


Recommending NWSG for Summer Forage



n = 108 (Ext); n = 80 (NRCS)

Recommending NWSG More Now Than Five Years Ago



Conclusions (producers)

- Few use NWSG (5%)
- Few are familiar with NWSG (<25%)
- Benefits of NWSG undervalued, liabilities overestimated (???)
- Interest in improving summer forages (>50%)
- Willingness to spend commensurate with actual NWSG establishment costs (37%)
- Willingness to incur increased management to achieve benefits

Conclusions (professionals)

- Much more familiar w/ NWSG (95%)
- Accurate assessment of attributes of NWSG
- Overestimate producer knowledge, interest in, and willingness to spend to improve summer forages
- Underestimate producers' opinion of NWSG
- Barriers to producer acceptance: lost prodn year, est issues, est cost
- Benefits valued by producers: fert cost savings, improved gains; higher pasture and hay productivity also considered important

Discussion????