

An Assessment of Integrated Pest Management Needs and Priorities for Local Food Production in Montana

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Introduction

- Interest in buying local organic food has risen due to increasing public demand for farm to table products and organic certification processes (USDA, 2019).
- For this reason, small-scale farms must manage operations differently than large-scale conventional producers.
- While many growers use production practices that reduce the application of pesticides, limited information is known about small farms use of IPM strategies (MDA, 2020).
- The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) attempts to understand why producers reject or adopt practices (Ajzen, 1991).
- Understanding how producers prioritize the need for information can give insight as to what drives their decision to explore innovative agricultural practices (Long, 2013).

Objectives

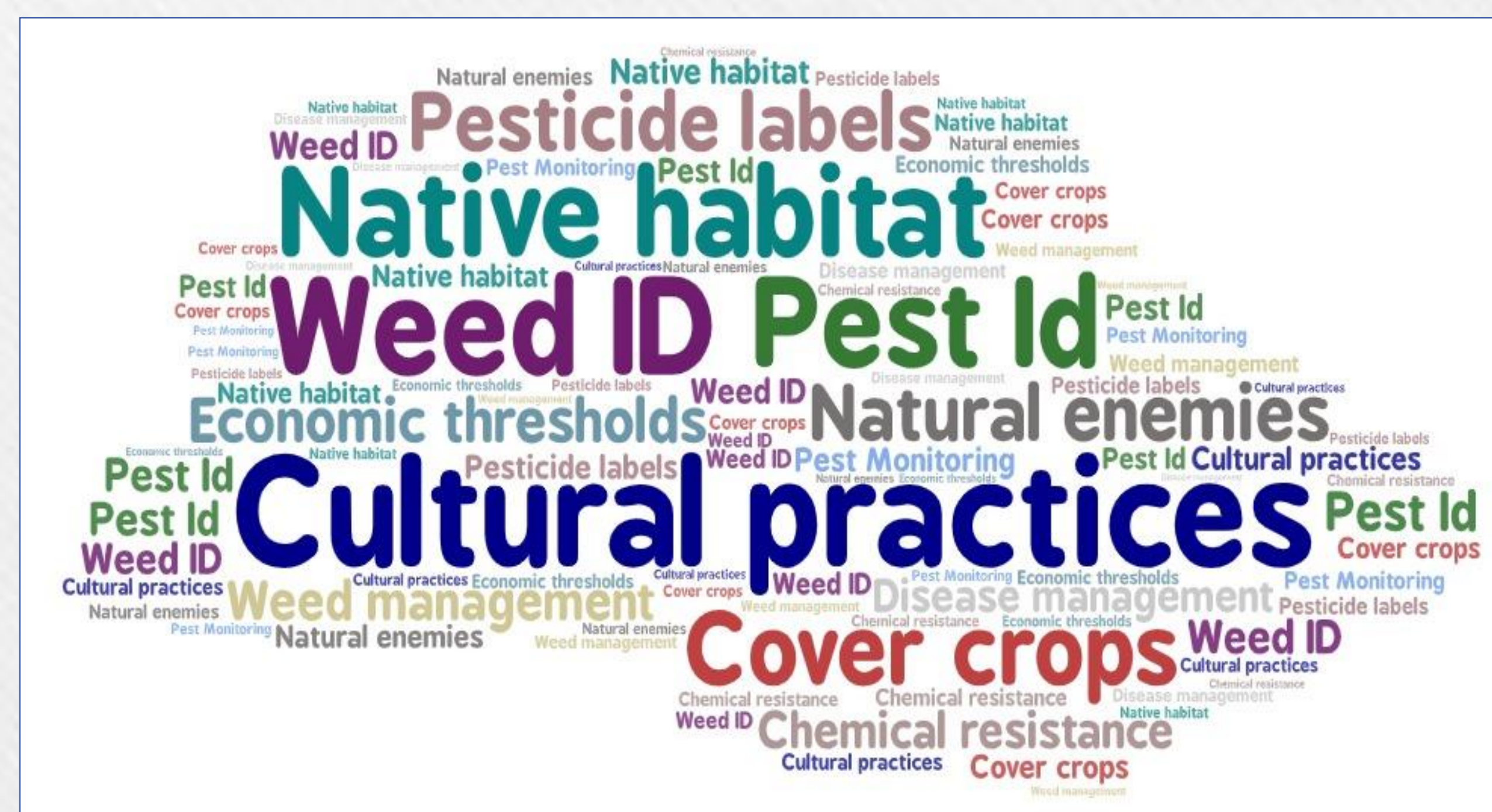
- (1) Identify small-scale producers' current levels of IPM knowledge;
- (2) Identify the priorities and needs that small-scale producers have for IPM education and research; and
- (3) Identify small-scale producers' preferred methods for receiving educational information about IPM.

Methods

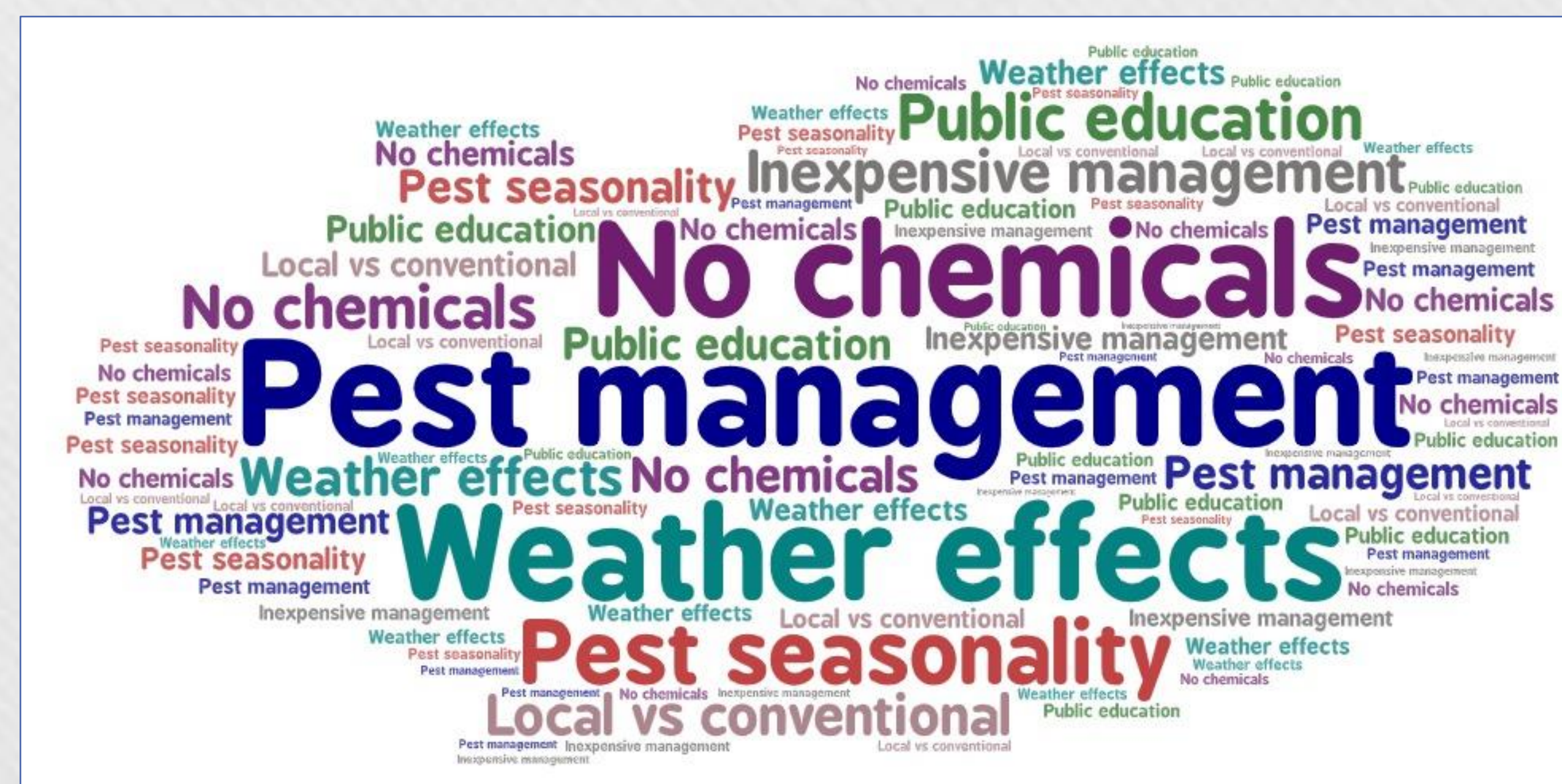
A Qualtrics survey was distributed to 60 small-scale producers and 18 were returned for a 30% response rate. Data analysis was conducted utilizing descriptive statistics and themes generated within Qualtrics.

Results

Objective One: The average level of IPM knowledge for small producers was 3.18/5.0.

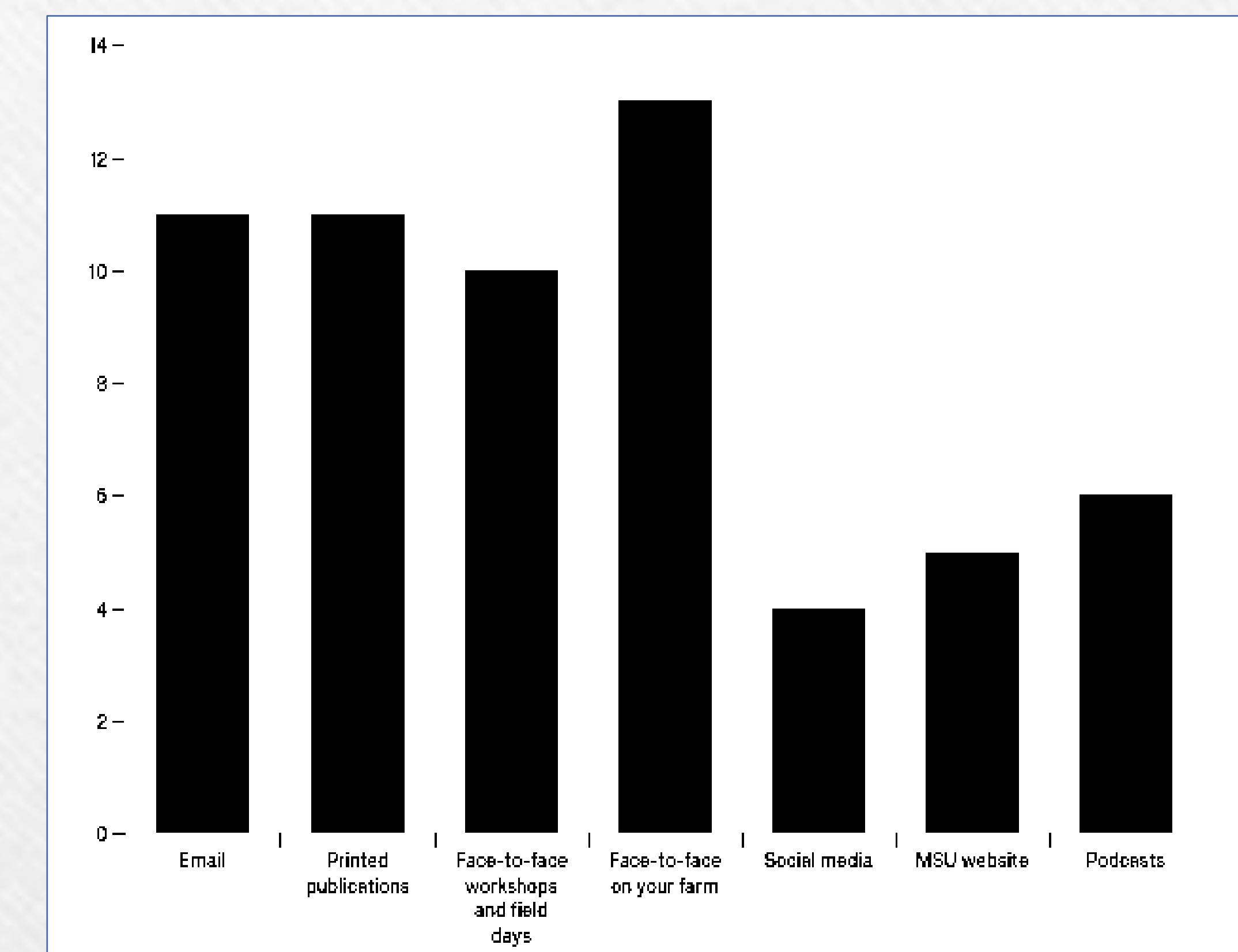


Objective Two: Priorities and needs for IPM education and research for small scale producers:



Results

Objective Three: Respondents preferred methods of receiving IPM information.



Conclusions/Recommendations

- Local producers rely on multiple factors to make decisions with precedence on peer networking, the internet, and continuing education to change behaviors (Ajzen, 1991).
- Topics should focus on producer priorities identified through annual needs assessments.
- There is a need for face to face and online management resources tailored for local producers from Extension and private consultants in the form of:
 - Online webinars
 - Tours and field days
 - In-person visits
 - Updated websites and online communication
 - Professional conferences with peer interaction
 - Mentoring programs