

# Building Relationships Between an Equine Advocacy Group and Cooperative Extension to Facilitate Adult Education Programming: A Pilot Study



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## Need for Innovation

Transporting horses can be a hazardous endeavor. The activity requires proper planning and infrastructure to avoid accidents and maintain high standards of animal welfare (Miranda-de la Lama et al., 2009). Accidents can arise from mechanical failures and improper weight balance between the vehicle and the trailer (Braver et al., 1997). Mishaps involving horse trailers can be a dangerous problem resulting in serious injury or death which could negatively impact the perception of the animal industry.

The MARE Center and VCE Loudoun needed assistance in promoting such events with organizations that have more presence/influence in the community. As such, the MARE Center and VCE Loudoun reached out to a more vocal equine organization, the Loudoun County Equine Alliance (LCEA). Having this partnership would be valuable on both ends because LCEA would assist in the Center's and VCE Loudoun's publicity efforts while the MARE Center and VCE Loudoun would be able to share our educational opportunities and research findings.



LCEA members tour of the Center in Jan 2021.



MARE Center and VCE staff members

## Goals and Outcomes

The goals of this program included:

- Teach adult learners better trailer safety methods.
- Establish a professional alliance between the MARE Center, VCE Loudoun and LCEA.

The outcomes of this program would include:

- Better trailer safety measurements
- An ongoing, ongoing alliance between the MARE Center, VCE-Loudoun and LCEA.
- More awareness of the organizations and Center.

## Pre-Program Survey

A pre-program survey was given to participants ( $n = 30$ ) when they registered online. Six questions were given consisting of the following:

1. How did you learn about this event?
2. Knowledge of organizations BEFORE signing up for the workshop (Figure 1).
3. What are your expectations of the event?
4. Are you interested in learning more about trailer technology?
5. Are you going to share this event with others?
6. Interest in other programming offered by the MARE Center and VCE (Figure 2).

## Results To Date/Implications

Following the program, participants ( $n = 19$ ) filled out a survey with four questions (Figure 3).

1. What was your favorite aspect of the program? Why?
2. Did you feel the presenters were well prepared for their respective lessons?
3. What is on thing about today's program you would change?
4. What trailer safety action will you take as a result of attending this program?

Participants said they would do the following takeaways after attending this program (Figure 4):

1. More purchase awareness
2. Trailer safety (first aid kits)
3. Trailer maintenance
4. Trailer technology
5. More than one

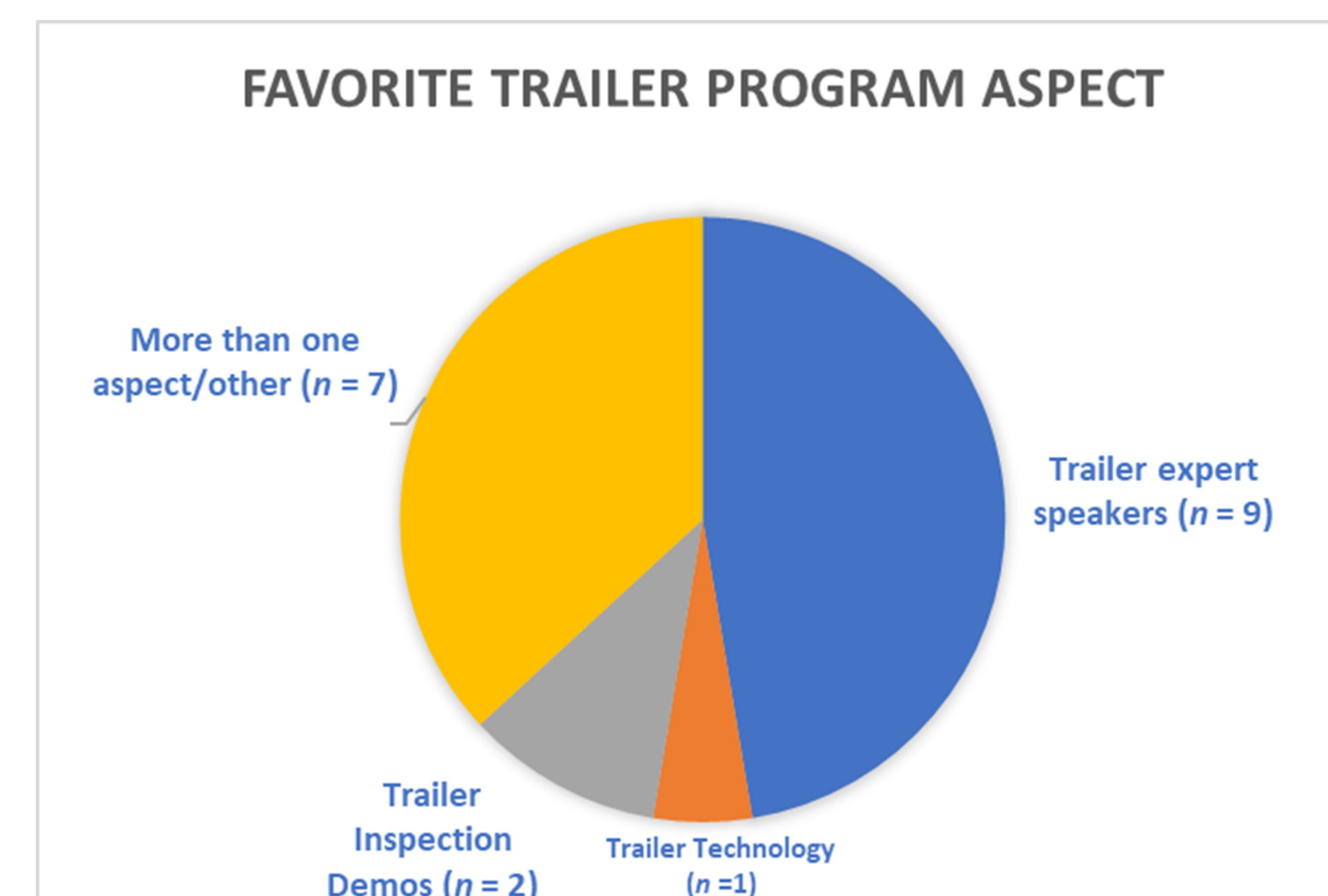


Figure 3: Favorite Trailer Program Aspect

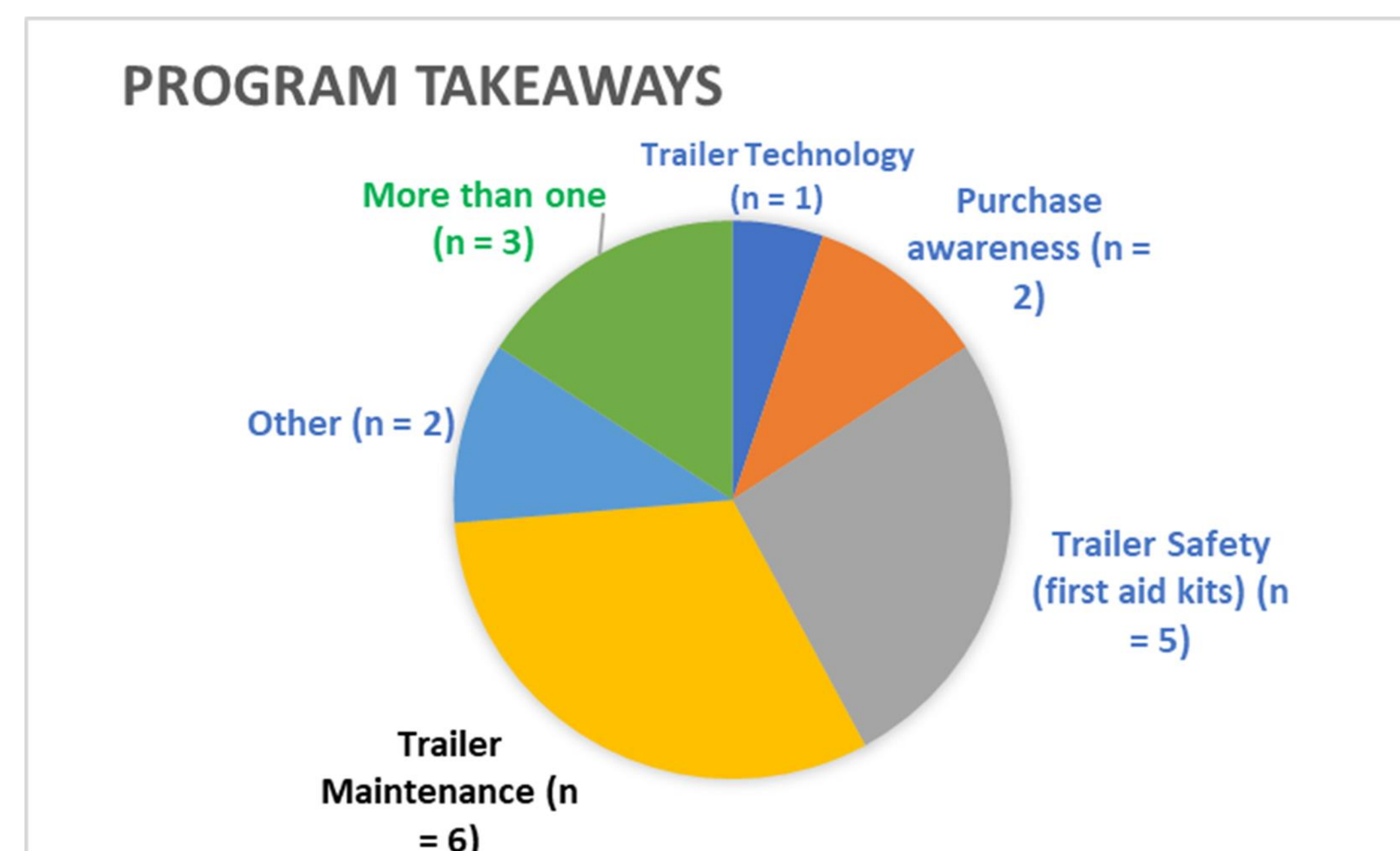


Figure 4: Program Takeaways

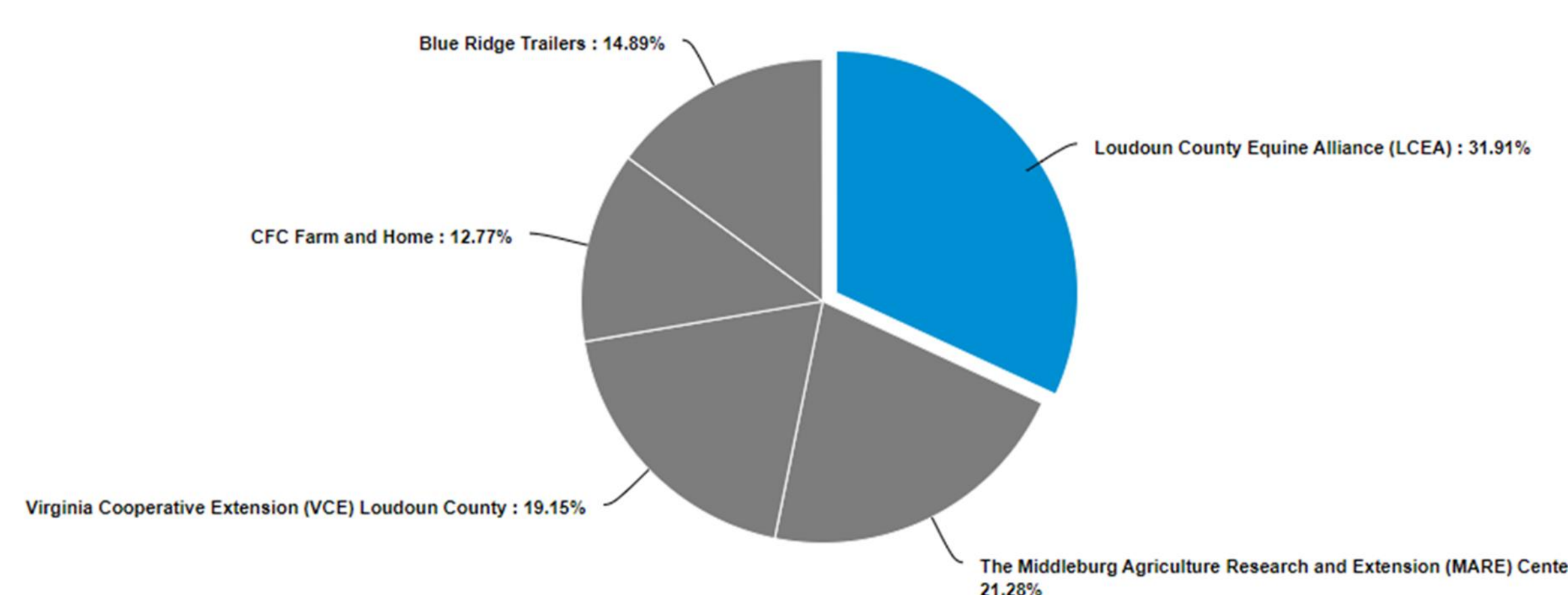


Figure 1: Knowledge of organizations before program

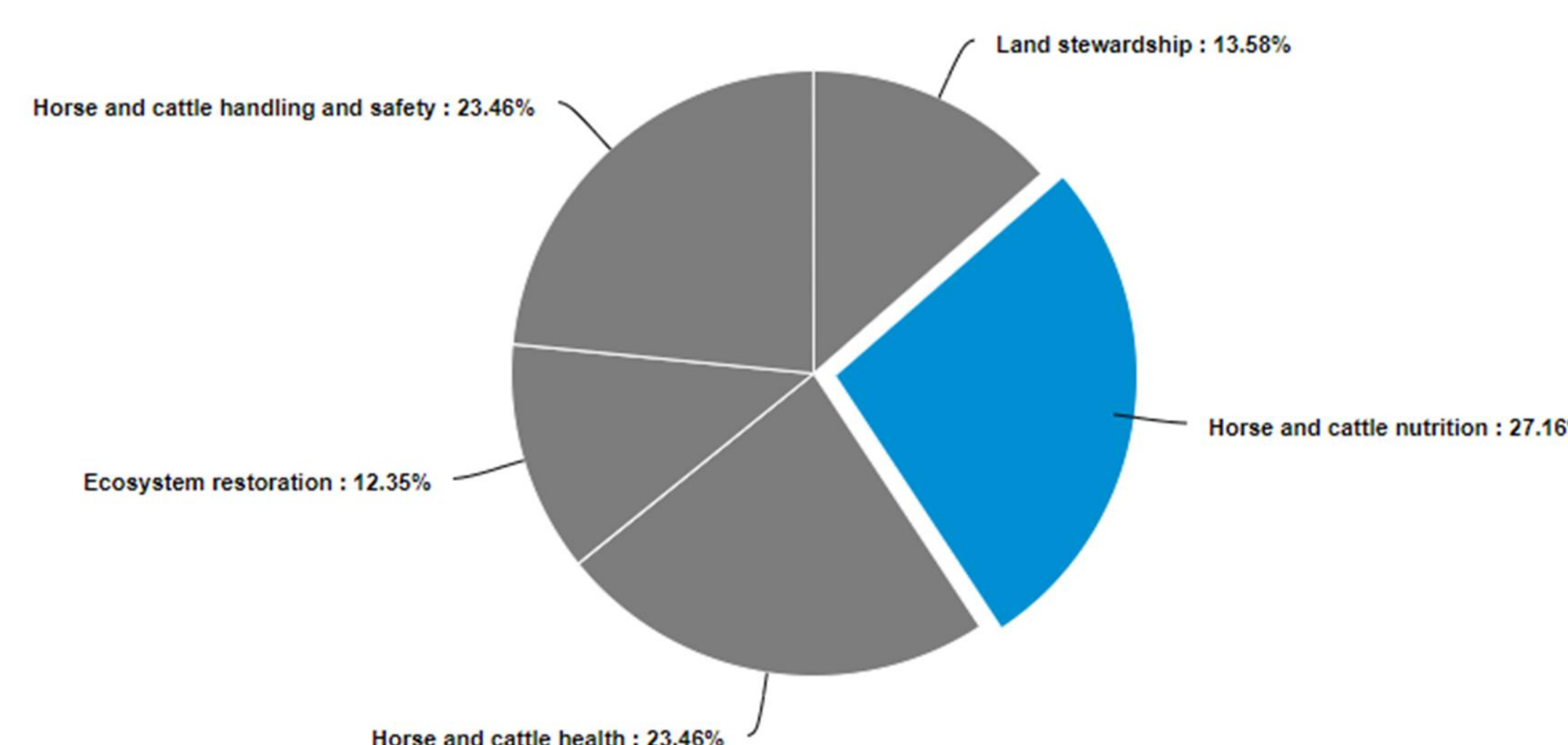


Figure 2: Interest in future program topics

## Future Plans/Advice to Others

Future plans will include:

- Another opportunity to host another trailer program at the MARE Center.
- Continuing partnership between these three organizations will for other programs, outreaches and other educational programs

We advise that other ARECs and Cooperative Extension services consider offering a similar program since it could be beneficial to the public in terms of adult learning programs. Having these connections and shared approach to program development with organizations can help bring people together who have a common learning theme and desire.



Participants inspect a trailer with the guidance from Donna of Blue Ridge Trailers.

## Cost/Resources Needed

The program cost participants \$15 which covered lunch.

Program sponsorships and volunteers were provided by:

- CFC Farm and Home
- VCE Loudoun County
- LCEA
- MARE Center
- Blue Ridge Trailers.

## Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank all the staff members, volunteers and sponsors at the MARE Center, VCE, LCEA, CFC and Blue Ridge Trailers for organizing this event. The author would also like to thank all the participants who attended this event that made it so successful.

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