

# **2018 County Commissioner Satisfaction Survey: CSU Extension Services in Colorado**

**Survey Results Summary Report**

**January 2019**



**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION**

## Introduction: 2018 County Commissioner Survey

The eleventh annual County Commissioner Satisfaction Survey was conducted from September 17 to October 26, 2018. 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 study variables 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

CSU Extension and the Office of the Vice President of Engagement designed the survey. As in years past, 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 Colorado State University 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. Final email reminders were sent 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, not every commissioner is expected to complete the CSU Extension survey.

Per-county responses (N = 52) are calculated using the mean of all commissioner responses for that county to that question. As begun in 2010, data is reported here as per-county response. Where relevant, commissioner responses (N = 83) are also reported in this document. Each graphic indicates the type of data calculation used.

A total of 210 surveys were sent to all commissioners/council members in all 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 83, for an overall response rate of 40%.

The per-county response rate was 85%, with 52 of the 61 counties surveyed by CSU extension responding. San Juan, Lake, and Pitkin counties were not surveyed in 2018. Response rates by

region were strong: Front Range region (Front Range urban corridor), 92%; Eastern Peaks and Plains region (Southeast, Northeast Golden Plains, and the San Luis Valley), 80%; Western region (all Western Slope counties), 89%. Counties that did not respond to the survey were: Adams, Cheyenne, Conejos, Costilla, Hinsdale, Otero, Ouray, Rio Grande, and Saguache.

Three additional surveys were received after the postmarked deadline. These surveys were excluded from the following analysis. Information from the excluded surveys was conveyed separately to Extension directors.

## Summary of 2018 Survey Results

Commissioners and county officials responded favorably to questions about Extension. Program quality and agent responsiveness scored particularly high. Scores tend to form a curve at the positive end of the scale. As in past years, comments indicate that lower scores may be tied to county desires for specific services and/or better agent coverage.

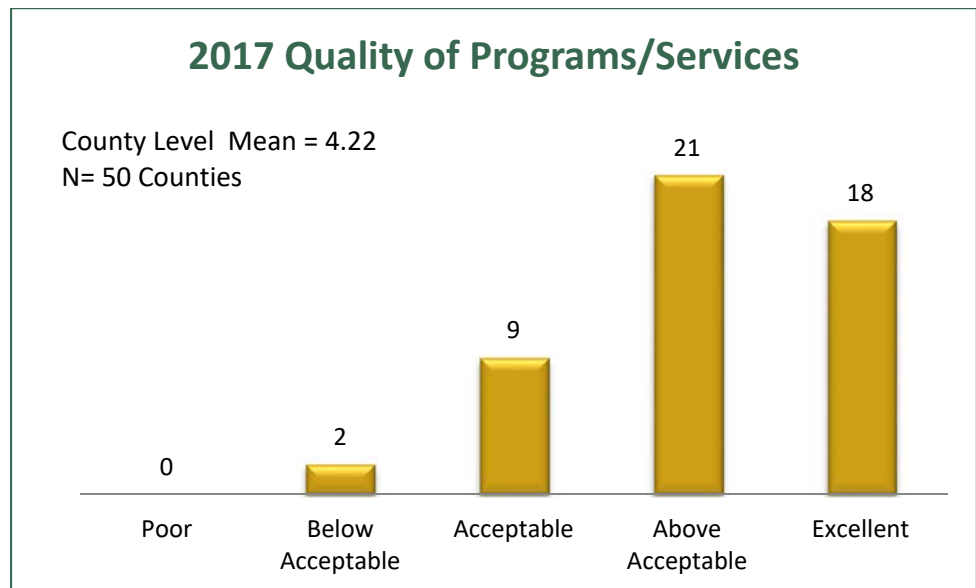
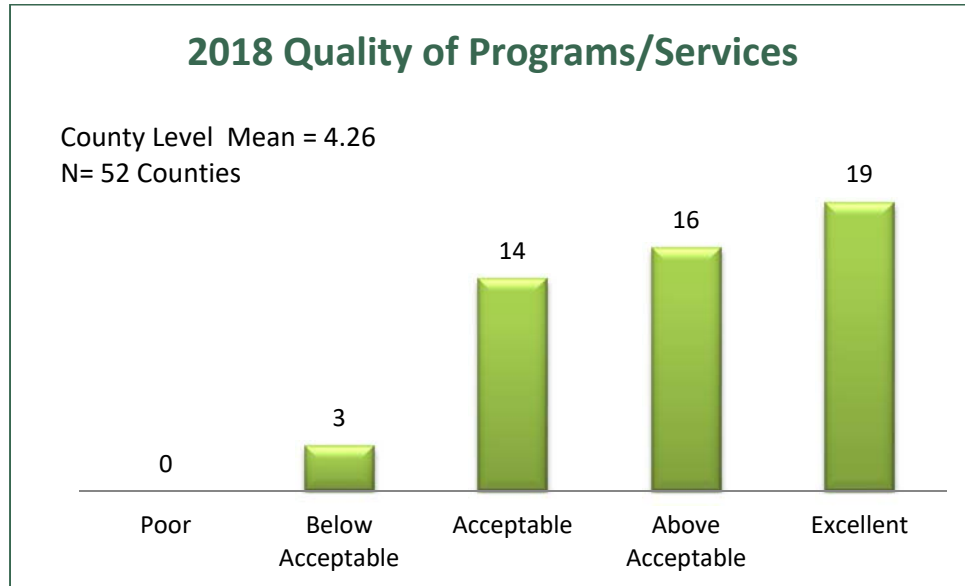
### Survey Results: 2017–2018 Key Indicator Comparison of County Responses

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.

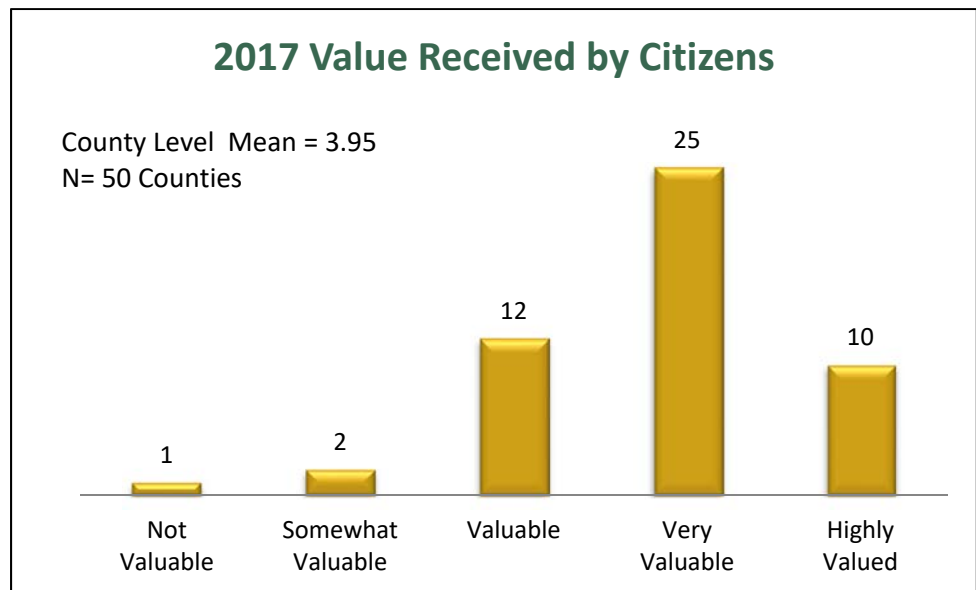
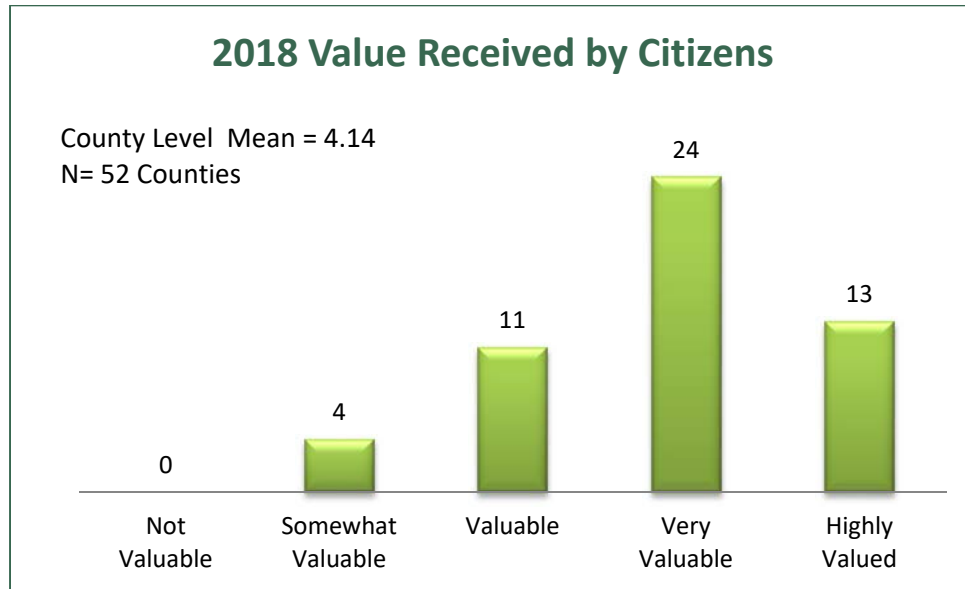
Overall, *counties* responded favorably to questions about program quality, value, responsiveness, and overall satisfaction. We compared 2018 data on four key indicators to 2017 data and found that three of the four key indicators for quality, responsiveness, value, and overall satisfaction trend slightly higher in 2018. All four indicators are above a 4 on a 5-point scale. These trends can be seen in both the averaged scores and in the graphs of individual responses below. All four scores have trended consistently high since 2012.

The four key indicators are graphed below for both 2018 and 2017 county responses. This includes the “overall satisfaction” question used to indicate mean satisfaction with CSU Extension.

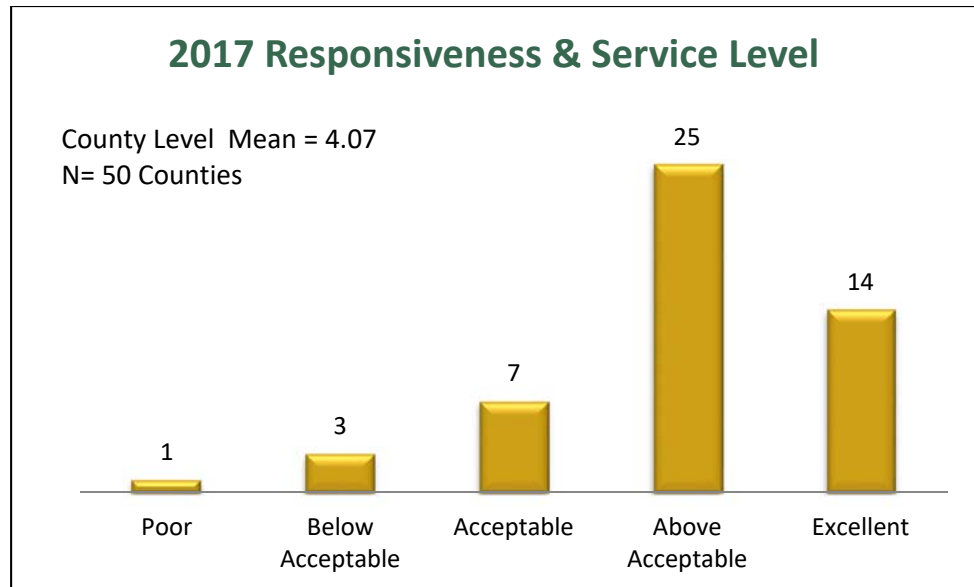
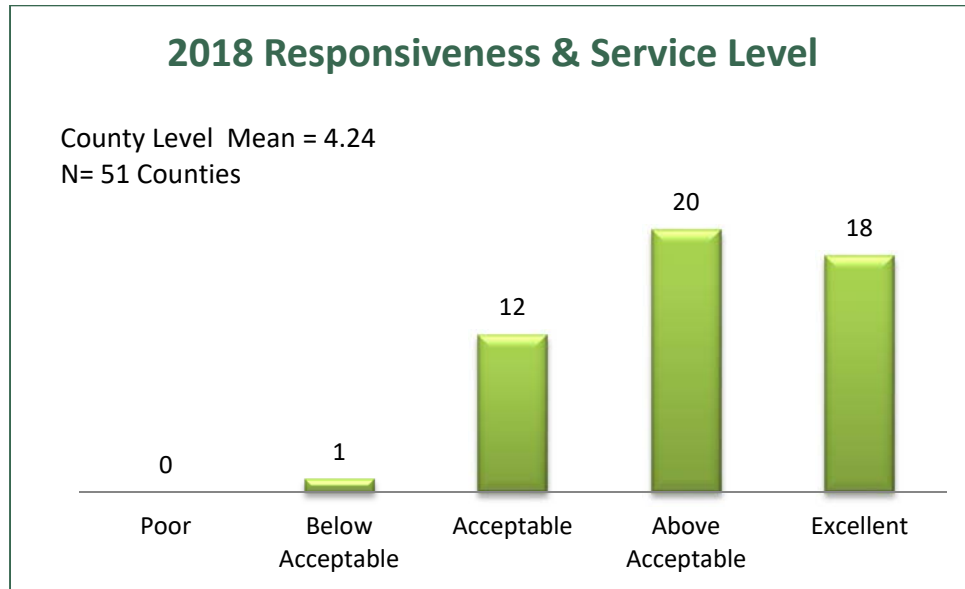
*Rate the quality of the programs and services provided from your local Extension office.*



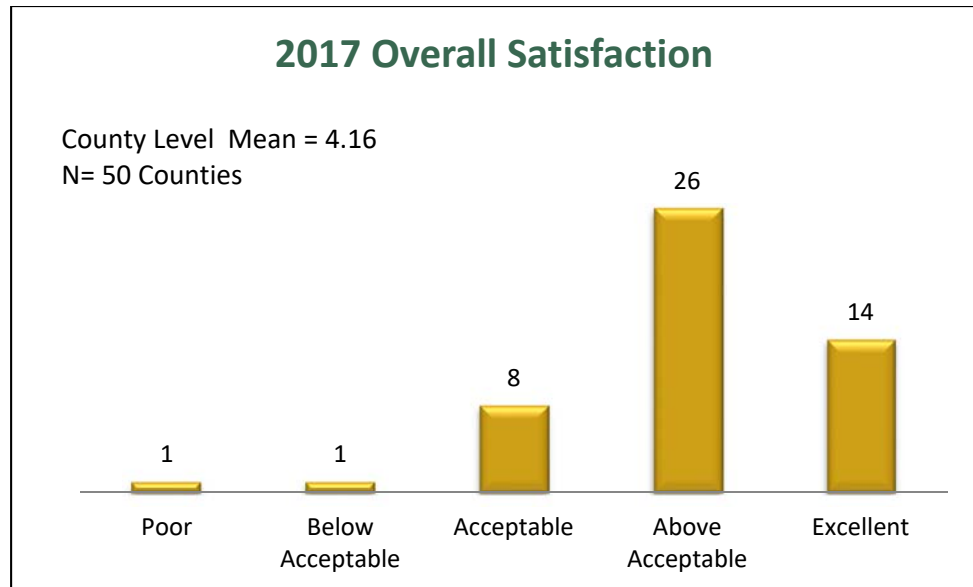
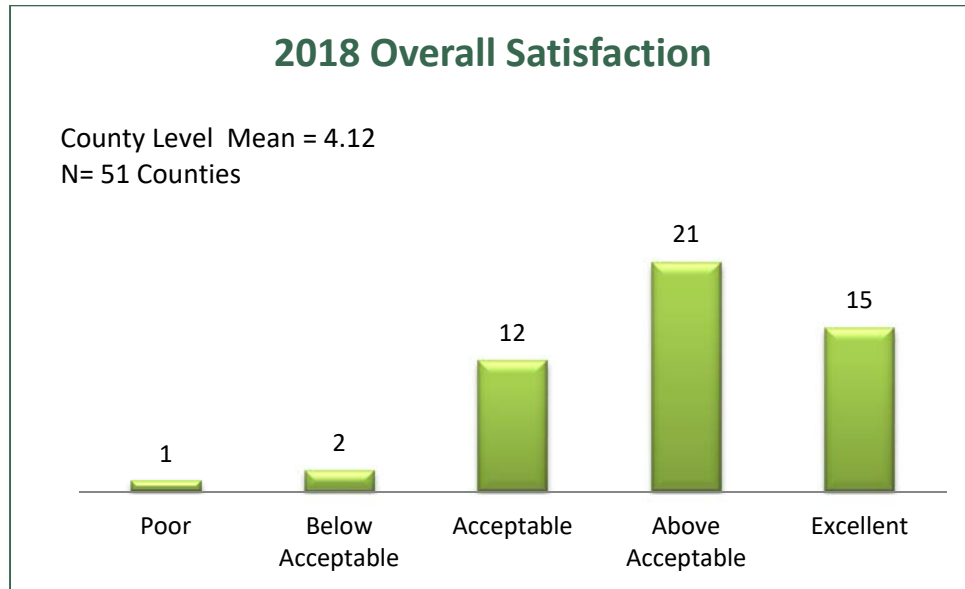
*How would you rate the value received by the citizens of your county from programs and services delivered by Extension?*



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

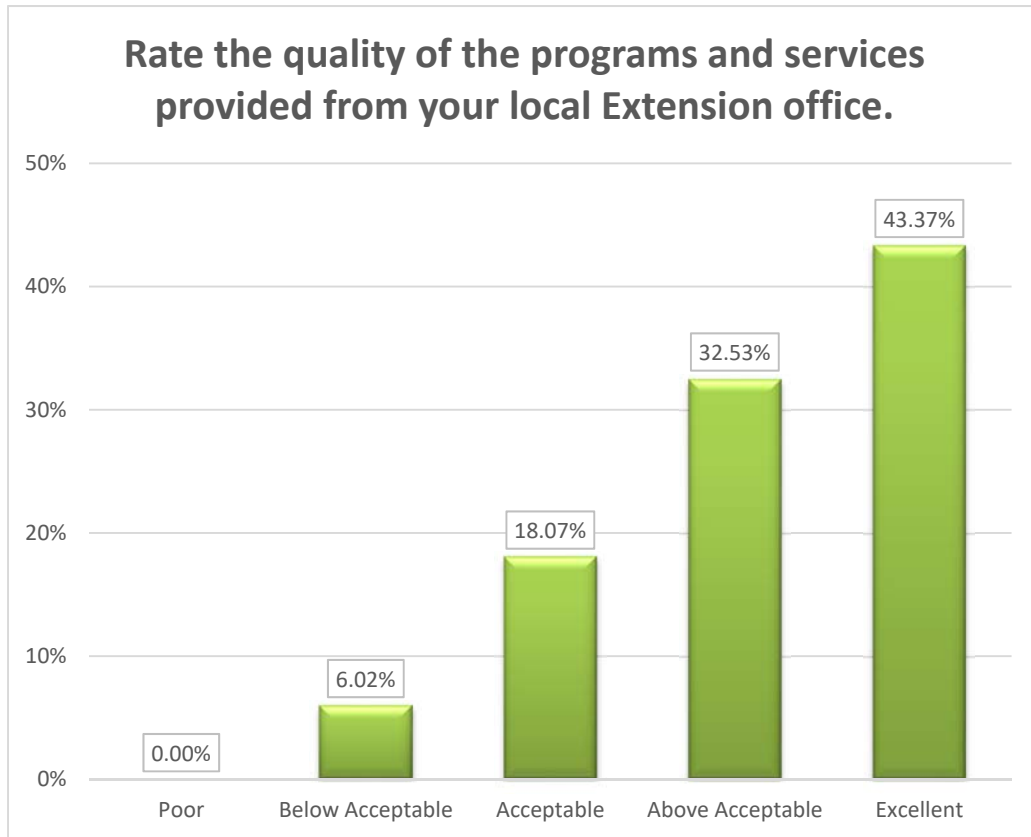


*Rate your overall satisfaction with the service the citizens receive from your local county/area Extension office.*



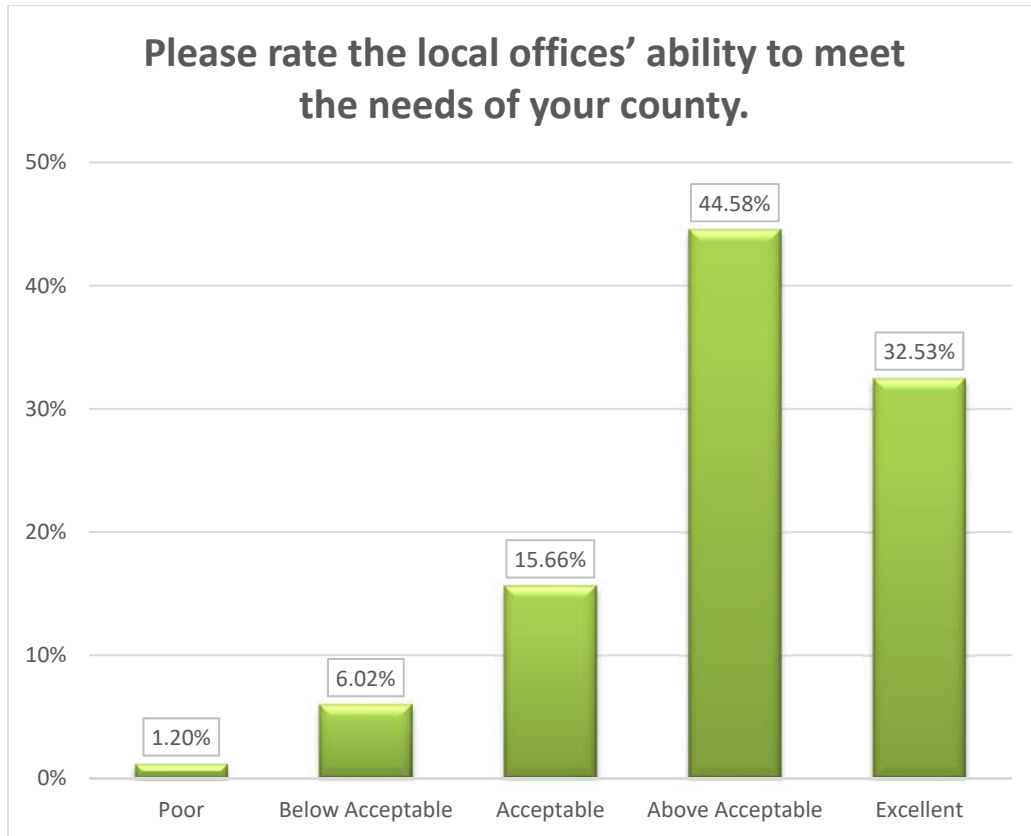
### Survey Results: Commissioner Level Data on Program Quality and Agent Ability

As indicated below, commissioner responses were overall positive about CSU Extension program quality and the responsiveness of local agents.

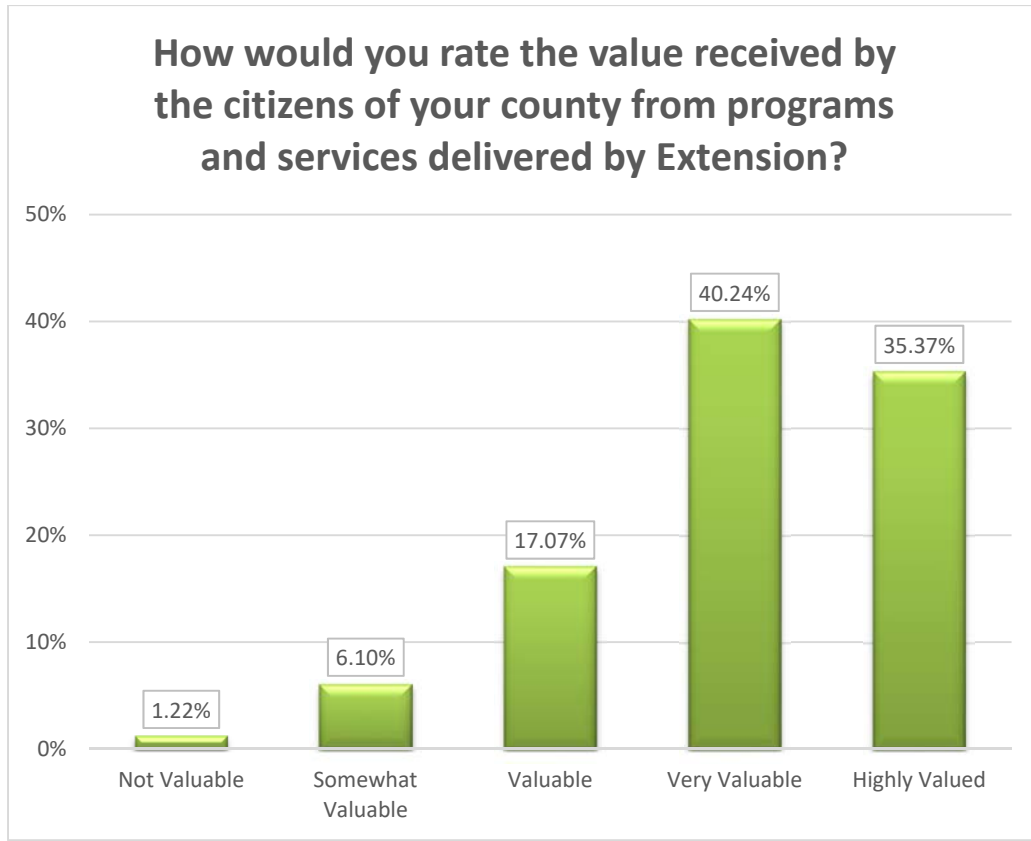


*Commissioners rated the services provided from local Extension office favorably, with 93.97% rated as acceptable, above acceptable or excellent.*

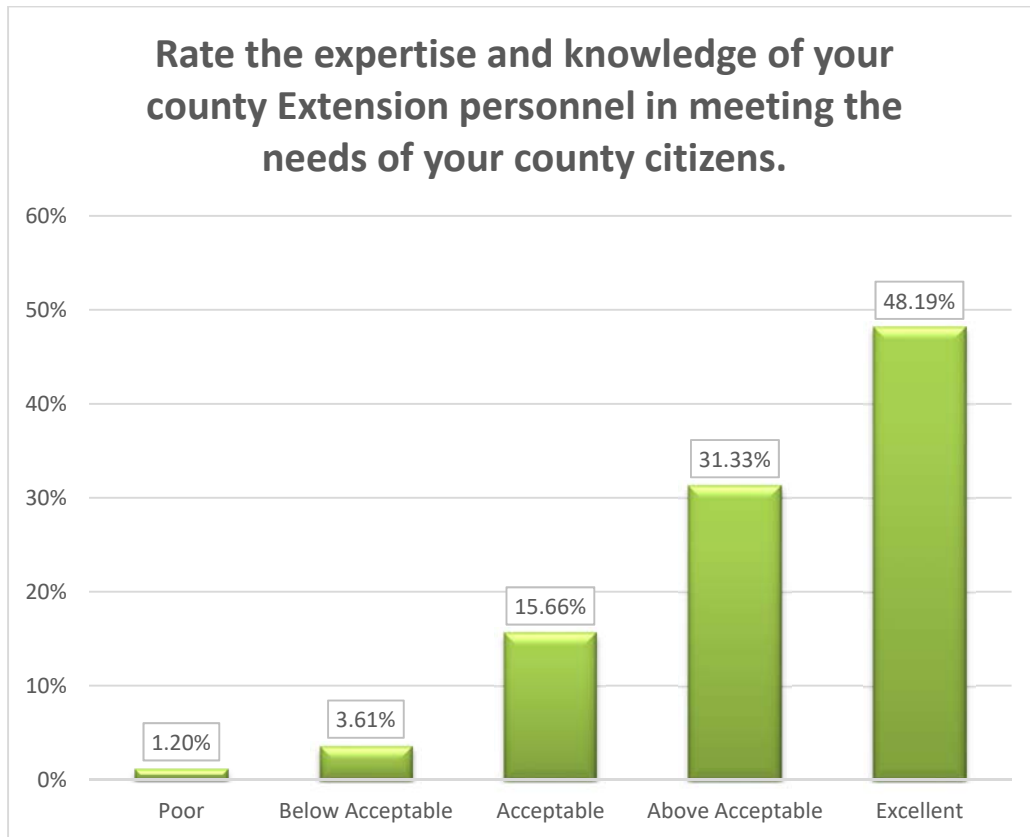




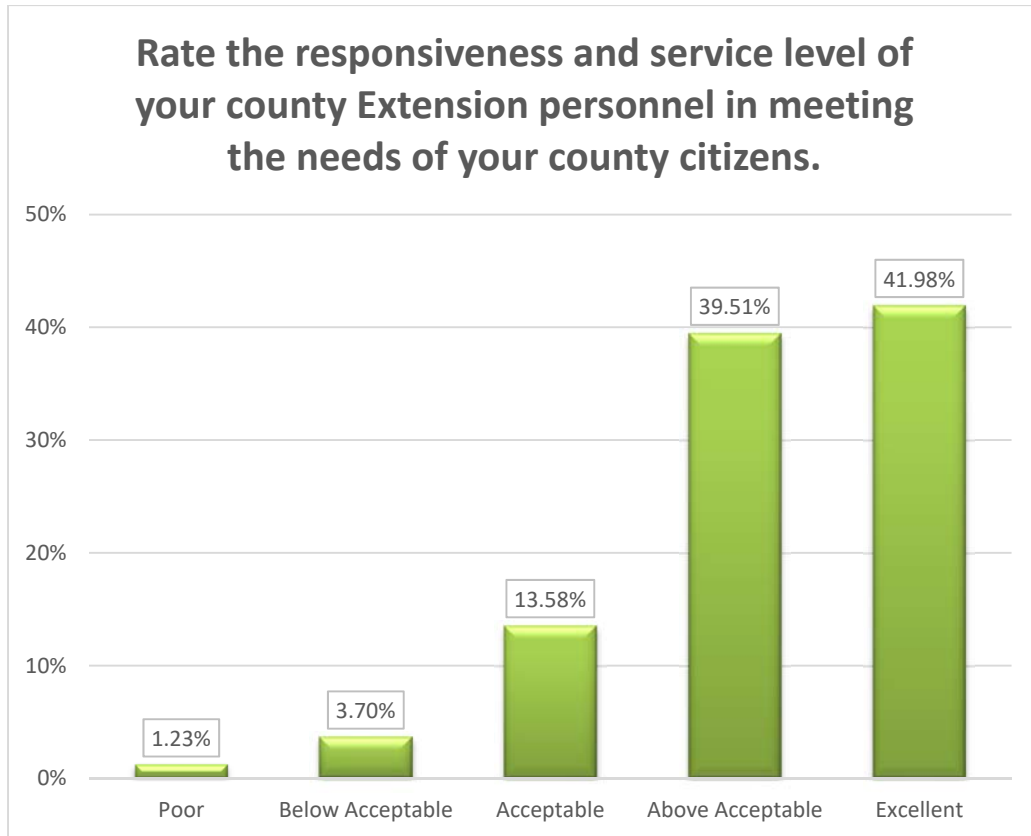
*Commissioners were satisfied with the **local offices' ability to meet the needs of each county**, with 92.77% rated acceptable, above acceptable or excellent.*



*The **value received** by the citizens from programs and services delivered by Extension was valuable, very valuable or highly valuable according to 92.68% of respondents. One commissioner noted: “They are a respected group of professionals that citizens feel comfortable working with and appreciate their knowledge and expertise.”*



*Commissioners rated the expertise and knowledge of Extension personnel positively, with 95.18% rated as acceptable, above acceptable or excellent. As one commissioner commented: “He is innovative and constantly looking for ways to involve citizens.”*



*The **responsiveness and service level** of Extension personnel in meeting the needs of citizens was found to be 95.07% acceptable, above acceptable or excellent. One commissioner comments: “The staff enjoy engaging with citizens and are always responsive to their questions.”*

### 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. Program quality is rated consistently high across all three regions. Overall, regions are most positive about Extension personnel knowledge and overall satisfaction; scores trend slightly lower with regard to quality and capacity.

2018 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%	75%	75%	16%	18%	19%	5%	7%	6%
Capacity	79%	75%	78%	11%	14%	19%	11%	11%	3%
Value	83%	75%	72%	11%	14%	22%	6%	11%	6%
Knowledge	79%	75%	83%	16%	14%	17%	5%	11%	0%
Responsiveness	94%	79%	78%	0%	11%	22%	6%	11%	0%
Satisfaction	88%	79%	72%	6%	11%	19%	6%	11%	8%

### Survey Comments: Kudos and Concerns

Each question on the survey allowed unlimited space for comments. Comments on local agents and offices were generally highly supportive. Comments continue to report leveraging Extension resources to partner with county efforts in nutrition, fire mitigation, parenting programs, water quality, and human services. Comments also raised concerns about local and regional capacity. Several responses suggested the need for more public awareness, and ideally more staffing, to increase impact and effectiveness.

#### Praise for Extension Agents and Services

- “All of our CSU Extension staff are excellent. Go above and beyond to make sure they help the citizens in our county. We truly are blessed by the staff here.”
- “We are thrilled with the ability to focus on what is most important to our community, and not to be too constrained by Extension requirements or expectations.”
- “Very pleased with the program, the involvement of CSU Extension at a higher level, and with our current CSU Extension agent and his involvement in our county and with the citizens. The 4-H program is growing under his direction and his knowledge of various issues is extensive and helpful on a daily basis.”
- “We have been able to utilize CSU Extension staff and their expertise in community prioritized endeavors. I feel it is a great two-way opportunity that brings the skill and services to the community and in turn elevates the presence and importance of CSU Extension in the community.”

### Concerns: Staffing and Outreach

- “Additional staff would be nice as our agent is spread thin offering classes and assistance to bordering counties. I understand the financial constraints on CSU & counties making this a difficult option.”
- “Agents do not stay long enough to develop and sustain programs.”
- “The Extension office is limited with only one staff person. Additional staff would really help enhance the office to better serve our county.”
- “Citizens can’t take advantage of programs they are unaware of. We need to do a better job of PR.”

### Recommendations from Respondents

- “As climate change continues to alter the landscape, the forage opportunities, our forest and our weather patterns here in the headwaters community we need CSU Extension to continue its leadership in bringing us the best available science, programs and expertise to allow adaptation to the challenges we will continue to face.”
- “Open positions need to be filled in a more timely manner.”
- “I think there is increasing interest in regenerative agriculture and carbon farming. It would be helpful for Extension to increase its expertise in this arena.”
- “Create more STEAM programs for youth and more engagement on climate change.”
- “CSU Extension should market to non-rural citizens about its services.”

### Conclusion

2018 survey data indicate that county officials feel positively about their agents and are highly satisfied with CSU Extension. Filling positions and continuing to consider county-specific interests and concerns through Extension programming and collaboration are items of interest for the coming year.

The Office of Engagement is working with CSU Extension to address issues raised and recommendations from respondents. 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. The survey results are shared with CSU Extension program leaders and regional directors, to be used in planning and recommendations for 2020.