

Ontario's Environmental Farm Plans: *Measuring Performance, Improving Effectiveness and Increasing Participation*

Paul Smith¹, Carrie Bibik², Jon Lazarus³, David Armitage³, Cindy Bradley-Macmillan¹, Maxine Kingston⁴, Nancy Cherny⁴, Andrew Graham⁵, Ryan Plummer⁶ and Robert Summers⁷

¹ *Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs*

² *PRA Inc.*

³ *Ontario Federation of Agriculture*

⁴ *Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada*

⁵ *Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association*

⁶ *Brock University*

⁷ *University of Alberta*



Sustainable and Just Rural Transitions: Connections and Complexities
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Outline

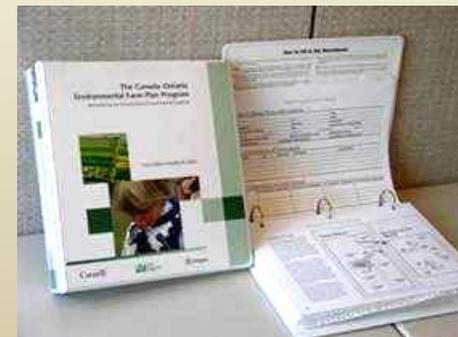
- What is an Environmental Farm Plan?
- EFP history and governance
- Research objectives and methodology
- Findings
 - Levels of Implementation of EFP Action Plans
 - Time and cost of implementation
 - Factors affecting implementation
 - Improvements to aid completion and implementation
- Recommendations for the future
- Evolution of EFP toward Sustainability Plans



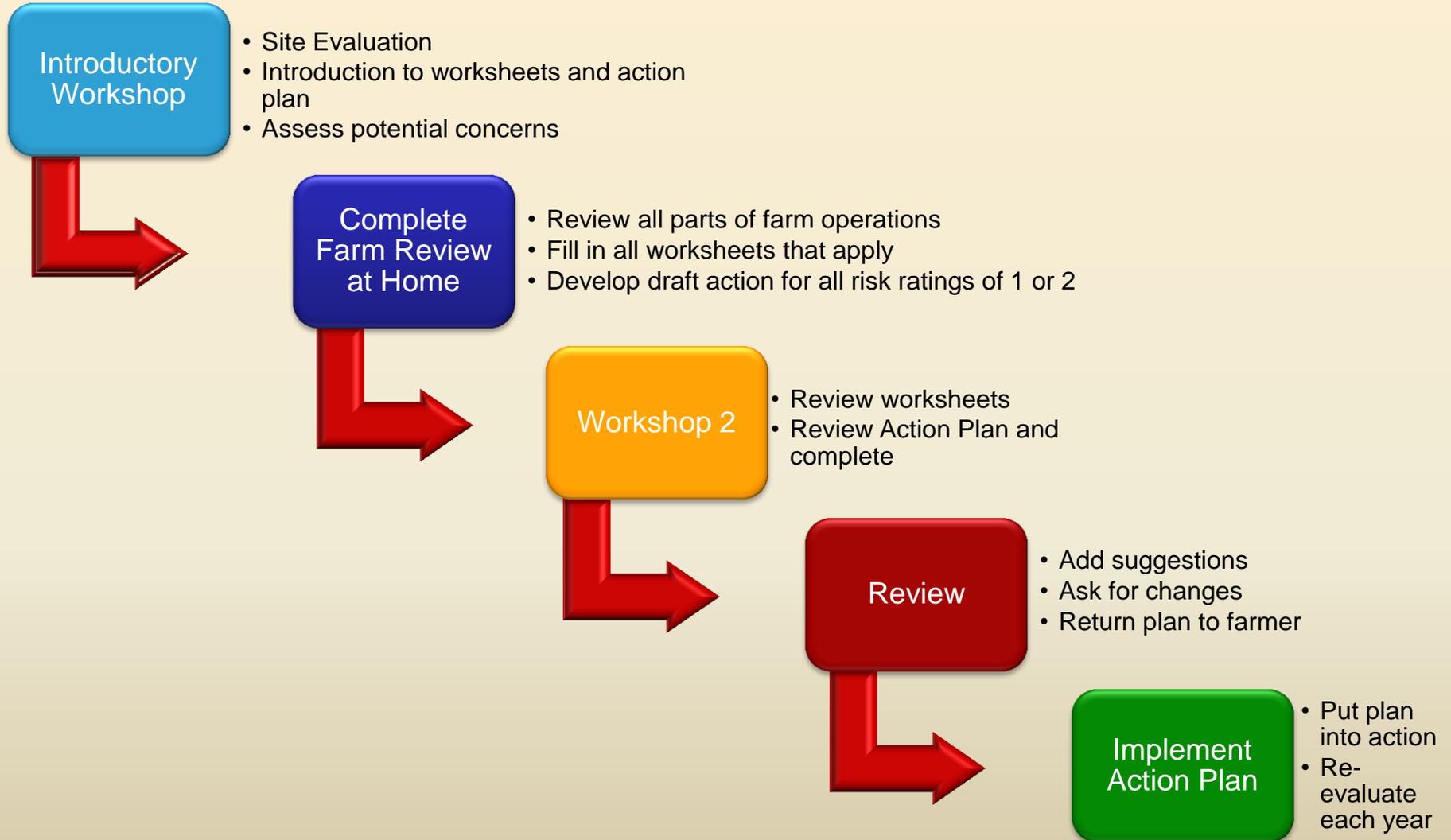
What is an Environmental Farm Plan?



- Voluntary, confidential risk assessment prepared by each farm
- Builds farmers' environmental awareness
- Rank performance in 23 topic areas or Worksheets
 - Water, soil, air, nature
 - Up to 319 risk assessment questions
- Rank farm's performance on each topic
 - 1, 2, 3, 4 (Best)
- Action Plan: actions to improve all 1 and 2 ratings to at least 3 (good)
 - Short- and long-term actions, compensating factors, monitoring, barriers to action
- 3rd party review
- Ready to implement
 - Many projects eligible for cost shared funding
 - Other actions implemented through business activities

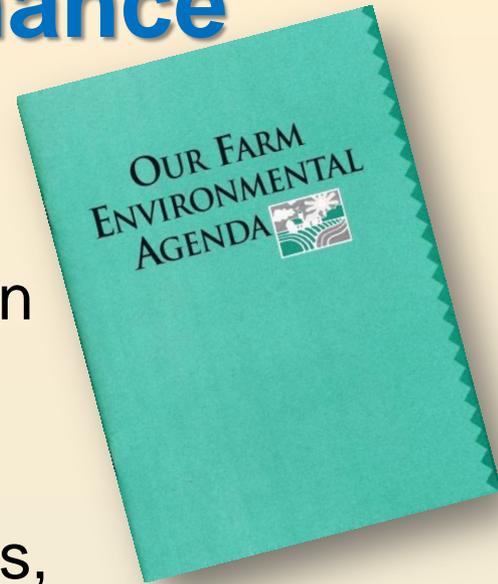


Process for EFP Development



EFP History and Governance

- Began as a farm organization-led initiative, supported by government, 1991
- A response to perceived threat of regulation
- Coalition of farm organizations developed an agenda for voluntary EFP
- Workbook manual developed by consensus, farm organizations and government participants
- Gradual acceptance in farm community
- Changed social norms
- Mid-1990s adopted in Canadian Maritime provinces
- 2003 – Canada-wide acceptance of EFP model
- Now in 4th edition, joint copyright by farm groups and government



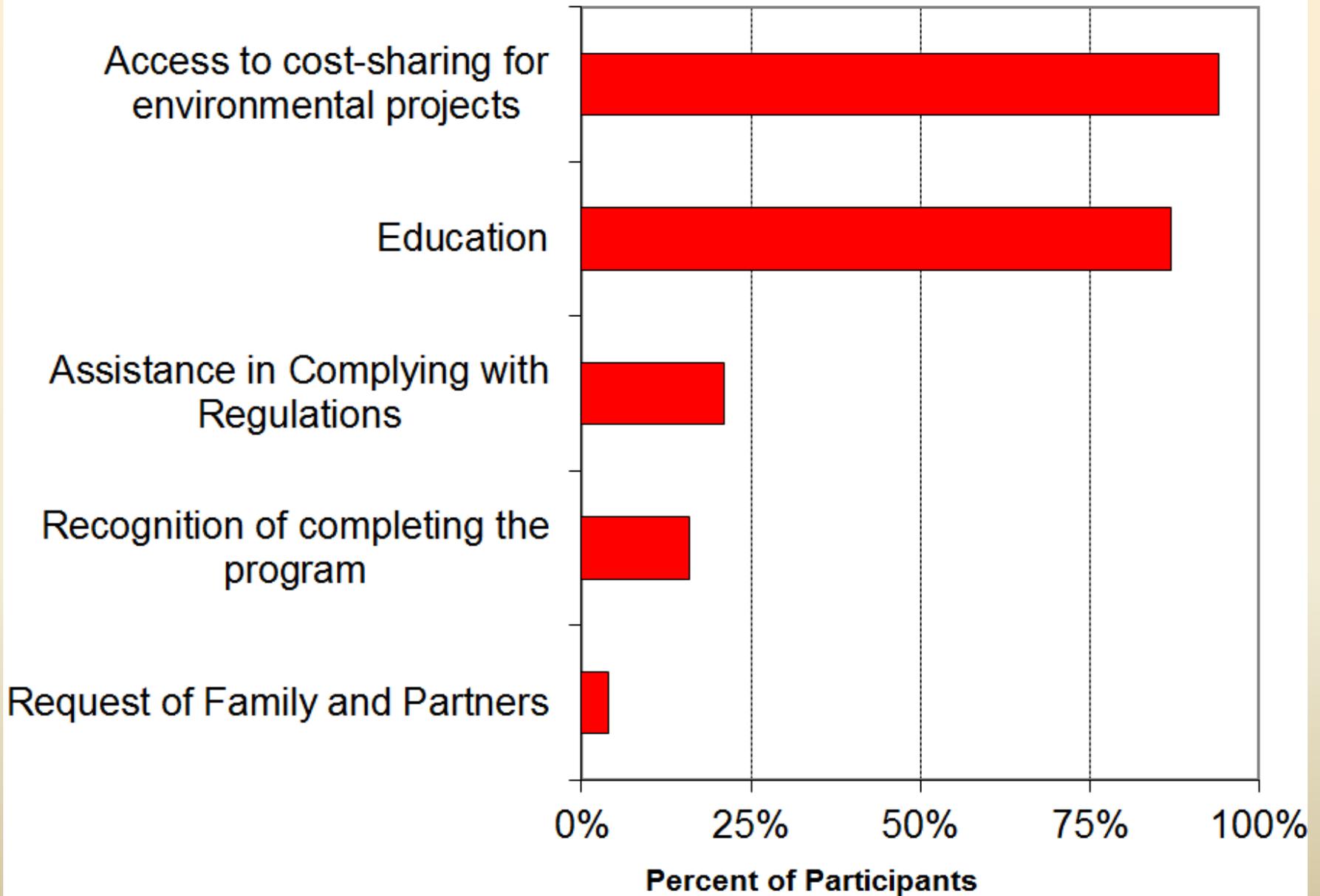
Research objectives

- Assess level of implementation of Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Action Plans
 - Important to measure progress of major policy tool
 - Move beyond participation levels
 - Comparisons between survey in 1999 and 2010
- Assess potential for ongoing measurement of progress in implementing EFPs
- Investigate services to encourage participating farmers to fully implement their EFP Action Plans

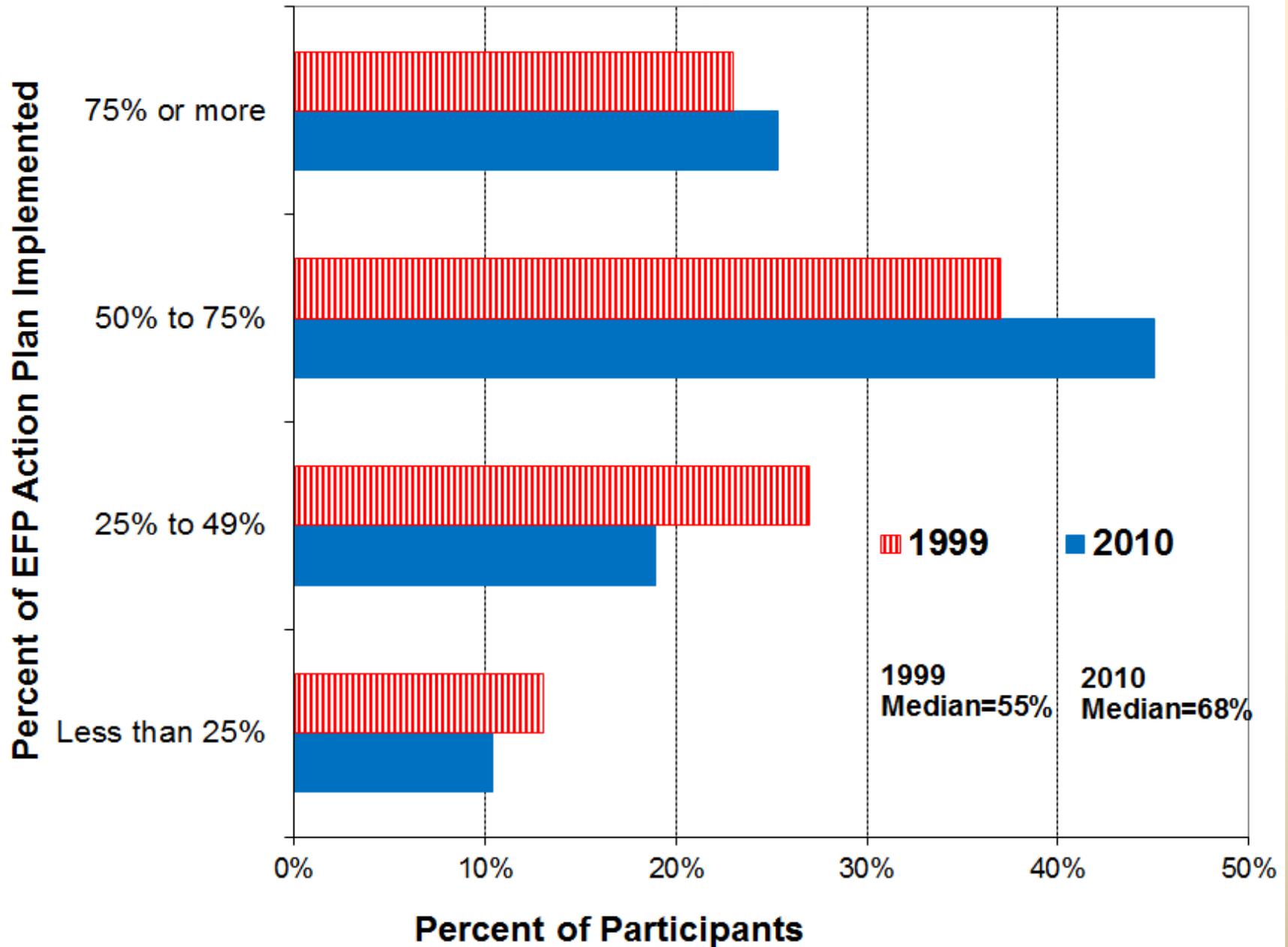
Research methodology

- Two-stage survey of 189 EFP Participants in 2010
 - Questionnaire on farm/producer characteristics
 - Interviews to review EFP Action Plans and how much of plans have been implemented
- Comparisons with EFP participant survey in 1999 (n=179)

Motivation for EFP Participation



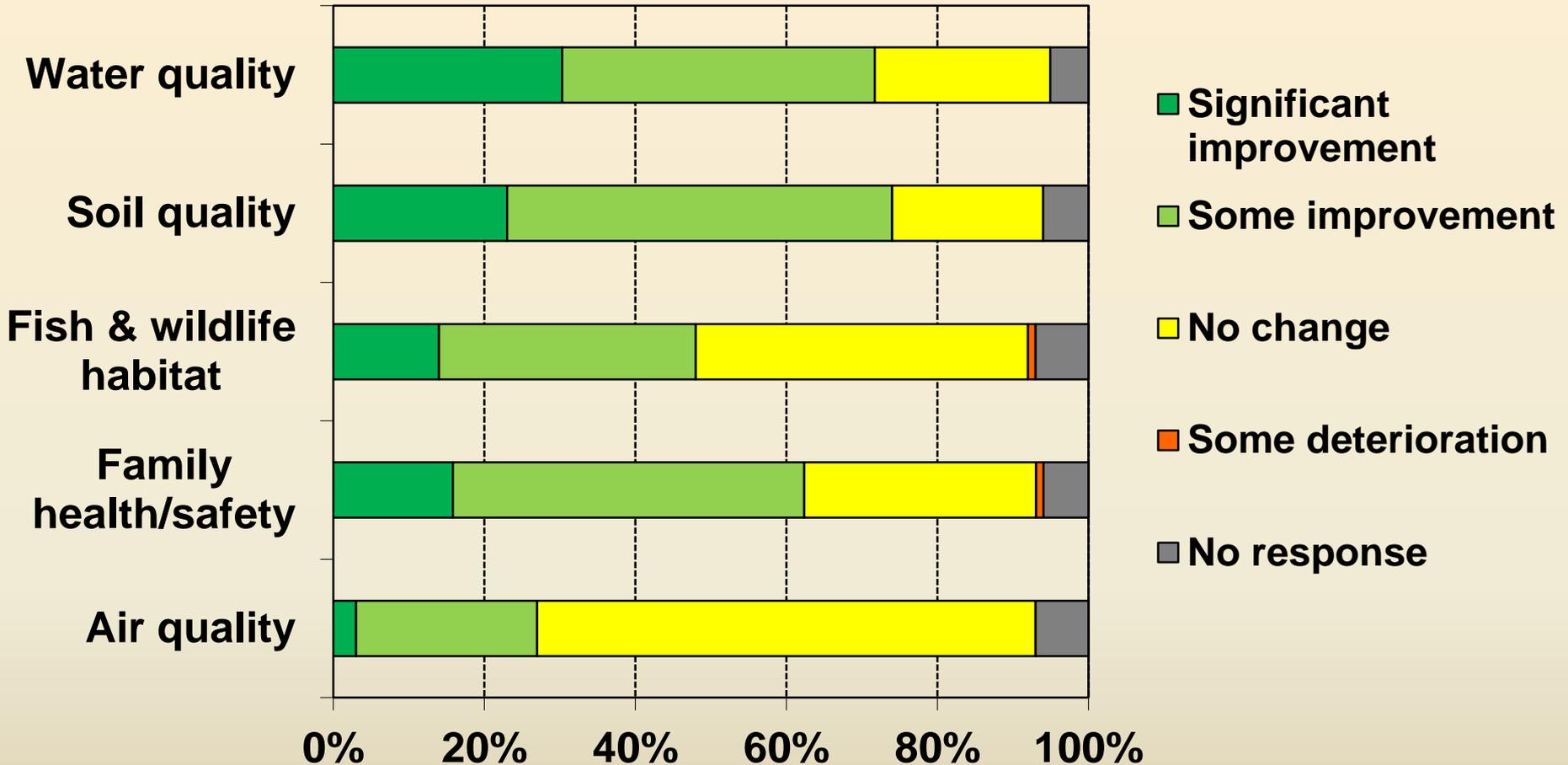
Level of EFP Implementation



Factors Influencing EFP Implementation

- Farming experience
 - Higher implementation with number of years experience in farming
- Time since EFP preparation
 - Higher implementation with years since completing the EFP Action Plan
- Farm income
 - Higher implementation for farms with higher farm revenue
- Off-farm income
 - Higher implementation for those with moderate off-farm income
 - Lower for those with high off-farm income

Perceived Environmental Improvements



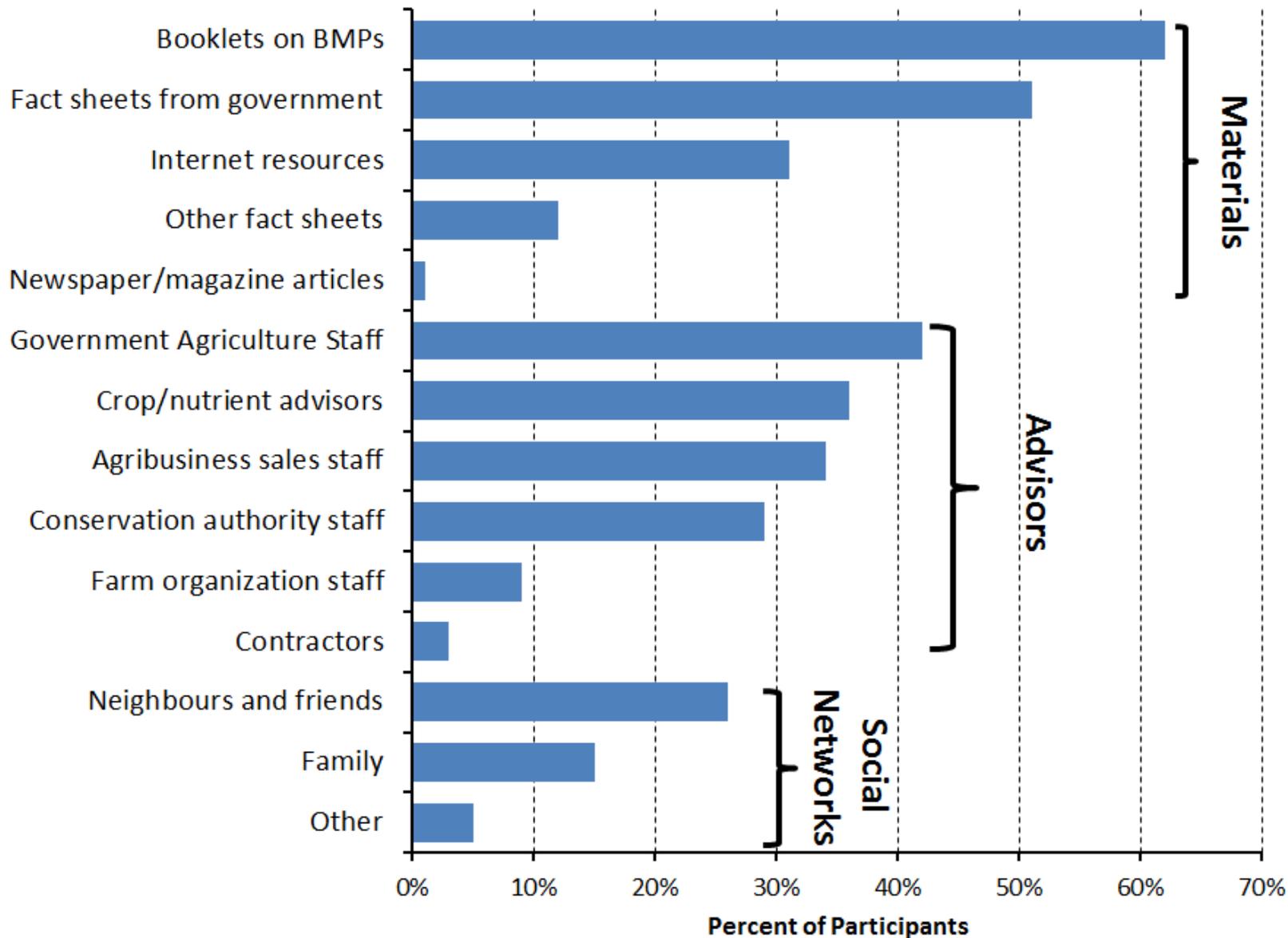
Those reporting improvements had significantly higher levels of implementation

Time and Costs of EFP Implementation

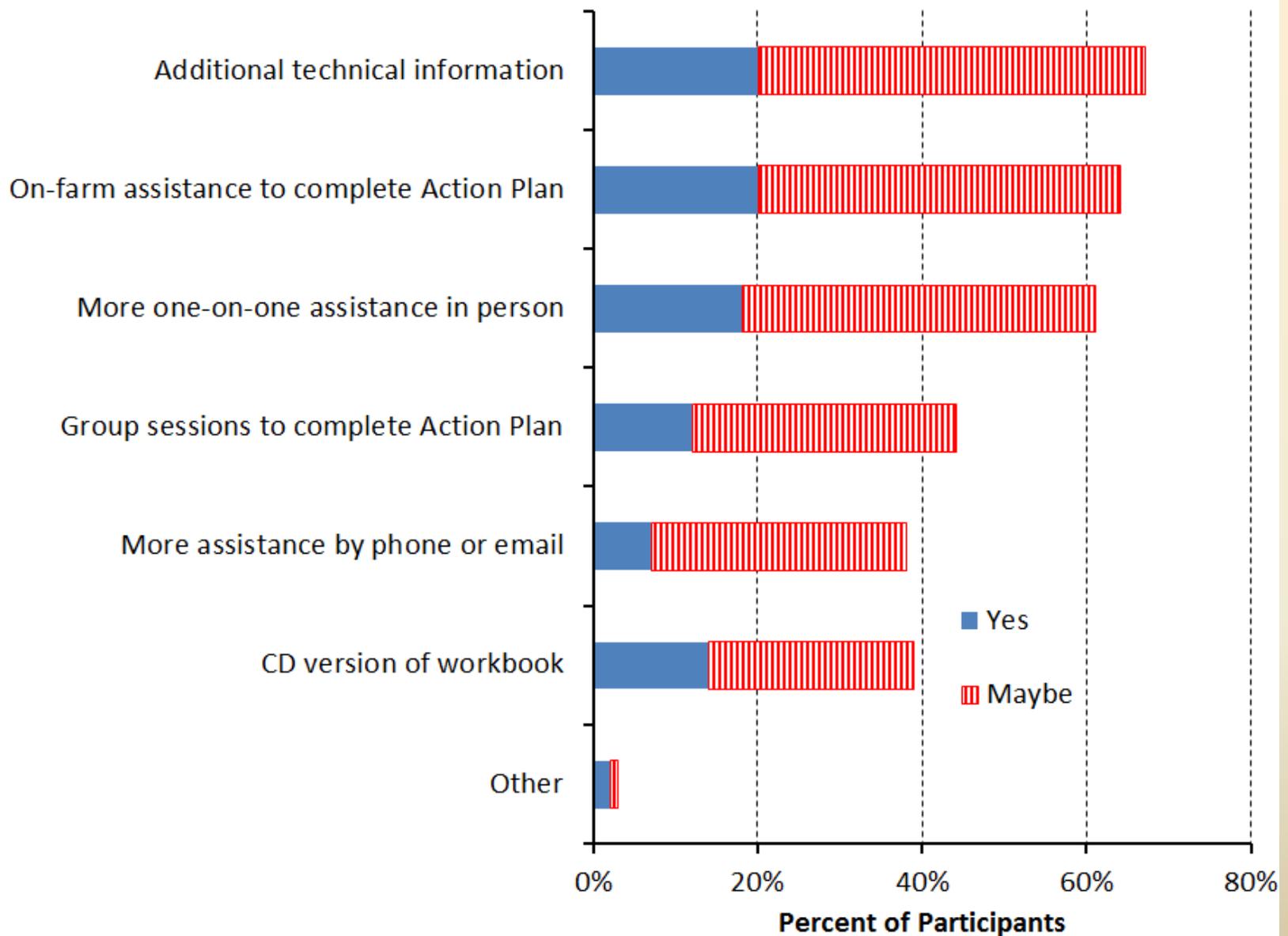
	1999 All Farms	2010 All Farms
Average Number of Hours in Implementation	53	163
Average total cost per farm	\$10,800	\$69,600
Average Percent self-funded per farm	-	77.4%
Average Percent cost-share funding per farm	-	22.4%

No significant differences between farm types for costs and hours in 2010 (among field crops, horticulture, livestock).

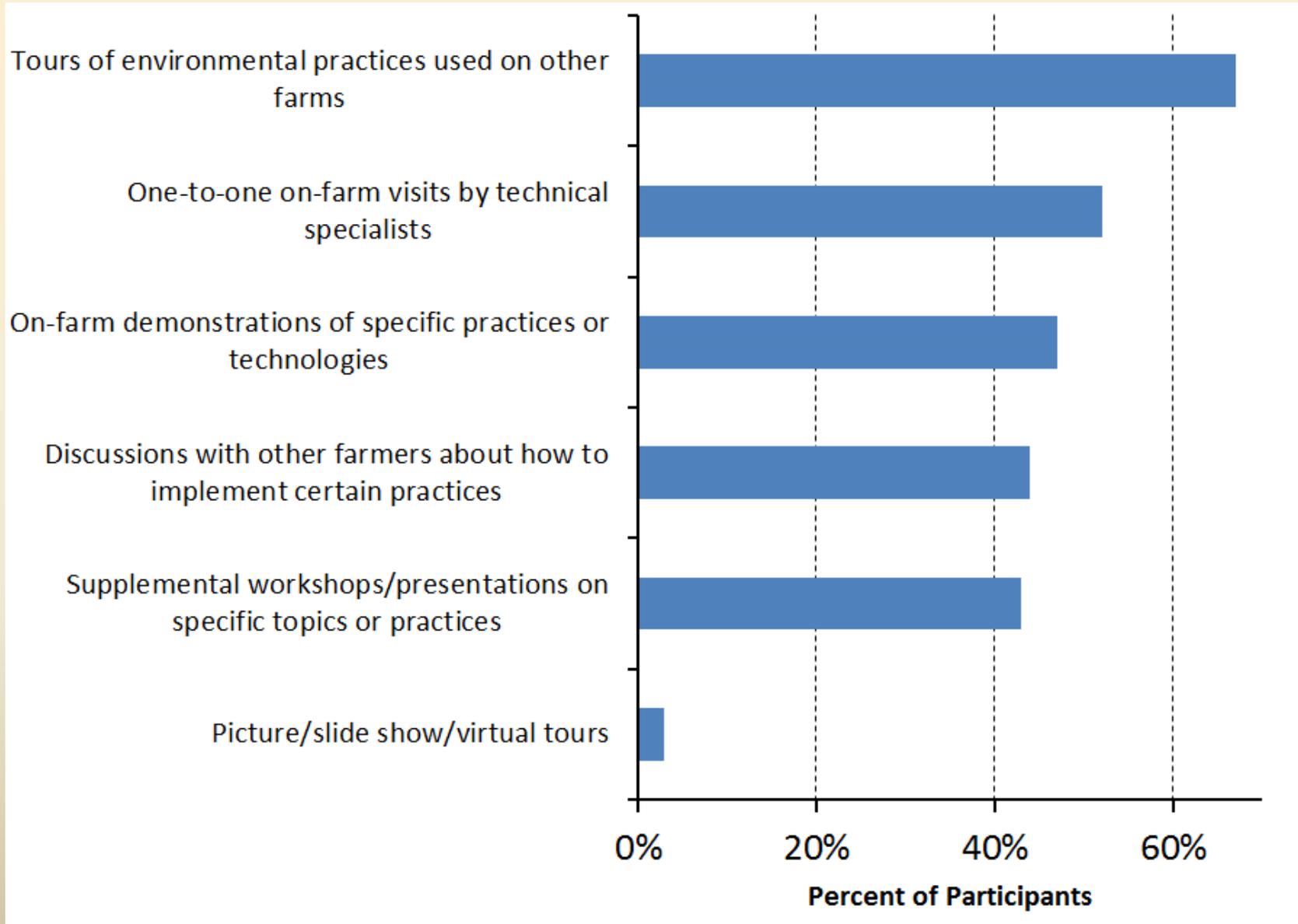
Information Sources Used



What would aid EFP completion?



What would aid EFP Implementation?



Recommendations for Improvement

Continue the Mix of Education and Incentives

1. Build on the success of education through EFP Program
2. Continue powerful linkage of education and cost-sharing

Enhance Services to Spur More Action

3. Offer more services tailored to needs of different types of producers
4. Consider additional ways to encourage implementation of EFP Action Plans
5. Consider additional services to enhance social interaction among farmers regarding EFP implementation
6. Revise EFP Action Plan to identify changes in risk ratings resulting from activities undertaken



Recommendations, continued

Expand Farmer Participation

7. Conduct research on motivators for farmers not participating in EFP

Improve Performance Measurement

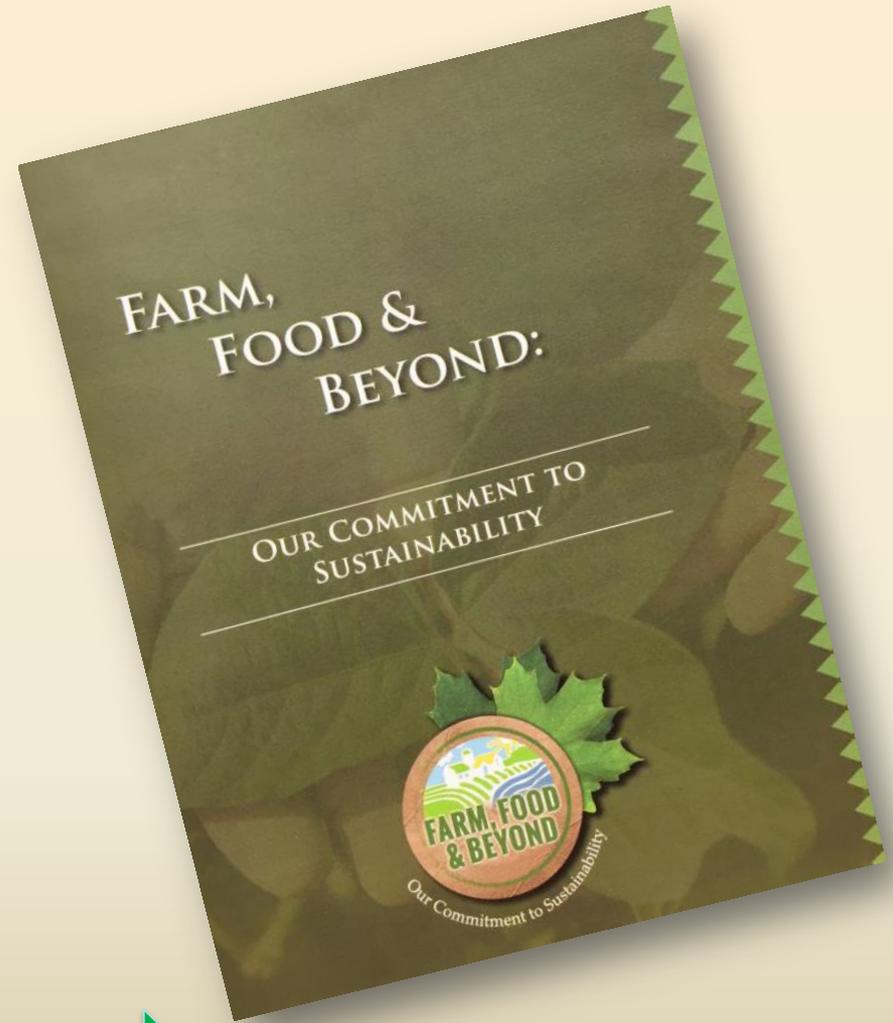
8. Expand performance measures to show success of EFP
9. Use Action Plan data to document the value of EFP
10. Ongoing EFP performance measurement



Evolution of EFP to Sustainability



1990



2015

FARM, FOOD & BEYOND:

OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainability now a complex, retailer-driven, commodity-based maze of standards and approaches.
- Multi-year initiative of Ontario's farmers and food and beverage processors
- Builds on 25-year success of Environmental Farm Plan
- Expands scope into a whole farm sustainability plan
- Goal to create system that reduces redundancy, is farmer-friendly and provide platform for next 25 years.
- Initial work to develop concept, benchmark against other sustainability platforms.



Key Findings

- High levels of implementation 65% in 2010, up from 54% in 1999
- Significant investments in environmental projects \$69.6K average, up from \$10.8K in 1999
 - 77% of funds were farmers' own funding
 - 42% of actions taken had no reported costs
- Evidence of behaviour change, education influencing priorities (45% changed priorities after workshop)
- High satisfaction with EFP program (100% satisfied or very satisfied)
- About 3/4 perceived an improvement in environmental quality
- Participants took advantage of educational resources available
- Recommendations of new techniques for improvements

Questions?