Avoiding Survey Fatigue

ANR clientele receive many surveys from vendors, services, organizations, and other entities, resulting in fierce competition for their attention. Yet Extension personnel need to canvas their clients to determine how effective our educational programs are and what kind of impact we are making.

The more approachable we can make surveys, whether electronic or printed, the more likely we’ll get a response.

To avoid “survey fatigue”, here are a couple of tips that will streamline survey questions.

Don’t use ‘Yes/No’ type of questions if you expect respondents to answer why they checked Yes or No. Consolidate the information you are seeking into one question as a more efficient and faster way for participants to answer. This approach also makes it easier to compile and analyze data, and it has the advantage of saving space.

SURVEY QUESTION EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1  This: How often do you routinely analyze raw and pasteurized milk for bacteria levels?

- Daily  - Weekly  - Monthly  - I do not routinely analyze...

Not this: Do you routinely analyze raw and pasteurized milk for bacteria levels?

- YES  - NO  If yes, how often? (Daily, weekly, monthly): __________

EXAMPLE 2  To avoid misunderstandings, use words rather than symbols with concepts such as “less than” and “more than” when listing a range, or when “Not applicable” is appropriate. For the same reason, use the word “to” rather than a hyphen when listing a range of values.

This:

a.  ______ less than 5  ______ 6 to 10  ______ 11 to 15  ______ more than 15

b.  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor  Does not apply

Not this:

a.  ______ < 5  ______ 6-10  ______ 11-15  ______ > 15

b.  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor  N/A