



2019

SUMMER CONFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS & FISCAL ANALYSIS



SECTION I.

- ▶ SURVEY RESULTS

Responses and Status

[ANALYZE RESULTS](#)

TOTAL RESPONSES

39

OVERALL SURVEY STATUS

OPEN

NOTIFICATIONS ?

[Edit](#)

Collectors

OPEN

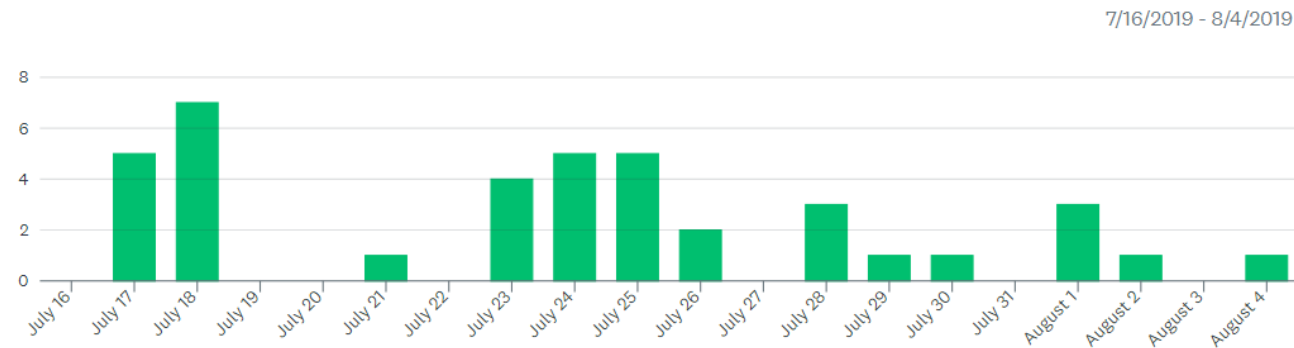
[Web Link 1](#)

Created: 7/18/2019

39

RESPONSES
COLLECTED

Responses Volume

[ANALYZE RESULTS](#)

Q1

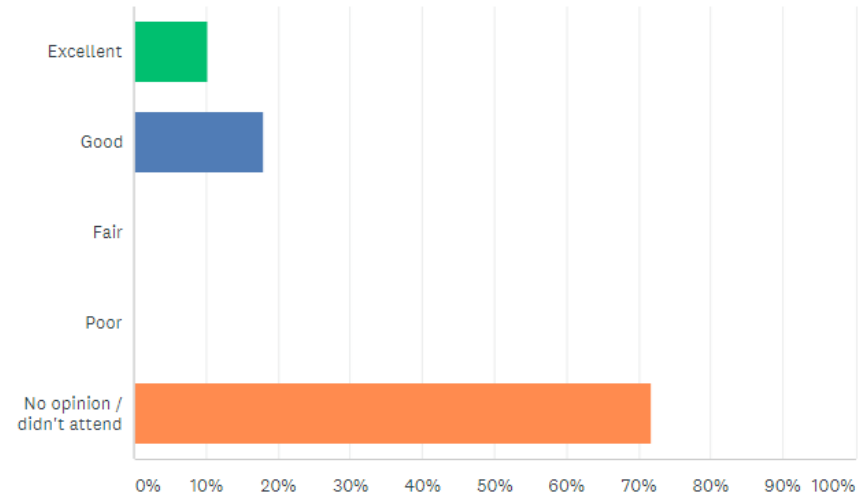


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SOCIAL EVENT: How would you overall rate the preconference social event "A Night at the Ballpark"?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	10.26%	4
Good	17.95%	7
Fair	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
No opinion / didn't attend	71.79%	28
TOTAL		39

[Comments \(4\)](#)

COMMENTS:

- ▶ Biggest crowd I can remember at a pre-conference event.
- ▶ The ball game was fun. The outside temperature was unfortunate.
- ▶ I thought it was great, except for the heat (which obviously can't be controlled) & there just wasn't enough shade for everyone. But it was fine- we just sat in the bleachers & walked our snacks/drinks back & forth. But I thought the concept of the event was great & would definitely attend again!
- ▶ The ballpark with food served was a great atmosphere. Glad we went.

Q2

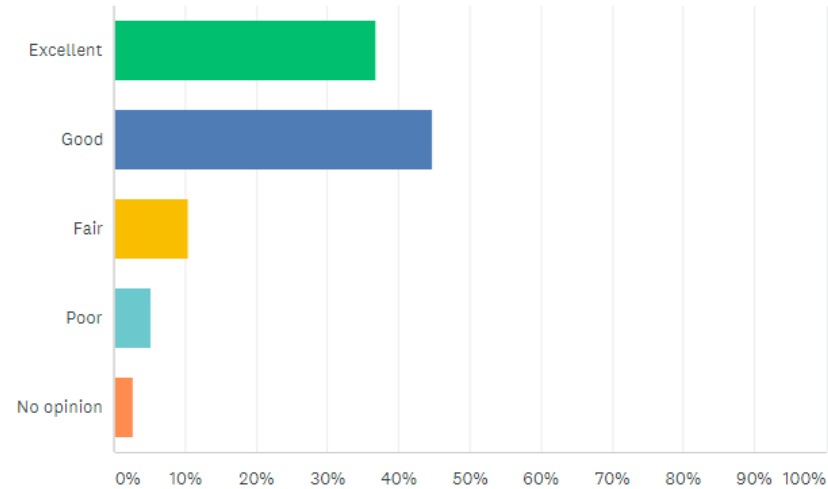


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SESSIONS: How would you overall rate the quality and value of the speakers and programs during the conference?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES ▼	
▼ Excellent	36.84%	14
▼ Good	44.74%	17
▼ Fair	10.53%	4
▼ Poor	5.26%	2
▼ No opinion	2.63%	1
TOTAL	38	

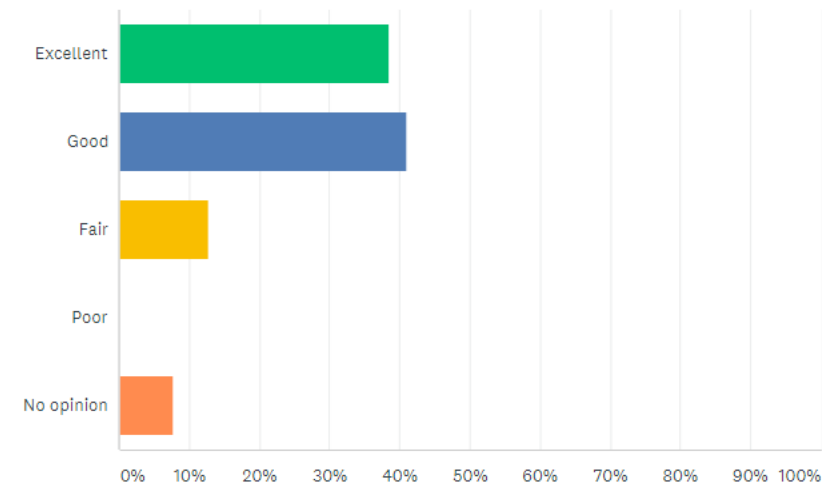
[Comments \(8\)](#)

COMMENTS:

- ▶ I liked last years where they were split up and you could choose which ones you wanted to attend
- ▶ Would have been nice to have some built in breaks.
- ▶ I thought most speakers were very good. A couple were a little dry. My favorite was probably Brad Zimmerman, I may try to get him for my annual meeting in February. Overall good relevant topics.
- ▶ Only present for Tuesday sessions
- ▶ Should be different sessions not one group all the time. More variety.
- ▶ Some were really good but a few were rather boring. Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act did not even attend because I have heard too many times and it is a rather boring subject matter. Kris Reynolds, Brad Zimmerman, Joseph Rush, and Jeff Cox were the best ones for me.
- ▶ Diverse group of speakers. Even the GATA and FOIA/OMA presentations were very good, kept my attention. I don't feel any of the sessions ran too long.
- ▶ The speakers were very pertinent to current work. I especially appreciated the breakout on Conservation Desktop and Citrix. The lady who spoke on GATA was over my head, but it is necessary information since this is the direction grants go now. She didn't explain why GATA is necessary to us and the directors were probably clueless. She was a very good speaker.

SIGNATURE EVENTS: How would you overall rate the Opening Ceremony, Recognition Luncheon, Conservation Farm Family Awards Dinner, and Soil Stewardship Breakfast?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	38.46%	15
Good	41.03%	16
Fair	12.82%	5
Poor	0.00%	0
No opinion	7.69%	3
TOTAL		39

[Comments \(10\)](#)

COMMENTS:

- ▶ I thought all the programs were great although next year with the farm family need to make sure to use slide narratives along with the slide show, whether its the honored speaker doing the presentation or the SWCD employee just need to make sure those are available, it makes the slides seem important and the employees more knowledgeable.
- ▶ Would like to see more participation in award categories.
- ▶ Did not attend any activities on Monday.
- ▶ The Farm Family Dinner was very nice.
- ▶ I didn't love the way that the buffet was in the hallway.
- ▶ Awards presented at recognition luncheon were disorganized. Individuals were initially omitted during the presentation, requested photos submitted of the Directors were not used in the power point, names misspelled on certificates when awards forms were submitted correctly. With there only being two farm families nominated again this year, the presentation/recognition/accomplishments of the families was too streamlined. More narrative along with slides showing practices, the farmstead, crop fields, etc. need to be a part of the presentation again. Also, it was obvious the county representatives were not prepared to do the introductions, narratives of the families. Great that both were awarded Farm Family!! Meals for the recognition luncheon and farm family banquet were very good and enjoyed by all. The stewardship breakfast has always been attended and enjoyed by our Directors. The food was excellent and the speaker very entertaining. It has been great to have the breakfast back in the line-up of events.
- ▶ Only attended the 1st two, no opinion on the last two

COMMENTS:

- ▶ Needs to be more to the opening ceremony. Did not attend farm family since only two families. This needs to be changed somehow to get more participation otherwise need to retire this and do something different. Too much workload I think involved for offices with only one employee.
- ▶ I only attended the Recognition Luncheon and the Soil Stewardship Breakfast but thought both were well-run. Soil Stewardship speaker interesting to someone who likes Illinois history (like me)!
- ▶ The new location was excellent, parking was great and the food was delicious. A change occasionally is good. My director's wife didn't appreciate the leftover salads on Tuesday at lunch. They were tasty though. The room for meals was way too cold, but that is a hotel issue and not the AISWCDs issue.

Q4

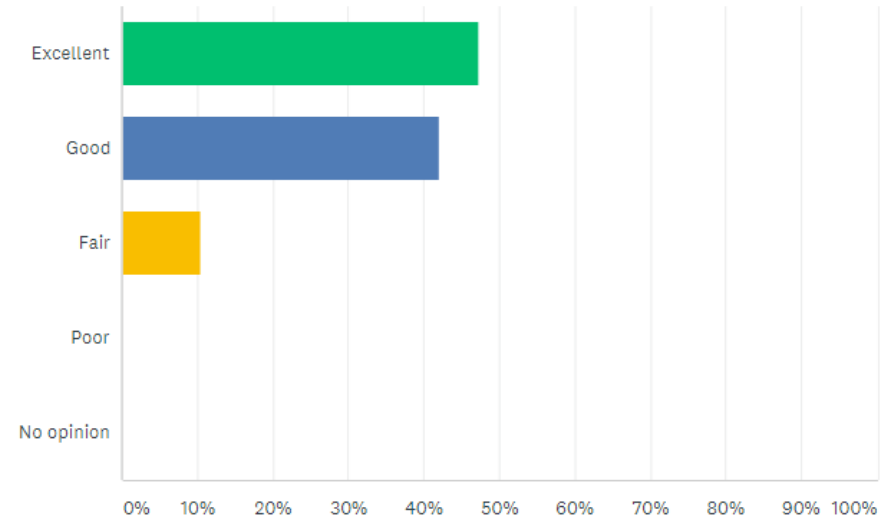


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EXHIBITORS: How would you overall rate the exhibitor area?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Excellent	47.37%	18
▼ Good	42.11%	16
▼ Fair	10.53%	4
▼ Poor	0.00%	0
▼ No opinion	0.00%	0
TOTAL		38

[Comments \(6\)](#)

COMMENTS:

- ▶ Logistically ideal. Convenient for exhibitors and conference participants. Many good exhibits. Relevant to our mission.
- ▶ Should have more time with vendors scheduled on the agenda
- ▶ Definitely an advantage for them to be set up in the hallway where attendees had to walk past them and not have them hidden off in another area.
- ▶ Everybody loves free SWAG! The content was great as well.
- ▶ It was both good and bad that they were in front of the main session rooms...sometimes it got a little congested there, but I personally still prefer they were exhibiting nearby rather than being away from the action.
- ▶ I very much enjoyed having the vendors up close and personal. The group was a great mix and the free craft beer samples were top notch!!

Q5

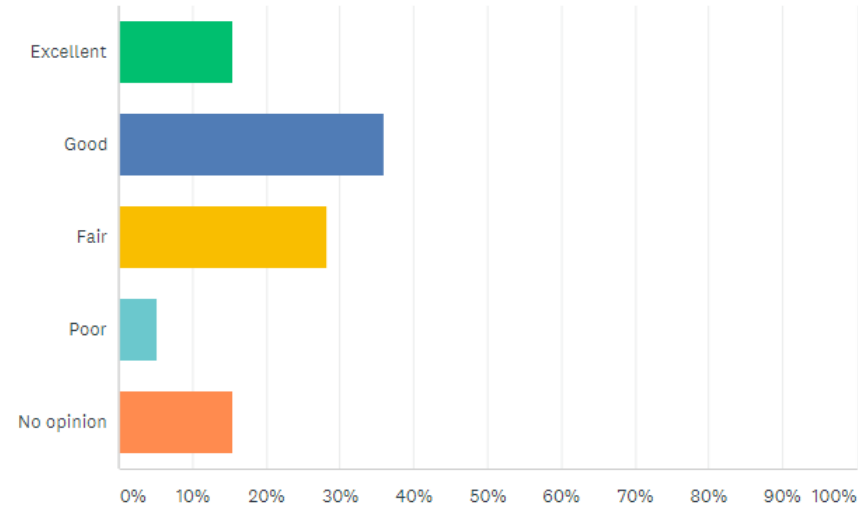


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FORUMS: How would you overall rate the Director or Employee Forums?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Excellent	15.38%	6
▼ Good	35.90%	14
▼ Fair	28.21%	11
▼ Poor	5.13%	2
▼ No opinion	15.38%	6
TOTAL		39

[Comments \(8\)](#)

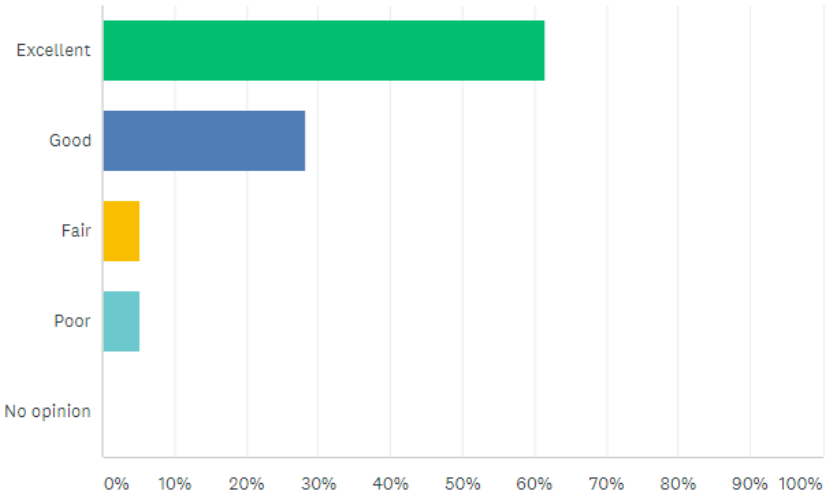
COMMENTS:

- ▶ I thought the sometimes contentious Director forum was actually pretty good. The floor discussion probably saved us a lot of time and trouble when we got to the board meeting. Unfortunately I feel that much of the discussion was based on uninformed directors looking for a forum in which to vent.
- ▶ Not near enough time. The speakers took all the time and there was no time available for employee questions about other issues.
- ▶ This is always my favorite part of the conference....it's where we get the REAL information & put our fingers on the pulse of what's actually going on in other districts.
- ▶ Employee forum didn't leave much time for other topics
- ▶ I did not attend on Tuesday. My co-worker and two directors went on Tuesday. They said it was good.
- ▶ Glad that the employees had a discussion about Citrix. I would have liked more of a dialogue on CREP and maybe some county info on who participated in IDOA PPCC.
- ▶ See above
- ▶ Employee forum - should of been geared towards employees



VENUE: How would you overall rate the quality and location of the conference venue?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	61.54%	24
Good	28.21%	11
Fair	5.13%	2
Poor	5.13%	2
No opinion	0.00%	0
TOTAL		39

[Comments \(13\)](#)

COMMENTS:

- ▶ Loved the new location! Great work Grant!
- ▶ I did not like where we had it. There were no drinks or anything provided before or during event except the water fountains. They did not keep things stocked very well at all. I had to hunt down someone to get me glasses for the water fountain after I waited most of the day for them to refill. bathrooms always out of something. Food was not great. I also had to wait 1 hr for an extra blanket and 2 towels after I called twice. Was not impressed with the place. I liked downtown better
- ▶ Good easy access location, free parking, conveniently located meeting and dining rooms, good food.
- ▶ The Crowne Plaza is much nicer than the previous hotel.
- ▶ Ease of access is great. ease of parking is even better. I don't like being forced to buy overpriced coffee. They didn't have enough water cups out for everyone.
- ▶ The venue was great, the only issue I had was checking in on Sunday before the ball game. I didn't get checked in to my room until after 4pm. I know they are busy and probably had a big event just go through from the weekend. That is understandable.

COMMENTS:

- ▶ I struggled between Fair & Poor. The meeting space was nice except for the hallway buffet. But our check-in was a mess....the staff was disorganized & got everything wrong. We were overcharged & no one seemed to know what was going on, & when we called to get it straightened out we were given a bunch of excuses rather than real accountability & apology. The place "seemed" fancy & opulent, but the floors were dirty & guest trash was just left all over for hours without staff picking it up. The fixtures were in disrepair. Our rooms were missing lights &/or they didn't work. I did not like the crooked set up of the rooms either. Meh. Now that I've seen the grass on the other side, I miss the Northfield.
- ▶ Nice hotel and amenities
- ▶ Best place as far as I am concerned. Food is also better than other hotels.
- ▶ I did not like going downtown for the meeting. This was much better. Seemed more organized. Our county prefers Crown Plaza.
- ▶ The check in was a joke
- ▶ Right off the interstate...plenty of eating options nearby...plenty of parking...a well-kept beautiful hotel. Wait staff cordial and helpful. I would like to see location alternate between here and downtown (which does beat the Crowne Plaza for nearby attractions).
- ▶ See above

Q7

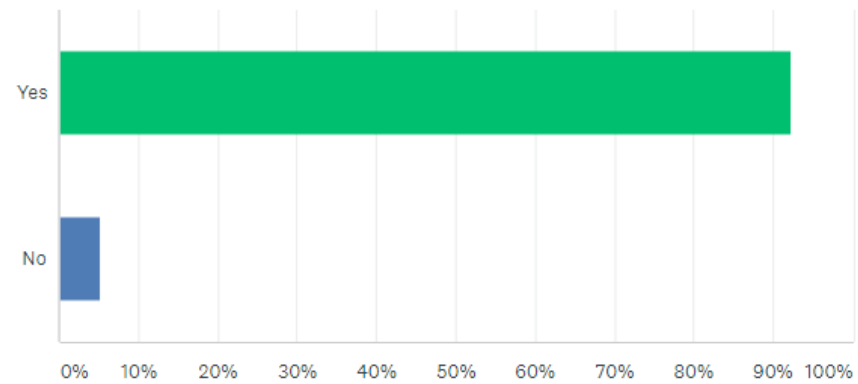


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OPINION: Do you plan to attend the next Annual Meeting & Summer Training Conference in July of next year?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES ▼	
▼ Yes	92.31%	36
▼ No	5.13%	2
TOTAL		39

[Comments \(3\)](#)

COMMENTS:

- ▶ Depends on what is on the agenda
- ▶ We always attend & I'm always optimistic. Onward & upward!!!
- ▶ Easier to attend when most are upbeat about AISWCD and Districts and employees and directors get along. Keep putting together Conferences like this and I would hope attendance would improve. Discouraged that more SWCD's weren't present for the Annual Meeting. Not sure how to alleviate.

Q8

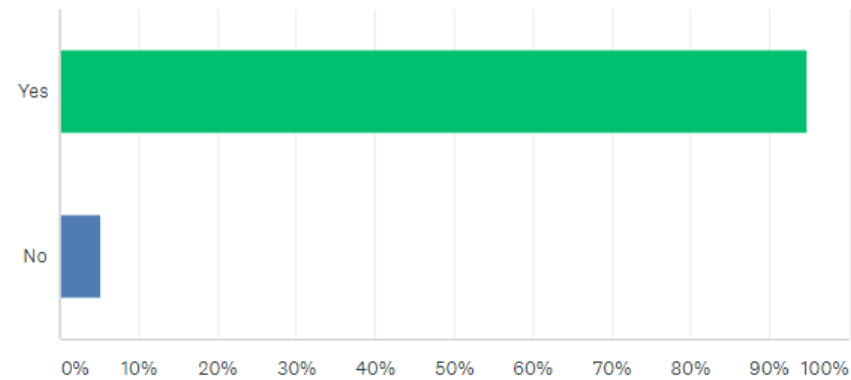


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OPINION: Based on your own experiences, would you recommend to others (e.g., colleagues and other industry professionals) that they attend the conference in the future?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.87%	37
No	5.13%	2
TOTAL		39

[Comments \(6\)](#)

COMMENTS:

- ▶ I would definitely recommend attendance at future conferences
- ▶ It is very good for new employees.
- ▶ Monday's lunch was too many starches, no green. Annual Meeting seating was a mess. Need at least two spots, round tables!
- ▶ It's generally a great event- I attend more for the networking aspect than for anything else, & for that I will continue & encourage others to do so.
- ▶ Excellent networking opportunities; I think all SWCD's need to learn about every grant opportunity they can get.
- ▶ The networking is excellent.

Q9

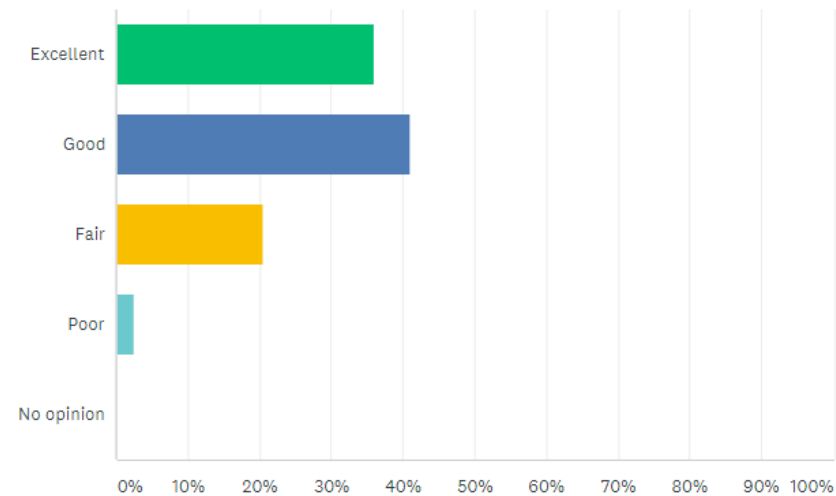


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SATISFACTION: How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the conference as a whole?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	35.90%	14
Good	41.03%	16
Fair	20.51%	8
Poor	2.56%	1
No opinion	0.00%	0
TOTAL		39

[Comments \(6\)](#)

COMMENTS:

- ▶ Liked the session topics, and speakers(mostly). Business meeting went very well. I thought the meals were good. I heard many positive comments on the live auction. We need to brainstorm ways to improve participation in award categories. Was good to see more involvement and presence of NRCS.
- ▶ I think the speaking sessions it could have been more organized.
- ▶ Everything was good but I think a few of the speakers could have been better. Also if you want directors to attend, I feel there needs to be more sessions for them and a reason to attend annual meeting. This year with the resolutions really no reason to attend.
- ▶ Heard a few complaints about not getting into the rooms. They ran out of food on the last lunch, which should not of happened. Some would like tea at all meals.
- ▶ Change of venue was nice. Liked the fact almost everything co-located on the same floor, even if it did get a bit busy in the hallway sometimes. Thanks for keeping the breaks between sessions to an absolute minimum!
- ▶ This was the best conference that I have attended because the ship is running very smoothly these days. Grant is the captain who is working very closely with legislators and GOMB and we appreciate that very much. Having the NRCS staff in attendance for BOTH days was great. They were there for networking and Q and A's. They showed they value our partnership. The auction was great fun also!

Q10



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OPINION: What could be done differently to enhance the conference in future years?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 14

COMMENTS:

- ▶ No suggestions, I thought it went well.
- ▶ I hope as in years past that we continue to get more exhibitors, and this year was a great step into the right direction
- ▶ Breakout sessions, sessions for new employees or those employees that are now doing both AC/RC roles.
- ▶ I loved the Auction and the DJ was great but not a lot of attendance for DJ. I would recommend that after auction to have a get together at a club or something for all those wanting to go. Depending on where we are, we could pull \$ together and get ubers or could walk. But just a social hour say till 11:30 or midnight or until we go home! Be less expensive and probably little more fun with the smaller group.
- ▶ Please keep it in the summer
- ▶ It would be nice if you could start Monday at 9 instead of 8 a.m., not everyone goes down the night before.
- ▶ All of the sessions need to have time for questions provided at the end. Need to lock in 2020 conference date and venue at Dec QB to assure desired date and venue. Add at least 10-12% overage to buffet style meals to make sure we don't run out of food. Encourage more district participation.
- ▶ Have speakers talk about new and changing policies and agriculture practices. The Hemp information was great this year! Next year, invite an actual producer to come speak about planting and harvesting a hemp crop.
- ▶ Some small breaks between presenters for bathroom and or coffee / donuts etc.

COMMENTS:

- ▶ I know not everyone likes break out sessions, and it creates more work for the organizers but sometimes it is a good option to make the conference more appealing with a higher diversity of topics
- ▶ Disappointed when the comment was made that the AISWCD quarterly meeting held in June did not have a quorum and that they were not aware of this at that time but made many critical decisions anyway. This should never have happened!!!! No matter what excuses can be made, decisions should not be made without a quorum.
- ▶ Presentations by groups who have completed watershed projects with multiple conservation partners. Explain what and how they did the project
- ▶ I would recommend for next year having a time keeper in the back of the room letting the speaker know when there is 5 to 10 minutes remaining so they know when to wrap it up. I think some of the speakers were rushed off before they were done speaking, however allowing them to know how much time they have remaining would also be beneficial to them so they have time to wrap up their speech. I think for the farm family awards, as nice as it was to award two families, only one should have been awarded as in past years.
- ▶ The OMA, State Trooper, and the Hemp presentations were the best of the event. Having more sessions on some of the current agriculture industry would be suggested. Focusing on how to reach farmers and how to be the most effective for them.
- ▶ Everything went fairly well. A job well done to Grant and AISWCD staff!
- ▶ See comments above plus auction lasted too long for the little amount, also band should be for all audiences not just young.
- ▶ It seems like we've been venue hopping trying to find a better place...hopefully we'll find it one of these years, but in my opinion the Crowne Plaza is NOT it.

COMMENTS:

- ▶ There needs to be more of an effort to get more land No-tilled with cover crops. That would solve most of the problems we are working on. It just seems there are meeting after meetings for years and nothing every gets accomplished. There needs to be a serious effort to stop tillage, fall nitrogen and increase the use of cover crops. I think it is going to take some very good incentives to get that done.
- ▶ Schedule breaks of 10-15 minutes. sometimes sessions got over a little early, but still didn't leave much time, so people were missing part of the next session.
- ▶ Already said I guess. I think the content is the key and not the time of year you have it. In the winter months you risk bad weather keeping people from coming.
- ▶ I cannot think of anything.
- ▶ More breaks between seminars to get up and stretch, go to the bathroom, ect.. this way we don't have to miss portions of the seminars.
- ▶ Not sure. Definitely concerned about lack of SWCD county representation at Annual Meeting...not to far over a quorum.
- ▶ The room where the food was served was too cold. The conference room temperature was just right. :)
- ▶ Have more discussion about new location of the office very soon maybe in the state ag building at the fair grounds and sell the office building



SECTION II.

- ▶ SURVEY SUMMARY

SURVEY KEY POINTS

- ▶ 77% of respondents rated their overall experience as excellent or good.
- ▶ 89% of respondents rated the overall quality and location of the venue as excellent or good.
- ▶ 80% of respondents rated the signature events (Opening Ceremony, Recognition Luncheon, Conservation Farm Family Awards Dinner, and Soil Stewardship Breakfast) as overall excellent or good.
- ▶ 82% of respondents rated the speakers and programs overall as excellent or good.
- ▶ 89% of respondents rated the exhibitor area as excellent or good.
- ▶ 92% of respondents will plan to attend next year!



SECTION II.

- ▶ FISCAL ANALYSIS

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
	Crowne Plaza	Wyndham	Northfield Inn	Northfield Inn	Northfield Inn
Revenue					
Auction	3,630.20	1,135.00	2,750.00	1,195.00	9,281.00
Registration/Meals	21,753.00	11,960.25	13,277.40	15,287.38	19,426.43
Sponsorship	12,400.00	9,480.00	3,000.00	2,341.35	3,447.50
Exhibitor	3,500.00	500.00	1,000.00	2,615.06	2,201.17
Total Revenue	\$ 41,283.20	\$ 23,075.25	\$ 20,027.40	\$ 21,438.79	\$ 34,356.10
Expenses					
Ag Day Recognition Meal	150.00			225.00	175.00
Auction Payout	3,630.20	1,134.99	2,750.00	1,167.00	2,887.81
Awards	102.07	174.00	1,710.12	1,761.09	2,180.14
Meals	26,118.51	24,000.23	16,246.74	10,776.33	12,005.56
Other	179.10	10,499.00	2,092.98	150.00	771.87
Speakers	952.75	180.79	212.35	173.40	547.10
Supplies	1,435.99	2,108.38	1,996.49	563.92	382.65
Total Expenses	\$ 32,568.62	\$ 38,097.39	\$ 25,008.68	\$ 14,816.74	\$ 18,950.13
Net Revenue	\$ 8,714.58	\$ (15,022.14)	\$ (4,981.28)	\$ 6,622.05	\$ 15,405.97

*Ag Day Recognition Meal expenses included as conference related expense (residually) for reason conference award winners honored at Illinois State Fair.

FISCAL ANALYSIS KEY POINTS

- ▶ The 2019 conference, for the first time in seven years (or more), surpassed the break event point and even ended in the positive.
- ▶ Revenues doubled over the previous three years.
- ▶ Sponsorship and exhibitor revenues have more than doubled or tripled during the 2019 and 2018 event years.
- ▶ The net positive result stems from a combination of greater sponsorship and exhibitor revenues (totaling \$15,900) than those seen in recent years and by efforts to more closely align food and beverage expenses (greatest expense) to meal and registration cost (greatest revenue).