

# AgLUP Policy Lab Survey Results

Results of on-line questionnaire  
completed by participants of AgLUP Policy Forum held on April 3, 2019

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April 26, 2019



# Main findings

The results of the survey indicate that:

- Networking is important among practising AgLUP professionals
- At this moment, there is no critical need for an AgLUP Policy Lab
  - Over the past year there has been an unusually high level of attention given to AgLUP issues, which has arisen from the provincial review of the ALC and ALR, the subsequent changes to the ALC Act through Bill 52, the proposed changes of Bill 15, and the rolling out of regional workshops
- Still, an AgLUP Policy Lab can be a valuable tool to:
  - Share information
  - Improve the knowledge base about AgLUP
  - Have more in-depth discussions on the AgLUP issues
  - Expand people's AgLUP networks
  - Strengthen their existing networks

AgLUP = Agricultural land use planning

# Next steps

Based on the discussion during the forum, the results of the survey, and other informal discussions, we have decided on these next steps:

- Establish a mailing list (listserv) as soon as possible
  - Membership will be restricted to AgLUP professionals (like the Policy Forum)
  - AgLUP professionals will be invited to become members
  - A list of all members will be available to members of the mailing list
  - The list will be managed by David Connell, UNBC
- Consider hosting two regional policy forums
  - One on Vancouver Island; one in the southern interior
  - The primary aims would be to bring AgLUP professionals together to identify current issues in their region and to generate interest in an AgLUP Policy Lab
- As the need or interest arises, organise webinar(s)
- Host a second in-person forum in the Lower Mainland in early 2020

# About the AgLUP Policy Lab

## WHAT IS A POLICY LAB?

- A policy lab is a neutral, expert-centred space for analysing issues and discussing solutions that address intractable policy problems. This definition serves to emphasise key elements that reflect who will be interested in a policy lab on AgLUP.

### *Expert-centred space*

- There are times and places where an open, widely inclusive approach is needed to identify issues and discuss priorities. At other times, it is better to limit the number of people involved and keep the scope of discussion narrow. The policy lab follows the latter approach; it is designed to bring together people who deal with AgLUP as part of their regular professional practice and is important to their areas of expertise.

### *Intractable policy problems*

- The focus of the policy lab is land use planning to better protect farmland. Whether an intractable problem or pressing issue, the emphasis is on public policy, which includes provincial, regional, and local legislative responses to land use planning using legislation, regulations, enforceable and aspirational policy, statutory plans, and implementing by-laws. Related issues, such as food security and farm viability, which affect and are affected by AgLUP, are critically important, but not the focus of the policy lab. Inevitably, the outcomes of the AgLUP policy lab discussions will inform these and other broader issues.

### *Analysing issues and designing solutions*

- The primary aim of the policy lab is to generate discussions to better understand issues and focus our attention on possible solutions. While AgLUP solutions appear as end goals, not every discussion needs to focus on or come up with definitive solutions.

## WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE POLICY LAB?

- The primary membership of the policy lab will be professionals who are practising in the field of agricultural land use planning. This membership includes experts from Planning Institute of BC and land use planners, BC Institute of Agrologists and agrologists, local governments, First Nations the Agricultural Land Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural Advisory Committees, , consulting firms, educational institutions, and others.

## WHAT TOPICS WILL BE COVERED BY THE POLICY LAB?

- The policy lab will be open to address any topic related to land use planning to better protect farmland. The pressures on the agricultural land base is relentless and, in spite of decades of efforts to protect farmland in British Columbia, the province continues to lose farmland, including some of its best farmland, to non-farm development. Concerns about food security, farm viability, and climate change also demand AgLUP solutions. The current effort by the Ministry of Agriculture to revitalise the Agricultural Land Reserve and Agricultural Land Commission, including the two recent sets of amendments (Bill 52 and Bill 15) reflect a current range of issues and solutions, such as size of residential dwellings and governance structures. In this wide context for AgLUP, the policy lab will respond to current interests and issues in order to better protect farmland.

# About the survey respondents

The questionnaire was completed by participants of the AgLUP Policy Forum held on April 3, 2019 (see Appendix for more details)

- 20 total respondents
- Of those who self-identified
  - Local Government: 8
  - Other: 12

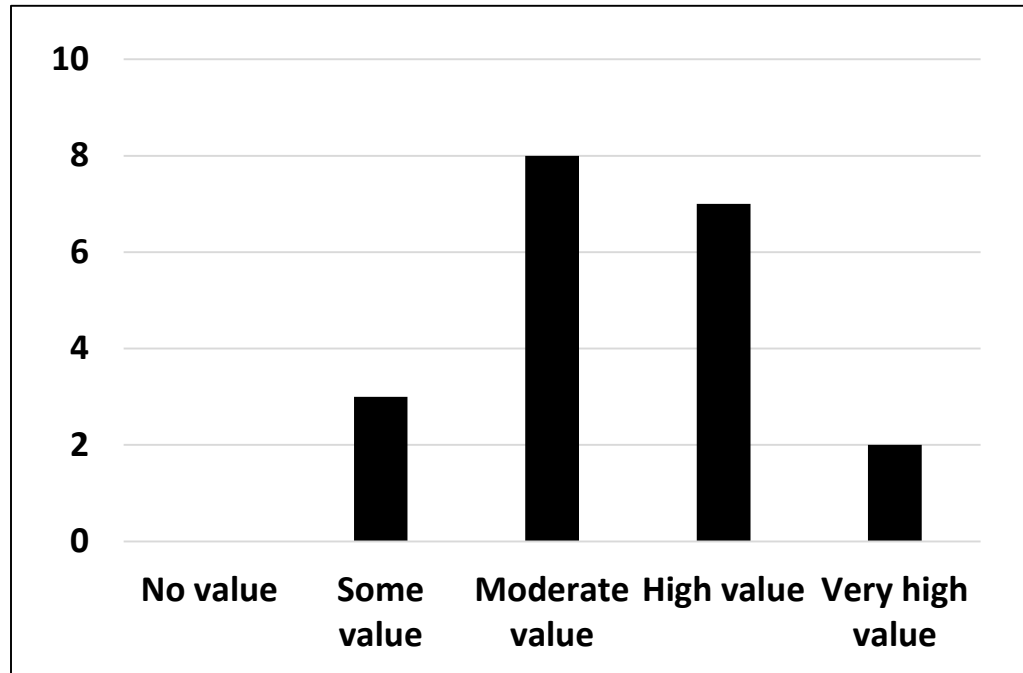
# 'Local Government' professionals versus 'Other' AgLUP professionals

- The following results separate responses between “Local Government” and “Other” AgLUP professionals based on information provided by those who self-identified
  - Respondents were not required to provide their name or position, or to indicate their type of AgLUP professional (e.g., academic, consultant); some respondents opted to provide self-identifying information

## **Cautions when interpreting the results:**

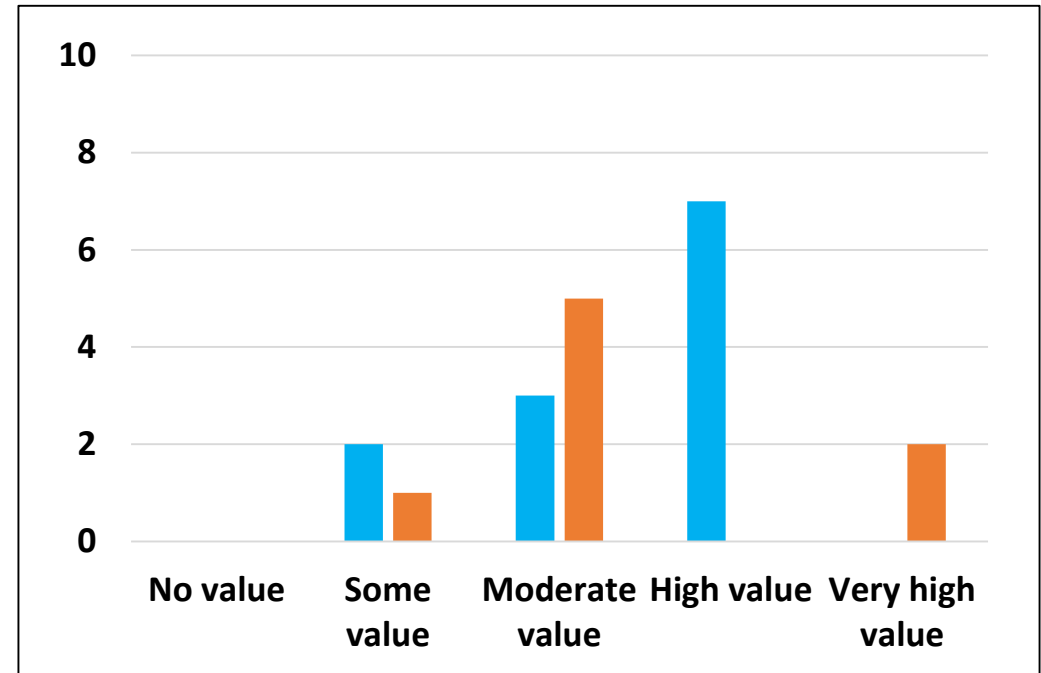
- Although the results are separated between the two groups, the two groups are not mutually exclusive
  - “Local Government”: we know that the results for this group reflect the perspectives of local government AgLUP professionals
  - “Other” AgLUP: this group may also include local government professionals, so the results for this group must not be interpreted strictly as a non-local government perspective
  - Although there are some issues with separating the results into these two groups, we decided there were sufficient benefits of doing so, if only to see what some local government AgLUP professionals think about the idea of a policy lab

# To what extent do you think an AgLUP policy lab can address your professional development in this field?



**All respondents**

Overall, all respondents see value in having an AgLUP Policy Lab.



**Other**      **Local Government**

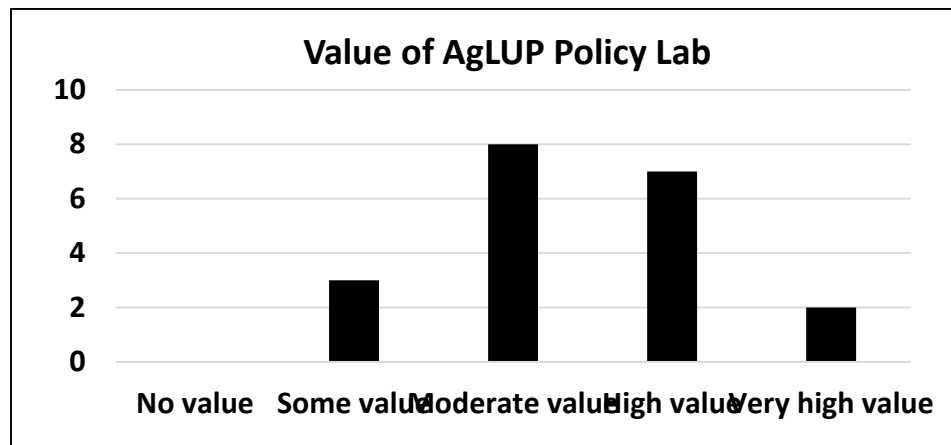
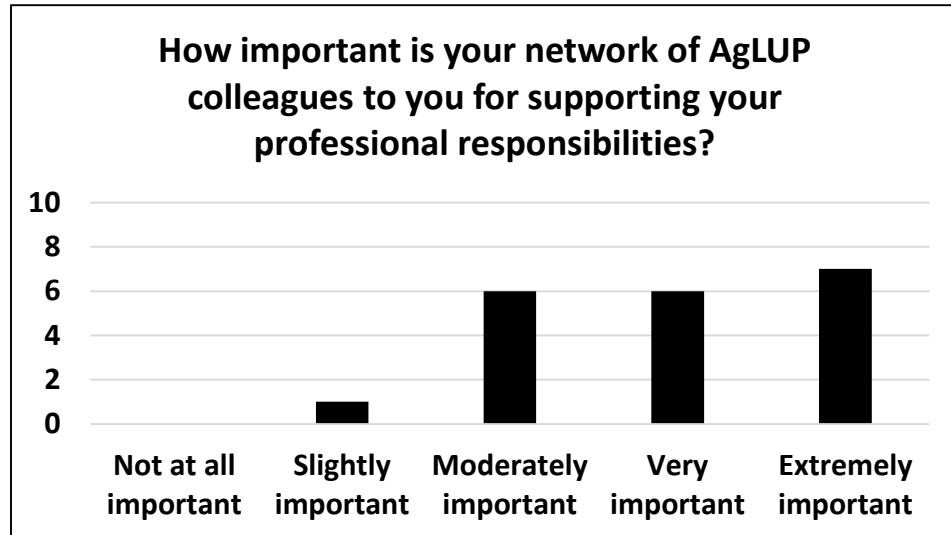
A higher proportion of 'Local Government' respondents indicate a moderate for an AgLUP Policy Lab. Two respondents indicate 'very high value.'

# Most important thing to get from an AgLUP Policy Lab

- A safe space for frank, expert-based discussion of issues and potential solutions
- Discuss in a non-confrontational way very difficult issues around land use planning for agriculture from all perspectives—local government pressure, regional pressure, ALC perspectives, Ministry of Ag perspectives
- Discussions about solutions with other land use experts
- Background, updates and input into Provincial/ALC policies related to agriculture
- Staying current on policy best practices
- Staying current within a small policy subset of professionals focusing on AgLUP issues, within a region experiencing extreme pressures related to land use and food security
- Changes in Legislation, emerging issues, review of case studies and networking opportunities
- Sharing ideas on issues, solutions, approaches, processes, and perspectives
- Sharing information about what are the issues, and how different levels of governments address the issues
- Examples of solutions for AgLUP issues faced by my local government
- Strategies for meaningful implementation
- Discussing innovative (out of the box) ideas
- Get inspired by ideas and know I am not alone in trying to do AgLUP
- Expressing truth and basing arguments on facts, not politics, untested social initiatives, or innuendo, in the assumptions pertaining to policy discussions and initiatives focusing on agricultural land use



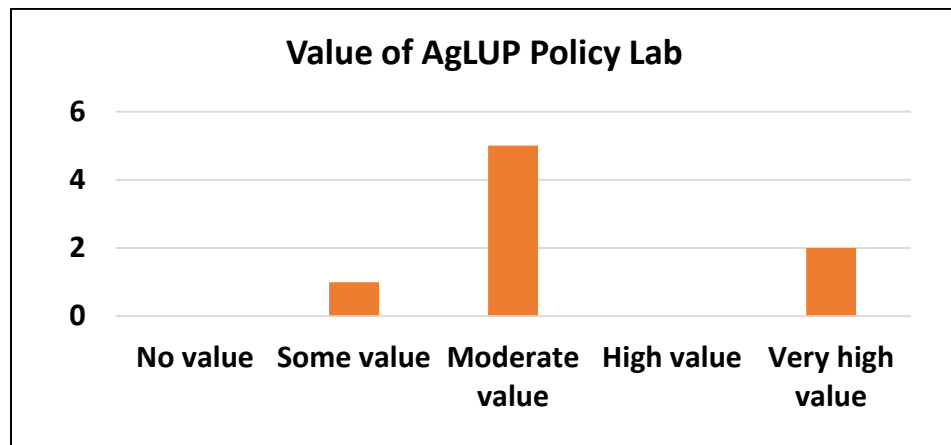
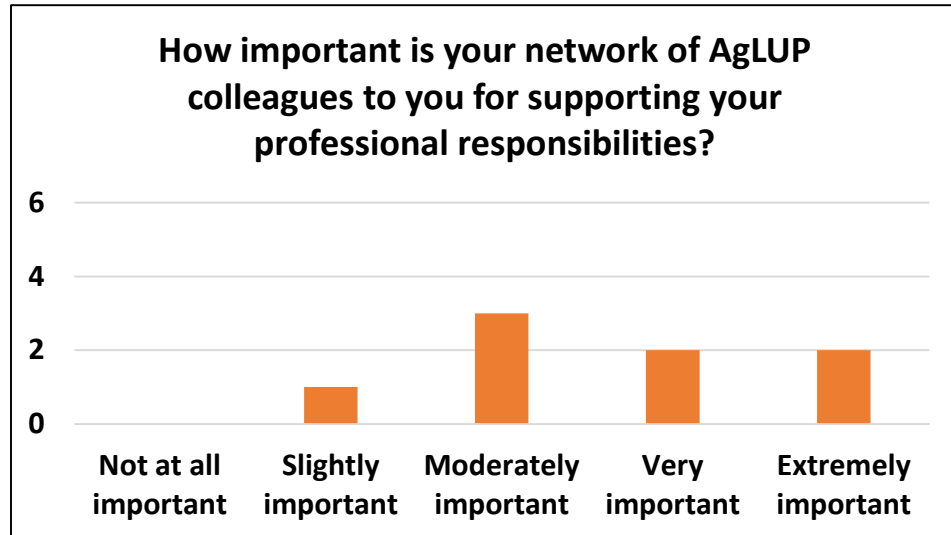
# Importance of AgLUP network in relation to importance of AgLUP Policy Lab – All respondents



Extremely important			1	5	1
Very important			4	2	
Moderately important		2	3		1
Slightly important		1			
Not at all important					
	No value	Some value	Moderate value	High value	Very high value

**An AgLUP network is important to all respondents.  
An AgLUP Policy Lab is moderately valuable**

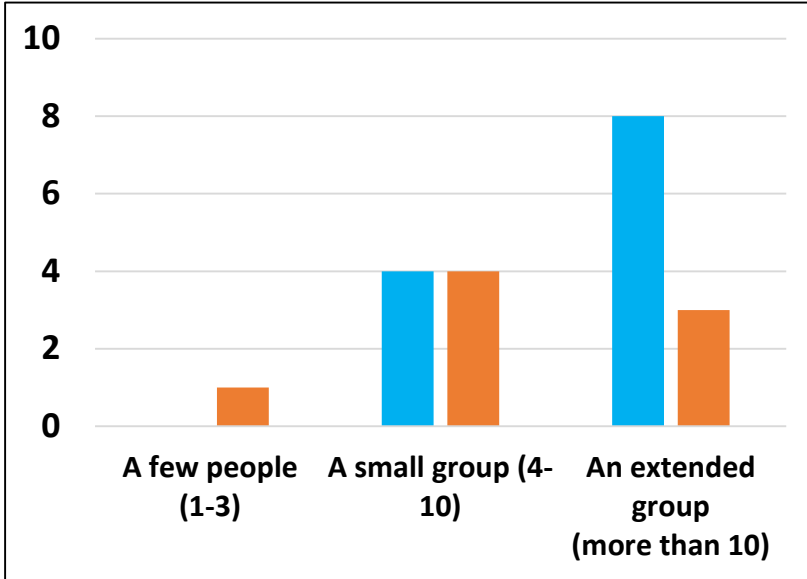
# Importance of AgLUP network in relation to importance of AgLUP Policy Lab – “Local Gov’t”



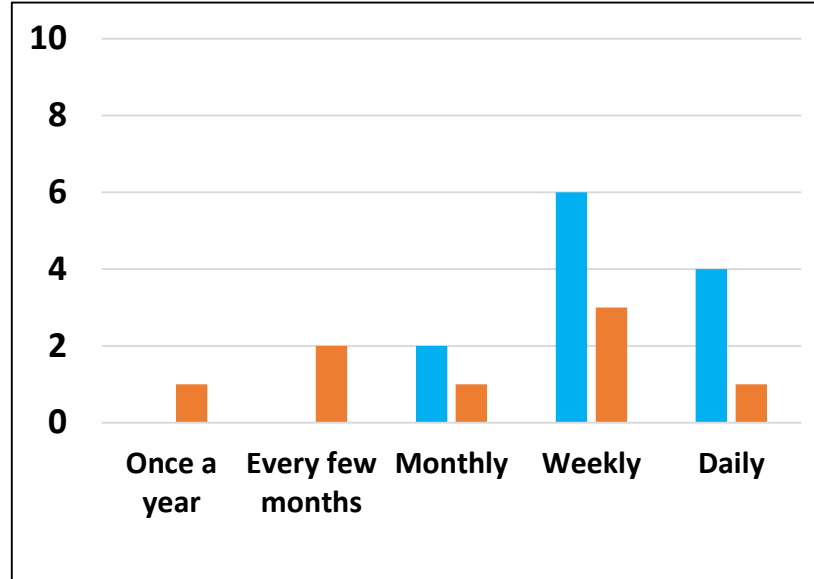
Extremely important			1	1	
Very important			2		
Moderately important			2	1	
Slightly important		1			
Not at all important					
	No value	Some value	Moderate value	High value	Very high value

**Similar results for ‘Local Government’ respondents:  
An AgLUP network is important,  
but not as important compared to the ‘Other’ respondents.  
An AgLUP Policy Lab is valuable.**

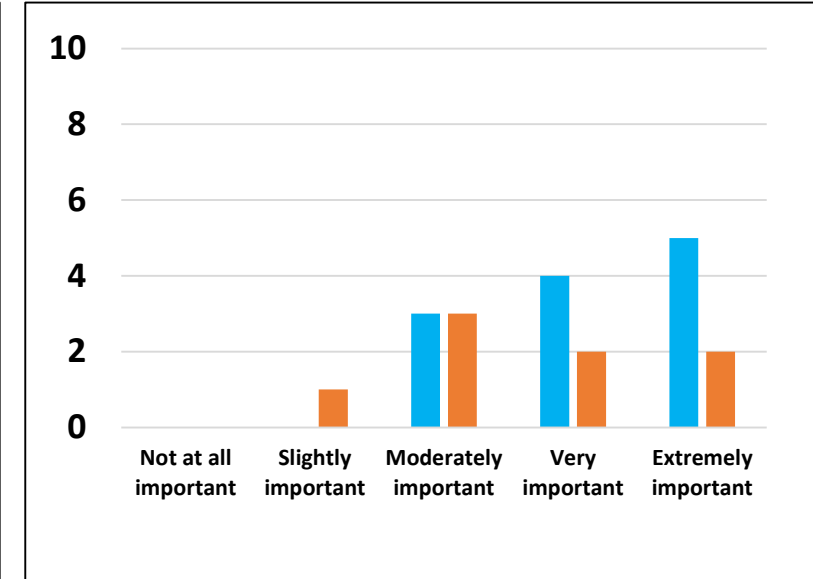
How many people would you consider being part of your AgLUP network?



How frequently do you interact with at least one member of your network?



How important is your network of AgLUP colleagues to you for supporting your professional responsibilities?



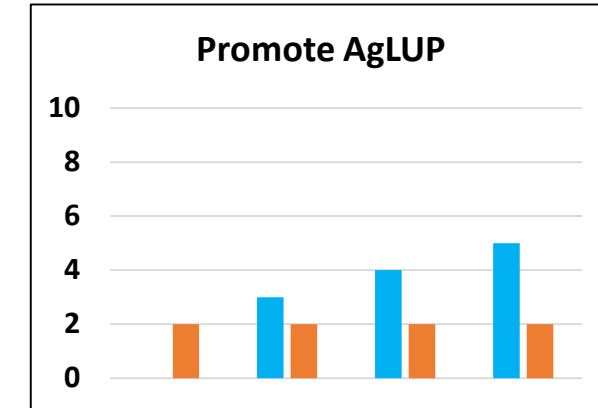
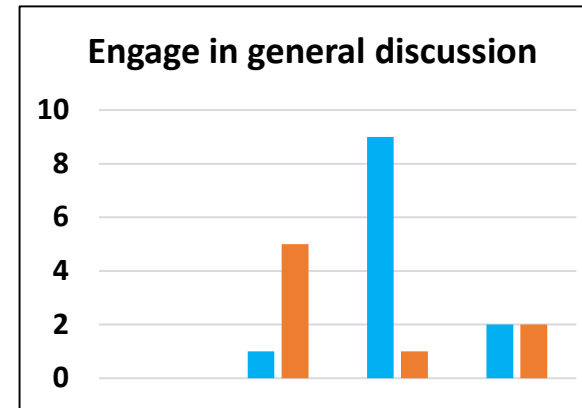
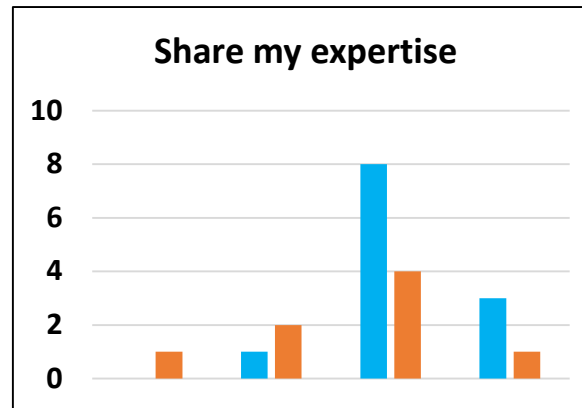
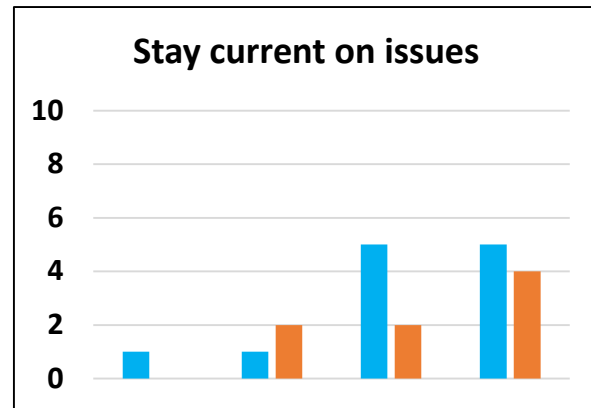
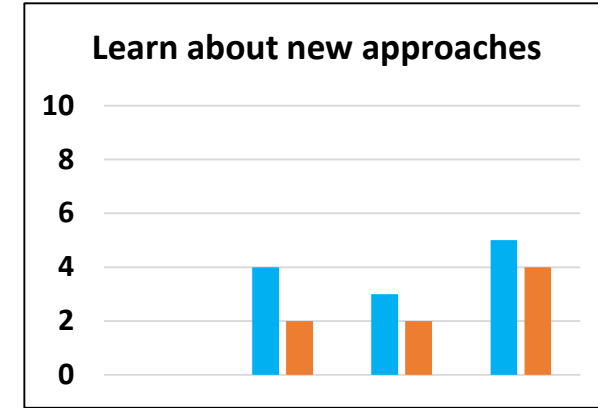
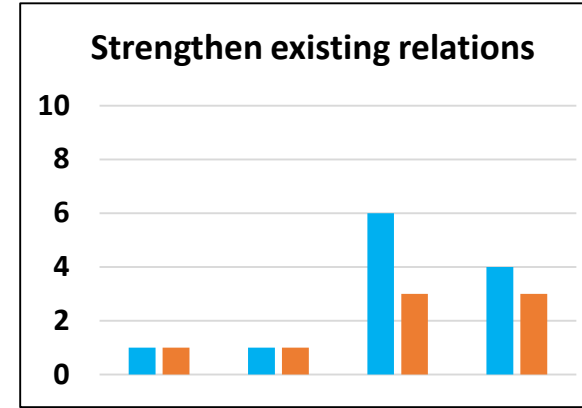
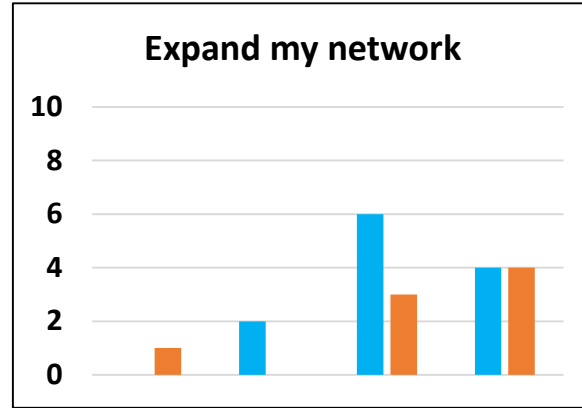
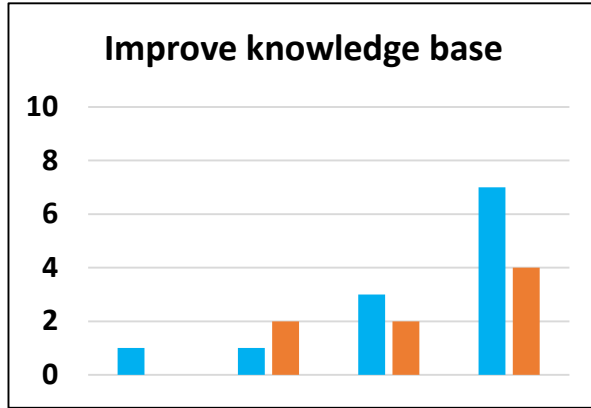
■ Other      ■ Local Government

AgLUP professionals have active networks

'Other' respondents interact more often with members of their networks than 'Local Government' respondents

Networks are important for all AgLUP professionals

# Potential value of an AgLUP Policy Lab

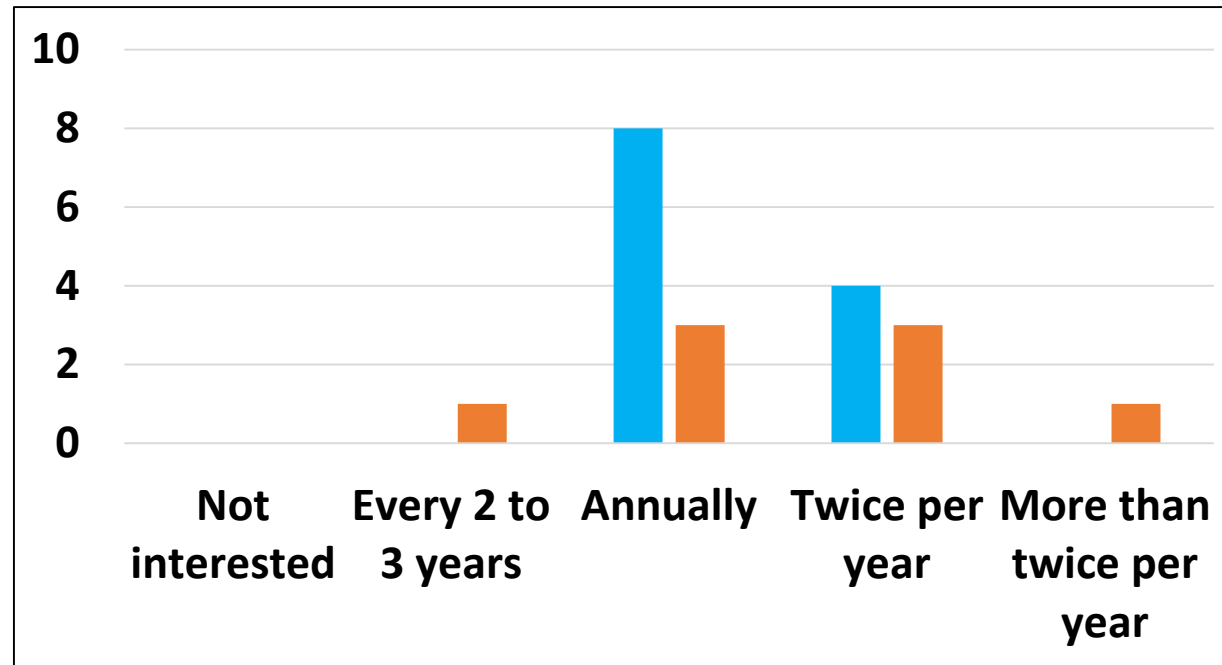


Scale for all charts: Not valuable   Somewhat valuable   Valuable   Very valuable

■ Other   ■ Local Government

The charts are arranged in general order from more to less valuable, from left to right top row, then left to right bottom row.

# In-person events (e.g. half or full day workshops or forums): How frequently you would participate?

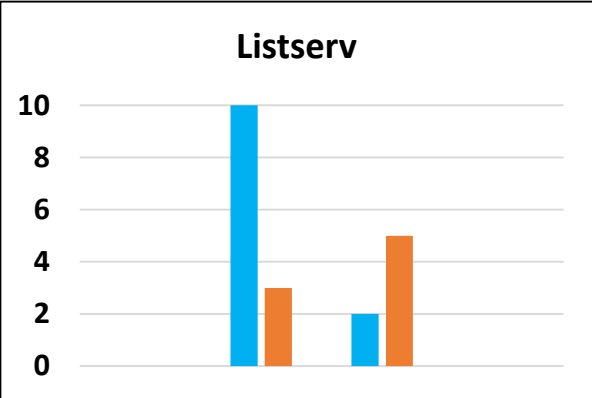
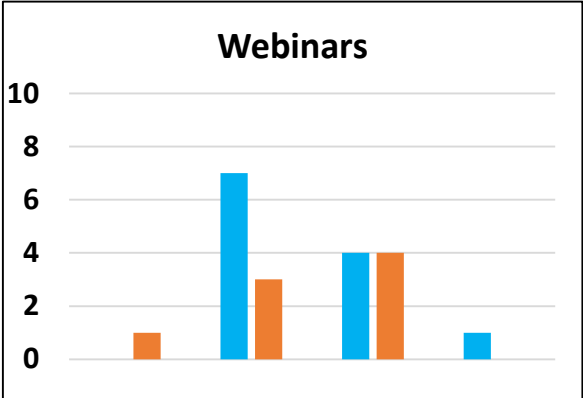


**Other**      **Local Government**

There is interest among AgLUP professionals in attending an in-person forum once or twice per year

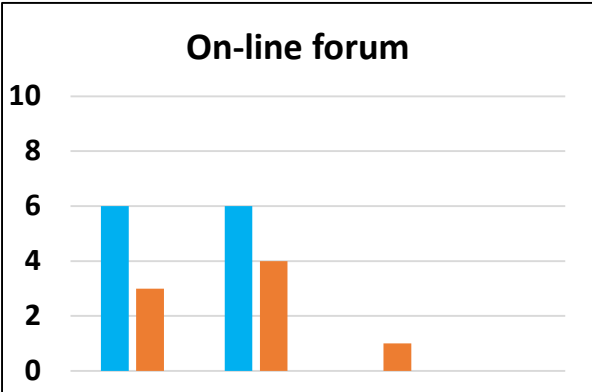
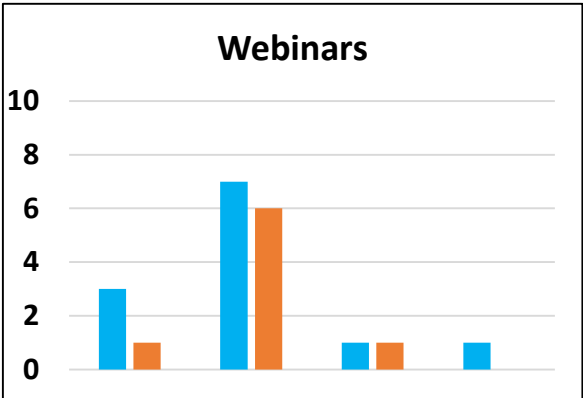
# Effectiveness of networking tools:

For sharing information:



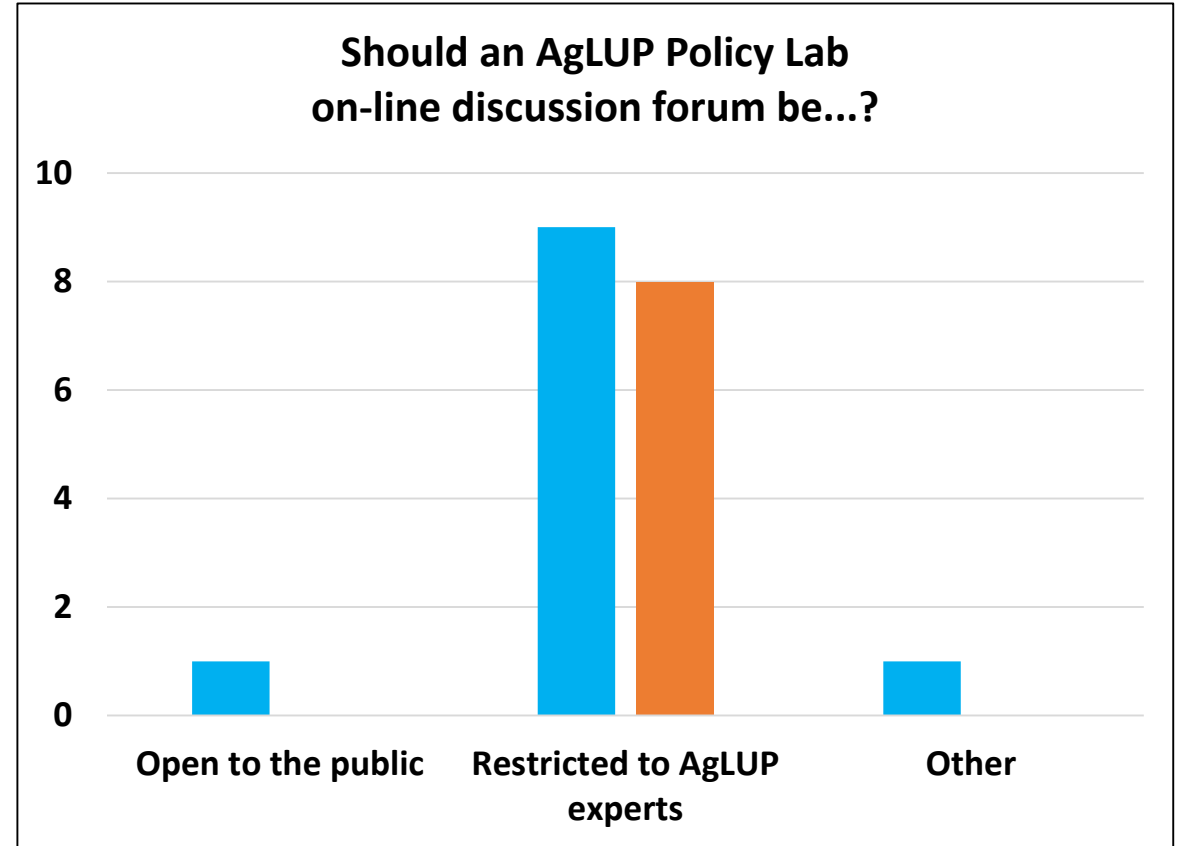
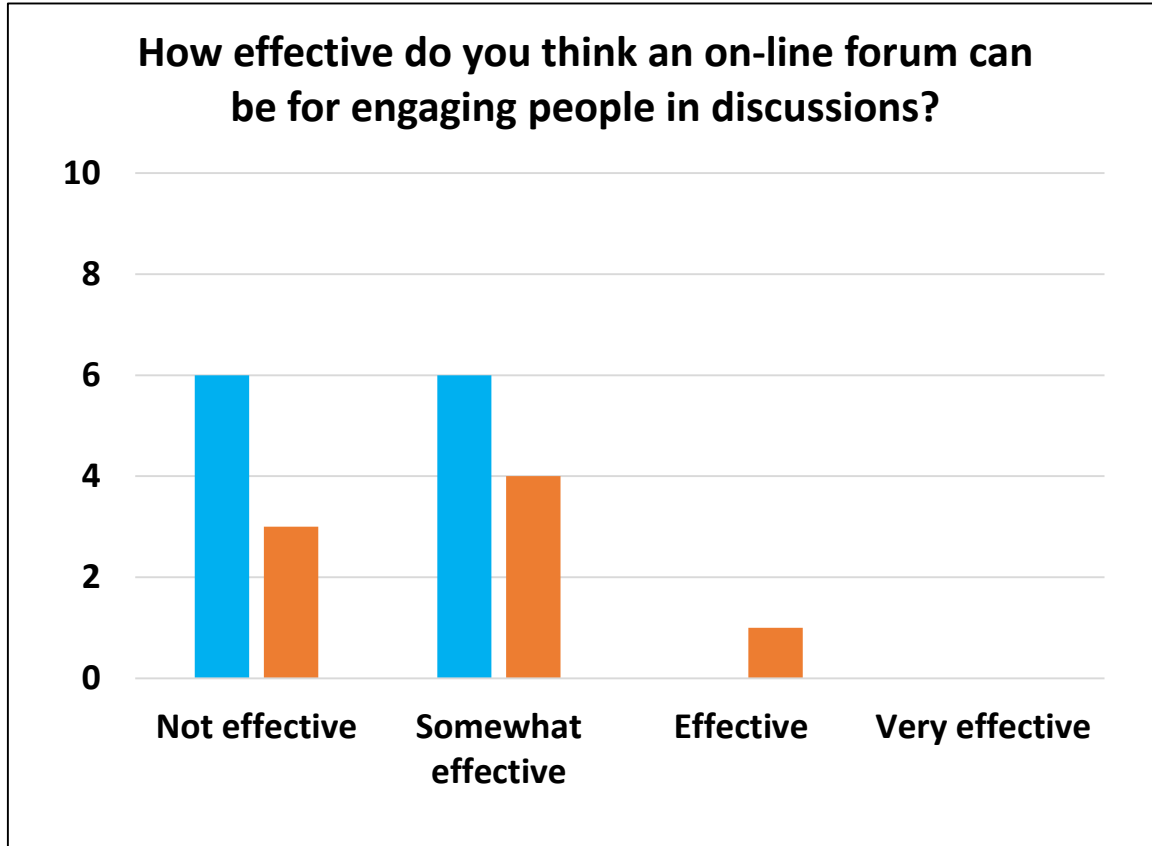
The effectiveness of on-line tools is limited. They are more effective for sharing information than for engaging people in discussions. Establishing a listserv seems like a good idea. (Not surprising results, but good to have affirmed.)

For engaging people in discussion:



Scale for all charts: Not effective Somewhat effective Effective Very effective  
■ Other ■ Local Government

# On-line discussion forum



■ Other

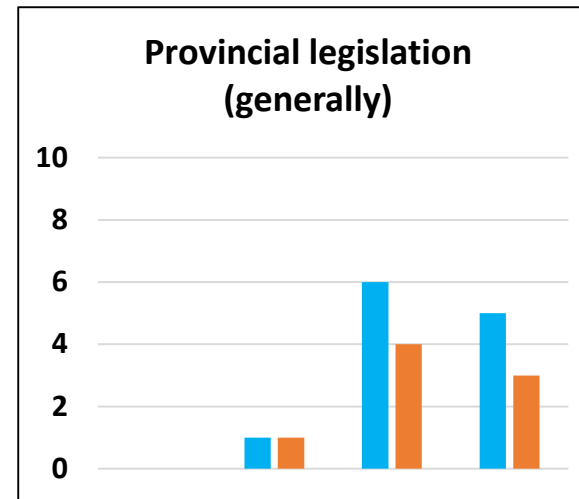
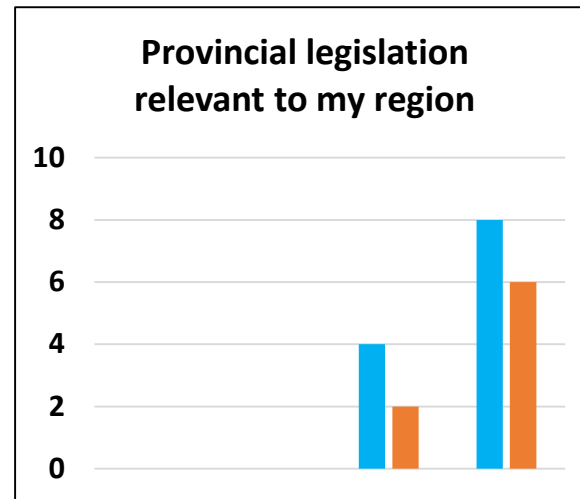
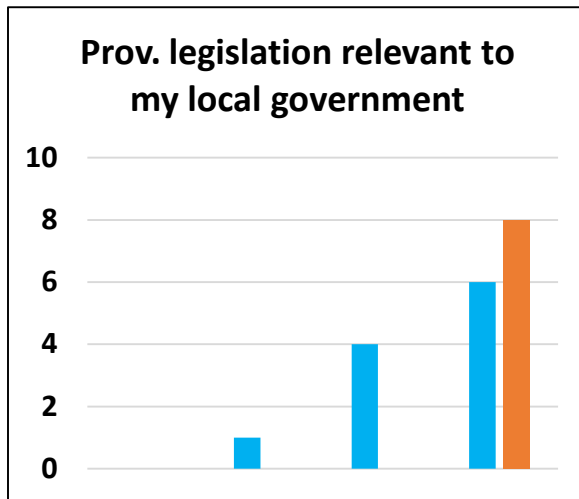
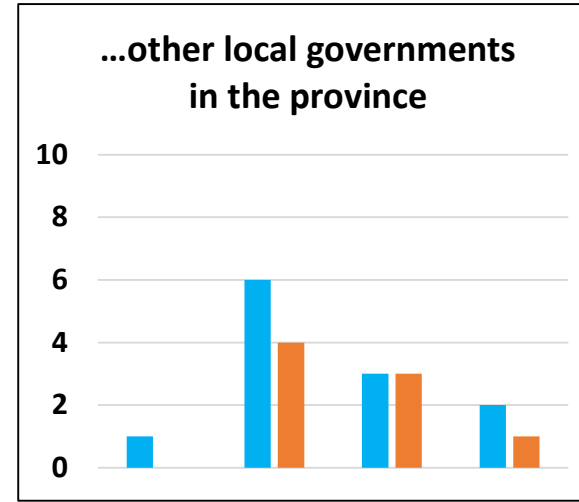
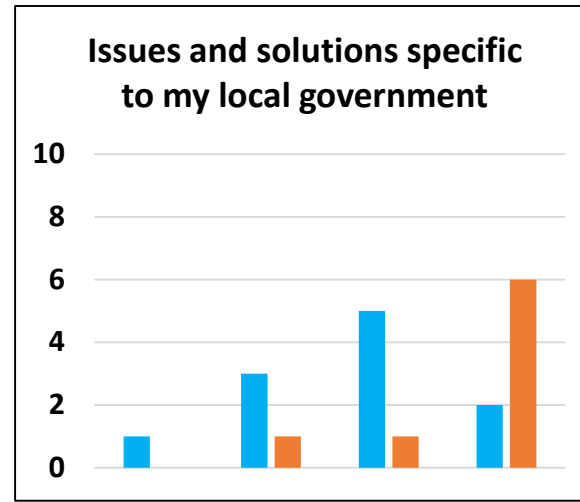
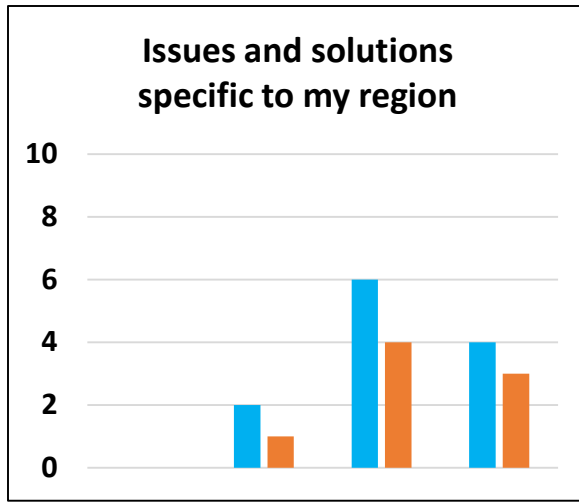
■ Local Government

Other: "Don't bother"

Restricting the Policy Lab to AgLUP professionals is supported by almost all respondents.

# Level of interest in potential topics

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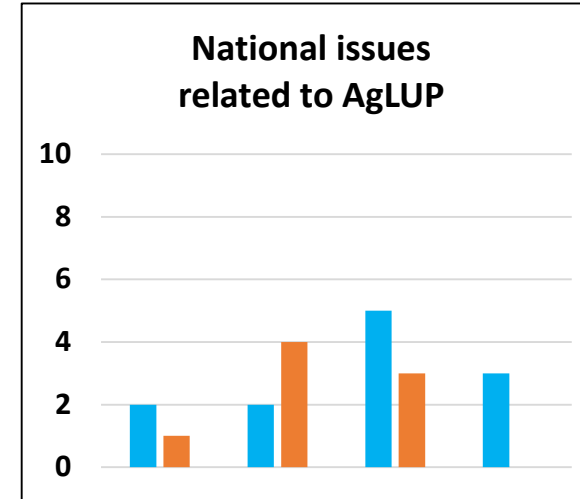
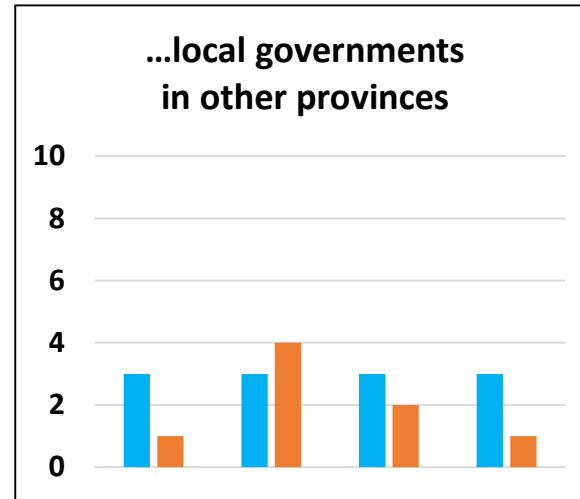
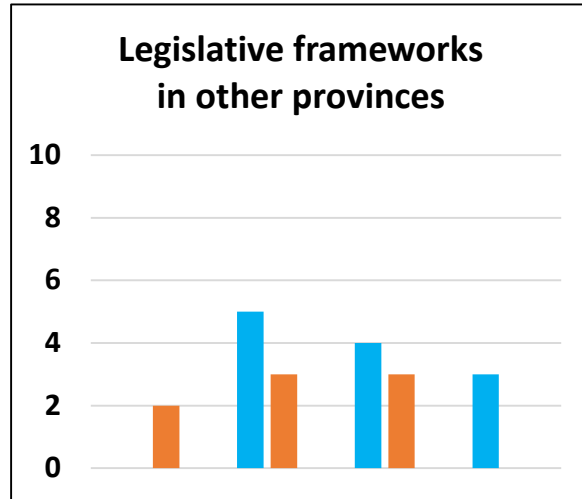
**AgLUP professionals are interested in a wide range of topics. Topics of most interest are directly relevant to one's local issues, especially among "Local Government" respondents.**

Scale for all charts: Not interested    Somewhat interested    Interested    Very interested

Other    Local Government



# Level of interest in potential topics



Scale for all charts: Not interested    Somewhat interested    Interested    Very interested

■ Other    ■ Local Government

# Current AgLUP issues

## On my desk

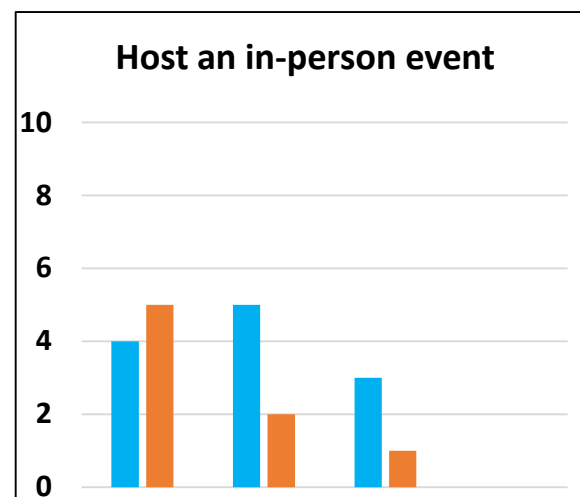
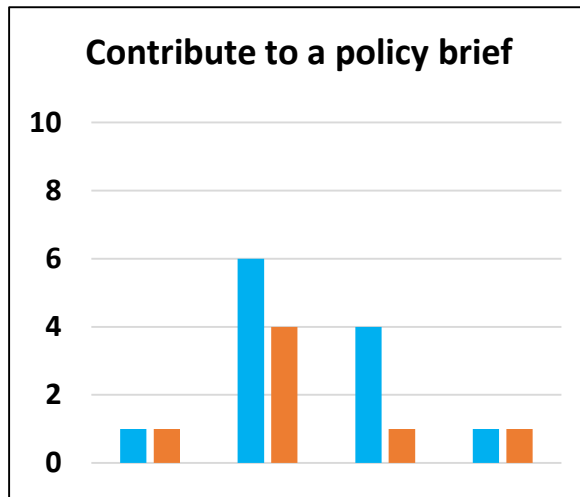
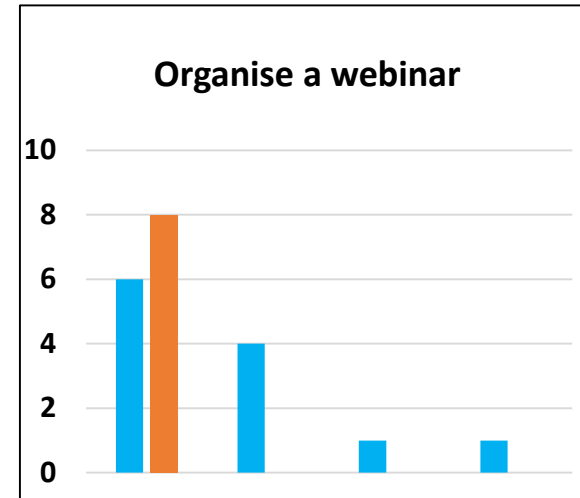
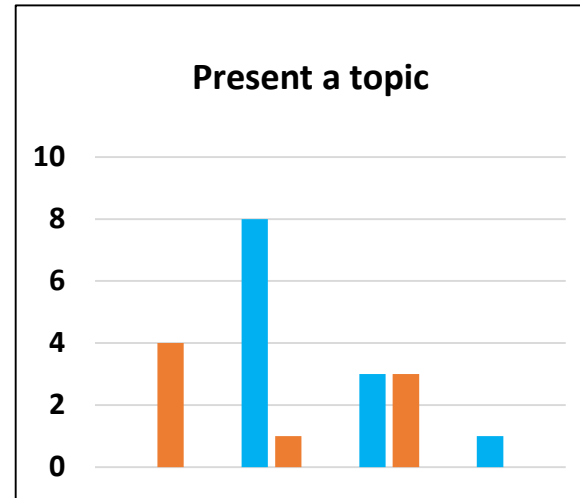
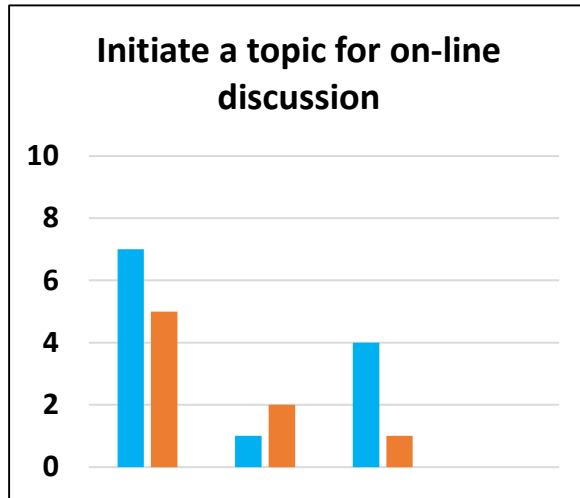
- Protection of farmland and farming; food security
- Limiting/prohibiting non-farm uses
- New provincial regulations
- Bring local government regulations into compliance with ALC Act and its regulations
- Compliance and enforcement, land use policies
- Agricultural processing
- inconsistency of regulated land uses

## To discuss

- Zoning bylaw consistency with ALR regulations
- Education of public about benefits of farmland and good AgLUP
- Help ALC understand what local governments can't do; seems like expectations of local governments are too high as they can't/won't regulate very much, but can enforce what is clearly defined by ALC

Consistency, compliance, and enforcement are current issues, among other things.

# Likelihood that you would contribute



There is interest among respondents to contribute in different ways to an AgLUP Policy Lab.

Scale for all charts: Not likely    Somewhat likely    Likely    Very likely

■ Other    ■ Local Government

# Additional comments

- Having an annual AgLUP policy lab at the PIBC conference could be a good venue, or I heard the suggestion of a Metro Vancouver technical subcommittee. An annual in-person policy lab would be most valuable, with informational webinars throughout the year and perhaps an email relaying updates to legislation and current issues/headlines.
- I would find an AgLUP policy lab very interesting and stimulating, but working for a small municipality with a whole lot of policy areas to work on, it is hard to dedicate resources to AgLUP unless it's directly relevant to our context. I suspect the lab will be more useful for academics and senior levels of government, and any publications from the group / knowledge translation could be useful to local government.
- I am more interested in Metro Vancouver regional issues and legislative context than what is happening in other regions or provinces. I do see some value in learning from other regions and provinces to see what is possible, but I am more focused on local/regional issues.
- I feel there is inadequate knowledge about farming among the participants in the policy lab, as currently structured
- I think any future meetings should be less theoretical and more focused on actual scenarios that participants are working on

# Appendix: About the Policy Forum

## *Agricultural Land Use Planning in the Lower Mainland*

- Held April 3, 2019, in Burnaby, BC
- Co-hosted by Metro Vancouver and Dr. David J. Connell, University of Northern British Columbia
- The policy forum was designed to provide an opportunity for practising AgLUP professionals to engage in dialogue about agricultural land use issues in the Lower Mainland
  - Attendees included professional planners and agrologists from municipal, regional, and provincial governments, and the Agricultural Land Commission, as well as consultants and academics.
- The forum was also designed to inform Metro Vancouver's Agricultural Policy Review that will take place later this year. In 2019, Metro Vancouver is undertaking a series of policy reviews in preparation for an update to *Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future (Metro 2040)*, the regional growth strategy.
- The forum was also a first step towards establishing a “policy lab” for AgLUP in British Columbia.
- Organisation team: Theresa Duynstee (Senior Planner, Regional Planning, Metro Vancouver), Jane Porter (Project Manager, Stakeholder Engagement, External Relations Department, Metro Vancouver), Colin Dring (PhD Candidate, University of British Columbia), and David Connell (Associate Professor, UNBC)
- The forum was facilitated by Colin Dring
- Proceedings from the Policy Forum will be available at [www.aglup.org](http://www.aglup.org)

# With assistance from:

Forum co-hosted by:



**metro**vancouver

Policy Lab initiative supported by:



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