



Organic orchards: needs and priorities

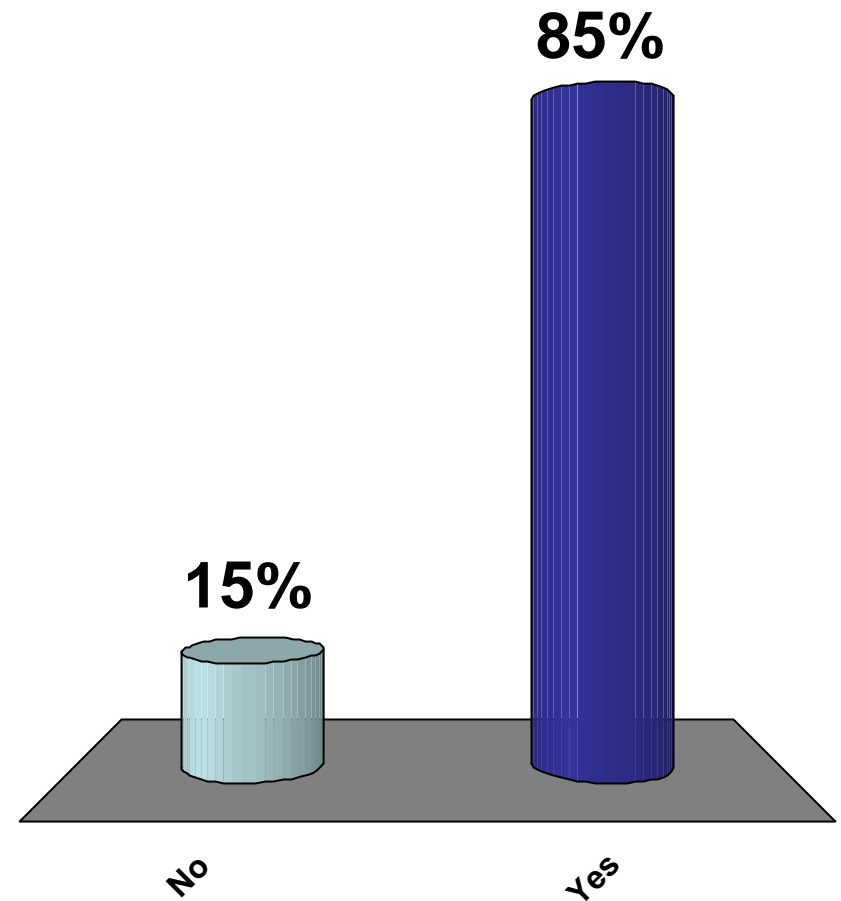
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Mark LaPierre, Wilbur-Ellis Co.**

Wilbur-Ellis Organic Grower Meeting, Feb. 17, 2011, Prosser, WA

The data presented here were collected via the Turning Point audience participation system during the February 17, 2011, Wilbur-Ellis organic grower meeting in Prosser, WA. About 47 people participated in the survey. A number of questions are the same as those used at other meetings and in other years to provide a look at changing conditions over time for organic tree fruit producers in Washington.

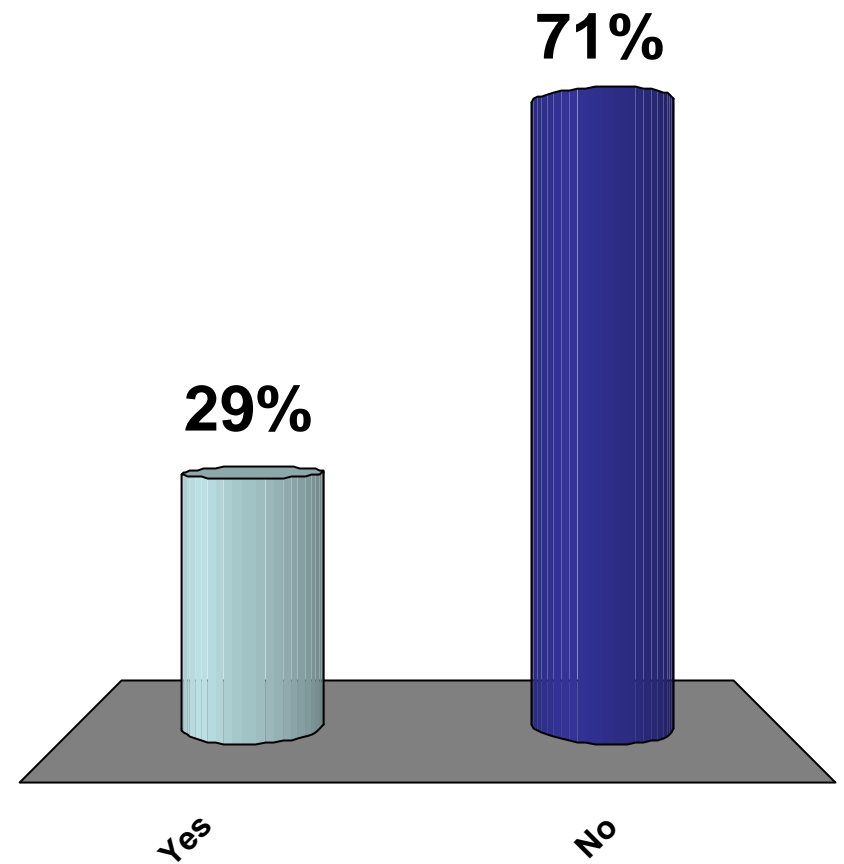
Do you work with organic orchards?

1. No
2. Yes



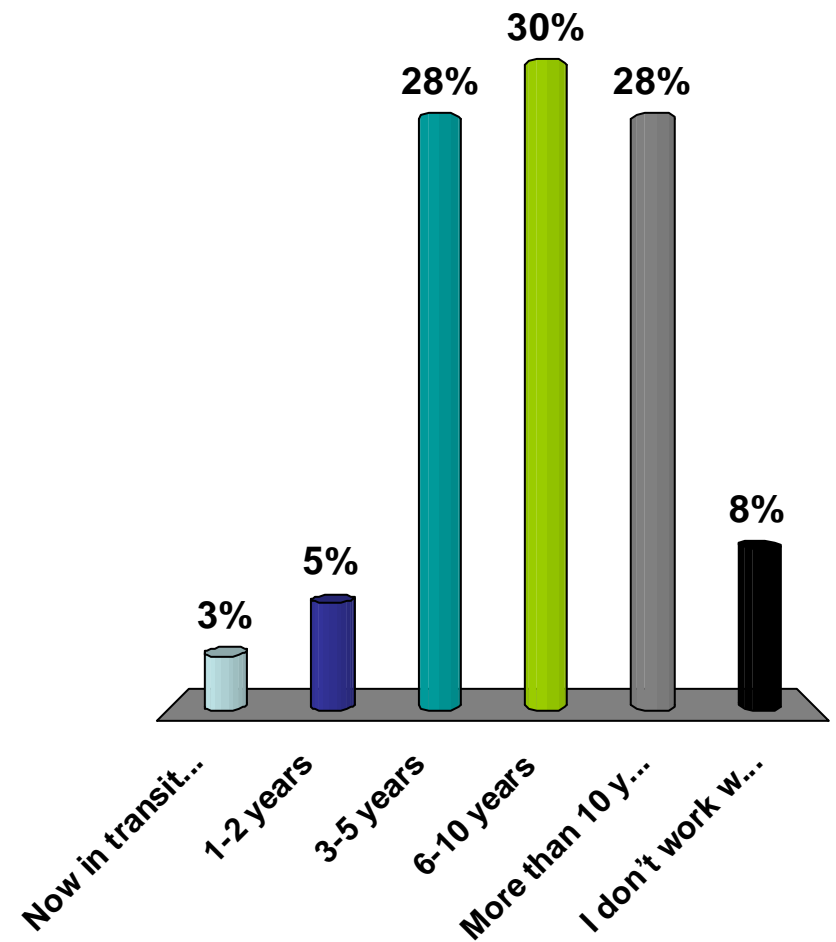
Did you participate in this survey in December or January at another meeting ?

1. Yes
2. No



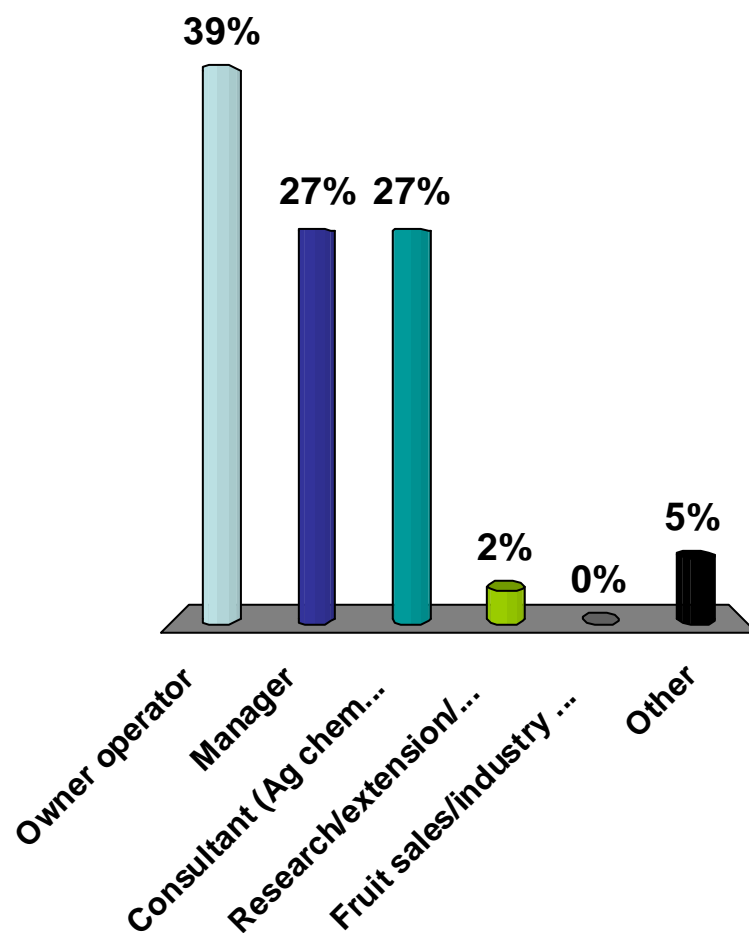
How long have you been in organic orcharding?

1. Now in transition
2. 1-2 years
3. 3-5 years
4. 6-10 years
5. More than 10 years
6. I don't work with organic orchards



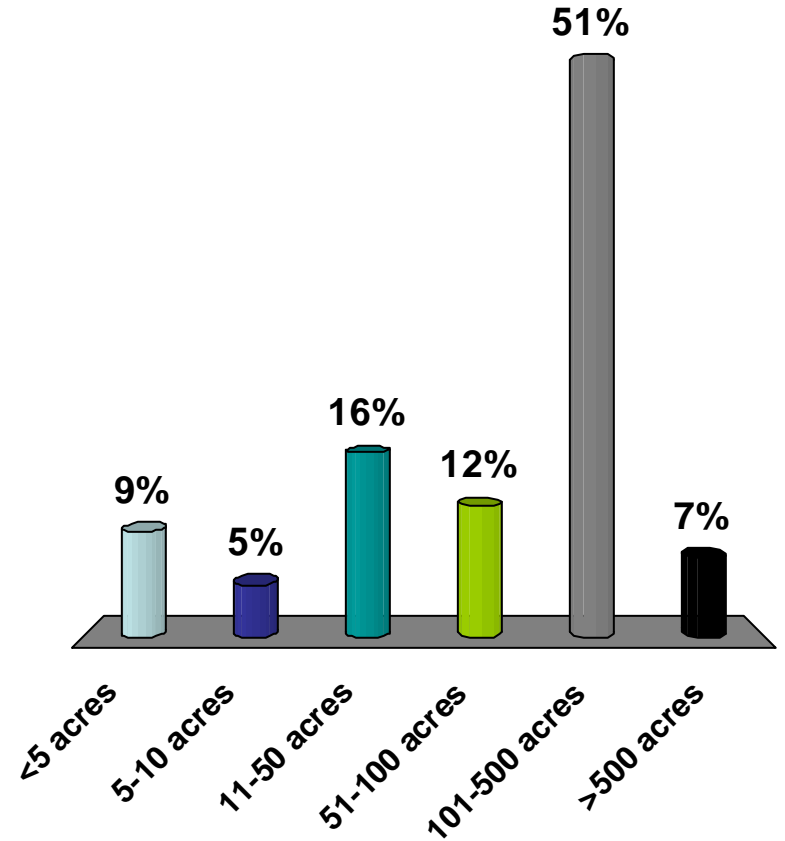
What is your primary role in organic orcharding?

1. Owner operator
2. Manager
3. Consultant (Ag chem, warehouse, private)
4. Research/extension/government
5. Fruit sales/industry support
6. Other



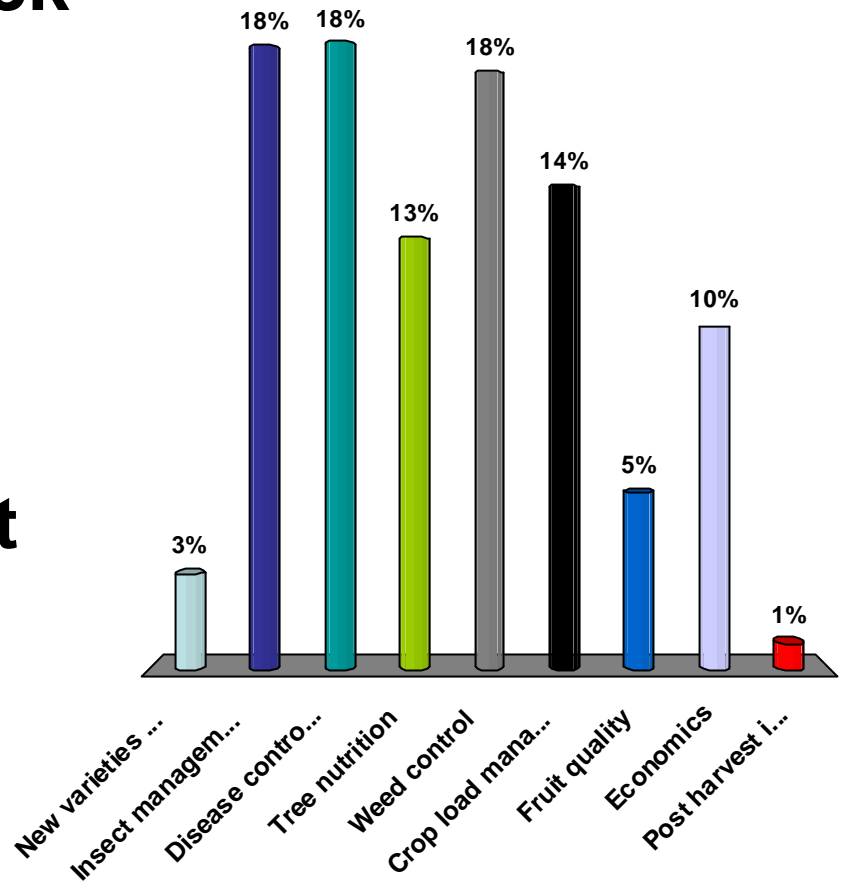
How many acres of organic orchard do you work with?

1. <5 acres
2. 5-10 acres
3. 11-50 acres
4. 51-100 acres
5. 101-500 acres
6. >500 acres



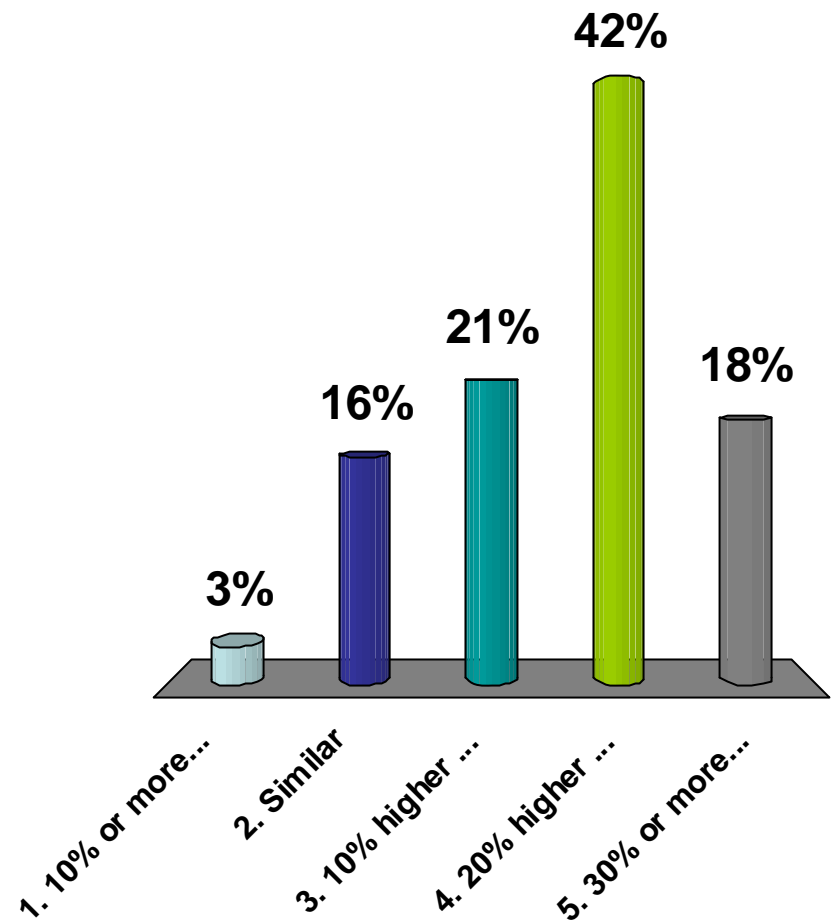
What are the **3 most serious problems** you face in organic tree fruit production? (rank from most to least)

1. New varieties / rootstock
2. Insect management
3. Disease control
4. Tree nutrition
5. Weed control
6. Crop load management
7. Fruit quality
8. Economics
9. Post harvest issues



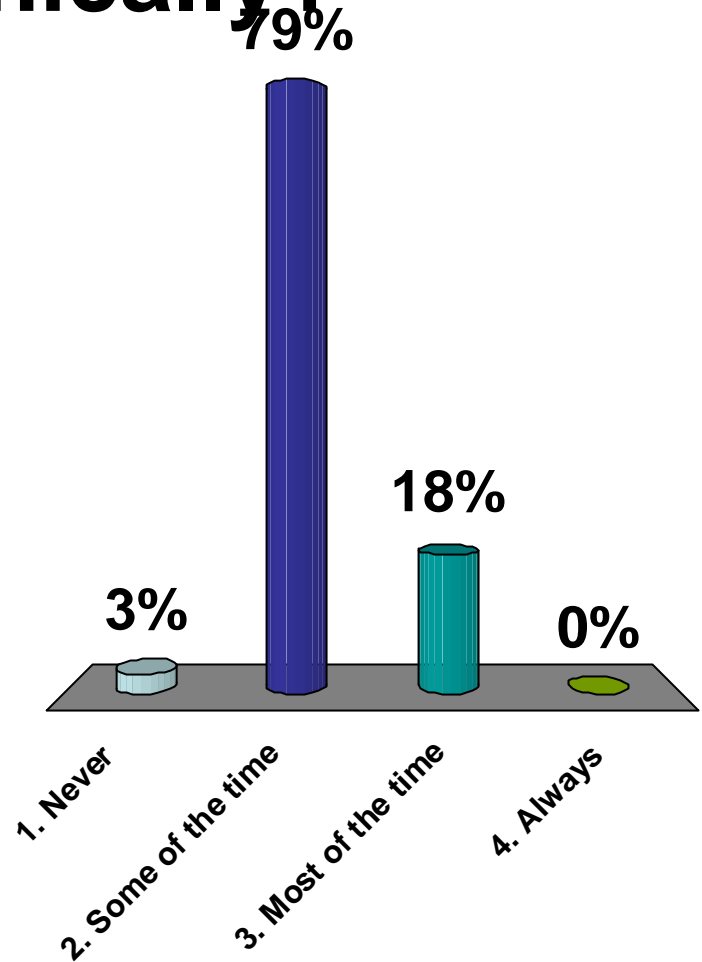
How would you compare the **cost of production** for organic tree fruit to similar conventional production?

1. 10% or more lower in organic
2. Similar
3. 10% higher in organic
4. 20% higher in organic
5. 30% or more higher in organic



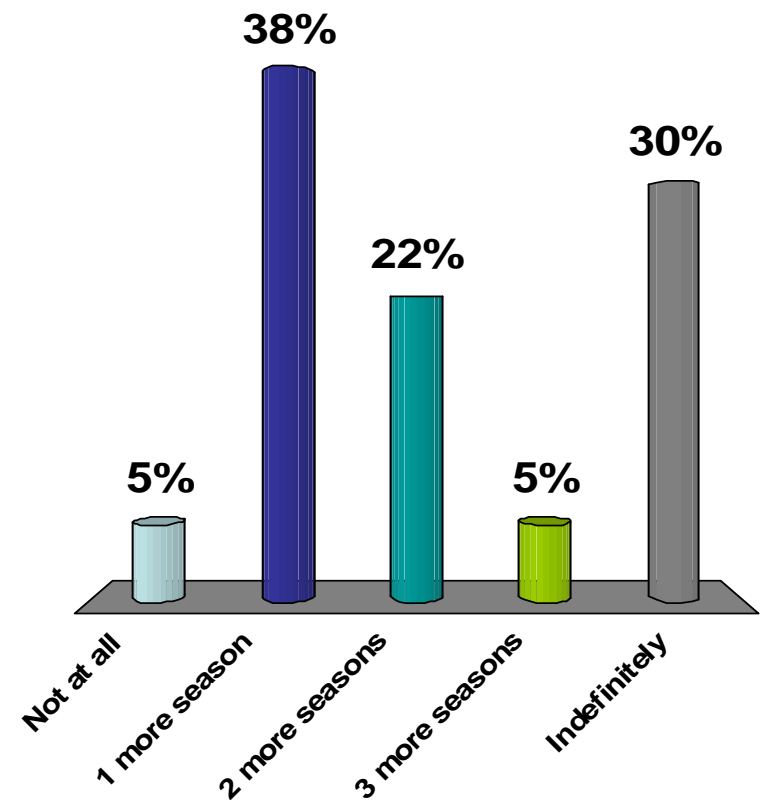
Do the returns from organic production offset the added costs of growing fruit organically?

1. Never
2. Some of the time
3. Most of the time
4. Always



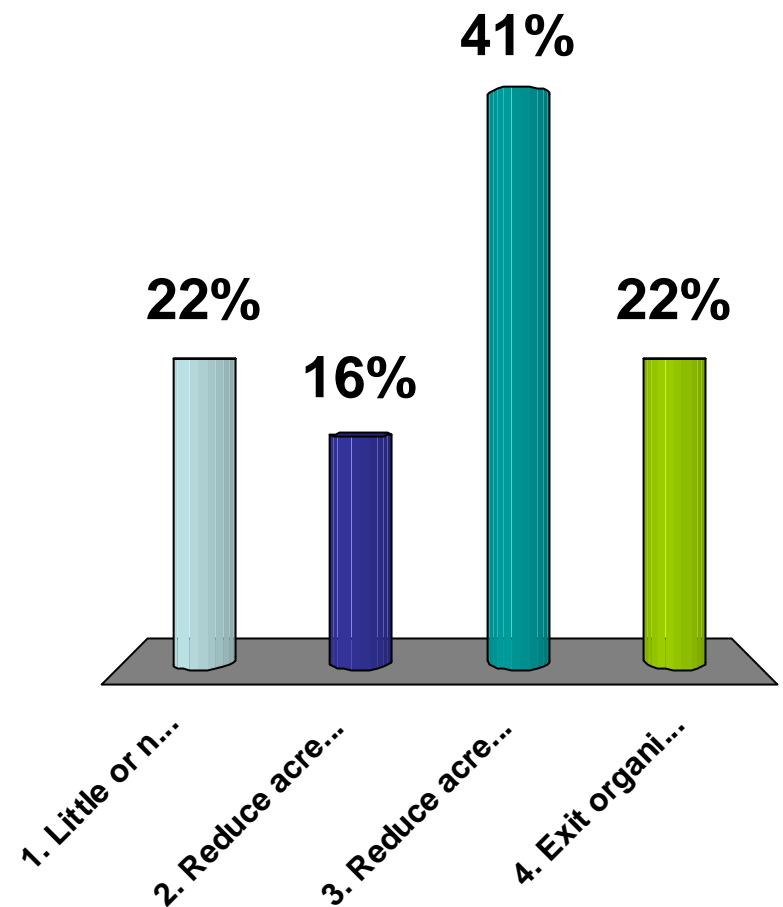
If organic premiums did not cover the increased costs, how long would you be willing to stay with organic production, given the 3 year transition to re-enter?

- 1. Not at all**
- 2. 1 more season**
- 3. 2 more seasons**
- 4. 3 more seasons**
- 5. Indefinitely**



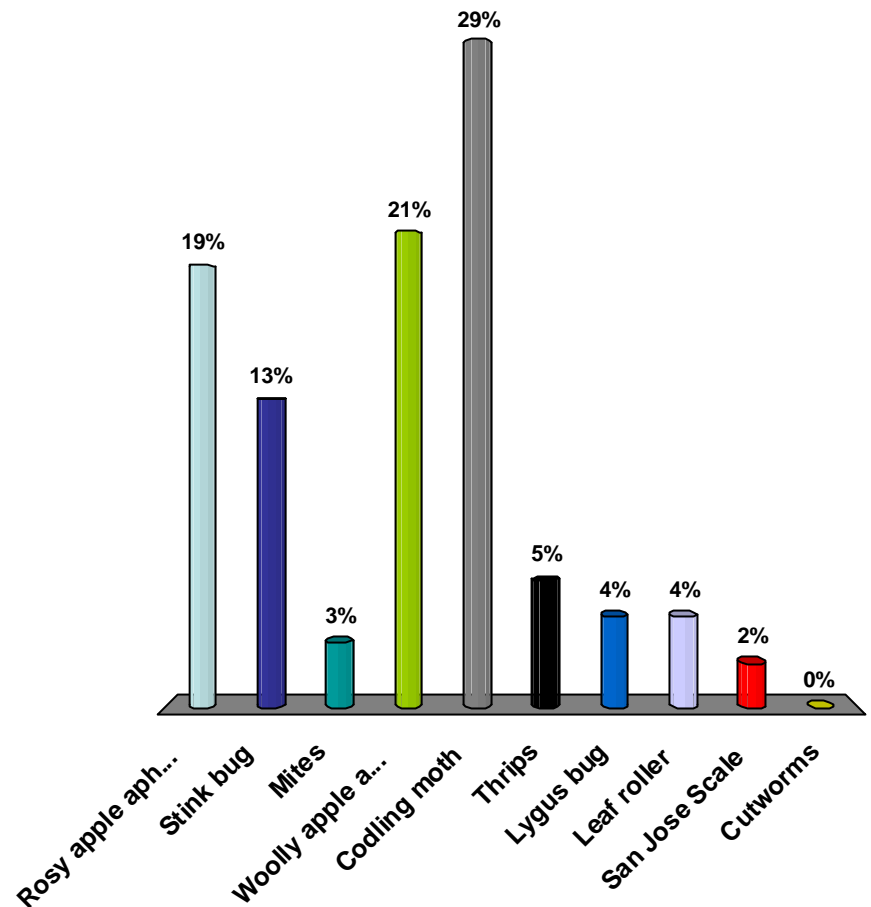
How would the loss of antibiotics for fire blight control impact your operation?

1. Little or no effect
2. Reduce acres of organic pears
3. Reduce acres of susceptible apple varieties
4. Exit organic apple and/or pear production



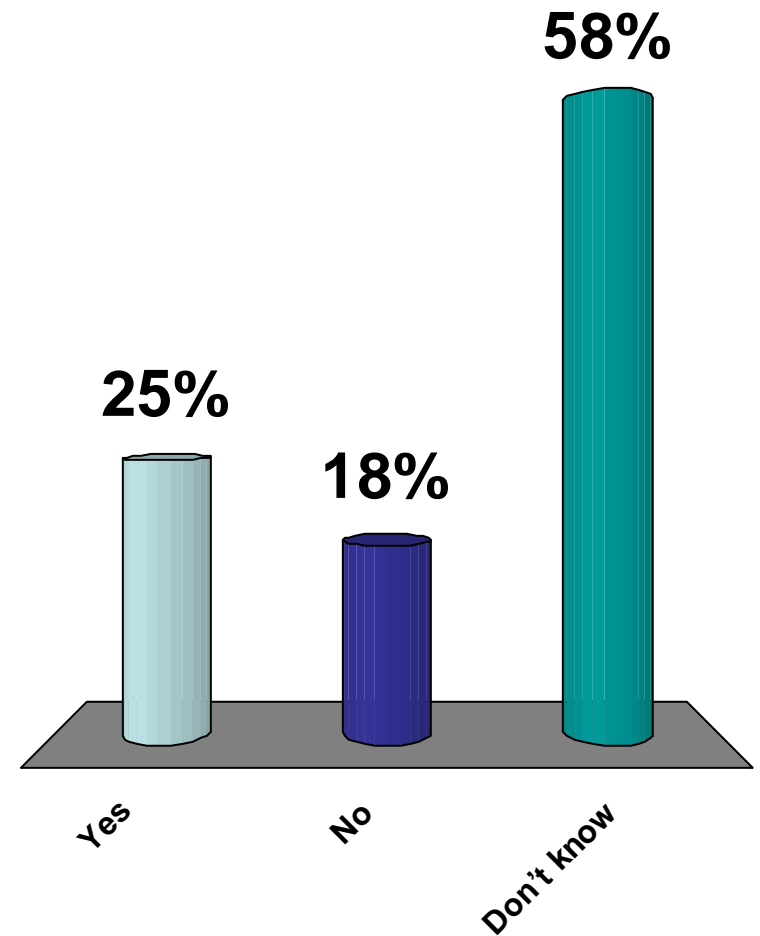
Rank the **3 most** difficult insect pest to control in organic apple production (with the worst first).

1. Rosy apple aphid
2. Stink bug
3. Mites
4. Woolly apple aphid
5. Codling moth
6. Thrips
7. Lygus bug
8. Leaf roller
9. San Jose Scale
10. Cutworms



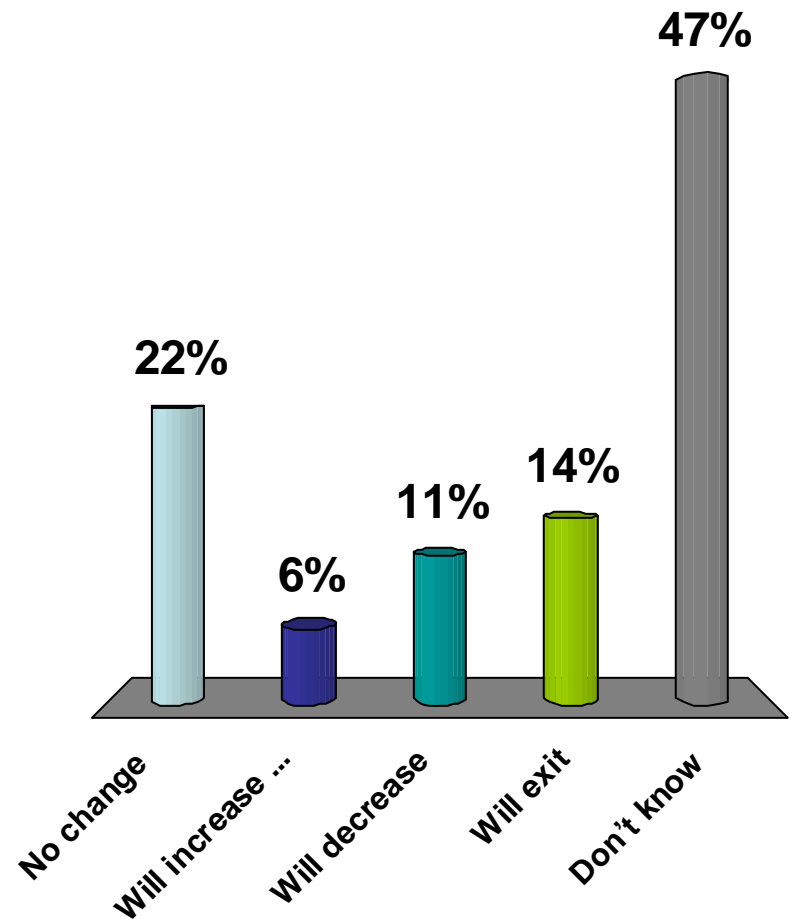
Do you think you can control Spotted Wing Drosophila in organic stone fruit and berries using organic methods?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know



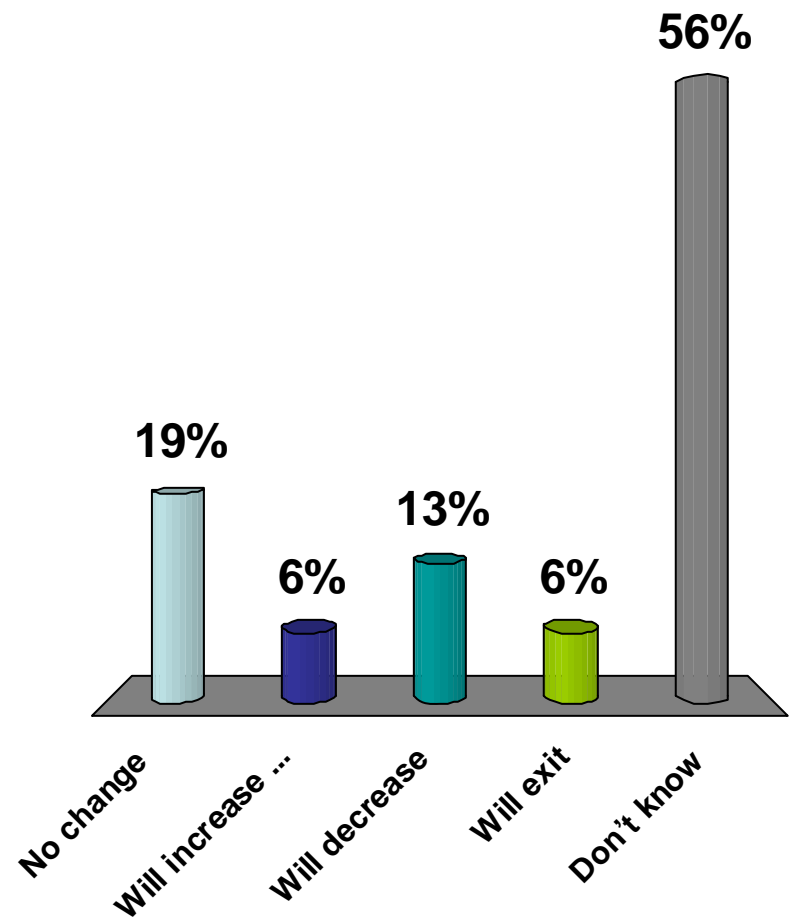
How do you think establishment of SWD will influence your future organic cherry production?

1. No change
2. Will increase anyways
3. Will decrease
4. Will exit
5. Don't know



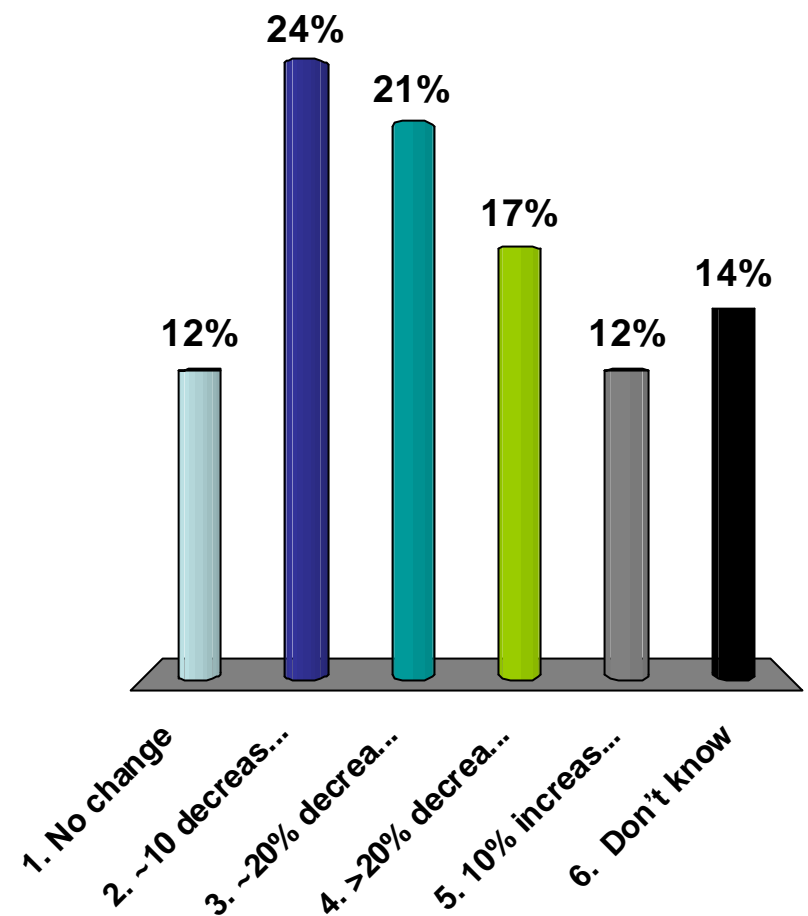
How do you think establishment of SWD will influence your production of other organic stone fruits and berries?

1. No change
2. Will increase anyways
3. Will decrease
4. Will exit
5. Don't know



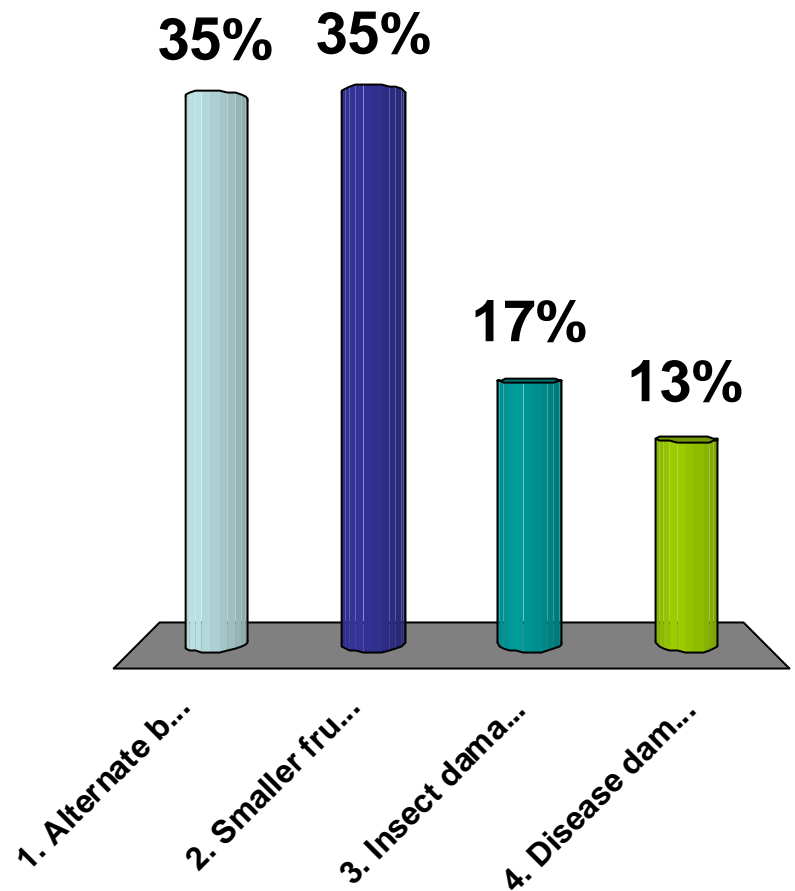
How has organic production impacted your fruit **yields** (e.g. bins/acre)?

1. No change
2. ~10 decrease
3. ~20% decrease
4. >20% decrease
5. 10% increase or more
6. Don't know



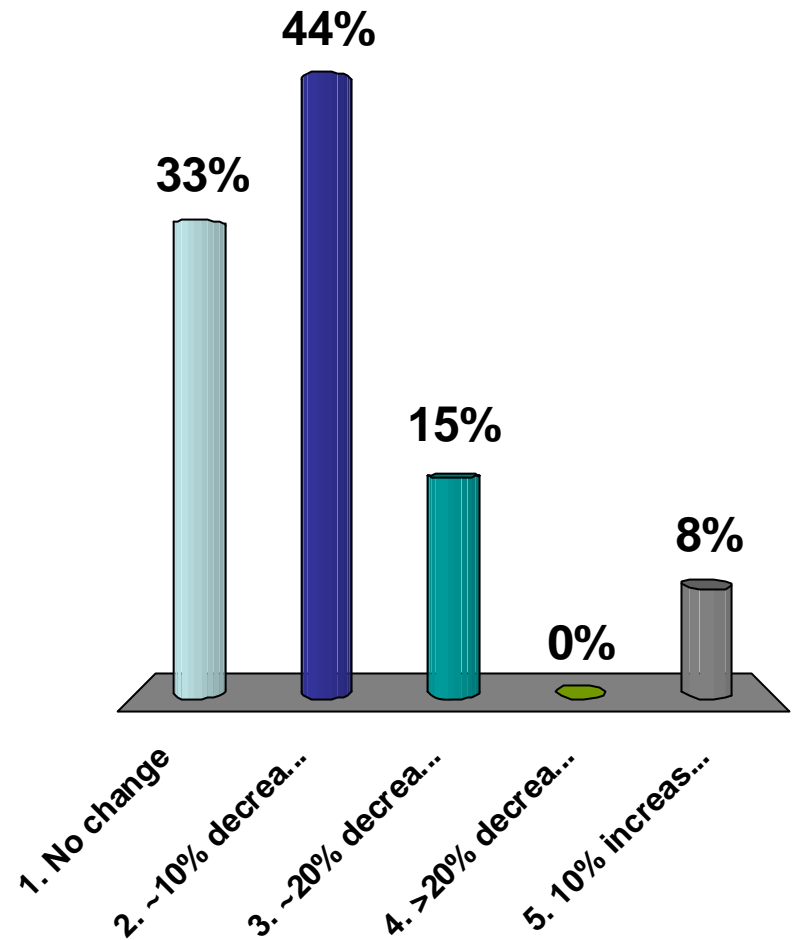
If you have experienced reduced **yields**, what are the main causes (rank in order of most important first)?

1. Alternate bearing
2. Smaller fruit size
3. Insect damage
4. Disease damage (e.g. fireblight, mildew)



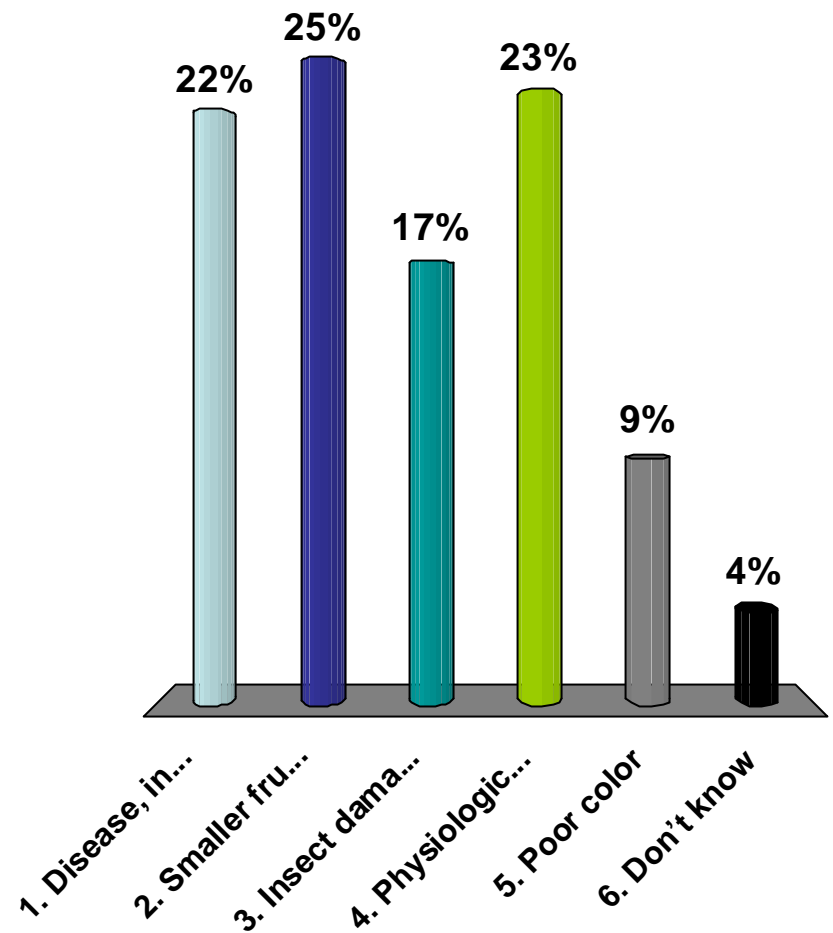
How has organic production impacted your fruit **packout**?

1. No change
2. ~10% decrease
3. ~20% decrease
4. >20% decrease
5. 10% increase or more



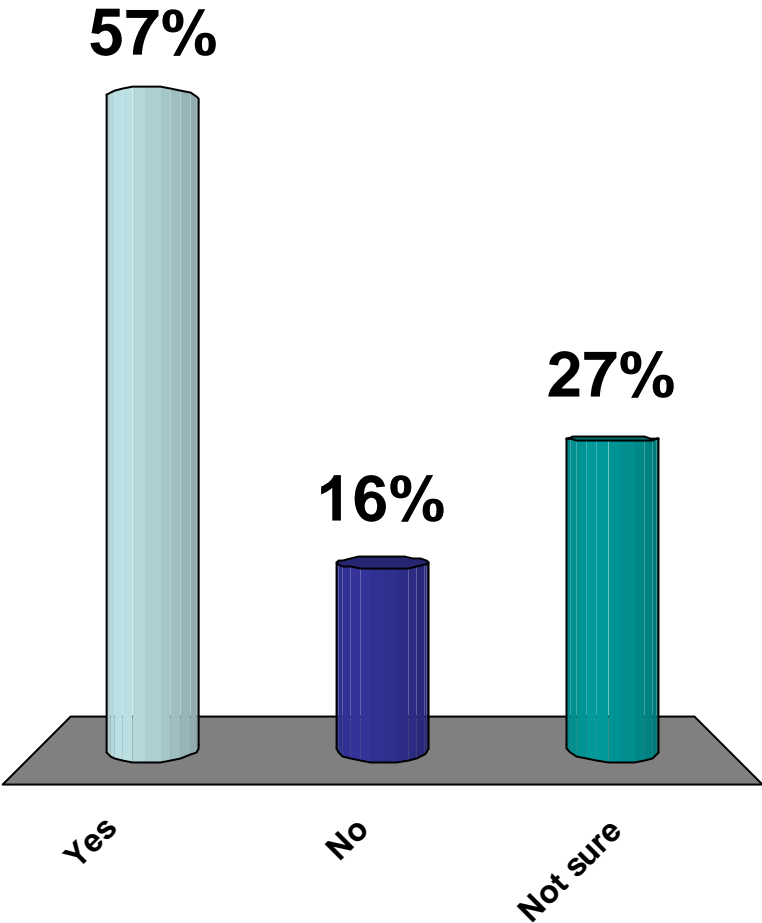
If you have experienced **reduced packout**, what are the main causes (rank in order of most important first)?

1. Disease, including storage rot
2. Smaller fruit size
3. Insect damage
4. Physiological disorders (e.g. bitterpit)
5. Poor color
6. Don't know



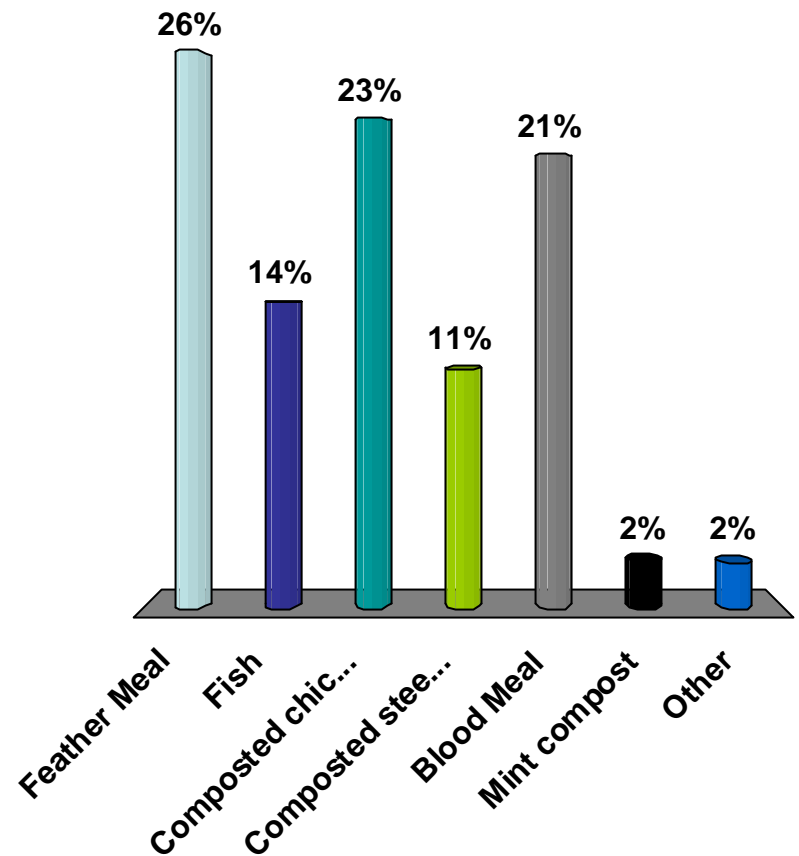
Does your warehouse provide you with information on the percent of your fruit sold as organic?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Not sure



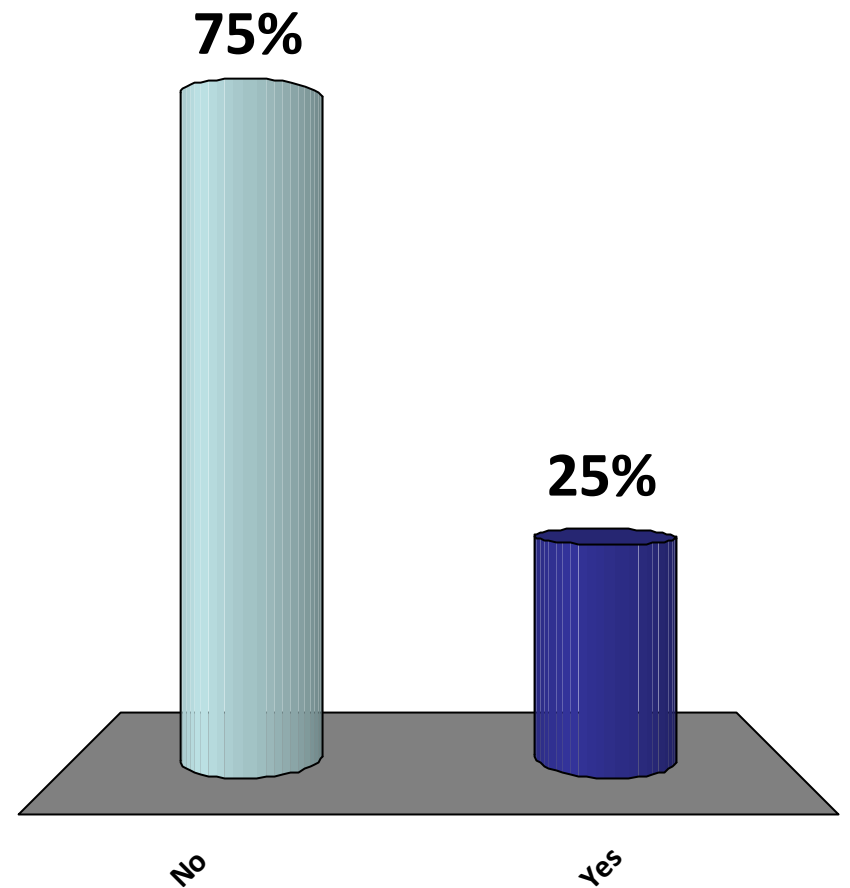
What are your main forms of N for soil application? (Choose **up to 3**, in order)

1. Feather Meal
2. Fish
3. Composted chicken / DPW
4. Composted steer
5. Blood Meal
6. Mint compost
7. Other



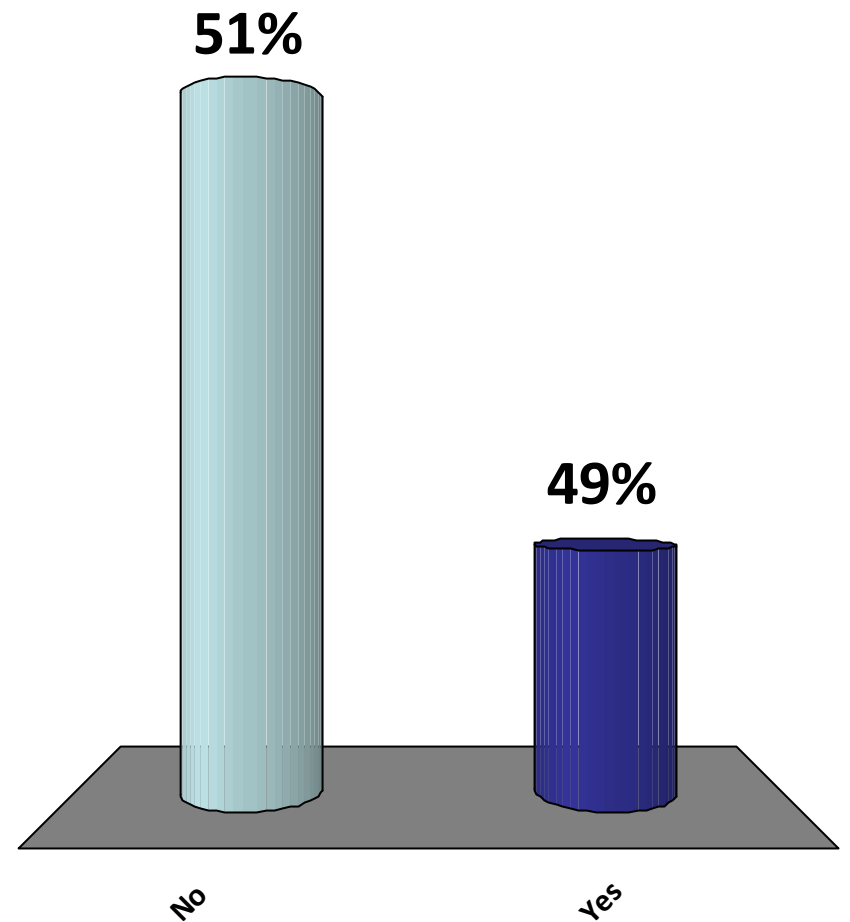
Do you use legumes in the orchard to provide some nitrogen nutrition?

1. No
2. Yes



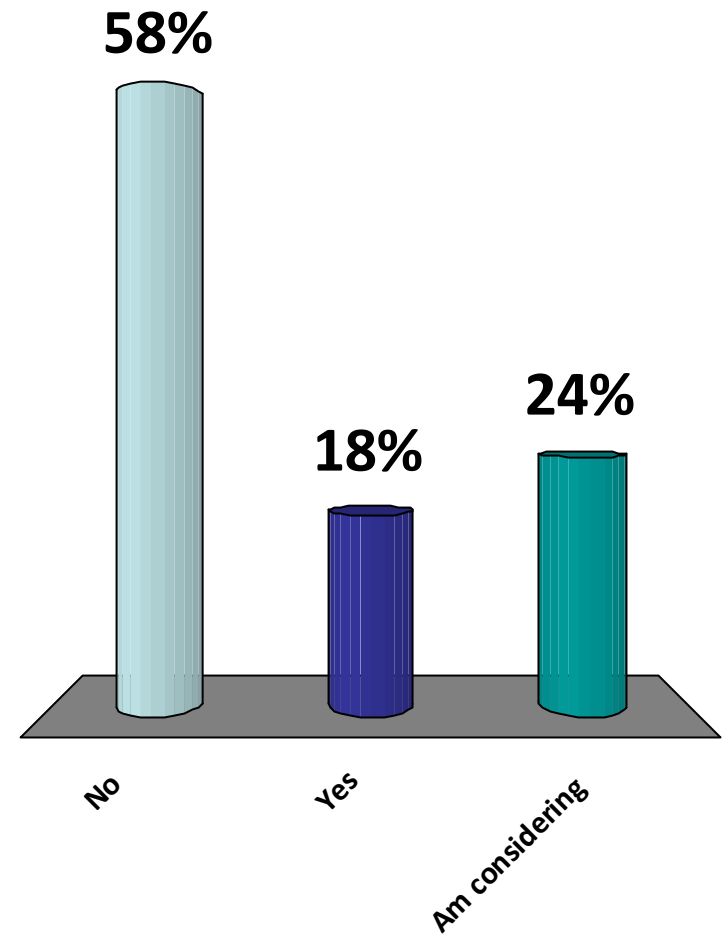
Have you used mulching for weed control / soil improvement?

1. No
2. Yes



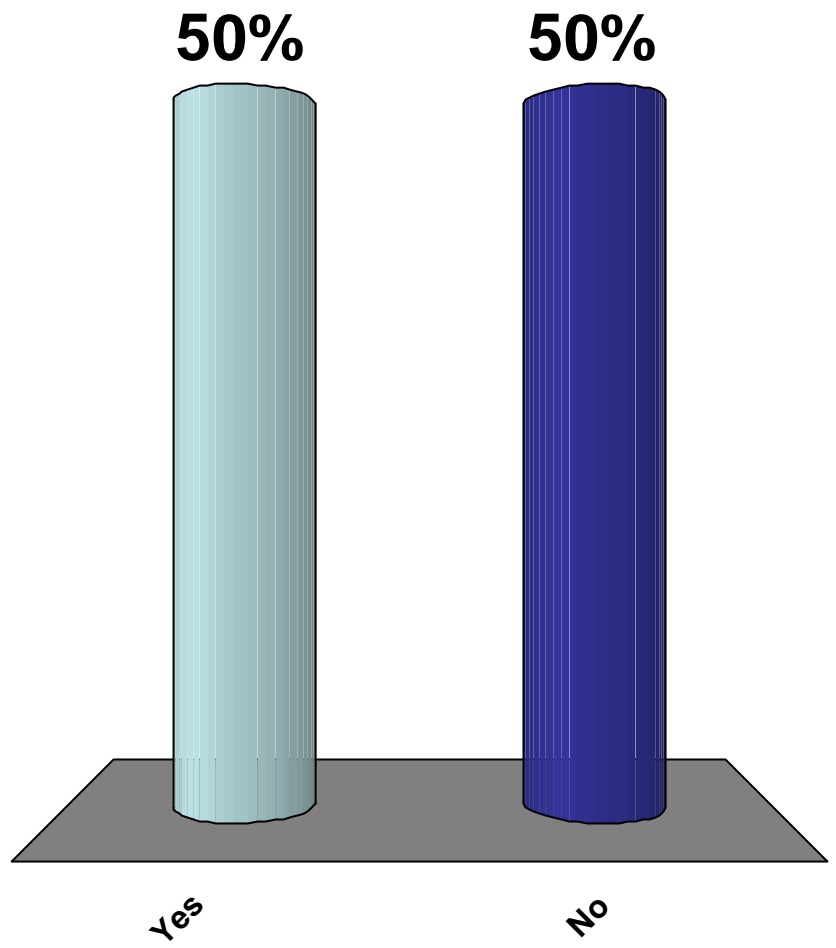
Do you use 'mow and blow' of the alley vegetation to mulch the tree row?

1. No
2. Yes
3. Am considering



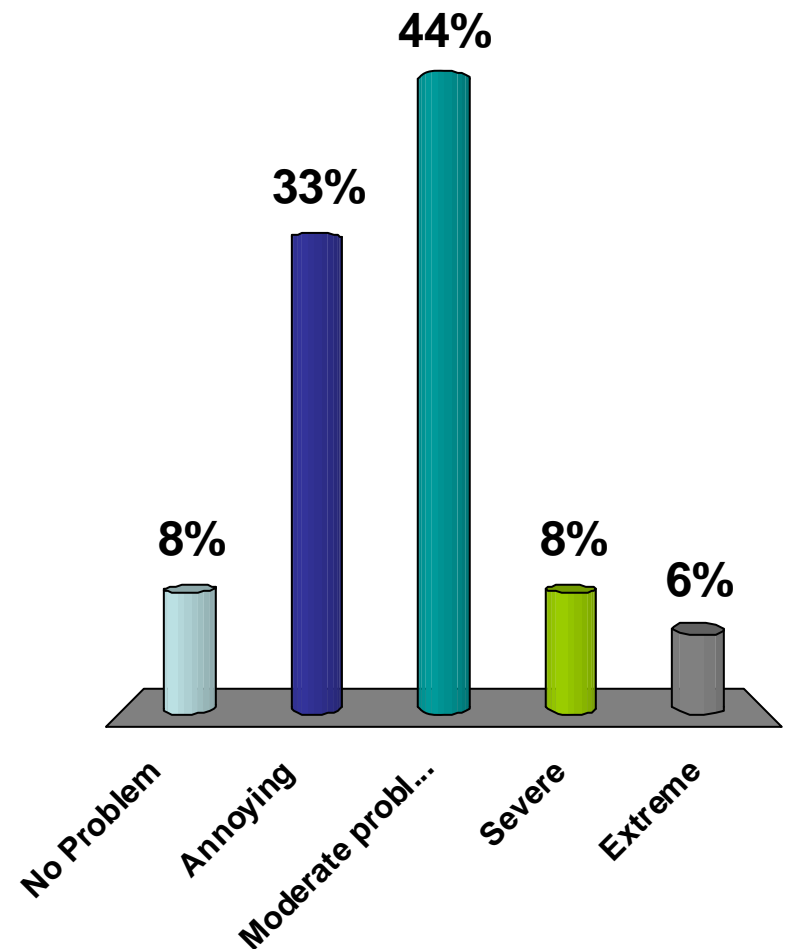
If you use mulching, do you experience increased vole or gopher problems due to mulching?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No



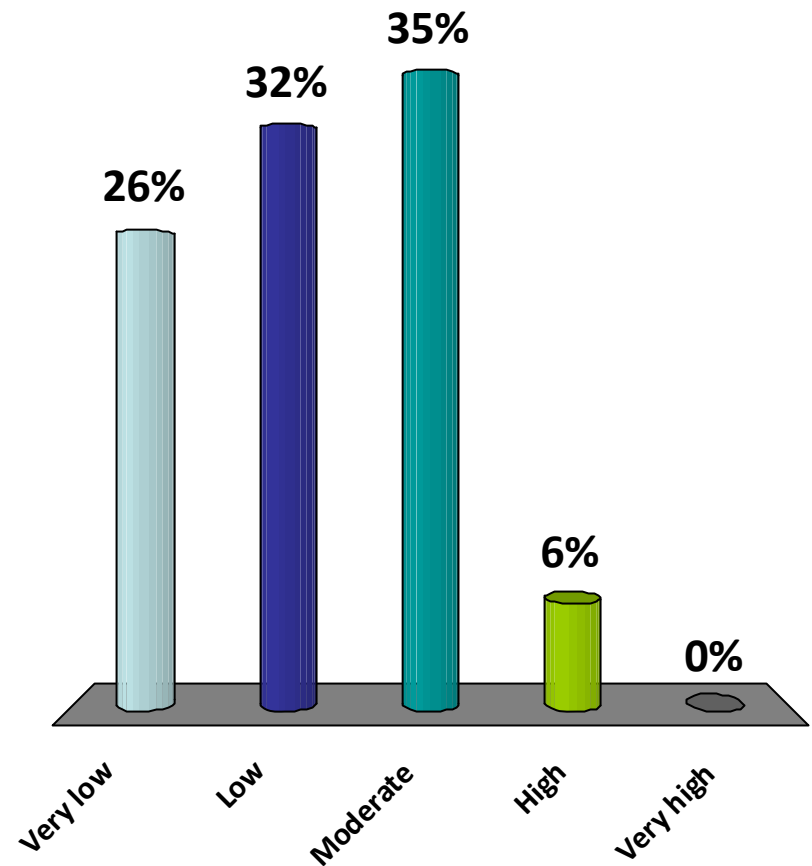
How would you rate the severity of your vole and gopher problem in your orchard?

1. No Problem
2. Annoying
3. Moderate problem
4. Severe
5. Extreme



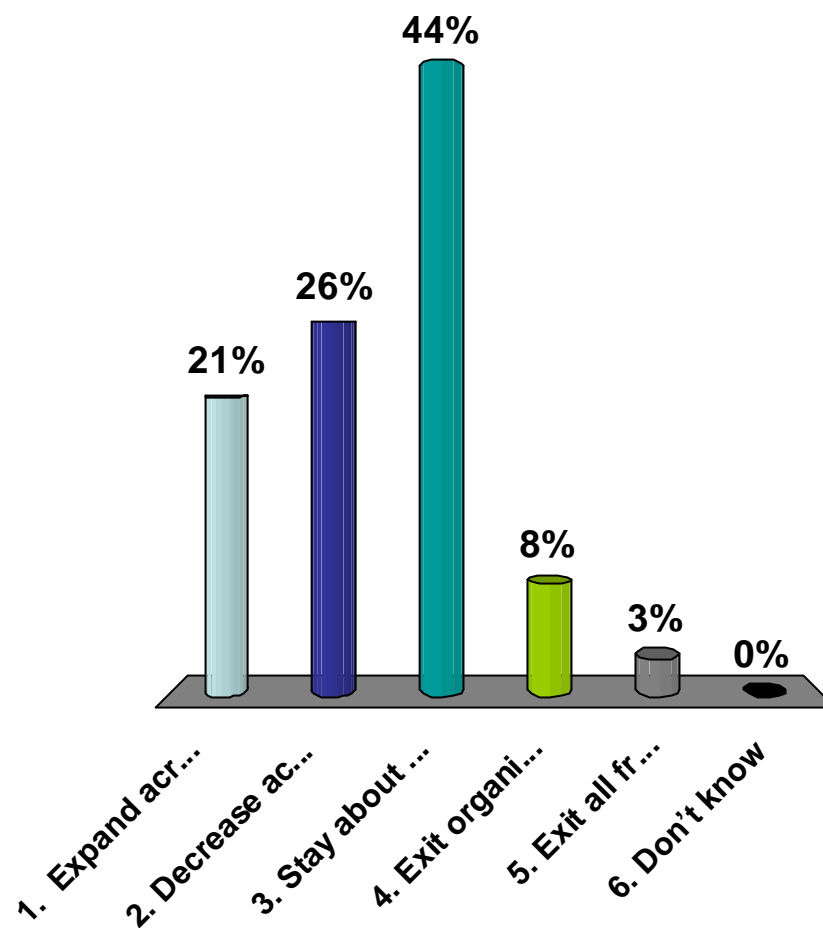
Rate your ability to adequately control mice (voles) in your organic orchard.

1. Very low
2. Low
3. Moderate
4. High
5. Very high



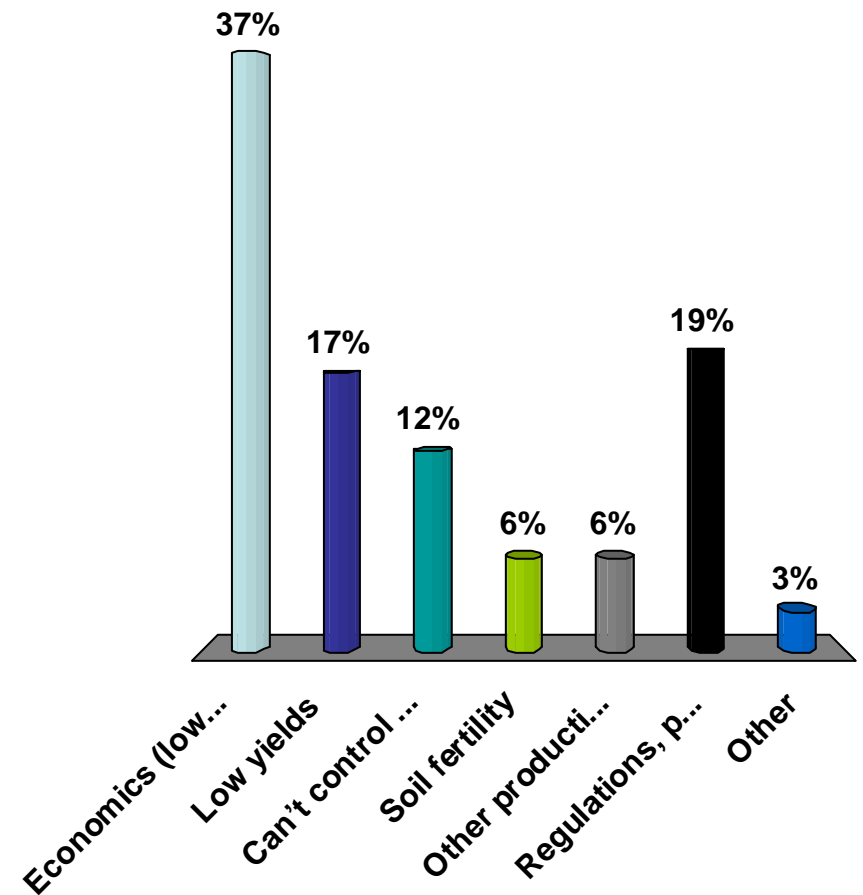
How do you see your organic fruit production changing over the next five years?

1. Expand acres under organic management
2. Decrease acres of organic management
3. Stay about the same
4. Exit organic production
5. Exit all fruit production
6. Don't know



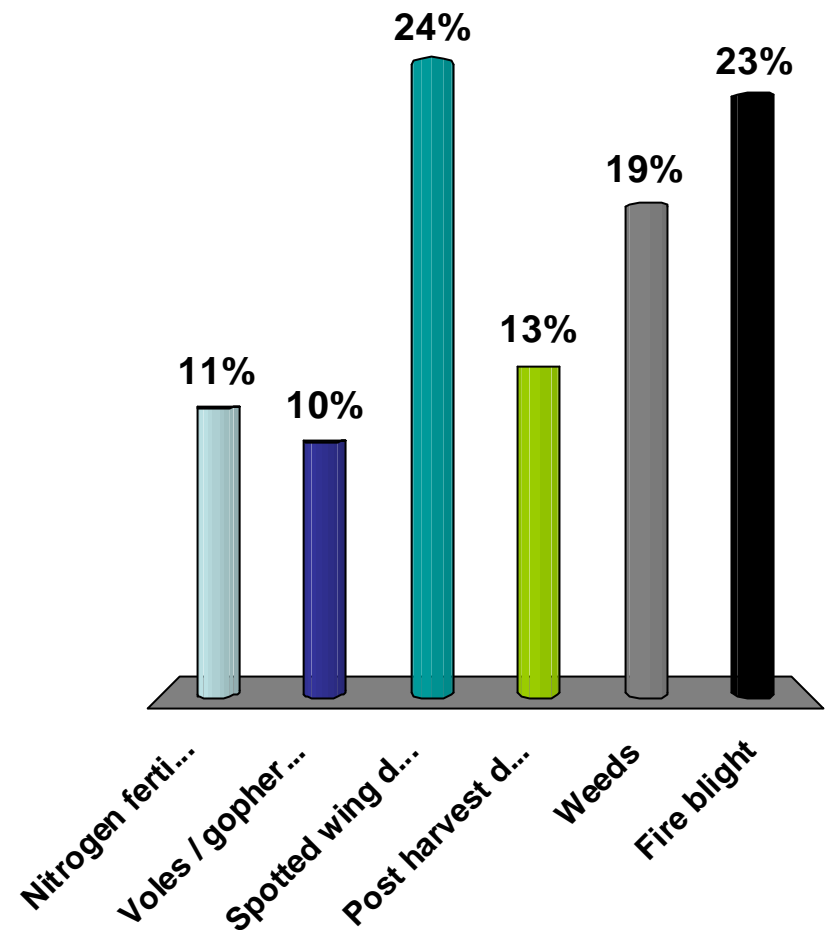
If decreasing organic production, choose (in order) the **top 3** reasons why.

1. Economics (low prices, hi costs, etc)
2. Low yields
3. Can't control pests
4. Soil fertility
5. Other production problems
6. Regulations, paperwork
7. Other



Rank these organic-specific research needs for funding priority (**top 3**, in order):

1. Nitrogen fertility
2. Voles / gopher control
3. Spotted wing drosophila
4. Post harvest diseases
5. Weeds
6. Fire blight





Thanks for participating !