

# In sync with your customers? Here's what they say!

## Vita Plus-Hoard's Dairyman Client/Harvester Survey

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Custom Harvester Meeting 2015

Sharpen skills, adjust the knowledge bar and gain the edge

## Hoard's Dairyman, October 25, 2014



### We all want quality feed

Regardless of affiliation, custom harvesters and dairymen share many of the same concerns and harvest goals.

by Jon Urness

**H**ARVEST is often a high-stress time as dairies strive to put up high-quality forage and high-moisture grains. The window of opportunity is often ridiculously narrow. Relationships between dairy producers and their custom harvesters can be stretched to the breaking point. Even the best of friends can find each other at odds when the stakes are a

remember that we truly need each other." Another said, "Keep communication open and have mutual trust. Our harvester knows our goal as to feed quality, and we know his schedule, so we work together."

**Most agreements are informal** So, how does this "good" communication occur? For better or worse, it is mostly done

"Harvest is often a high-stress time as dairies strive to put up high-quality forage and high-moisture grains. The window of opportunity is often ridiculously narrow. Relationships between dairy producers and their custom harvesters can be stretched to the breaking point. Even the best of friends can find each other at odds when the stakes are a year's supply of top-notch forage."



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***“Knowing the producer’s goals is the biggest thing. Sure, we need to show up on time and do those things right, but knowing what is wanted is a big deal. Those pre-harvest meetings and communication are critical.”***

***-Jon Orr***



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***“Communication. We are not able to harvest our forage in a timely manner without a custom harvester. We need to be willing to work with a custom harvester when there are conflicts and remember that we truly need each other.”***

***Another said, “Keep communication open and have mutual trust. Our harvester knows our goal as to feed quality and we know his schedule, so we work together.***

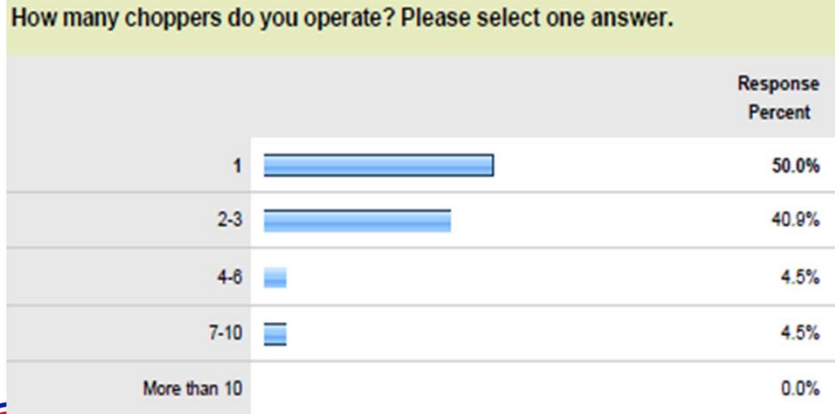
***-Dairy Producer Comments***



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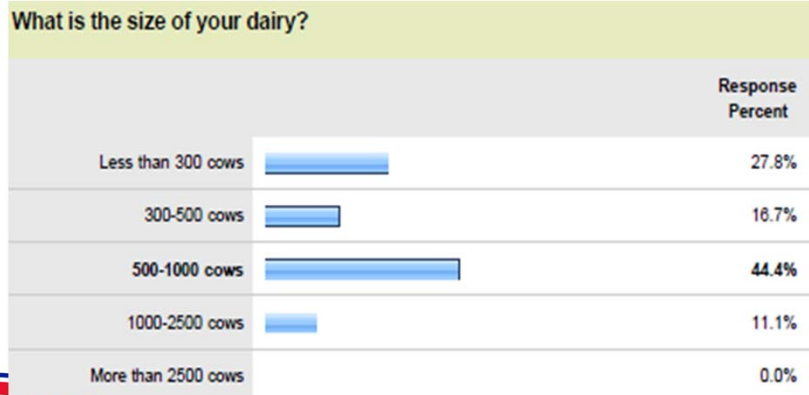
## Who answered the survey? Choppers:



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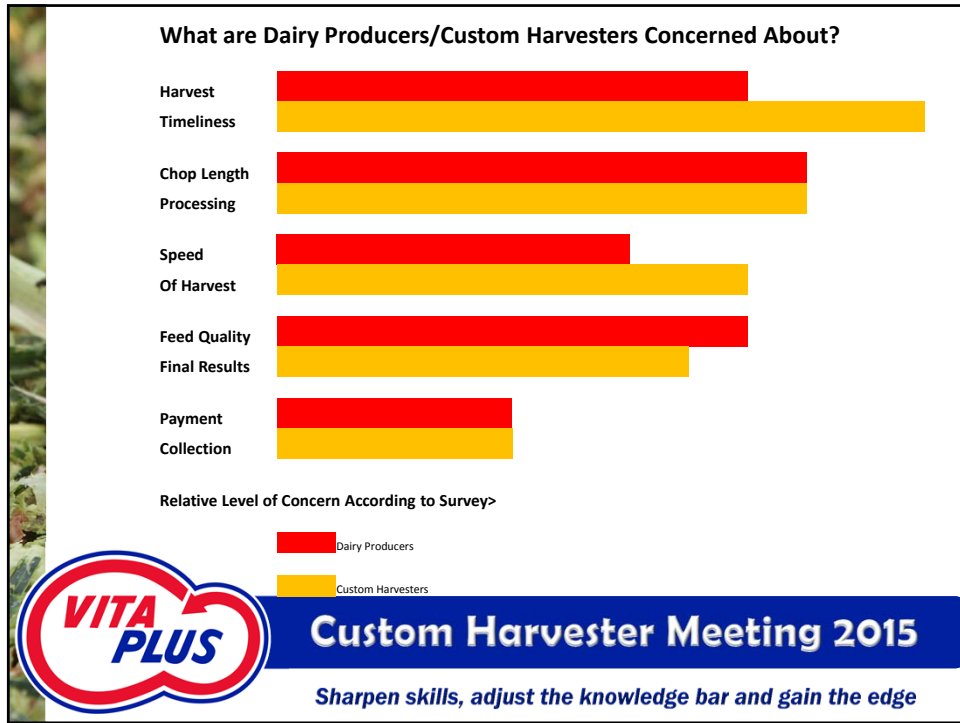
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## Dairy producers:



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- ### Causes for conflict..... (Custom Harvester Perspective)
- 1 Harvesting faster than packing ability Bunkers too small for multiple packing tractors
  - 2 Farmer has weak crops, or rough fields that tear up equipment
  - 3 feed quality less than anticipated
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## Written contract? Choppers:

Do you have a written contract with your clients?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never



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## Written contract? Choppers:

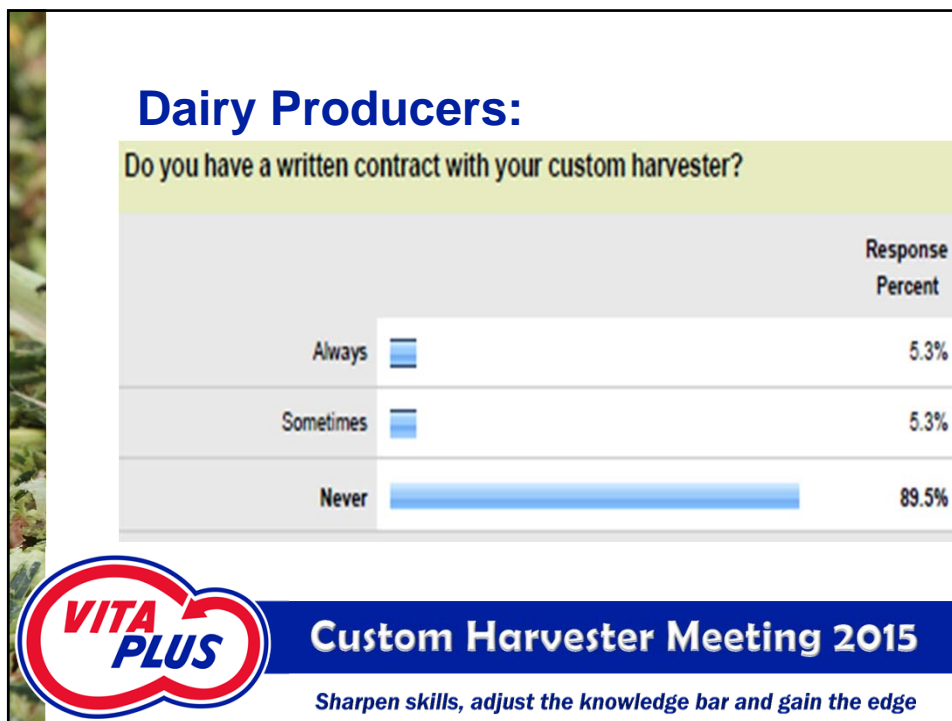
Do you have a written contract with clients?

	Response Percent
Always	4.3%
Sometimes	43.5%
Never	52.2%



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## Pre-Harvest Meetings? Choppers:

Do you or members of your crew have a pre-harvest meeting (formal or informal) with your clients to determine specific goals of the client?

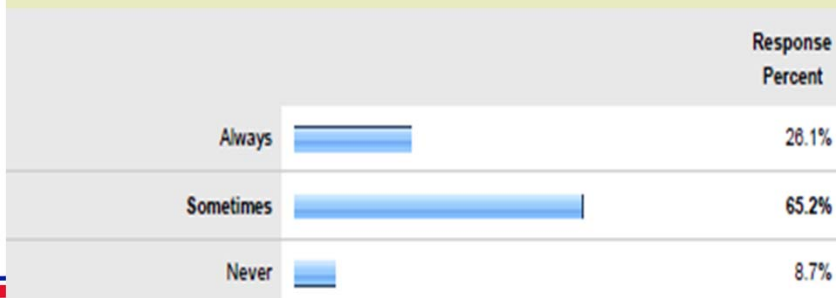
- Always
- Sometimes
- Never



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## Pre-Harvest Meetings? Choppers:

4. Do you or your members of your crew have a pre-harvest team meeting (formal or informal) with your clients to determine specific goals of the client?

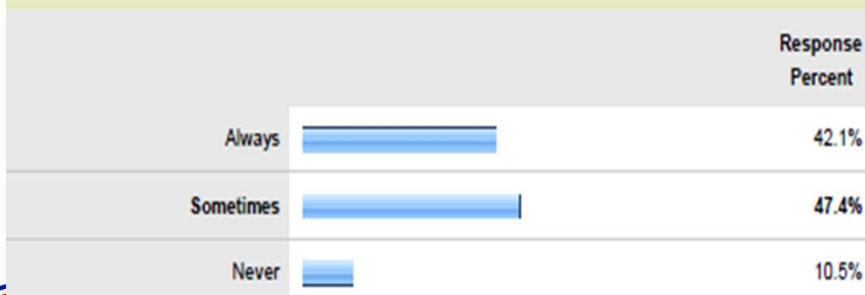


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## Dairy producers:

4. Do you or your team have a pre-harvest team meeting (formal or informal) with your custom harvester to determine specific harvest goals?



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## Meeting useful? Choppers:

5. In regard to the usefulness of pre-harvest meetings (if you are having them or even aren't) please rate how helpful you think they are or could be in avoiding conflicts and misunderstanding once harvest commences.

	Response Percent
Very Helpful	69.6%
Somewhat Helpful	28.1%
Not at all Helpful	4.3%



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## Dairy Producers:

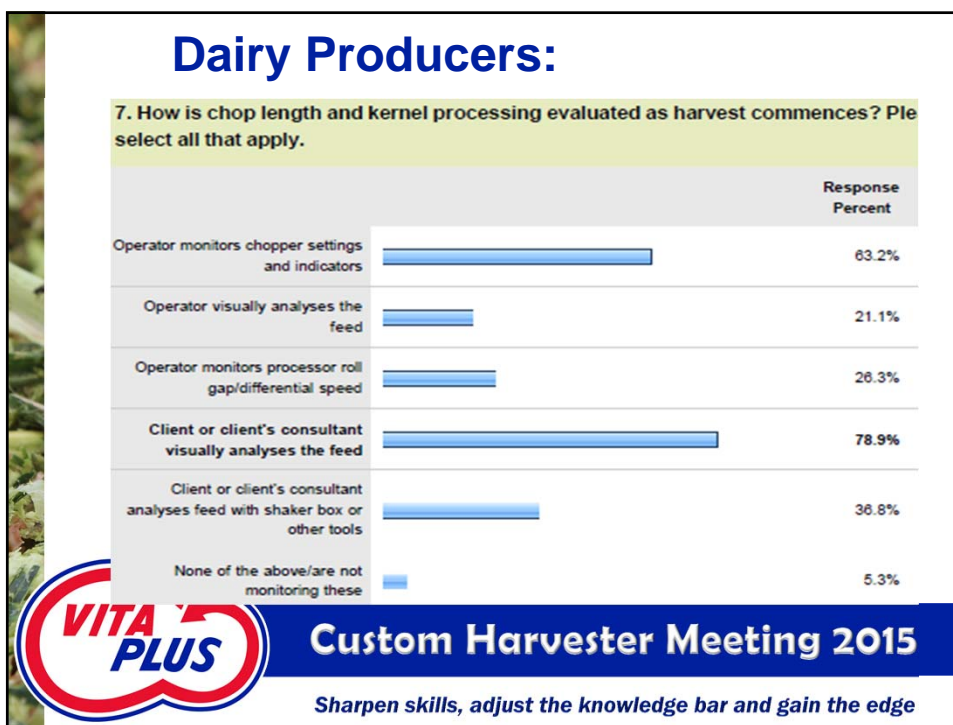
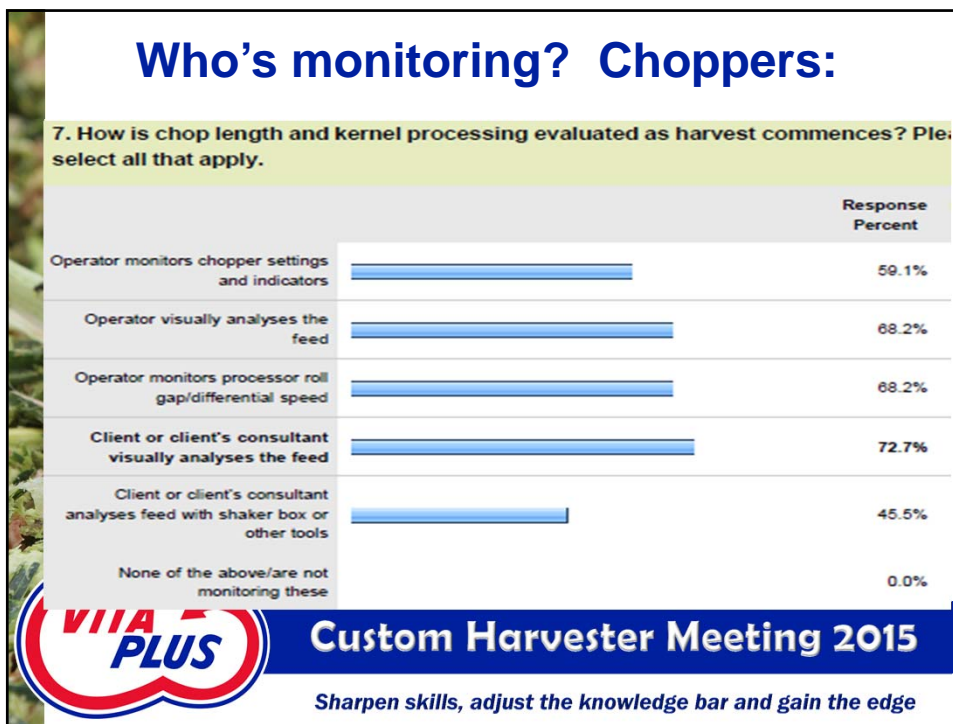
5. In regard to the usefulness of pre-harvest meetings (if you are having them or even aren't) please rate how helpful you think they are or could be in avoiding conflicts and misunderstanding once harvest commences.

	Response Percent
Very Helpful	68.4%
Somewhat Helpful	31.6%
Not at all Helpful	0.0%



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## Custom Harvester:

Have you ever "fired" a client for any reason?

	Response Percent
Yes	30.1%
No	60.9%



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## Why did you fire your customer?

(Custom Harvester)

- 1 we had some we needed paid before we went back
- 2 Not paying bill.
- 3 Payment issues
- 4 Hard to work with, rough grounds, weak crops etc or farmer with no loyalty or dedication.
- 5 Lied about acres all the time

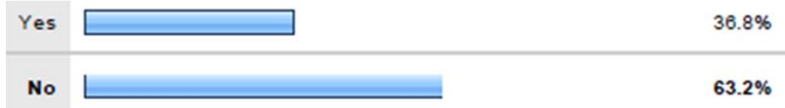


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## Dairy Producers.....

Have you ever “fired” a custom harvester?



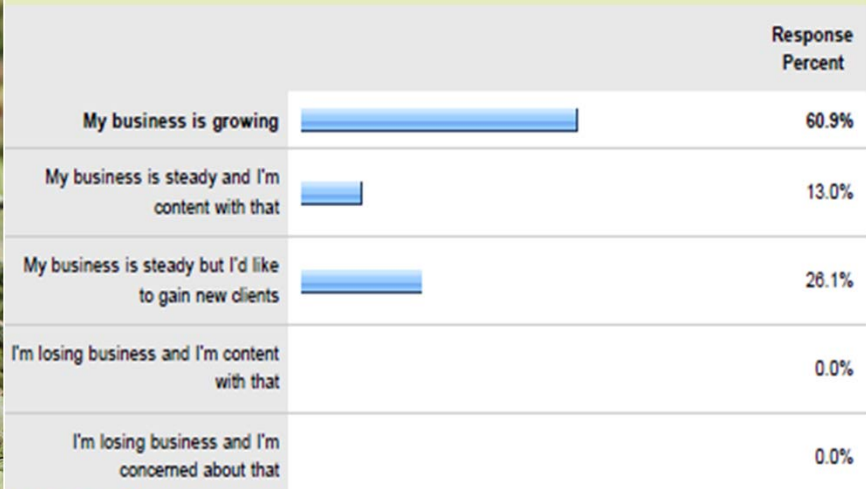
Producers didn't say why-not sure what that means?



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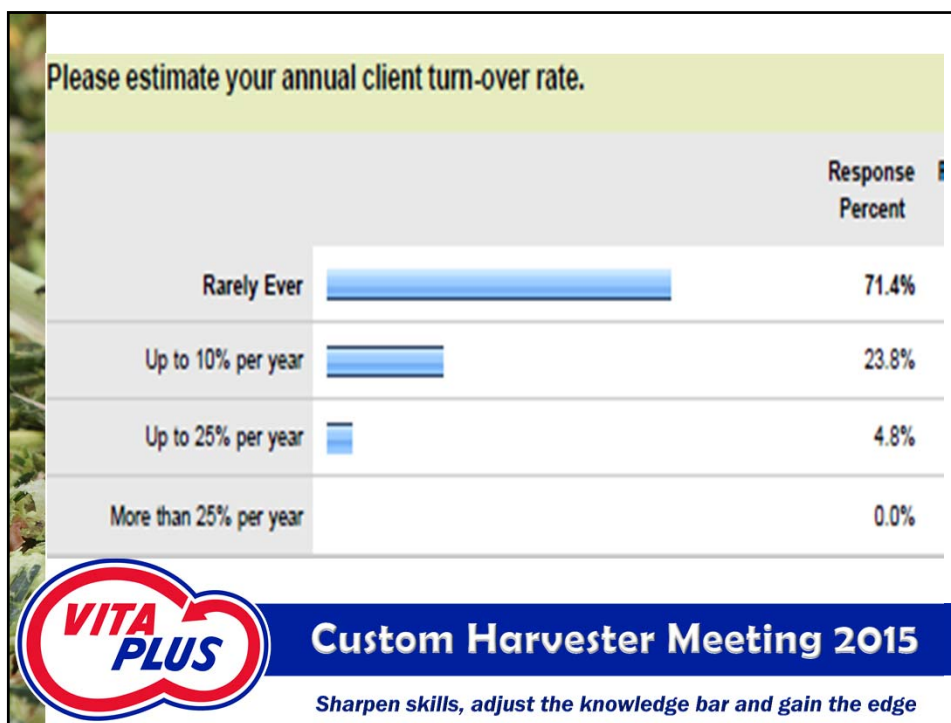
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10. Is your business growing? Please select one answer.



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### Misc Custom Harvester Comments....

Learn to know what the customer or more importantly their nutritionist wants..when you have a visual of what is desired it is much easier to satisfy

Clearly defined goals, obstacles, and fees prior to any work performed. Also, both parties need to be fully aware that the end goal can and will be a moving target.

Call often. Communicate w dairy before chopper gets to the field. Follow up during the off season.

Price sheet with payment terms provided and discussed. Goals established pre and post harvest meetings. Do your damn job professionally !



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## Wouldn't you like to have these Producers as clients?

Good communication. If the custom operator doesn't know what your goals are how can he meet them? He can also give you an idea what is practical although you want ideal because its your cows and bills that are directly affected

Good communication and a commitment to each other by both sides is important. I think a custom operator is going to be much more responsive to someone who he thinks is a long-term customer and not to someone who he thinks will switch to another custom harvester every other year.



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## And finally, this one regarding kernel processing....

This is a yearly battle with corn silage. The more processing the slower the chopper must go to make up the power lost to processing, I know they have to stay on schedule, they run [redacted] choppers and I think they are not designed as well as some others, in time through out the day they seem to open at least some. I monitor every 2 to 3 hours.



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***“If you want to be successful it’s just this simple- Know what you are doing, love what you are doing, and believe in what you’re doing.***

**-Will Rogers**



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***Thank you,  
for your  
attention!***



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