

# The Missouri Produce Growers Video Newsletter

## Engaging, Impactful & Replicable Extension Education

Justin Keay<sup>1</sup>, Katie Kammler<sup>2</sup>, Debi Kelly<sup>3</sup>, Juan Cabrera-Garcia<sup>4</sup>, Ramon Arancibia<sup>5</sup>, Eli Isele<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horticulture Specialist, Bowling Green, MO 63390, <sup>2</sup> Horticulture Specialist, St. Genevieve, MO 63670, <sup>3</sup> Horticulture Specialist, Columbia, MO 65203, <sup>4</sup> State Vegetable Specialist, Columbia, MO 65211, <sup>5</sup> Horticulture Specialist, Butler, MO 64730, <sup>6</sup> Horticulture Specialist, St. Peters, MO 63376

### Needs and Goals

- Maintaining impactful, ongoing digital engagement with specialty crop producers is challenging. Extension educators must compete with social media content creators to capture and hold audiences' attention to distribute research-backed farming information.
- The bi-monthly Missouri Produce Growers Video Newsletter (MPGVN) was developed in 2020 by a team of educators to distribute brief videos to specialty crop farmers through a central communication channel. The engaging content and format are designed to promote adoption of research-based farming practices and serve as a resource hub for Missouri's specialty crop industry.

### Program Execution

- Issues are created in the Dotdigital engagement platform and include five to seven educational videos three to seven minutes long. The interdisciplinary videos includes live shot recordings and narrated PowerPoint presentations. Content is created by the team, edited by a multimedia staff member, and posted on YouTube.
- Resource hub content includes a "Contact Your Local Horticulture Specialist" map, lists of upcoming workshops, webinars, grants, specialty crop budgets, publications, partner agencies and non-profits, partner newsletters and regional email listservs for growers.

### Cumulative Reach 2020-2025

41,987 Content Clicks

120,000+ Video Views

68,687 Sends

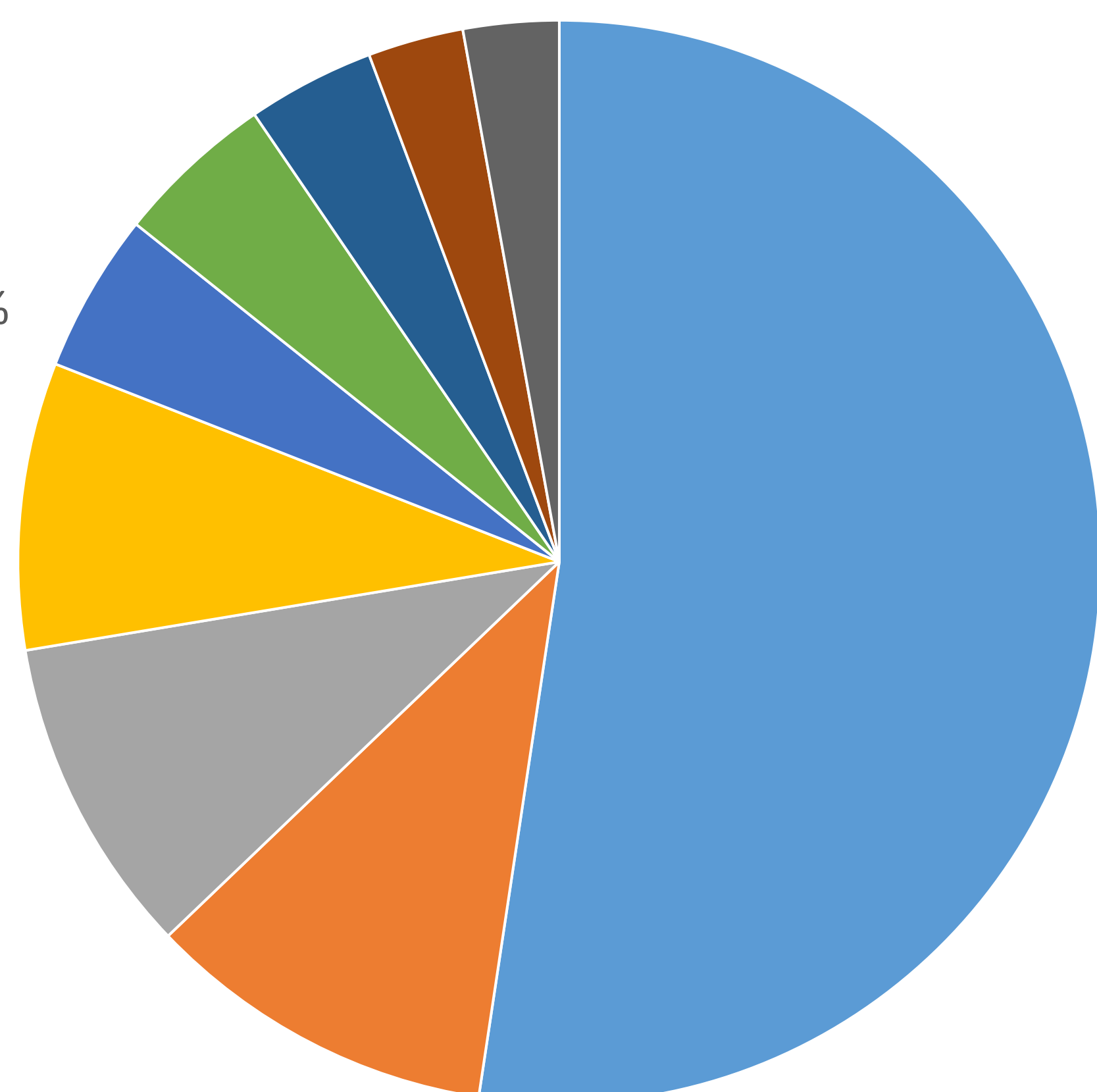
37,419 Opens

90 Issues

316 videos

### Newsletter Videos by Discipline

- Cropping Systems - 51%
- Business Management - 10%
- Grants and Agency Resources - 10%
- Workshop Promotion - 9%
- Produce Safety - 5%
- Climatology - 5%
- Research Updates - 4%
- Natural Resources - 3%
- Pesticide Safety - 3%



### Assessing Impact and Engagement

- In 2023, a survey to assess impacts was sent to 948 subscribers using Qualtrics (14% response rate [N=132]). Of respondents, 55% identified as "currently growing and selling produce or growing produce and planning to sell in the future" (growers).
- An analysis was also performed to assess subscriber engagement. Email newsletter engagement metric data, tracked by issue in Dotdigital, was collected for 2020-2023 issues. Values for each metric were averaged and compared to industry benchmarks for educational newsletters provided by Campaign Monitor, an aggregator of email newsletter analytics.

### Survey Responses & Engagement Metrics

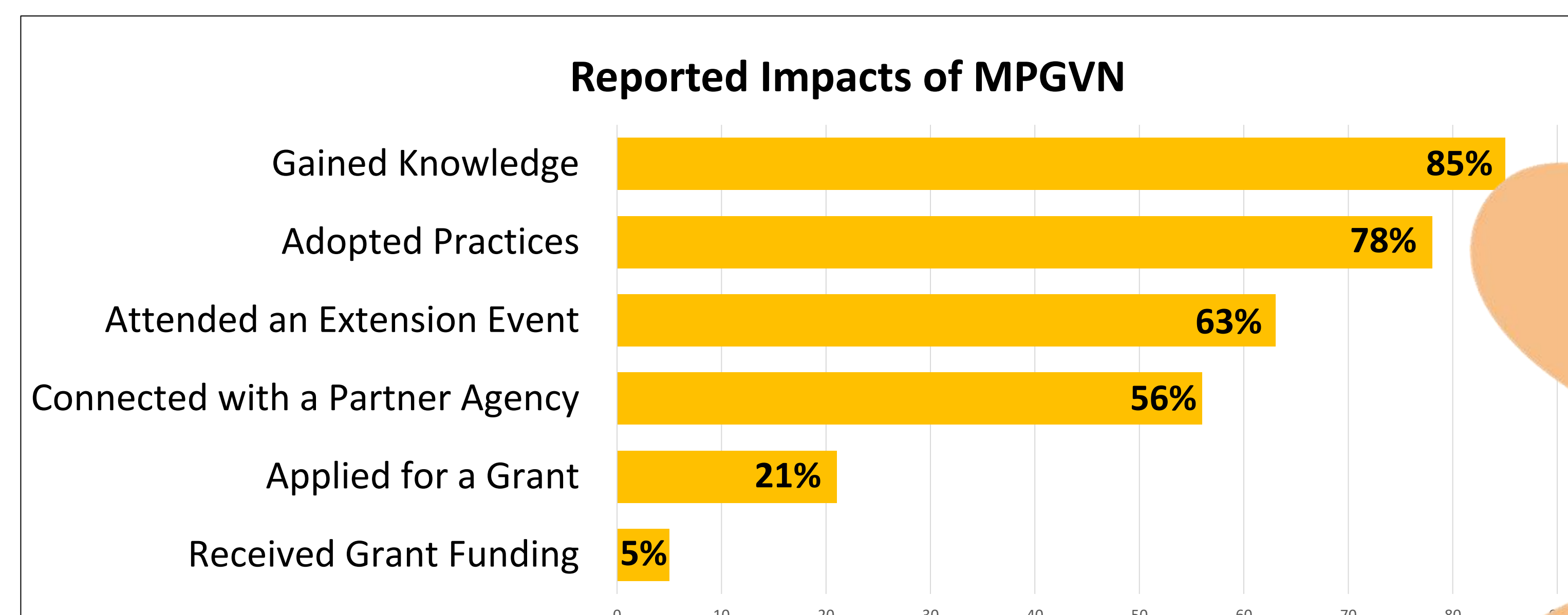


Figure 1. "Grower" respondent group answering affirmatively to impact assessment questions

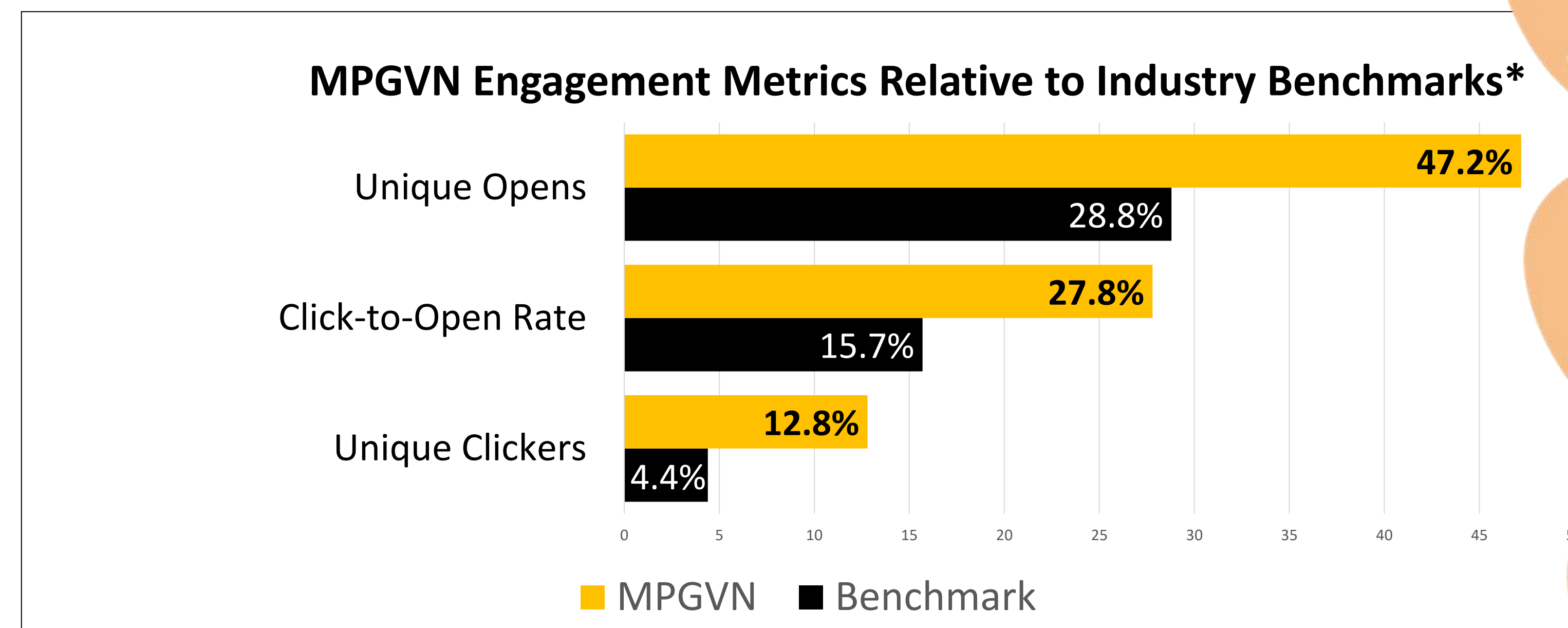


Figure 2. 2020-2023 MPGVN engagement metrics relative to industry benchmarks for educational newsletters \*Data from Campaign Monitor

### What Did You Do With What You've Learned?

- "Changed watering practices, planting layout, more emphasis on soil testing for nutrient supplementation."
- "Soil testing, don't waste money on unnecessary fertilizer."
- "I have added two high tunnels to help extend my growing season and used more organic methods."
- "Helped me develop and implement a better cover crop plan."
- "Tested my soil for heavy metals."
- "I applied to and received a beginning farmer loan and high tunnel cost-share."

### Key Takeaways

- The MPGVN is an effective educational tool supporting adoption of research-driven farming practices.
- The MPGVN serves as a valuable resource hub, connecting growers to Extension events, partner agencies, and grants.
- The content and format of the MPGVN drive engagement and can be replicated by other Extension programs to support their state's specialty crop industry.



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