

# Livestock Extension Program Delivery Modes Following COVID Pandemic

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## Introduction

Due to COVID, Extension faculty turned to virtual programming to reach clientele during quarantine. This shift in delivery allowed Extension programs to continue without interruption. Annually, the UF/IFAS South Florida Beef Forage Program offers an intensive 3-day course on beef cattle reproductive management. In 2020 due to COVID restrictions, committee members opted to offer an online video series of the seminars. With what appeared to be a greater acceptance of virtual programs, the committee proceeded to plan a hybrid version of the course to attract a larger audience. Shifting this program to an Extension Online Learning platform plus a one day on site program would replace three days of intensive in-person interaction that required participants to travel great distances, lodge and leave their normal daily responsibilities. This could reduce cost to the participant, organizers, and time away from daily responsibilities.

## Objective

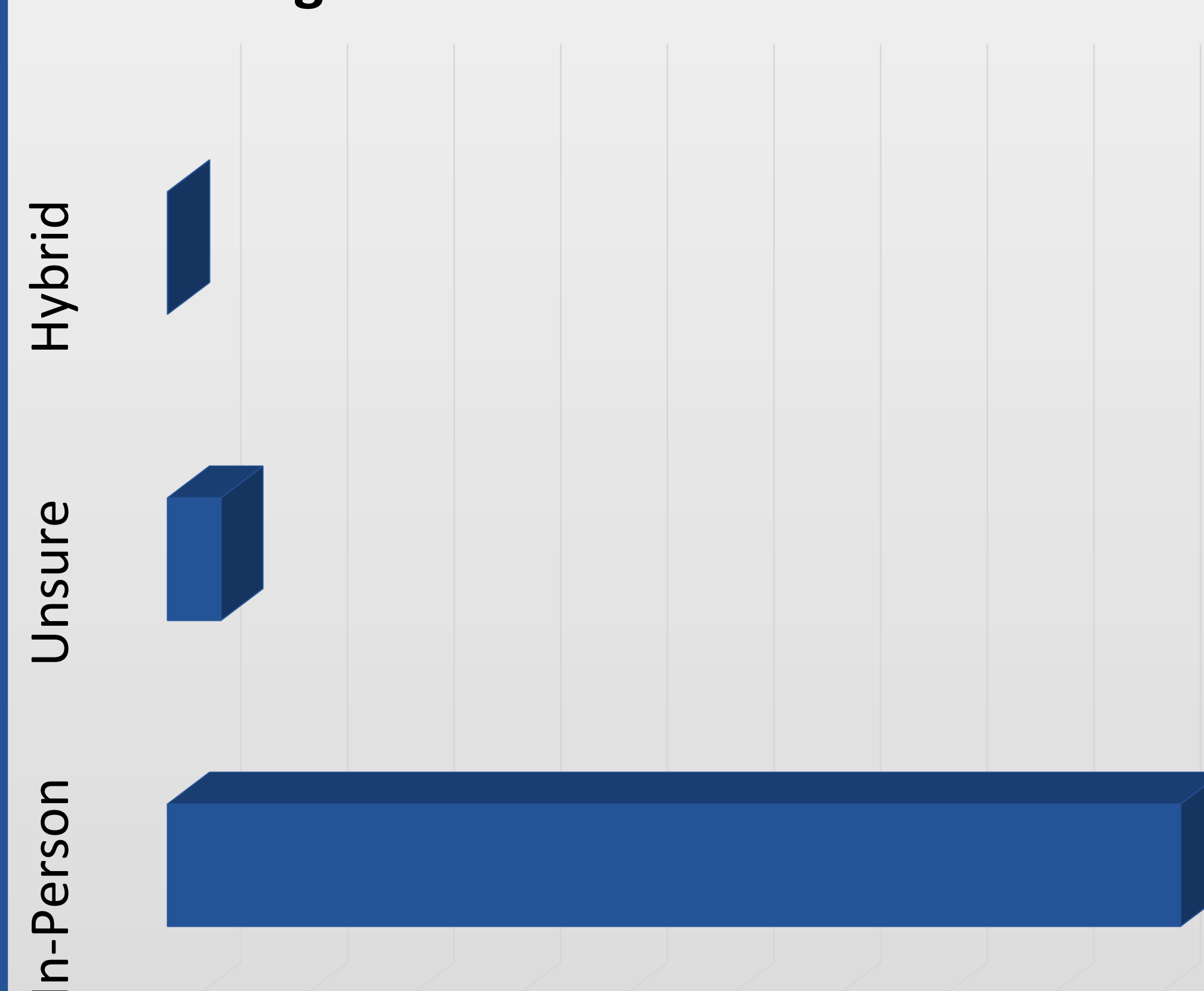
To determine if a hybrid version of future Reproductive Management Schools would be preferable or acceptable to South Florida beef cattle producers..

***"The diversity and depth of presenters was really exceptional. I think that you will lose some of that in the room transfer by going on-line. On-line would be more convenient though and may help more people access the course."***  
-Survey respondent

## Methods

Past participants (98) of the Beef Cattle Reproductive Management School were sent an e-mail survey, and local ranch managers and workers (6) were polled in-person to determine their acceptance of a hybrid program. Fourteen past participants responded to the emailed survey. The survey consisted of two questions and an option to provide a short answer response with suggestions for improved future program delivery.

**Figure 1: Beef Cattle Reproductive Management School Format Preference**



**Extension faculty turned to virtual programming to reach clientele during COVID quarantine**



## Results

Of the 20 survey and interview respondents, 100% indicated that they would not prefer a hybrid delivery mode. 95% preferred a fully in-person program delivery and 5% indicated that they were not sure. All the short answer responses indicated an in-person delivery preference. Six of the short answer respondents strongly disapproved of a hybrid format.

## Conclusions

While technologies offer alternative delivery modes for programming, it is important that we continue to consider the needs of our clientele in planning Extension programs. This survey exercise indicated that, for this particular program, there is a strong preference toward in-person program delivery. Further evaluation of delivery alternatives for other programs is needed.

**Traditionally, the Beef Cattle Reproductive Management School involved intensive classroom training and hands-on lab activities**

