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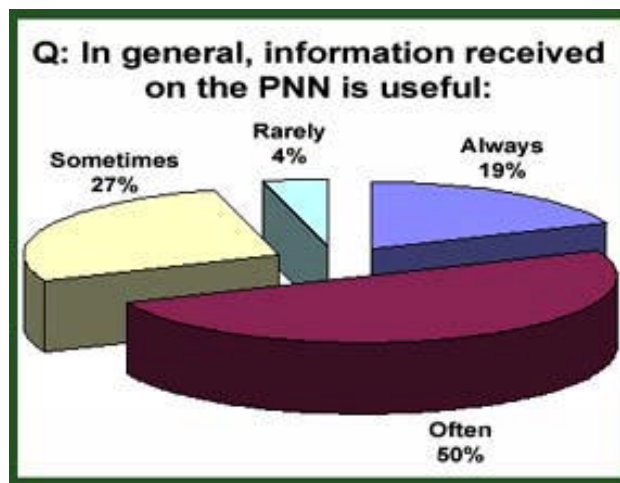
PNN Gets Good Grades from Subscribers

Results of the 2001 Survey

Jane M. Thomas, Pesticide Notification Network Coordinator, WSU

After a nearly four year wait, Pesticide Notification Network (PNN) subscribers were once again given the opportunity to let us know their thoughts on the services provided by the PNN. For those not “in the know” the PNN is an information network funded by the Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration and operated by Washington State University’s Pesticide Information Center. (For a complete description of the PNN, please visit Internet URL <http://www.pnn.wsu.edu> .) The survey questions sought subscribers’ input in three areas: PNN service in general, information provided on the PNN Web page, and ideas for future PNN enhancements.

Nearly half of those surveyed responded (47%, the same excellent response rate we received for the 1997 survey) and the survey results were positive overall. Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated that PNN notifications were either always or often useful.



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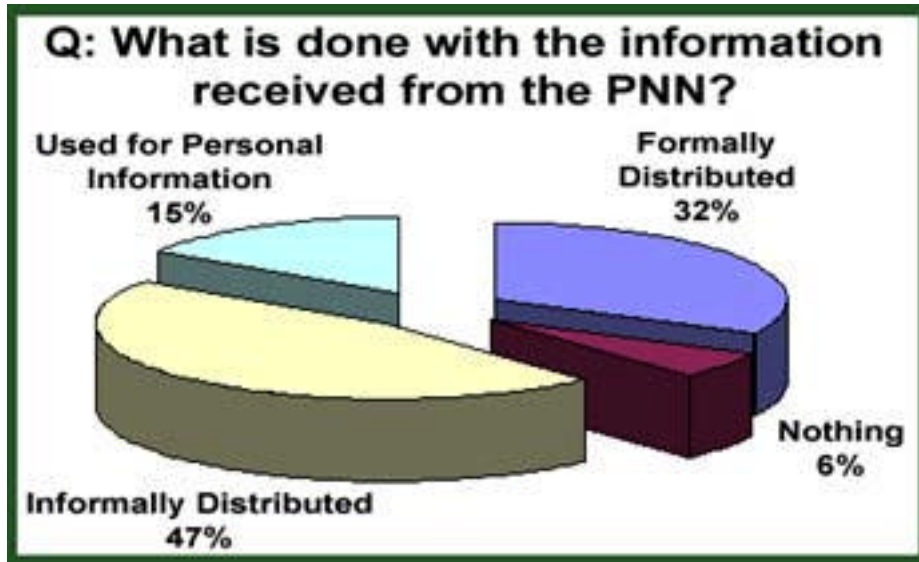
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A Bit of Background

The purpose of the PNN is to inform Washington State pesticide users of registration and label changes for products of interest to agriculture. Information is distributed by e-mail, fax, and U.S. mail to representatives of various commodity groups and commissions and to WSU research and extension staff, with the idea that these primary contacts in turn disseminate the information to affected growers. Over time, we have also developed a PNN web page (<http://www.pnn.wsu.edu>) where this information is also posted.

Subscriber Feedback

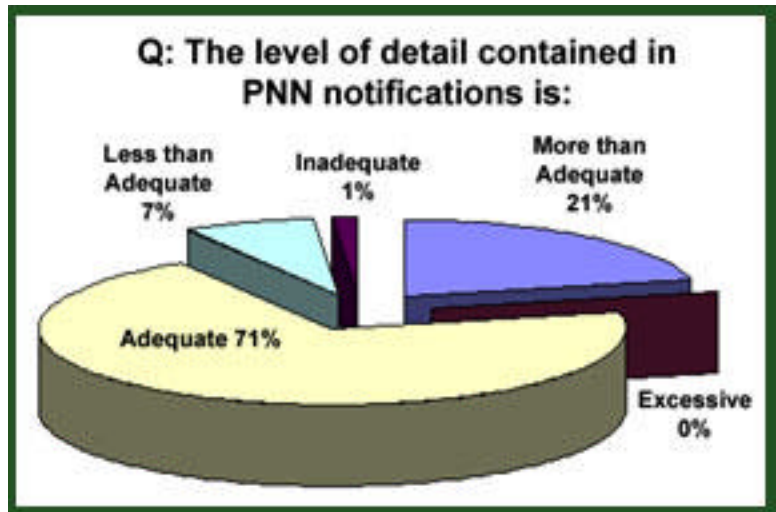
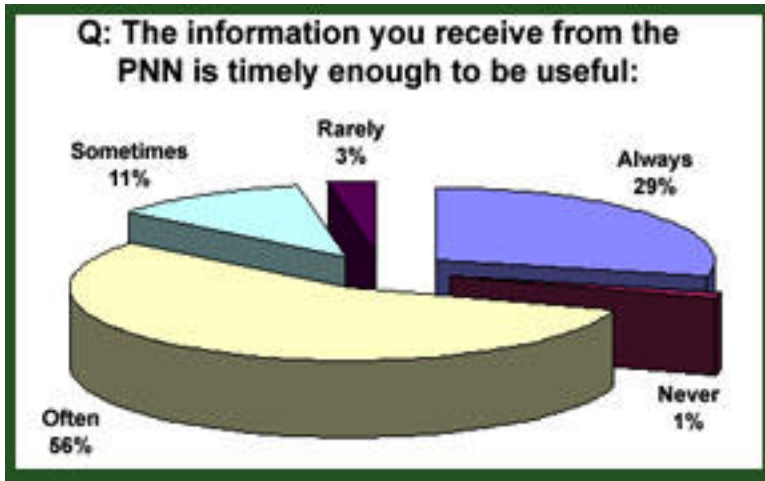
What do subscribers do with the information they receive from the PNN? In the survey, 32% of the respondents stated that they formally distributed PNN information via newsletters, Web pages, e-mail, and presentations. Forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they informally distributed PNN information in discussions with colleagues. Therefore, nearly four out of five of the respondents (79%) are passing along information received from the PNN. With the PNN information being distributed to this degree, the system seems to be working even better than originally intended.



When asked if the PNN was redundant of other sources of information, an overwhelming 85% of respondents replied that the PNN was not redundant. Of those for whom the PNN was one of several similar information sources, 75% graded the PNN as more convenient to use than other sources.

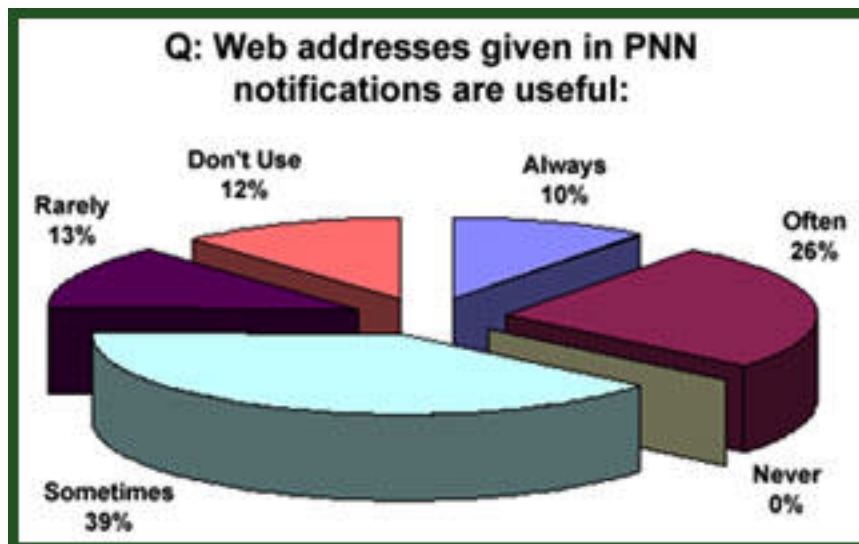
As in the 1997 survey, PNN users were asked to rate the timeliness, level of detail, and volume of PNN notifications that they receive. The responses in 2001 compare very well with responses received in 1997 and continue to indicate that subscribers are happy with the timeliness, detail, and number of PNN

notifications. Ninety-six percent of those who responded to the survey indicated that the number of PNN notifications they received was manageable, while only four percent found the number to be excessive.

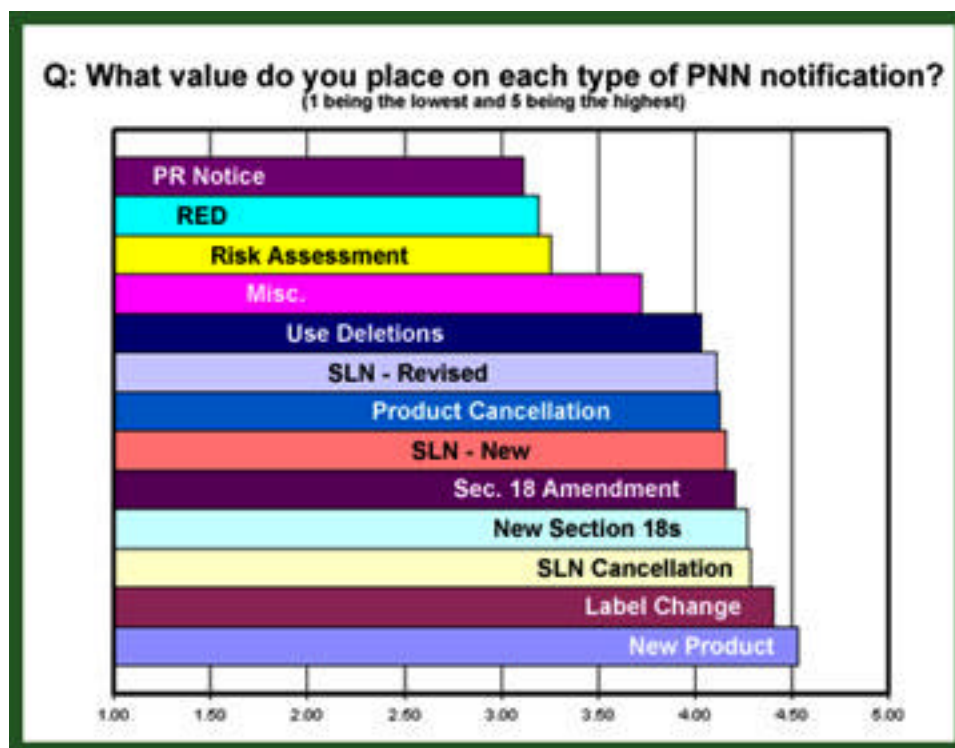


Over the past couple of years an effort has been made to include relevant Web addresses in PNN notifications. Thirty-six percent of survey respondents found these useful (either “always” or “often”), with another 39% stating that the addresses were sometimes useful. This compares to 25% of respondents indicating that they rarely find the URLs useful or that they never used them. This response (75% favorable) indicates that there is sufficient interest in the Web addresses to continue devoting staff time to this practice.

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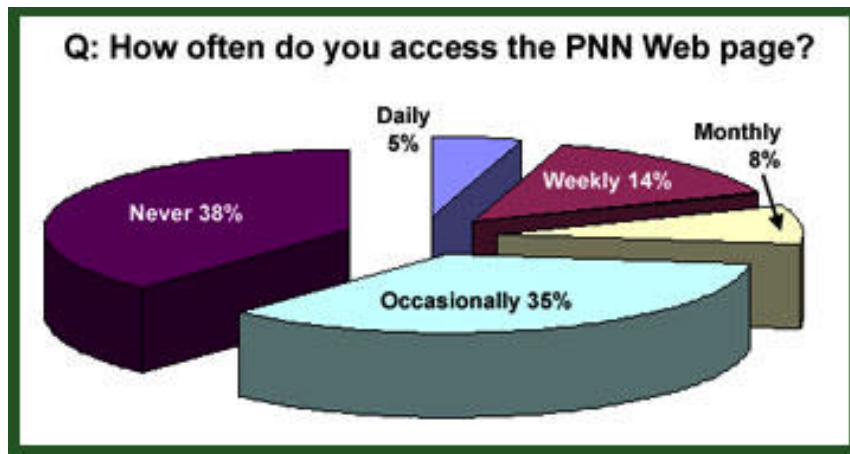


As was done in the 1997 survey, PNN subscribers were asked to place a value, from a high of five to a low of one, on the types of content covered by the PNN notifications they receive. New product and label change notifications again topped the list of notification types most valued by PNN subscribers, but all types of notifications rated an average of higher than three.

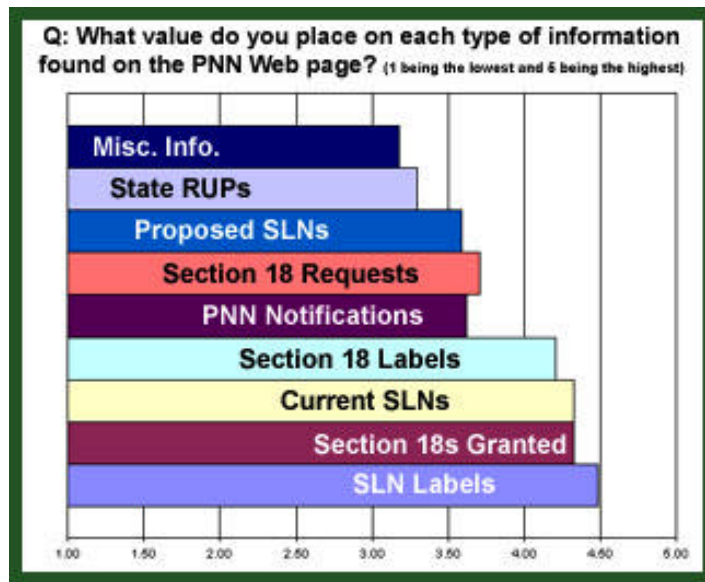


PNN Web Page

This survey offered the first opportunity to obtain formal data on PNN subscribers' use of the PNN Web page. This relatively new service was initiated as a "value-added" product for the convenience of PNN subscribers and others in agriculture who would benefit from the information disseminated via the notification network. We found that, while 38% of subscribers do not access the PNN Web page, the other 62% do access it, at least occasionally. An impressive 14% access it weekly.



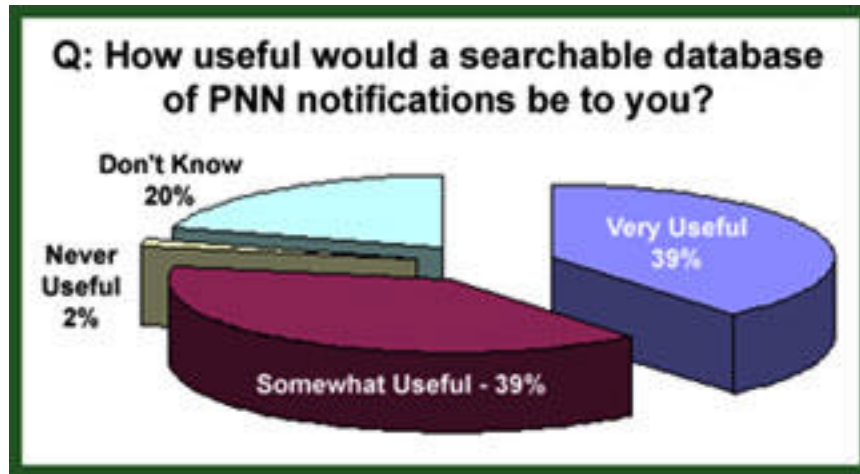
Those users who do access the Web page rated the various types of information posted quite high: all items averaged between three and four-point-five in importance on a scale of one to five.



These results seem to indicate that the information posted on the PNN Web page is valuable, but that the site may be underutilized. Curiously, the high number of “never use” responses (38%) seemed to contradict the response to another question. When asked how useful the electronic copies of the Section 18 and 24c (SLN) were to users, over half of the total survey (63% and 68% for 18s and 24cs, respectively) stated they find labels “very useful.” These labels are only accessible via the PNN Web page.

Searchable PNN?

Finally, a series of questions in the 2001 PNN survey attempted to ascertain the utility of a searchable database of PNN notifications. Such a database would allow people to search for notifications that have been sent out using multiple search criteria. For example, a user would be able to call up and review all the notifications that were sent covering newly issued SLNs pertaining to grass seed crops or review all the notifications that have been sent in 2001 regarding fungicides. Seventy-eight percent of respondents indicated that a searchable PNN database would be either very or somewhat useful.



Conclusion

All in all, the survey results for the PNN were very positive. Subscribers gave the PNN high marks for overall usefulness, timeliness, and quality and quantity of information. Anyone interested in comparing the results of the 2001 survey with those from 1997 can view the 1997 results in the May 1998 issue of the *Agrichemical and Environmental News* on the Internet at <http://www.aenews.wsu.edu/May98AENEWS/may98pnn.html> .

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