



An Evaluation of the Teagasc Level 6 Advanced Programme in Dairy Herd Management and Identification of Future Needs in Curriculum Development

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Aim

The overall aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Teagasc Level 6 Advanced Programme in Agriculture (Dairy Herd Management), and to identify future needs in curriculum development

Rationale

- Food Wise 2025 suggests that enrolments in the Level 6 Advanced Dairy programme should be increased
- It was suggested Level 5 and 6 further education awards in agriculture be reviewed
- Need to ensure that the courses are fit for purpose, and to 'future proof' them (DAFM, 2015, Food Wise 2025)
- 'Training schemes and college education programmes at all levels must be critically examined to ensure appropriate practical / technical content, and a greater focus on business and project management skills' (DAFM, 2010, Food Harvest 2020)
- To inform Teagasc of the effectiveness of the programme and how it may be improved for the future

Methodology

Questionnaire

- Postal survey
- Graduates of the Course from Ballyhaise, Clonakilty & Kildalton
- Graduated from 2008-2012
- 113 respondents from population of 203 (56% response rate)

ICBF

- On-farm performance of graduates compared with all ICBF members
- With Milk Solids yield/cow, meal fed & farm stocking rate, gross margin can be estimated

Focus Group

- Examining attitudes towards the course in more detail
- Probe into survey findings
- Find out what they would change about the course

Key Findings to Date

- All respondents are farming either full-time or part-time, except for 6, who plan to farm in the next 3 years or more
- 70% in joint management of the farm, 20% in sole management
- 60% completed the course 'to further their dairy knowledge', 30% did so to get the 'Green Cert'
- 48% of respondents were 'very satisfied' with the course, with another 50% 'satisfied'
- 95% would recommend the course
- Some improvements can be made, e.g. financial management

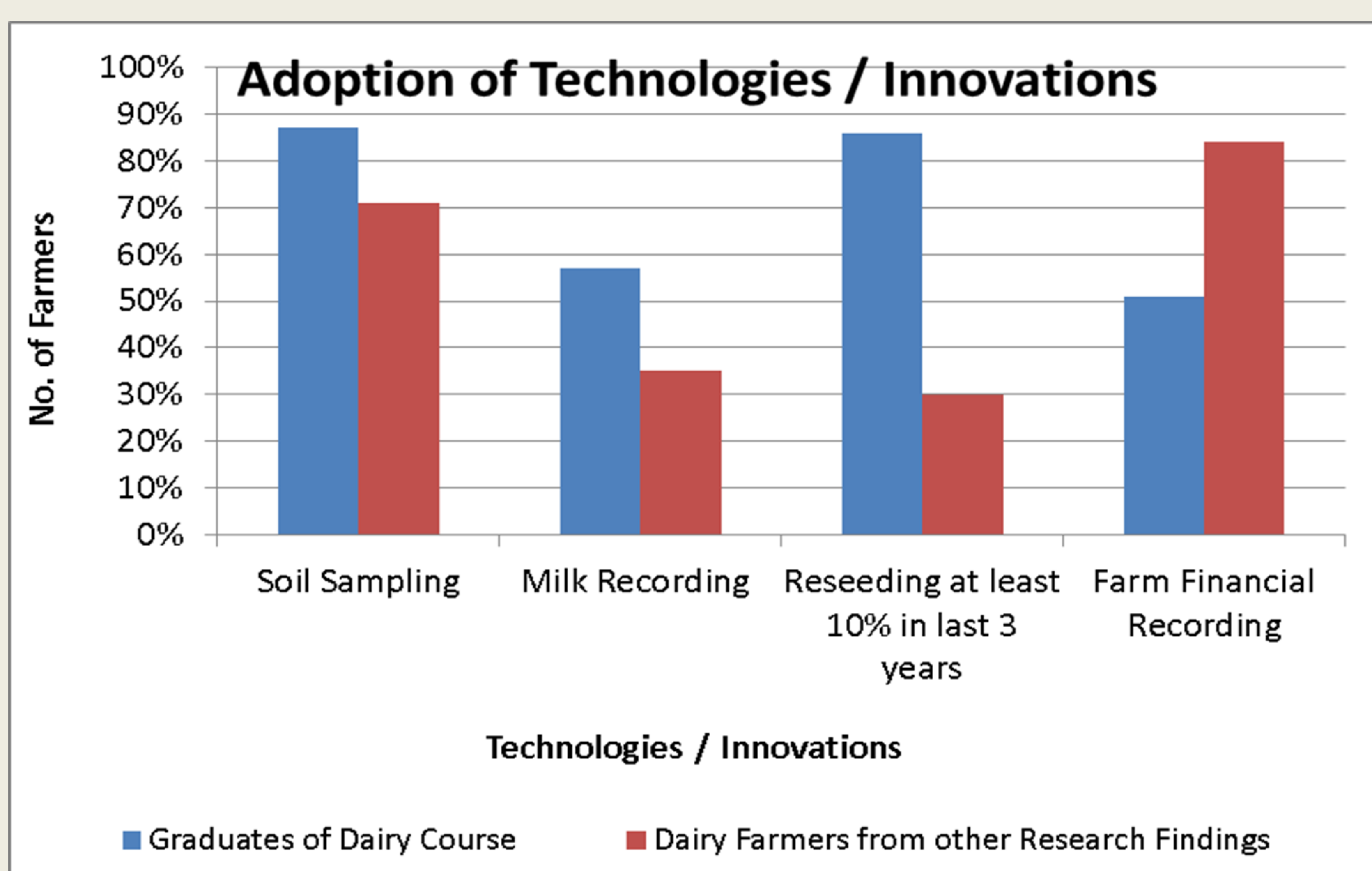


Fig.1. Distribution of respondents by Innovations and technologies adopted compared with those adopted by dairy farmers from other research findings (N=90).

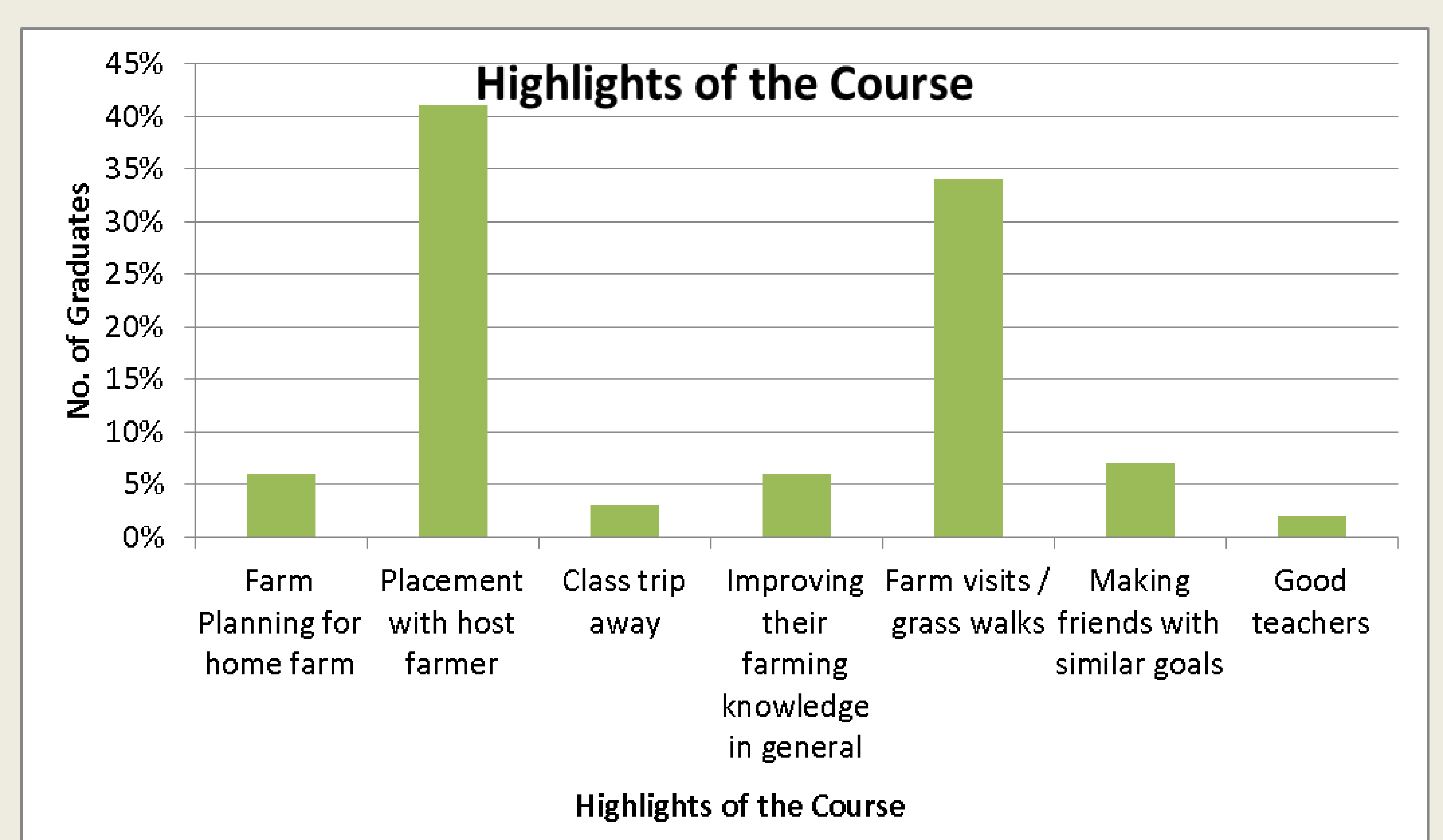


Fig.2. Distribution of respondents by reported highlights of the course (N=100).

This research has been funded through the Teagasc Walsh Fellowship Scheme