Loggers’ Views on Training after Attending a Three-Day Educational Program

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ABSTRACT

Loggers attended a 3-d educational program. Subject matter included first aid and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); forest ecology and silviculture, including the use of Kentucky Best Management Practices (BMPs); woods safety; and small business management. A post-event survey was used to determine views of participants toward the training. The rate of response was 100% for those 120 participants who completed the entire educational program. The objectives of the survey were to determine (i) the acceptability of the program content and structure and (ii) characteristics of those who attended the program. Survey results indicate the training was worthwhile to the participants and 113 of them said they would be willing to attend additional training.

METHODS

A Logger Training Program, designated the Kentucky Master Logger (KML) program, was developed in the Commonwealth of Kentucky during 1991 and 1992. The first program was presented in November 1992 and offered at six more locations throughout Kentucky during 1993 (Fig. 1). This program was recognized with the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award for Forestry during the 1994 19th Annual Governor’s Conference on the Environment.

Currently, local, state, or federal regulations do not require loggers who harvest timber in Kentucky to attend an educational training program. In structuring the KML program, we believed it should be offered in various locations throughout the state to attract a large number of participants. Multiple training locations would help minimize participants’ travel requirements.

Six of the seven KML programs were each presented on three consecutive Thursdays, and the seventh program was presented on three consecutive Tuesdays. The participants practiced first aid training and CPR during an indoor session on the first day (American Red Cross, 1991). The participants received Red Cross certification for first aid and adult CPR. The second day of training consisted of forest ecology; silviculture; BMPs for logging; and woods safety (OSHA, 1994; Kentucky Division of Forestry, 1992; Reeb, 1992). The woods safety program emphasized chainsaw and felling safety. Two to 3 h of programming were presented in the classroom. Then the participants went for the remainder of the day to a harvesting site and practiced their woods safety training. Participants were encouraged to try new methods of felling trees and then discuss the pros and cons of following those methods. Chainsaw safety was the major theme for this outdoor part of Day 2 (Reeb, 1993). The participants studied small business management in a training session taught by local business and professional people on Day 3. Local accountants, lawyers, and bankers spoke on topics including bookkeeping; taxes; the pros and cons of the different categories of businesses (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation); trespass issues; and how to secure loans for equipment.

No information is currently available about Kentucky loggers’ views concerning training programs. A two-page survey questionnaire was used to ascertain those views after the educational program. This paper reports on survey results after 120 participants completed the 3-d program. A copy of the questionnaire is available from the author.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A two-page, 15 question survey requested information on: (i) the general feelings about the 3 d of training and the subject matter discussed each day, (ii) information about the structure of the program, (iii) ideas on how the program might be improved for future training, and (iv) characteristics of those who attended the program. The survey was given at the end of Day 3.

Each participant was given a program questionnaire and pencil. The participants were instructed not to put their name on the questionnaire. They were told the answers would be used to improve the course for those who took it in the future and were asked to answer as truthfully as possible.

During the Red Cross first aid test, given on Day 1, several participants indicated they could not read. The Red Cross instructor read the test for those individuals. Consequently, the facilitator read aloud each question and the choices that followed each question. After two to three questions, the facilitator stopped and asked if anyone needed more time to answer the questions or needed help to understand the questions.

Questions 1 through 3 asked the participants what they thought of an entire day of training (Fig. 2). Most of the participants felt that all 3 d were either “very good” or “good”. None said any of the 3 d were “not worth attending”.

Comments to program facilitators from “owner managers” indicated they thought the first 2 d of training were good for their employees but Session 3 was not. They felt Session 3 was good for the employer but the employee should have been “at work” rather than attending. Participants were required to attend all three sessions to be designated as KMLs.

Abbreviations: CPR, cardiopulmonary resuscitation; BMP, Best Management Practice; KML, Kentucky Master Logger.

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Participants were asked if they wanted more or less training by subject category (Fig. 3). Ninety-four percent would like additional training. Forty percent answered they would like less training in a particular subject category. One participant listed two categories that could be eliminated, silviculture/ecology and business management, while 47 answered only one category to eliminate.

Although Day 1 (Fig. 2) received the best overall rating, participants said they would like more silviculture/ecology training, given on Day 2 (Fig. 3). Participants next chose first aid, safety, BMPs, business management, and other for additional training. The “other” category was for training in skidder maintenance and safety. No skidder training was offered in the 3-d program.

Business management received the least amount of positive support among the subject categories offered and also received the most negative support.

Business management was chosen most as the subject category to “have less training” (Fig. 3). Thirty-four responded that an entire day could be eliminated. Of these 34, 59% stated that Day 3, business management, could be eliminated. First aid and safety were chosen least as subject categories to have “less training” (Fig. 3) and only four responded that we could eliminate Day 1. The low number choosing first aid and safety for either less or no training indicate loggers are aware of the dangers of their profession.

Seven participants said they did not want any additional training. All 113 participants who wanted additional training responded they would be willing to attend extra days for this training. Fifty-one (45%) stated they would be willing to attend 1 d of additional training. The same number stated they would be willing to attend whatever it takes to get the extra training. Six (5%) answered they would attend 3 additional days of training and five (4%) answered 2 additional days of training.

Forty-two participants chose “any day” to conduct the logger training (Table 1). All but one 3-d training was offered on consecutive Thursdays but only 14 chose Thursday as the best day to conduct the training. Of the 10 participants who attended the KML Program given on consecutive Tuesdays, only one chose Tuesday as the best day to conduct the training.
Speaking informally with the loggers, we concluded the "any day" response related more to work conditions than it did to the acceptance of training on any day. If the weather was bad (wet) and the loggers could not get into the woods, then it would be a good day to offer the program. If the sawmills were short of logs and the weather was good (dry), then it would not be a good day for training. This supports our belief that it is difficult to schedule training for loggers whose work depends on weather conditions and quantity of sawmill log inventories.

Participants identified their job duties on the program survey (Table 2). The number of responses for the categories is a reflection of small logging operations. The 120 participants checked 294 responses in 10 categories. This indicated a person does many of the jobs necessary for the operation to succeed.

Participants were asked about their use of a professional forester, and how much a forester assisted them with their logging jobs. Sixty-two participants never use a forester (Fig. 4). Thirty-nine use a forester at least part of the time.

Seventy-four participants said they would be more likely, and 22 said they would be less likely, to use a professional forester after attending the training. The Kentucky Division of Forestry estimates less than 12% of the timber cut in Kentucky is harvested with the help of a professional forester.

Ninety-nine percent reported hardwood sawlogs as their main product. Fifteen percent reported hardwood pulpwood as a main product. Six percent reported pine sawlogs as a main product. Less than 5% reported either hardwood chips, pine chips, firewood, or hardwood veneer logs as main products.

Participants were asked how they heard about the KML Program. Some heard about the training through more than one source. Table 3 shows the 133 responses of how participants learned about the program. The Kentucky Division of Forestry and the local sawmill or pulpmill were the primary sources accounting for more than 80% of the response.

A letter was sent to the Cooperative Extension office in the county where the planned training was to be held.
NUMBER (PERCENT) OF PARTICIPANTS BY RESPONSE  N = 120

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>NO RESPONSE</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>LESS THAN HALF</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT HALF</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL JOBS</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORE LIKELY</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESS LIKELY</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4. Participant response to: (A) Do you use a forester, if so, what percent of jobs is the forester involved? (B) Are you more or less likely to use a forester after this program?

Accompanying the letter was a sample announcement for either the newspaper or radio explaining the program. In this way, the county agent could advertise the program several weeks in advance. The Kentucky Forest Industries Association and the Kentucky Division of Forestry distributed program brochures and training agendas to sawmills, pulpmills, and other wood product mills in the training areas.

Finally, we asked participants if they received what they wanted from the training. Although not limited to loggers, the program was designed to meet the needs of practicing loggers. Survey results indicate most of the participants were in fact practicing loggers (Table 2). Ninety-eight percent responded that they did receive what they wanted from the training. Two did not receive the training they wanted because they wanted skidder safety and maintenance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey showed that loggers wanted additional training in several subject areas. The business management session had more votes for less training than for more training. For 1994, the business session was replaced with a safety session. The business session may have been a low priority for several reasons. First, speaking informally with owners, we were told it was a good session for them but their workers should have been out in the woods working. Second, since most of the participants were not owners (Table 2), they were not involved with the financial and planning aspects of the business and therefore did not have as much interest in this session.

Table 3. How participants learned about the program.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Division of Forestry</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local sawmill or pulpmill</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other logger</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media—newspaper or radio</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Forest Industries Association</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee Valley Authority</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although we thought the business session was important, we also felt 1 d was not enough time to cover the subjects of ecology, silviculture, BMPs, and woods safety. For 1994, ecology, silviculture, and BMP training was presented on Day 2 and woods safety training was presented on Day 3. Days 2 and 3 each had a short classroom part followed by field training.

Participants were positive about the program; thus, 11 more 3-d programs were scheduled through 1994. Program leaders will reevaluate the program each year. New educational programs need to be developed as additional training for past participants. During a 1993 KML program, loggers asked if cable logging could be included in the training. In response to this request, a cable logging demonstration was given in March, 1994 to more than 50 participants.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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REFERENCES


