

# 2024 NAPB Conference Survey

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Martin Bohn

Our Annual Meeting took place a few weeks ago, and the organizing team is excited to share the results of the post-conference survey. The Bayer and University of Illinois team worked for nearly a year on the program and all the nitty-gritty details. The planning team believed this event was an outstanding success: we connected St. Louis and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the two cornerstones of the Midwestern Ag Innovation Corridor, invited insightful speakers, organized engaging panels, provided plenty of networking opportunities, and even had an “awesome” six-hour bus ride. However, the team also recognized the importance of collecting honest and constructive feedback, so a post-conference survey was conducted to gather suggestions for improving future conferences. We’re sure Dr. Kantar at the University of Hawaii, host of the 2025 Conference (*Big Island, Kona, Hawaii Outrigger Resort - University of Hawaii - May 18-22, 2025*), will be eager to dig into these results.

**Survey highlights** - Out of 417 conference attendees, 191 responded to the survey, resulting in a 46% response rate. A quick Google search indicates that a 20-30% response rate is considered good, so we’re pleased with this level of engagement. The largest groups of survey participants were students (42%), scientists and faculty from public institutions (26%), and scientists and managers from private institutions and companies (21%) (Figure 1).

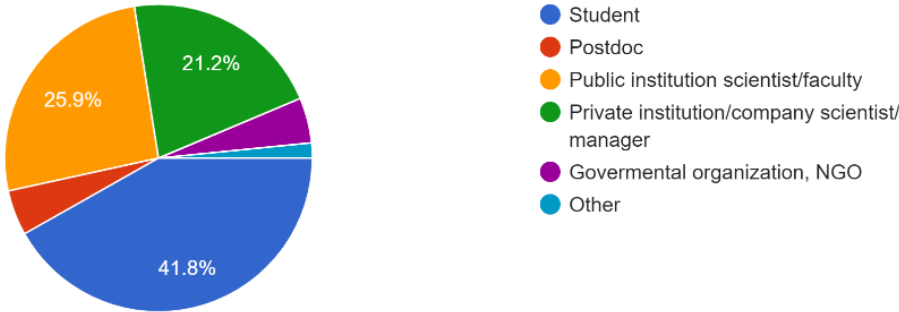


Figure 1 – Who responded to the survey?

An impressive 92% of respondents rated their conference experience as “very good” or “excellent,” corresponding to a Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) score of 92%. CSAT, which measures customer satisfaction by calculating the percentage of respondents who rate their experience as very good or excellent, is widely used across industries (Figure 2). While I’m not an expert in consumer surveys or their statistical analysis, another quick search suggests that a CSAT score above 80% is considered excellent. Hopefully, a CSAT typically used in the hospitality industry can be applied just as well to a large annual conference of a national association!

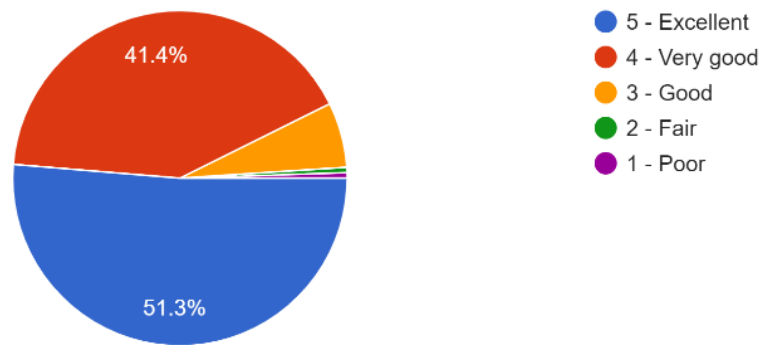


Figure 2 – What was the overall conference experience.

The average CSAT score for the five sessions (DEI, Rethink, Reinvent, Revolutionize, and Commercial Plant Breeding Committee - Transformative Breeding Systems) was 77%, with scores ranging from 68% for the “DEI Panel Discussion” to 84% for the “Reinvent Plant Breeding” session. Among survey participants who attended the panel discussions (DEI, Revolutionize), 68% rated the effectiveness of these sessions in providing valuable insights and fostering engaging conversations as “very good” or “excellent.” Additionally, 69% of attendees who visited the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign campus rated that event as “very good” or “excellent.” The poster session received a CSAT score of 78%. One of the conference highlights was the “Networking Opportunities,” which earned an outstanding CSAT score of 93%.

**Comments and Suggestions** - We received a large volume of positive comments, constructive criticism, and suggestions for improvement. To analyze this feedback efficiently, we first created a word cloud (Figure 3) and then explored the most frequent phrases to identify key trends. The terms that stood out most were "Field," "Poster," and "Panel."

*Campus Field Visits* - Participants offered mixed reviews on the visit to the University of Illinois campus in Urbana-Champaign. While some found the tour "well-organized and interesting," others were disappointed by the absence of specific stops. A common sentiment was that the tour felt rushed, with many suggesting that future tours be closer to the conference site.

*Poster Session* - The poster session received generally positive feedback, with a Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) score of 78%. However, there is room for improvement, especially regarding the space available. Attendees suggested providing more room for poster presentations to reduce crowding and lowering the noise level to create a better environment for discussions.

*DEI Panel Discussion* - The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Panel sparked a lively discussion, with many attendees emphasizing the importance of these topics. However, opinions varied on how DEI issues should be addressed during our meetings, highlighting the need to carefully consider the format and timing of future DEI sessions.

Additional feedback highlights were:

- There was broad agreement that talks during lunch are not ideal.

