South West Victoria Dairy extension network 2014.

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Dairy Australia
Your Levy at Work

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Massey University
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Key ideas

- Agricultural extension occurs within networks

- Understanding extension networks helps to realise opportunities for collaboration across diverse providers and users of knowledge

- Combining knowledge is a relational process that underpins innovation

Premise of social network analysis

- Relationships are the primary focus rather than attributes of individuals

- Social network analysis gives visual clues about relational connections

Case study location: South West Victoria

SNA Study

- Longitudinal study of the SW Victorian dairy extension network

- Benchmark in 2014

- Two further network analyses to track change in 2015 and 2016

- Relational question:

Within your region who do you talk to about extension planning, services and resources for dairy farmers?

Network questions

- How well are network members connected to support extension for dairy farmers?

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the network?

Key for network groups

Node colour	Network group
● (yellow)	Private adviser/consultant
● (light green)	Farmer
● (red)	Education e.g. NCDEA
● (blue)	Industry e.g. WestVic Dairy, DA
● (light pink)	Public adviser e.g. DEPI
○ (white)	Milk company field officer
● (orange)	Milk company management
● (black)	Vet
● (dark navy)	Accountants and bankers
● (pale green)	Agribusiness/rural merchants
● (dark green)	Other e.g. researcher

South West Victoria regional extension network

Legend:
- Private adviser (yellow)
- Farmer (green)
- Education (red)
- Industry (blue)
- Public adviser (light purple)
- Milk Co Field Officer (white/open circle)

South West Victoria regional extension network

CORE

PERIPHERY

Key

- Private adviser
- Farmer
- Education
- Industry
- Public adviser
- Milk Co Field Officer

Network core

Key

🟡 Private adviser	🟠 Milk Co Field Officer
🟢 Farmer	⚫ Vet
🔴 Education	🟣 Banker/Accountant
🔵 Industry	
🔴 Public adviser	
⚪ Milk Co Field Officer	
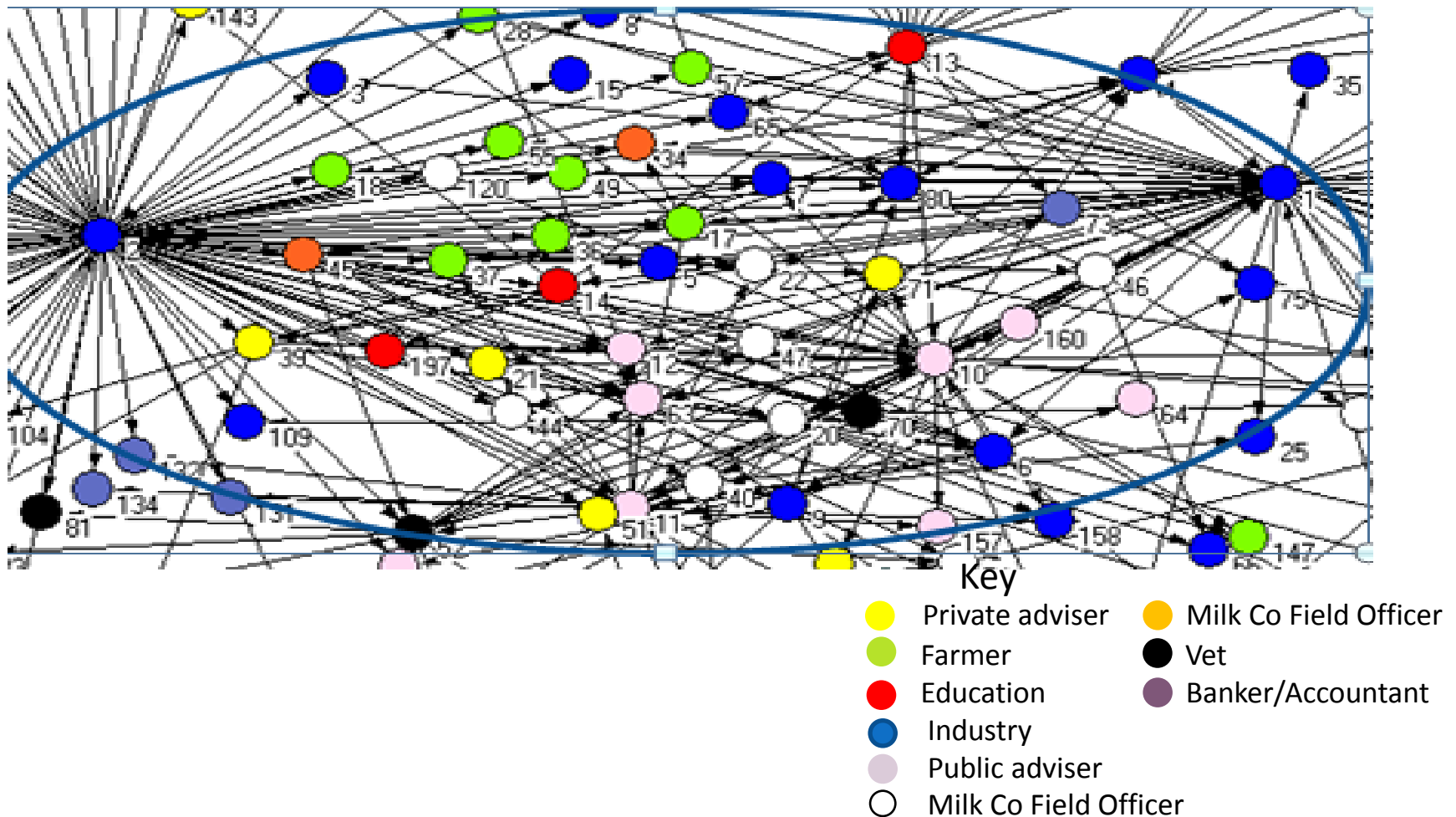
Regional extension network

Farm specific networks

KEY
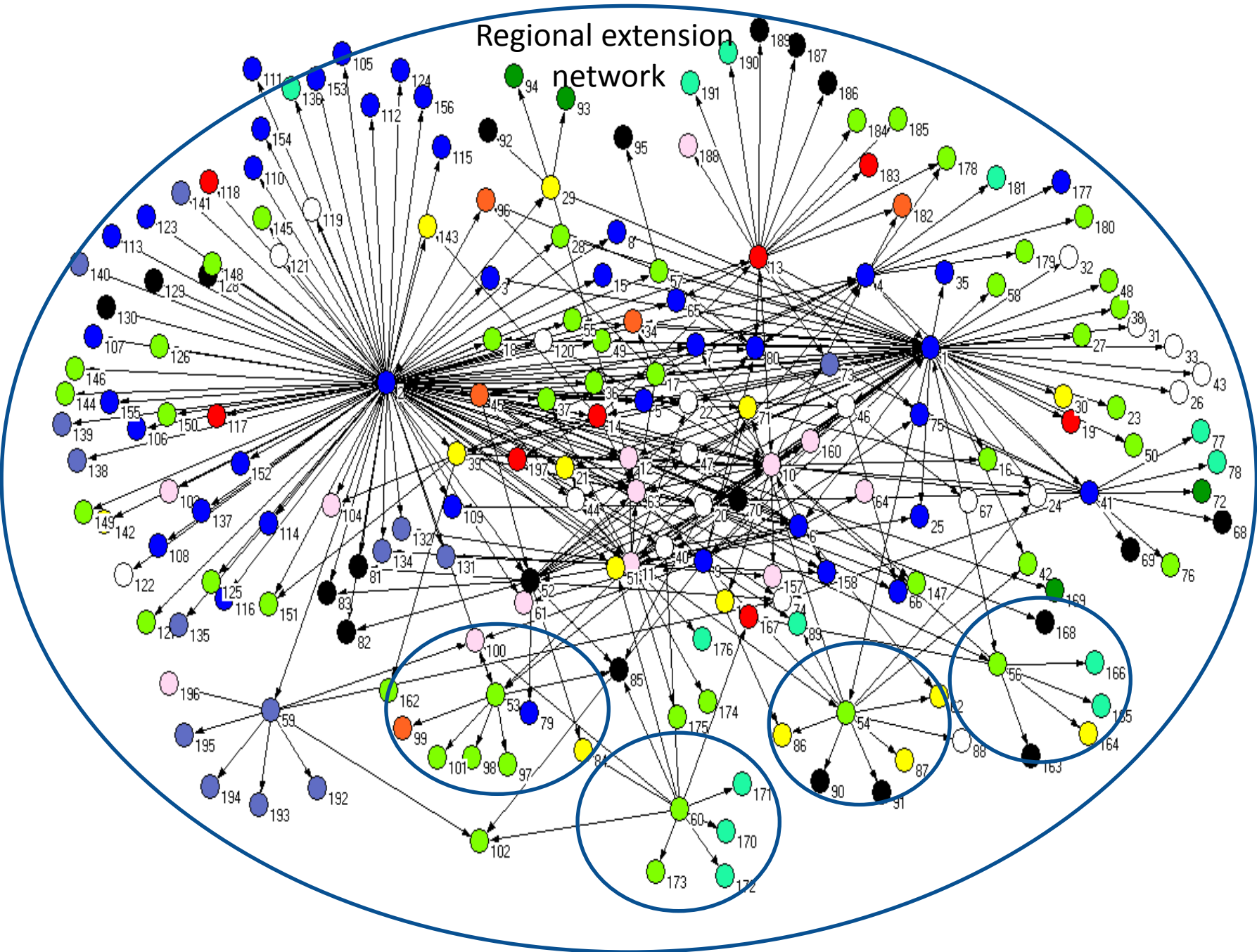
- 🟢 Farmer
- 🟡 Private adviser
- ⚫ Vet
- 🟢 Agribusiness
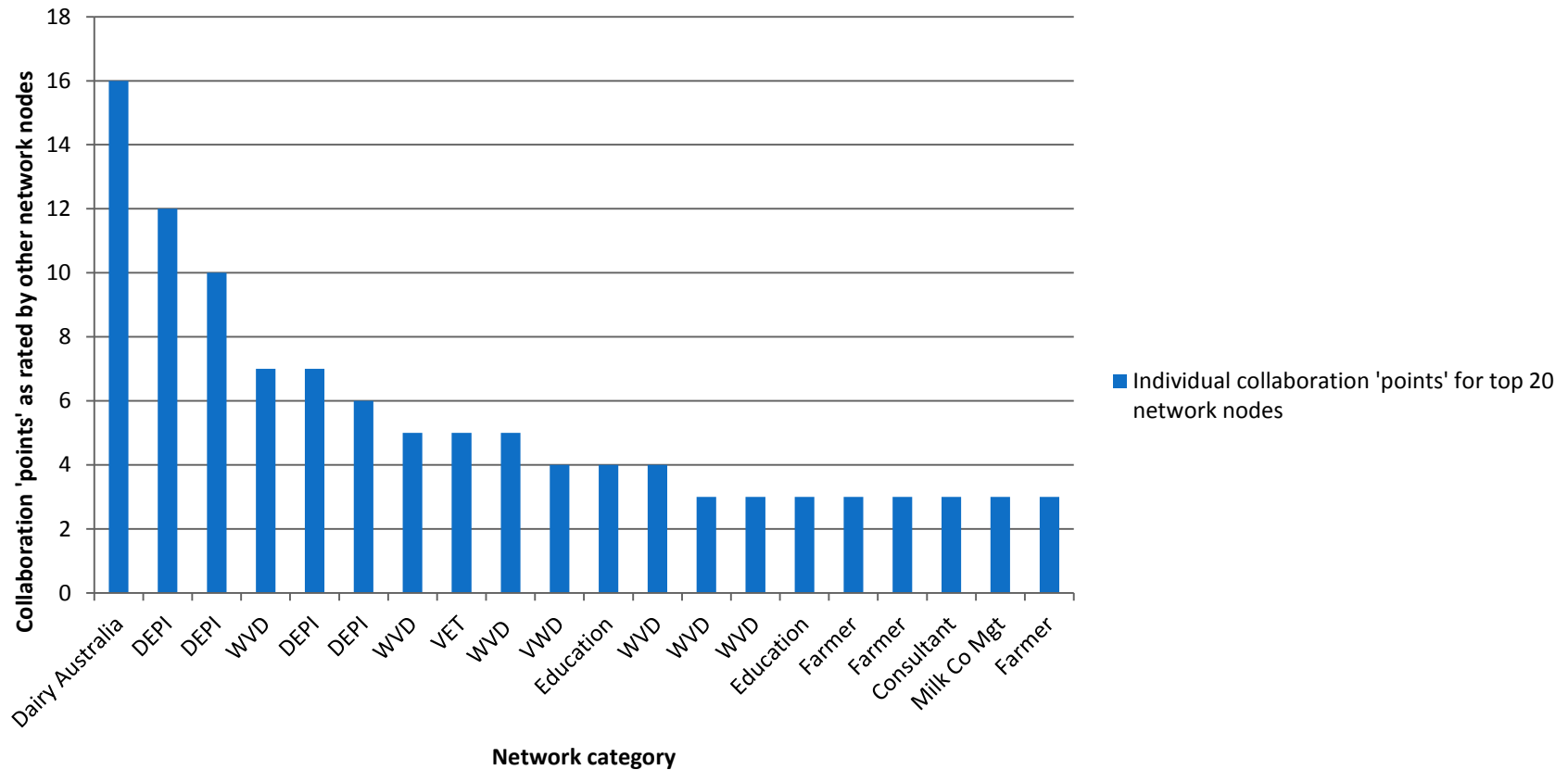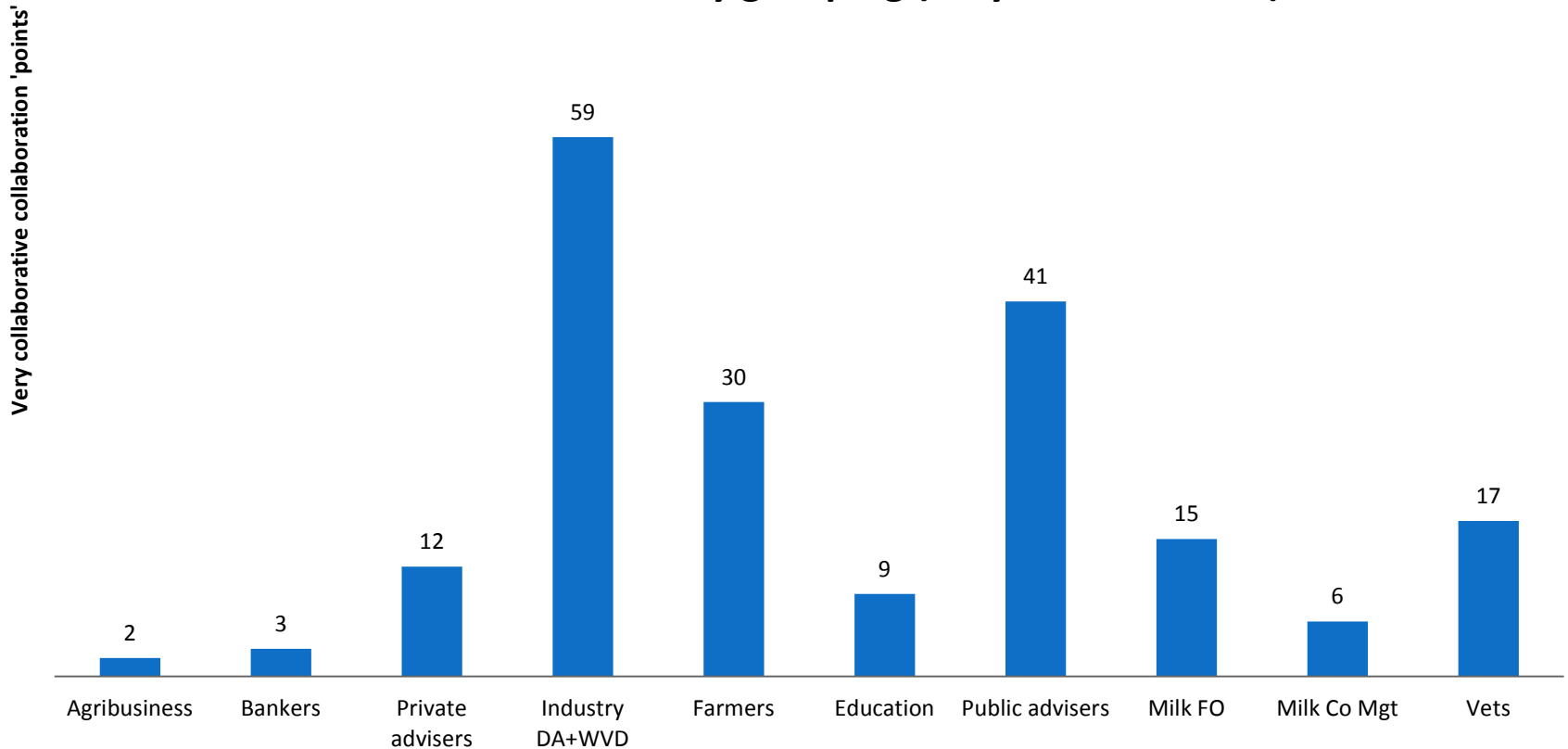- 🟣 Public advisers
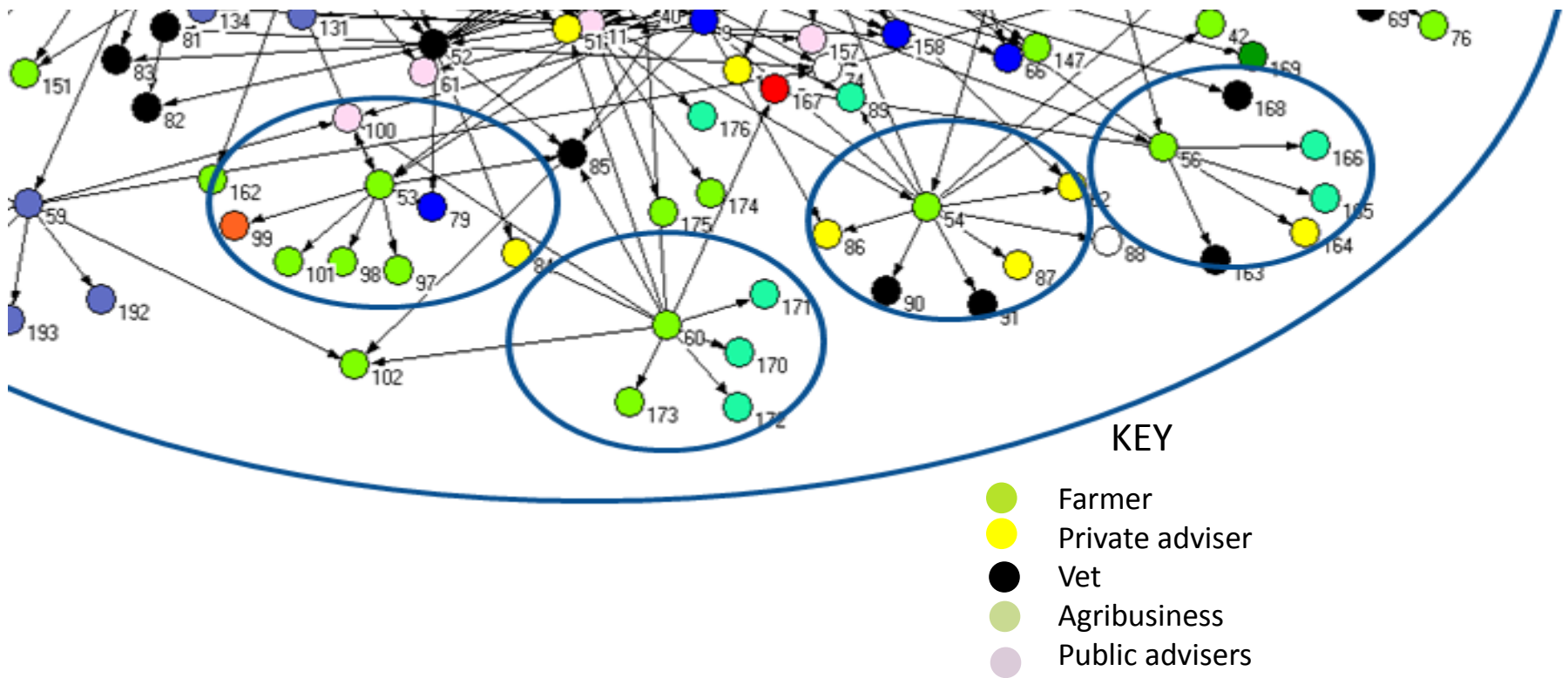
Collaboration

Who do you consider to be very collaborative with respect to extension in South West Victoria?

Individual collaboration results for top 20 network nodes

Collaboration by grouping

West Victoria Dairy extension network:
collaboration results by grouping (very collaborative)

Frequency of interaction
How frequently to do talk with each person?

Individual frequency points 'very often make contact' for top 20 network nodes

Y-axis: Very often make contact (0–10)

X-axis: Network category — Dairy Australia, DEPI, DEPI, WVD, DEPI, WVD, DEPI, Education, Education, Farmer, WVD, WVD, WVD, WVD, WVD, DEPI, Farmer, Farmer, Consultant, Farmer

Legend: ■ Individual frequency points 'very often make contact' for top 20 network nodes
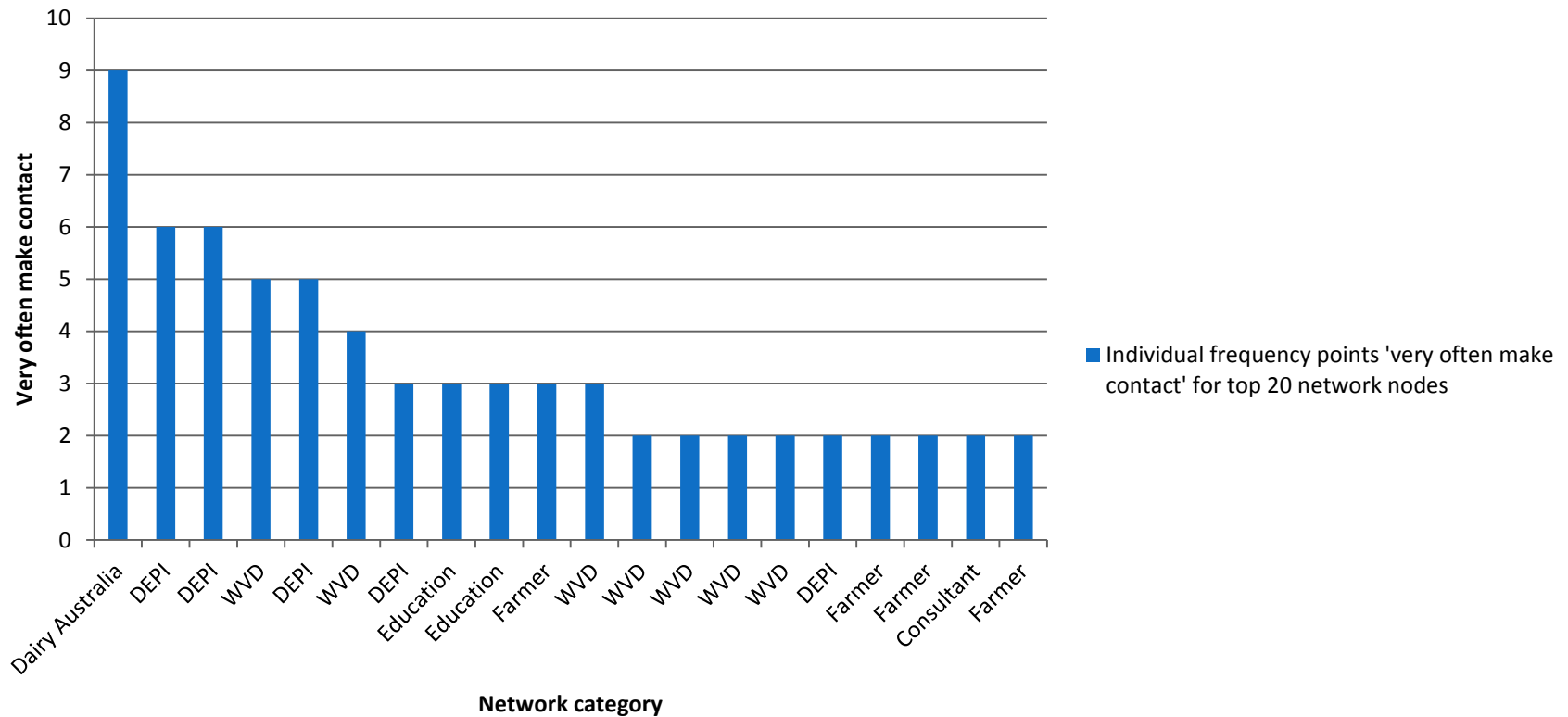
Frequency of contact by grouping

West Victoria Dairy extension network: 'frequency of contact'
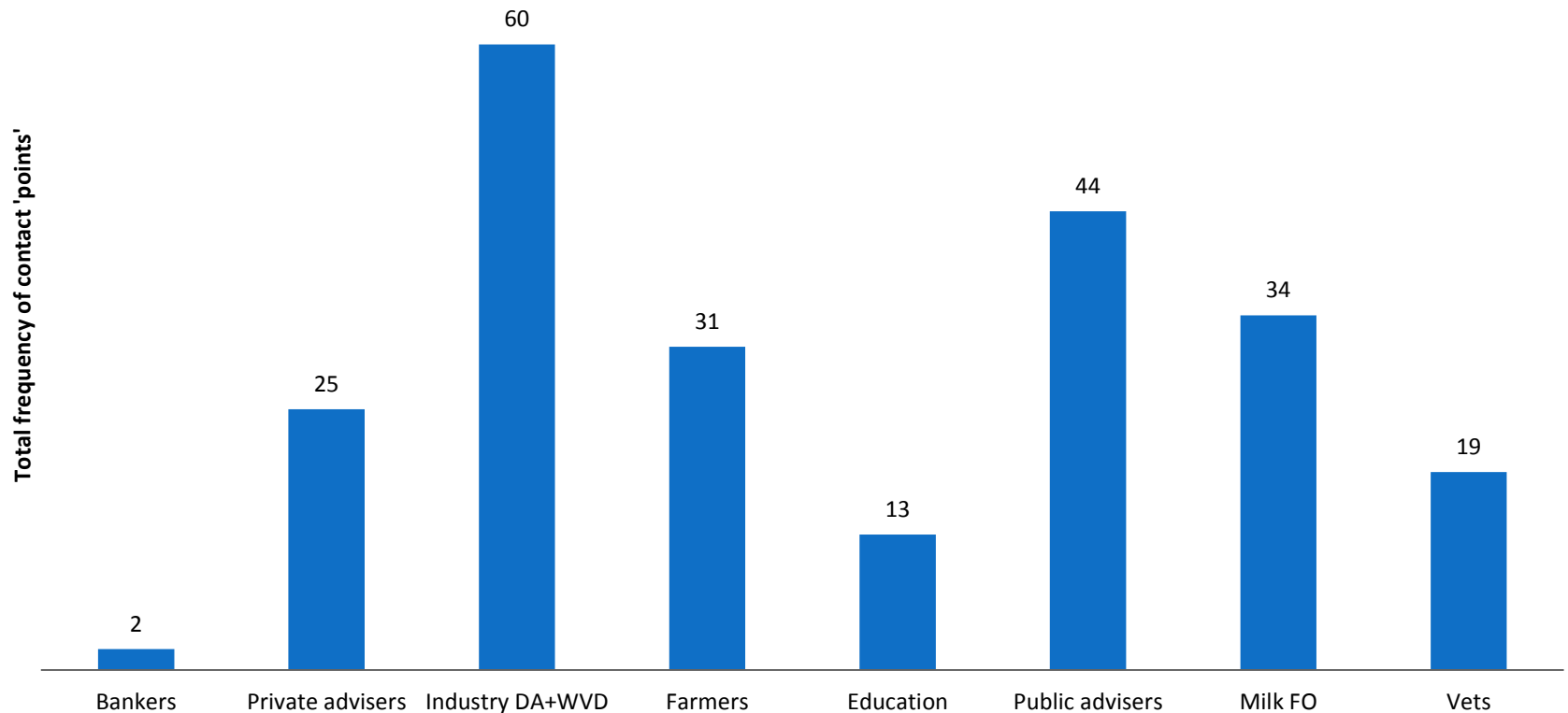
Findings – network core

- Highly connected core of extension stakeholders

- Industry (blue nodes) are well positioned to act as brokers between other groups in the network

- Government extension advisers still a strong presence, and influence in the network

Findings - network periphery

- Farmers create their own networks directly with industry, public and private advisers, vets and agribusiness

- Agribusiness has weak connections with other network groups except farmers

- Vets and milk company field officers are moderately connected in the network

Opportunities

- Review some activities in the network core – is there overlap/duplication

- Strengthen connectivity with weakly connected groups e.g. researchers

- Potential to strengthen connections of education and financial services to support dairy extension

Further questions

- How can the innovation potential of the network be supported and strengthened?

- What could a more competitive and innovative dairy extension network look like?