

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

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The Right Stakeholders Are the Key

Inviting and involving the appropriate stakeholders in the planning and delivery of a project improve the odds of success as well as long-term sustainability.

INTRODUCTION


An effective supply chain approach requires a strong project team that includes all relevant partners and stakeholders. This means recruiting and obtaining commitments from individuals with expertise in key components of the project and assuring they will be available for consultation at every stage, from initial design through implementation and evaluation. This also ensures that planned activities are realistic and well-coordinated.

Key stakeholders must be meaningfully included in the project planning phase and in the project execution, assuring that real needs are being met and improving the possibility of buy-in from all involved.

Not all projects have large enough budgets to fund significant participation by multiple partners. However, project teams can still make sure all the relevant expertise is at the table, starting at the planning stage.


The following are examples of AMS-funded strong project teams from Massachusetts, Tennessee, and New Hampshire.

Massachusetts: “Planning for New Meat Cutting and Processing Services” (FSMIP-2012)


 This project researched options, benefits, costs, and regulatory requirements for meat cutting and processing businesses and services for local meat producers in Massachusetts. By bringing producers, processors, and potential customers into the project, the team determined the actual needs of the community, developed services and opportunities that directly addressed those specific needs, and optimized the use of existing infrastructure. They

identified and prioritized the most effective next steps, including providing technical assistance in partnership with local processors and meat buyers, adding meat processing services to an existing shared-use kitchen, and supporting the start-up and expansion of meat-related businesses including value-added production.

Tennessee: “Enhancing Value-Added Beef Opportunities: Focusing on Market-based Opportunities (SoLUTions) for Cattle Producers” (FSMIP-2012)

 The goal of this project was to identify and overcome barriers to the development of successful farm-based, beef marketing enterprises. The project team included both producers and processors, and workshops were designed to educate each group about the expertise, constraints, and opportunities of the other. Project publications reflect this holistic approach. Still, the project director stated that he now recognizes the need to involve processors even more in this work.

New Hampshire: “Local Beef for Healthcare Institutions in New Hampshire Food Deserts” (FMPP-2012, LFPP-2014)

 This project worked to provide locally raised beef at five health care facilities in New Hampshire. Like most meat-related projects, the success of this project required the use of a USDA-inspected processor. Rather than taking the processor’s participation for granted, the project leads included the processor on the project team and in the work.

As a result, the project team included individuals with subject matter knowledge on every vital aspect of the supply chain, improving the overall effectiveness of the project and enhancing the ability of the team to identify potential challenges, roadblocks and opportunities.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For specific information about these grant projects, please contact AMSGrants@usda.gov.

Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network
Rebecca Thistlethwaite
Email: thistler@oregonstate.edu

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Samantha Schaffstall
Email: samantha.schaffstall@usda.gov

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO BUILD STRONG TEAMS

- Seek key stakeholders and subject matter experts during the initial stages of a project. Project team members must possess the needed expertise, or they should seek other experts. Do not assume that this knowledge will be learned by doing once the project is underway.
- If a project is related to meat, then local and regional meat processors and producers must be engaged in the process.
- Include key stakeholders from the beginning. Do not expect key stakeholders to come to the table after a project is initiated. They must be meaningfully included beforehand to feel any sense of ownership of the project. This will also ensure the project's real needs are met, rather than assumed or perceived needs.
- Have conversations with key stakeholders and collect relevant (primary) data to show both volume of production and processing capacity. Secondary data such as census data is not enough to ascertain market demand.

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