

Specialty Meat Processing



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Why this study?

To identify needs and challenges of local meat processing.

At the time of the 2014 Redwood Acres Fair, the local meat processing operation, Redwood Meat Co., was unable to process the pigs sold at fair by 4-H students.

Redwood Acres was forced to make an alternative arrangement: transport dozens of live pigs to a facility over 200 miles away.

The experience was challenging and stressful, and it added considerable cost and coordination to the effort.

Local farmers raising pigs also had to find out-of-area processors. They transported live animals out and brought finished product back so they could sell their meat locally.

Redwood Acres determined to find a better solution to this challenge, and this study was initiated to find ways to service non-beef meat processing needs locally.

Once the study was underway, Redwood Meat Co. began to service pork processing needs again.

While this study still explored alternative slaughtering options, it quickly became obvious that the local market would not sustain multiple slaughter operations.

The remaining efforts focused on ways Redwood Acres could support related meat processing activities and the local meat industry as a whole.

What was done?

A lot of research, planning, design and scenario analysis.

Stakeholder Interviews

Included producers, service providers (processing, distribution etc.), technical advisors and market outlets

Explored what is in the way of growing their business & the local meat economy

Identified key needs for supporting the local industry, including local meat supply and the demand for local meat processing

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

Case Studies & Best Practices

Reviewed regional studies on food processing, production, distribution, storage & marketing

Researched case studies & industry resources to identify operational, economic & regulatory requirements

Analyzed opportunities and barriers for local meat industry

Operational Planning

Compiled information about Redwood Acres facilities, operations, management and long-term vision

Identified potential partnerships for meat processing operations

Described potential business model and financial requirements of operation

PLANNING & DESIGN

Facilities Design

Convened workshop to identify ways that Redwood Acres could meet local food industry needs

Identified issues and benefits of Redwood Acres facilities

Prepared three design concepts that incorporated meat processing at Redwood Acres facilities

What was found?

Bridges were built & other needs discovered.

Redwood Acres offers many amenities that help to grow food & agricultural businesses. Local production of pork is very low and limited by land, climate, and economy. Connecting producers, service providers, & market outlets increased business opportunity. Processing is not the major limitation for the local meat industry; distribution, storage and disposal also create substantial barriers. The success of a local meat industry relies on a diversity of animal species and requires many related services.

KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions that Redwood Acres and other supporters in the community can take include:

Advocate for policy and regulatory changes that improve local waste disposal and meat inspection opportunities.

Enable partnerships and investments by having a facilities development plan and operating agreements that encourage and attract private investments.

Increase education about local meat production and processing through events, educational programs, and promotional activities.

Strengthen the value chain by coordinating services and improving infrastructure, especially for cold storage, transportation and business development services.