



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Asa Hutchinson
Governor

1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205
agriculture.arkansas.gov
(501) 225-1598

Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

Arkansas Department of Agriculture

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10/16/2020

CONTACT: Amy Lyman, (501) 219-6323, amy.lyman@agriculture.arkansas.gov

Arkansas Meat and Poultry Processing Grant Recipients Awarded \$10.4 Million

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce the complete list of recipients for funding through the Arkansas Meat and Poultry Processing Grant Program.

The program was previously approved and provided funding of \$5 million by the CARES Act Steering Committee and the Arkansas Legislative Council. An additional \$5.4 million in funding for the program was approved today bringing the total funding available through the program to \$10.4 million.

The following 31 facilities were selected for funding:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| A&C Meat Company | Hot Springs, Arkansas |
| Arkansas State University | Jonesboro, Arkansas |
| B&R Meat Processing | Winslow, Arkansas |
| Bee's Mobile Butchery | Lamar, Arkansas |
| Buck Matthews | Waldron, Arkansas |
| Centerpoint High School | Amity, Arkansas |
| Central Arkansas Mobile Processing | Lonsdale, Arkansas |
| Clarksville Processing and Taxidermy | Clarksville, Arkansas |
| CR Custom Meat Processing | Bismarck, Arkansas |
| Cut to Taste | Perryville, Arkansas |
| Cypress Valley Meat Company | Pottsville, Arkansas |
| Deaton Slaughterhouse | Caddo Gap, Arkansas |
| J&D Custom Meat Processing | Greenwood, Arkansas |
| JACO Meats | Hope, Arkansas |
| Key's Family Butcher Shop | Van Buren, Arkansas |
| Moore's Mill, Homestead Food | Charleston, Arkansas |
| Morrilton Packing Company | Morrilton, Arkansas |
| Natural State Processing | Clinton, Arkansas |
| OK Beef | Nashville, Arkansas |
| Ouachita Valley Meat Company | Arkadelphia, Arkansas |
| Prewitt Farms Cattle and Meat Market | Texarkana, Arkansas |
| Prime Country Meats | Horatio, Arkansas |
| Ramsey's Red River Smokehouse | Judsonia, Arkansas |
| Ridge Runners Processing | Jonesboro, Arkansas |
| T&A Womack Farms | Pleasant Plains, Arkansas |
| Taylor's Custom Butcher Shop | Cave City, Arkansas |
| Tilton's Processing | Harrison, Arkansas |
| Williams Baptist University | Walnut Ridge, Arkansas |
| Wynne Meat Processing | Wynne, Arkansas |
| 2B Butchered Custom Mobile Slaughter | Vilonia, Arkansas |
| 4-M Butcher Barn | Gillham, Arkansas |

“Recipients of this funding will help address the lack of local, small-scale meat processing capacity in Arkansas that limited our producers’ ability to meet consumer demand for locally grown meat products during the COVID-19 related disruptions. Expanded processing capacity will build resiliency within the industry and benefit producers, consumers, and our rural communities,” said Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward.

A review committee consisting of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Arkansas Cattlemen’s Association, Arkansas Farm Bureau, the Livestock Marketing Association, Arkansas Hunters Feeding the Hungry, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, and the United States Department of Agriculture evaluated the applications and selected recipients.

“One of the main goals of the Arkansas Cattlemen’s Association is to further develop and strengthen the cattle and beef industry here in Arkansas, and this Meat Processing Grant will do exactly that. The COVID-19 pandemic made it abundantly clear that federally inspected processing capability in Arkansas was far beneath what is needed. By helping state processors become fully USDA inspected the food supply chain of Arkansas is further protected and bolstered; benefiting both cattle producers and consumers. We appreciate the Arkansas Department of Agriculture for submitting these requests, and we appreciate the CARES Act steering committee and Arkansas State Legislature for their approval,” said Arkansas Cattlemen’s Association President Bernie Freeman.

“The response to the initial \$5 million grant to expand our state’s packing capacity highlighted the clear need for additional support for this effort,” said Arkansas Farm Bureau President Rich Hillman. “Arkansas livestock producers are ready to provide our state’s families with more high quality, locally produced protein. We are happy about this additional \$5.4 million in funding. This is a critical step that will help get more Arkansas meat products to consumers, schools, and restaurants. This is an opportunity to impact some of our rural economies and that is needed right now.”

“Arkansas Hunters Feeding the Hungry has been working with meat processors across the state for the past 20 years. We work with both custom and USDA facilities to provide wild game meat to food banks and feeding agencies across the state. It became clear that many facilities were not able to handle the increasing demand for beef over the past several months. Arkansas needs more processing facilities to meet the increasing demand. Funding from the CARES Act will allow processors to upgrade and expand their facilities. Our thanks to all those involved in making this a reality,” said Arkansas Hunters Feeding the Hungry Executive Director Ronnie Ritter.

“These grants are important to expanding meat processing capabilities in Arkansas,” said Ed Mabry, extension rural development program associate for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture and member of the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission. Mabry, whose work is in economic development in Arkansas, knows the meat industry, having worked in both processing and retail. “We learned a hard lesson at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, when panic buying ensued and the industry could not meet the need, that we needed to look at developing new or enhancing current processing capacity in Arkansas,” he said. “With 45 applications seeking over \$30 million in grants, it’s gratifying to see the powerful response we’ve received to this program in the state and its potential to make a difference in our economy.”

The Department received 45 applications requesting a total of more than \$30 million in grant funding. Selected recipients will receive 85.9 percent of the amount requested up to a cap of \$500,000 per application.

Collectively, the applicants receiving awards anticipate increasing processing capacity throughout the state by over 2,000 head of cattle, 850 hogs, 7,400 poultry, and eight goats and sheep per month. The applicants also

anticipate utilizing 258 full-time positions and 75 part-time positions. Recipients will also provide additional further processing and value-added capacity and assist with education and workforce development.

Arkansas ranks 10th in the nation in the value of animals and animal products that provide more than \$5.6 billion to the state's economy annually. In the 2019 production year, Arkansas was ranked 10th in the nation in beef cow inventory and 25th in the nation in cattle and calves with 510,641,000 pounds of production.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit agriculture.arkansas.gov.