

MEAT PROCESSOR INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

FY 2022 & 2023 IMPACT REPORT





Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
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For more information about this program, please visit:
[Meat and Livestock Development](#) or datcp.wisconsin.gov.

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Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant Program Overview

The Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant strives to grow Wisconsin's meat industry and improve the long-term viability of the livestock sector through services to meat processing establishments.

The grants were proposed by Governor Tony Evers in his 2021-23 biennial budget and approved by the Legislature with a baseline of \$200,000 per fiscal year. The program was a response to supply chain issues that were magnified during COVID-19 disruptions. The Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants aim to grow harvest capacity and product throughput by eliminating bottlenecks impacting efficiency in meat establishments.



State capital building in Madison, Wisconsin.

2022 Grant Impacts

- One hundred grant applications were received in 2022 requesting a total of \$4.4 million dollars. The \$200,000 in grant funds were distributed to five establishments with 100% of the grant funds utilized by the recipients.
- The Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant requires recipients to make a dollar-for-dollar match, but all projects exceeded the requirement with total processor investment amounting to \$1.1 million. Combined, the businesses reported an expected \$4.85 million increase in revenue within two years.
- The average harvest capacity increase for the projects was 40%. Infrastructure improvements, more efficient equipment, and increased cooler space increased capacity to harvest an additional 1,150 beef and 1,180 hogs.
- Recipients reported hiring 35 additional employees.

2023 Grant Impacts

- Seventy grant applications were received, requesting a total of \$2.8 million. Eight recipients were selected and all funds were used.
- Industry investment exceeded \$13.2 million. Revenue was expected to increase by \$2.29 million because of the projects.
- Harvest capacity increased by 850 beef, 900 hogs, and 325 sheep/goats.
- Recipients reported adding 41.5 jobs because of the projects.

Combined 2022 & 2023 Impacts

- The 2022 and 2023 projects resulted in a 2,000 head increase in beef harvest capacity. In addition, capacity increased by 2,080 hogs and 325 sheep/goats.
- Industry investment totaled \$14.3 million and revenues were reported to increase by \$7.14 million.
- 76.5 new jobs were created.

2022 Grant Recipients

Crescent Meats

Location: Cadott

Award: \$50,000

Purpose: Addition of more than 19,000 square feet to existing facility.

Counties Impacted: Multiple counties, regional and national scope

Project Summary: The project moved sausage production to a separate area of the establishment designed wholly for that purpose. This allowed for increased food safety as product flow and separation was realized. The project has allowed increased production and co-packing opportunities. The expansion resulted in hiring nine additional employees.

JM Watkins

Location: Plum City

Award: \$50,000

Purpose: Construction of a new building and purchase of a new smoker.

Counties Impacted: Multiple counties

Project Summary: The larger scope of the project included a new building to replace an aging storefront butcher shop. The project focused on the purchase and installation of a new smokehouse. Harvest capacity was increased as well as further processed product production benefiting farmers in the area and the local community.



Future cooler and production area for JM Watkins.

Nordik Meats

Location: Viroqua

Award: \$25,000

Purpose: Expanding frozen storage, purchase of a walk-in freezer unit and forklift, and increasing labor.

Counties Impacted: Multiple counties and regional implications

Project Summary: The project eliminated a bottleneck within the establishment by increasing carcass holding capacity. This allowed Nordik Meats to increase harvest days from 1.5 to 3. Annual harvest capacity has increased from 993 beef to 1,700 beef and 365 head of hogs and lambs to 576 head.

Paulie's Chop Shop

Location: Luxemburg

Award: \$50,000

Purpose: Construction of a new butcher shop, training, and purchasing numerous pieces of equipment.

Counties Impacted: Kewaunee and surrounding counties

Project Summary: Several pieces of equipment were purchased so the new build could become more efficient. This included equipment for the livestock harvest area as well as further processing. One goal was to shorten the local processing wait time, resulting in more animals harvested and a boost to the local supply chain. The equipment purchased cut processing and packaging time by at least 50% compared to a manual process.



New cooler at Sorgs Farm Packing.

Sorgs Farm Packing

Location: Darien

Award: \$25,000

Purpose: Reconstruction of an existing carcass cooler and freezer and expansion of processing and cutting room.

Counties Impacted: Walworth and surrounding counties

Project Summary: The project added two separate coolers: one for carcasses and the other for cooked and ready-to-eat products. This also allowed the expansion of the cutting area. The project increased efficiency, improved product separation for food safety, and increased harvest capacity. Three employees were added to the harvest and cutting team while one full-time employee was added in the packaging area.

2023 Grant Recipients

D-D Meat Processing

Location: Sheboygan Falls

Award: \$25,000

Purpose: Investment in refrigeration and industrial tank expansion.

Counties Impacted: Sheboygan and surrounding counties

Project Summary: Replaced a 55-year-old refrigeration room and updated equipment. Installation of a vacuum tank with the ability to filter blood and fat from wastewater. Improvements in the refrigeration system increased harvest capacity by 200 cattle per year.

The Durand Smokehouse

Location: Durand

Award: \$25,000

Purpose: Processing and automation expansion.

Counties Impacted: Pepin and surrounding counties

Project Summary: Purchased a sausage stuffer to speed the processing of harvested animals. This allowed increased efficiency by allowing The Durand Smokehouse to make both sausage and ground beef/pork patties at the same time. This increase in efficiency and the removal of a production bottleneck allowed increased sausage and patty production as well as a 20% harvest capacity increase.



Smokehouse mixer and stuffer at The Durand Smokehouse.

JM Watkins

Location: Plum City

Award: \$50,000

Purpose: Complete expansion and new storefront construction.

Counties Impacted: Multiple counties

Project Summary: The project entailed the construction of a new building. The funds were used on design costs and septic construction. The grant funds helped to offset the cost of a \$3.5 million construction project.

NF Packing

Location: Elkhorn

Award: \$25,000

Purpose: Build a meat establishment to address critical gaps in supply chain.

Counties Impacted: Elkhorn

Project Summary: The grant funds were used for engineering and construction design for a 1,500 head cattle harvest establishment.

Sailer's Food Market and Meat Processing

Location: Elmwood

Award: \$25,000

Purpose: Expansion to improve efficiency and competitiveness.

Counties Impacted: Statewide and national implications.

Project Summary: Purchase of a stick cutting machine to create efficiency and keep pace with expanded snack stick business. This allows the business to take on more co-packing and wholesale accounts.

2023 Grant Recipients cont.

Salchert Meats

Location: St. Cloud

Award: \$30,000

Purpose: Provide infrastructure for long-term sustainability project.

Counties Impacted: Fond du Lac and surrounding counties

Project Summary: The project involved laying the foundation for an addition to the existing business as well as purchasing a smokehouse. The addition, as well as the installation of the more efficient smokehouse, increased annual harvest capacity by over 100 beef, 200 hogs and 300 goats.

Wisconsin River Brands

Location: Mauston

Award: \$25,000

Purpose: Investment in expanded refrigeration and rail hanging system.

Counties Impacted: Juneau and surrounding counties

Project Summary: Built a new cooler that included a carcass rail system. The project allowed the separation of carcasses and raw product, and increased the number of cattle and hogs the establishment can process for customers. The entire investment topped \$500,000.

University of Wisconsin - River Falls

Location: River Falls

Award: \$20,000

Purpose: Renovation of livestock holding pens and handling facilities.

Counties Impacted: Statewide

Project Summary: Reconfiguration of pens and alleys to eliminate backtracking of livestock as they flow from unloading to holding pens to restraint. Development of safe handler working spaces that allow for the handling of large and/or fractious livestock from outside the pens to prevent risks to worker safety.



Pens and alley from the University of Wisconsin - River Falls grant.



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