



Managing Risk for Montana Producers in Mobile Processing of Poultry

Lake County Community Development

Montana poultry producers face multiple risks associated with processing poultry in a Mobile Processing Unit (MPU), specifically, food safety liability and personal and business liability. Many of these producers expressed a strong interest in learning methods to safely process poultry, for personal use, neighbors, friends or a business. This Lake County Community Development Project, delivered workshops in 7 locations in Montana to address this growing demand. While the project targeted producers, an unanticipated audience of regulators from different agencies such as Montana's Department of Livestock, County sanitarians and Extension agents who wanted to learn how regulatory information was being conveyed to producers to help them safely slaughter and sell poultry. They discovered that there had been little continuity between the regulating agencies which created barriers to producers setting up a business. The project generated communication among these

groups on methods to streamline interpretation. This led to the Montana Department of Agriculture taking the lead in drafting a comprehensive *Mobile Processing Unit Training and Use Manual* that was reviewed and approved by the state's attorney general.

The success of this project was educating producers and enabling them to thoroughly understand the regulatory barriers to on farm processing and helping them assess whether it was feasible for their farm. Results showed that the majority of producers determined it was too costly and would increase their financial risk if they were to pursue commercial production (from 300-20,000 birds) which would also require additional licensing and state inspections. Two producers developed on-farm processing plans and 2 more are in the process of developing these plans which are required for commercial production. This project presents a prime example of a risk management outcome where training helped producers decide not to pursue a market.



"...I tried to work through the proper channels, produced a safe product and in the end was denied approval [for wholesale markets]. Now I have chicken which I produced and would serve to my closest friends and family but I am not allowed to sell wholesale and am limited to the thousand bird exemption."- Poultry Producer





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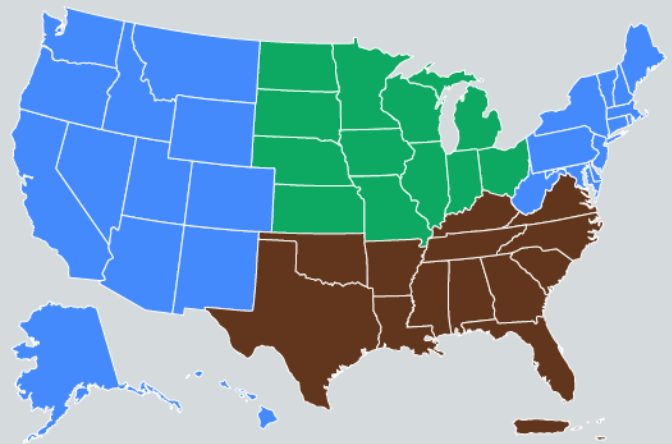
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**“Educating America’s farmers and ranchers
to manage the unique risks of producing food
for the world’s table.”**

Extension Risk Management Education (ERME) is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, results-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted results that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those results.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible results for producers in every state. ERME is committed to funding results, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration. View the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website.
<http://ExtensionRME.org>



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