



**GO Virginia Region One  
Agriculture and Food Manufacturing  
Working Group Meeting Notes from Feb 7.**

We started the meeting with welcome and introductions and talked about our "If only" idea. A meat processing facility was a popular choice in that icebreaker category. We moved from there to a flip-chart list of all ideas mentioned in the previous meeting, even if they were briefly mentioned.

**These ideas included:**

- Southern Appalachian Beef Jerky
- Regional Beef Processing Facility
- Feasibility for Finished Livestock Products
- Small Processing for Niche Markets
- Agriculture Incubator Idea
- Composting, Wood & Fiber
- OM Manufacturing

A lot of conversation from these topics ensued, eventually it was necessary to narrow the focus. The topic then moved to two main focus areas: meat processing and an agriculture "incubator." The word incubator was discussed, and we decided to use the words "resource center" instead. The idea of a meat processing facility seemed to be too large of a project to some, but the "resource center" seemed a more feasible idea. However, we didn't want to abandon the meat processing idea altogether. David Eaton is going to do research between now and March 1st to learn what he can about adding meat processing, possibly at a smaller level, to the broader idea of the agriculture incubator/resource center.

Meat processing and the resource center concept are the two areas of focus, but the plan is to explore as many options from the list above. Two subcommittees were formed to research different elements of these ideas. One subcommittee, chaired by David Eaton, will focus on the meat processing possibilities. The second subcommittee will research as many of the niche market ideas as possible. Katy Elsea from the USDA, and James and April Wilson (local meat goat farmers with many connections) will head this subcommittee.

The group expressed the desire for Google Drive folders for each of the subcommittees in order to share any findings between now and the next meeting.

**Some important questions and ideas to consider for the future:**

- What will this cost?
- Providing an asset inventory
- Who would run the resource center?
- Can meat processing be included in a facility with produce?
- Commercial kitchen/Cannery

- Retail opportunities
- Including Educators (K-12 and Higher)
- Market Development
- How much space needed/Where would this be located?

**Next Meeting:**

- The next Agriculture and food Manufacturing Working Group meeting will be at the Heartwood in Abingdon, March 1, 1:00 PM.