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| **5. Regional Food Safety Experts - medium term** | | | | |
| **SITUATION:** Farmers, food entrepreneurs, food system advocates, and regulators in Minnesota have difficulty navigating complex food safety requirements and in state and local rules and regulations. Moreover, there is a disconnect in understanding around food safety practices and business innovations among these groups at the regional level. | | | | |
| **Summary:** Create positions throughout MN that farmers/food businesses trust to ask food safety-related questions and have adequate training/background to refer people appropriately. | | | | |
| **Ask:** Funding is secured and five new full-time Extension staff people are hired to operate out of existing regional offices. MDA, MDH and Delegated Agencies include these new educators in the existing agency educational structures so that they stay up-to-date on regulatory information. | | | | |
| **INPUTS** | **OUTPUTS** (Activities) | **OUTCOMES** | | |
|  | | Knowledge | Actions | Conditions |
| Funding to hire new staff people  Communications Capacity  Resource/hosting organizations  Resource documents  MDA/MDH involvement – leadership, educational structures, and food safety expertise  Food entrepreneurs’ experience and engagement  University of Minnesota Extension involvement and support | Decide organization(s) to house positions  Hire on staff members  Establish job responsibilities and parameters for position  Gain support from the Food Safety Defense Task Force  Targeted outreach to start-up food entrepreneurs through the sustainable agriculture and local food network or organizations in Minnesota.  Guide entrepreneur questions to related organizations as needed  Collect existing and create new resource documents for food entrepreneurs  Work with regulators within the agencies | Increased food entrepreneur preparation to contact an inspector.    Increased food entrepreneur knowledge - including on issues of food safety  Reduced confusion around requirements on the part of food entrepreneurs | Efficient referral of entrepreneur questions due to collaboration between Licensing Liaisons & Regional Food Safety Experts    Food inspectors field fewer points of confusion.    Regional Food Safety Experts become part of the agencies’ learning management system | Faster turnaround time between concept and application approval    Food entrepreneurs have a information resource they trust and can learn from within their geographical region. |
| **ASSUMPTIONS:** The Regional Food Safety Experts will be effective, helpful trusted,, and sought out by farmers, food entrepreneurs, food system advocates, and regulators. | **EXTERNAL FACTORS:** The success of this project will depend on the willingness of organizations to house the positions and how responsive food entrepreneurs are to the outreach efforts. | | | |