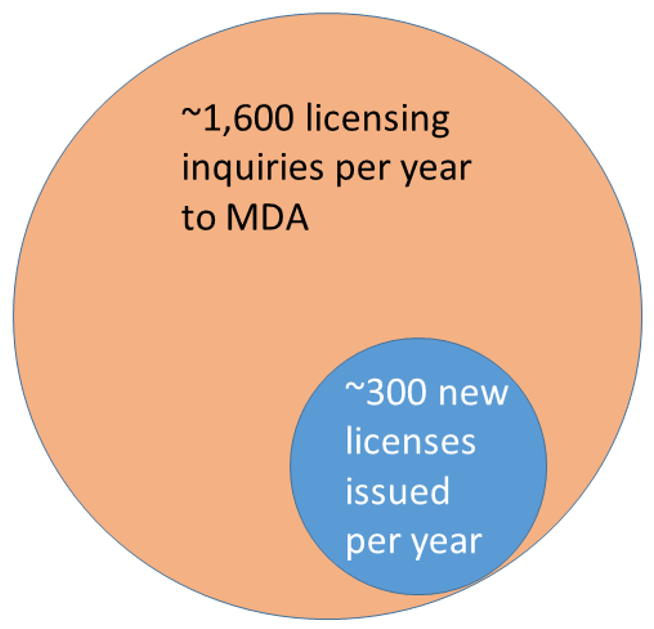
**PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING FOOD LICENSING FOR INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURS**

Economic upheavals and opportunities inspired by the local food movement have led unprecedented numbers of Minnesotans to start food businesses.

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| 2010 to 2016: 74% in number of food business licenses issued.  **Mostly:**  \* retail food handler  \* food manufacturer  license types used by  **small and mid-size food entrepreneurs**  *Source: MN Department of Agriculture* |  |



~ 1 new license from every 5 inquiries.

IF just 10% *more* inquiries get a license, that means   
  
~130 more food businesses per year in MN

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| Why some would-be food entrepreneurs  give up:  *Source: Food Enterprise Experiences Survey, Feb. 2017* |  |

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| Some innovativeenterprises become tangled in unclear regulatory language. | Wabasha Farmers’ Market took:   18 months  +  involvement of farm groups  +  meeting with MDA staff  to achieve licensing for innovative local produce distribution enterprise.  *Source: Wabasha Farmers’ Market case study, June 2016* | Delays are especially costly to small businesses.  How long until a food entrepreneur could proceed?  *Source: Food Enterprise Experiences Survey, Feb. 2017* |

**SOLUTION: A SMOOTHER, MORE CONSISTENT REGULATORY PROCESS**

A new MDA “Food Business Innovation Coordinator” position backed up by a team of experts would create a brighter path to licensing of innovative business models, providing both consistent regulatory interpretation and timely decision-making.

* One *FTE for Food Business Innovation* housed at MDA
  + 0.5 FTE = Coordinator
  + 0.5 FTE = MDA regulatory specialists
* *SALT: Solution Advisory Licensing Team*
  + Regulatory specialists from MDA and MDH
  + Volunteer participants:
    - Experienced food business entrepreneurs
    - Representatives of economic development agencies/DEED
    - Food system advocates

The SALT Team will serve the innovative food entrepreneur while protecting food safety.

The Solutions Advisory Licensing Team would:

* Have authority to issue definitive interpretations of statute and rule
* Convey decisions back to MDA and MDH staff trainers and field-level staff for implementation in the field.

Continuous improvement feedback loop

This proposal supported by:

Minnesota Farmers’ Market Association Renewing the Countryside

[info@mfma.org](mailto:info@mfma.org) // (320) 250-5087 [info@rtc.org](mailto:info@rtc.org)