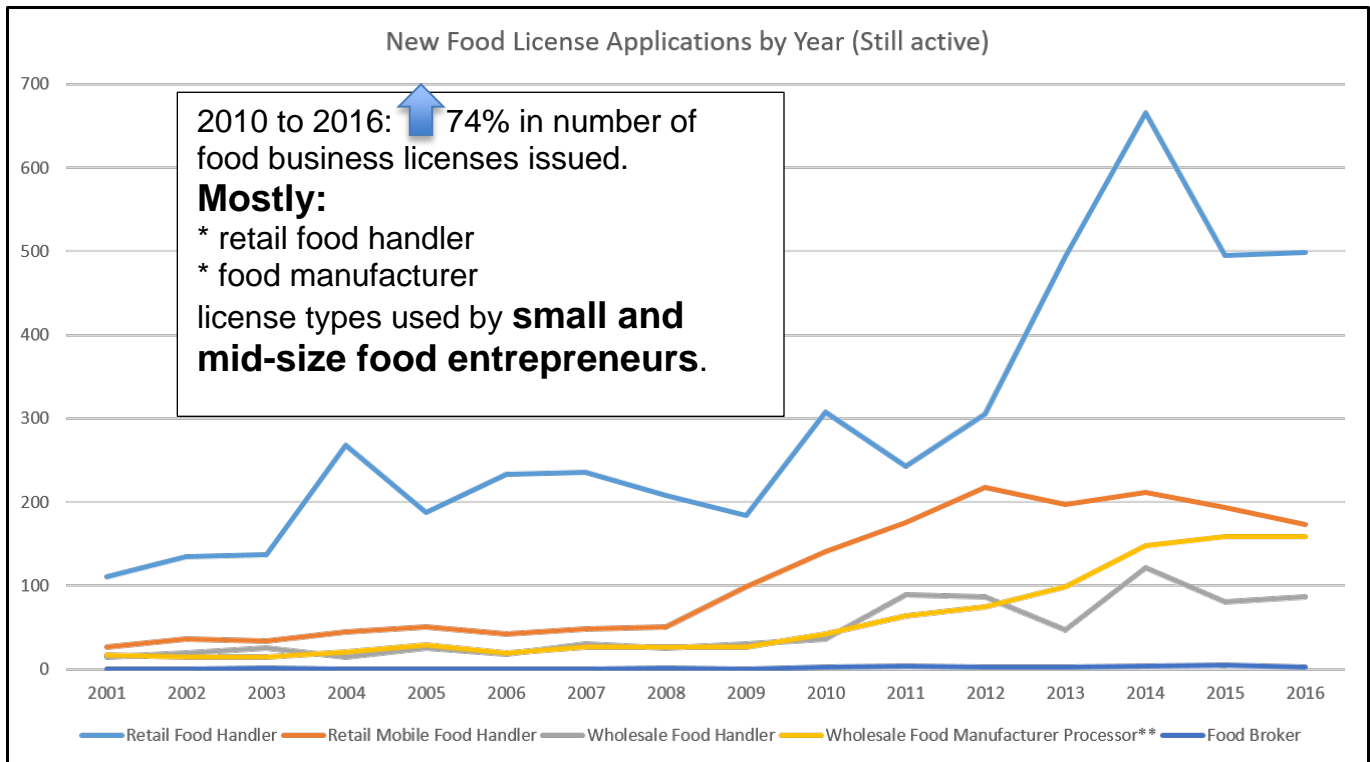


## PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING FOOD LICENSING FOR SMALL BUSINESS

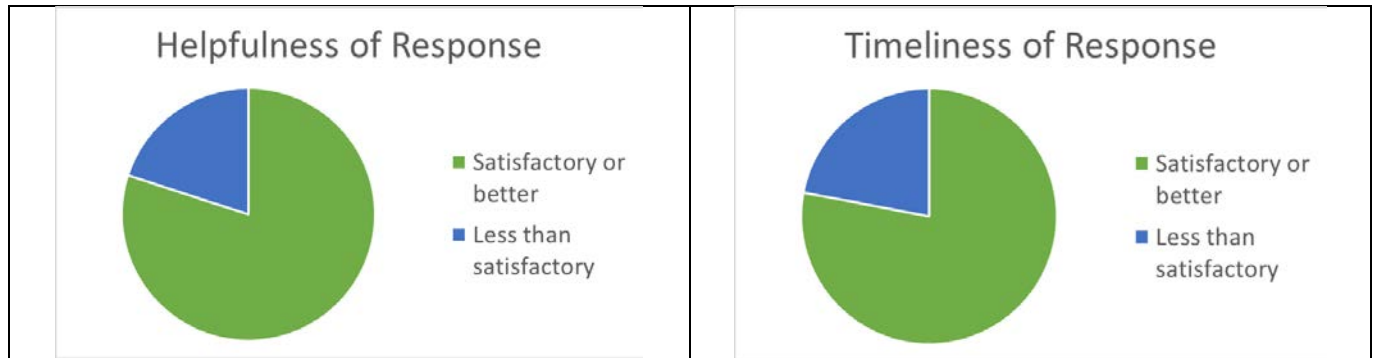
Economic upheavals and the lure of the local food movement have inspired unprecedented numbers of Minnesotans to start food businesses.



Not all license *inquiries* succeed, for many reasons.

IF just 10% *more* of these inquiries get a license => **130 more food businesses per year** in MN

Surveys by MDA found about **80%** of food license applicants received **satisfactory to very helpful** information and a timely response to their requests. About **20% were not satisfied** with either response or timeliness.

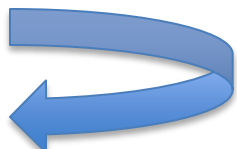


<p>Some innovative enterprises become <b>tangled</b> in unclear regulatory language</p>	<p>Wabasha Farmers' Market took:  18 months + involvement of farm groups + meeting with MDA staff  to achieve licensing for innovative local produce distribution enterprise.</p>	<p><b>Delays</b> are especially <b>costly</b> to small business</p>
---	---	---

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

A new MDA "Food Business Innovation Coordinator" position backed up by a team of experts would clear the path to licensing, 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 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 coordinator and 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.

This proposal supported by:  
Minnesota Farmers' Market Association  
[info@mfma.org](mailto:info@mfma.org) // (320) 250-5087

Renewing the Countryside  
[info@rtc.org](mailto:info@rtc.org)