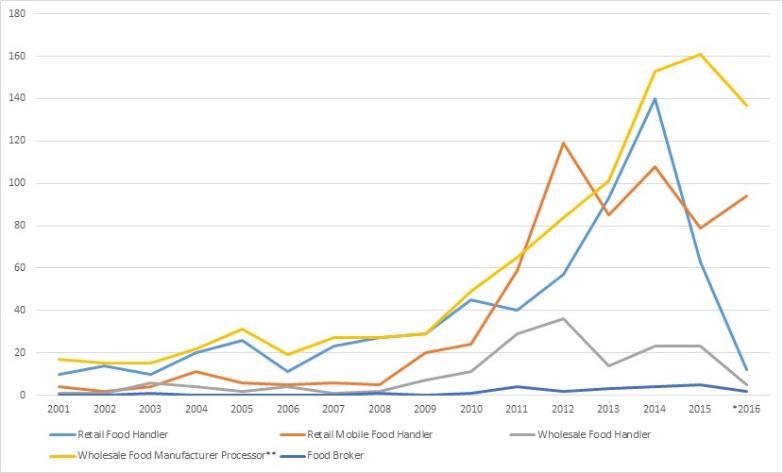
**PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING FOOD LICENSING**

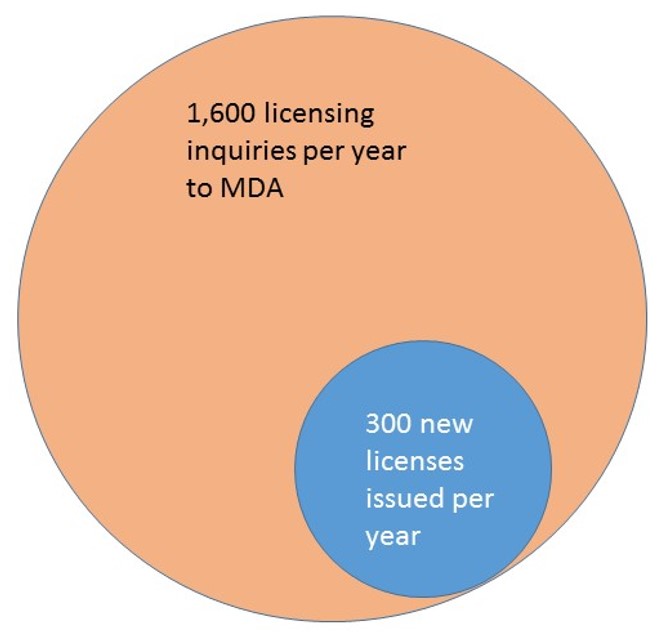
**FOR SMALL BUSINESS**

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



2010 to 2016: 150% in number of food business licenses issued.   
**Mostly:**   
\* retail food handler   
\* food manufacturer

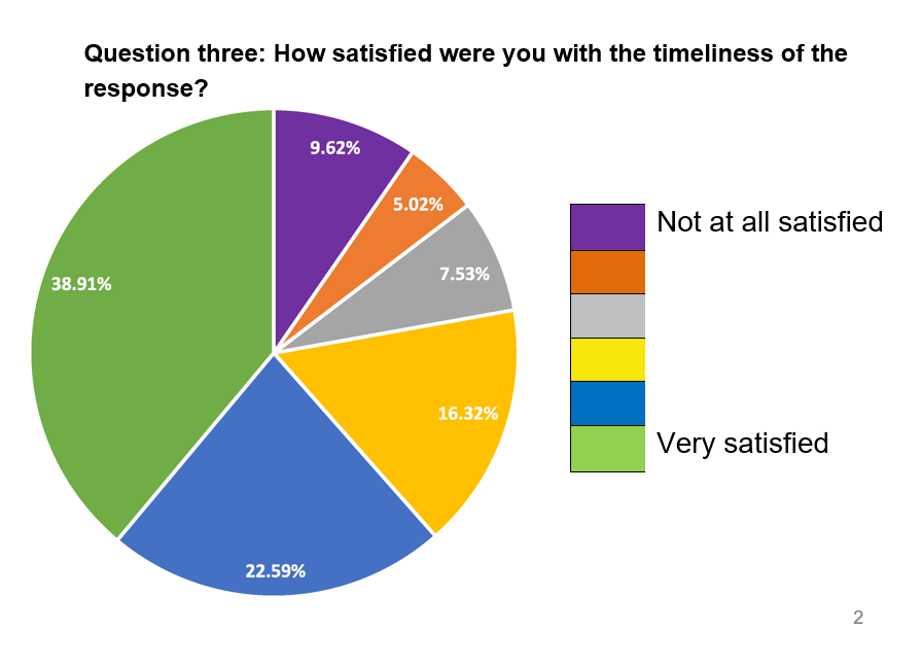
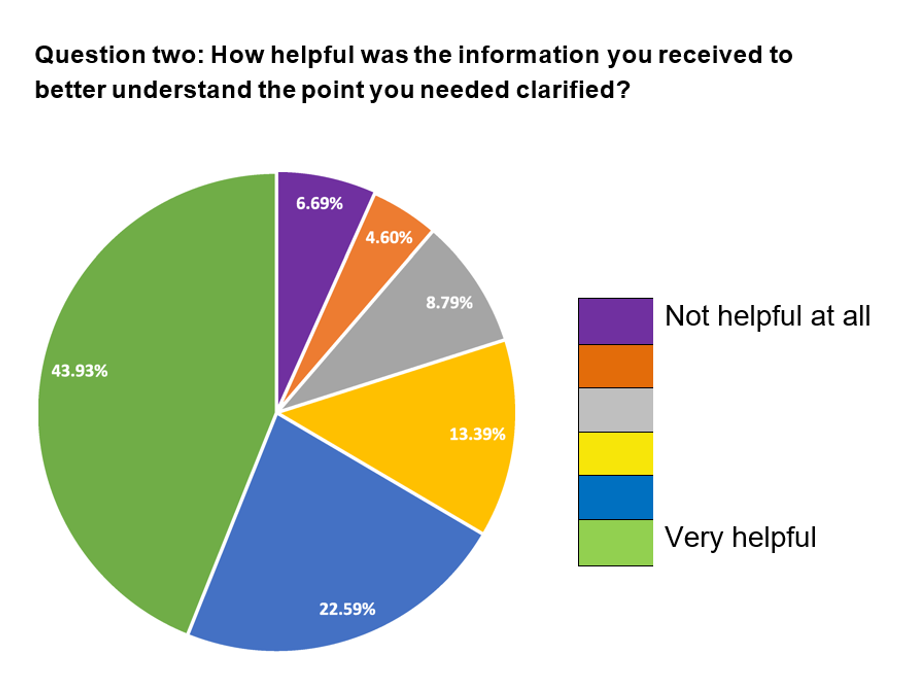
license types used by **small and mid-size food entrepreneurs**.



Just 10% more of these inquiries getting to licensing =  
130 more food businesses per year in MN

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

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



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Some innovativeenterprises become tangled in unclear regulatory language | Example: Wabasha Farmers’ Market took   18 months  +  involvement of farm groups  +  meeting with MDA staff  to achieve licensing for innovative local produce distribution enterprise. | Delays are especially costly to small business |

**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 Coordinator for Food Business Innovation housed at MDA
* SALT: Solution Advisory Licensing Team
  + Regulatory specialists from MDA and MDH
  + Experienced business entrepreneurs
  + Representatives of economic development agencies/DEED
  + Food system advocates

**IMPROVED CLIMATE FOR SILICON VALLEY OF FOOD**

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.