

Livestock Meat Processing Survey Report May 2020

This survey was developed by a team of farmers and staff from Sustainable Farming Association (SFA), Land Stewardship Project, MN Farmers Union, MN Farmers' Market Association, Renewing the Countryside, and the MN Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, working together to improve the meat processing system. The survey was developed by Dan Zimmerli, SFA Community Organizer, and circulated through respective networks in May 2020. Responses were gathered from 111 individuals. Results are being shared with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, policymakers and others working to expand and improve the local production, processing, and marketing of beef, pork, poultry, eggs, dairy, sheep, goats, and other animal-based protein.

This survey does not reflect Minnesota agriculture as a whole. Survey recipients were typically in the network of one or more of the organizations mentioned above, although access to the survey was not limited. The farm community served by those organizations tends to include medium- and smaller-scale farms, diversified farms, and farms involved in direct marketing of products or marketing through local or regional entities. BIPOC, urban, and veteran farmers were most likely missed in this survey.

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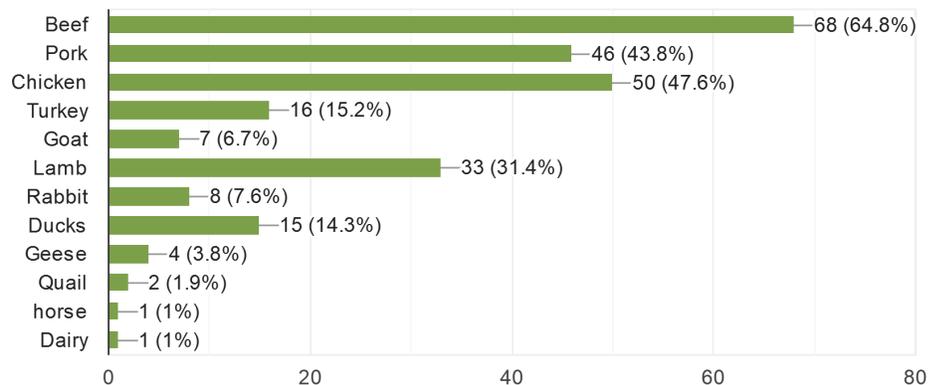


What type of livestock do you produce? Choose all that apply.

Beef, pork, chicken, and lamb are the most common species of livestock raised by farmers who filled out the survey.

What type of livestock do you produce? Choose all that apply.

105 responses



Has your livestock processing access changed since COVID-19? If so, how?

Processors that usually process local livestock for farmers are booked out for more months than is typical; frequently, into 2021. In some cases, this has affected livestock producers' ability to schedule processing dates that match their target maturity dates with their livestock. This sampling of respondent comments reveals a range of experiences with scheduling of processing:

- *Yes! there for 5 weeks packers did not offer any bids, they had backlog of cattle already purchased sitting on the shelf waiting for a harvest date.*
- *No. My processor called me and scheduled me for the entire year. She also called all the other regular customers and scheduled them. Then she allowed in the contract hog farmers.*
- *We were lucky to have already booked fall appointments but due to the soaring demand for processing I'm already booking for fall 2021 which would have been unthinkable in years past.*
- *We are begging to get animals processed. Normally it's 6 months out. The shops are doing a good job and the best they can.*
- *Yes, our normal processor is now booking at in November and we have steers that should have gone in next month [June]*

- *Thankfully I booked all my slots in February before this started. But the fact that I had to book them that early to get the USDA spots I need points to the fact that processing access was already a problem and it's only gotten worse.*
- *Yes! When we went to schedule our butcher dates, we were forced to pick dates 4 months later than what we normally schedule.*
- *Yes. My butcher is over-booked and I can't get animals in for several months, meaning I have to feed animals longer.*

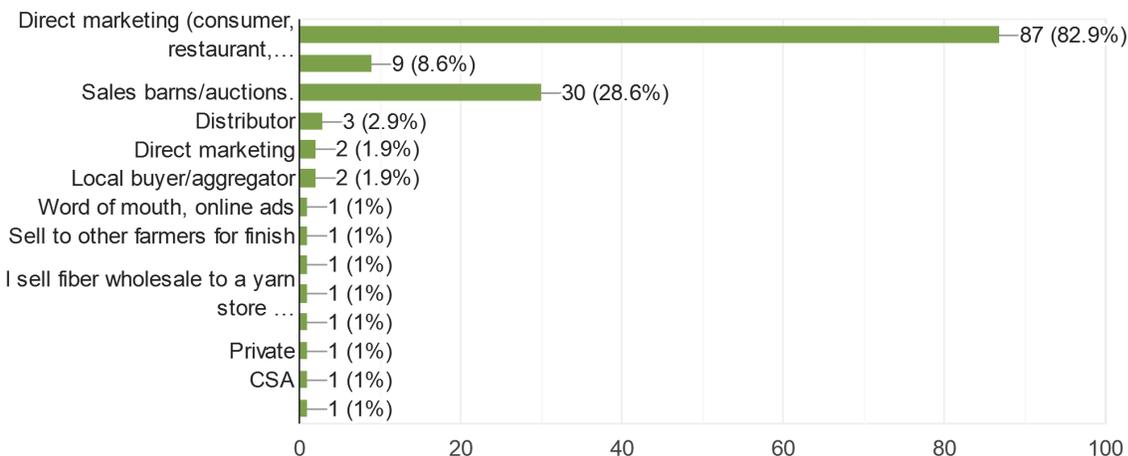
The majority of respondents agreed that processing options had changed. Comments suggest that processors of all types -- USDA, E2, and Custom-Exempt -- are booked out for months. Farmers who booked their dates in advance, and especially before the lockdown are the least affected at present.

How did you market your livestock prior to Covid-19? Choose all that apply.

The majority of respondents, more than 80%, direct market their livestock. Survey results should be interpreted as primarily coming from producers marketing through local and regional food systems rather than producers marketing through commodity channels.

How did you market your livestock prior to Covid-19? Choose all that apply.

105 responses



Has finding buyers for your livestock products changed since COVID-19?

Most respondents who filled in an "Other" option on this question stated their demand had increased but they were unable to fill the demand. The percentage of respondents reporting increased demand was approximately 70%, including both those who answered "Yes-demand

has increased” and those who used the “Other” option to indicate increased demand.

Has finding buyers for your livestock products changed since COVID-19?

105 responses



Has the COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges or opportunities related to marketing your livestock products, or did these challenges exist for you in some form prior to the pandemic? Please explain.

Respondents indicated several themes here. First, interest/demand has increased significantly for most respondents. Second, respondents indicated that processing was an issue before the pandemic and now it's exacerbated. Finally, respondents indicated that marketing is easy as consumers are actively seeking them out.

Sample of respondent comments:

- *Inability to get baby chicken fryers as hatcheries are booked out. Even if I was able to get more chicks, I can't get them butchered anywhere as all plants have no open dates. As for beef, we have to sell them at the sale barn since we can't get butcher dates causing customers to buy elsewhere.*
- *Processing was tight before and now it's a nightmare for farmers who didn't already have dates booked.*
- *Looking at social media and the comments from the consumers it is that they are now aware of how important buying local and supporting local really is.*
- *The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the challenge of selling livestock unless I want to sell for a huge economic loss*
- *I think if we market correctly it would increase opportunities, but we want to make sure we take care of our loyal customers first before finding new ones. I'm concerned that people don't really understand the process of buying from a farmer and there will be disappointment.*

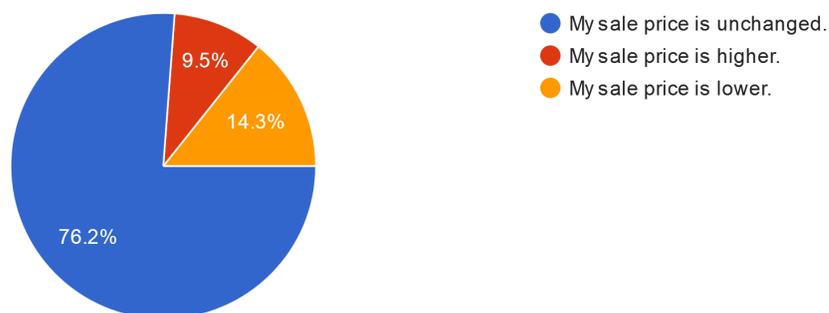
- *We have beef, we have customers, need more local processing*
- *Marketing has been easier as more and more people are finally reaching out to farms near them for products.*
- *I have a mile long wait list for rabbit breeders, I don't think some of these folks have thought it out though.*
- *Being a seasonal dairy farm, we usually have lots of calves that sell easy in the spring, but we have no one wanting to buy them yet. And we had market ready steers ready to be sold this spring, anticipating this sale to pay off a loan, but we couldn't find anyone who would buy them until this week, NFO took 4 animals out of the 23 or 26 ready for market.*
- *Just highlights the need for more local processors, which was a problem before but now it's amplified. And we could raise many more hogs and sell them easily...the demand is huge!*
- *Our order volume has significantly increased without any increase in marketing time or money expense. Enough people knew about us that we sold out in early March by word of mouth. We are increasing our pork and chicken production for this summer because of the increased demand.*
- *We will run out of processed meat within 2 months and our processor does not have any openings until December. We will have very little revenue from August to December.*

How has your pricing changed since COVID-19?

About three-fourths of survey respondents said their sale price was unchanged.

How has your pricing changed since COVID-19?

105 responses



If your pricing has changed, please explain how.

Some producers are raising their prices due to increased demand; others are raising prices just enough to cover their increased costs. Some are not raising their prices because they believe that would be unethical. Several producers expressed frustration with low prices received through commodity marketing channels.

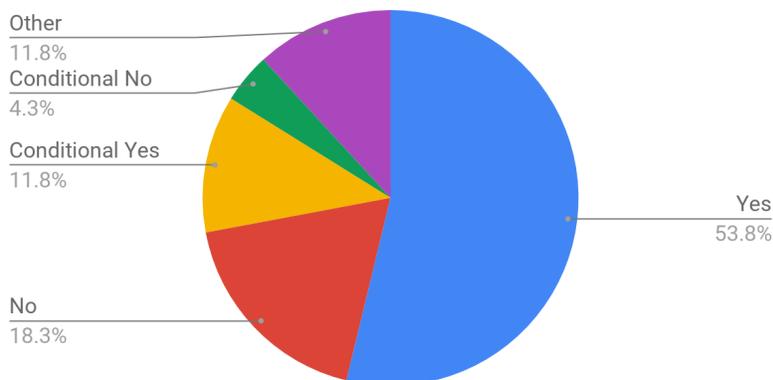
Sample of comments:

- *I am being forced to sell at prices lower than what it costs to raise the animals*
- *Will sell my products to cover the feed costs and some labor. Will not price gouge my direct buyers.*
- *I market through sales barn so am stuck with what I get*
- *I don't want to be a grifter! I can't conscience increasing our prices because demand has increased. Our prices need to be based on what it costs us to raise livestock for dedicated local customers.*
- *We are raising our price since there is so much demand*
- *Demand has increased, processing costs increased, prices had to increase.*
- *Slightly higher to cover additional feed/processing fees*
- *Very slight raise for new customers. Others the same.*
- *I feel it would be immoral to increase my prices at this time.*
- *We could raise our prices because the demand is there but don't feel that is the right thing to do during times like these*
- *Had to raise prices because processors raised prices. We raised ours a bit higher than processing to cool people down on the idea of hoarding all our products thinking them a good deal all of the sudden.*

Would you raise more livestock if you had access to more processing? And if so, how much?

A majority of respondents (53.8%) indicated unequivocally that they would raise more livestock if more processing was available. An additional 11.8% stated they would if other factors, such as profitability or land availability, were also favorable. The amount they would increase varied from single digit percentages to 200% or more. Respondents in the "Other" category pointed to factors other than processing that were limiting their ability or desire to expand.

Would you raise more livestock if you had access to more processing?



Sample of comments:

- *No (nearing “retirement “ and reducing livestock numbers gradually)*
- *Yes - additional 80 - 100 pigs and 1,000 chickens per year.*
- *No room for more*
- *Yes 200% increase*
- *My capacity is currently dependent on my marketing, not my processor*
- *Yes we would increase our farm output by 100-180%*
- *Only if the local foodshed expands enough; supply management is more critical. Having said that, MN really needs more inspected meat plants especially for poultry. And rabbits!*
- *Potentially, but we’d probably need more access to land as well.*
- *I would like to increase my flock by 40-50% but processing is only one hurdle.*
- *No. We want to stay small.*
- *Probably not. I have a few steady buyers of animals for their own processing. The rest go to sales barn.*
- *Yes, I wanted to scale up and double my size for next year but with this butcher issue I might hold off*
- *Yes. "How much" is hard to answer for a closed herd cow/calf operation - we wouldn't just go buy more cattle. Secondly, the price of hay is holding us back as well - hopefully that will ease some this year.*
- *Yes. We could easily double*

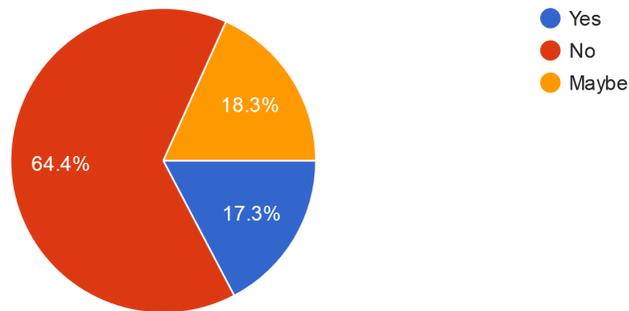
- *Yes, currently I sell wholes and half for pork and lamb. If I had access to local USDA facilities it would dramatically change my production and profitability.*
- *I would add another species or two-pigs, sheep, or chickens.*

Are livestock processing options in Minnesota adequate for your business (even before COVID-19)?

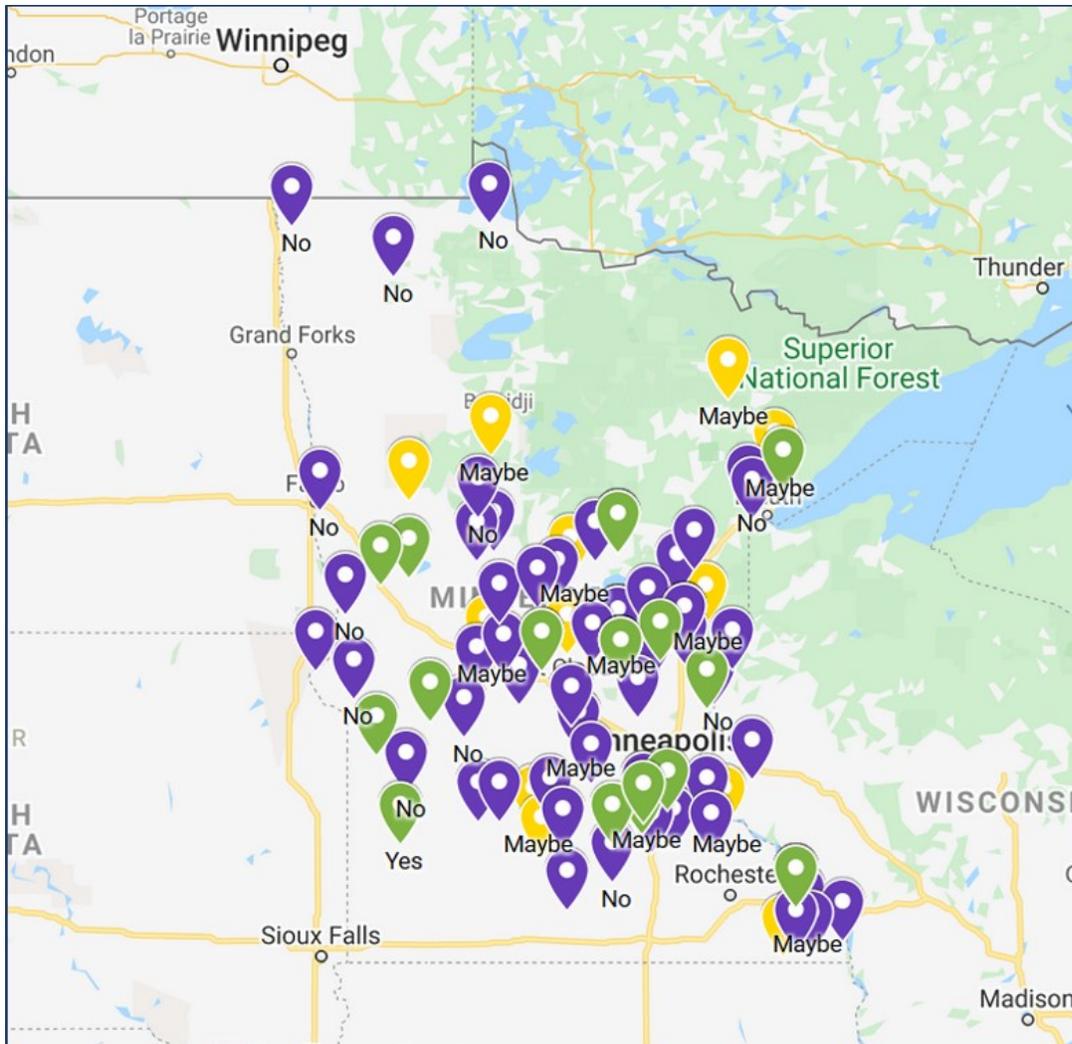
A solid majority of respondents, 64.4%, said livestock processing options in Minnesota were not adequate for their business even before COVID-19 led to further tightening of processing availability.

Are livestock processing options in Minnesota adequate for your business (even before COVID-19)?

104 responses



There were also 17.3% of respondents who said processing options were adequate prior to COVID-19. This map shows the distribution of respondents, by ZIP code, who said processing options were adequate, not adequate, or maybe adequate:



Link to map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1qw2aWu1sFnouNbhqF3JJthkWQOHTeqSD&ll=46.085378068762495%2C-94.1645552&z=6>

Adequacy of processing options was indicated in the metro area and along major routes: I-35 and I-94. Inadequacy of processing options was indicated in some of the same areas where others indicated adequate processing. Some potential explanations for this pattern of overlapping “adequate” and “not adequate” perceptions of processing availability:

- Mismatches of scale of operation between farmers and available processing plants
- Varying levels of tolerance of farmers for travel distance to plants.
- Varying levels of tolerance of farmers for advance scheduling of livestock processing

What, in your opinion, should be done to improve livestock processing in Minnesota?

There were 101 responses to this question. We deleted a few vulgar ones; see all remaining responses at the end of this survey report; Appendix A. Some themes:

- Establish more small processors with continuous inspection in all parts of the state; more inspectors needed; subsidies needed
- Make Equal-to or USDA-inspected status affordable for small processors
- Attend to succession planning for small mom-and-pop plants
- Solve the skilled labor shortage for small processing plants
- Reduce regulatory burden on processing plants and farmers

Are there any other comments about meat processing or marketing that you'd like to share?

There were 64 responses to this question. See all responses at the end of this survey report; Appendix B. Some themes:

- Lack of consumer education / funds / freezer space to enable bulk purchases of local meats & poultry
- Unfair competition from large-scale meat industry and imports; unfair pricing structures that raise consumer prices without raising prices received by farmers
- Desire for more options for processing and marketing of livestock; including more on-farm processing options and more options for local retail sale of custom-processed meat
- Uncertainty whether the current spike in demand will last

APPENDIX A. 100 of 101 responses to the question, “What, in your opinion, should be done to improve livestock processing in Minnesota?”

- State supported small processing plants could be helpful. Wage increases will be necessary to attract workers.
- USDA and State equal facilities are too few and far between. If I didn't sell to an aggregator I would have to slaughter 4 to 5 at a time to distribute travel costs over more product. That's beyond my freezer capacity.
- We need USDA or MN equivalent certified humane processors. We also need on-farm slaughter. WI has these but not MN in my area.
- We need to make e2 and USDA more affordable for the butcher.
- I have to drive a long distance to get access to E2 processing.
- Support more small processors

- We are typically able to get processing done when we need it, but because of only having inspectors a few days a week, it can be hard to get on a schedule. Increasing state inspectors at processors would be a great first step.
- more local livestock processors
- Our custom exempt butcher shop is not USDA inspected because it's not financially viable for them to do so. The inspection fees should not be so high that these small butcher shops can't afford them.
- There should be more small scale butcher shops. Programs, incentives, and education could give this profession more attention and merit to save them.
- The large scale processors won't take our animals because we're too small, and if they did there's no guarantee we'd even get ours back.
- More inspectors more inspection days at local processors
- More USDA inspected options
- Encourage more small to mid-sized development. Localize processing.
- Increase the amount of livestock processors to give producers more options
- Let farmers sell individual cuts of custom processed meat direct to consumer. Only people with the wealth to own a large house and a vehicle and have a large freezer can access custom processed meat. Millennials and urban consumers are very interested in buying direct from farmers but need smaller quantities. There are not enough USDA processors for farmers to be able to serve those consumers.
- More dispersed, small town meat processing - with access to wholesale and retail market options. I.e. more options beyond USDA and State Equal To facilities
- More smaller plants in missing areas of the state (Duluth as an example)
- If it was easier for people to start small processing plants I think there would be more of them but that's a question for processors. I'm not in that game just an outside observer.
- Cut regulations and allow custom-exempt to sell by-the-cut.
- Diversify processors geographically across the state even if that mean subsidizing them. Dependence on a few large processor was inevitably going to fail
- We need some medium sized processors available. I would finish out my own better doing beef. I would sacrifice pricing if I knew my cattle were not going to the BIG FOUR
- I have to travel a ridiculously long distance to get E2 or USDA processing. We need to have more small to medium scale E2 or USDA inspection facilities around the state. There would be more economic opportunities in smaller communities, less expense for smaller farmers, and more resiliency in our meat processing industry if this were the case.
- More processors especially USDA inspected processors

- Help processors figure out how to operate profitably. There are big succession problems in meat processing, just like in farming.
- Provide more federal meat inspectors locally so we can sell more meat locally.
- MDA is working to increase capacity, but will small processors still need to have the higher level of processing post Covid?
- We need to change farm to consumer regulations. Potentially adopting regulations similar to Wyoming in the food freedoms act that allows exemptions from Federal law requiring USDA inspection. This will have a great positive impact on farmers, consumers, local butcher shops and ultimately strengthen communities.
- More small family-owned processors. More farm based processing plants. More access for lamb and goat processing.
- I'm not sure
- I think once the COVID-19 is over the processors will have more capacity again.
- We need public investment in the local foodshed infrastructure, including community based meat plants, food hubs, commercial kitchens.
- Relax regulations for E2 or USDA facilities.
- I think that the dept of ag has loosened the grip and that has made a super big difference
- A few more processing facilities.
- Add flexibility for state equal to plants to be able to ship between states, as well as added granting dollars for custom plants to increase their capacity to get to state equal to level
- Support small farms and processing.
- Being able to sell cuts direct to consumer similar to the prime act. If small butcher shops were given more opportunities to provide this service it would be beneficial to the farmer, butcher, and community
- Regional or county onsite slaughter and mn e2 inspection. Much like cops having a processor in each county or at least region.
- Need more processing plants,
And more plants that are inspected so we can sell products to consumers.
- Create incentives for people who start new plants.
More available grants/loans for processors
- Mn only has one beef processing facility (Long Prairie Pack) lockers plants are almost prohibitively expensive to build new, state permit and building requirements far exceed common sense in the regulatory world.
- More USDA or E2 plants

- We need more small processors, who can be available to small producers. We have lost too many "mom and pop" operations and the ones remaining are overworked and understaffed.
- Help get more butchers up and going and get more USDA certified butchers around
- Ok, technically we're in far western wisconsin.
- WE NEED MORE CUSTOM MEAT LOCKERS!
- more good ones
- Educate the public.
- More small processing plants.
- Support for skilled worker training and development. Perhaps buyer cooperation for supplies and equipment. Consumer education about the idea that they are buying local when they buy meat from a local butcher which is really box meat purchased and processed further for retail.
- Allow on-farm processing while meeting health standards.
- Reduce red tape for small processors to expand. Mobile slaughter units. Allow custom slaughter at inspected facilities to be sold to individual customers in any quantity from established inventory.
- We need a good plant in central MN
- More farm to consumer relationships so more local processing is needed and smaller butcher shops can be in business
- Need more mobile lamb and chicken/turkey processors.
- not sure
- Personally, it would be nice to have some regional centers set up (maybe partner with existing processors willing to be part of this) that could take on larger amounts of livestock and have storage space for finished product. They could also have a marketing specialist on board that would be willing to get these finished products in grocery stores, restaurants, etc. The plant would need to be state or federally inspected, but could also do custom exempt.
- break up corporate consolidation
- Skill and storage. I feel my product is superior to store bought partially Due to dry aging which very few lockers are willing to offer due to space and capacity constraints.
- Also many do not have the skilled labor that wants to do Or is trained to do lamb well and I'm forced to just use who is available.
- Support for for small, local processors.
- We need more M=2 or USDA processors, especially for poultry
- We need more small regional processors

- Small to mid-size operations for livestock harvesting, including more E2 or USDA plants for producers. Poultry harvesting is a particular need.
 - Loosen up and / or clarify the regulations.
 - More availability
 - encourage more poultry processing, Lack of education in meat processing as a career, Pipestone has not offered for many many years. Make waivers for planning and zoning at city and county level.
 - more hometown butchering businesses, maybe some portable butchering.
 - We'd like more small processors.
 - I don't know
 - I think demand for direct from the farmer purchases will increase as a result of this pandemic. More small-scale processors will be necessary to meet the increased demand.
 - The biggest complaint I have from the processing plants is finding help. Regulations don't make it easy either
 - I'm not sure what could be done.
 - Allow sales by the cut from custom processors.
 - Make it easier for people to process
 - Grants for facilities to expand and start. Bring back meat cutting training programs at community and state colleges.
 - Building a training facility near (inside of 20 miles) from one of our Tech or Community Colleges so that we would have hands on training for new owner operators would be a good start. If this facility also was large enough it could also provide some more market availability. Once we have the trained people providing them low cost start up loans would be money well spent. We also need to spend more on state inspectors to give support and control along the way to make sure everything is done with humane conditions for the animals. Treatment of the employees should be part of inspection protocol, basic levels of care and health concerns.
-
- regional/county located onsite slaughter.
 - We don't contract in MN so no comment.
 - More smaller family operated seasonal facilities.
 - There should be more options for State inspected processors or processors that allow farmers to sell their meat by retail cuts. I feel that that there are an adequate number of custom processors in a normal year, but these limit farmers to selling the live animal to the customer directly. Our society today is not accustomed to buying so much meat at

one time and its a huge learning curve to convert someone to the idea of buying a half hog, for example.

- On-the-farm slaughter for retail cuts. So state inspected.
- More places to go? Less regulation so butchers want to stay in business
- Small processing facilities need more incentives/help to become continuously inspected (either USDA or "equal-to"). I know efforts have been make to expedite this process, but as a producer, I need help finding facilities that have gone through that. Important to note, none of this can come at the expense of safety. Worker safety and animal welfare must be the number one priority at all times, but especially during this pandemic.
- the state needs to sponsor, by bonding, the construction of several teaching processing facilities that would give would be owners of processing a chance to learn the ropes and would demonstrate how important livestock handling and approach to slaughter is to meat quality and consumer protection. What we have now is mostly left over from a generation or more ago. Not satisfactory.
- More poultry options including duck! More exemptions to process on farm and sell at farmers markets without inspection.
- Restructure licensing, more affordable options for licensing for butchers, more transparency for butchers to get licensed and continuous fast tracking to equal to status outside of the push in response to the pandemic.
- Allow custom processing from WI
- Need more facilities with state or federal inspectors in the northern area
- less restrictions for starting a processing business
- more pooled growers for better pooled slaughter slots at facilities designed to work with the scale of the surrounding pool of growers. we need more plants but we also need to have enough to supply those plants - lamb and poultry is particularly hard to find, skin on pork processing is also very difficult
- Set up places for people to slaughter animals on their own some USDA station like a shed set up for people to rent and then be inspected also a place to dispose of bones and animal bodies from slaughter. Disposal is a problem
- Allowing easier pathways for locks processing to happen. The regulations itself is so complex to understand. We looked at opening a small plant and have put it on hold.
- We need more local processors.
- Either expand current small processors or more small ones
- We need more USDA inspected processors, especially for poultry!
- Packers should not own hogs and more smaller processing facilities

APPENDIX B. All 64 responses to: Are there any other comments about meat processing or marketing that you'd like to share?

- When IP seven to \$800 to process a 1200 pound beef we have a big issue with the current market price for beef
- I know the U of M -St Paul has courses/major in meat processing, but didn't River Falls drop their program? I think commodity associations like pork/ beef/ lamb producers need to endow positions or fund scholarships to encourage access of students to knowledge of the business opportunity.
- We need more good processors. Processing is the biggest expense for my farm.
- The cost of processing has risen dramatically for small producers-even before covid.
- The mda website that lists USDA, E2, and custom exempt processing facilities is inaccurate and needs to be validated and brought up to date. Our normal USDA butcher is not even listed. Another example, some are listed that they do poultry or onsite slaughter, but when you call and talk to them they tell you they don't. Making them easier to find and accurately listing their services would help them with profitability and make it easier for the small scale producers to find them, which would help keep them from all closing down.
- I would like to see someone, please please PLEASE monitor truth in labeling.
- Regarding "Are livestock processing options in Minnesota adequate for your business (even before COVID-19)?" : They were before COVID-19, but just barely. Now they are not.
- Who is making all the money? Producers are selling at near or below production costs yet meat is at or near all time highs
- Large animal mobile slaughtering units would also help the current situation.
- Hopefully this situation will wake people up to how fragile our food system is relying on a few, large processors for a majority of our food.
- I think it is important to market heritage breed pork as a completely different product than conventional pork. With pork prices projected to drop so low, it is important to differentiate that forage-raised pork still has more value than commercial pork operations due to the different inputs
- Get MN Congress reps to support PRIME Act by Rep Massie (R)Kentucky
- The BIF Four got greedy even before the Covid hit.
- The demand is very strong now but it uncertain if this will last as the pandemic goes on and someday goes away.
- some meat processors do a better job than others

- It is almost impossible to find USDA inspected facilities to process beef, pork and poultry. Most people are unable to purchase a beef quarter and are therefore excluded from purchasing meat from local farmers. Changing regulations to make it easier to sell meat off the farm is foundational to creating a more sustainable food system. As a new farmer who is hoping to produce chicken and pork along with beef, the current regulations are discouraging me from getting into production.
- The corporate ag system of contract livestock farming, especially in CAFOs, harms the farmer, the workers in the meat packing plants and the meat customer. Only the corporation wins & takes all the profit. With the COVID pandemic we can see how this system is fragile and vulnerable. It's time to build out our local food systems and supply chain so that everyone benefits, from the farmers to the folks who eat meat.
- Facebook needs to stop flagging meat and egg posts
- I would like to see a grant for farmers that do on-farm poultry processing to help with buying processing equipment. The mini grant was only for processors that were either USDA, Equal-to, or custom
- Supply management would make marketing more profitable.
- Processing has always been a limiting factor for the direct to consumer farmer.
- Locally grown is where we are. The integrated market leaves the farmer with the short straw
- Continue to develop local markets and food education opportunities.
- We are beginning a capital campaign to raise funding for our business plan hoping for opening in August 2020
- Direct marketing has potential, but the regulatory process handcuffs those with the desire to enter the locker business
- My processing costs are far and away the largest expense I have as a producer. Most lambs are butchered for \$80/head and it is really hard to make money at that price. Sale barns are more profitable for that reason.
- Looking for processors that do organic processing.
- Come up with some new guidelines on how the farmer can sell direct to the consumer
- Meat processors are very important and not as prevalent as they should be. Small animal farms and local meat processors and butchers should be as essential to small communities as produce farms and food hubs.
- Force those big plants to open at full capacity. This is crazy!
- We're very fortunate to have processors who are extremely talented in what they do. More people should consider it to be a good way to earn a living. Now it's nearly

impossible to book dates with processors. It's definitely become a bottleneck, especially if you weren't planning ahead and getting on their calendars.

- Our Government says GET BIGGER OR GET OUT!!!!!! When BIG fails, then there is a major crisis. There will be no change for the future. BIG is here to stay. Expect the current situation to happen again!!! Maybe triggering a real food fight!!!!
- Demand has been high in our area for quite some time. I would like to see on farm beef harvest qualify for USDA inspected like is allowed for buffalo.
- Enforce antitrust laws in large meat packers.
- This is a systematic issue, not just a processing issue. Covid-19 has just exposed one weak link in the chain.
- More halal butcher would be helpful. And deregulation of meat retailing; Processors should be able to sell what they process for farmers.
- Thank you for your work with this issue.
- Lack of processors continues to hinder my farm business growth
- Yes it is totally controlled by 3 major packers
- There is a lack of home freezers available, not made in the USA only China and Mexico who aren't shipping to US and backlogged til the end of July if then? Consumers are not educated on how to cook...no FACS classes in high schools any more. Lack of knowledge in cuts of meats and how to cook a great steak or a 5 hour stew.
- Llitchers in Rushford, Mn used to come on farm for the slaughtering, and then take the hanging halves back to their site in town for the hanging, cutting and wrapping. We really liked that. Less animal stress meant better tasting meat. and it saved a bit on the expense.
- It is difficult to get sheep processed well. Everyone wants to do swine.
- Bring cool to law
- Keep it small, Keep it local, Keep it direct from producer to the consumer. We will not be able to compete with the monopolies in processing for the mass market; but one on one we win---more food, better prices, better quality, happier animals.
- we are in the process of starting a capital campaign for a processing facility in Princeton, MN
- Why the importation of other countries meats??? And why are we relying on foreign owned processors? Food production and processing should fall under the Jones act or similar..just like steel production and farm equipment should!!!. Anything less is treasonous on all and many scales.

- The state needs to do what it can be build and facilitate small processing. The current situation with such central control of the meat industry is just hopeless for any small or midsized farm. If we want a rural countryside, we need to go for it and make it happen.
- Consenting adults should be able to buy meat directly from the farmer with farmer processing! Including farmers markets. Communication about the type of processing required.
- Allowing animals processed under custom exempt to be sold direct to consumer, or farmer>grocer/restaurant.
- Would like to see reciprocity with border communities
- this is a complex issue - we need more plants like Lorentz Meats - a scale that serves large and small scale farms with value added processing but we also need the supply to back them (not just large scale farms/processors with contracts such as JBS or Hormel)
- Not enough processors, no place to dispose of bones and skins. I have checked with landfill but it's hard to get a straight answer then with closures. A station where anyone could slaughter may sound far fetched but if regulated would keep people healthier like a fish cleaning station at the lake disposal would be safer than people dumping animal parts down county roads. May need pens for animals waiting in some areas could be full on slaughter house not sure how they would work but....
- Would like to find safe homes for young heifers
- too much difference between prices i'm paid and prices consumers pay. I think processors are making too much
- We need more poultry processing for small flock owners.
- During normal times, lessons on marketing for farmers would be helpful.
- CME has become a useless tool for farmers