

Identifying Gaps in Ohio's Red Meat Supply Chain

Author: Sandra Depue

Major: Animal Science

Project Advisor: Henry Zerby

Ohio has a unique infrastructure: a large urban-rural interface and several small meat processing facilities, which provide opportunities for food animal producers to engage in value-added marketing strategies. To assist Ohio's producers who are interested in capitalizing on this infrastructure, it is necessary to determine if the areas of miscommunication are specifically localized between two adjacent components of the supply chain or are more widely spread across the supply chain. Information regarding where discrepancies lie between the various links of the production chain will help producers and processors make more informed decisions on production and marketing strategies and thus, enhance their fiscal sustainability and success. Producers could especially benefit from increased revenues, which may help Ohio retain its remaining small family farms. A series of surveys that have been conducted in association with previous market research projects and feasibility studies in Ohio are being used to compare responses regarding market drivers and desires from the various segments of the supply chain (consumer – retailer – processor – producer). Similar questions have been identified among the surveys and are being analyzed to recognize similar trends or lack thereof among responses. Specifically, questions ranking quality factors (i.e. flavor, tenderness, or price) and questions relating to consumer product preference are being given a primary focus. The hypothesis is that the closer a production segment within the supply chain is to the end-point consumer, the greater their awareness for the end-point consumer's desires or preferences will be (retailers awareness > processors awareness > producers awareness).