



July 25, 2022

LL.M. Program in Agricultural and Food Law  
1045 W. Maple St.  
University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, AR 72701

RE: Humane Handling Educational Resources for Farmers, Ranchers, and Small Processors  
Southern SARE Education Grant Proposal

To Whom it May Concern:

Cypress Valley Meat Company is custom meat processor with multiple locations in Arkansas and NE Oklahoma serving small to medium-sized farmers and ranchers. We strive to not only be a service provider to our customers, but to be a strategic partner in the value chain for farmers and ranchers serving local and national food supply chains. We process cattle, hogs, bison, lamb, and goat in our facilities servicing customers with both USDA-inspection requirements and without. We also operate one of only 25 USDA-inspected custom poultry processing plants in the country in partnership with Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative.

There is a significant need for these educational resources because there is a need to educate farmers about the regulatory requirements small processors must comply with and to create additional resources for small plants on a robust systematic approach to the humane handling of livestock. More intentional collaboration between farmer and processor can yield better relationships between value chain actors and help to eliminate inconsistencies and inefficiencies from live animal to packaged meat products.

We commit to participating in and supporting the 2023 application to the Southern SARE Education Grant entitled "Humane Handling Educational Resources for Farmers, Ranchers, and Small Processors." We commit to actively participating in this two-year project from April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2025. We will support the project by participating in drafting and/or reviewing guidebooks or manuals, supporting the development of FAQ documents, and participating or hosting webinars on how humane handling regulations impact family farms and small processors in order to create a more consistent understanding of each actor's role in the livestock value chain. Cypress Valley's experience with sustainable livestock production, meat processing, humane handling regulations, and food safety in manufacturing give us a unique and well-rounded perspective across the region. More, specifically, Chris Shaw – Director of Operations and Kim Schroeder – Director of Food Safety and Quality Assurance have over 30 years of combined experience in humane handling regulations and daily experience with USDA and livestock that will contribute significantly to this project.

Sincerely,

*Ben Wihebrink*

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