

Case-Study of How WVU Extension Educators Helped Mid-West Market Hog Producers Meet Local Consumer Demand During National Shut Down

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Background

With the onset of Covid-19 in 2020 many industries, companies, families and life in general were disrupted. Impact included a slowing or complete shutdown of slaughter facilities across the country to protect and slow the spread of Covid-19 among facility workers and because of the reduced demand of product due to nationwide shutdowns. Restaurants, grocery stores, etc. have slowed production and reduced demand due to food businesses and restaurants being closed (livestock producers) throughout the country were met with the grim reality that some of their product would not be accepted. Tens of thousands of animals destined for meat facilities had nowhere to go. Several states initiated euthanization programs for animals that were getting to large to be processed.

The talk of thousands of animals being euthanized and unused prompted WVU Extension Agents to act to see if they could alleviate the problem somewhat. Seeing a need to help with this issue, WVU Extension Agents in the Greenbrier Valley initiated a program which provided needed pork to citizens in across West Virginia during these uncertain times. Many WVU Extension Agents began contacting pork producers and truckers from Ohio, South Dakota, Iowa and Indiana who needed to sell animals to avoid euthanization. With established contacts in the livestock marketing and transportation industry it appeared to be a perfect fit to establish a pipeline of these animals coming into rural areas of West Virginia to be purchased and used by our clientele.

Reaching out to local consumers to gauge interest sparked enormous interest immediately by word of mouth and social media and a live demonstration was a baseline project to take on. May/June through Mid-May was extremely busy with the Market Hog project.

Methods

- Coordinate the booking and delivery of hogs from Midwest farms to West Virginia. Work with local cattlemen's association and clientele to coordinate purchase of market hogs.
- Distribute educational materials on at-home slaughtering for those that chose to slaughter their purchased hogs using their own facilities and equipment rather than utilizing local custom and USDA inspected slaughter facilities.
- Survey participants to evaluate program and gauge impact.



Results

- 142 people responded to the online survey.
- In the Mid-Central Valley, 454 hogs were requested, representing 278 families. However, 358 hogs were purchased for a total of 115 families. So, 24% of demand was met through this program. It is estimated that the yield of meat was approximately 50,000 lbs. of pork product.
- In the Greenbrier Valley, 440 hogs were provided to local citizens, representing over 100 families. It is estimated that the yield of these animals provided approximately 30,000 lbs. of pork product.
- In East Central West Virginia, 531 hogs were provided to a total of 331 families. It is estimated that the yield was approximately 35,000 lbs. of pork product.
- In Southern West Virginia, 336 hogs representing 105,840 lbs. live weight yielded approximately 74,088 pounds of meat.
- There were multiple days during the month where agents received over 100 phone requests per day to reserve a hog for their family.
- Of the survey respondents, 86% of participants processed at home and 64.8% of hogs were processed at home.
- Of the survey respondents, 45% of participants found a processor and 35.2% of hogs were processed professionally.
- Processors utilized by participants of this program included: Wilder's, Toungs, Toyfins, Spillers, Richards, K & L Processing, Cook Brothers, and United Market, Community Slaughter Shop, Harmon's Meats LLC, Ragsdale's Meats, Spirit Meats Processing LLC, Pocomoke Procs Meats, Preston High School Animal Processing, R & D Meats, B & L Beef, Cameron 248, Southern Living High School, P & C Slaughter & Processing, Countrywide Meat Processing, D & K Custom Curing.
- Processing costs ranged from \$0.50/lb and \$35 kill bill to \$0.70/lb, and \$60 kill bill.
- Of the survey respondents, 59.8% had their hogs further processed (cured, smoked, etc).

Regional Breakdown

| County | Location | Counties | Survey Response | All Agents | # of Hogs | # of Weights | Total Weight | Price Paid | Price Sold | State Points |
|---------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Greenbrier Valley | Putnam | Greenbrier, Boone, Lincoln, Logan, Boone, Lincoln, Boone, Lincoln | Boone, Lincoln, Boone, Lincoln | 440 | 385 | 134,230 | \$336 | \$1.25 | South Dakota | |
| South West | Adams | Adams, Boone, Lincoln, Boone, Lincoln | Boone, Lincoln, Boone, Lincoln | 336 | 355 | 105,840 | \$330 | \$1.25 | Indiana | |
| Mid-Central Valley | Wetzel | Wetzel, Boone, Lincoln, Boone, Lincoln | Boone, Lincoln, Boone, Lincoln | 531 | 220 | 123,840 | \$330 | \$1.25 | Ohio, Indiana | |
| Central | Wetzel, Boone, Lincoln | Wetzel, Boone, Lincoln | Zell, Boone | 336 | 320 | 140,000 | \$330 | \$1.25 | West Virginia, South Dakota | |
| Northwest Highlands | Marshall | Marshall, Boone, Lincoln | Alton Smith | | | | | | | |



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Evaluation

Participants were sent an online survey to evaluate the utilization of the animals they received, how they were processed, their associated cost, educational or economic needs.

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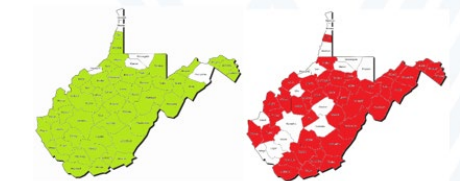
Additional Results

Fortunately, other requests were met in some of the highlighted counties and those consumers did not respond to the survey. Furthermore, other entities replicated the program through local stockyards and private treaties. In Calwell, WV, for example, the local stockyard brought in an additional 1,000 hogs for consumers. As was the case throughout the state. Despite WVU Extension's role diminishing, the program was successful for several weeks with those that took on the sourcing and delivery of these market hogs.

Through this service project, we learned of the need for additional education in the area of curing and smoking meats as well as the economic need to develop educational program targeting the development of additional slaughter facilities.

Although this a short-term service program, it was highly impactful for the producers of these animals and our local clients that received them. New WVU Extension contacts were made throughout the state.

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Map 1 Counties with Live Hog Requests, Map 2 Counties with Live Hogs Purchased

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Collaborators

WVU Extension Agents: Greg Hamons-Pocahontas Co., Brian Wickline-Monroe Co., Josh Peplowski-Greenbrier Co., Allan Tomlinson-Monroe Co., Evan Wilson-Cabell/Wayne Co., Ben Goff-Putnam/Mason Co., Daisy Bailey-Calhoun/Gilmer Co., Brandy Brabham-Roane Co., Jody Carpenter-Barbour Co., John David Johnson-Jackson Co., Mollie Toppe-Wetzel Co., Jodi Richmond-Mercer Co., Alex Smith-Hardy Co., Brad Smith-Grant Co., Stacey Huffman-Mineral Co., Brooke Alt-Pendleton Co., Zona Hutson-Doddridge Co., Zach Teter, Producer, Monroe County Cattlemen's Association, R&C Livestock LLC, South Branch Valley Livestock Exchange, and the Greenbrier Valley Marketing Association.

Supportive Materials Used or Created

- Client Survey: https://www.qualtrics.com/learn/sv_of/CaseStudy/
- ISU Beef and Pork Buying Guide: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/producer/Beef-and-Pork-Whole-Animal-Buying-Guide>
- WVU Extension Factsheet: [Chilling a hog carcass down in warmer outdoor temperatures](https://www.extension.wvu.edu/files/pdf/4442-20-001/Chilling_a_hog_carcass_down_in_warmer_outdoor_temperatures)
- WVU Extension Educational Outreach: [2020 Hogs for Processing COVID-19 Response Program](https://www.extension.wvu.edu/files/pdf/4442-20-001/2020_Hogs_for_Processing_COVID-19_Response_Program)
- WVU Extension Factsheet: "We CAN! Meats and Poultry," <https://extension.wvu.edu/files/pdf/1968171308-3751-4443-2078c-161607905902/wvc-can-meats-and-poultry.pdf>

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Reflective Critique

Clientele reported overwhelmingly positive feedback about the quality and price of the product they received. Many indicated the desire for WVU Extension to repeat this and projects with other livestock species annually. Local slaughter facilities business increased to the point of no longer being able to accept bookings, creating a bottleneck for processing. Soiling reports of local pork producers being upset about the increased level of competition occurred but were limited.

As temperatures increased, it was decided to halt all hog sales, coordinated by WVU Extension for food-safety and animal welfare purposes. If not for that early warm period, we would have been able to meet more requests of West Virginia consumers. Going forward, we learned that West Virginia needs to increase its slaughter capacity to help ease the burden during future public health crisis or perceived food shortages or distribution disruptions.

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Background

With the onset of Covid-19 in 2020 many industries, companies, families and life in general were disrupted. Impacts included a slowing or complete shutdown of slaughter facilities across the country to protect and slow the spread of Covid-19 among facility workers and because of the reduced demand of product due to nationwide shutdowns (Restaurants, Grocery Stores, etc.) With slowed production and reduced demand due to food businesses and restaurants being closed livestock producers throughout the country were met with the grim reality that some or all their product would not be accepted. Tens of thousands of animals destined for meat facilities had nowhere to go. Several states initiated euthanization programs for animals that were getting to large to be processed.

The talk of thousands of animals being euthanized and unused prompted WVU Extension Agents to act to see if they could alleviate the problem somewhat. Seeing a need to help with this issue, WVU Extension Agents in the Greenbrier Valley initiated a program which provided needed pork to citizens in across West Virginia during these uncertain times. Many WVU Extension Agents began contacting pork producers and truckers from Ohio, South Dakota, Iowa and Indiana who needed to sell animals to avoid euthanization. With established contacts in the livestock marketing and transportation industry it appeared to be a perfect fit to establish a pipeline of these animals coming into rural areas of West Virginia to be purchased and used by our clientele.

Reaching out to local consumers to gauge interest sparked enormous interest immediately by word of mouth and social media and it was determined this was a feasible project to take on. Mid-April through Mid-May was extremely busy with the Market Hog project.

Goals

- Provide a temporary alternative market for mid-west swine producers
- Deliver market hogs to local clientele to provide fresh, high quality pork while also
- Provide clear and concise information on at-home processing to clients purchasing and processing hogs.

Methods

- ❖ Coordinate the booking and delivery of hogs from Midwest farms to West Virginia. Work with local cattlemen's association and clientele to coordinate purchase of market hogs.
- ❖ Distribute educational materials on at-home slaughtering for those that choose to slaughter their purchased hogs using their own facilities and equipment rather than utilizing local custom and USDA inspected slaughter facilities.
- ❖ Survey participants to evaluate program and gauge impact.

Evaluation

Participants were sent an online survey to evaluate the utilization of the animals they received, how they were processed, their associated costs, and additional educational or economic needs.

Results

- 142 people responded to the online survey.
- In the Mid-Ohio Valley, 554 hogs were requested, representing 278 families. However, 358 hogs were purchased for a total of 115 families. So, 41% of demand was met through this program. It is estimated that the yield of was approximately 59,000 lbs. of pork protein.
- In the Greenbrier Valley, 440 hogs were provided to local citizens, representing over 160 families. It is estimated that the yield of these animals provided approximately 88,000 lbs. of pork protein.
- In East Central West Virginia, 531 hogs were provided to a total of 331 families. It is estimated that the yield was approximately 95,000lbs of pork protein.
- In Southern West Virginia, 336 hogs representing 105,840 lbs. live weight yielded approximately 74,088 pounds of meat.
- There were multiple days during the month where agents received over 100 phone requests per day to reserve a hog for their family.
- Of the survey respondents, **56% of participants processed at home** and 64.8% hogs sold were processed at home.
- Of the survey respondents, **44% of participants found a processor** and 35.2% of hogs were processed professionally.
- Processors utilized by participants of this program included: Wolfe's, Troyers, Taylors, Sliders, Richards, K & L Processing, Cook Brothers, Call's Meat Market, Campbell's Butcher Shop, Hampshire Meats LLC, Hyde's Meat Packing, Patriot Meat Processing LLC, Pocahontas Proud Meats, Preston High School Animal Processing, R & D Meats, B & L Beef, Cameron High School – Meats Lab, Cook's Packing/Slaughtering & Processing, Countryside Meat Processing, D & K Custom Cutting, and Pendleton County High School Ag. Dept.
- **Processing Costs ranged from \$0.65/lb and \$35 kill bill to \$0.70/lb. and \$60 kill bill.**
- Of the survey respondents, **60.8% had their hogs further processed (cured, smoked, etc).**

Additional Results

Fortunately, other requests were met in some of the highlighted counties and those consumers did not respond to the survey. Furthermore, other entities replicated the program through local stockyards and private treaties. In Caldwell, WV, for example, the local stockyard brought in an additional 1,000 hogs for consumers. As was the case throughout the state. Despite WVU Extension's role diminishing, the program was successful for several weeks with those that took on the sourcing and delivery of these market hogs.

Through this service project, we learned of the need for additional education in the area of curing and smoking meats as well as the economic need to develop educational program targeting the development of additional slaughter facilities.

Although this a short-term service program, it was highly impactful for the producers of these animals and our local clients that received them. New WVU Extension contacts were made throughout the state.

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Clientele reported overwhelmingly positive feedback about the quality and price of the product they received. Many indicated the desire for WVU Extension to repeat this and projects with other livestock species annually. Local slaughter facilities business increased to the point of no longer being able to accept bookings, creating a bottleneck for processing. Some reports of local pork producers being upset about the increased level of competition occurred but were limited.

As temperatures increased, it was decided to halt all hog sales coordinated by WVU Extension for food-safety and animal welfare purposes. If not for that early warm period, we would have been able to meet more requests of West Virginia consumers. Going forward, we learned that West Virginia needs to increase its' slaughter capacity to help ease the burden during future public health crisis or perceived food shortages or distribution disruptions.

Supportive Materials Used or Created

- Client Survey: https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cGvcxauCUcbhxE9
- ISU Beef and Pork Buying Guide: <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/Beef-and-Pork-Whole-Animal-Buying-Guide>
- WVU Extension Factsheet ANR-ANSC-20-001: [Chilling a hog carcass down in warmer outdoor temperatures](#)
- WVU Extension Educational Outreach: [2020 Hogs for Processing COVID-19 Response Program](#)
- WVU Extension Factsheet, “We CAN! Meats and Poultry,” <https://extension.wvu.edu/files/d/681713c6-375f-4dd3-b78e-bd3207f5090c/we-can-meat-and-poultry.pdf>

Regional Breakdown

| | Location | Counties | Survey Response | All Agents | # of Hogs | Av Weight | Total Weight | Price Paid | Price Sold | State From |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---|-----------------|---|-------------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| Greenbrier Valley | Pickaway | Monroe Greenbrier Pocahontas | Brian Wickline | Wickline Hamons Peplowski | 440 | 305 | 134,200 | \$106 | \$125 | South Dakota |
| Southern | Athens | Summers Mercer Raleigh McDowell | Jodi Richmond | J. Richmond D. Richmond | 336 | 315 | 105,840 | \$100 | \$125 | Indiana |
| Mid-Ohio Valley | Liberty | Cabell Wayne Putnam Mason Calhoun Gilmer Roane Jackson Doddridge | Brandy Brabham | Brabham Bailey Goff Wilson Johnson Hutson | 554 | 220 | 121,880 | \$100 | \$125 | Ohio, Indiana |
| Central | Weston, Buchanan | Barbour Tucker Randolph Upshur Taylor Lewis Preston Marion | Zach Teeter | Carpenter | 531 | 320 | 169,920 | \$100 | \$125 | Iowa, South Dakota |
| Potomac Highlands | Morefield | Hardy Grant Mineral Pendleton | Alex Smith | Smith Smith Alt Huffman | 550 | 266 | 146,300 | \$100 | \$125 | Ohio, Iowa, South Dakota |
| | | | | | 2411 | 281.27 | 678,140 | | | |

Happy Hogs

