



The New Mother Lode: Local Community and Economic Benefits of a Livestock Processing Facility in the Region

In order for us to have the energy and investment we need to build this facility, we need to gain broad community support for the vision we have. There is certainly much more to a good business model than what I'm going to share with you here. But this is a good start, especially for increasing community interest.



Conversations about sustainably raised meat in mainstream media

The New York Times

The Opinion Pages

WORLD U.S. N.Y. / REGION BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH



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OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

The Myth of Sustainable Meat

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It's not just in rural places or among farmer's market shoppers that sustainable meat production is a topic of conversation. This image is from the most recent issue of Women's Health Magazine and this article is from the April 12th New York Times. The New York Times article actually argues that small scale production of meat is NOT sustainable because ranchers will eventually start cutting corners and wind up like the factory farms from which they distanced themselves. The article attracted a slew of rebuttals and the resounding message seems to be the same across the board: *Livestock raised in a humane and natural way takes longer and costs more to produce. But this is how it should be. Because of the higher cost, you will eat a little less and the cost will better reflect a balance between ranchers, the environment and health.*

So, it is unquestionable that there is demand for this product, as you know from having trouble keeping up with demand and because Farmers' Market customers have doubled or tripled in this region in recent years.

Economic Landscape

<u>Unemployment:</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2012</u>
El Dorado County	4.6%	11.9%
Calaveras County	5.9%	14.8%
Amador County	5.0%	13.5%
Tuolumne County	5.7%	13.5%
State of California	5.4%	11.5%

Unemployment rates are much higher than before the recession, and higher in our region than in the state as a whole. We need job growth in our communities.

Economic Landscape

<u>Self-Reliance Levels: Beef</u>	<u>Pork</u>	
El Dorado County	11.7%	0.15%
Calaveras County	225.43%	0.75%
Amador County	196.21%	0.48%
<u>Tuolumne County</u>	<u><1%</u>	<u>0.69%</u>
Region Total	108%	0.52%

Using what is called a leakage calculator designed by an organization called Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (or BALLE), the above numbers were generated for this region. They mean that we produce more than 100% of the livestock needed to serve our local market, meaning we have enough for ourselves and to export. But we know from experience that although we produce this much, we still import meat to our grocery stores, and we send a lot of our livestock elsewhere for finishing or processing – to livestock auctions, or to processors outside of the region, even when we bring meat back to sell to locals. Building a local livestock processing facility could potentially capture some of this leakage.

Economic Landscape

Self-Reliance Levels: Slaughter

El Dorado County 10%

Calaveras County <1%

Amador County <1%

Tuolumne County 7%

Region Total 7%

Job creation potential: 144 jobs

This is the information for the slaughter done locally. As you can see, while we produce more animals in our region than we can eat ourselves, most of them are sent elsewhere for processing.



Studies show...

- Businesses connected to local land and local communities better at facilitating long term economic stability.
- There are residual benefits of value-added agriculture.
- A diverse economy is more stable.

Businesses connected to the local land are more faithful to the region because proprietors are invested fully here. Industrial jobs have fled rural California and gone to other states and overseas. Much of this is due to high levels of environmental regulation and a preference for urban firms, as well as enticing offers, like tax incentives, to relocate. However, those businesses closely tied to agriculture have stayed in California.

When value-added production comes to a community, not only does it tend to generate more profit at the local level, but this money stays in the community, creating jobs and more revenue for business--- which generates more taxes for local government --- and in the case of this facility brings healthy food to residents.

An economy that relies solely on agriculture or tourism or industry will struggle with economic downturns. A diverse rural economy is most likely to remain stable over the long term. This facility has the potential to tap into various aspects of the rural economy, as we'll see in the next slide.



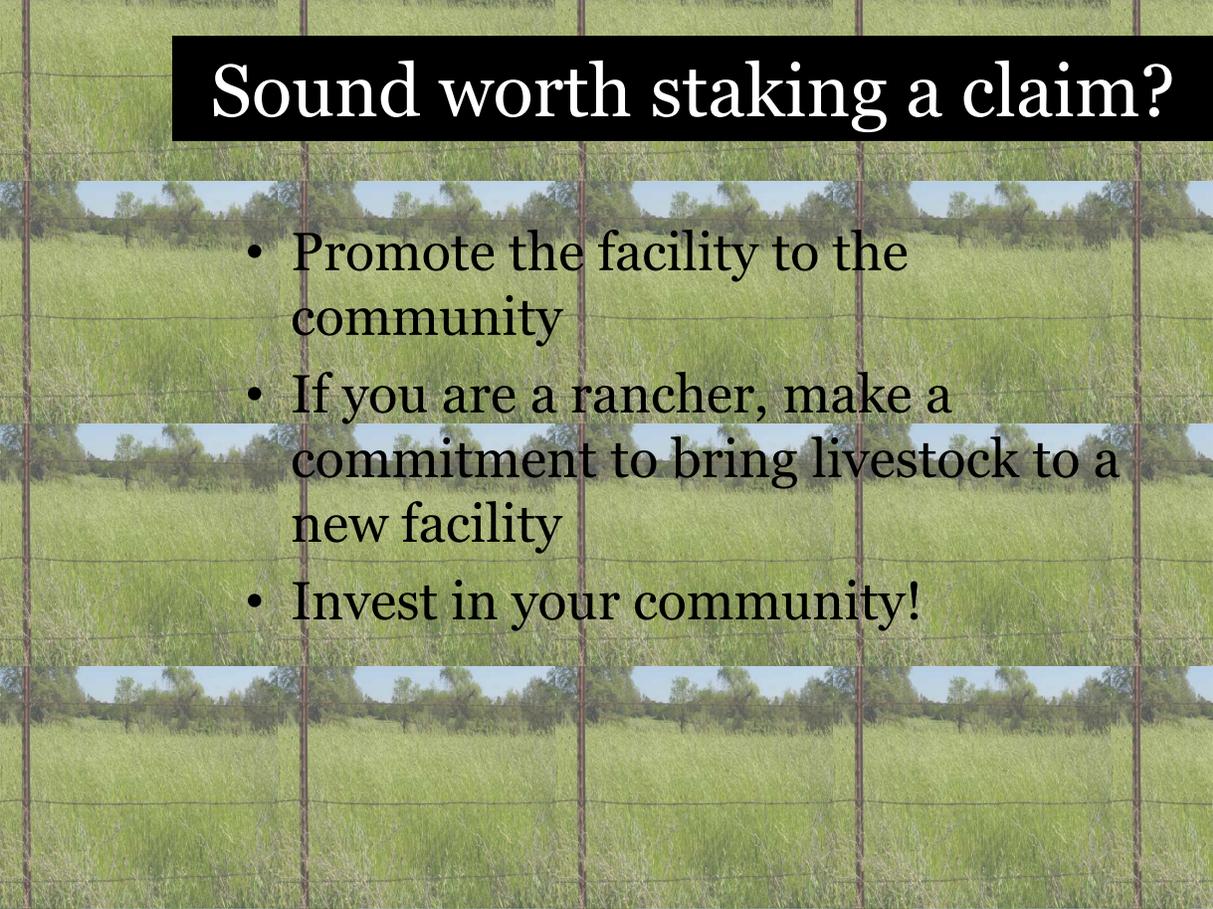
The Vision

- Quality jobs
- Educational opportunities
- Increased tourism
- Improved access to healthy, local food

The steering committee has a real vision for better ways to capture the growth in demand for locally produced natural foods. Again – these may not be new visions, but they are ideas about what the steering committee and other stakeholders believe a livestock processing facility could accomplish in this region:

- Diverse processing options for ranchers
- Potential cost savings for ranchers
- Education opportunities
 - Vocational training in butchering, business management, customer and food service
 - Boutique charcuterie classes which could also boost tourism
- Value added retail sales: everything from making doggie treats, to smoking meats, to operating a restaurant that serves locally produced foods. Some have even mentioned creating a facility that not only processes meat, but is a hub for all kinds of food processing, packaging and labeling.

Ideas like these, if brought to fruition, would create new quality jobs and create local meaningful vocations for young people so they choose to stay in the region and build a future here.



Sound worth staking a claim?

- Promote the facility to the community
- If you are a rancher, make a commitment to bring livestock to a new facility
- Invest in your community!

So if you are interested in ways to turn this vision into interest and investment from the community, get in touch with us!