

Driftless Foods. Building the Next Steps

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Creating appropriate scale economic infrastructure to support agriculture and rural economies benefits all people of a region. If regions are to prosper, rural communities must be included. Thriving rural economies support and enrich urban economies. Without both, regions stagnate.

The plan is to grow a network of interrelated, mutually supportive local food processing facilities on a county-wide scale under the direction of a single planning and leadership structure. Our goal is to create a highly transparent, well-documented model that can be readily reproduced in other regions.

Driftless Foods will be a market-driven organization supplying locally produced and processed foods to the 35 million people in our local region.

Driftless Foods will be organized as a leadership and development organization. This leadership level will provide business services for all individual facility teams that emerge from future business opportunities, including training, mentoring, research, sales, marketing, and financial support, as well as tourism and regional educational outreach programs.

The core principles of the Driftless Foods include regional fair trade, local control, promotion of local foods and local processing, and the distribution of profits to the producer level and the communities they live in. These core principles will be guaranteed in all future relationships.

A three-year design for a system of interrelated local food processing facilities is planned. These facilities will work in concert with the hub facility, an individually quick frozen (IQF) plant in the Village of Highland, Iowa County, WI, planned for year one.

In the following year two, the design calls for building a hydroponic / extended growing season facility in the Village of Avoca as well as an artisan dairy plant in the Village of Barneveld. At the Avoca site, plans are in place to utilize new waste digesters for heat generation to run the facility. In the following year the leadership team will add scale-appropriate, technology-driven facilities that process local/regional poultry as well as the growing goat and sheep herds in our region.

In the third year, the design also calls for the creation of a facility to process a Driftless branded line of regional pet foods. Not only will this benefit animal farming in the region, but it will also allow for food resources from the other processing facilities that may have been considered 'waste' products to be included in the pet food line as a high value-added benefit for the brand.

Driftless Foods is an opportunity to create a reproducible local foods processing model that celebrates local foods, is profitable, and returns value directly to the producers, the communities they live in, and the regions that support them for generations.

This process is designed to enrich, empower and grow our entire region. Our goal is to help unify our rural and urban economies through education, outreach, and wonderful locally-grown, locally-processed foods.

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