



Exploring Meat Processing and Marketing Opportunities Possibilities Tour to Marksbury Farm: Evaluation Summary

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As part of the Tennessee Value-Added Beef Program, the Center for Profitable Agriculture offered a tour to Marksbury Farm in Lancaster, Kentucky on September 9, 2013. Marksbury Farm has a meat processing facility, retail market and event facility. The tour was conducted as part of a project funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Southern Risk Management Education Center.

Two small buses carried groups traveling from Nashville and Knoxville. A total of 28 people participated in the tour of the meat processing facility, retail market and event center where lunch featured Marksbury Farm burgers. A copy of the tour schedule is included as Appendix A, and a copy of the evaluation form is included as Appendix B.

A total of 17 completed evaluations were collected. This is an overall response rate of 61 percent.

The evaluation asked participants to choose among three phrases that best described their role in the value-added beef industry. As shown in Figure 1, 6 participants indicated they were a “farmer already direct marketing meat” while 8 were “farmers interested in direct marketing meat.” Two respondents indicated they were “Beef industry partners other than farmers including Extension, Department of Agriculture and producer organizations.” One respondent identified themselves as “other.”

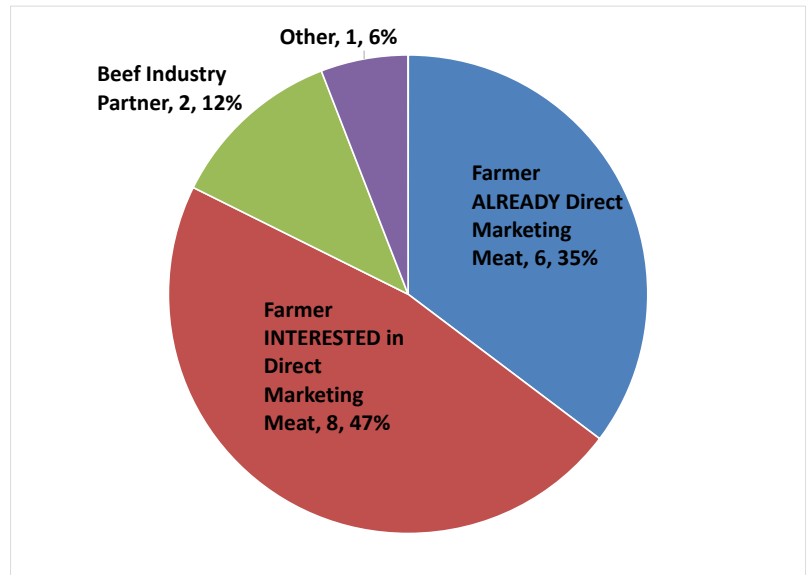


Figure 1: Participant Role in Value-Added Beef Industry



Marksbury Farm's Cliff Swaim discusses harvesting and processing procedures and equipment with some of the tour participants.



Marksbury Farm partner, Richard McCalister discusses meat marketing at the farm retail store.

Respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with several statements. A rating scale was provided with a numeric score assigned to each rating. The scale and assigned numeric score were: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), Somewhat Agree (4), Agree (5) and Strongly Agree (6). The statements, the number of people responding, ranges of responses and average response ratings are listed in Table 1. The numbers of people responding with a rating of Somewhat Agree (4) and higher are also provided for each statement. Average ratings ranged from 4.18 for "I have increased my awareness of how to manage legal risk of a value-added meat business" to 5.53 for "I would recommend this tour to others." The number of people responding with a rating of Somewhat Agree to Strongly Agree ranged from 12 for "I have increased my awareness of how to manage legal risk of a value-added meat business" to 17 (all respondents) for "I have improved my understanding of how to develop and implement marketing strategies for a value-added meat business" and "I would recommend this tour to others."

Table 1. Rating of Agreement for Impact Statements on a Scale of Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), Somewhat Agree (4), Agree (5) and Strongly Agree (6)

Impact Statements	Number Responding	Range of Rating Responses	Number Responding with Rating of ≥4	Average Response Rating
I have increased my understanding of the regulations involved with processing and/or direct marketing meat.	17	2-6	14	4.47
I have an increased awareness of business and market planning as a means of decreasing financial risk.	17	3-6	16	4.94
I have improved my understanding of how to develop and implement marketing strategies for a value-added meat business.	17	4-6	17	5.06
I have increased my awareness of how to manage legal risk of a value-added meat business.	17	1-6	12	4.18
I will implement or change at least one practice or procedure.	15	4-6	15	4.87
I would recommend this tour to others.	17	4-6	17	5.53

Participants were asked to provide a comment regarding how they planned to use the information learned on the tour. Comments indicated the information would be helpful in working with processors, deciding whether to start a processing operation and how to market beef. Comments provided by participants are listed below:

- I know I do not want to start a processing operation
- This tour was great from a farmer’s perspective to see how a meat processor thinks and what they are looking for when buying. I will take this info in consideration when working with my processor at home
- Planning for 2014 and beyond
- To help make decision on how to market beef
- To sell beef cattle
- As a resource for beginning direct beef marketing
- I am using this info for my own education and to learn the industry
- Focus on the most profitable first
- To be more conscious of my packer

Participants were also asked to provide ideas and suggestions on how the tour could have been improved. A couple of participants mentioned that they would like to tour a smaller scale processor. A couple of others would like to see a processing facility while it was actually harvesting and processing. Suggestions are listed below in addition to positive comments given in response to this question.

Suggestions for Improvement

- An individual processor on a smaller scale doing their own product
- Would like to see smaller operation
- Would have liked to tour on kill day to see how that process works at the small scale
- I would have liked to see the killing operation through finish
- Microphone on the bus
- Would have liked to hear more about requirements on production side
- More networking
- More discussion on regulations

Example Positive Comments

- All good
- Not sure – very good overall
- It was a very good tour
- Very good

Finally, participants were asked to list the key resource, information or training still needed in developing or growing a local beef marketing enterprise. The four comments received are listed below:

- Knowledge is the key – once again gained enough knowledge to know I don't want to start a processing operation
- Business plan – more investigation
- Start-up information and willing investors
- Information and understanding of your local market's wants and needs

Summary

The Center for Profitable Agriculture organized a tour of Marksbury Farm's meat processing and retail market on September 9, 2013. A total of 28 people participated in the tour, which was conducted as part of a project funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Southern Risk Management Education Center.

Following the tour, participants had increased their understanding of regulations involved with direct marketing meat, had an increased awareness of business and market planning as a means of decreasing financial risk, improved their understanding of how to develop and implement marketing strategies for a value-added meat business, increased awareness of how to manage legal risk and were planning to implement or change at least one practice or procedure.

Participants were asked how they planned to use the information learned during the tour. Comments indicated the information would be helpful in working with processors, deciding whether to start a processing operation and how to market beef.

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Appendix A – Tour Itinerary



Exploring Meat Processing and Marketing Possibilities Tour Itinerary

Marksbury Farm – Lancaster, KY – Monday, September 9, 2013

Contact Numbers: Nashville Group – Hal Pepper (334) 531-2631; Knoxville Group – Megan Bruch (931) 212-1513
Retail Facility Address: 73 Fisher Ford Road • Processing Facility Address: 7907 Nicholasville Road

Group Departing from Nashville, TN

Metro Southeast – Parking lot nearest McGavock Pike.
1417 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville, TN

7:00 am Central Load Bus
7:15 am Depart
(Travel time is approximately 4
hours including 1 stop.)
(Time change to Eastern)

12:15 pm Eastern Arrive at Marksbury Farm

12:30 pm Lunch, Overview of Marksbury
Farm and Q & A Session

Tour On-farm Retail Facility

2:15 pm Travel to Processing Facility

2:30 pm Tour Processing Facility

4:00 pm Depart for Nashville
(Time change to Central)

7:00 pm Central Arrive in Nashville

Group Departing from Knoxville, TN

New Harvest Park – Lower parking lot on left side.
4775 New Harvest Lane, Knoxville, TN

7:00 am Eastern Load Bus
7:15 am Bus Departs
(Travel time is approximately
3.5 hours including 1 stop.)

10:45 am Arrive at Marksbury Farm

11:00 am Tour Meat Processing Facility

12:15 pm Travel to Lunch Location

12:30 pm Lunch, Overview of Marksbury
Farm and Q & A Session

1:45 pm Tour On-farm Retail Facility

2:30 pm Depart for Knoxville

6:00 pm Arrive in Knoxville

Funding Partners

Special thanks to the following agencies for providing funding support for these events:



United States
Department of
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of Food and
Agriculture



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Appendix B – Evaluation Form



Exploring Meat Processing and Marketing Possibilities Tour Marksbury Farm – Lancaster, KY – Monday, September 9, 2013

1. Please read the following options carefully and choose the ONE that best describes you.

- a. Farmer ALREADY direct marketing meat
- b. Farmer INTERESTED in direct marketing meat
- c. Beef industry partner other than farmer (including UT, TDA, producer or service organizations, etc.)
- d. Other. (Please specify.) _____

2. Please read the following options carefully and choose the ONE that best describes you.

- a. I ALREADY operate a meat processing facility
- b. I am INTERESTED in opening/operating a meat processing facility
- c. I am interested in supporting meat processing facilities as an industry partner (other than farmer)
- d. I am NOT interested in operating a meat processing facility am and NOT an industry partner
- e. Other. (Please specify.) _____

3. Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Due to today's tour, ...	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I have increased my understanding of the regulations involved with processing and/or direct marketing meat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have an increased awareness of business and market planning as a means of decreasing financial risk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have improved my understanding of how to develop and implement marketing strategies for a value-added meat business.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have increased my awareness of how to manage legal risk of a value-added meat business.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will implement or change at least one practice or procedure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this tour to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How do you plan to use the information you learned at today's tour?

5. How could this tour have been improved?

6. What is the key resource, information or training you feel is still needed to assist in developing or growing a local beef processing and/or marketing enterprise?

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