

## **Summary of Final Report**

**Organization Name: North Coast Small Business Resource Center (NCSBRC)**

**Project Title: Natural Meat Production in Humboldt**

**Amount of Grant Award: \$71,800**

**Date of Final Report: May 18, 2007**

### **1. What were the project goals and were they achieved?**

The primary goal of the Natural Meat Project was to help facilitate the development of a natural meat industry in Humboldt County and to enhance the economic sustainability of local livestock producers. These goals were met as evidenced by expanded sales and the creation of new markets for Humboldt natural meat products.

New outlets were established for Humboldt beef producers into several Northern California markets and restaurants. Based on these increased sales projected forward from May 2007 through April 2008, Humboldt natural grass-fed beef will see an increase of approximately 416 head of cattle sold per year and organic beef nearly 1,040 head. This represents projected additional sales of \$2,500,000 for our local natural beef producers.

### **2. What were the activities undertaken and accomplishments through the completion of this grant?**

Specific activities included conducting a market feasibility analysis and writing a market development plan. A master Feasibility Report included a Producer Survey, Final Consultant Report with Retailer and Consumer Survey Summary, Market and Feasibility Analysis, Quantitative Product Supply Assessment, Market Development Plan, Consumer Survey Frequency Tables and Graphics and a PowerPoint Presentation of the Organic Meat Program.

In preparation for the master report, producer/processor site visits were conducted at 17 ranches and 2 processors. A survey was conducted on site at several Bay Area markets which involved face-to-face discussions with 154 consumers. A retail survey assessing interest in natural meats was conducted with 14 individual store meat managers and 10-20 regional chain store meat buyers and distributors.

The NCSBRC also hired a consultant to work on market development, to help brand and introduce Humboldt natural meats to suitable companies, distributors and retailers. Through this effort, and by mutual agreement and cooperation of all producers, two local brands, Humboldt Grass-Fed Beef and Eel River Organic Beef, were refined and launched into the greater Bay Area market.

### **3. What are the lasting benefits of the project?**

Humboldt natural grass-fed and organic beef sales have been significantly impacted by this project. In the first year alone we anticipate an additional 1,000-1,500 cattle will be processed and sold. In three years time we hope to see this number reach 2,500 cattle. What is most

significant about these numbers is this represents “value-added” boxed and case-ready meat products rather than “on-the-hoof,” so our producers are benefiting not only from increased volume, but from increased profit margins as well.

Additionally, the Natural Meat Project has planned for all processing to take place within the county, so Redwood Meats will see growth and develop with the increase in volume of cattle processed. Family farms and open, agricultural land will also be preserved due to the increased viability and sustainability of continued ranching in the region. The project’s emphasis on natural and largely organic production also promotes increased use of ecologically sound and humane ranching practices.

#### **4. How will you continue work started by this project?**

The NCSBRC will continue to work with individual producers through their traditional SBDC services providing on-on-one business counseling to aid them in writing business plans, marketing plans and with financial and risk analysis as they grow. Also, the producer and processors have asked NCSBRC for support in organization a production consortium and with continued support in branding and marketing their products. Redwood Meats is also in need of support as they make necessary upgrades to their facilities to increase capacity and to meet higher product and packaging standards.