

1.0 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning is seeking ideas and information regarding future uses of the slaughterhouse at the Suffolk County Farm, Yaphank, New York.

This Request for Expression of Interest (“RFEI”) is to solicit recommendations to modernize the slaughterhouse into an economically self-sustaining operation as recommended in the 2015 Suffolk County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan. The information and recommendations obtained from responses to this RFEI (“Responses”) may result in the development and issuance of a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for the slaughterhouse.

2.0 BACKGROUND

There is increasing demand among consumers for locally raised meat. Although there is interest in raising more animals for meat on Long Island, one of the major limiting factors is the lack of local meat processing facilities. Producers who want to sell retail meat to consumers or restaurants must first transport animals to New Jersey, Upstate New York, Pennsylvania and even Rhode Island for slaughter and processing. This limits the farm income derived from meat production because of the substantial costs associated with shipping animals out of the region. In addition, the lengthy transit time can stress animals and reduce meat quality. There are also missed employment opportunities for local butchers. Finally, a lack of processing options strains long-term agricultural viability in Suffolk County, as the County’s agricultural strength is derived from the diverse range of crops and commodities.

It is highly likely that the ability to process animals at a local USDA facility in Suffolk County would encourage expansion of livestock production among existing and new farmers, especially given the potential demand among the 2.7 million persons on Long Island. Although land availability and high production costs limit the overall potential for livestock production, it is estimated that up to 5,000 animals could be raised and marketed annually. Notably, the livestock industry has grown 93% in Suffolk County since the 2007 Census report. Though land costs may be high, demand for local product is equally high. Local producers report 100% price premiums for their products over supermarket prices. Markets for compassionately-raised, organically-raised animals are still growing, and fed by affluent households across Long Island and in restaurants and grocery stores in Brooklyn and Manhattan.

A local meat processing plant on Long Island would increase and enhance: the income and sustainability of farmers raising meat animals; the availability of locally-raised meat; the development of new and diversified agricultural enterprises in the region; and provide job creation in animal production and processing and handling meats. The expanded processing plant is envisioned to handle the slaughter and processing of cattle, hogs, sheep, goats and possibly bison.

The 200+ acre Suffolk County Farm and Education Center is owned by Suffolk County. It was purchased by the Suffolk County Board of Supervisors in 1870 to provide a facility for indigent County residents. An inmate and labor farm was initiated in 1918. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County has operated the farm since 1974. The facility is located on the west side of Yaphank Avenue. The farm is open seven days a week from 9am - 3pm except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter with no admission charge. A large portion of the Suffolk County Farm is dedicated to the Conservation of Agricultural Lands for farm use, as specified in Suffolk County Legislative Resolution No. 1105-2003. The slaughterhouse, however, is near to,

but outside the dedicated Conservation of Agricultural Lands area and would not be subject to its regulations.

This was the only USDA meat-processing plant in Suffolk County. It was formerly managed by Cornell Cooperative Extension and was a butcher-training facility for inmates from the Yaphank and Riverhead jails. It was not open to the public. The meat that came from livestock at the Suffolk County Farm was used in the jail cafeterias or donated to Island Harvest, a Long Island hunger relief organization, and other local food banks.

The main processing center is 31' x 120' (see Appendix A for additional dimensions and a floor plan) and processed approximately 15 steers and 100 hogs per year, providing over 20,000 pounds of meat.

Potential necessary improvements to expand into commercial use may include:

- Improved outside chute area
- Rebuilt holding pen for animals
- Replacement of de-hairing machine for pigs
- Replacement of blast freezer
- Improvements to slaughter floor and knock-down area
- Additional hoists and equipment
- Addition of equipment for processing goats and sheep (Only beef and swine are processed currently)
- Addition of bison processing capabilities (would require a complete renovation as separate State regulations govern facilities processing “exotic” animals, which include deer/venison)
- Would require an approved United States Department of Agriculture Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point plan

POTENTIAL MARKET

TABLE 1: Existing Meat Production in Suffolk County (Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture)

Total Sales:

Poultry & Eggs = \$24,138,000

Cattle and cows = \$36,000

Hogs = \$51,000

Other animals and animal products = \$23,000

Inventory:

Cattle, sheep, & goats = ~ 400

Hogs = ~ 200

Bison – ~ 300

TABLE 2: Result of 2012 Cornell Cooperative Extension Meat Processing Survey – Measuring Level of Demand/Need:

23 total responses with 11 from active farmers. Other responses were from persons interested in local foods and/or looking to enter livestock production.

- Of the active farmers, the range of animals includes rabbits, swine, cattle, buffalo, and poultry.
- Most (9) of the active and current farmers indicated potential for “some investment” (less than \$5,000).
- Most indicated willingness to increase animal numbers if local processing were in place.

3.0 REDEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of this RFEI is to assess if there are viable options for modernizing and privatizing the slaughterhouse in an economically self-sustaining manner. Responders should provide financial models and strategies needed to reach the redevelopment objective.

4.0 PRE-SUBMITTAL MEETING AND OPTIONAL SITE TOUR

All interested parties are strongly encouraged to attend a scheduled meeting and an optional site tour prior to preparing their Responses. The short informational meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 28th at 10:30 a.m.** at the 4-H Youth Development and Diabetes Education Center, 350 Yaphank Ave, located at the entrance of the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center, in Yaphank (see Appendix C). An optional tour of the slaughterhouse facility will immediately follow the meeting. Please e-mail your RSVP for the facility tour to august.ruckdeschel@suffolkcountyny.gov by **4 p.m. Monday, January 25th, 2016.**

5.0 REQUIRED INFORMATION

In accordance with the provisions of this RFEI, you are requested to provide the information described below. Each Responder must follow the instructions contained in this RFEI in preparing and submitting its Response.

All Responses received, and any information contained therein, are subject to public disclosure. A Responder may designate specific information as exempt from public disclosure pursuant to New York Freedom of Information Law, Public Officers Law Article 6. If the Responder wishes such information to be withheld if requested pursuant to FOIL, the Proposer shall submit with its Response a separate letter addressed to the primary contact referenced in this RFEI, specifically identifying the page number(s), line(s) or other appropriate designation(s) of the Response containing such information, explaining in detail why such information is a trade secret or is other information which if disclosed would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of the Proposer's enterprise, and formally requesting that such information be kept confidential. Failure to submit such a letter will constitute a waiver by the Responder of any interest in seeking exemption of this information under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law relating to protection of trade secrets. The proprietary nature of the information designated confidential by the Responder may be subject to disclosure if it is requested and the County

deems it subject to disclosure or if ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. A request that an entire Response be kept confidential may not be considered reasonable since a submission cannot reasonably consist of all data exempt from FOIL. All Responses shall become the property of the County once submitted.

6.0 RESPONSES

Responses should be concise, descriptive and pertinent. Responders should indicate its/their level of experience and/or expertise in processing and/or handling live animals.

All Responders are required to limit responses to twenty (20) pages or less at no smaller than 12 point type. Excess pages and extraneous materials or appendices will detract from the overall quality of the response and at the discretion may not be considered.

Communications with representatives of the County concerning this request, by a Responder or on behalf of a Responder, are NOT permitted during the submission process (except as specified below). No telephone inquiries will be accepted. If you have questions or require clarification on any aspect of this RFEI, please forward the request via email to: August.Ruckdeschel@suffolkcountyny.gov. Questions must be submitted by **4:00 p.m. Monday, February 1, 2016** in order to be considered. The County will post answers to all questions on the Economic Development and Planning website at <http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Business/AgriculturalandFishing.aspx> on **Tuesday, February 9, 2016**.

The County will not be responsible for any expenses in the preparation and/or presentation of the Responses and oral interviews, if any, or for other disclosure of any information or material received in connection with the solicitation, whether by negligence or otherwise.

The County reserves the right to request additional information or clarification, if necessary. This RFEI is not an offer and is not intended to result in the selection of any Response. The County shall not be obligated to pay for any costs incurred in preparation and submission of Responses.

Responses must be received no later than the due date specified herein. August Ruckdeschel is the contact for general questions or comments related to this solicitation as indicated in this RFEI.

Responders must submit **by 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 1, 2016** one original and one electronic copy of Responses to:

August Ruckdeschel
Suffolk County Department of Economic Development
100 Veterans Memorial Highway – 11th Floor
Hauppauge, NY 11788
August.Ruckdeschel@suffolkcountyny.gov

Appendix B: Photograph of Meat Processing Facility



