

## PRESS RELEASE

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Southern Tier West Regional Planning & Development Board  
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*For Immediate Release*

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***Southern Tier West Releases Regional  
Meat Production and Processing Study***  
*Results establish plans for next steps*

Salamanca, NY: Southern Tier West has released “*The Invigoration of Local Livestock and Processing Industries*,” a comprehensive study examining the current capacities and relationships between the region’s meat animal farmers and meat processing facilities. The basis to conduct the nearly year-long study grew from Southern Tier West’ ongoing work with the region’s farmers and food producers and in an effort to respond to the challenges and needs expressed by the them regarding perceived barriers to yielding the fullest profitability from their quality, locally grown meat. To gain expert industry analysis, Southern Tier West received a Local Food Promotion Program grant from the USDA and retained Kitchen Table Consultants, a team of experienced food system analysts, entrepreneurs, and farmers from southeast Pennsylvania to conduct primary research, analysis, and then issue a final comprehensive assessment report.

Kimberly LaMendola, manager of Southern Tier West’s food system projects, notes, “The region has many local small-farm meat producers who continued to inform us that they face many barriers in being able to process, package, and market their high-quality meat products in ways that will return the full potential of profitability as well as expand the availability of their product for consumer direct sales. We turned to a team of experts from Kitchen Table Consultants to help us better understand the existing capacities of the region’s meat producers and processors and to suggest strategies to help the meat producers reap the full benefits of their farming investments.

From the onset, we had assumed that the region faced a lack of meat processing facilities and that recommendations would point to the need for new meat processing infrastructure and operations. At the conclusion of the thorough work performed by Kitchen Table Consultants and with the full participation of both meat farmers and processing house operators, recommendations are pointing toward development of a hybrid approach to assist meat farmers in optimizing the return on their livestock farming and to assist meat processing operators with customer and resource development and business and succession planning.”

The research conducted by Kitchen Table Consultants demonstrates that there is actually excess capacity in meat processing within the region but there are many bottlenecks along the entire process that disconnect the needs and functions between the meat farmers and the meat producers. When bottlenecks occur, there are needs that go unmet for both the farmer and the meat processor which creates the appearance of deficiencies.

“As data were being analyzed, it was apparent to Kitchen Table Consultants and Southern Tier West that the deficiencies in meat processing that we assumed existed were not validated. We did learn that there are meat processing options within the greater Southern Tier Region that are more than adequate to accommodate the needs of the region’s nearly 80 small, consumer-direct meat farmers. Much of our future work plan will be to connect the dots, so to speak, along the local meat supply chain and to develop resources and training/assistance opportunities to assist both meat farmers and processors to gain new knowledge and skills that can carry forward to sustain their businesses,” says Ms. LaMendola.

The continued increasing demand for local meat products parallels the increased demand for locally grown vegetables and fruit. The consumer demand for local food creates a tremendous opportunity for the region’s farmers to develop local markets for their products which positively impacts the local and regional economy.

The full report is available for download on both [FreshLocalWNY.org](http://FreshLocalWNY.org) and [SouthernTierWest.org](http://SouthernTierWest.org) websites. For additional information about the study or any aspect of Southern Tier West’s food system work, please contact Kimberly LaMendola, Regional Development Coordinator, at 716-945-5301 x2211 or [klamendola@southerntierwest.org](mailto:klamendola@southerntierwest.org)

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