

1/30/2025

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs

RE: SB 2327

Chairman Luick and Members,

My name is Travis Maddock and I am a small business owner and cattle producer from Maddock. I stand today to share how the Agricultural Diversification and Development Fund (ADD), administered by the Department of Agriculture, has positively affected our small businesses and our ranching operation.

In 2020 my family, along with other partners, purchased the Prairie West Meat facility in New Salem. At that time, the capacity was between 6-7 large animal units per week and their value-added processing was limited to occasionally smoking game and custom products for local friends.

Since our purchase, we have invested over \$500,000 into the facility to expand slaughter and processing capacity, with \$200,000 of these investments coming from an ADD grant. The facility is now USDA-FSIS inspected and can comfortably harvest 15 large animal units per week and value-added processing (smoked and prepared meats) has increased 10-fold.

These improvements have provided much needed capacity to regional cattle producers in need of slaughter and processing, either for their own use or for direct-to-consumer sales. The additional value-added processing not only gives our ranching customers more options, but we are now producing smoked- and prepared-meats for commercial customers as well, co-packing under their house brands. Meats that are prepared in New Salem, North Dakota at 6 In 1 Meats are now sold online and found in many convenience stores and groceries across the upper-Midwest.

As our capacity has expanded, so has our payroll, which has increased over 75% from 2022. We now have 4 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees and are advertising to hire 2 more full-time workers as the value-added business continues to grow.

In 2025, we will continue to expand, adding more coolers, capacity, and workers, and our initial investments, added in a large part by the ADD grant, will help leverage this continued growth. Each owner of the facility now has their own meat brand and label and we continue to feature locally grown and harvested meat products across the state.

In closing, the ADD grant has allowed our small business the opportunity to grow, be more profitable, and to make a positive economic impact to not just the New Salem area, but across the state and region.

Thank you for your time, I welcome questions.