Developing Networks of Innovation Within the Mississippi River Region's Food Processing and Agribusiness Industry Cluster



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ABSTRACT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the establishment of the Food Resource and Agribusiness Network (FRAN) designed to serve western Wisconsin, eastern Minnesota and northeast Iowa. The foundational economic research for this project focused on the nine counties that comprise the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) Economic Development District in western Wisconsin. These nine counties are: Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, and Vernon. This Region, the remaining area of western Wisconsin, eastern Minnesota and northeast Iowa are home to many food-processing companies that are supported by an abundance of productive farmland. This entire region faces similar economic challenges including Iower per capita incomes and disparate areas of poverty.

The abundant farmlands and food-processing companies in this tri-state region present an opportunity for more in depth industry-cluster based economic development activity. This involves a more coordinated and stronger focus on

private and public resources to maximize the success of this regional economic driver industry. Industry cluster organizations seek to identify common interests among their various participants to create greater business success for themselves through cooperative activities. Reasons cluster participants desire to connect are centered on numerous business improvement interests in such areas as new product development, technology, suppliers, distributors, training, transportation and marketing. This convening of companies and institutions with common interests fosters efficiency, innovation and entrepreneurism making both the cluster and its companies more competitive and creating greater demand for higher skilled and higher wage jobs. The clusters continual business improvement focus will hopefully lead to greater business success and more companies entering the ranks as a "Traded Industry" that sell more goods or services outside the region, thus importing additional capital and creating added wealth for themselves, other business sectors and the region through deep economic multiplier effects.

This project therefore involved building on a regional economic strength in a more focused and coordinated manner, designed to produce a more competitive foodmanufacturing cluster that will address a regional need to generate more income and quality jobs for the region.

Industry clusters often coalesce naturally and informally, as relationships among connected industries and institutions form in any given geographical area. This project however involved speeding the natural course of cluster activity up by purposely convening food processing companies to inform them about the possibilities they have through cluster based joint ventures. After several meetings companies saw the benefits and started active involvement in a food processing and agribusiness industry cluster network. The food processing companies, Western Technical College, U.W. Stout - Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center, Workforce Connections and the MRRPC began in earnest on this project in August 2008. It started by surveying each other, companies identified what capacities they had in surplus that could be shared with others on a contractual basis. They also determined what needs they shared, which they might satisfy more easily by sharing the cost. This project therefore involved building on a regional economic strength in a more focused and coordinated manner, designed to produce a more competitive food-manufacturing cluster that will address a regional need to generate more income and quality jobs for the region.

The results of this project's efforts since August of 2008 are the following:

- Several companies are nearly ready to launch a shrink-wrap collection recycling program that could save companies thousands of dollars each year in waste-disposal costs, and open a new stream of revenue for them. Joint corrugate recycling and preventing empty truck backhauling may also be pursued in the near future for quantity discount and energy saving benefits.
- A website is about to be launched that will help this network of companies to recruit new members, exchange information, and arrange cooperative trucking and transportation projects. The website address is www.frannetwork.com

- 3. Participating companies have already received both federal and state grants through their cluster activities that have allowed them to tailor several training programs for themselves in such areas as workplace safety, machinery maintenance, welding, lean manufacturing and leadership. They continue to pursue additional training grants.
- The network of food processing companies are set to begin a strategic planning process with the assistance of U.W. Stout, Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center that will allow the network of companies to become more organized, focused, stable, and self-perpetuating.
- 5. The network has developed a database of company contact information, plant and equipment excess capacity, plant and equipment needs, training available on a contract basis, training needs, and joint venture interests.
- 6. The network has determined a name for its self FRAN and acronym for Food Resource and Agribusiness Network

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1. What Is Industry Cluster Based Economic Development?

Industry clusters typically include firms within the same geographic area that produce similar goods and services, their suppliers and distributors, other firms that employ related skills and technologies, and organizations that train workers for and conduct research in these fields (Mills, Reynolds, Reamer, p. 2). These companies, organizations, and institutions are interrelated and share interests with regard to their access to raw materials, supplies, workforce, and markets. While clusters can include organizations that are in direct competition with each other, they are ultimately characterized by the gathering of various organizations that complement one another's operations. Therefore, clusters are "defined by relationships rather than a particular product or function, clusters include organizations across multiple industrial classifications" (Mills, Reynolds, Reamer, p. 2).

When companies, organizations, and institutions gather in a cluster because of shared interest or experience in a particular industry, they begin to exchange knowledge, capacity, and workers. This encourages innovation and productivity, with the cluster acting as a catalyst. Demonstrable successes and members who recognize the benefits of being involved fuel the cluster's growth. Successful businesses within the cluster spawn new businesses, and regional infrastructure can be harnessed to maximize the cluster's potential. As the region grows and develops a critical mass of innovative companies, industry workers move to the region from elsewhere, either to accept new jobs at regional companies or to launch entrepreneurial ventures. In this way, a "cluster's growth usually becomes self-reinforcing" (Montana, et al., pp. 66-67).

Technology industries are classic examples of how cluster developments thrive and innovate with input from many companies within the industry, regional educational institutions, and even public-sector support. High-tech industries produce high-wage jobs, and regions with strong high-tech clusters benefit from their presence by a heightened profile. But high-tech clusters account for a small percentage of the total number of jobs in most regional economies, and their overall impact on a regional economy is usually small. The majority of high-wage jobs in a region are in fields that are not part of the high-tech constellation of communications, medical devices, and software and web design. In order to meaningfully increase overall regional prosperity, innovative capacity must be built in many clusters. Strong leadership committed to regional economic development is needed to ensure that companies, educational institutions, governments, and economic development organizations contribute their full potential to cluster-based initiatives. An overarching organizational structure for economic development is needed to help coordinate and implement cluster initiatives. No single cluster strategy will work for all regions; each region must craft a distinctive approach based on its unique assets.

Industry-based clusters are organized to better position their members and their regions in the competitive global marketplace. Clusters with a formal organization can implement any number of programs to accomplish this goal. The programs that follow are examples of cooperation, cost-sharing, and resource-pooling among members of the cluster:

- Jointly acquiring raw materials (inputs) for quantity discounts
- Development of supply-chain management efficiencies for inputs and products produced
- Developing plant and office production efficiencies (Lean Manufacturing, Lean Office, Six Sigma)
- Providing education and training assistance for technicians, engineers, scientists, analysts, assemblers, welders and fabricators or other commonly shared production or supervisory positions
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system training
- Developing mutually beneficial industry cluster contracts between industries and public economic development organizations to maximize each industry's production capacity in terms of:
 - Floor space
 - Machinery and equipment
 - Laboratories
 - Material and product testing services
 - Research and development resources
 - Transportation and warehousing services

- Information technology
- Increase industrial park land and building inventory through public-private ventures
- Assist in expanding educational opportunities in the scientific, technological, engineering, and mathematics professions
- Initiatives to improve the image of manufacturing occupations as a career choice
- · Health-care insurance pooling and administration initiatives
- Energy assistance
- Marketing assistance
- Pursuing federal, state, and private grants to assist in funding any of the above private, market-driven initiatives

How the Industry-Cluster Model Grows "Traded Companies"

The lower levels of per capita income in the MRRPC Region are not entirely the result of a lack of jobs, as evidenced by the Regional unemployment rate that is lower than the state's (see Table 1). The problem is the lack of high-paying jobs, or a lack of companies with the appropriate market dynamics that pay higher wages. This situation not only reduces income levels in the Region, but also makes it more difficult to attract and retain a high-skilled, well-educated workforce. This is exactly the economic environment in which the US Council on Competitiveness and the National Governors Association recommend using cluster-based economic development. This concept involves aligning the resources of the public and private sectors to promote cooperation among companies, institutions, and organizations that operate within an industry so that this industrial cluster becomes more innovative, dynamic, and successful in an increasingly competitive global economy.

The US Council on Competitiveness identifies local, resource-driven, and traded industries as the components of regional economies. Local industries are those that produce goods and services primarily for the local or regional population. Employment in these industries is roughly proportional to the size of the regional population. Examples of local industries include retail, services, construction, health care, education, and utilities. Resource-driven industries rely on a natural or agricultural resource and are therefore located in close proximity to where that resource is found. Examples of resource-driven industries are extraction industries like timber, mining, and oil and gas drilling, and agricultural industries like dairy farming. Other examples are production industries that are most efficient when located near the source of raw materials, such as lumber, textile, and paper mills. Traded industries are those that import capital by selling goods or services well beyond the region in which they are located, and that do not rely on close proximity to an immobile resource. Traded industries set an economic multiplier effect into motion. Traded industries are most likely to identify their skilled workers as their most important resource. In seeking employees who would best fit their operations, traded industries tend to locate in areas where they find the workforce to be well educated, or in areas where they expect they can attract such a workforce from outside the area. "Businesses are looking for places that have a workforce with the particular skills, abilities, and attitudes they need to be competitive" (Montana, et al., p.66). Examples of traded industries include aircraft, sporting goods, machine equipment and components, motion pictures, computer hardware and software, medical equipment, and footwear.

All three of the above industries play an important and much needed role in a region's economy and can produce highwage jobs. However, the US Council of Competitiveness points out that "traded industries are the dynamic core of a regional economy" and "the way to increase prosperity of an entire region is to increase wages in traded industries." A goal of the MRRPC's 2007-2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is to encourage the growth and development of traded industries in the Region.

Cluster activities should focus on improving the situation of those companies that export goods and services to other regions, and who thus import capital. These funds, in turn, are spent in the local and regional economy, by paying both suppliers and companies in support positions. This creates a multiplier effect in the regional economy, improving the economic conditions of the region. A cluster organized around traded companies has the potential "to provide international sales, marketing, and support services to the companies or industries...associated with it" (Henderson & Flogstad, p. 5). Furthermore, by involving traded companies in its leadership, the cluster lets the private sector lead the

way. This allows member companies to sharpen their leadership skills, which will serve them well in keeping their companies competitive in the global marketplace.

Establishing contacts and communication among members of a cluster is the most important element for the cluster's success. Only by exchanging ideas can the member companies initiate the programs that will strengthen the cluster as a whole, and thus better position the member companies and their region to be competitive in the global economy. The US Council on Competitiveness has identified several programs that clusters have implemented that have led to success for their regions. Cluster organizations should:

- Promote awareness of the industrial cluster
- Continually assess the cluster's competitive position compared to other peer clusters
- Develop and provide training and management programs
- Actively participate with government in recruitment efforts by identifying gaps in the cluster
- Widen institutional membership to include all cluster constituents (e.g. suppliers, service providers, research institutions, etc.)

The MRRPC's 2007-2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy calls for the encouragement of industrycluster-based economic development, with an emphasis on the Region's existing traded company strengths. These are agriculture and food processing; equipment, machinery, and metal products; and forest and wood products. Establishing an industry cluster organization centered on the agriculture and food-processing industry is a key step in further building the strength and number of traded companies in the Region. The region's climate, fertile soils, crops, fast-growing organic food industry, and existing concentration of food-processing industries make this a logical economic asset on which to further capitalize.

An agricultural and food-processing cluster initiative would help the MRRPC Region's economy. The State of Wisconsin fares worse than the national average in the categories of per capita income levels, rate of population growth, aging population and workforce, workforce growth rate, and net losses in workforce with baccalaureate degrees, or "brain drain" (see **Low Income Levels in the Region** and **Loss of Knowledge-Based Workers to Other Regions** in Section 2). Moreover, the MRRPC Region fares worse than the rest of the state in these same categories. The key Regional economic problem, and the source for much of the Region's economic decline in recent decades, is the lack of Traded Companies. An increase in the number of, or an expansion of existing, Traded Companies would result in more importation of capital from outside the Region; the creation of higher-wage jobs; and the recruitment of a younger, better-educated workforce that would contribute to an increase in per capita income levels and help stem the brain drain.

How an Industry Cluster Can Be a Catalyst for Innovation and Business Start-Ups

Clusters concentrate local talent, technology, resources, and information so that they can operate more efficiently. If the various companies operated in isolation, they would not necessarily encounter new ideas from others, or be inspired by what they learn from their suppliers, distributors, and neighbors. When they are brought together, though, these members of a cluster can exchange information. When one company tries something new that is successful and is applicable to others in the cluster, this innovation can spread through the other companies and benefit them all. This type of information exchange often happens naturally and informally among companies in a region. Forming a cluster is simply an effort to formalize an activity that would likely happen anyway, but doing so with more direction and focus, to make the effort more productive than it might be if left to natural and informal development. "Clusters promote knowledge sharing ('spillovers') and innovations in product development and technical and business processes by providing thick networks of formal and informal relationships across organizations" (Mills, Reynolds, Reamer, p. 2-3). By gathering many companies, organizations, and institutions that are related by industry, clusters encourage dynamism. Even as members of a cluster are cooperating on some programs that better use their excess capacity, they are competing in other areas, like financing, finding talented employees, and obtaining beneficial arrangements with suppliers (Montana, et al., pp. 66-67).

Cluster development not only spurs innovation among member companies. It also creates advantageous circumstances for business start-ups. When some businesses within the cluster become successful, some of their workers naturally

What Is Industry Cluster Based Economic Development?

decide to start new businesses of their own. This helps the region develop a critical mass of innovative companies, and people who work in the industry elsewhere may decide to move to the region, either to accept new jobs at regional companies or to launch entrepreneurial ventures. Start-ups should have the same access to the cluster and its programs, which give these fledgling businesses access to talented and skilled workers as employees change jobs and companies. They also gain access to training, which can help erase some small companies' weaknesses. Finally, by being members of the cluster, small companies can identify roles not filled by bigger competitors and fill these niches.

How the Industry-Cluster Model Can Create Jobs and Raise Income Levels

"Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between cluster strength and patenting rates (a measure of the innovation process), gross domestic product per capita, and wage levels" (Mills, Reynolds, Reamer, p. 3). Strong industry clusters create an economic environment in which an enthusiastic, well-educated, and well-paid workforce thrives.

The industry-cluster model drives improvements in the workforce that make high-skill and high-paying positions more efficient to fill. Training of skilled workers in engineering, the sciences, welding, machinery operation, and other necessary skills can be accomplished by educational institutions within the cluster in the establishment of programs that all member companies would be eligible to use in training their workers (Mills, Reynolds, Reamer, p. 3). This sharing of training facilities and resources makes the development of the required workforce much more economical than if each company were to make the attempt on its own. By combining efforts this way, more companies can draw from a workforce whose skills are better matched to the companies' operations. This will create more jobs that pay a higher wage.

In the same way that combining efforts can help cluster members develop the workforce they need, those same companies can see benefits from combining their excess capacity. "Clusters offer agglomeration economies – cost savings and greater access to suppliers, labor, markets, specialized transportation services, specialized training programs and other inputs" (Montana, et al., p. 66). Whether it is warehouse space, machinery, materials, transportation, laboratories, training facilities, or any other resource, every company can likely identify something of value it has in excess of its needs, but which might be of use to other members of the cluster. The members of the cluster should arrange to make their excess capacity available to other members, in return for either monetary compensation or access to another company's excess capacity of similar value (Mills, Reynolds, Reamer, p. 3). This cooperative relationship regarding excess capacity reduces waste within the member companies' operations, allowing them to pay better wages for high-skilled jobs. It also allows for the companies to maximize their outputs, and develop dynamic systems within their own operations and within the cluster. This dynamism encourages more innovation, which leads to more improvements, attracts a better-educated workforce, and encourages "entrepreneurship and new business development" (Mills, Reynolds, Reamer, p. 3).

The industry cluster model fits well with the State of Wisconsin's economic development priorities, as expressed in Governor Jim Doyle's "Grow Wisconsin Plan." The plan consists of the following eight goals:

- 1. Retain and Create High-Wage Jobs.
- 2. Prepare Workers for Tomorrow's Economy.
- 3. Create and Unleash Knowledge to Build Emerging Industry.
- 4. Add Value to Wisconsin's Economic Base.
- 5. Tap Wisconsin's Full Urban Potential.
- 6. Implement Strategies Regionally.
- 7. Lower Regulatory Burdens, Keep Standards High.
- 8. Develop World Class Infrastructure.

The industry-cluster-based economic development model is supportive of these goals. The model addresses the need to improve income levels and workforce education by developing traded companies in the MRRPC Region and attracting more of them to the Region. These traded companies and other members of industry clusters would build on existing strengths in the Region's economic base. The regional nature of the industry cluster model encourages solutions that

involve entities from multiple jurisdictions. Cooperation among these entities in cluster development will be helpful in establishing the infrastructure necessary to keep cluster members competitive in a global marketplace.

Examples of Industry Clusters Elsewhere

Most industry clusters are informal, and arise naturally in geographic regions where companies, organizations, and institutions are involved in similar endeavors and they find themselves cooperating on projects and establishing professional connections. Perhaps the most famous industry cluster is Silicon Valley in California's San Francisco Bay area. This collection of high-tech companies began growing in the 1970s around the semiconductor makers and university researchers who were pioneering new electronics that eventually gave birth to the personal computer revolution of the late 20th century. Other clusters, whether formal organizations or informal networks, have followed similar patterns. The medical and biological research being conducted around the Minneapolis-St. Paul area gave birth to LifeScience Alley, a nonprofit organization that promotes a healthy business climate for companies in the life sciences in the Twin Cities. Software clusters have developed in Seattle, most prominently, but also in Boston, Austin, TX, and Boise, ID. Scientific research has spurred economic growth in the Research Triangle area of North Carolina.

But high-tech and biotech are not the only examples of successful industry clusters. Other successful industry clusters, past and present, include the conglomeration of financial companies in New York, shipping and transportation companies in Chicago, auto manufacturing in Detroit, movie studios in Los Angeles, oil companies in Houston, pharmaceutical companies in New Jersey, thoroughbred horse racing in Lexington, KY, steel companies in Pittsburgh, and dairy farming in Wisconsin.

Even without the efforts of economic development organizations, agricultural producers and food processing companies would form an economic cluster in the Mississippi River Region, even if it were informal. There are other such clusters in the Region, both formal and informal.

The most prominent cluster of industries in the MRRPC Region is the Equipment and Metal Manufacturing Association (EMMA). This industry cluster consists of over 150 companies, which employ more than 10,000 workers in the Region. These manufacturers of equipment, metals, machinery, electrical equipment, appliances, and other such products represent more than a third of all manufacturers in the Region – indicating that manufacturing is still a major part of the Region's economy. EMMA is a formal organization, organized by the MRRPC, Workforce Connections, XCEL Energy, Western Technical College, Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center of the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and member companies in surrounding areas, including northeastern Iowa and southeastern Minnesota.

Another major cluster of companies involves the wood and forest product industries. There are over 100 businesses in the Region that are mostly involved in wood products manufacturing.

The Mississippi River Region is also home to a cluster of health care institutions, which are becoming a source of strength primarily for the economy in the metropolitan La Crosse area. In 2004, more than 18,000 jobs (9.5% of the Region's total employment) were in this cluster. One example of the medical-care cluster forming is the establishment of the Health Science Center in 2000. This consortium of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Viterbo University, Western Technical College, Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, and Franciscan Skemp Healthcare combines health care practice with education and research efforts, and serves a 24-county area in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Two major hospitals in La Crosse, Gundersen Lutheran and Franciscan Skemp, are state-of-the-art facilities providing critical treatment in such areas as cancer and emergency care. This cluster also includes Logistics Health Inc., a private firm that works closely with the federal government and large corporations like Wal-Mart to provide medical care for military and civilian personnel and the distribution of vaccines.

2. Why Create an Agribusiness and Food Processing Industry Cluster Organization?

Low Income Levels in the Region

Despite having unemployment rates that are typically lower than the State and Nation, the Mississippi River Region's income levels are significantly below the State and Nation. In 2007, the unemployment rate was estimated at 4.3% in the Mississippi River Region, while it was 4.9% for the State of Wisconsin and 4.6% for the nation (see Table 1).

Table 1. Mississippi River Region 2007 Unemployment Rate					
Area	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	
Buffalo	8,256	7,909	347	4.2	
Crawford	9,745	9,238	507	5.2	
Jackson	9,883	9,347	536	5.4	
La Crosse	64,600	62,172	2,428	3.8	
Monroe	24,131	23,063	1,068	4.4	
Pepin	4,131	3,929	202	4.9	
Pierce	23,867	22,867	1,000	4.2	
Trempealeau	16,348	15,645	703	4.3	
Vernon	14,248	13,536	712	5.0	
MRRPC	175,209	167,706	7,503	4.6	
Wisconsin	3,093,763	2,948,131	145,632	4.7	
United States	153,124,000	146,047,000	7,078,000	4.6	

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Bureau of Workforce Training - Labor Market Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Query Results 2007, Query Results - Created on March 9, 2010,

http://WORKnet.Wisconsin.gov

Per Capita income in the Region in 2007 was \$29,814 compared to \$36,272 for Wisconsin and \$38,615 for the Nation. If the Region, with a 2007 population of 313,053, could reach the State of Wisconsin's per capita income level of \$36,272 it would generate more than \$2 billion more in additional income circulating through the various business sectors of the Regional economy (see Table 2).

Table 2. Mississippi River Region 2007 Per Capita Income			
Area	Per Capita Income (in Dollars)		
Buffalo	35,409		
Crawford	26,415		
Jackson	28,986		
La Crosse	32,853		
Monroe	28,211		
Pepin	29,940		
Pierce	31,609		

Table 2. Mississippi River Region 2007 Per Capita Income			
Area Per Capita Income (in Dollars)			
Trempealeau	29,775		
Vernon	25,128		
MRRPC Region	29,814		
Wisconsin state total	36,272		
U.S.	38,615		

Source: REIS, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce http://www.bea.gov/regional/docs/footnotes.cfm?tablename=CA1-3 Regional Economic Information System, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 'April 2009'

This low-income situation contributes to a Regional poverty rate being lower than the Nation, but higher than the State rate. According to a 2008 Census Report, all counties in the Region except Vernon County, with 14.4% of its population in poverty, had poverty rates below the National poverty rate of 13.2%. Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, and Monroe counties, with 12-13% of their populations in poverty, exceeded the State of Wisconsin poverty rate of 10.5% but were below the National rate. Trempealeau, Pierce, Pepin, and Buffalo counties all had poverty rates between 9.5 and 10.1%, which are below both the State and National poverty rates (see Table 3).

Table 3. Mississippi River Region 2008 Poverty Rates					
Area	Number in Poverty	Percent in Poverty	Number not in Poverty		
Buffalo, WI	1,351	10	13,510		
Crawford, WI	1,926	12	16,050		
Jackson, WI	2,360	12.6	18,730		
La Crosse, WI	12,868	12	107,233		
Monroe, WI	5,429	12.8	42,414		
Pepin, WI	697	9.7	7,186		
Pierce, WI	3,254	8.6	37,837		
Trempealeau, WI	2,610	9.6	27,187		
Vernon, WI	4,131	14.4	28,687		
MRRPC Region	34,626	11.3	298834		
Wisconsin state total	573,574	10.5	5,462,609		
U.S.	39,108,422	13.2	296,275,924		

Source: Census.gov - SAIPE - Counties in Wisconsin:2008

Loss of Knowledge-Based Workers to Other Regions

Unfortunately, the State of Wisconsin with its great post secondary education institutions routinely sees a net loss of college graduates, suffering a "brain drain" where more people with college degrees left the state than settled in it. A key challenge for the Region is to create a business climate where companies operate in an innovation-driven economy where businesses demand high-knowledge workers to compete globally.

Manufacturing is Still a Key Regional Economic Development Driver

Manufacturing remains an important element of the Regional economy. Even though manufacturing jobs in the Region have declined, as they have nation-wide, in the last decade, the rate of decline in the Region has been much less than in the rest of the state or the nation. Along with cost pressures that drive manufacturers to seek cheaper labor overseas, the manufacturing industries have also suffered from a negative reputation in terms of recruiting the needed workforce.

Why Create an Agribusiness and Food Processing Industry Cluster Organization?

It has grown harder to entice young workers to consider careers in manufacturing because of the prevailing idea that manufacturing is dirty, dangerous, low-paid, dead-end work. Manufacturers must do a better job of educating the public, and younger workers in particular, that modern manufacturing jobs often are high-paid and employ high-skilled people in fields such as engineering, mathematics, the sciences, software development, and law. These knowledge-based skills drive the modern world of manufacturing, and Regional companies will need to attract the best and brightest if they wish to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

The Region Has an Abundance of Productive Farmlands and a High Concentration of Food Manufacturing Companies

The relatively humid climate and high-quality silt and sandy loam soils in the Region make the area a good one for agriculture. Corn, alfalfa, soybeans, and oats are major crops that thrive in the conditions here. These same crops, with the exception of soybeans, are also highly suitable for dairy cattle. With such favorable conditions for agriculture, it is little surprise that farm products and food processing are major drivers of the region's economy. In the Mississippi River Region, more than 3500 employees work at over 85 companies in the food processing sector alone (see Map 1). In the 24 counties that make up Northeast Iowa, Southeast Minnesota and Western Wisconsin, 1,279 companies exist in the Agribusiness, Food Processing, and Technology cluster, according to the Indiana Business Research Center. These companies employ 15,614 workers, and pay out \$527 million annually in wages (see Table 4).

County State	Number of	Number of	Wages Paid
Allamakee County IA	41	181	\$5 939 819
Clayton County IA	55	531	\$16 765 321
Delaware County IA	50	341	\$11 844 137
Dubuque County IA	74	956	\$35 568 214
Favette County IA	66	589	\$19,904,872
Winneshiek County, IA	54	328	\$8,790,692
Fillmore County, MN	74	351	\$10.277.152
Goodhue County, MN	82	898	\$33.924.905
Houston County, MN	25	184	\$4,749,617
Olmsted County, MN	59	1,746	\$73,794,124
Wabasha County, MN	46	818	\$24,734,721
Winona County, MN	89	1,126	\$40,032,743
Buffalo County, WI	36	502	\$14,845,171
Crawford County, WI	21	152	\$2,511,593
Grant County, WI	117	1,346	\$41,700,964
Jackson County, WI	48	264	\$9,410,163
Juneau County, WI	33	321	\$11,315,762
La Crosse County, WI	42	1,151	\$37,420,195
Monroe County, WI	76	1,167	\$37,244,040
Pepin County, WI	18	170	\$7,024,266
Pierce County, WI	37	368	\$10,654,741

Table 4.	Agribusiness,	Food Processing,	and Technology	Cluster
Employe	rs, Employees	, and Wages, 2008		

County, State	Number of Companies	Number of Employees	Wages Paid
Richland County, WI	31	692	\$26,125,046
Trempealeau County, WI	59	1,060	\$32,791,745
Vernon County, WI	46	372	\$9,770,631
Total	1,279	15,614	\$527,140,634

 Table 4. Agribusiness, Food Processing, and Technology Cluster

 Employers, Employees, and Wages, 2008

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (all USA counties and States); Indiana Business Research Center (Indiana regions); and Purdue Center for Regional Development (cluster definitions).

This sector's competitive advantage is the efficient provision of both crops and milk from the nearby productive farmlands. In the 24-county 7 Rivers Region (which includes Allamakee, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, and Winneshiek Counties in Iowa; Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties in Minnesota; and Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon Counties in Wisconsin), the Agribusiness, Food Processing, and Technology industry cluster ranks highly in three important categories (see Table 5). Compared to other industry clusters, Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology is fourth in the number of people employed and in wages paid, and is third in number of companies in the industry.

Industry	Number of Companies	Number of Employees	Wages Paid
Advanced Materials	387	2,255	\$84,292,760
Agribusiness, Food Processing & Technology	1,279	15,614	\$527,140,634
Apparel & Textiles	145	1,358	\$41,306,319
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Vistor Industries	907	8,488	\$168,072,659
Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences)	822	31,481	\$2,079,623,286
Business & Financial Services	2,422	11,010	\$515,748,888
Chemicals & Chemical Based Products	285	3,265	\$142,146,110
Defense & Security	525	5,024	\$241,708,865
Education & Knowledge Creation	645	19,644	\$656,637,691
Energy (Fossil & Renewable)	1,716	11,487	\$364,511,471
Forest & Wood Products	664	6,505	\$232,116,452
Glass & Ceramics	114	506	\$20,502,345
Information Technology & Telecommunications	798	3,305	\$181,724,715
Transportation & Logistics	929	7,866	\$311,734,872
Manufacturing Supercluster	451	19,117	\$916,179,281
Primary Metal Mfg	24	783	\$25,794,434
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg	206	6,787	\$279,579,334
Machinery Mfg	126	8,669	\$484,769,708

Table 5. Employers, Employees, and Wages in 24-County 7-Rivers Region*, 2008

Industry	Number of Companies	Number of Employees	Wages Paid	
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg	43	2,063	\$89,468,309	
Electrical Equipment, Appliance & Component Mfg	20	422	\$23,184,855	
Transportation Equipment Mfg	32	390	\$13,382,641	
Mining	40	25	\$804,341	
Printing & Publishing	424	6,191	\$245,592,754	
Total All Industries	24,130	418,625	\$15,035,139,530	
* The 7 Rivers Region includes Allamakee, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, and Winneshiek Counties in Iowa;				

Table 5. Employers, Employees, and Wages in 24-County 7-Rivers Region*, 2008

* The 7 Rivers Region includes Allamakee, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, and Winneshiek Counties in Iowa; Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties in Minnesota; and Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Richland, Trempealeau, and Vernon Counties in Wisconsin.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (all USA counties and States); Indiana Business Research Center (Indiana regions); and Purdue Center for Regional Development (cluster definitions).

The Region Efficiently Serves the "Circle City"

The Mississippi River Region is part of a larger "Circle City," as identified by landscape architecture professor Philip Lewis. According to his theory, constellations of large cities are connected in rings, which surround areas that produce invaluable natural resources. One such ring, or Circle City, extends from Chicago through Milwaukee to Green Bay, across Wisconsin through Eau Claire to Minneapolis-St. Paul, through Cedar Rapids to the Quad Cities, and across Illinois to complete the ring at Chicago (see Map 3). This area contains over 20 million people. Lewis points out that inside this ring is a vast area of productive farmlands and scenic natural landscapes that must be protected in order for the Circle City surrounding it to thrive. Lewis's prescription is to curtail urban sprawl, so that growth in the Circle City does not threaten the productive capabilities as farmland or scenic attractions for tourists – such as through haphazard development patterns – they would lose their economic value, and would contribute to economic decline for the Circle City surrounding them. Therefore, Lewis's theory places a high importance in preserving farmlands and scenic natural landscapes, and the agribusiness and food processing industry cluster works toward this goal. By strengthening these industries, the area's farmlands can remain productive and economically viable, reducing the incentive for farmers to develop their land for other purposes that would endanger the competitive advantage of the agriculture and food processing companies within the circle to serve it efficiently.

The Region is Fortunate to Be at the Heart of the Organic Farming Industry

Organic farming is another key contributor to Region's agribusiness and food processing activities. Continued consumer interest in organic farming has led some experts to estimate a growth rate of 20% or more in this industry in the coming decade. The growth in this industry can be seen in the success of the Coulee Region Organic Produce Pool (CROPP). Headquartered in La Farge in Vernon County, CROPP is in the midst of a concentration of organic farms (see Map 2). CROPP sells its products under the nationally known Organic Valley brand, and the co-operative's success has allowed it to grow and invest almost \$9 million in improvements to its operations in the last six years.

Despite challenges to traditional crop and dairy farming, local farmers have adapted by exploring other markets. Some have enjoyed success by engaging in direct-to-consumer production, as well as community-supported agriculture. Organic farming is a growth area within the agricultural sector, and organic farmers in the Mississippi River Region are encouraged and supported by Organic Valley Finally, some growers have explored more exotic (for Wisconsin) agricultural products: not only have goats and sheep become more popular for milk and cheese production, but wine grapes have even been tried with some success.





Map 3 Circle City Urban Pods Efficiently Served by its Interior Agricultural and Food Processing Industries



An Agribusiness and Food Processing Industry Cluster Meets the Requirements Established by the U.S. Council on Competitiveness

The U.S. Council on Competitiveness is a non-profit gathering of business, labor, and higher education leaders who collaborate on policy efforts directed at increasing and maintaining the United States' competitive position in the manufacturing, technology, and financial industries. With changing circumstances in the world economy, the Council on Competitiveness focuses on policy recommendations that will help American businesses thrive in the face of increased global competition. Industry-based cluster development is an area of development that the Council recommends. The Council identifies the following guidelines to establish and grow successful clusters:

- 1. Inventory your assets What are we good at? What do we have that people want?
- 2. Build on strengths Leverage what we already have, rather than trying to build from scratch something that works elsewhere (think of textile areas that moved into Gore-Tex production).
- 3. Invest in research New ideas fuel innovation.
- 4. Build the talent K-12, colleges, and other training are important in high-value industries.
- 5. Make capital available for investment.
- 6. Strengthen the infrastructure.
- 7. Create connections Get creative people together (in institutional or informal groups) so they can exchange ideas.
- Identify private-sector champions Business leaders know the obstacles that will need to be overcome; they can lend important business sense to economic development plans; and projects led by business leaders tend to face less political opposition.
- 9. Think economically, not politically That is, clusters will tend to develop without regard to municipal boundaries, so everyone must avoid thinking of his or her jurisdiction first.
- 10. Take the long view These efforts take time, require patience, and must be able to outlast the outcome of the next election.

In seeking to establish a formal industry-based cluster in the Mississippi River Region, the agriculture and foodprocessing cluster presented itself as an obvious choice. It is a cluster that takes advantage of the Region's agricultural assets and builds on the Region's strengths, not least of which is the presence of many thriving food-processing companies. Food processing and agribusiness constitute a cluster of knowledge-based industries that have the most number of firms and the most number of employees in the Region: Over 85 firms, totaling 3224 employees. Examples of food-processing companies in the MRRPC Region are Bakalars Sausages, Century Foods, City Brewery, Foremost Farms, Gold'n Plump, Great River Milling, Kwik Trip, La Crosse Milling, Land O Lakes, Main Street Ingredients, NuPak, Ocean Nutrition, Organic Valley, Pepsi La Crosse, Rochdale Co-Opreneurial Group, Westby Co-Op Creamery, and Whitehall Specialties.

While agriculture has long been an important part of the MRRPC Region's economy, it has also proven to be innovative and dynamic in recent years. In 2001, a group of 21 growers in the Region began planting grapevines as part of a demonstration project to determine the feasibility of growing grapes commercially in Western Wisconsin. In September of 2004, a number of growers in the project reached a milestone when they processed a batch of grapes with their own press. The juice was then sold to a local wine maker. In 2006, two growers opened a winery in Vernon County, selling five varieties of wine. Another nontraditional agricultural practice for Western Wisconsin is goat and sheep herding for milk production. Nevertheless, it is a growing segment of the agriculture in the state. While goat and sheep milk production is dwarfed by the state's annual cow milk production (27.6 million pounds of goat and sheep milk, compared to 2.5 billion pounds of cow milk), the growth of the industry is encouraging for the MRRPC Region, especially with the potential for value-added products like cheese and yogurt. Clearly agriculture and food processing were a good pick for the establishment of an industry cluster not only because the companies in those industries were already present in the MRRPC Region; the innovation and dynamism of these industries also made them attractive for building a formal industry cluster.

3. The Process of Forming the Food Resource and Agribusiness Network (FRAN) Industry Cluster

Willingness of Regional Economic Development Organizations and Institutions to Partner

As noted, informal industry clusters often develop spontaneously where the components of related companies, suppliers, and institutions exist. The direction and focus of a formal industry cluster organization is often desirable, though, since it can make the efforts of the member organizations more efficient and effective – which is, after all, the ultimate goal of cluster developments. Formal cluster organizations require the willingness of companies in complementary lines of business to partner and cooperate with each other, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, and public sector entities. Since the economy of a region operates beyond the artificial boundaries of municipalities, a regional organization is most helpful in establishing a formal industry-based cluster.

The agricultural and food-processing industry cluster in the Mississippi River Region grew out of MRRPC's stated goal of organizing an economic development partnership with the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Western Technical College, the University of Wisconsin-Stout EDA Center, and Regional economic development organizations. Through one-on-one discussions, joint meetings, telephone conversations, and e-mail communications, the MRRPC received support from the member organizations to partner with each other to assist in creating a formalized regional industry cluster to maximize private and public resources and improve the competitive advantage of this regional economic development driver.

The first meeting of this cluster was on December 4, 2007. The next meeting was on August 7, 2008. Since that time, meetings have grown more frequent. Meetings have been held on:

- September 25, 2008
- November 11, 2008
- January 14, 2009
- March 10, 2009 (teleconference on transportation)
- March 11, 2009
- April 15, 2009
- August 13, 2009
- October 15, 2009
- December 10, 2009
- February 4, 2010

Currently, there is a standing expectation of a FRAN meeting once every two months. Kwik Trip in La Crosse has hosted these meetings, and has recently provided a large conference room to accommodate a guest speaker for the network. Companies that have participated in at least one of these meetings include: Nu Pak, Bakalars Sausage, Kwik Trip, Century Foods, Main Street Ingredients, Ocean Nutrition, Foremost Farms USA, CROPP/Organic Valley, Gold'n Plump, City Brewery, Westby Co-Op Creamery, Whitehall Specialties, and La Crosse Milling.

Deciding on Joint Ventures

FRAN members have explored several opportunities for joint ventures. The first survey of members to determine what projects might interest them was conducted in the summer of 2008. At the August 7, 2008, meeting, the results of this survey were discussed. Possibilities included the joint purchases of corrugate, plastic, styrofoam, and stretch wrap; finding excess warehouse capacity; finding a use for excess eggs; and finding a source of ice. There was a consensus that training was a need for all member companies, that it would be an appealing recruitment item for companies that were not yet participating in this industry cluster's activities, and that this should be the initial joint venture of the industry cluster. Western Technical College offered to survey the membership to determine what training was most in demand.

The Process of Forming the Food Resource and Agribusiness Network (FRAN) Industry Cluster

Surveys

The first survey conducted by FRAN was to determine the level of interest Regional companies had in joining an industry-based cluster. Surveys were mailed to companies in the region inquiring about participating in a industry cluster initiative (see Appendix A). Six companies responded to the survey (see Appendix B). In addition to identifying the products they made, excess capacities they had, and training or production needs (see *Explanation of Joint Ventures and Excess Capacity*, below), the companies commented on what they found most attractive about being members of a cluster. A majority liked the prospects of:

- Networking
- Cost-sharing and resource-pooling on education, training, and workforce development
- Joint job recruiting and employment advertising
- Joint ventures and contractual relationships with other similar companies in the region through use of each others excess capacity to maximize use of machinery, equipment, vehicles testing facilities, warehousing/storage

These six companies emerged as willing to serve on a steering committee to assist in cluster organization. These company representatives are from:

- Bakalars Sausages, Inc., of La Crosse, WI
- Century Foods, Inc., of Sparta, WI
- Gold'n Plump, Inc., of Arcadia, WI
- Kwik Trip, Inc., of La Crosse, WI
- NuPak, Inc., of Praire Du Chien, WI.
- Ocean Nutrition, Inc., of Arcadia, WI

These company representatives met on August 7, 2008. Century Foods and Kwik Trip, along with City Brewery and Organic Valley, have formed a core group of enthusiastic participants in this industry cluster's activities. These companies in particular have demonstrated a high level of interest in leading the group as it moves forward.

One result of this survey was the assembling of a database of agribusinesses and food processors in the MRRPC Region. In order to send the survey to appropriate recipients, the MRRPC identified more than 80 businesses, which were assembled in a database (see Appendix C).

The second major survey conducted by FRAN concerned the training that member companies would like to pursue jointly. In August of 2008, Western Technical College sent a survey to 41 food-processing companies regarding training needs. Sixteen companies responded to the survey. The most commonly expressed interest in joint training included:

- Ammonia
- Arc Flash
- Basic Electricity
- Electrical Safety
- Food Safety
- Machine Maintenance
- OSHA 10 hour
- Plant Safety

Less frequent, but notable, responses showed an interest in:

- Chemical Safety
- Fire Safety
- Forklift
- Fertilizing Handling

- GMP
- HAACP
- HVAC Systems
- Pneumatics/Hydraulics

FRAN began to investigate funding these joint training programs with grants from the US Department of Labor or the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. These grant applications would fare better if they were packaged as a industry cluster project with both public and private sector investment participation. FRAN members also agreed that Western Technical College should work on tailoring training programs to meet the greatest needs of all industries completing the surveys.

The third major survey conducted by FRAN involved the shrink-wrap recycling program. In April of 2009, FRAN members agreed that a shrink-wrap recycling route should be investigated first and asked the MRRPC to put together a simple email questionnaire and to email it out to companies asking what companies were interested in such a program, and how many pounds per week each company generated. Surveys were sent to 16 companies, seven of which responded. Two of the respondents were not significant producers of shrink-wrap for recycling. The other five respondents reported a total of 5,500 pounds of shrink-wrap per week (see Appendix D). The FRAN members were then able to contact various recycling operations about their pricing structures and thus determine whether the joint shrink-wrap recycling program was viable. By December 2009, FRAN members had decided on a trial membership with Midwest Recycling Association, which is a broker that seeks out the best price on recyclables for its clients.

Explanation of Joint Ventures and Excess Capacity

The intent of FRAN is for the companies to cooperatively organize, research, plan, and strategize through the formal organization of an industry cluster. Surveys and strategy sessions among the membership early in the formation of the cluster identified the following priorities and opportunities for cooperation¹:

Networking:

• development of website to facilitate networking

Savings/Efficiencies:

- corrugate: investigate volume discounts
- equipment
- machinery
- testing facilities
- transportation fuel: avoiding empty backhauls, exploring consolidation/combination of routes
- vehicles
- warehousing/storage

Cost-Sharing and Resource-Pooling:

<u>Raw Materials Needed</u>: companies might see significant price reductions through shared volume purchases

- beef
- cheese
- corrugated boxes
- dextrose
- fish oil
- flour

¹ In the interest of not revealing potentially sensitive company information, the information gathered in the surveys and strategy sessions has been aggregated to protect the anonymity of the individual companies.

- foam trays
- gelatin
- ham
- juice
- milk
- packaging film
- sodium ascorbate
- sodium phosphate
- sugar
- turkey

Excess Capacity Offered:

- auger feeds
- bakery
- band seals
- cartooning
- commissary
- copy center/print shop
- corrugated boxes
- cup fillers
- dairy
- dicers
- display building
- foam trays
- food testing laboratories
- fuel tankers
- ice plant
- liquid processing tanks
- meat packing equipment
- packaging film
- refrigerated transportation
- research and development facilities
- shredders
- slicers
- spray dryer
- trucks
- vertical and horizontal form fill seal machines with scales
- warehousing

Resources and Services Needed:

- blow molding
- packaging
- pathogen testing labs
- storage, including temperature-controlled
- transportation of raw materials
- warehouse space

Education and Training Offered:

• audit capabilities

- computer maintenance
- good manufacturing practices
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)
- leadership
- lean manufacturing
- meat cutting
- portion control
- quality assurance
- sanitation

Education and Training Needed:

- ammonia system annual certification and arc flash welding
- electrical safety
- fall protection/ladder safety
- food safety
- general maintenance
- HVAC systems
- lean manufacturing
- machine operator certification
- maintenance
- maintenance and computer
- OSHA 10-Hour
- pneumatics/hydraulics
- sales and warehousing
- Six-Sigma

Joint Venture Interests:

- baked goods
- blow molding
- consolidation of freight transportation and warehousing
- dairy
- finding use for eggshells and banana peels
- manual pack labor
- organic product development
- private label manufacturing
- processing, purchasing, and packing ready-to-eat meats and cheeses
- providing custom-label bottled water
- purchasing eggs
- selling bulk ice
- selling excess eggs

The preceding list stimulated a discussion of joint ventures and excess capacities among FRAN members. The project that generated the most interest was transportation sharing to reduce costs. One company reported excess back-hauling capacity on their trucks that other companies might find useful. Another company reported a similar situation, but also expressed the need to involve purchasing and transportation-logistics departments in order to structure routes and timing. A third company was also interested in transportation since the company buys cheese in South Dakota, processes it, and sells it in Chicago. The companies involved in this strategy session agreed that after training initiatives were more formalized, Transportation and Logistics would be a worthwhile subject area to investigate for future joint ventures, due to rising energy costs. On March 10, 2009, several FRAN members held a conference call to discuss

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possible joint ventures on transportation. The transportation venture evolved to combine with the shrink-wrap recycling program, since both involved mapping of routes and assembling of full truck loads and less-than-truckloads.

4. FRAN Initiatives

FRAN's Shrink-Wrap Recycling Program Is Underway

The Network began its ongoing investigation of a shrink-wrap recycling program with a survey of member companies in April of 2009. The MRRPC sent out a simple email questionnaire asking which companies were interested in such a program and how many pounds of shrink wrap they generated per week (see Appendix D).

Participants in this program would reduce significant waste-disposal costs and contribute to environmental improvement by keeping the shrink-wrap out of the landfill. Furthermore, they would realize some income from sale of shrink-wrap. Shrink-wrap is one of the best-paying recyclables, and this project could be a money-maker for FRAN members, rather than just a cost-savings. One company, for example, once paid \$1200 a month for waste disposal. Then the company started selling its shrink-wrap for recycling. The company now only pays \$400 a month for disposal of its other waste, plus gets about \$160 for the recycled shrink-wrap. That comes to \$1920 a year in recycled shrink wrap revenue, in addition to yearly savings on waste disposal of \$9600 (\$800 times 12 months). This revenue stream could benefit all companies in the Network. Not only would they reduce significant waste-disposal costs and realize some income from sale of that waste, but they will also contribute to environmental improvement by keeping the shrink-wrap out of the landfill and the reuse of it as recycled materials.

Considering only the six companies who have so far signaled commitment to this effort, the numbers are encouraging. The 143 total tons of shrink-wrap these companies produce every year would yield about \$57,000 in revenue from recyclers. That is in addition to the money saved by not having to pay a waste handler to dispose of the shrink-wrap.

The FRAN network met December 10, 2009, to listen to a presentation from Midwest Recycling Association (MRA) on how this nonprofit organization works as a broker to get municipalities the best value from their recyclables. MRA currently contracts with more than 20 municipalities to get the best possible price for their recyclables, which typically come from curb-side collections. These municipal collections are usually low-volume, so the individual municipalities would be penalized on the open market for such small amounts. The MRA was formed in 1990 to combine these municipal efforts, consolidate shipments, and thus maximize the value of the recyclables for the municipalities. The MRA is a nonprofit organization, so it can offer its services to any other organization, whether in the private, public, or nonprofit sectors. It is membership-driven and membership-supported. The MRA offers a reduced fee (\$15 per month) for the first year of membership. The MRA will work with any type of recyclables, and will seek out the best possible price for them. Each shipment of shrink-wrap would need to be clean and baled. Sometimes cardboard and shrink-wrap could be combined in one shipment.

MRA would need to get the contact information from the participating companies. They would then contact MRA when they thought they had a combined truckload of baled shrink-wrap. MRA would find a buyer for the shrink-wrap and give the quote to the participating FRAN companies. They would either approve that quote or ask MRA to try to find a better price (if they had heard of other buyers paying more, for example). Once the participating companies agree to a buyer's price, they would arrange for the shrink-wrap to be picked up. They should also weigh it, if at all possible. MRA would get the payment from the buyer, and would then send a check to each of the participating companies. This process can be completed with a few phone calls or emails. It is simple, and requires no contracts.

Some FRAN members wondered if the shrink-wrap would be picked up on a set schedule, and all the participating companies would get a load ready for that date. Others suggested that the participating companies would just have to experiment with the best way to arrange pick-ups. Once-a-month pick-ups might work well, but it is also possible that it would be best to wait until all the participating companies have loads ready to go. MRA said it is flexible and able to adjust to the needs of the participating companies.

The FRAN members who are participating in this shrink-wrap recycling program met by phone on January 21, 2010, to discuss their steps moving forward. They decided on a six-month trial membership with MSA.

Fran Initiatives

The FRAN Website Is in Development

The website design effort began in earnest in the late summer of 2008, when the MRRPC began the first stages of designing a FRAN website. This mainly involved determining what elements would be included in the website, such as company information, cluster marketing, FRAN membership applications, and interactive elements (message boards, blog comments, etc.). During the September 25, 2008, meeting, FRAN members reviewed the draft of the website. They promised to consult with their own marketing and web-design staffs to get input for further development of the FRAN website. Subsequent ideas for the website included a trucking and transportation element, which would allow member companies to coordinate opportunities for shared shipments and deliveries. FRAN members discussed how open the website should be – that is, how much information should be accessible by web users, and how much should be protected by passwords and accessible only by FRAN members. At the August 13, 2009, meeting, FRAN members decided that the website should remain open and unsecured for the most part, because FRAN would benefit from exactly that open exchange of information. It is up to the Network members to make sure sensitive information is not released to be put on the website. At this same meeting, the members decided that the MRRPC should put together a proposal for the website, contact potential developers, and meet with them to discuss options for moving forward.

After identifying ten likely web designers, the MRRPC sent them requests for proposals. FRAN received proposals for the website from six potential web designers. In reviewing the proposals, the FRAN membership narrowed the field to the top three candidates, who were invited in for interviews. FRAN members, a representative from Workforce Connections, and MRRPC staff conducted these interviews. After consideration of the best balance of price, functionality, and simplicity of design, Gathering Waters Design, Inc., emerged as the winner. The FRAN group expects a website that will include member-interaction functions, such as a bulletin board and comments to blog postings, as well as allowing FRAN website administrators to edit the site themselves (i.e., without incurring a maintenance fee from Gathering Waters) all for about \$5000.

At the December 10, 2009, FRAN meeting, Gathering Waters provided a few pages that were mock-ups of what the website would look like (see Appendix E). As currently envisioned, the site would have a message board and/or blog comments behind the password protection, but more such areas of the site could be added. Gathering Waters plans to build the site using Adobe Contribute, which will allow FRAN to maintain the site itself. Workforce Connections offered to maintain the site for a trial period, after which FRAN could decide whether or not to continue with that arrangement.

Gathering Waters explained that the menu down the left side of the page allows it to grow over time. Using the right side of the page for announcements gives the site a lot of flexibility. Using the top of the page for photos and FRAN member companies' logos gives the entire site consistency and continuity from page to page. One of the mock-ups featured a strip of photos that would change every few seconds. These photos can be stock photos that are easily available, but FRAN companies should also think about supplying their own material.

FRAN members suggested that the website needed a geographical reference, to let users know where the FRAN group and its member companies operated. Gathering Waters agreed to add this graphic element. FRAN members also wanted the addition of a FRAN logo. Since FRAN did not yet have an official or generally accepted logo, Gathering Waters agreed to come up with some basic ideas for a FRAN logo. The same committee that dealt with selecting the website design firm provided input to create the FRAN logo. Gathering Waters then submitted a questionnaire to the FRAN member companies to gather certain basic information that would be important to include on the website (see Appendix F).

FRAN Continues to Explore Joint Training Initiatives

In August of 2008, Western Technical College sent a survey to 41 food-processing companies regarding training needs. Sixteen companies responded to the survey. The most common interest in joint training included: Ammonia, Food Safety, OSHA 10 hour, Machine Maintenance, Arc Flash, Electrical Safety, Basic Electricity and Plant Safety training. Other companies showed interest in Fire Safety, HVAC Systems, Pneumatics/Hydraulics, Fertilizing Handling, GMP, HAACP, Forklift and Chemical Safety training. Western Technical College then met one-on-one with companies who showed interest in the survey to determine specific training priorities and class sizes.

FRAN began to investigate paying for these joint training programs with grants from the US Department of Labor or the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. With assistance from Western Technical College, FRAN members Kwik Trip, Foremost Farms, Main Street Ingredients, Westby Coop Creamery, La Crosse Milling, and Organic Valley applied for a Workforce Advancement Training Grant for fall prevention, confined space, ammonia refrigeration, fire prevention-extinguisher training. The members pointed out the value of this project because it is training that OSHA requires, and cost savings accrue to all participants.

At the August 13, 2009, meeting, Western Technical College reported that the entire amount requested for the Workforce Advancement Training Grant was awarded, without any revisions. The grant covered \$45,000 of the project's \$84,000 cost. The training provided by this grant could be broken up into smaller sessions (a 20-hour course could be broken into four 5-hour sessions, for example). Western Technical College reported that being part of this industry cluster initiative probably aided in getting the grant. The training program was scheduled to last until June 30, 2010, at which point they expect 540 students to be participating in these specialized, demand-driven training programs. At the December 10, 2009, meeting, Western Technical College asked the FRAN membership if the group though it would be worthwhile for the college to apply for a similar grant in 2010. The answer was a resounding "yes," and Western Technical College agreed to survey FRAN members in early 2010 to determine which training programs they would find most useful.

With grant-writing assistance from Workforce Connections, Western Technical College received almost \$2 million from a U.S. Department of Labor Community Based Job Training Grant. This grant will be used to improve training resources for the Region's manufacturing workforce. The grant has been used so far to hire staff, begin computer numerically controlled machining (CNC) skills and welding training, and establish training curricula in industrial electronics maintenance, lean skills, and leadership in manufacturing. The training program is scheduled to last until February of 2012, and it has the following goals:

- Aligning the local Workforce Development Board for BEST's Manufacturing Academies and alternative populations
- Increasing Western Technical College's capacity to provide advanced training in welding, CNC, and Industrial Electronic Maintenance, augmenting the output of Skilled Certificate-holding graduates
- Increasing industry partner productivity by developing and offering LEAN training, Manufacturing Skills Standards Certificate (MSSC)
- Create experimental activities and articulated programming for K-12 youth to promote manufacturing and integrate with career pathways and BEST Academies.

The Superintendent of Sparta Schools attended the October 15, 2009, meeting, and reported on the Mathematics and Science Partnership Grant. He commented that they have several business partners and are looking for more to help achieve the goals of this grant, which are to:

- 1. Provide professional development in math and science content to sixty teachers
- 2. Increase student achievement in mathematics and science
- 3. Provide professional development in evidence-based practices, including contextual teaching and learning strategies, differentiated instruction, balanced assessment, and technology integration to sixty teachers
- 4. Align each of the six Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum projects with WMAS in Mathematics and Science
- 5. Develop an integrated curriculum project for each of the six STEM-related career clusters
- 6. Build strong collaborative relationships among K-12, higher education, and business partners that will foster sustainability of grant activities after the grant funding has ended

FRAN members have identified other topics to investigate for further cooperative efforts at training programs. Forklift training, combustible dust, OSHA compliance, food safety/security, and energy savings were areas in which FRAN members though would be beneficial to seek training. At the August 13, 2009, meeting some members suggested that at future meetings the Network should try to get guest speakers that present on topics of interest to all, such as Food

Fran Initiatives

Safety – Homeland Security requirements. One idea that stimulated much interest was getting an OSHA compliance officer to speak and share his or her expertise. Kwik Trip has worked very hard to schedule just such a speaker, and FRAN looks forward to a presentation on emerging issues for food processing companies, given by Leslie Ptak of OSHA, at the February 4, 2010, meeting.

FRAN Will Prepare a Strategic Plan in 2010

In early 2009, FRAN members indicated an interest in a new State of Wisconsin Industry Sector Training Grant, which could be useful for emerging industry-cluster initiatives like FRAN. This program could help FRAN organize, prepare a strategic plan, conduct research on a given project, and provide training funds. At the April 15, 2009, meeting, Workforce Connections reported that State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development provided a seed grant that would suit these purposes of organizing th industry cluster and developing a strategic plan for it. There would be no match or financial outlay needed to obtain these funds, and Workforce Connections would be the applicant. FRAN members were unanimous in supporting this effort.

FRAN's application for the grant expressed three goals:

- 1. Forming the group, and incorporating if necessary
- 2. Developing short-term plans for entry-level workforce
- 3. Developing sustainability and strategic plans.

At the October 15, 2009, meeting, Workforce Connections reported that it received four industry sector training grants targeting Food Processing, Equipment and Metals, and Health Care and Biocomposites. Three of these industries are currently Regional economic drivers, and Biocomposites hopefully will become an important industry in the future because of its potential for value-added products. This grant of about \$16,000 can be used to provide FRAN with more capacity to develop as an organization. Examples of eligible uses for the grant are website design, marketing materials, meetings, speakers, and strategic planning.

At the December 10, 2009, meeting, FRAN members voted unanimously to conduct a strategic plan. UW-Stout's EDAfunded Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center has conducted these in the past, and they cost about \$1000. FRAN members will discuss the process at the February 4, 2010, meeting. The next stages in the process – individual consultation with FRAN companies, sending out a survey, and a half-day or day-long session to plan the process with 10 or 12 companies and set an agenda – will likely begin in March. The final product of this effort would be a planning document.

FRAN Has Completed a Database of Company Contact Information to Assist Networking and Cluster Development

The first survey conducted by FRAN was to determine the level of interest Regional companies had in joining an industry-based cluster. Surveys were mailed to companies in the Region inquiring about participating in a industry cluster initiative (see Appendix A). One result of this survey was the assembling of a database of agribusinesses and food processors in the MRRPC Region. In order to send the survey to appropriate recipients, the MRRPC identified more than 80 businesses, which were assembled in a database (see Appendix C). A data base regarding company contact information, plant and equipment excess capacity, plant and equipment needs, training available on a contract basis, training needs and joint venture interests has been developed with several companies providing information so far (see Appendix B).

Works Cited

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Montana, Jennifer, et al. Strategic Planning in the Technology-Driven World: A Guidebook for Innovation-Led Development. US Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration. 2001.

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Appendix A: Initial Agriculture and Food-Processing Industry Cluster Survey

Food Resource and Agribusiness Network (FRAN) Industry Cluster Survey

Thank you for your interest in helping us investigate forming a Food Resource and Agribusiness Network or industry cluster organization. To assist investigating this concept it is important that this initiative meet your company's needs. This survey has been developed to help do that by identifying talent, equipment, training, and technology resources that you and other companies have. These resources can be used to develop networks of innovation and joint ventures with other regional companies and organizations that can improve your company's competitive advantage. Your survey responses will help set direction for this potential new organization that is being investigated for the purpose of making this cluster of industries more profitable and globally competitive.

Please provide your opinion on concepts on relating to forming an organized FRAN industry cluster group based on the following five-point scale:

1 = (Of Least Importance	2 = Not Important	3 = Neutral Opinion	4 = Important	5 = Very Important
1. Networking and soci	alizing with other compa	ny representatives in	the FRAN industry clust	er:	·····
2. Cost sharing and res companies (potential	ource pooling on educa Ily with state and federa	tion, training and work I grants):	force development initia	atives with other regi	onal FRAN
3. Developing joint job	recruiting and employme	ent advertising initiativ	es with other regional F	RAN industries:	·····
 Developing joint ven excess capacity to m treating facilities, res 	tures and contractual re naximize use of: machine earch and development	lationships with other ery, equipment, vehicl labs and warehousing	regional FRAN industrie es, testing facilities, trar g or storage facilities:	s through use of each sportation facilities,	ch others'
5. Please describe the	products your company	makes			
6. Please describe the	major raw materials nee	ded to manufacture y	our products		
7. Please describe any warehouse facilities tha	of your company's mac It you would consider m	hinery, equipment, ve aking available to othe	hicles, treating facilities, er regional FRAN indust	testing facilities, R & ries through a contra	& D facilities, transportation – ictual arrangement.
8. Please describe any have a need for and are	machinery, equipment, e interested as a contra	vehicles, testing facili tee with other FRAN	ies, treating facilities, R industries in the Region	& D facilities, transp	ortation – warehouse facilities that you
9. Please describe any industries through a co	of your company's work ntractual relationship.	force education and t	raining programs you we	ould consider making	g available to other regional FRAN
10. Please describe an companies or regional	y workforce education a education institutions the	nd training programs rough a contractual ar	you have a need for and rangement.	I would like to develo	op or cost share on with other FRAN
11. Please describe an	y joint ventures you are	interested in pursuing	with other industries or	institutions in the rea	gion.
Company Name:		Addı	ess:		City:
Zip Code:	Telephone:		E-Mail:		Web Site:
Your Company's key co	ontact person regarding	this survey and future	FRAN Industry Cluster	initiatives:	
Name				L-Iviali	
Thank you for completing th Suite 435, La Crosse WI 54 and you will soon receive da	e survey! If you have any que 601. T: 608.785.9396 E: greg ata on other companies that c	stions please contact Greg @mrrpc.com. You will be in ompleted the above survey	Flogstad, Director, Mississipp vited to the next industry clust to assist you with one on one	i River Regional Planning ter meeting where cluster joint ventures and netwo	Commission, 1707 Main Street, wide joint ventures will be discussed rking.

Appendix B: Results of Initial Agriculture and Food-Processing Industry Cluster Survey

Agriculture and Food Processing (AFP) Industry Cluster Cost Sharing, Resource Pooling and Joint Venture Opportunity Survey Results The following are the results of a survey that was mailed out to companies in Western Wisconsin that are involved in manufactuing some form of food product and rejy on the region's agricultural base for raw materials. The pupose of the survey was to determine interest companies have in investigating joint venture opportunities among one another to help improve their competitive advantage through industry cluster initiatives. Industry cluster initiatives would also involve support from regional economic development organizations and education institutions if requested. The overall goal of industry cluster based economic development is for the private sector to identify what is needed to improve their competitive advantage and the public sector supporting their initiatives where possible. Examples of industry cluster based economic development is haved opprendit professional development is for the private sector to identify what is needed to improve their competitive advantage and the public sector supporting their initiatives where possible. Examples of industry cluster based economic development initiatives include: networking, professional development, shared employee training costs, buying and selling each others excess capacity, supply chain and new product joint ventures. These survey results are the start in identifying potential initiatives. 1 = of least

	Question 1:	Question 2:	Question 3:	Questic	on 4:	Question 5: Please describe the	Question 6: Please describe	Question 7: Please Describe	Question 8: Please describe	Question 9: Please describe	Question 10: Please	Question 11: Please describe
	Networking and socializing with other AFP compo- representatives i the region.	Cost sharing an resource poolin any on example in training and workforce workforce initiatives with other AFP companies in th region.	 d Developing joi g job recruting; g advertising advertising initiatives with comparies in1 region. 	int Develop and venture contract relation compar- the region the responding use of n each of warehoi etc.	ping joint se and tual ships with ships with milar in the ines in the seccess through use of through use of through seccess of the through seccess acchinery, ent, vehicles, facilites, using/storage	products your company makes.	the major raw materials needed to manufacture your products.	any of your company's machinery, euclipment, webicles, facilities that you would consider making available to other AFP industries through a contractual arrangement.	any machinery, equipment, vebicles, factine that you have a need for and are interested as a contractee with other AFP industries in the Region.	any of your company's workforce accention and training programs you would consider making available to other AFP industriss through a contractual relationship.	describe any workdorce describe any workdorce programs you have a need for and would like to develop or cost to develop or cost to develop or cost through a contractual inducties or regional inducties or regional inducties or regional arrangement.	any joint ventures you are nereased in pursuing with the region. In the region.
Manufacturer*	1 2 3 4	5 1 2 3 4	5 1 2 3 4	- 2	2 3 4	0						
Company 1		-				Wholesale meat products	Beef, pork, poutiny, cheese, corrugated boxes, packaging film, trucks, diesel	We could manufacture products under a private label agreement.	Possibly contract packaging.	HACCP training - portion control/meat cutting expertise	Sales/Warehouse training	Ne would be interested in any type of private label manufacturing.
Company 2	*-	-			-	Dairy food supplements, blended and instantized ingredients, ready to drink food products.	Dairy commodities, dextrose, corrugate.	R&D and Micro laboratories	Warehouse, pathogen testing labs, blow molding	Lean manufacturing training	Machine operator certification program	7ganic product development, blow nolding, manual pack labor

requested. The overall goal of development initiatives include	f industry clust	ter based	econd nal de	velona	levelo	pment	t is for	r the p	orivate trainin	sector to identify what is need	ded to improve their competi- ich others excess renacity is	tive advantage and the pu	blic sector supporting theil	r iniatives where possible. I	Examples of industry in identifying notenti	r cluster based economic al initiatives 1 = of least
important, 2 = not important, 3	= neutral opinic	on, 4 = im	portar	nt, 5 = 1	very ir	mporta	ant.									
	Cuestion 1: Networking and socializing with other AFP compile representatives in the region.	Quest Cost si resount resount not training infrativ compart compart region.	ion 2: haring a cepooli g and ree vree vree vree vree vree vree vree	and Developeration of the contract of the cont	rection recruit ployme vertsing abres 1 plon.	3: ing joint and with s in the	Que Devin Comparate contrelation contrelation comparate	setion 4 eloping tures an tractual fibring ar simila a simila panies of mach ponent, ng facilit ponent, shousing	: joint r in the ugh use s' excest hinery, vehicles ties,	Curetion 5: Please descrite the transformed to the comparty makes. I of the comparty makes. I of the comparty makes and the comparts of the co	a Question 6: Please describe the major raw materials medical to manufacture your products.	Question 7: Please Describe any 4: vehicles, requipment, vehicles, realignent would consider making available to chinr A:P would consider making would consider making would consider making contractives through a contractive through a	Question 8: Please describe any machiner, equipment, vehicles, facilities fat you have a need far and are interested as a contracter with other AFP industries in the Region.	Question 9: Please describe I and r'your ongany's workforce el dompany's training programs you would training programs you would context PP Industries Innough a contextual relationship.	Question 10: Please describe any workfore a describe any workfore a descript any our have a programs you have a to develor crant work to develor crast and any any of the ducatives or regional ducatives or regional and any of the and any of the any of th	Juestion 11: Please describe Invited Viamite's your are invited for pursuing with other industries or institution's other industries or institution's of the region.
		F	E	f	F	E	F	Ŀ	Ę							
	1 2 3 4	5 1 2	3	- 2	2	4	2	7	4	5						
Company 3		-	-		-				-	Foulty processor - Food service and old products and associated product products and associated product and associated and associated and associated and associated and associated	Com, sopkean medi, fuel, electricity, s comuçated: plastic film, learn trays, stanfoss equipment	Parch ased commodities- complated toxic, packaging film, loan tryst, watehousing and transportation of rating-rated goods.	Warehousing storage of dry goods, impresentine controlled scircus, transportation controlled scircus, transportation controlled storage, 45 to 70 degrees ontholide storage, 45 to 70 degrees F, with valiel level dock areas. Reinigerated rubdood transportation,	-	Maintenance training	Urchase of excess erga scholing 7 Channes ergine arehousing and rafrigated arehousing and rafrigated profunities. Also have ergos that are not used for haiching that may are value
Company 4		-	-		-					Mit, Ibe Cream, Julice, Cockles, Norus, Broad, Brus, Picza, Salads, Sandwither, Bouliad Water, Ioo, Swe I Breads, Multins, Hard Boliad Peeled Eggs	Flow, milk, sugar, water, deli meat, douttroodes, juce, plasto films, et	Food testing lab, All distratuion centeridelivery trucks, fuel tankers, bakiery.commissary, dairy, copy center print shop, los plant.	Cpen to most any	None	Certification, Arc Flash p	ind use for egghsells, banaria eels, purchase eggs, sell bulk ice, covide custion labeled small run ottles of water opeachinarutacure for most ambody out our dairykee fantitoomnissaryb akery
Company 5	~		-		-				~	USDA & FDA portion packages (phouhes), processing of chocses (phreding, cubing, packaging),processing of medy to ea meas (phoing, stoing, pouching), procision scaling and fquid fill	Block cheese (#40 to #580 blocks), has & Mrkwy, etchern bgs for dioing and story, extrer USDA of a medy hour metis, freese died meats, powdered flavor biends.	20 vertical form fill seal machines with scales, suprised reds, cup filters, 2 horizontal for fill seal machines, catcoring, display building, band seals, slicers, shredders, drens.		OX, HACCP, Sanitation, Audit and the samployee training programs, SMPs, Isadeship training	 C-> Both ways, mainfenance, computer c 	rocessing, purchasing, packaging Mrady-to-eat (RTE) meats and theeses.
Company 6		-	-		-				~	Microencapsulated fish oil powder	Fish ol, gelatin, sodium polyphosphate, sodium ascorbate	Spray dryer, liquid processing lanks			General mainten ance training.	
Totals	2	4	1 4	-	5		-		4	2						
* In the interest of not revealing potentially	sensitive company in	normation, th	he FRAN	V member	ts who p.	articipate	led in this	s prograr	m have b	con given generic names, and the informa	tion gathered in the surveys and strategy	y sessions has been edited to protect	t the anonymity of the individual comp	Janies.		

Agriculture Opportunity Survey Results The following are the results of a survey that was malled out to companies in Westem Wisconsin that are involved in manufacturing some form of food product and rely on the region's agricultural base for raw materials. The pupose of the survey was to determine interest companies have in investigating olioit venture opportunities among one another to help improve their compatitive advantage through industry cluster initiatives. Industry cluster initiatives would also involve support from regional economic development organizations and education institutions if

Appendix C: Database of Agriculture and Food-Processing Businesses in the MRRPC Region

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Food Processing Manufacturers Database

Buffalo County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

EAGLES PEAK PROCESSING

W999 County Road NN Mondovi,WI 54755 Telephone: (715) 946-3988 Email: Website: NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Animal (except po

Animal (except poultry) Slaughtering

LA CROSSE MILLING CO.

5th Ave. & Hwy. 35, PO Box 86 Cochrane,WI 54622 Telephone: (608) 248-2222 Email: Imc@mwt.net Website: HTTP:\\www.lacrossemillin NAICS: 311119 Products Produced: Oat processing

NELSON CHEESE CO.

N237 S. Main Street, PO Box 82 Nelson,WI 54756 Telephone: (715) 673-4725 Email: nelsoncheese@nelson-tel.net Website: http://www.nelsoncheese.co NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese

SPF NORTH AMERICA INC.

428 S. Washington St. Mondovi,WI 54755 Telephone: (715) 926-3841 Email: Website: NAICS: 311111 Products Produced: Pet food ingredients & flavorings

GREAT RIVER ORGANIC MILLING

118 S. Main Street, PO Box 185 Fountain City,WI 54629 Telephone: (608) 687-9580 Email: contact@greatrivermilling.com Website: http://www.greatrivermilling. NAICS: 311211 Products Produced: Whole grain cereals & flour

LAKESIDE FOODS

457 Canal St. Mondovi,WI 54755 Telephone: (715) 926-5075 Email: Website: http://www.lakesidefoods.co NAICS: 311421 Products Produced: Canned snap beans

PECK N LOG USA

849 E Main Street Mondovi, WI 54755 Telephone: (715) 926-4966 Email: Website: NAICS: 311119 Products Produced: Other Animal Food Manufacturing

Crawford County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

EARTH FIRE PRODUCT COMPANY

302 Grove Street Gays Mills,WI 54631 Telephone: (608) 735-4711 Email: Website: NAICS: 311221 Products Produced: Wet Corn Milling

KICKAPOO LOCKER SERVICE

325 Main Street Gays Mills,WI 54631 Telephone: (608) 735-4140 Email: Website: NAICS: 311612 Products Produced: Meat Processed from Carcasses slicing

SOUTHWESTERN WIS DAIRY GOAT 310 Diagonal St., PO Box 104

310 Diagonal St., PO Box 104 Mount Sterling,WI 54645 Telephone: (608) 734-3151 Email: mtsterlingcoop@centurytel.net Website: http://www.buygoatcheese. NAICS: 311513

Products Produced: Goat cheese

EASTMAN LOCKER

107 North Eastman,WI 54626 Telephone: (608) 874-4331 Email: Website: NAICS: 311611 Products Produced:

Animal (except poultry) Slaughtering

NU-PAK

PO Box 126 Prairie du Chien, WI 53821 Telephone: (608) 326-0547 Email: Website: http://nu-pak.com/index.html NAICS: 311999 Products Produced: Packagir

Packaging with cheese shredding, meat

Jackson County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

A-C MEAT & LOCKER CO.

120 N. Church Street Alma Center, WI 54611 Telephone: (715) 964-5781 Email: Website: NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Meat Processing

LAND O 'LAKES

2 Leeson Way Black River Falls,WI 54615 Telephone: (715) 284-8871 Email: Website: NAICS: 311119 Products Produced: Animal milk replacer

FOREMOST FARMS U S A

W12215 Cty. Hwy. FF, PO Box 111 Alma Center, WI 54611 Telephone: (715) 964-7411 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced:

Cheese processing

SAND CREEK BREWING COMPANY

320 Pierce St., PO Box 187 Black River Falls, WI 54615 Telephone: (715) 284-7553 Email: Website: http://www.sandcreekbrewi NAICS: 312120 Products Produced: Beer

La Crosse County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

BAKALARS BROS. SAUSAGE CO., INC.

2219 South Ave., PO Box 1943 La Crosse,WI 54602 Telephone: (608) 784-0384 Email: Bakalars@centurytel.net Website: http://www.bakalarssausag NAICS: 311612 Products Produced: Sausage processing & frozen foods

CITY BREWING CO., INC.

1106 S. 3rd St. La Crosse,WI 54601 Telephone: (608) 785-4200 Email: Website: NAICS: 312120 Products Produced: Beer

GREAT LAKES CHEESE OF WISCONSIN, INC.

2200 Enterprise Ave. La Crosse,WI 54603 Telephone: (608) 781-2800 Email: glcinfo@greatlakescheese.com Website: http://www.greatlakeschees NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese products

KWIK TRIP BAKERY

2306 Commerce Street La Crosse,WI 54601 Telephone: (608) 781-8988 Email: Website: http://www.kwiktrip.com NAICS: 311812 Products Produced: Commercial Bakery

LINDA'S SALEM BAKERY INC.

W3436 US Hwy 16 West Salem,WI 54669 Telephone: (608) 786-1818 Email: Website: NAICS: 311812 Products Produced: Bakery Products

PEARL STREET BREWERY

1401 Saint Andrew Street La Crosse,WI 54603 Telephone: (608) 784-4832 Email: Website: www.pearlstreetbrewery.com NAICS: 312120 Products Produced: Brewery

BRICK OVEN BAKERY OF WISCONSIN, INC.

3316 Commerce St. La Crosse, WI 54601 Telephone: (608) 783-7600 Email: Website: NAICS: 311812 Products Produced:

Bakery products - Breads, pastries & cakes

CRAIG'S MEATS & CATERING

N9064 St. Rd. 162 Mindoro,WI 54644 Telephone: (608) 486-2212 Email: Website: http://craigsmeats.com NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Meat processing

HOLMEN LOCKER SERVICE

412 Main St., PO Box 132 Holmen,WI 54636 Telephone: (608) 526-3112 Email: Website: http://holmenmeatmarket.co NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Meat processing & packaging

KWIK TRIP/DAIRY

1626 Oak Street La Crosse,WI 54603 Telephone: (608) 781-8898 Email: Website: http://www.kwiktrip.com NAICS: 311511 Products Produced: Fluid Milk Manufacturing

MAIN STREET INGREDIENTS

2340 Enterprise Ave., PO Box 1628 La Crosse,WI 54603 Telephone: (608) 781-2345 Email: info@mainstreetingredients.com Website: http://www.msing.com/ NAICS: 311514 Products Produced: Dairy products

PLEASONING SEASONINGS

2418 South Ave., PO Box 2701 La Crosse,WI 54602 Telephone: (608) 787-1030 Email: pleason@pleasoning.com Website: http://pleasoning.com NAICS: 311942 Products Produced: Low sodium food seasonings

La Crosse County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

RANISON ICE CREAM AND CANDY

706 16th Street South La Crosse,WI 54601 Telephone: (608) 782-1987 Email: Website: NAICS: 311520 Products Produced: Ice Cream and Candy

SWEET-SHOP

1113 Caledonia St. La Crosse,WI 54603 Telephone: (608) 784-7724 Email: Website: NAICS: 311340 Products Produced: Candy & ice cream

WIS-PAK, INC.

3239 Airport Rd. La Crosse,WI 54603 Telephone: (608) 783-0610 Email: Website: http://www.wis-pak.com/ NAICS: 312111 Products Produced: Carbonated beverages/soft drinks, food service/institutional package

SARA LEE BAKERY GROUP

334 5th Ave. S., 334 5th Ave S La Crosse,WI 54601 Telephone: (608) 782-8488 Email: Website: NAICS: 311999 Products Produced:

Croutons, stuffing mix & crumb products

SWISS VALLEY FARMS, INC.

W3959 Cty. Rd. D Mindoro, WI 54644 Telephone: (608) 857-3422 Email: Website: http://www.swissvalley.com NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Blue cheese

Monroe County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

CENTURY FOODS INT'L LLC

400 Century Court Sparta,WI 54656 Telephone: (608) 269-1901 Email: Website: http://www.centuryfoods.co NAICS: 311514 Products Produced: Dry, Condences, and Evaporated Dairy Product Manufacturing

COULEE COUNTRY WINES

916 St. Anne Street Sparta,WI 54656 Telephone: (608) 784-4177 Email: Website: NAICS: 312130 Products Produced: Wine

whole and skim milk

reconstituted skim milk

K & K CHEESE

S510 County Hwy D Cashton,WI 54619 Telephone: (608) 654-5580 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese Manufacturing

OCEAN SPRAY CRANBERRIES, INC.

28171 Essex Ave. Tomah,WI 54660 Telephone: (608) 372-7824 Email: Website: NAICS: 311411 Products Produced: Cranberry processing

VAN WYCHEN WINES, INC.

3365 Auger Rd Warrens,WI 54666 Telephone: Email: Website: NAICS: 312130 Products Produced: Wine

WISCONSIN HILL & VALLEY CHEESE

R.R. 3, Box 94-A Cashton,WI 54619 Telephone: (608) 654-5411 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese products

CLIFFSTAR CORP.

Rt 2, 204 Church Street Warrens,WI 54666 Telephone: (716) 366-6100 Email: Website: NAICS: 311421 Products Produced:

Fruit and Vegetable Canning

FOREMOST FARMS U S A

427 E. Wisconsin St., PO Box 111 Sparta,WI 54656 Telephone: (608) 269-3126 Email: Website: NAICS: 311514 Products Produced:

Whey protein powder, buttermilk powder,

powders, condensed milk products, cream,

MARS PETCARE US INC.

411 Martin Ave. Tomah,WI 54660 Telephone: (608) 372-3000 Email: Website: NAICS: 311111 Products Produced: Pet food

PASTURE PRIDE CHEESE LLC

S510 County Road D Cashton,WI 54619 Telephone: (608) 654-5580 Email: Website: http://www.pastureprideche NAICS: 311513 Products Produced:

Cheese Manufacturing

VPP GROUP, INC.

19081 Hwy. 71 E., PO Box 256 Norwalk,WI 54648 Telephone: (608) 823-7445 Email: vpp@centurytel.net Website: NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Meat processing

Pepin County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

DURAND BAKERY

112 W Main Street Durand,WI 54736 Telephone: (715) 672-8780 Email: Website: NAICS: 311812 Products Produced: Bakery Products

THE MBP CO. LLC

1220 Hardy St., PO Box 9 Durand,WI 54736 Telephone: (715) 672-8911 Email: Website: NAICS: 311514 Products Produced: Instant non-fat dry milk

EAU GALLE CHEESE FACTORY, INC.

N6763 St. Hwy. 25 Durand,WI 54736 Telephone: (715) 283-4276 Email: info@eaugallecheese.com Website: http://eaugallecheese.com/ NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese processing

Pierce County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

BEST MAID COOKIE CO., INC.

1147 Benson St. River Falls, WI 54022 Telephone: (715) 426-2090 Email: customerservice@bestmaid.com/ Website: http://www.bestmaid.com/ NAICS: 311821 Products Produced: Cookies

ELLSWORTH CO-OP CREAMERY, INC.

232 N. Wallace, PO Box 610 Ellsworth,WI 54011 Telephone: (715) 273-4311 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese, whey powders & butter

NAT'L NUT CO OF AMERICA LTD

411 N Industrial Ellsworth,WI 54011 Telephone: (715) 273-5231 Email: Website: NAICS: 311911 Products Produced: Roasted Nuts and Peanut Butter Manufacturing

PIERCE COUNTY MEATS

460 E. Wall Street Ellsworth,WI 54011 Telephone: (715) 273-4741 Email: piercecountymeats@yahoo.com Website: http://www.piercecountyme NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Meat processing Purchased Chocolate

SAILER'S FOOD MARKET & MEAT PROCESSING, INC.

600 W. Winter Ave., PO Box 35 Elmwood,WI 54740 Telephone: (715) 639-2191 Email: Website: NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Meat & sausage processing

WATKINS LOCKER INC.

130 Pine Street Plum City,WI 54761 Telephone: Email: Website: NAICS: 311612 Products Produced:

Meat Processed from Carcasses

DEATON NUTRITION

N4852 County Road C Ellsworth,WI 54011 Telephone: (715) 273-3739 Email: Website: NAICS: 311119 Products Produced:

Other Animal Food Manufacturing

KAUFOLDS KURD'S INC.

440 N. Maple Street Ellsworth,WI 54011 Telephone: (715) 273-3561 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese

NESTLES PURINA PET CARE CO

N1725 805th Street Hager City,WI 54014 Telephone: (715) 792-2106 Email: Website: NAICS: 311111 Products Produced: Dog and Cat Food Manufacturing

RIVER CHOCOLATE CO LLC

203 County Road U, PO Box 289 River Falsl,WI 54022 Telephone: (715) 273-3731 Email: Website: NAICS: 311330 Products Produced: Confectionary Manufacturing from

SPRING VALLEY BAKERY

232 S. McKay Avenue Spring Valley,WI 54767 Telephone: (715) 778-5904 Email: Website: NAICS: 311812 Products Produced: Bak

Bakery Products

WESTERN WISCONSIN DRIED PRODUCTS

E866 210th Ave. Elmwood,WI 54740 Telephone: (715) 639-5404 Email: Website: NAICS: 311514 Products Produced: Dried milk

Trempealeau County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

ASSOCIATED MILK PRODUCERS, INC.

220 Center & Main Sts., PO Box 6 Blair, WI 54616 Telephone: (608) 989-2535 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese & whey powder

COUNTRYSIDE LEFSE LLC

1101 E. Broadway Blair,WI 54616 Telephone: (608) 989-2363 Email: Website: NAICS: 311991 Products Produced: Lefse

FOUR SEASONS FARM SUPPLIES

Box 218, 3rd Ave. S., PO Box 218 Strum,WI 54770 Telephone: (715) 695-2618 Email: Website: NAICS: 312120 Products Produced: Beer chicken, rotisserie chicken

INDEE MEAT & LOCKER SERVICE

23553 Adams Independence,WI 54747 Telephone: (715) 985-3712 Email: Website: NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Animal (except poultry) Slaughtering

JEFF'S HEGG MILL

W12035 Cty. Rd. C Ettrick,WI 54627 Telephone: (608) 525-4545 Email: Website: NAICS: 311222 Products Produced: Dry extruded soybean products

NORSKE NOOK BAKERY

13804 7th Street Osseo,WI 54758 Telephone: (715) 597-3069 Email: Website: http://www.norskenook.com NAICS: 311811 Products Produced: Retail Bakery

CHIPPEWA VALLEY CHEESE

13918 5th Street, PO Box 292 Osseo,WI 54758 Telephone: (608) 343-4025 Email: Website: http://www.chippewavalleyc NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese Manufacturing

CRUST UNLIMITED

51020 Industrial Road, PO Box 684 Osseo,WI 54758 Telephone: (715) 597-2362 Email: Website: NAICS: 311999 Products Produced: Pizza crusts

GOLD'N PLUMP/ JFC INC.

209 N 3rd Street Arcadia,WI 54612 Telephone: (608) 323-2141 Email: consumer@goldnplump.com Website: http://www.goldnplump.com/ NAICS: 311615 Products Produced: Poultry processing - deli and food service

JADE SPRING ARTESIAN WATER, LLC

W16974 Holmen Road Osseo,WI 54758 Telephone: (715) 694-5223 Email: Website: NAICS: 312112 Products Produced: Br

Bottled Water Manufacturing

MYERS BAKERY

113 W. Main Street Arcadia,WI 54612 Telephone: (608) 323-7220 Email: Website: NAICS: 311811 Products Produced: Retail Bakeries

OCEAN NUTRITION (US) INC

501 S. Washington Street Arcadia,WI 54612 Telephone: (608) 323-2300 Email: info@ocean-nutrition.com Website: http://www.ocean-NAICS: 311999 Products Produced: Food and dietary supplements

Trempealeau County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

PAT & SONS, LTD.

 310 S. Nelson Dr.

 Arcadia, WI
 54612

 Telephone:
 (608) 323-2131

 Email:
 Website:

 NAICS:
 311611

 Products Produced:

Smoked sausage products, fresh meat counter, custom slaughter

STRUM LOCKER PLANT

128 5th Avenue Strum,WI 54770 Telephone: (715) 695-2602 Email: Website: NAICS: 311612 Products Produced: Meat Processed from Carcasses

WHITEHALL SPECIALTIES INC.

31620 Owen St., PO Box 677 Whitehall,WI 54773 Telephone: (715) 538-2326 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese processing

QUALITY MEATS

113 E. Main St. Arcadia,WI 54612 Telephone: (608) 323-3040 Email: Website: NAICS: 311611 Products Produced:

Meat processing & packing

TENBA RIDGE WINERY

N27857 Joe Coulee Road Blair,WI 54616 Telephone: (608) 525-2143 Email: Website: NAICS: 312130 Products Produced: Wine

WILDWOOD SPECIALITY FOODS INC.

11339 Main Street Trempealeau,WI 54661 Telephone: (608) 534-6644 Email: Website: NAICS: 311942 Products Produced: Spice and Extract Manufacturing

Vernon County Food Processing Product Manufacturers

CAKERY & BAKE SHOP LLC

807 S. Main Street Viroqua,WI 54665 Telephone: (608) 637-3400 Email: Website: NAICS: 311812 Products Produced: Bakery Products

MORNING GLORY FARMS

186A Madison Street Hillsboro,WI 54634 Telephone: (608) 489-2651 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Cheese processing

ORGANIC VALLEY FAMILY OF FARMS

One Organic Way La Farge,WI 54639 Telephone: (608) 625-3025 Email: Website: http://www.organicvalley.co NAICS: 311513 Products Produced: Organic dairy products, organic eggs, organic meat products, organic produce

VERNON VINEYARDS LTD

S3459 Dahl Road Viroqua,WI 54665 Telephone: (608) 634-6734 Email: Website: NAICS: 312130 Products Produced: Wine cheese

WESTBY LOCKER & MEATS

406 Main St. Westby,WI 54667 Telephone: (608) 634-4515 Email: Website: NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Meat processing

KEY INGREDIENTS LLC

1225 Nelson Parkway Viroqua,WI 54665 Telephone: (608) 637-3539 Email: Website: NAICS: 311119 Products Produced:

Other Animal Food Manufacturing

Creamery Butter Manufacturing

ORGANIC VALLEY CHASEBURG CREAMERY

203 S Main Street Chaseburg,WI 54621 Telephone: (608) 483-2104 Email: Website: NAICS: 311512 Products Produced:

PREMIER MEATS

E7342 Three Chimney Road Viroqua,WI 54665 Telephone: (608) 634-4900 Email: Website: www.premiermeats.biz NAICS: 311611 Products Produced: Meat Processing

WESTBY CO-OP CREAMERY

401 S. Main St. Westby,WI 54667 Telephone: (608) 634-3181 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced:

Cheeses, butter, sour cream & cottage

WHITEHALL SPECIALTIES

1402 County RD HH Hillsboro,WI 54634 Telephone: (608) 489-4482 Email: Website: NAICS: 311513 Products Produced:

Cheese & dairy products

Appendix D: Results of FRAN Shrink-Wrap Recycling Survey

Food Resource and Agribusiness Network (FRAN)

Shrink-Wrap Recycling Route

Survey Results		
Company*	Shrink Wrap Generated per Week	Company Comments on Shrink Wrap Recycling*
Company 1	No response	No response
Company 2	3000 lbs.	" interested"
Company 3	No response	No response
Company 4	No response	No response
Company 5	300 lbs. but outside immediate area	Could relocate its out-of-area shrink wrap to the Region for pick-up as part of this effort
Company 6	No response	No response
Company 7	2000 lbs.	"We are interested"
Company 8	N/A	"We do not have a need for the shrink wrap recycling"
Company 9	No response	No response
Company 10	No response	No response
Company 11	No response	No response
Company 12	N/A	Do not "generate any significant amount of waste shrink wrap"

* In the interest of not revealing potentially sensitive company information, the FRAN members who participated in this program have been given generic names, and the information gathered in the surveys and strategy sessions has been edited to protect the anonymity of the individual companies.

Food Resource and Agribusiness Network (FRAN)

Survev Results		
Company*	Shrink Wrap Generated per Week	Company Comments on Shrink Wrap Recycling*
Company 13	200 lbs.	Currently sell shrink-wrap for \$0.20/lb. At 800 lbs./month, that comes to about \$160/month for shrink wrap. The price the recycler pays for shrink wrap is best for full truck loads (FTLs), but the recycler picks up our shrink wrap at the same time as they pick up shrink wrap at local Walmarts. In this way, we are able to sell less than an FTL to the recycler. This combination of shrink wrap from multiple sources is a model that might be expanded. We would be willing to have a semi trailer at our distribution site that could wait until other companies could deposit enough shrink wrap to make an FTL, which could then be sold to the recycler. Splitting the payment fairly among individual companies would depend on how much shrink wrap they contributed to the FTL, and so this would require a tracking system. Shrink wrap is one of the best-paying recyclables, and this project could be a money-maker, rather than just a cost-savings for the companies involved. We once paid \$1200 a month for waste disposal. With the sale of shrink wrap for recycling, we now only pay \$400 a month for waste disposal, plus get about \$160 for the recycled shrink wrap revenue, in addition to yearly savings on waste disposal of \$9600 (\$800 times 12 months).
Company 14	No response	No response
Company 15	No response	No response
Company 16	No response	No response

* In the interest of not revealing potentially sensitive company information, the FRAN members who participated in this program have been given generic names, and the information gathered in the surveys and strategy sessions has been edited to protect the anonymity of the individual companies.

Appendix E: Sample Pages of the FRAN Website in Development



Example of Web Site

The following information is factual. Company names and contacts has been suppressed for confidentiality purposes. When website content is approved company contact information will be available on an open site for all to view. Go to www.frannetwork.org

Welcome to the Food Resource And Agribusiness Network "FRAN"

About FRAN	We are a network of agribusinesses working together to improve the competitive advantage of our businesses and the economy of our region.
Joint Venture Examples	We are a geographic concentration of similar companies that share common technology, markets, suppliers or workforce skills in Western Wisconsin, Eastern Minnesota and
Current News and Projects	Northeast Iowa.
Meeting Information	Our region with over 85 food processing manufacturers, a nationally renowned organic farming industry, 12,000 farms and 1.7 million acres in agriculture assessed lands provides great opportunities for joint ventures between suppliers, manufacturers, transporters, retailers
Resources Available from Companies	and consumers!
Resources Desired by Companies	Our joint venture initiatives are also often supported by regional economic development organizations and educational institutions because of the importance agriculture and food processing plays in our regional economy.
<u>Training Available from</u> <u>Companies</u>	
<u>Training Desired by</u> <u>Companies</u>	
Trucking-Transportation Opportunities	
Employment Opportunity Link	
<u>How to Join</u>	
Member Contacts	
For Further Information	
About FRAN Joint Ventures Projects Mee	ting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities. Employment Opportunities. How to Join Member Contacts Eor Further Information Home
Paraman mananan dan kanan kanan kanan kanan kanan dan kanan kanan kanan kanan kanan kanan kanan kanan kanan kan	

	Food Resource and Agribusiness Network
	JOINT VENTURE EXAMPLES
<u>Home</u>	The types of joint ventures that may be pursued by firms, companies, and organizations within the FRAN network are listed below. These ventures may be one-on-one initiatives, several companies or organizations working together, or a network wide venture.
About FRAN Joint Venture	 Jointly acquiring raw materials (inputs) for quantity discounts Development of supply chain management efficiencies for inputs and products produced
Examples Current News and Projects	 Development of plant and once production encices into (cean manufacturing, court once, or once, or
Meeting Information	 supervisory positions Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system training Developing mutually beneficial industry cluster contracts between industries and public economic development organizations to maximize each industry's production capacity in terms of: floor space
Resources Available from Companies	machinery and equipment, laboratories, material and product testing services, research and development resources, transportation and warehousing services, information technology
Resources Desired by Companies	 Increase industrial park land and building inventory through public-private ventures Assist in expanding regional chapters, organizations, and education opportunities in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematic professions
Training Available from Companies	 Initiatives to improve image of manufacturing occupations as a career choice Joint health care insurance pooling and administration initiatives Energy conservation projects
Training Desired by Companies	 Joint marketing projects Pursuing federal, state, and private grants to assist in funding any of the above private market driven initiatives
<u>Trucking-</u> <u>Transportation</u> <u>Opportunities</u>	
Employment Opportunity Link	
<u>How to Join</u> Member Contacts	
For Further Information	
About FRAN Joint Ventures]	Projects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Iraining Available Iraining Desired Irucking-Iransportation Opportunities Employment Opportunities How to Join Member Contacts For Further Information Home

	Food Resource and Agribusiness Network	
	CURRENT NEWS AND PROJECTS	
Home	State of Wisconsin Workforce Advancement Training Grant Awarded: Western Technical College in conjunction with Company A, Company B, Company C and Company D will be cost sharing on employer training in the following areas: Fall protection, confined space, ammonia refrigeration, fire extinguisher ar	e nd fire
About FRAN	prevention. Training period is May-August 2009. Total grant: \$17,000, Total project: \$25,000. To find o more on this, contact: John Doe, t. 000.000.0000, e. johndoe@westerntc.edu.	ut
Joint Venture Examples	\$2 million Community Based Job Training Grant Awarded: Western Technical College through the g writing assistance of Workforce Connections was recently awarded a Community Based Job Training Gra	grant ant.
Current News and Projects	The proceeds of this grant will be used to: Develop manufacturing academies and alternative student populations; develop educational pathways for new entry level workers; develop alternative credentialing options; provide more advanced training in welding, CNC machine, and industrial and electronic mainten	iance;
Meeting Information	work with employers to develop LEAN manufacturer training modules; develop Leadership in Manufacturer Certificate. Training period is February 2009-February 2012. For further information on how your compart	ing ny and
Resources Available from Companies	employees can participate in this \$2 million training, contact: John Doe, Western Technical College, t. 000.000.0000, e. johndoe@westerntc.edu.	
Resources Desired by Companies		
<u>Training Available</u> from Companies		-
<u>Training Desired by</u> <u>Companies</u>		
<u>Trucking-</u> Transportation Opportunities		
Employment Opportunity Link		
How to Join		
Member Contacts		
For Further Information		anana mirananan
About FRAN Joint Ventures E	Crojects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities Employ Opportunities How to Join Member Contacts For Further Information Home	yment

	Food Resource and Agribusiness Network
	RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM COMPANIES
Home	The following is a list of companies that have expressed interest in providing their resources to others in the region on a contractual basis:
About FRAN Joint Venture	Company A: P.O. Box 111, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 000.000.0000 Resources Available: Sausage manufacturing equipment that can be used to manufacture sausage under a private label agreement.
Examples	Den D. D. D. 1990, Annuch and Mill 000000, Telephones 444 444 4444
Current News and Projects	Resources Available: Research and development facilities and micro-laboratories.
Meeting Information	Company C: P.O. Box 333, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 222.222.2222 Resources Available: Purchase commodities - corrugated boxes, packaging film, foam trays, warehousing and
Resources Available from Companies	Company D: P.O. Box 444, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 444.444.4444
Resources Desired by Companies	
Training Available from Companies	
<u>Training Desired by</u> <u>Companies</u>	
<u>Trucking-</u> Transportation Opportunities	
Employment Opportunity Link	
How to Join	
Member Contacts	
For Further Information	
About FRAN Joint Ventures F	Projects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities Employment Opportunities How to Join Member Contacts For Further Information Home

	Food Resource and Agribusiness Network
(19.200)	
	RESOURCES DESIRED BY COMPANIES
Home	The following is a list of resources that companies have a desire for from other companies in the region on a contractual basis.
About FRAN	Company A: P.O. Box 111, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 000.0000 Resources Desired: Contracting with other companies for packaging.
Joint Venture Examples	Company B: P.O. Box 222, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 111.111.1111
Current News and	Resources Desired: Warehouse space
Projects	Company C: P.O. Box 333, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 222.222.2222 Resources Desired: Warehousing storage of dry goods, temperature controlled storage, transportation
Meeting Information	consolidation for inbound raw materials.
Resources Available from Companies	Company D: P.O. Box 444, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 444.7444.4444 Resources Desired: Open to most anything.
Resources Desired by Companies	
Training Available from Companies	
Training Desired by Companies	
<u>Trucking-</u> Transportation Opportunities	
Employment Opportunity Link	
How to Join	
Member Contacts	
For Further Information	
About FRAN Joint Ventures F	rojects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities Employment Opportunities How to Join Member Contacts For Further Information Home

	Food Resource and Agribusiness Network
an soo converse the ball of the source of	TRAINING AVAILABLE FROM COMPANIES
Home	The following is a list of companies that have expressed interest in providing their training programs to others in the region on a contractual basis.
About FRAN	Company A: P.O. Box 111, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 000.000.0000 Training Available: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) training.
<u>Joint Venture</u> Examples	Company B: P.O. Box 222, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 111.111.1111
Current News and	Praining Available: Lean Manufacturing training available on a contractual basis.
Meeting Information	Training Available: Quality Assurance (QA), HACCP, sanitation, audit capabilities, employee training programs, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), leadership training and computer maintenance training on a
Resources Available from Companies	contractual basis.
Resources Desired by Companies	
<u>Training Available</u> from Companies	
<u>Training Desired by</u> <u>Companies</u>	
<u>Trucking-</u> <u>Transportation</u> <u>Opportunities</u>	
Employment Opportunity Link	
How to Join	
Member Contacts	
For Further Information	
About FRAN Joint Ventures F	Projects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities Employment Opportunities How to Join Member Contacts For Further Information Home

	Food Resource and Agribusiness Network
	TRAINING DESIRED BY COMPANIES
Home	The following is a list of training programs that companies have a desire for with other companies in the region on a contractual basis.
About FRAN	Company A: P.O. Box 111, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 000.000.0000 Training Desired: Sales and warehouse training.
Joint Venture Examples	Company B: P.O. Box 222, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 111.111.1111 Training Desired: Machine operator certification program.
Projects	Company C: P.O. Box 333, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 222.222.2222 Training Desired: Maintenance training.
Meeting Information Resources Available from Companies	Company D: P.O. Box 444, Anywhere, WI 00000, Telephone: 444.444.4444 Training Desired: Ammonia System Annual Certification and Arc Flash training.
Resources Desired by Companies	
Training Available from Companies	
<u>Training Desired by</u> <u>Companies</u>	
<u>Trucking-</u> Transportation Opportunities	
Employment Opportunity Link	
<u>How to Join</u>	
Member Contacts	
For Further Information	
About FRAN Joint Ventures F	Projects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities Employment Opportunities How to Join Member Contacts For Further Information Home

	Food Resource and Agribusiness Network
	Trucking-Transportation Opportunities
Home	The following are listings of trucking and transportation services and needs of companies participating in the FRAN Network. If you can make use of these transportation services or possibly fulfill a need please use the contact information below to pursue this opportunity.
About FRAN	
Joint Venture Examples	Company C: P.O. Box 333, Anywhere, WI 00000. Contact John Doe Jr.: 222.222.2222, johndoejr.@anywhere.com
Current News and Projects	 Have excess capacity 53' refrigerated trailer - Route: On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays there is a morning route from Green Bay to Anywhere, Wisconsin. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays there is a morning route from Milwaukee to Anywhere as well as Madison to Anywhere. On Monday
Meeting Information	 and Friday there is a morning route from Wisconsin Rapids to Anywhere. We generate 8-10 bales of cardboard each week and one bale of plastic shrink wrap every other week.
Resources Available from Companies	Anyone else interested in a joint recycling truck route for higher quantity pricing?
Resources Desired by Companies	johnsmithjr@anywhere.com
Training Available from Companies	 with a pick up or delivery at our company. We have a rail dock that is under utilized. Would any other companies entertain the idea of brining in loads by rail and using our rail dock if there would be a savings?.
<u>Training Desired by</u> <u>Companies</u>	We have small amounts of freezer space periodically. Is anyone interested in this space?
<u>Trucking-</u> <u>Transportation</u> <u>Opportunities</u>	
Employment Opportunity Link	
How to Join	
Member Contacts	
For Further Information	
About FRAN Joint Ventures E	Projects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities Employment Opportunities How to Join Member Contacts Eor Further Information Home

Food Resource and Agribusiness Network		
Employment Opportunities		
Home	The following are links to FRAN network companies' websites where job openings may be posted.	
About FRAN	Company A: www.CompanyA.com	
<u>Joint Venture</u> <u>Examples</u>	Company B: www.CompanyB.com	
	Company C: www.CompanyC.com	
Current News and Projects	Company D: www.CompanyD.com	
Meeting Information		
Resources Available from Companies		
Resources Desired by Companies		
Training Available from Companies		
Training Desired by Companies		
<u>Trucking-</u> Transportation Opportunities		
Employment Opportunity Link		
How to Join		
Member Contacts		
For Further Information		
About FRAN Joint Ventures Projects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities Employment Opportunities How to Join Member Contacts For Further Information Home		

Food Resource and Agribusiness Network		
HOW TO JOIN		
Home	Membership in FRAN is open to manufacturers, businesses, educational institutions, and other organizations who have an interest in helping to make the Agriculture and Food Process Industry in western Wisconsin,	
About FRAN	eastern Minnesota, and northeast lowa more globally competitive and prosperous.	
Joint Venture Examples	If you are interested in becoming a member of FRAN please complete the member survey and application. Both of these can be accessed below.	
Current News and Projects	FRAN Member Survey	
	FRAN Application	
meeting mornation		
Resources Available from Companies		
Resources Desired by Companies		
Training Available from Companies		
<u>Training Desired by</u> <u>Companies</u>		
<u>Trucking-</u> Transportation Opportunities		
<u>Employment</u> Opportunity Link		
How to Join		
Member Contacts		
For Further Information		
About FRAN Joint Ventures Projects Meeting Information Resources Available Resources Desired Training Available Training Desired Trucking-Transportation Opportunities Employment Opportunities How.to.Join Member Contacts For Further Information Home		

Γ

Food Resource and Agribusiness Network MEMBER CONTACTS Home Company A Contact: John Doe Wholesale meat **COMPANY A** P.O. Box 111, Anywhere, WI 00000 manufacturing and About FRAN Telephone: 000.000.0000 processing Email: JohnDoe@anywhere.com **Joint Venture** Examples COMPANY B Contact: John Smith **Current News and** P.O. Box 222, Anywhere, WI 00000 **COMPANY B** Dairy food products Projects Telephone: 111.111.1111 **Meeting Information** Email: JohnSmith@anywherecom **Resources Available** Company C Contact: John Doe Jr. from Companies COMPANY C P.O. Box 333, Anywhere, WI 00000 Deli products **Resources Desired** Telephone: 222.222.2222 Email: JohnDoeJr@anywhere.com by Companies Training Available Company D from Companies Contact: John Smith Jr. P.O. Box 444, Anywhere, WI 00000 Bread, buns, pizzas **COMPANY D** Telephone: 333.333.3333 Training Desired by Companies Email: JohnSmithjr@anywhere.com Trucking-Transportation **Opportunities** Employment **Opportunity Link** How to Join Member Contacts For Further Information About FRAN | Joint Ventures | Projects | Meeting Information | Resources Available | Resources Desired | Training Available | Training Desired | Trucking-Transportation Opportunities | Employment Opportunities | How to Join | Member Contacts | For Further Information | Home

Appendix F: Questionnaire from Gathering Waters, Inc., Concerning FRAN Members' Expectations for the Website



Web Site Development Questions

Purpose of Web Site

- What is the goal of your web site? (recruiting new business, providing information to 1. prospective business, providing basic information to public, resource for the public, etc.)
- 2. How are you going to measure its success? (number of visits to the site, new business found through the web site, etc.)
- 3. How do you expect the web site to impact your current business?

Target Audience

- Who is your primary audience for the web site? (existing business, new business, community) 1. 2.
 - Describe your current clientele for your business:
 - Business or Individual (% of each) a.
 - b. Location (number of miles from home office)
 - Income bracket c.
 - d. Age
 - Employee size e.
 - f. Education level
 - Career (professional, factory worker, farmer, etc % of each) g.
- 3. Describe who you would like to reach with your web site or the clientele you would like to have:
 - a. Business or Individual (% of each)
 - Location (number of miles from home office) b.
 - Income bracket c.
 - d. Age
 - Employee size e.
 - Education level f.
 - Career (professional, factory worker, farmer, etc % of each) g.

Web Site Content

- What type of information do you want included on your web site? 1.
- 2. How will visitors use this information?
- 3. What action do you expect from visitors after a visit to your web site?
- 4. Do you have specific information you would like to have clients access either by topic or by other criteria?

Competition

Conduct a few Google searches on your competition and see list who has web sites and their content List sites and observations:

Competitor Site (www.competitorsite.com)

- Home page
 - Likes 0
 - Dislikes 0
 - Notable Content 0
 - Main page 1
 - Likes 0
 - Dislikes 0
 - Notable Content
 - Main page 2
 - Likes 0
 - Dislikes 0
 - Notable Content 0

901 4th Street South P.O. Box 2556 La Crosse, WI 54602-2556

608.796.2376 Fax: 608.796.2379 www.gatheringwaters.com



Web Site Development Questions (continued)

- Etc.

Other questions about competitor or non-competitive sites that your like or dislike:

- 1. What immediately strikes you likes and dislikes
- 2. Thoughts on the organization/buttons,
 - a. What sections do you feel you need?
 - b. Where would you like to see the navigation buttons? Do you have a preference?
- 3. Is it easy to navigate and find what you are looking for
- 4. Too detailed?
- 5. Not detailed enough?
- 6. Overall thoughts.
- 7. Which sites did you like?
- 8. Which sites did you not like?

What key words would you use to search for a web site in your line of work? What key words would your best prospect use to find a business in your line of work?

901 4th Street South P.O. Box 2556 La Crosse, WI 54602-2556

608.796.2376 Fax: 608.796.2379 www.gatheringwaters.com

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