

Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler recently announced the creation of the Increasing Meat Production Efficiency and Capacity (IMPEC) grant program, administered by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

The \$10 million grant program is an effort to strengthen the meat supply chain and ensure consumers have adequate sources of protein. The program will also help counter limitations that occurred with fresh meat in the marketplace as consumers purchased more of their food from grocery stores because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Proposals are being sought for the program. The program can be for beef, pork, small ruminant and catfish processing facilities. Proposals should focus on stimulating the economy by increasing the capacity and efficiency of moving North Carolina produced meat from the farmer to the consumer.

The grant application and required forms can be downloaded at www.ncagr.gov. Applications must be postmarked by close of business on Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020

For more information concerning the program submission process, contact Allison Medlin at allison.medlin@ncagr.gov or at 919-693-2483.

Recipients shall provide matching funds for the grant in the amount of \$1 from non-grant sources for every \$2 provided by the grant. Matching funds of cash, in-kind services or donated goods and services must come from non-federal and/or state sources. Matching funds for this project may not be used as a match for any other federal or state cost-share project.

To ensure food security for North Carolina, the IMPEC initiative will address the vulnerability identified by this pandemic. The food animal industry represents about 70 percent of North Carolina's agricultural economy. This program will support that industry by increasing efficiency and capacity of local small-scale meat processing facilities that will benefit the livestock producers, processors and consumers to ensure an uninterrupted supply of wholesome North Carolina meat products.

"We have seen that consumers are eager to buy local and support North Carolina farms," Troxler said. "The Got to be NC program will help connect recipients of this grant with consumers across the country."