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# Meat Education and Training Grants

Grants for Secondary Career and Technical Education  
Meat Cutting and Butchery Programs

11/1/2025

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## Executive Summary

In 2024, the Minnesota Legislature provided funding through the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) program to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) for a second round of Meat Education and Training (MEAT) Grants. These grants help secondary schools establish or enhance meat cutting and butchery programs. The MDA released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in February 2025 and made awards in May 2025. This grant process built off a prior round of these grants offered in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. This legislative report outlines the process and the awards that were made.

## Background

During Minnesota's 2024 legislative session, the legislature appropriated \$225,000 in FY 2024 from the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) program for grants to secondary and technical education programs for the purpose of offering instruction in meat cutting and butchery. The appropriation language allowed the commissioner to award up to \$75,000 per grant recipient and prioritize grants to applicants that coordinate with meat cutting and butchery programs at Minnesota State Colleges and University system (Minnesota State) and local industry partners.

Grant funding was to be used for costs including, but not limited to:

1. Equipment required for a meat cutting program;
2. Facility renovation to accommodate meat cutting; and
3. Training faculty to teach the fundamentals of meat processing (limited to 10% of grant funding).

A prior round of funding was offered in FY 2023. The [Meat Education and Training Grants, Grants for Secondary Career and Technical Education Meat Cutting and Butchery Programs report \(PDF\)](#) from November 1, 2023, provides details about the initial round.

This report is submitted in accordance with Laws of Minnesota 2023, First Special Session Chapter 3, Article 1, Section 2, Subd. 4, as amended:

*By January 15, 2025, the commissioner must report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over agriculture finance and education finance by listing the grants made under this paragraph by county and noting the number and amount of grant requests not fulfilled. The report may include additional information as determined by the commissioner, including but not limited to information regarding the outcomes produced by these grants. If additional grants are awarded under this paragraph that were not covered in the report due by January 15, 2025, the commissioner must submit an additional report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over agriculture finance and education finance regarding all grants issued under this paragraph by November 1, 2025.*

## Request for Proposals

Branded as the Meat Education and Training (MEAT) Grant, the MDA released an RFP on February 19, 2025; applications were due on April 1, 2025.

Applications were accepted from public and private school districts in Minnesota that were seeking to establish or enhance meat cutting and butchery programs for secondary students (defined as grades 6 through 12, unless otherwise indicated by the school district).

Eligible applicants could request a minimum of \$5,000 and a maximum of \$75,000 and could use up to 10% of their grants for faculty training. The MDA anticipated awarding between five and 10 grants, dependent on the amounts requested.

The MDA gave priority to projects involving partnerships with Minnesota State's meat cutting and butchery programs, local industry, and applicants that were new or had previously received small awards.

In response to the RFP, the MDA received 19 applications requesting a total of \$858,350.

Applications were reviewed by a panel of MDA staff and community-based reviewers with expertise in education and meat cutting. A total of \$222,360 was awarded to six school districts. Table 1 contains the list of grantees and their projects.

All grantees are consulting with MDA Dairy and Meat Inspection Division staff to finalize their projects to ensure compliance with food safety regulations and best practices.

Grantees are actively implementing their projects, which must be completed by June 4, 2028.

## Grantees

**Table 1: MEAT Grant recipients**

School Name	Counties Served	Project Summary
Battle Lake High School	Otter Tail	Development of a hands-on meat science curriculum that prepares students for careers in meat processing. The project will provide critical skills in meat handling, processing, safety, and industry regulations. The meat science course will be housed within the existing agricultural program.
Dover-Eyota Schools	Olmsted	Incorporation of hands-on wild game processing into existing natural resource courses. The project will equip students with skills in meat handling, food safety, and introduce them to career opportunities in the meat industry.
Holdingford Schools	Stearns	Multi-phase development of meat processing coursework that uses collaborative relationships with local lockers and creates a workforce pipeline. One agriculture classroom will be converted into a meat processing area, and students will have processing units incorporated into existing agriculture classes.
Little Falls Community Schools	Morrison	Incorporation of meat processing education into an existing agriculture science program. Students will learn about food safety, meat cutting skills, and a meat industry career path through hands-on learning and guided instruction.
Staples-Motley High School	Todd, Cass, Wadena, Morrison	Establishment of a meat cutting and butchery curriculum that provides high school students hands-on learning and career pathways. Students will gain skills in meat processing, food safety, and business development.
Wabasso School District	Redwood	Establishment of a meat science course offered twice per year, introducing over 30 students to the meat industry yearly. The course will incorporate training in meat processing and learning from the many local lockers in the area.