

## 25 Value-adding to your Farm's Products Resource Kit for Nova Scotia Farmers

### **Moving Your Value-Added Product from Idea to Income**

The purpose of value-adding is to increase customers' perceived value of your products, thereby increasing your sales. Ideally, value-adding will boost your revenue by a higher proportion than the added expenses it requires.

Farm operations can begin value-adding in many simple ways:

- Make your products convenient to purchase.
- Enhance the experience of buying your products.
- Specialize in unique products, packaging and/or functionality that serve a growing demand.

Successful value-adding strategies include direct sales, u-picks, farmers markets, agri-tourism, natural and organic production, products with extra nutrition (e.g. omega-3 eggs and pork), and specialty crops and livestock.

Value-adding can also result from simply processing your primary products. Some examples currently used by farmers and retailers include:

- packaging different root vegetables together in a soup/stew "medley";
- making hay and straw bales small enough to fit in the trunk of a car to appeal to urban consumers;
- changing food and packaging functionality (e.g. boil-in-bag rice);
- turning cow manure into particle board.

How do you know what the market wants? You can find out by talking to consumers, manufacturers and processors beyond your typical clients; searching the Internet; reading industry periodicals and attending seminars.

Branching into food processing is a growing strategy for increasing farm profits. A variety of processed products are currently made on, or in partnership with, Nova Scotia farms, such as:

- berries into beverages, spreads or wine
- milk into specialty cheeses
- special diet formulations (e.g. gluten-free)
- specialty meats, retail/restaurant cuts, meat medleys

- easy to prepare/ready to eat meals, salad mixes.

Being a successful value-added processor requires three main things:

- a business development plan that includes value-adding;
- an identified product you can produce that has a market demand;
- complying with Nova Scotia regulations related to the environment, safety and health.

The **Product and Quality Development Division** (PQD) of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture can be your partner in value-added development.

The division's mandate is to support you in bringing your value-added product idea to reality. Through a range of counseling, networking, resource and support programs, staff can help you capture your value-added opportunity.

PQD works with you to:

- make sure your idea is viable - *production cost, market size and location, demand;*
- test your product - *consumer preferences, shipping/shelf life, regulatory compliance;*
- promote your product - *sales channels, packaging, image and positioning;*
- sustain the innovation and demand - *adapt to new markets and demands, ride new trends;*
- connect with the right people - *suppliers, partners, R&D, export.*

For more information or to discuss your ideas, contact the Product and Quality Development Division at [greatfoodideas@gov.ns.ca](mailto:greatfoodideas@gov.ns.ca) or 902-424-4560 or visit: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/marketing/proddev/>.

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