

**Recommendations regarding Montana food processing and distribution
generated at the Governor's Food and Agriculture Summit**

Helena, MT

March 22-23, 2007

Over 280 people attended the Governor's Food and Agriculture Summit. Various topical work groups were convened to discuss barriers and opportunities associated with Montana's food and agriculture system. The food processing and distribution workgroup came up with the following recommendations.

Overall Recommendation: Promote development of more local and regional food processing and distribution systems. Increase the resources and capacities needed to support such development, including cooperatives.

Action Steps:

1. Support the building of regional food processing centers around the state and provide resources for their operation.
2. Support Montana's network of agricultural innovation centers.
3. Implement incentives for investment in local processing facilities.
4. Establish a revolving loan fund for cooperative capitalization.
5. Support cooperative development in all sectors of the food system. In doing so, request that the office of the Secretary of State help facilitate cooperative business development via their web site and informed staff.
6. Support an in-state and regional transportation feasibility study.
7. Create incentives for distribution companies to help develop model transportation systems that may include community-based food warehouses and distribution hubs, with a focus on energy-efficient food transportation.