



MEDA Value Added Working Group  
October 1, 2020  
3:00pm

Participants: Paddy Fleming (Chair), Dale Mahugh, Michael Peter, Courtney Loeffler, Abby Majerus, Erin Farris-Olsen, Brett Doney, Tami Burke, Davey Madison and Gloria O'Rourke.

**1. MEDA's definition of Montana Value-Added Agriculture**

Activities, investments, or infrastructure that help increase the value of agriculture products that have been grown, raised, or processed in Montana. This may include producers, processors, manufacturers, brewers, distillers, vintners, cooperatives, marketing, distribution, transportation, warehousing, wholesaling, retail, farmer's markets, timber, and restaurants that add value to agriculture products grown, raised or processed in Montana.

After a brief discussion, Davey moved to approve the above definition of Montana Value Added Agriculture. Dale seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**2. Mission of the MEDA Value Added Ag Working Group**

The group came to consensus on the Mission: Increase the value-added agricultural industries in the state and expand higher value agriculture production.

**3. Goals of MEDA's Value-Added Agriculture Committee**

1. Foster teamwork between MEDA members and other stakeholders on Value-Added Agriculture issues and projects in Montana.
2. Provide recommendations to the MEDA Board regarding state funding, federal funding and state policies that affect Value-Added Agriculture in Montana.
3. Educate and promote the importance of value-added agriculture in Montana.

The above goals were discussed. Courtney Loeffler moved to approve the goals, with Abby Majerus providing the second. Motion carried.

#### **4. Work to Accomplish**

1. 1-2 Page Document that can be used during the legislature that clearly explains:
  - a. The MEDA definition of Value-Added Agriculture with examples.
  - b. What MEDA programs (all of them) are doing to assist in growing Value-Added Agriculture
  - c. What Federal Agencies are providing funding to Montana that helps grow Value-Added Agriculture
    - i. SBA
    - ii. USDA
    - iii. NIST-MEP
    - iv. EDA
    - v. EPA
  - d. Showcase some success stories
2. Improve communications and information sharing  
MEDA will begin building from the Value Added Ag Working Group page to provide a resource and communication center:
  - a. Create email list or other sharing mechanism to share value added ag resources and information.
  - b. Gather resources such as Made in Montana, Food and Ag Centers, etc.
  - c. Establish webpage with all resources and links to organizations working on value added ag
  - d. Include success stories on landing page
3. Ultimately, create a way to share information with companies
  - a. Explore ways to connect with companies
  - b. Build a trade association (private sector led)
  - c. Mentorship

#### **5. Vision for the Future**

Some initial thoughts on what we would suggest **if** there was increased funding for Value-Added Agriculture:

1. Protect existing funding for SBDC, FADC, MMEC, Growth through Agriculture.
2. Increase funding (locations) for FADC.
3. Increase funding for MMEC to build capacity.
4. Increase State's efforts to attract agriculture processing/manufacturing (value-added agriculture) companies to Montana.
5. Increase Montana Board of Investments' investment into value-added agriculture companies or cooperatives in Montana.

Next meeting: Gloria will send a doodle to determine the next meeting.