

## Introducing the New Hampshire Meat and Poultry Producer/Processor Project

The Environmental Mediation Center (EMC), which administers the New Hampshire Agriculture Mediation Program, was recently awarded a Local Food Promotion grant from USDA to increase communication and collaboration between New Hampshire's meat and poultry producers and processors. The EMC will work with the Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food and UNH Cooperative Extension on this project--with the goals of increasing markets and production, lowering production costs, and increasing access to local meats.

People in New Hampshire are fortunate to have an opportunity to enjoy locally raised meats and poultry produced by our farmers. We take pride in the small and medium-sized, family owned farms that produce meat and poultry in our state. However, our smaller-scale meat and poultry farms face many challenges, including razor-thin margins because they must compete with much larger operations that enjoy economies of scale and the lower costs of production in other regions of the country. Additionally, the limited number of USDA-inspected processing facilities in the state makes scheduling processing appointments during high-demand periods difficult.

The NH Meat and Poultry Producer/Processor Project aims to help address these and other challenges that may be identified, by developing effective strategies that lower the cost of production for our state's livestock and poultry producers and address scheduling and efficiency issues for processing facilities.

We encourage meat and poultry producers and processors to fill out the online survey and participate in the focus group meetings that will be held throughout the state. Following the focus group meetings, the EMC will form meat and poultry producer and processor working groups to develop strategies and recommendations to grow this vital sector of our agricultural economy. For more information about this project, or to fill out the survey and learn about upcoming meetings, please visit the EMC website at [www.emcenter.org](http://www.emcenter.org).

Sincerely yours,



Lorraine S. Merrill  
Commissioner