

Mobile Poultry Processing Unit Project (MPPU) *Building Capacity for Small-Scale Poultry Producers in Massachusetts*



Background and Need for the MPPU: Rapidly increasing demand for locally produced, humanely-raised, free-range, and organic poultry is creating opportunity for profitable poultry production in Massachusetts. However, small-scale producers - fewer than 2,000 birds/year - lack access to affordable and legally-sanctioned slaughter facilities. There are no state-licensed or USDA-inspected poultry slaughter facilities in the Northeast open to small producers. Due to heightened biosecurity concerns, larger commercial poultry farms with on-farm licensed processing facilities often refuse to process birds from outside their closed flocks. The ease with which new producers can begin small-scale poultry production makes it a viable “gateway livestock enterprise” that can introduce beginning farmers to animal husbandry practices and encourage additional local meat production. Access to appropriate infrastructure to facilitate these emerging enterprises is critical as the cost of traditional “bricks and mortar” processing facilities is prohibitively high for new producers. The Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU) enables many small-scale producers within a reasonable geographic radius to share processing equipment and use the facility on their farm. It provides an affordable processing option and the design of the unit has met stringent public health and environmental inspection to enable producers to comply with all necessary state and federal regulations.

Goals of the Project: To support the growth of small-scale poultry operations by providing access to cost-effective, shared processing infrastructure. Specifically, we aim to educate at least 15-20 new producers about the regulatory process to become licensed to use an on-farm Mobile Poultry Processing Unit and to provide the necessary food safety and practical skills training to successfully produce and process high-quality poultry for direct markets. Additional educational resources will be developed and we will facilitate a producer steering committee that manages and maintains the MPPU to foster maximum cooperation and accountability among users.

How will my donation be used? Our goal is to raise at least \$35,000 to construct a second MPPU to serve Eastern Massachusetts farmers in Middlesex, Norfolk, Essex, and parts of Worcester county. Your contribution will help purchase a trailer and food grade flooring material, poultry processing equipment (cones, scalding, plucker, eviscerating tables, chill tanks, etc.), hoses and hand wash sinks, electrical and plumbing supplies, wastewater and solid waste management equipment, backflow prevention devices, hot water heaters, and a canopy for shade and protection of food contact surfaces. The goal is to raise the funds and begin construction of the unit by early 2009. The unit will be owned and insured by Tufts University and managed by the [New Entry Sustainable Farming Project](#).

How can I stay informed and receive updates on the project? A mobile poultry processing unit listserv (mppu@elist.tufts.edu) has been established for producers, consumers, agency regulators, and other interested individuals to receive news and announcements about the project. To subscribe, send an email to jennifer.hashley@tufts.edu asking to be subscribed to the listserv.

For more information: Contact Jennifer Hashley, Director of New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Email: jennifer.hashley@tufts.edu; Phone: 617-636-3793; web: www.nesfp.org

To Donate: Contributions are accepted through Tufts University’s [Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy](#). Visit the Tufts giving page: <https://www.alumniconnections.com/donate/tufts/> Select gift option 3 and write in: New Entry Sustainable Farming Project or MPPU. Your donation is fully tax deductible.