

Bellair Farm is one of the region's largest direct-to-consumer agricultural producers, serving more than 650 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) households and hundreds of additional retail and wholesale customers. Its operation is grounded in responsible land stewardship, with rotational grazing and silvopasture systems that regenerate soil health while supporting sustainable livestock production. The Farm raises and processes 60–80 hogs annually for its own markets and has the land, feed systems, and management capacity to scale up. As a result of Business Retention and Expansion work, staff was approached by Bellair Farm with the request to support an application to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) for an Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID) Infrastructure Grant to support the Farm's expansion.

Stock Provisions (SP), a long-standing local whole-animal butcher with a proven customer base, has an immediate need for a new pork supplier. Its demand averages 2 hogs per week (100 per year). Bellair Farm can meet this need sustainably and reliably with its processor, Honest Meats (HM), who can easily accommodate increased volume.

In addition to SP's demand, Bellair Farm frequently receives inquiries from chefs, caterers, and individuals seeking whole hogs. The Farm is unable to meet this demand because its animals are processed without the skin, which reduces yield and limits certain specialty uses. Adding whole-hog sales would improve usable yield and help minimize waste.

The only obstacle to expanding production and meeting multiple market channels is the lack of safe, affordable transportation for whole, fresh hogs. Unlike boxed frozen cuts, whole hogs require refrigerated transport with secure hanging infrastructure. The proposed solution is to purchase, retrofit, and maintain a used Class 3–6 refrigerated box truck to fulfill market demand and maintain food-safe handling standards.

#### **PROPOSED INVESTMENT: \$11,000.00 - AFID INFRASTRUCTURE LOCAL MATCH REQUEST**

Bellair Farms is requesting \$22,000 in total grant funding to leverage its cash match and in-kind match to support its expansion and purchase of a refrigerated truck "Coldlink Collaborative – Central VA."

#### **The Coldlink Collaborative expansion would:**

- Supply 50 hogs annually to SP, filling half of its pork market gap (10,000+ lbs./year).
- Capture up to 600 lbs. of additional yield from specialty parts currently discarded.
- Increase HM's annual revenue by \$4,000+ through expanded slaughter volume.
- Support long-term land management goals through expanded rotational grazing.
- Create or expand one year-round part-time job.
- Strengthen regional food infrastructure by linking farm, processor, butcher, food banks, and farmers markets.

A refrigerated truck is essential to unlock a long-term, sustainable partnership among these three key agricultural businesses, expand access to ethically raised pork, reduce waste, and support regenerative land stewardship. This modest investment would generate significant regional economic and ecological benefits.

Staff recommends this project based on its potential to strengthen Central Virginia's regional food network, expand market access for local food producers, and contribute to sustainable economic growth in Albemarle County.

At the Economic Development Authority meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup>, staff will share additional background on this application and a request for matching fund support will be made if the application is awarded later this year. At that point, staff will request action by the EDA. If approved, source funds would be the Economic Development Opportunity Fund (EOF).