

Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation
Annual Report 2023

HVADC

507 Warren Street, 2nd Floor
Hudson, NY 12534
P: 518.432.5360
F: 888.317.5556

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The Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) is the only economic development agency in the Hudson Valley with a specific focus on the viability of the agricultural economy in the region. HVADC's charge is to enhance the agricultural sector in the Hudson Valley by assisting both new and existing agri-businesses, and supporting policies and regulations that recognize and support New York State's agricultural economy. Our services are carefully designed to promote the Hudson Valley as an attractive, viable region for agriculture and to foster growth and development of the agricultural sector through a creative program of marketing, promotion and the provision and coordination of financial and other resources.

Scope of Services

HVADC offers the following services to farms and farm-related/farm dependent businesses:

1. Technical assistance to businesses applying for funding or implementing awards from various public and private sources to include but not limited to: USDA Value Added Grant, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants, SBA, EDA, NYS Consolidated Funding Applications, etc.
2. Business planning services to businesses seeking to diversify production.
3. Business expansion counseling to businesses seeking to add process capacity and expand operations to make room for next generation.
4. New business referrals for site search selection opportunities to locate in the region.
5. Representation and technical support to ensure these business interests are included in NYS Regional Economic Development Councils' plans and implementation.
6. Local farm product sourcing for regional co-packers, value added processors and other regional commercial and institutional buyers.
7. Development and promotion of farm and local business sourcing to support agri/culinary-tourism and educate the community members and markets of the role local sourcing plays in economic development through the Hudson Valley Bounty Program and regional branding.
8. Loans through the Agriculture Loan Fund primarily for equipment needs. Loans can range in size from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and are available at a low interest rate. Terms are determined on an individual loan basis.

Operations and Accomplishments

In 2023, HVADC maintained its popular core programs: Incubator without Walls (IWW), a program designed to meet a variety of needs of current and potential agri-businesses, the Agribusiness Loan Fund which provides capital to farm and food business including underserved communities and entrepreneurs and Hudson Valley Bounty (HVB), a project that pushes the farm-to-table agenda by encouraging the community to eat and shop local while fostering relationships between consumers, restaurants and farms. HVADC's food rescue program now in its fifth year, addresses food security in the region. FeedHV reduces hunger and food waste through a network of food donors, volunteers and feeding agencies by

facilitating the harvesting, processing and distribution of locally grown or produced agricultural products, shelf-stable food donations and prepared nutritious foods.

Incubator without Walls

Qualified businesses that are admitted into our IWW program can tap into a wide range of services to accelerate their growth and increase their chances of long-term success. These services can include: business and financial planning, value-added infrastructure services, financing and networking. For the year 2022, HVADC estimated that we could assist approximately 30-35 businesses; we were able to successfully achieve our goal. Through IWW, HVADC has been able to assist 33 businesses in 2023. The various types of services we have provided are listed below:

- 13 businesses with general business planning
- 13 businesses with strategic planning for growth/development
- 4 businesses with grant writing assistance
- 2 businesses with legal
- 1 business with financial projections

Agribusiness Loan Fund

The Agribusiness Loan Fund Program is another tool to help provide access to capital for small agribusinesses that otherwise may face limited opportunities, not only supporting the success of these businesses but also improving the economic outlook for rural and surrounding communities. Loans are available to assist small agribusinesses across the state access low-interest loans ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Eligible borrowers of program funds include value-added processors, food distribution companies, food aggregators, wineries, breweries, distilleries, cider producers, farms and Food Hub participants. Projects qualifying for loans primarily include the purchase of machinery and equipment used in support of the New York State agricultural industry.

HVADC closed on three loans in 2023 totaling \$285,000.

Hudson Valley Bounty

HVB is the region's most comprehensive local farm and food portal. With a new and improved website launched in 2023, the HVB website showcases a large number of food enterprises, provides refined search capabilities and in-depth details of its participants. The site is searchable by county, with interactive maps pin-pointing each farm or food business included throughout Albany, Orange, Sullivan, Ulster, Dutchess, Columbia, Rensselaer and Washington counties. Searches may also be conducted by business categories, with participants grouped according to products such as farms, wineries/vineyards, distilleries, breweries, cideries, specialty producers, farmers markets, food and beverage trails, restaurants, caterers, retail and grocery stores, or distributors/wholesalers.

Participation in HVB is free for farms and food businesses. As the region's go-to-resource for local food and farm offerings, HVB provides participants with exposure on its high-traffic website used by local consumers, tourists, chefs, farmers, wholesalers, and institutional buyers; the opportunity to be featured on HVB social media, email newsletters, and blog; as well as access to HVB curated newsletters containing information on grant and financing opportunities, training workshops, events, and opportunities to promote their business or sell their product.

FeedHV

FeedHV is a regional food rescue and harvesting network dedicated to meeting the needs of neighbors while mitigating the impacts of food waste. The concept evolved out of community dialogues with farmers, volunteers, nonprofit agencies and key stakeholders.

Through our web-based and mobile application powered by ChowMatch, FeedHV links food donors of prepared but unserved food and fresh produce (including farms, restaurants, catering services, grocery stores, hospitals, universities and more) to nonprofit organizations with food assistance programs (such as food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters) through the efforts of a network of volunteers who transport, harvest and process donated food. With this technological solution, FeedHV enhances and streamlines the good work of businesses, agencies, and organizations already doing food recovery work.

Since inception, FeedHV has moved approximately 565,526 pounds of food (equivalent to 471,272 meals) through 3,498 food runs using a volunteer network of 338 people. The network consists of 215 donors and 164 agencies. The FeedHV network covers seven counties in the Mid-Hudson region.

HVADC Special Projects:

1 - NYS Ag & Markets Meat Processing Expansion Grant

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets contracted with HVADC to provide grants on a competitive basis to fund projects to support the expansion of existing meat processing facilities and the establishment of new meat processing facilities in the State to increase the capacity of NYS sourced meat. By supporting increased meat processing capacity in New York State, the program addresses the nationwide shortage of affordable meat available to consumers, including the availability of protein sources for schools and institutional facilities in the State. The successful execution of this program will provide New York consumers with an increased supply of healthy meat sourced from New York State producers, while also improving the State's agricultural economy.

Applications were reviewed through a competitive process, and funds awarded until state funds were fully allocated. An independent funding committee was convened by HVADC which oversaw the scoring and recommendations of the applications.

HVADC received 36 applications and awarded 26 businesses \$4.25 million through the program. Processors from 19 counties across New York were included in the funding.

2 - Agricultural Viability Alliance

HVADC is a founding collaborator of the newly formed Agricultural Viability Alliance (AVA). The alliance, which brings together agricultural agencies and service providers from across the Northeast, is enthusiastically focused on bringing diverse world-class Business Technical Assistance (BTA) to the farmers and food producers who need it to maintain, grow, and transition their businesses in an ever-changing world. The AVA will work in tandem to identify, develop and secure funding for BTA.

The AVA is working with American Farmland Trust and other peer service providers to stress the need for BTA support through the through the USDA and other federally funded programs. This support of a variety of existing and available funds will lay a strong foundation for a more resilient food system.

3 – Hudson Valley Food System Coalition

The Hudson Valley Food Systems Coalition (HVFSC) is a forward-thinking initiative bringing together professionals from across every sector of the Hudson Valley's food system to share ideas, identify issues and build solutions. HVFSC is a transdisciplinary & regional coalition with representatives from Agriculture, Government, Community, Processing, Distribution, Health, Education, Food Access, Food Business, Environment, Funding, and the Culinary Arts. The mission is to realize a more equitable and regenerative Hudson Valley food system by connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management practices while encouraging the use of our region's food resources to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of our community.

HVADC is a founding member and facilitator of the Land & Agriculture interest group.

Compensation Schedule:

There was one employee with a salary over \$100,000 in 2023.