

impact

University of Idaho Extension
programs that are making a
difference in Idaho.

Strengthening Idaho's food manufacturing industry through process improvement

AT A GLANCE

Empowering Idaho's food processing industry through training, compliance, process improvement and innovation. Over \$24 million of total impact reported.

The Situation

Food manufacturing is a major economic driver in the state of Idaho. The state's food processing sector employs more than 17,000 workers and contributes approximately \$2.8 billion annually to Idaho's GDP. Idaho's food industry is highly diverse — varying in facility size, product type and geographic location. According to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, if Idahoans were to consume all the food produced within the state in a single day, each resident would need to eat 152 slices of bread, 39 potatoes, 3 pounds of sugar, 2 pounds of cheese, 2 pounds of beef and 1 cup of beans.

Our Response

We support Idaho's food manufacturing industry through a broad range of targeted programs and services. We offer open-enrollment public courses on topics including food safety and quality systems, personnel safety and lean process improvement. These same programs are also available as customized, onsite training tailored to each facility's priorities.

In addition to training, we assist food manufacturers with audit preparation, regulatory compliance, supplier sourcing and advanced manufacturing



Introduction to HACCP course participants.

assessments. Our goal is to help companies address challenges, identify improvement opportunities and strengthen their operational performance.

Program Outcomes

Following project completion, companies are surveyed to quantify the impact of the programs on their business performance. All reported impacts are generated using the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) client impact survey, a survey not conducted by TechHelp or University of Idaho Extension. The companies that participated in our programming report on how the projects and work we did impact their company. These figures reflect only what companies attributed directly to the services and training that we provided. The results represent the value-added

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impact that would not have occurred without our involvement. The table below summarizes the reported outcomes from 27 completed surveys conducted between Q3 2024 and Q2 2025. The total impact was \$24,009,300, broke out in several categories and 281 jobs impacted.

Project survey results of 27 completed surveys.

Sales Total	Jobs Total	Cost Savings / Cost Avoidance	Investment Total
\$22,704,000	281	\$298,500	\$1,006,800

These results reflect the outcomes of a wide range of projects, including some of the following:

- HACCP Training for Potato Processors – Developed and delivered a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) course tailored for Idaho's potato processing industry. HACCP is a preventive, systematic approach to identifying and controlling food safety hazards and is required by regulators, auditors and customers.
- Gem State Food Safety Alliance – Facilitated a cohort program supporting small food processors in developing food safety systems and achieving two regulatory certifications.
- Lean/Process Improvement Green Belts – Trained professionals in Lean and Six Sigma methodologies to lead waste reduction, efficiency, and quality improvement initiatives within their organizations.
- Open Enrollment Food Safety Courses (HACCP, Internal Auditing, PCQI) – Provided required regulatory training to help companies maintain compliance and build in-house expertise.
- Company-Specific Projects – Supported customized initiatives such as shelf-life extension, third-party audit preparation and time studies for maintenance operations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Because of these projects companies were able to:

- Implement new or updated HACCP and food safety plans, meeting both state and federal regulatory requirements, avoiding costly recalls and downgraded products (products that cannot be sold) and reducing non-compliance findings during inspections.
- Entrepreneurs were able to bring their products to the market and develop their businesses.
- Pass and complete third-party audits which helped them keep and gain new customers and open additional markets sometimes internationally.
- Train and give professional development to their existing workforce making them more valuable and increasing their skillset.
- Reduce waste and inefficiencies in their processes allowing the company to make more products, invest in new equipment or processes, increase existing and new hire wages, overall become more profitable, in addition to many other benefits to their companies and their communities.

Participating companies represent the diverse landscape of Idaho's food sector, from small, owner-operated startups to large multinational manufacturers. Geographically, participants span throughout Idaho.

The Future

We will continue to expand and deliver these essential services to both emerging food entrepreneurs and established food manufacturing companies across Idaho.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

TechHelp, Idaho's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) Center, collaborates on these initiatives. TechHelp's mission is to help Idaho manufacturers innovate, improve and succeed.