

Our Mission

Accelerate the expansion of the agricultural economy by empowering expanded uses and markets of agriculturally derived products

Turning a Dream of Local Meat Processing Into Reality



In 2017, Paul Benson and his friend Doyle Turner approached the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to explore funding for expanding their family farm's butcher operation in Mahnomon County.

They learned \$10,000 was available for a feasibility study — if they could match it. The White Earth Nation stepped in with matching funds, giving the project momentum.

The feasibility study confirmed what Benson already believed: there was room —and need— for local meat processing capacity. The pair hired a design firm and worked with their accountant to develop a business plan. They pursued additional grants and worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to identify an accessible location near both livestock producers and convenient traffic corridors.

Today, Benson + Turner Foods' 8,000-square-foot USDA-inspected facility employs 21 full- and part-time workers and contributes an estimated \$4 million annually to the local economy.

[Read more about Paul Benson's journey in the April issue of Ag Innovation News.](#)

Ag Innovation News

BioMADE Webinar: AURI's blended approach to innovation



Join BioMADE and AURI on April 9 for a webinar to discover ways to 'Catalyze Innovation'. By blending commercialization support from applied research with business development know-how, AURI advances new ideas to the market utilizing agricultural feedstocks. Learn how AURI helps companies launch new products to grow sales, improve processes, valorize coproduct streams, and derisk longer-term capital investment decisions as well as develop longer-term industry opportunities. **Note:** You must be a BioMADE member to register for the webinar.

[Register](#)

Apply by April 15! New Food Safety Cost-Share Program



Minnesota food businesses can now access AURI's Food Safety Cost-Share Pilot Program, offering 50% reimbursement (up to \$2,500) for eligible food safety improvements. Funds are limited and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. The program helps companies strengthen compliance, reduce risk, and invest in critical food safety systems. Learn more and apply today. Application deadline: April 15, 2026.

[Learn more](#)

Fields of Innovation explores alfalfa market opportunities



Don't miss this month's **Beyond Forage: Expanding Alfalfa's Potential for Feed & Fertilizer**. Session 2 of AURI's alfalfa innovation series explores non-forage opportunities in feed, fertilizer, and processing technologies. Experts will share research, pilot trials and commercialization pathways that could expand alfalfa's role in resilient ag markets. A live Q&A follows. Join the free webinar from noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, April 16. **Registration is required.**

Register

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AURI in the News

Fuel Cells Works

Upcoming **AURI Events**

April 16, 2026

[Beyond Forage: Expanding Alfalfa's Potential for Feed & Fertilizer \(Part 2\)](#)

(Fields of Innovation Webinar)



Did you miss an event?
We have you covered.

Visit and [Subscribe to AURI's YouTube channel](#) to view more on-demand videos from AURI's Webinar Wednesday series, Fields of Innovation events, UnTapped, Minnesota Renewable Energy Roundtable, and more!

[Check out our most recent webinar: Expanding Alfalfa's Potential for Food Innovation \(Part 1\)](#).

[Watch Past Webinars](#)

Ag Innovation News

The newspaper is designed to make research and technical information easy to read and enjoyable for the average user. From an initial subscription list of 4,000, it has grown to reach more than 12,000 print and online readers every quarter, covering AURI's work in the development of new food products, renewable energy, biobased products and new uses for agricultural coproducts.

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Ag Innovation News **PODCAST**

The Ag Innovation News podcast features Jamie Dickerman of Red River Farm Network having in-depth conversations with some of the brightest minds and most recognizable personalities in Minnesota's value-added agriculture ecosystem.



[Check out our latest interview with Plasma Blue CEO Tom Slunecka, who delves into the new technology.](#)

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