NEW COST SHARING OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR SMALL MINNESOTA FOOD AND BEVERAGE MAKERS

MDA New Markets Program pivots support during COVID-19 pandemic

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The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) New Markets Program seeks to help farms and food businesses lean in to changes and opportunities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by offering new cost-sharing options for small Minnesota food and beverage makers.

With specific eligibility and reimbursement limits that are available online, the program offers 50 percent reimbursement on the following expenses through the end of June:

- Contracted merchandising help. This in-store support ensures that products are in stock and on the shelf at retail stores when consumers want them.
- E-commerce assistance, specifically for Minnesota food and beverage companies who have Wholesale Food Handler or Manufacturer Licenses from the MDA (includes some farms who add value to their crops, and some consumer-packaged goods-makers (CPG)).

"During this time, it makes sense to pivot our popular cost-sharing program from product expos and store demos to other activities," Assistant Commissioner Patrice Bailey said. "The MDA can more effectively help small Minnesota food and beverage companies with e-commerce and contracted merchandising now, and we're happy to do so."

Reimbursement for e-commerce and web store development may include site registration and membership fees, fees paid based on sales, fees for advertising and premium positioning, site development services and consulting, and creative setup costs such as product photography.

"We offer a new e-commerce platform called Frank & Ernest/RED Markets (https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.frankandernestmarkets.com%2Fcollections%2Fin-season&data=02%7C01%7CLarry.Schumacher%40state.mn.us%7Ceb69329107704922182f08d7ec74f360%7Ceb14b04624c445198f26b89c2159828c that helps household buyers purchase directly from vendors," RED Market's Katie Myhre said. "MDA's support will help farmers and food makers take advantage of e-commerce opportunities like ours."

Costs associated with connecting to brand discovery sites that may not include payment or fulfillment options are also eligible.

Companies must apply by July 10, 2020. Funds are limited, and available first-come, first-served. Program details, contact information, and forms are available on our New Markets Cost Share Program web page (/business-dev-loans-grants/new-markets-cost-share-program).

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