

# Entrepreneurship

## ➤ The Essence of Developing Entrepreneurial Food Businesses

➤ David S. Jackson, Ph.D.

Associate Dean / Associate Director

Agricultural Research Division

*Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources*

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

➤ [djackson@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:djackson@unlnotes.unl.edu)

# What is an entrepreneur?

- Literally means “*to take action*”
- One who “shifts...resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity”
- A Food Business Entrepreneur adds value to agricultural commodities
  - Brings useful products to market
  - Increases standard of living

# Program to Develop Food Businesses ↗

Why a program like this in Nebraska?



# People, land and agriculture

- Only 1.8 million people
- Nebraska's total area, including land and water, is 200,358 square kilometres. (Land area alone is 199,113 square kilometres).
  - 15th out of the 50 US States in land area.
  - **93% of the land area is used for Agriculture**
- Mostly Plains / Excellent Large-Scale Farming
- Underground water resources (aquifer)
  - 8.2 million acres (3.2 million hectares) irrigated

# Economy dependent on agriculture...

- When crop and meat prices are high, economy is good
  - Economy suffers when...
    - Prices are low
    - Weather limits production
- Need to “add-value” to commodities
  - Food processing is a natural business
- University of Nebraska, as a “Land-Grant” University has a mission to help the state and its economy

# The UNL Food Processing Center

- Developed in early 1980's.
- Stimulates the development and growth of Nebraska's food processing industry
  - Provides **integrated** scientific, market/business development, technological, pilot plants and product development services
  - Full time professional staff dedicated to this mission with close support of faculty
  - Supports all size businesses
  - Specialized entrepreneurial assistance program

# Food business entrepreneur program

- Created in 1989
- Only US program providing comprehensive assistance to individuals wishing to develop a food manufacturing business
- Combines **business** and **technical** assistance.



# Phase one

- One-day *From Recipe to Reality* Workshop
  - *Food Safety*
  - *Product development & processing*
  - *Packaging*
  - *Labelling*
  - *Market Research and Pricing*
  - *Business Plan Development*
  - *Pricing*
  - *Product introduction and Promotion*
  - *Legal and business structure*



# Many people want to be entrepreneurs / own their own business...

- Not everyone ready, able or has the right personality to be an entrepreneur
  - First stage designed to discourage those not truly interested
  - Gives us a chance to work with only those that are most interested and committed

# Phase two

- Integrated individualized follow-up services customized to client needs
  - Food Scientists
    - End Use Quality / Consumer Needs
    - Processing Technologies
    - Product Development and Sensory Analysis
    - Ingredient Uses / Functionality
    - Labelling and Nutrition
  - Business Professionals
    - Business Plan Development
    - Financing
    - Distribution
    - Marketing

# Goals and success

- Rural Economic Development
  - Increasing Farm Income
  - Capturing Value
  - Reduced Food Miles / Local Foods
  - Empowering Families
- Since 1989, 61% of the businesses that were started remain in existence

Model applicable anywhere...  
with any product or service.

- Combine individualized business and technical assistance
- Focused on increasing sorghum / millet use in East Africa



# Making entrepreneurship happen

- Takes people, money, and infrastructure
  - People: Elements of risk taking
  - Money: Small (and Large) Capital
  - Infrastructure: Interdisciplinary technical and business knowledge availability
    - In USA – Most applicable to Land-Grant Universities
    - Elsewhere – Where structures exist for interdisciplinary knowledge transfer

# Can you teach entrepreneurship?

- Probably not quickly
  - And probably not for the kind of program outlined
  - You can *improve* the chances for success
- Student programs an option
  - Make entrepreneurship a part of college / university culture for faculty, staff **and students**

# “Universities create the future”

## Engler Entrepreneurship Program (Minor)

- Engler Scholarships
- Engler Entrepreneur in Residence
- Applied Undergraduate Research
- Internships and Field Placements
- Engler Program Capstone Course
- Engler Entrepreneurship Course Development
- Entrepreneur Camp
- Husker Horizons
- International Experience
- Engler Venture Capital Fund
- Paul Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Chair
- Paul Engler Lectureship Series

# Sorghum food business entrepreneurship

What is the program...and does it work?

