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### Focus Groups Planned to Aid NW Missouri Meat Producers, Consumers

(KTNC) - A series of focus groups is planned over the coming weeks to discuss the Market Opportunities for Regional Entrepreneurs – or MORE – project. That is a new collaborative effort organized by students and faculty from Northwest Missouri State University's departments of Agricultural Sciences and Business and Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation.

Dr. Ben Blackford is an assistant professor of management at Northwest Missouri State who helped develop the program. He says the goal of the project is to bring together people to identify opportunities and hurdles that could be addressed to help those involved in the production and consumption of meat in the area. (play audio :22)

Six focus group discussions are planned. The first will be held this coming Monday, January 21, at Wabash Junction in Stanberry. A focus group will be held Tuesday, January 22, at the Black Iron Grill in Rock Port, beginning at 5:30 p.m. (play audio :18)

Other focus groups discussions will be held in St. Joseph, Maryville, and Chillicothe, Missouri, and in Clarinda, Iowa.

Dr. Blackford says follow-up meetings will be held at each location to disseminate information gathered at the initial meetings. (play audio :23)

Seats are limited at each meeting, so those interested in attending should reserve a spot in advance. That can be done by emailing [MORENW@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:MORENW@nwmissouri.edu), or by calling 660-562-1282 and leaving a message.

Dr. Blackford says what he hopes to garner from the focus group discussions. (play audio :35)

The MORE project also seeks to identify market needs for value-added beef products in the region and help local beef producers and businesses develop successful production and marketing strategies for those products.

The project is funded through a \$37,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and has also received support from K-C-P-and-L, Northwest Missouri State University, and Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation.

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