

“Robin has been very helpful and a great person to work with. We are excited about our growth and now that the construction is finished we are focusing on going ahead. The first year is always a challenge.”

- Margie Jones



Collaboration Key to Warrington Farm Meats Success

Margie and Gerald Jones were raised in farming families, married in 1973 and bought their first dairy farm in 1979. Over the years the couple had six sons, each developing different interests in agriculture. The Joneses have cultivated an agri-business conglomerate that includes a custom farming operation, raising crops and livestock, a trucking company, and a butcher shop with wholesale, retail and specialty products market. It remains a family operation with all six sons and several other relatives working in the business.



In 2007 the Joneses purchased Warrington Farm Meats, a wholesale and retail outlet for their slaughterhouse and meat processing operation. Recently the Joneses wanted to expand the business by building a new facility that would expand their processing space (from 800 sq/ft to 4500 sq/ft), their freezer space (from 30,000 lbs to 268,000 lbs), adding a new smokehouse and a 600sq/ft retail store at the location. The envisioned project, however, required significant capital to undertake. They met with M&T Bank regarding financing and M&T pulled in the SBDC to provide assistance in developing a business plan and financial projections.

Margie connected with Robin Burtner at the SBDC who provided assistance with the business plan, helping with market research, financial projections, narrative and formatting. Margie says they had done some business planning before, but not with the market detail and financial projections the bank was looking for. Margie notes, “Robin was amazing at helping to set up the business plan – where we are, where we’re going, what we’re striving for. It just flowed.”

Though it took quite a bit of time to bring the project to fruition, Margie says they are now focused on managing growth with the new capacity. In addition to the Warrington Meats brand the company is doing increased levels of “private label” products for others. And, with the new smoker capacity, Margie sees tremendous growth opportunities with shelf stable products including their new “pepper bourbon stick.”



Warrington Farm Meats, with Robin’s coordination, became the focus of a SBDC student group marketing project at Dickinson College. Margie found the process interesting and was “not sure what she would get.” Some of the ideas, however, were helpful and, Margie notes, “They had some really good thoughts, including several social media ideas.” Following-up on the students’ recommendations, Margie set-up a Facebook page, recently hired a social media manager for the business, and identifies the value of connecting directly with Warrington Farm Meats customers through social media marketing.

The expansion of the business has increased sales significantly and, due to demand, new employees have been hired. Margie, evidencing the wisdom of experience, stresses that they are careful to not grow too fast but to be strategic managing growth. She also notes that she has appreciated the way “Robin followed me through. She kept coming back to ask if I needed anything. She stuck beside us the whole way.”