Priority 8: Conduct Trainings on **ALTERNATIVE LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND MARKETING STRATEGIES** to overcome processing bottlenecks

**154 out of 584 respondents (26%) ranked this topic as highest priority. Of those, 80 provided justification as follows:**

* 34 respondents (or 43%) commented that conducting trainings on alternative livestock production and marketing strategies could help farmers overcome major constraints to small-scale livestock processing and better suit small farmer needs, such as year-round processing, single or small number animal processing, and more accessible and timely processing.

*“The only access to locally raised and processed livestock is at farmers markets. With few processing facilities in this area, those who do raise livestock are in a feast or famine situation. Processing is not always available when livestock are ready, and then getting the foods to the public is achieved only by those fortunate enough to be able to afford heavy advertising.”*

* 24 respondents (or 30%) commented that conducting trainings on alternative livestock production and marketing strategies would help small livestock farmers increase their profits and be more economically viable, such as by reducing processing costs, ensuring dependable processing commitments, and increasing market connections and niche marketing opportunities.

*“Small farms need to access niche markets in order to gain and maintain profitability.”*

* 8 respondents (or 10%) commented that they were simply interested in learning more about what alternative livestock production and marketing strategies were available to them and their businesses.

*“I do not know what the alternatives are, but I highly value alternatives to the current bottlenecking scenarios we see every fall.”*

* 7 respondents (or 9%) commented that conducting trainings on alternative livestock production and marketing strategies would enable small farmers to make local, sustainable meat more accessible to the general public, particularly by cutting farmer costs and making local meat more affordable.

*“Livestock farming for meat production will remain an ultra-specialty niche field until price and accessibility to the consumer are addressed.”*

* 7 respondents (or 9%) commented that conducting trainings on alternative livestock production and marketing strategies is important for farmer and consumer education about the full process of meat production, the importance of organic and sustainable production and processing, and food safety concerns associated with large scale processing.

*“It’s clear that pasture-based livestock production returns healthier meat, and that CAFO-style production causes disease generation. More information on pasture farming needs to be available.”*