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EDA Awards \$250,000 to Advance Central Valley Ag Manufacturing

Sacramento, Chico, Fresno, and Central Sierra partnering regions lead AgPlus Initiative

SACRAMENTO, CA — Valley Vision Managing Director Trish Kelly was notified today by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) that California's Central Valley will be awarded \$250,000 to carry out implementation activities as part of the Valley's Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP).

IMCP is a federal designation that unlocks access to up to more than \$2 billion in federal resources and assistance from 11 different federal agencies to accelerate the resurgence of manufacturing in region's across the country. The Central Valley AgPlus Food and Beverage Manufacturing Consortium received an IMCP designation in July 2015. The Consortium includes 28 of California's 58 counties, extending from Bakersfield to Redding, Shasta County in the north, and the Coastal mountain range to the West. The Central Valley Consortium is the largest of the 24 IMCP regions in the country.

EDA grants are awarded through a highly competitive process. The EDA award is its first for the AgPlus Consortium. The funds provide the mega-region with a huge advantage for accelerating the resurgence of advanced manufacturing and for creating an environment for businesses to grow and create well-paying manufacturing jobs in the food processing and agricultural industries.

"The Central Valley is the most productive agricultural region in the country," said Congresswoman Doris Matsui. "These federal funds will support the AgPlus implementation plan, which strengthens food and beverage manufacturing. I look forward to seeing the ways this grant helps foster continued economic growth and job creation in the region."

Four co-leadership organizations will implement the AgPlus project, including Valley Vision headquartered here in Sacramento. The others are CSU Fresno Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED), CSU Chico Center for Economic Development (CED), and the Tuolumne County Economic Development Authority (TCEDA). Partners of the Central Valley AgPlus Consortium will provide a \$250,000 match, for a total project budget of \$500,00 over two years.

"The investment impact will be to accelerate the growth, expansion, competitiveness and prosperity of the food and beverage manufacturing cluster in the Central Valley," said Kelly. "This includes key supply chain technologies that will improve the efficiency, productivity and sustainability of one of California's most important economic clusters."

California is the largest agricultural economy in the U.S., and among the top ten globally. The Central Valley plays a dominant role in this economy with production agriculture yielding a farm gate value of \$40.7 billion in 2013 (greater than the value of 19 U.S. states combined). Agricultural production fuels growth in the food manufacturing sector as these industries are part of a highly integrated supply chain. Food processing is California's third largest manufacturing sector.

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“Although the Central Valley provides 68% of California’s overall farm gate value, the Valley’s 1,650 food and beverage manufacturing establishments accounted for only about 40% of the state’s food and beverage manufacturing output,” said Mike Dozier, Executive Director at OCED. “The economic loss of value-added manufacturing and jobs is a contributing factor to the Central Valley’s chronic and persistent high levels of unemployment and poverty.”

As the implementation lead, Valley Vision has been working with partners at the regional, state and federal level to advance innovation in manufacturing and ag-related industries. AgPlus Consortium members are collaborating to develop projects in six IMCP implementation areas that together form a region’s manufacturing eco-system: Workforce, Infrastructure, Access, Innovation, Key Supply Chains, and International Trade.

“EDA’s valuable support will enable AgPlus Consortium members to drive increased investment in the Valley’s Ag Manufacturing ecosystem,” Kelly added. “This will lead to the creation of new middle skilled jobs across the entire cluster and provide opportunities developing new technologies and products to address the global food challenge.”

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Valley Vision | Since 1994, Valley Vision’s work has driven transformative change for Northern California. An independent civic leadership organization headquartered in Sacramento, Valley Vision strengthens our communities by creating the conditions for improved quality of life, economic growth and community vitality. Through unbiased research, boundary-crossing collaboration and change leadership, our contributions help make California’s Capital Region one of the most livable in the nation.