

# SOUTHERN IDAHO'S AGRIBUSINESS ADVANTAGE: THE RIGHT PEOPLE, LOCATION AND PRODUCT

By Madeleine Smith, Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization

World-class recreation and must-see landmarks aren't the only attractions that Southern Idaho has to offer. What else? Food. From Chobani, to Clif Bar, to Glanbia Nutritionals, the six-county region is home to some of the world's biggest food processors.

It's why Southern Idaho leads the state in agribusiness, contributing nearly half of Idaho's total agriculture receipts. In 2015, the region earned the prestigious *Federal Manufacturing Community Designation* in the food category—one of only four nationally to do so. This national “stamp of approval” further cements the small region's economic leadership in the global marketplace of all things food.

What is putting Southern Idaho at the heart of global food processing? The region's people, location and product all work together to make it flourish.

**The Right People.** At the core of food processing is people. And in order to continue feeding the world, businesses need a qualified workforce to keep the wheels turning. Not only does Southern Idaho have many global companies who hire and train the next generation of food processors, the region also has resources available to those interested in launching their careers and companies wanting to hire the best workers.

The *College of Southern Idaho's (CSI) Food Processing Technology Program* gives students in the region the necessary skills, certifications and degrees to succeed in areas of quality control, sanitation, maintenance/utility, controls and production operation.



“Careers in food processing facilities are highly diversified,” said Janna Hamlett, Assistant Professor of Food Science/Quality Assurance at CSI. “Some people think that a job in a food plant is all about manual labor, however most of that labor is done with automation like robots. The food facilities need people with critical thinking, lab, people management, engineering and warehousing skills. The CSI Food Processing program allows people to explore different careers among the different food manufacturing categories.”

The program is designed by the local food manufacturing industry, focused on people getting a career in the local industry. The lab equipment mimics the type of equipment students will see in the manufacturing facility, just on a smaller scale.

CSI also offers the Workforce Development program, with a mission to bring businesses, professionals and industries together to create customized training programs specific to their needs and the growth of the region's talent. This works to assure the local workforce is qualified to meet the challenges brought on by a rapidly-changing and growing economy. The program currently

provides training in the food processing industry, in addition to welding, industrial safety, maintenance, manufacturing and healthcare. These types of programs work to enrich the workforce while assisting local companies in their own growth and prosperity.

“We're able to provide an educated workforce for companies to be able to use for their new and existing facilities,” said Hamlett. “In addition, we're able to provide customized training for prospective companies as they hire new people so that workforce is ready to go when the paint is dry and the facility is open.”

**The Right Location.** The natural beauty from the Snake River, Shoshone Falls and the area's unique terrain aren't the only things that gave the region its nickname, “The Magic Valley.” Historically, Southern Idaho canals carried water from the Snake River to the desert soil to create productive farmland. This, in addition to the region's mild four-season climate, makes Southern Idaho an agricultural center.



In addition, the Magic Valley is ideally located in the mountain west. The state capital, Boise, is located approximately 115 miles northwest with Salt Lake City



230 miles southeast. From the west, east, north and south, interstate availability for goods and products are only a one-day truck route to Oregon, Washington, Utah and Nevada, with two-day routes to California, Colorado and Arizona.

The region also boasts rail infrastructure with a branch line connecting to the UPSP mainline and the Eastern Idaho Railroad (EIRR). EIRR has nearly 270 mainline miles and carries nearly 35,000 annual car load capacity.

This fully-developed infrastructure to process, package, store and transport products across the region, nation and globe ensure current and future agribusiness goods and services are produced economically and responsibly.

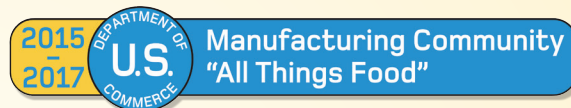
The Right Product. With a dedicated workforce and ideal location, Southern Idaho's agricultural opportunities are abundant. The region is proudly dubbed "America's Most Diverse Food Basket," and it's not hard to see why when taking a look at its output. Nationally, Southern Idaho ranks top of the list for a variety of cross-industry foods, including:

- #1 in commercial trout and potatoes
- #2 in barley and sugar beats
- #3 in cheese and milk
- #4 in dry edible beans
- #5 in spring wheat

This diverse food production output has created an environment with a wide range of products and

complimentary support services that sustain and grow this economic base for effective food processing, food science, R&D, warehousing, distribution, dairy production, potato processing, aquaculture and meat processing to name a few. The state's products and services are why Southern Idaho ranks in the top third of U.S. states for food processing.

With the assets, environment and infrastructure to help the workforce and business community thrive for future growth, Southern Idaho is a leading region in the United States to locate any agribusiness and food processing facility. 🏭



## Why Southern Idaho?

Elite Manufacturing Community designation by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Agri-business sectors include crops, freshwater Rainbow Trout, aquaculture, dairy, food processing, food science, packaging, warehousing and distribution.

**Southern IDAHO**  
Feed Your Soul!

**SOUTHERN IDAHO ALL THINGS FOOD**

DAIRY, TROPICAL FISH, CHEESE, WHEAT, TILAPIA, BUFFALO, POTATOES, LAMB, HAY, BEEF, HONEY, SUGAR BEETS, YOGURT, SEEDS, PORK, BARLEY, YAM, TROUT, BEANS, U.S. Manufacturing Community "All Things Food"

CHOBANI, Elmer's, McCain, ConAgra Foods, glanbia, DAYSCO

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