

**RESULTS: Pat's Pastured****LEAN MANUFACTURING KAIZEN  
INCREASES POULTRY PROCESSING  
BY 50%****COMPANY PROFILE**

Pat's Pastured, a 150+ acre farm located in East Greenwich, RI, was founded in 2002 by Patrick and Kelly McNiff. The farm raises 100% grass-fed beef, pasture-raised chicken, pigs, and turkeys that are never given antibiotics, steroids, or hormones. The company has 9 employees that process food on-site to sell to local companies and the public.

**SITUATION**

The farm was experiencing success and growth however the chicken processing workflow took far too long to complete. Associates were spending more time handling the chicken than processing it, creating significant time and motion waste, and increasing the time it took to process the chicken.

The company also needed to become more efficient due to labor shortages. "I'd love to have more people" said founder Patrick McNiff. "With the margins in farming, we can't invest in huge pieces of equipment to improve the process. Right now, we need to improve our efficiency with the people we have."

Pat's Pastured leadership set an ambitious goal to increase processing by 50%. McNiff had been exploring efficiency concepts after he and several other farmers were inspired by the book "The Lean Farm," by Ben Hartman. The farms worked with Polaris MEP to form a cohort of Lean manufacturing learners. From that experience, McNiff recognized that Polaris MEP could help his team reach their target.

**SOLUTION**

Polaris MEP conducted a kaizen event where Pat's Pastured team members were taught lean principles. "We were lucky enough to have both Nathan [Bonds] from Polaris MEP and another farmer give us shiny eyes" on processes. The event identified non-value-added practices and got the team committed to continuous improvement.

First, the workflow was mapped so the full picture of the process of cutting, transferring and storing birds was clear. Project Manager Nathan Bonds and McNiff quickly determined that swiftly meeting the goal of a 50% increase in production volume could not be accomplished without compromising safety or quality. So the team revised its immediate objectives. "We wanted to get some quick wins – big impact from small changes," said Bonds.

Next, a new workflow or "future state" was created with the help of associates. Through this process a new method of cutting was identified, encouraging the use of both hands and speeding up production. Each station now had their own storage, eliminating wait time.

The kaizen event helped create a culture of continuous improvement. McNiff explained. "We actually have gone even further based on what we learned in that event, with little experiments in speed. Polaris MEP also is working with us on another project so we can continue to improve."



# IMPACTS



Decreased labor expense  
by **33%**



Decrease processing time by  
**5.5 hours a week**



To learn more, read the full Success Story at  
**<https://bit.ly/3wYQOTS>**



*Working with Polaris MEP has been great. It has helped us look at and improve the training we do. Nathan is wonderful in helping us think through the processes so we can work better with our team.*



**Patrick McNiff**  
Owner



**Looking for greater  
profitability and  
productivity?**

Find out how we can help!

Visit **[polarismep.org/schedule](https://polarismep.org/schedule)**  
or call **401-207-8896**