

## Lezanne's Story



### **Background**

Lezanne originally went to school to work in the hospitality industry. After working at a hotel for two months, she felt that the industry was not the right fit for her and decided to take a job at the Carmen Multi-Purpose Cooperative, a local credit union. During her time at Carmen MPC, Lezanne learned of the Wisconsin Microfinance program and decided to apply for a loan with the intention of starting her own pig raising business. With the constant demand for meat in the area, pig raising and meat vending became a stable source of income for her. In 2017, she was



finally able to resign from her position at the cooperative and pursue pig raising full-time to become one of area's regular meat suppliers.

Since the start of her business, Lezanne has been raising the pigs in the yard of her own home, just as other small-scale meat suppliers. At first, the loan allowed Lezanne to buy three piglets, and over time, three became five, and eventually five became nine. Additional loans made it possible for her to expand from one pig pen to five. There was even a point where she was raising 16 piglets.

Maintaining a piggery of that size, however, can create disturbances for neighboring households. Some of Lezanne's neighbors were unhappy with the smell coming from her property and called a health worker to investigate her enterprise. Upon his visit, the health worker instructed Lezanne to limit her piggery to 10 pigs at a time. She used an additional loan to buy a different plot of land with husband, but she does not yet have enough capital to build the necessary pens. Moreover, her biggest business expense are the water tanks used to wash her pigs. She currently has three water tanks in order to be able to wash her 10 pigs 3-4 times a day. If she expands her business to the second plot of land, she will need to somehow generate enough income to afford the infrastructure and supplies for raising more pigs. In the meantime, she will continue supplying meat on a smaller scale.



Despite the issues with her neighbors and lack of resources to expand, supplying meat has been an overall success for Lezanne. With the support of her former colleagues, she has been able to sell her meat twice a month to loyal customers. Personal networking has been the key to her success, since becoming a market vendor and supplying meat on a more frequent basis is still out of reach. For now, she is content with her overall ability to start a business and build a supportive customer base.

