

## ‘AW, NUTS!

Heartland Nuts ‘N More is a for-profit producer-owned cooperative whose members produce high-quality cultivar black walnuts or northern pecan nuts. According to their website, their black walnuts taste better because they “harvest the nuts at just the right time while still on the tree—then immediately hull, wash and dry them to retain that mild but rich natural walnut flavor”.

Prior to the formation of the cooperative, small independent producers found the high costs of processing machinery and demand for large quantities of nuts from buyers prohibitive. The collective pooling, processing and marketing of nut products through the cooperative have allowed members to expand marketing efforts for their high quality nuts.

With assistance from an Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Agriculture grant, the cooperative remodeled its Valparaiso facility and purchased equipment to improve processing efficiency and eliminate production bottlenecks. They added equipment for nutshell grinding, providing another possible revenue source for cooperative members. Ground shell products are used as soft abrasive, blasting media, and bio fuels expanding marketing potential for the membership.

The remodeled facility has encouraged more walk-in traffic and raised sales. The purchased equipment has made harvesting and processing nut products less labor intensive leading to decreasing production costs and increasing profitability.

Marketing continues to be a challenge as the cooperative strives to create a niche market for a superior nut product and they are beginning to market in states neighboring Nebraska.

To learn more about Heartland Nuts ‘N More visit their website:  
[www.heartlandnutsnmore.com](http://www.heartlandnutsnmore.com)

