



Local Meat Processing & The 2023 Farm Bill

The 2023 Farm Bill must maintain investments in local and regional meat processing programs to support good jobs in rural communities and reduce burdens for farmers.

The bipartisan, bicameral **Strengthening Local Processing Act (SLPA)** lays out a national strategy for sustained investment in our small and very small meat processing plants. The SLPA increases states' ability to opt-in to cooperative interstate shipment, provides guidance on how to ensure food safety across small and very small plants, and invests in developing the highly skilled workforce necessary for local processing plants to thrive.

Supporting the SLPA will help ensure the 2023 Farm Bill continues the historic pandemic-response investment in small meat processing plants that is helping create a more resilient and diversified food processing system and reducing logistical complexity for farmers.

Specifically, the SLPA:

Addresses the workforce shortage by creating new training programs for jobs in meat processing.

- Authorizes the Processor Career Training Program, which reimburses plants for investing in on-the-job training programs, with an appropriations authorization of \$10 million annually.
- Authorizes the Institutional Career Training Program, which creates other avenues for meat processing skill-building and education at rural educational institutions, with an appropriations authorization of \$10 million annually.

Increases regional and interstate trade, creating new opportunities for farmers and meat processors.

- Expands potential participation in the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program, allowing for greater supply into local and regional markets that cross state borders
- Increases the amount of cost share for states that are part of CIS, the amount of funding available for reimbursement of state inspections of small and very small plants, and outreach to states that wish to participate in the program.

Expands technical assistance to support scaling existing plants and viability of new plants.

- Codifies a need for a library of size-appropriate Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans to provide clear outlines for how plants of those sizes can comply with regulatory requirements.
- Ensures effective utilization of previous investments by providing proper, scale-appropriate resources for compliance with food safety protocols.

Promotes a vibrant and competitive meat processing sector by expanding local and regional processing capacity.

- Builds on the one-time investments in USDA meat and poultry supply chain initiatives, sustaining funding for critical capacity expansion grants by authorizing up to \$20 million to be appropriated annually.

**For more information, please contact Connor Kippe, Policy Specialist,
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition at 202-547-5754 or ckippe@sustainableagriculture.net**

