

## INTERSTATE SHIPMENT LEGISLATION

### Creates a More Uniform & Seamless Inspection System

- Current law is outdated. State and federal inspection programs should function together as a seamless system in both intrastate *and* interstate commerce. Interstate shipment legislation would further improve food safety by creating a more uniform system and increasing consumer confidence.
- Today, there are no real distinctions between federal and state inspection requirements. State meat and poultry inspection programs must equal or exceed the level of food safety for the federal inspection program. This has been verified through USDA's annual reviews and oversight of state inspection programs over the past 35 years.
- *Since the late 1960's USDA has never unilaterally found that a state inspection program should be discontinued because of inadequacies in its inspection program.* In fact, many states impose inspection requirements more stringent than USDA.
- In approximately one-third of the states with inspection programs, the state inspectors are providing inspection coverage for *both* federal and state facilities.

### Enhanced Oversight & Review

- USDA began a new comprehensive review of state meat and poultry inspection programs in spring/summer 2003. In fall 2004, USDA updated its policy and procedures for reviewing state inspection programs, including a new review manual which has further strengthened testing and training requirements. USDA issued a June 2005 report which found that state inspection programs are "at least equal to" federal inspection. *This review data continues to demonstrate that state inspection programs are highly effective and provide consumers with a wholesome, unadulterated food product that is properly labeled and safe. At a minimum, the review data adds a margin of safety to the state inspection process.*
- The question of removing the ban on interstate meat shipment is *not* a food safety issue, but an economic fairness issue. States are allowed to inspect "non-amenable" products—such as venison, buffalo, squab, quail and pheasant—and interstate shipment of these state-inspected products has been allowed for many years and deemed safe for commerce and consumers. The interstate ban on beef, lamb, pork, and goat does not make sense.
- State and local government programs currently conduct more than 80 percent of the food establishment inspections, respond to and manage the majority of food emergencies in the nation, and conduct the majority of food products testing for bacteriological or chemical contamination. The mission of state meat inspection programs is to provide consumers with a wholesome, unadulterated product that is properly labeled and safe.