

NEWS RELEASE
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COMPROMISE REACHED ON STATE MEAT INSPECTION

Washington, D.C. – A compromise has been reached on allowing interstate shipment of state-inspected meat and the provision will be included in the senate version of the farm bill, says Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson.

Johnson, the president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, announced the compromise after a series of meetings in Washington, D.C. last week and further negotiations with consumer, labor and farm groups and Congressional leaders over the weekend.

“The compromise creates a new, optional program within federal law that provides federal oversight of state-inspected facilities that want to ship products across state lines,” Johnson said.

Johnson noted that under the compromise, state inspection programs will continue to maintain their current cooperative agreements with the federal government which require state programs to be at least “equal to” federal requirements.

“The goal of this new program is to ensure the safety of meat and poultry products sold in interstate commerce and to open new markets for products from smaller, state-inspected companies,” Johnson said.

Processing establishments with up to 25 employees will be eligible to participate in the program. Companies will be required to use a federal mark, stamp, tag or label of inspection.

Johnson has lobbied on behalf of NASDA and state-inspected processing establishments, arguing that these businesses meet or exceed all federal food safety requirements.

“The present system is simply unfair and wrong,” he said. “Meat and poultry products from nearly 40 countries can be shipped and sold anywhere in the United States, while state-inspected products are limited to their state of origin.”

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