

SUPPLY CHAIN

FOOD AND PRODUCTION SUPPLY CHAIN

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture is committed to ensuring long-term stability and resilience in our nation's food supply chain through supporting projects to increase U.S. meat processing, food and nutrition security and reducing food waste.



MEAT PROCESSING

Supply chain interruptions have exacerbated the need for adjustments in existing meat processing capacity and potentially the creation of additional meat processing capacities across the nation. Increasing access to both domestic and international markets is necessary to bolster U.S. meat processing capacity and decrease the number of backlogged livestock, all while maintaining the stringent food safety standards consumers expect during a supply chain disruption.

State departments of agriculture play a central role in identifying and coordinating food chain and meat production relationships, as well as leading outreach and regulatory authority to state inspected meat processing facilities. Twenty-seven state departments of agriculture operate state meat and poultry inspection programs, from which nine states participate in Cooperative Interstate Shipment Programs. During the pandemic, state departments of agriculture effectively implemented programs provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the CARES Act. This program has greatly assisted state and custom-exempt slaughter and processing plants to significantly increase the production of food.

Expanding the ability of meat processors across the country to effectively fulfill consumer demand without compromising safety or health is a priority for NASDA. An enhanced meat processing system will give producers and consumers much-needed options.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

NASDA supports addressing hunger and food insecurity solutions with the goal of ending hunger in our nation. State departments of agriculture are uniquely positioned, formally and informally, to connect farmers and ranchers with entities (public and private) providing support to food insecure communities. Further, if provided adequate resources state departments of agriculture can leverage and/or implement federal programs at the state level that can best meet local objectives.

NASDA published a [Food Security Toolkit](#) in 2021 to increase awareness and improve coordination around hunger solutions. NASDA surveyed state departments of agriculture and found that successful state food security programs involve partnerships between the public and private sector using federal grants and aligned with organizations focusing on food policy. The Food Security Toolkit has shown that when state departments of agriculture partner with other entities including federal partners, state residents become more food-secure and farmers, ranchers, and food producers within the state benefit from wider market-access.



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FOOD WASTE

There are many highly successful food waste reduction programs across our country, many of them founded and funded locally. The further reduction of food waste must play a role in USDA's strategy around food and nutrition security, and involve all appropriate organizations, not the least being federal, state and local governments. NASDA supports extending the inter-agency agreement between the USDA, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Food and Drug Administration to achieve the national goal of reducing food loss and waste in the U.S. by 50 percent by 2030. Further, NASDA supports additional efforts to improve coordination and communication amongst federal, state and municipal stakeholders to use resources more efficiently and effectively when addressing food waste.

NASDA REGULATORY REQUESTS:

Expanding Meat and Poultry Processing Capacity

NASDA appreciates USDA meeting NASDA's recommendations to invest in large-infrastructure costs, technical assistance for grant applicants, and support for workforce training. However, implementing this USDA program on a national level has resulted in an unnecessarily cumbersome and difficult application process. State agriculture departments remain best suited to implement and administer grants to local meat processors to increase meat processing capacity.

NASDA supports entering into a cooperative agreement with USDA to comprehensively define state and USDA responsibilities in relation to current and future meat processing grant programs.

Healthy Food for Food Insecure Americans and Build Food Bank Capacity

NASDA recommends USDA provide dedicated funding to state departments of agriculture (or other designated state agencies) to support both the purchase of local food for food banks and all necessary administrative costs incurred by the states.

NASDA LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS:

- NASDA encourages Congress to provide funding opportunities for meat processing training, modernizing outdated processing facilities and provide technical assistance for food safety programs.
- NASDA encourages Congress to give USDA resources to provide block meat processor grants to state agriculture departments permitting those departments to administer those block grants as appropriate in consideration of that state's particular needs and requirements.

January 2023



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