



# NASDA

## Policy Materials

### 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

- Committee Agendas
- Policy Amendments & Action Items

*Please note printed policy books will NOT be available at this year's meeting. All documents are available on our app.*

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# NASDA

## Committee Agendas

2026 Winter Policy Conference

# Food Systems and Nutrition Committee

*Chair: Secretary Karen Ross, California*

*Vice-Chair: Commissioner Ashley Randle, Massachusetts*

*NASDA Staff Contact: Becky Garrison Warfel*

## Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 | 12:30 PM-1:30 PM ET | 2026 Winter Policy Conference | Congressional A

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### Opening Remarks (12:30)

- Secretary Karen Ross, California
- Commissioner Ashley Randle, Massachusetts

### Food Systems & Nutrition Policy Updates (12:40)

- Becky Garrison Warfel, *Director of Public Policy, NASDA*
  - 2026 Policy Landscape: Opportunities & Challenges
    - Food Systems, Nutrition Security & Food Safety
    - New 2026 NASDA Policy Priority: “Regional Food Procurement & Distribution”
    - MAHA State Laws & Federal Preemption
    - Impacts to Food Safety – Joe Reardon, Senior Director of Food Safety Programs, NASDA Foundation

### Food Safety & FDA Cooperative Agreement Updates (12:50)

- Joe Reardon, *Senior Director of Food Safety Programs, NASDA Foundation*
  - 2026 Produce Notice of Funding Opportunity – Status & Funding Levels for States
    - Transitions for Path A States
  - 2026 Produce Consortium
  - State Employee Trainings
  - Update on “FDA Bridge Project” - Transitioning Routine Inspections to the States
    - Overview & Timeline

### FY 2027 Appropriations Advocacy for FDA Cooperative Agreement (1:00)

- Becky Garrison Warfel, *Director of Public Policy, NASDA*

### Consideration of Policy Amendments and Action Items (1:05)

- Policy Amendment 1, Nutrition Education and Community-Based Initiatives

### Open Dialogue (1:20)

- Secretary Karen Ross, California

### Adjourn (1:30)

# Natural Resources & Environment Committee

*Chair: Secretary Jeff Witte, New Mexico*

*Vice-Chair: Secretary Kevin Atticks, Maryland*

*NASDA Contact: Logan Moss*

## Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 | 12:30 – 1:30 PM ET | 2026 Winter Policy Conference | District B

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### Opening Remarks (12:30)

- Secretary Witte, New Mexico
- Secretary Kevin Atticks, Maryland

### Consideration of Policy Amendments and Action Items (12:40)

- Policy Amendment 4, Federal Tax Credit for Agriculture Conservation Easements

### Updates from America's Electric Cooperatives on FEMA & Opportunities for Improving Disaster Response and Recovery in Rural America (12:55)

- Will Mitchell, *Legislative Affairs Director, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*

### Open Dialogue (1:15)

- Secretary Witte, New Mexico

### Adjourn (1:30)

# **Animal Agriculture Committee**

*Chair: Director Sherry Vinton, Nebraska*

*Vice-Chair: Secretary Randy Romanski, Wisconsin*

*NASDA Contact: Logan Moss*

## **Meeting Agenda**

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 | 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET | 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference | District B

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### **Opening Remarks (2:00)**

- Director Sherry Vinton, Nebraska
- Secretary Randy Romanski, Wisconsin

### **Overview of Cyber, Criminal, and National Security Threats to Agriculture (2:05)**

- Eugene Kowel, *Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)*

### **Consideration of Policy Amendments and Action Items (2:20)**

- Policy Amendment 5, Development of Standing National Action Plans for Animal Diseases of Significance
- Policy Amendment 6, State-Inspected Meat Program Sold in Interstate Commerce
- Action Item A, State-Inspected Meat Program (Risk-Based Inspection)

### **An Update from USDA-APHIS (2:35)**

- Kelly Moore, *Administrator, USDA-APHIS*
- Dr. Allen Huddleston, *Chief Veterinary Officer, USDA-APHIS*

### **Open Dialogue (2:55)**

- Director Sherry Vinton, Nebraska

### **Adjourn (3:00)**

# Rural Development and Financial Security Committee

*Chair: Secretary Anson Tebbetts, Vermont*

*Vice-Chair: Director Don Lamb, Indiana*

*NASDA Contact: Patrick Wade*

## Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 | 2:00-3:00 PM ET | 2026 Winter Policy Conference | Congressional A

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### Opening Remarks (2:00)

- Secretary Anson Tebbetts, Vermont
- Director Don Lamb, Indiana

### Consideration of Policy Amendments and Action Items (2:05)

- Policy Amendment 3, Artificial Intelligence Coordination
- Policy Amendment 7, Commercial Driver's License

### Agricultural Labor Reform: Ag Workforce Coalition Priorities in 2026 (2:20)

- Jonathan Sarager, *Senior Director of Federal Government Affairs, Western Growers; Co-Chair, Ag Workforce Coalition*

### Open Dialogue (2:50)

- Secretary Anson Tebbetts, Vermont

### Adjourn (3:00)

# Marketing and International Trade Committee

*Chair: Commissioner Richard Ball, New York*

*Vice-Chair: Secretary Mike Beam, Kansas*

*NASDA Contact: RJ Karney*

## Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 | 3:30 – 4:30 PM ET | 2026 Winter Policy Conference | District B

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### Opening Remarks (3:30)

- Commissioner Richard Ball, New York
- Secretary Mike Beam, Kansas

### Consideration of Policy Amendments and Action Items (3:35)

- Policy Amendment 2, Specialty Crop Insurance

### United States Agricultural Trade Update (3:40)

- Jason Hafemeister, *Trade Counsel, Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA* **(Tentative)**

### Canadian Delegation Remarks (4:15)

- Hon. Trevor Jones, *Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, Ontario*
- Hon. David Marit, *Minister of Agriculture, Saskatchewan*
- Jason Hale, *Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Alberta*

### Open Dialogue (4:25)

- Commissioner Richard Ball, New York

### Adjourn (4:30)



# Plant Agriculture & Pesticide Regulation Committee

*Chair: Director Chris Chinn, Missouri*

*Vice-Chair: Director Chanel Tewalt, Idaho*

*NASDA Contact: Patrick Wade*

## Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 | 3:30 – 4:30 PM ET | 2026 Winter Policy Conference | Congressional A

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### Opening Remarks (3:30)

- Director Chris Chinn, Missouri
- Director Chanel Tewalt, Idaho

### Consideration of Policy Amendments and Action Items (3:35)

- No submissions before the deadline

### Plant Biotechnology in 2026: Emerging Regulations, Litigation, and Innovations (3:35)

- Karen Ellis Carr, *Partner, FDA Practice Leader, and Agriculture & AgTech Industry Group Leader at ArentFox Schiff LLP*
- Fan-Li Chou, PhD, *Senior Vice President, Scientific Affairs & Policy, American Seed Trade Association*

### Open Dialogue (4:15)

- Director Chris Chinn, Missouri

### Adjourn (4:30)



# NASDA

## **Policy Amendments and Action Items**

2026 Winter Policy Conference

Proposed Policy Amendments							
<i>Policy Amendment Number</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Submitted By</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Policy Book Page Number</i>	<i>Passed</i>	<i>Passed with Amendment</i>	<i>Failed</i>
1	Nutrition Education and Community-Based Initiatives	Secretary Russell Redding, Pennsylvania	Food Systems & Nutrition				
2	Specialty Crop Insurance	Commissioner Byran Hurlburt, Connecticut Commissioner Ashley Randle, Massachusetts Secretary Russell Redding, Pennsylvania	Marketing & International Trade				
3	Artificial Intelligence Corrdination	Secretary Russell Redding, Pennsylvania	Rural Development & Financial Services				
4	Federal Tax Credit for Agriculture Conservation Easements	Commissioner Kate Greenberg, Colorado	Natural Resources & Environment				
5	Development of Standing National Action Plans for Animal Diseases of Significance	Commissioner Kate Greenberg, Colorado	Animal Agriculture				
6	State-Inspected Meat Program Sold in Interstate Commerce	Secretary Mike Beam, Kansas	Animal Agriculture				
7	Commercial Driver's License	Secretary Mike Beam, Kansas	Rural Development & Financial Services				

States can still propose policy amendments and action items through their regional meetings. However, these proposals will require a 2/3 vote for passage throughout the process.

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

1

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Food Systems and Nutrition

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Policy Amendments (PA) either create a new section or amend an existing section of NASDA's Policy Statements. PAs establish general policy principles of the association and guide NASDA's policy prioritization process and engagement.

### Section Number and Title to be Amended:

5.2. National Feeding and Nutrition Assistance Programs; SNAP-Ed

### Subject of Policy Amendment:

Nutrition Education and Community-Based Initiatives

### Submitted By:

Secretary Russell Redding, Pennsylvania

### Text of Policy Amendment:

Replace: "NASDA supports funding for the SNAP-Ed program through NIFA and state land grant universities, which teaches recipients how to make their SNAP dollars go further and healthier".

New Text: "NASDA recommends federal investments in educational programs and community-based initiatives that help individuals enrolled in SNAP or other food assistance programs make healthier choices."

**Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the Policy Amendment or appear in the NASDA Policy Handbook):

Funding for SNAP-Ed was eliminated in the passage of H.R. 1. However, nutrition education and community-based initiatives continue to be a valuable tool to help SNAP enrollees make healthier decisions. While it's unlikely that SNAP-Ed will come back in the same form, it's important that NASDA have the ability to advocate for nutrition education programs if opportunities arise in a future Farm Bill or other legislative vehicle.

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

2

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Marketing and International Trade

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Policy Amendments (PA) either create a new section or amend an existing section of NASDA's Policy Statements. PAs establish general policy principles of the association and guide NASDA's policy prioritization process and engagement.

### Section Number and Title to be Amended:

11.11 Specialty Crops

### Subject of Policy Amendment:

Specialty Crop Insurance

### Submitted By:

Commissioner Byran Hurlburt, Connecticut  
Commissioner Ashley Randle, Massachusetts  
Secretary Russell Redding, Pennsylvania

### Text of Policy Amendment:

Replace: "NASDA supports additional crop insurance resources for specialty crop farmers".

New Text: "NASDA supports efforts to ensure that federal risk management programs provide crop insurance products that meet the needs of specialty crop growers. Priority should be given to affordable products that offer a payout rate that is advantageous enough to attract participation from small, diversified farms, and a process that is not overly burdensome for those producers."

**Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the Policy Amendment or appear in the NASDA Policy Handbook):

Our agencies have heard feedback from specialty crop growers and insurance providers about the complexity of existing crop insurance programs as being a barrier to participation. In addition, payout rates may not be as straightforward as the insurance products provided to row crop producers. Given the unique nature of specialty crops, along with the value those crops bring to diversified farm operations, we believe that NASDA policy should be updated to address not only the resources of insurance products, but also the ease of access and implementation. We support any effort to reduce barriers to participation for specialty crop growers.

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

3

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Rural Development and Financial Security

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Policy Amendments (PA) either create a new section or amend an existing section of NASDA's Policy Statements. PAs establish general policy principles of the association and guide NASDA's policy prioritization process and engagement.

### Section Number and Title to be Amended:

10.5 Emerging Technology

### Subject of Policy Amendment:

Coordination Around Research for Emerging Technology and Artificial Intelligence

### Submitted By:

Secretary Russell Redding, Pennsylvania

### Text of Policy Amendment:

NASDA encourages greater cooperation between USDA and public-sector research institutions in the development of resources that can aid farmers and agribusinesses to identify emerging technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), solutions that can increase their efficiency and improve their overall stewardship.

**Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the Policy Amendment or appear in the NASDA Policy Handbook): AI has an opportunity to be a useful tool in many aspects of agriculture production. It's important that farmers have a trusted resource to determine which new technology or application may have merit. Both USDA and our Land Grant Universities have a well-deserved reputation of being unbiased sources of information for the agriculture community. Given the rapidly evolving nature of AI technology, greater coordination and resource development is needed.

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

4

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Natural Resources & Environment

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Policy Amendments (PA) either create a new section or amend an existing section of NASDA's Policy Statements. PAs establish general policy principles of the association and guide NASDA's policy prioritization process and engagement.

### Section Number and Title to be Amended:

Conservation Programs Section 7.1.1.1

### Subject of Policy Amendment:

Federal Tax Credit for Agriculture Conservation Easements

### Submitted By:

Commissioner Kate Greenberg, Colorado

### Text of Policy Amendment:

(add to the existing bullet point list in 7.1.1)

NASDA supports incentivizing the voluntary conservation of agricultural land through the existing conservation easement deduction and the development of a federal tax credit for landowners who donate a perpetual conservation easement.

**Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the Policy Amendment or appear in the NASDA Policy Handbook):

The U.S. is experiencing an unprecedented rapid loss of agricultural land, with 2,000 acres of productive farmland lost every day from 2001-2016 and an anticipated additional 18.4 million acres projected to be lost between 2016 and 2040<sup>1</sup>. United States national security depends on a resilient farm economy. Yet acute financial stress driven by rising inputs and falling crop prices, an aging farmer population, and the disproportionate rise in farmland value in comparison to farm profitability<sup>2</sup> continue to create the perfect storm to accelerate further loss of vital productive agricultural lands nationally.

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<sup>1</sup> American Farmland Trust. "Farms Under Threat 2040." [https://Farmlandinfo.Org/Wp-Content/Uploads/Sites/2/2022/06/AFT\\_FUT2040\\_AbundantFuture\\_ExecutiveSummary.Pdf](https://Farmlandinfo.Org/Wp-Content/Uploads/Sites/2/2022/06/AFT_FUT2040_AbundantFuture_ExecutiveSummary.Pdf), 2022.

<sup>2</sup> American Farm Bureau Federation. "Real Estate Rising: Farmland Values Hit Record High," n.d. <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/real-estate-rising-farmland-values-hit-record-high.capital>

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

4

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Natural Resources & Environment

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Access to affordable farm and ranchland is a barrier for farmers and ranchers across the nation, particularly as land values continue to rise at a rate higher than agricultural profitability, particularly in regions experiencing rapid urban growth where development values outpace agricultural production values. Young and beginning farmers remain at a particular disadvantage due to limited existing capital and assets, which is of particular concern considering that over 40% of the nation's farmland is owned by people over 65, so up to 370 million acres of farmland could change hands in the next 20 years. Additional federal incentive opportunities are needed in order to encourage the transfer of our nation's vital productive agricultural lands from farmer to farmer.

Conservation easements provide a valuable tool for keeping agricultural land in production while fostering innovation, conservation, and, in certain cases, affordability. The voluntary option to place a perpetual agricultural conservation easement on the land to keep it in production and reduce its value is a proven and successful tool that increased federal tax incentives would further enhance. Farmers deserve an option that allows them to receive the highest value possible for their land and to keep their land, and a conservation tax credit allows them the option to profit from their land's highest value while preserving farmland from converting to non-agricultural uses. A federal tax credit could incentivize landowners to donate all or part of the value of a conservation easement, building on the success of states such as Colorado that have implemented state tax credit programs for conservation easements.



# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

5

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Animal Agriculture

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Policy Amendments (PA) either create a new section or amend an existing section of NASDA's Policy Statements. PAs establish general policy principles of the association and guide NASDA's policy prioritization process and engagement.

### Section Number and Title to be Amended:

1.1 Foreign and Domestic Animal Health Protection and Disease Control

### Subject of Policy Amendment:

Development of Standing National Action Plans for Animal Diseases of Significance

### Submitted By:

Commissioner Kate Greenberg, Colorado

### Text of Policy Amendment:

(modify 1.1 *Development of a Standing National HPAI Action Plan*)

New Title: *Development of Standing National Action Plans for Animal Diseases of Significance*

NASDA supports the development and maintenance, in close coordination with states, of robust, integrated, and well-communicated national action plans for the detection, surveillance, response, and containment of foreign animal diseases of significance including, but not limited to, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), New World screwworm, and African swine fever. Plans could include the development of vaccinations and treatments but must be accompanied by enhanced or improved biosecurity measures and surveillance.

**Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the Policy Amendment or appear in the NASDA Policy Handbook):

Foreign animal diseases pose serious risks to U.S. livestock and poultry health, producer livelihoods, and the national food supply. It is important for USDA to work closely with State Departments of Agriculture in the development and maintenance of standing national action plans to ensure the United States is proactive and prepared to rapidly detect, respond to, and contain emerging or recurring animal disease threats. An action plan helps:

- Protect the U.S. Food Supply and Economy: Animal disease outbreaks can cause severe animal health impacts and major market disruptions, threatening agricultural productivity and significant economic activity across the livestock, poultry, and broader agricultural sectors.

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

5

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Animal Agriculture

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

- **Coordinate a National Response:** A standing national action plan provides clear operational guidance for a coordinated response to detections or outbreaks, ensuring a unified, whole-of-government effort by linking USDA and federal partners with state, tribal, territorial, and industry stakeholders.
- **Strengthen Biosecurity and Containment:** A coordinated plan strengthens biosecurity and containment by supporting enhanced surveillance and diagnostic capacity, improving border and domestic monitoring, and advancing response tools such as vaccination or treatment strategies (when appropriate), while reinforcing practical, scalable biosecurity measures across operations.

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

6

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Animal Agriculture

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Policy Amendments (PA) either create a new section or amend an existing section of NASDA's Policy Statements. PAs establish general policy principles of the association and guide NASDA's policy prioritization process and engagement.

### Section Number and Title to be Amended:

11.12 Establishment of Production Standards

### Subject of Policy Amendment:

The allowance of state-inspected meat products to be sold in interstate commerce

### Submitted By:

Secretary Mike Beam, Kansas

### Text of Policy Amendment:

NASDA supports the modification of existing or addition of a new USDA-FSIS program allowing meat and poultry products processed at state-inspected meat and poultry processing facilities to enter interstate commerce, provided that the state inspection services meet "at least equal to" FSIS inspection services at federally inspected facilities.

**Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the Policy Amendment or appear in the NASDA Policy Handbook):

At least equal to and same as state meat and poultry inspection programs are held to the same standards as set out by the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) of the USDA for federally inspected facilities. However, product produced by these state-inspected facilities are limited to selling their products within their own state. State-inspected facilities are held to the same standards as federally inspected facilities; however, their commerce is restricted to in-state promotion. While some meat processing facilities would like to seek federal inspections, most small facilities are unable to be licensed due to the limited availability of federal inspectors to provide adequate inspections at times convenient for the plant. Federally inspected plants often have infrastructure requirements that pose a significant obstacle for smaller processing facilities. Allowing products from state-inspected meat processors to be sold in interstate commerce provides more market opportunities for small businesses, more options for consumers, and it relieves pressure on FSIS from needing to provide additional staffing if they were to be federally licensed. FSIS will still conduct their routine audits to ensure that States and the licensees comply with "at least equal to" and "same as" regulations set forth by USDA FSIS.

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Policy Amendment Form

7

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:** Dec. 30, 2025

**Committee:** Rural Development and Financial Security

☐ Adopted by NASDA

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Policy Amendments (PA) either create a new section or amend an existing section of NASDA's Policy Statements. PAs establish general policy principles of the association and guide NASDA's policy prioritization process and engagement.

### Section Number and Title to be Amended:

10.1 Agriculture Transportation

### Subject of Policy Amendment:

Provide opportunities for drivers with a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) who are 18 to 20 years old to travel interstate within a limited range.

### Submitted By:

Secretary Mike Beam, Kansas

### Text of Policy Amendment:

Recommendation to include the following: NASDA supports efforts to allow drivers who hold a valid Commercial Driver's License and are 18 to 20 years old to operate in interstate commerce within a minimum of 150 miles of the base operation.

**Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the Policy Amendment or appear in the NASDA Policy Handbook):

The availability of licensed CDL drivers is often a limiting factor for many agricultural farmers, ranchers, cooperatives, custom harvesters, and other businesses. Currently, some licensed CDL drivers are limited to intrastate travel. This amendment would allow NASDA to advocate for the expansion of allowable service for this subset of CDL drivers. By allowing CDL holders who are 18 to 20 years of age to travel a limited range of interstate miles, it will improve employment opportunities for 18 to 20 year old CDL drivers, expand marketing opportunities for farmers and ranchers, and improve workforce capacity and flexibility for all agribusinesses, especially those with farms and other operations near state lines.

Proposed Action Items							
<i>Action Item Letter</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Submitted By</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Policy Book Page Number</i>	<i>Passed</i>	<i>Passed with Amendment</i>	<i>Failed</i>
A	State-Inspected Meat Program (Risk-Based Inspection)	Director Brian Baldrige, Ohio	Animal Agriculture				

States can still propose policy amendments and action items through their regional meetings. However, these proposals will require a 2/3 vote for passage throughout the process.

# 2026 NASDA Winter Policy Conference

## Action Item Form

A

*To be completed by NASDA Staff:*

**Date Submitted:**

☐ Adopted by NASDA

**Committee:**

☐ Adopted with Amendment by NASDA

☐ Not Adopted by NASDA

**Additional Notes:**

Action Items (AI) highlight a specific current issue Members feel NASDA should act on or other priority issues. AIs do not establish NASDA policy and must comply with existing policy or be accompanied by a corresponding Policy Amendment.

**Subject of Action Item:**

Allow states to establish a risk-based inspection frequency to state inspected meat processing establishments.

**Submitted By:**

Director Brian Baldridge of Ohio

**Corresponding Policy Section & Statement:**

4.5.4 Risk Analysis In Food Safety Regulation

**Text of Action Item:**

NASDA urges USDA and Congress to permit state meat inspection programs to establish risk-based inspection tiers for meat processing facilities.

**Background & Rationale** (Note: Information in this section will not be included in the final text of the Action Item):

Current USDA FSIS policies mandate meat inspection personnel presence at processing facilities daily.

Inspections verify that processing establishments have systems to minimize contamination and illness risk. This occurs daily, regardless of establishment history or risk level, leading to inefficiency and neglecting higher-risk establishments. Allowing states to create risk-based inspection tiers would ensure routine inspection of all meat processing facilities in a timely manner while simultaneously enhancing consumer protection and reducing costs through efficiency.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2024, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) spent over 60,000 hours inspecting processing establishments, only half of which was spent on what ODA would consider as high-risk establishments. Further in 2024, ODA Division of Meat Inspection drove 1.7 million miles. This is equivalent to 68 flights around the world. ODA's inspectors were driving on the clock a total of around 30,000 hours. This represents \$1.2 million of hourly wage being attributed to driving.

Much of this time and mileage is due to the requirement that all processing facilities must be inspected each day they are in operation. Inspectors must leave high-risk inspections (i.e., ready-to-eat products) to drive to a low-risk facility (i.e., single ingredient products such as steaks and roasts) to meet these requirements. Focusing on higher risk establishments by reducing the daily inspection frequency of lower risk establishments would increase the level of public health across the country. While driving is certainly a part of the job it should not be the job. Inspectors should be able to focus on inspections rather than meeting frequency requirements.

