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**State agriculture departments ask USDA to allow for local meat processors to access additional markets**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today at the 2026 Winter Policy Conference, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture members encouraged USDA to develop an additional pathway for products from state-inspected meat and poultry processing facilities to be sold across state lines.

The [policy amendment](#) members passed states that NASDA supports the modification of existing or addition of a new USDA Food Safety Inspection Service program allowing meat and poultry products processed at state-inspected facilities to enter interstate commerce, provided that the inspection services are 'at least equal to' USDA requirements.

NASDA CEO Ted McKinney remarked on state agriculture departments' food safety inspection experience and unique perspective as local advocates for food processors and co-regulators with the federal government.

"One of state agriculture departments' most critical roles is safeguarding the nation's food supply, detecting and preventing the spread of foodborne illnesses and supporting small and medium-sized producers," McKinney said. "With our ability to conduct inspections on behalf of the federal government, saving federal resources, paired with our close relationships with local processors, we have a unique opportunity to efficiently help small-medium sized processors expand their markets regionally."

Facilities inspected by states using "at least equal to" USDA FSIS requirements 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.

"Allowing meat and poultry products from state inspected meat processors to be sold in interstate commerce is a win-win for everyone, providing more market opportunities for small businesses, more options for consumers and saves federal resources."

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NASDA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association which represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. NASDA grows and enhances American agriculture through policy, partnerships and public engagement.



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