



STATE INNOVATION EXCHANGE AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Supporting Regional Meat Processing: Resources

Types of Meat Inspection

- Federal/USDA Inspection: Provided by USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Federally-inspected products can be shipped over state lines and internationally. Plants require extensive documentation and inspection.
- State Inspection: Established in [27 states](#), state inspection programs must be “at least equal to” federal inspection in terms of regulatory rigor.
 - States with state inspection programs may apply to be part of the federal [Cooperative Interstate Shipment](#) (CIS) program, allowing state-inspected meats from qualifying plants to be shipped across state lines. Current CIS participants are: IN, IA, ME, MO, ND, OH, SD, VT, WI.
- Custom-Exempt: Can only slaughter and process livestock for the exclusive use of the livestock owner(s); product cannot be sold. Subject to periodic, risk-based inspection.
- Retail-Exempt: Allows a meat processing business to sell meat at its own retail storefront without daily inspection. Retail-exempt businesses cannot slaughter livestock, and so the meat they sell must come from a USDA plant or in-state from a state plant.

Find more details on inspection types and many more introductory resources at the [Niche Meat Processors Assistance Network](#).

Current federal bills to expand local meat processing:

- [Strengthening Local Processing Act](#), sponsors Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Jeff Fortenberry (R-Nebraska)
- [Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption \(PRIME\) Act](#), sponsors Thomas Massie (R-KY), Chellie Pingree (D-ME)

Examples of how some states have supported regional meat processing

These examples are not meant as recommendations of what would be best in your state. The devil is in the details with policy, and we always recommend working with local advocates who may have a better understanding of the nuances of your state laws and regulations.

Financial assistance programs

Iowa launched a [Meat Processing Expansion and Development Program](#) in August 2020, appropriating \$2 million in CARES Act funding to three grant programs administered by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. Eligible meat and poultry processors can use the recovery funds for business improvements, direct-to-consumer food marketing or continuing education programs.

Other states launched similar programs with COVID-19 relief funds and there may be additional opportunities with funding from the Build Back Better infrastructure bill.

Statutory changes

- [OR HB4206](#) authorized the state Department of Agriculture to oversee a state meat processing and inspection program
- [OR HB 2785](#) created a grant fund to support the brand new state meat inspection program
- [WY HB54](#) establishes a council to develop a strategy for expanding WY meat processing.
- [AR HB1315](#) creates a state meat inspection program, with the rationale that the lack of such a program causes loss of revenue to the state

“Herd share” laws

Wyoming [passed a law](#) in spring 2020 allowing ranchers to sell cuts of meat direct to consumers without the need for USDA-inspected slaughter. Wyoming ranchers can now [sell shares](#) of a herd of livestock and then allow those shareholders to buy cuts of meat when the animals are processed. [Vermont](#) has a similar herd share law.

Other Resources & Opportunities

- [The Pandemic Has the Potential to Finally Transform Meat Processing in the U.S.](#)
- [Halal and Kosher Minnesota Meat Market Assessment: Analysis, Implications and Recommendations](#)

Examples of vocational meat processing programs:

- [Meat Cutting Apprenticeship, San Jose City College](#)
- [Edgewood Locker Introduces Meat Cutting and Butcher Apprenticeship Program](#)
- [Miles Community College News - Meat Processing Program](#)
- [Vocational Meat Cutting Programs \(Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network\)](#)

For more information or specific ideas for your state, please reach out to us at agriculture@stateinnovation.org