

## **INTERSTATE MEAT SALES INCLUDED IN NEW FARM BILL LAW**

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The final 2007/08 Farm Bill includes provisions for a new program to allow interstate sales of meat and poultry from certain state plants. The new interstate program is part of the Livestock Title XI of the Farm Bill legislation and now goes into law since Congress overrode the President's veto on May 22.

NASDA and a coalition of agricultural organizations have long fought for legislation to allow interstate meat sales. USDA must now issue rules to implement the program and NASDA is urging the department to do so as quickly as possible.

The final Farm Bill adopts the Senate proposal and language on interstate meat sales. The legislation creates a new, optional program to allow state-inspected plants that have 25 employees or less to sell their products across state borders. This new Title V program is an optional tool for states and will not replace existing state inspection programs. States will continue to maintain the current Title III cooperative agreements with USDA which require state inspection programs to continue to be "at least equal to" federal requirements.

USDA will designate a position of State Coordinator, who will be a federal employee, for each state inspection program. The state coordinator will visit selected establishments to ensure that they follow all federal meat and poultry inspection laws and food safety requirements. USDA will reimburse states for not less than 60 percent of the costs of operating the new program. Companies in the program will use a federal mark of inspection.

USDA will develop a procedure for plants that are larger than 25 employees and want to ship in interstate commerce to help those companies transition to federal inspection. USDA will also establish an inspection training division to coordinate outreach, education, training and technical assistance for certain small and very small plants. USDA is authorized to provide grants to state agencies to help establishments transition from the existing intrastate inspection program to the new Title V program.

Link to Farm Bill: <http://agriculture.house.gov/inside/FarmBill.html>