



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Livestock and Meat Initiatives

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Early 2020

Virtual meetings held with meat industry stakeholders to discuss challenges brought on by COVID-19. DATCP begins waiving overtime fees for processors that extend harvest times.

May 2020

The Passion for Pork program, led by the Wisconsin Pork Association and DATCP, is announced.

September 2020

DATCP writes budget proposals including funding requests for additional meat inspectors, grants for meat processors, and a meat talent training program to increase processing capacity in Wisconsin.



February 2021

First meeting with the Wisconsin Technical College System to discuss building meat talent training programs. Governor Evers introduces biennial budget including strategic investments in meat industry.

July 2021

After legislative modification, Governor Evers signs 2021-23 biennial budget into law including four meat inspectors to keep pace with industry and \$200,000 per year for Meat Processor Expansion Grants.

January 2022

Governor Evers announces the Meat Talent Development Program, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), investing \$5 million to attract and provide financial support to students in Wisconsin meat processing training programs as well as connect the meat processing industry with potential employees.



May 2022

DATCP announces five meat processors are selected to receive a total of \$200,000 in Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants. In this application window, DATCP received 100 applications requesting more than \$4.4 million in funding and identifying over \$67 million in total project costs.

Governor Evers announces the creation of the Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Grant Program to meet this need, investing up to \$10 million in the program to continue growing Wisconsin's meat processing industry.

August 2022

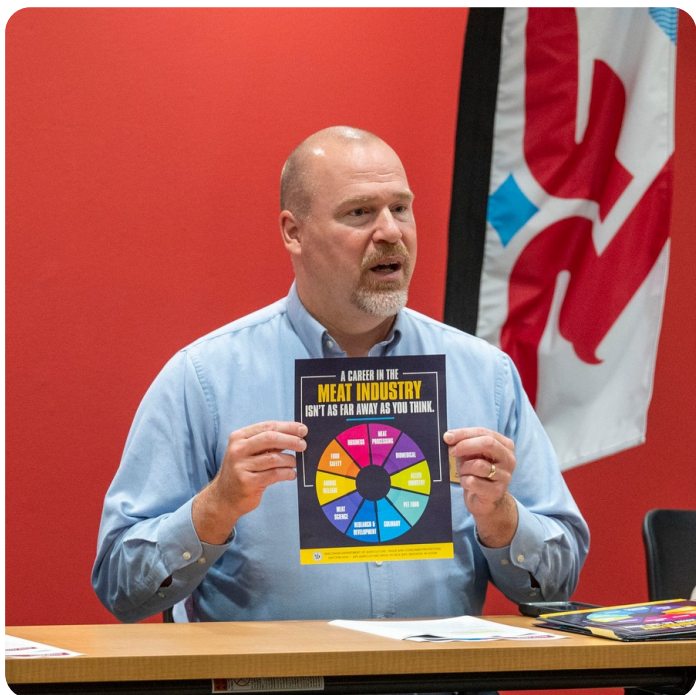
DATCP provides tuition reimbursement for Wisconsin participants of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) training held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. DATCP creates a meat career pathways website to help job seekers identify careers available in the livestock and meat processing industry as well as possible pathways to receive education and training.

September 2022

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls and DATCP announce the development of a high school meat science curriculum to create awareness of opportunities in and attract students to careers in the meat industry.

October 2022

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls and DATCP announce the creation of the Humane Handling Institute, a first-of-its-kind program to provide hands-on training for current meat industry workers in humane pre-slaughter handling, transport, stunning, humane handling program development, and stunning equipment maintenance.



To learn about additional meat initiatives, visit datcp.wi.gov
To access the meat careers pathways website, visit MeatPathways.wi.gov



State of Wisconsin
Governor Tony Evers

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Secretary Randy Romanski

DATCP Livestock and Meat Initiatives Overview

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created challenges across the food supply chain, including in the meat processing industry. Consumers quickly transitioned from regularly eating food at schools and restaurants to stocking up at the grocery store for meals at home. Families also began seeking alternative sources for their foods – including meats – from area farmers and main street businesses, such as small meat processors. This shift highlighted opportunities to strengthen the meat processing industry for the future including investing in infrastructure, increasing capacity, and developing the future workforce.

To maintain regular contact with the state's livestock producers and meat processors, in early 2020 the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) established livestock and animal welfare conference calls to discuss the impacts of COVID-19. These calls allowed DATCP to help make connections across the industry, including helping pork producers to find alternative processing for their hogs when their processors were closed and helping processors find new markets for their products when consumer patterns changed. These conversations also helped develop valuable partnerships like the [Passion for Pork program](#), which used local Wisconsin meat processors to process hogs for food security efforts.

As of the middle of 2020, Wisconsin had around 500 meat establishments, nearly 250 of which were state-inspected. While the COVID-19 pandemic initiated discussions on the meat supply chain, it quickly became apparent that this was the time to bolster Wisconsin's meat processing industry for the future. In September 2020, DATCP began developing concepts that were included in the state biennial budget and, along with industry representatives, appeared before a joint committee of the Wisconsin state legislature to advocate for investment in the meat industry.

In February of 2021, Governor Evers introduced his 2021-2023 biennial budget which included strategic investments in the industry including: \$1 million annually for meat processor expansion grants, \$1.3 million annually for a meat talent development initiative, and six permanent DATCP staff positions for meat inspections to help keep pace with the industry. After legislative modifications, Governor Evers signed the 2021-2023 budget into law, providing DATCP with four project meat inspector staff and \$200,000 for meat processing expansion grants for each year of the biennium. This total investment of \$400,000 over the biennium allowed DATCP to create the [Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant Program](#) to support meat processors as they increase harvest capacity and expand. In the first year of these grants, DATCP received 100 applications requesting more than \$4.4 million in funding and identifying over \$67 million in total project costs. The first recipients of the initial \$200,000 were [announced](#) on May 5, 2022 and DATCP expects the second application period for an additional \$200,000 to open soon.

Wisconsin, like many states, is utilizing federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support resiliency in the meat processing industry and complement other efforts. Utilizing these funds, Governor Evers has created several additional initiatives to support Wisconsin's meat industry.

Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Grants

Recognizing the high demand for the Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants, Governor Evers created the [Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Grants](#), investing up to \$10 million in ARPA funds to continue to grow Wisconsin's meat processing industry and improve the long-term viability of the state's livestock industry. Through this grant, meat processors were able to request up to \$150,000 in grant funding. On October 12, 2022, DATCP [announced](#) the 91 projects selected to receive this grant funding.

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Meat Talent Development Program

Earlier this year, Governor Evers announced up to \$5 million in the [Meat Talent Development Program](#) to help attract students to meat careers, provide financial support to students in Wisconsin meat processing training programs, support program development, and connect the meat processing industry with potential employees. DATCP has been working collaboratively with stakeholders, universities, technical colleges, high schools, meat processors, and groups representing farmers to develop the program. In the coming months, DATCP will continue to develop and implement educational and talent development opportunities through this program. Announced projects include:

- DATCP launched the [“Meat Pathways” website](#), a critical component of the Meat Talent Development Program. The website is designed to help job seekers identify careers in the livestock and meat industry that fit their talents and ambitions as well as connect them with training and education.
- Over the next year, DATCP will work collaboratively with the University of Wisconsin-Madison to hold Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) trainings and provide tuition reimbursement for up to 200 Wisconsin meat processors to attend. Participants that complete the training will receive a certificate of completion and their name will be added to a registry of HACCP trained individuals that is maintained by the International Meat and Poultry HACCP Alliance. The first training was [held](#) in August 2022, and additional trainings will be announced soon.
- In the coming year, DATCP and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) will launch meat industry certificate programs at several WTCS schools, providing additional educational opportunities and preparing students for careers in the meat industry. DATCP will provide tuition assistance to students engaged in these training programs and plans to fund mobile processing units to allow for on-farm harvest and more accessible meat education.
- This fall, DATCP and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls [launched](#) a new meat industry curriculum for Wisconsin high school agricultural education programs. Spanning ten days, the curriculum covers the history of the meat industry, meat processing information, and careers in the meat sector. The program is currently in the pilot stages with plans to release the education program state-wide next year. As part of the program, up to 100 schools can receive small-scale meat processing equipment so students can have hands-on experiences in the classroom.
- Recently, DATCP and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls also [announced](#) the creation of the Humane Handling Institute, a first-of-its-kind program to provide hands-on training for current meat industry workers in humane pre-slaughter handling, transport, stunning, humane handling program development, and stunning equipment maintenance. The program consists of a series of 2.5-day long workshops, and interested participants can select individual workshops or complete the entire series and a project to receive certification. Trainees that receive a certificate are also able to utilize the program logo in marketing and promotional materials. As part of the program, up to two staff per small slaughter facility in Wisconsin will be eligible for reimbursement but courses are open to all interested participants.

Looking to the future, DATCP will continue working with the industry to ensure the meat processing industry in Wisconsin is strong for years to come. For more information on these initiatives, visit [DATCP's website](#) and sign-up for [email updates](#).



State of Wisconsin
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DATCP Livestock and Meat Initiatives Timeline

- March 2020** First livestock and animal welfare conference call scheduled by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), providing a weekly forum for stakeholders to discuss how COVID-19 was impacting livestock producers and meat processors.
- April 2020** First virtual meeting with the Wisconsin Beef Council and Wisconsin Cattlemen to discuss challenges brought on by COVID-19.
- First virtual meeting with the Wisconsin Pork Association to discuss challenges brought on by COVID-19. Staff from the Wisconsin Pork Association and DATCP started reaching out to Wisconsin processors to secure processing for Wisconsin raised market hogs. The meetings would continue to be held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday into the fall of 2020.
- DATCP begins waiving overtime fees for processors extending harvest times.
- May 2020** The Passion for Pork program, led by the Wisconsin Pork Association and DATCP, is [announced](#). The program begins using local, Wisconsin butcher shops to process hogs for food security efforts.
- May-July 2020** DATCP holds meetings with meat industry stakeholders to discuss ways to boost meat processing capacity in Wisconsin. The purpose was to find ways to address needs, identify challenges, and find solutions to address them.
- September 2020** DATCP internally reviews plan for increasing processing capacity in Wisconsin and begins writing budget proposals which included funding requests for meat processor infrastructure grants, additional meat inspectors, and a meat talent training program.
- February 2021** Governor Evers introduces the 2021-2023 state biennial budget including \$1 million annually for meat processor expansion grants, \$1.3 million annually for a meat talent development initiative, and six permanent DATCP staff positions for meat inspections.
- First meeting with Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) to discuss building meat talent training programs.
- March 2021** Stakeholder meetings are split into two focus groups – one focused on grants and the other on meat talent programming.
- April 2021** DATCP staff and meat industry representatives appear before a joint committee of the Wisconsin state legislature to discuss Governor Evers' budget proposals focused on meat initiatives.
- July 2021** After legislative modification, Governor Evers signs the 2021-2023 biennial budget into law. Four meat inspector project positions were approved, the meat processor expansion grants were reduced to \$200,000 per year of the biennium, and there was no funding allocated for meat talent development initiatives. The meat processor expansion grant funds were placed in a supplemental appropriation, requiring DATCP to petition the Joint Committee on Finance for release of the funds.

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- October 2021** The Wisconsin Legislature Joint Committee on Finance releases the meat processor expansion grant funds from their supplemental appropriation fund, allowing DATCP to open the application window for interested processors.
- January 2022** Governor Evers announces the use of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to create the [Meat Talent Development Program](#), providing \$5 million to attract and provide financial support to students in Wisconsin meat processing training programs as well as support program development and connect the meat processing industry with potential employees.
- May 2022** DATCP announces that five meat processors have been selected to receive a total of \$200,000 in state funded [Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants](#). In this application window, DATCP received 100 applications requesting more than \$4.4 million in funding and identifying over \$67 million in total project costs.
- Governor Evers announces the creation of the [Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Grant Program](#), investing up to \$10 million in federal ARPA funds in the program to continue growing Wisconsin's meat processing industry.
- July 2022** DATCP and WTCS host roundtables at three technical colleges across Wisconsin to announce investments in WTCS programs including bolstered meat processing certificate programs and mobile processing units to allow for on-farm harvest and education.
- August 2022** Implementation of a [meat career pathways website](#) to help job seekers identify careers available in the livestock and meat processing industry as well as possible pathways to receive education and training.
- DATCP provides tuition reimbursement for Wisconsin participants of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) training [held](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Up to three additional trainings will be held in the future.
- September 2022** The University of Wisconsin-River Falls and DATCP [announce](#) the development of a high school meat science curriculum to create awareness of opportunities in and attract students to careers in the meat industry. As part of the program, up to 100 schools can receive small-scale meat processing equipment so students can have hands-on experiences in the classroom.
- October 2022** Governor Evers and DATCP announce that 91 meat processors were selected to receive \$10 million in [Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Grants](#).
- The University of Wisconsin-River Falls and DATCP [announce](#) the creation of the Humane Handling Institute, a first-of-its-kind program to provide hands-on training for current meat industry workers in humane pre-slaughter handling, transport, stunning, humane handling program development, and stunning equipment maintenance.