

Funds Released for Meat Processing Grant Program

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/covid-19-workers-meatpacking-s5.jpg>



Governor's meat processor grant program to support meat processing supply chain moves forward.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers and Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Randy Romanski celebrated the release of funds Tuesday in support of the governor's meat processing grant program. Gov. Evers proposed in his 2021-23 biennial budget a new meat processor grant program with \$1 million in each year of the biennium to help meat processors expand and modernize their facilities and operation to keep pace with the supply chain. Funds for the grant program, which were ultimately reduced by the Legislature to \$200,000 annually through the biennial budget process, were today released by the Joint Finance Committee.



"Here in America's Dairyland, we have a strong history of meat production and processing, and we take a lot of pride in that tradition," said Gov. Evers. "I'm proud of our work to create a meat processor grant program to help support meat processors and grow this critically important industry."

Prior to the challenges of the pandemic, waiting lists for meat processing were already beginning to grow. Overall, harvest numbers have been trending higher, even with fewer plants offering slaughter services. Despite this decrease in the number of plants offering slaughter, demand for their services has risen. The global pandemic only heightened the needs to shore up the supply chain. The governor had also proposed creating a new meat talent development grant program, which was ultimately removed by the Legislature during the biennial budget process.

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“This is an industry that has growing demand and an aging infrastructure. Wisconsin processors are having challenges addressing the growing demand for their services without expanding or modernizing facilities, and there’s a lot of need out there to expand processing facilities,” Secretary Romanski said. “We are hopeful that this funding can address some of the demand, but there is still more work to do. Ongoing funding is needed to keep the industry moving, and there is also a need to address talent development in the meat processing industry. This is an opportunity to work with our industry and legislative partners to do more to strengthen the meat processing infrastructure in Wisconsin.”

DATCP consulted with stakeholders to identify the best opportunity to make sure that the funding can be used to increase capacity and reduce the backlog in the supply chain. The grant program will allow meat processing facilities of all sizes to apply for these dollars. This will allow facilities to expand and modernize their facilities and increase processing capacity. Under the Meat Processor Grant Program, DATCP will award grants to meat processing facilities of up to \$50,000. The department plans to release a request for proposal in the coming days.

For additional information on the Meat Processor Grant Program, sign up for [DATCP email updates](#).