



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

[datcp.wi.gov](http://datcp.wi.gov) | [MeatPathways.wi.gov](http://MeatPathways.wi.gov)

## 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.



## July 2023

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Governor Evers and the Wisconsin legislature allocate a one-time increase to \$1.8 million for the Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant Program for 2024, continuing funding at \$200,000 for 2025.



## September 2023

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DATCP begins reimbursing tuition for students enrolled in UW-Madison's Meat Processing School short course. The DATCP and UW-River Falls high school meat science curriculum launches and by the start of 2024, Wisconsin schools have claimed all 100 available lab kits.

## February 2024

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DATCP and partners host a series of free workshops on Producing Quality Beef in Wisconsin at locations around the state; their popularity leads to the scheduling of another series in 2025 and total participation of over 400 producers.

## March 2024

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DATCP collaborates with UW-Madison to create and offer a new Animal Harvest and Fabrication School short course.

## December 2024

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Meat industry training programs at seven Wisconsin Technical College System campuses enhanced or developed with Meat Talent Development funds report robust enrollments and positive response. DATCP has provided tuition reimbursements for 229 students in these programs to date, along with funds to build two mobile processing units that allow field-based learning (a third mobile unit is planned for 2026).



## January 2025

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The Humane Handling Institute at UW-River Falls reports having trained 125 meat processors in humane methods and program development since its inception. It remains the only course of its kind in North America.



## February 2025

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DATCP surpasses its goal of reimbursing 200 processors for completing the UW-Madison HACCP training program with 217. Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant recipients report that on average, each grant dollar has increased sales by \$7.87 and spurred \$237.37 in industry investment.

## March 2025

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The Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Program closes, having supplied \$8.1 million to meat processors across the state. Recipients report that each grant dollar increased sales by \$3.97 and spurred \$5.04 in industry investment, and funded projects created 218 full-time and 68 part-time jobs.



To learn about additional meat initiatives, visit [datcp.wi.gov](http://datcp.wi.gov)  
To access the meat careers pathways website, visit [MeatPathways.wi.gov](http://MeatPathways.wi.gov)



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**Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**  
Secretary Randy Romanski

## **DATCP Livestock and Meat Initiatives Timeline**

Updated June 2025

**March 2020** The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) schedules the first livestock and animal welfare conference call, providing a weekly forum for stakeholders to discuss how COVID-19 is impacting livestock producers and meat processors.

**April 2020** DATCP holds the first virtual meeting with the Wisconsin Beef Council and Wisconsin Cattlemen to discuss challenges brought on by COVID-19.

DATCP holds the 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 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. Discussions center on identifying challenges and finding solutions to address needs.

**September 2020** DATCP internally reviews plan for increasing processing capacity in Wisconsin and begins writing budget proposals that include 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.

DATCP holds 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. It funds four meat inspector project positions and the meat processor expansion grants at \$200,000 per year of the biennium, and allocates no funding for meat talent development initiatives. The meat processor expansion grant funds are 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](#), allocating \$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 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 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. Discussions eventually grow to include programs at seven campuses.

**August 2022** The [meat career pathways website](#) launches 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 begins providing tuition reimbursement for Wisconsin participants of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) training [held](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**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 lab kits 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.

**May 2023** Governor Evers and DATCP [announce](#) that eight processors are being awarded grants totaling \$200,000 through the 2023 Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant Program. The recipients were selected out of 70 applications with more than \$2.8 million in funding requests.

**July 2023** Governor Evers and the Wisconsin legislature continue funding for the Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant Program in the 2023-2025 biennial budget, allocating a one-time increase to \$1.8 million in 2024 and returning to \$200,000 in 2025.

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**September 2023** DATCP begins reimbursing tuition for students enrolled in [UW-Madison's Meat Processing School](#) short course using Meat Talent Development Program funds.

The DATCP and UW-River Falls high school meat science curriculum launches. By the start of 2024, Wisconsin schools have claimed all 100 available lab kits. The curriculum continues to be adopted by schools throughout the state and in other states as well.

**February 2024** DATCP joins with the Wisconsin Beef Council and UW-Madison's Division of Extension Livestock Program to host a series of workshops on Producing Quality Beef in Wisconsin at livestock sales locations around the state, including Bonduel, Monroe, Sparta, and Stratford; over 250 producers attend these free educational events supported by Meat Talent Development Program funding.

**March 2024** DATCP and UW-Madison collaborate to offer a new [Animal Harvest and Fabrication School](#) short course supported by Meat Talent Development Program funds; its success leads to a second course offering in March 2025.

**June 2024** Governor Evers and DATCP [announce](#) 38 recipients of a total \$1.8 million of available funding in Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants.

**November 2024** Due to the popularity of the original Producing Quality Beef in Wisconsin workshops held earlier in 2024, an extra session is added in December in Richland Center, and then a full series is scheduled for 2025 through another livestock sales organization with sessions in Bloomington, Altoona, and Reeseville. These additional workshops, also free to attend thanks to support from Meat Talent Development Program funds, push total participation past 400 producers from across the state.

**December 2024** Meat industry training programs at seven Wisconsin Technical College System campuses that were enhanced or developed in partnership with DATCP report robust enrollments, along with positive response to two mobile processing units built with Meat Talent Development funds to allow field-based learning. A third mobile unit is planned for 2026.

**January 2025** The Humane Handling Institute at UW-River Falls reports having trained 125 meat processors in humane methods and program development since its inception. It remains the only dedicated course of its kind in North America.

**February 2025** DATCP surpasses its initial goal of providing reimbursement for 200 processors through Meat Talent Development Program funds to complete the University of Wisconsin-Madison Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) training program; to date, 217 processors have been reimbursed for completing the training.

A Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants (MPIG) Program data review indicates that the 23 recipients of these grants to date collectively report over \$6.6 million in increased revenue, meaning each grant dollar has increased meat processor sales by \$7.87 and spurred \$237.37 in industry investment. In addition, recipients report creating 14 full-time and 11 part-time jobs due to MPIG funding.

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**March 2025** The Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Program closes, having supplied \$8.1 million in funding to meat processors across the state. Recipients collectively report investing over \$41.1 million of their own money to complete grant projects and earning \$32.4 million in increased profits due to those projects, meaning each grant dollar increased meat processor gross sales by \$3.97 and spurred \$5.04 in industry investment. Recipients also report that these projects directly created 218 full-time and 68 part-time jobs.

**June 2025** Data from partner institutions through the first semester of the 2024-25 academic year indicate that Meat Talent Development Program funds have thus far supplied tuition reimbursement for 627 students: 229 across campuses in the Wisconsin Technical College System; 217 in UW-Madison's HAACP training program; 145 through UW-River Falls Humane Handling Institute; and 36 in UW-Madison's Meat Processing School short course.

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