Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Livestock and Meat Initiatives

datcp.wi.gov MeatPathways.wi.gov

2020

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

The Passion for Pork program, formed to address pork processor slowdowns and led by the Wisconsin Pork Association and DATCP, was announced.

DATCP wrote 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.





July 2021

After legislative modification, Governor Evers signed the 2021-23 biennial budget into law, investing in meat inspectors to keep pace with the industry and providing $200,000 per year for Meat Processor Infastructure Grants.

January 2022

Governor Evers announced 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 connecting the meat processing industry with potential employees.



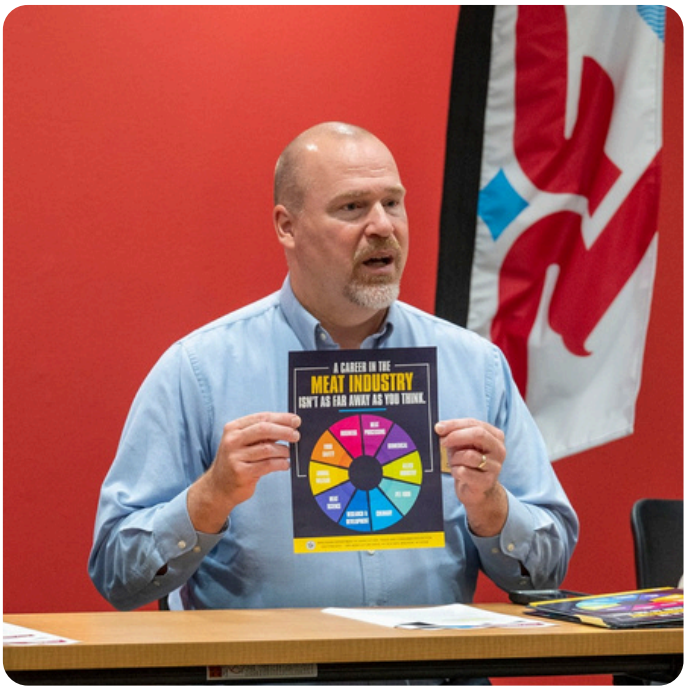
May 2022

DATCP announced five meat processors were selected to receive a total of $200,000 in Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants (MPIG). In this application window, DATCP received 100 applications requesting more than $4.4 million in funding and identifying more than $67 million in total project costs. Governor Evers announced the creation of the Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Grant Program to meet this need, investing up to $10 million of federal dollars in the program to continue growing Wisconsin's meat processing industry.

August 2022

DATCP provided tuition reimbursement for Wisconsin participants of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) training held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

DATCP created 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.



Fall 2022

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls and DATCP announced the development of a high school meat science curriculum and the creation of the Humane Handling Institute, an original program providing hands-on training for current meat industry workers in humane pre-slaughter handling, transport, stunning, humane handling program development, and stunning equipment maintenance.

2023

Eight meat processors received MPIG grants totaling $200,000. The recipients were selected out of 70 applications with more than $2.8 million in funding requests.

Governor Evers and the Wisconsin legislature allocated a one-time increase to $1.8 million for the 2024 MPIG program, continuing funding at $200,000 for 2025.

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



Late Winter 2024

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.

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

DATCP received 70 applications for the 2024 MPIG program totaling $3 million in grant requests. Governor Evers announced the 38 grant recipients and their planned projects.

December 2024

Meat Meat Talent Development funds enhanced or developed meat industry training programs at seven Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) campuses, who reported robust enrollments and a positive response. Funds were also provided to build three mobile processing units that allow field-based learning for WCTS students.



Late Winter 2025

The Humane Handling Institute at UW-River Falls reported training more than 250 meat processors in humane methods and program development since its inception. It remains the only course of its kind in North America.

DATCP surpassed its goal of reimbursing 200 processors for completing the UW-Madison HACCP training program with 217 participating.

The Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Program closed, having **supplied $8.1 million to meat processors** across the state. Recipients reported 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.

A total of $250,000 was available for the 2025 round of MPIG program, with a maximum of $50,000 allowed for each project. DATCP received 51 grant requests totaling more than $2.2 million. Nine processors received funding.



2026

Governor Evers and the legislature approved increasing MPIG program funding to $700,000 for 2026 and 2027. Governor Evers announced that 18 meat processors would receive grants from the 47 applications that requested $1.77 million.

These investments in the meat industry are proving to be effective and meaningful. As of 2025, Wisconsin meat establishments that received MPIG funding collectively reported over **$15.7 million in increased revenue**. Each grant dollar **increased meat processor sales by $11.00** and each grant dollar further **spurred $15.26 in industry investment.**

Five WTCS campuses continue to offer meat processing training with courses developed or enhanced with Meat Talent funding. Students had the ability to take one course or continue to graduation with tuition paid for by the Meat Talent Program. In all, the Meat Talent Program **paid tuition for 493 courses**, with **over 200 individual students** successfully completing at least one course.

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