



# Meat Messenger

North Dakota State Meat and Poultry Inspection Program

2023 Issue 1

## A Message from the Commissioner

Greetings,

Our local meat processing industry remains a critical necessity. We thank you all for your service and helping us to understand your needs.

I wanted to talk about a few things we did last year that could be potential opportunities for your business. Last year we attended the National Restaurant Association show and the Americas Food & Beverage show and provided international trade mission assistance to promote beef and other commodities produced in North Dakota. We had some North Dakota meat processors attend with us. We are planning to do more of this in 2023 and invite other meat processors to participate if you are interested in connecting with buyers from both the U.S. and all over the world. We also increased our Farm to School efforts, along with the Independent Beef Association of North Dakota and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, by encouraging beef producers to sell to schools. Please let us know if you are interested in working with producers to process beef destined for local schools.



We also received a Local Food Purchase Assistance grant in cooperation with Great Plains Food Bank which provides funding to purchase North Dakota beef and other locally grown, minimally processed foods for the North Dakota food bank system. Please contact Stephanie Erickson at the Great Plains Food Bank at (701) 232-6219 if you are interested in this. Interested producers may also complete a form to show interest at [forms.office.com/g/wZTuy84d5N](https://forms.office.com/g/wZTuy84d5N).

We will continue to work with you to strengthen the industry, add value locally and improve local economies. We look forward to continuing to serve you and ensuring a safe and economical meat supply for consumers.

Sincerely,



Doug Goehring

## Meat Messenger

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# Loans Available to Support North Dakota's Meat and Poultry Industry



USDA Rural Development has awarded a \$10 million grant to Lewis & Clark Development Group to create a new Revolving Loan Fund for North Dakota's meat and poultry industry. The grants are part of the Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending

Program (MPILP), which is designed to expand existing meat processing plants and build new operations throughout rural America, with the objective to strengthen the capacity of independent meat and poultry processors, and to create a more resilient, diverse and secure U.S. food supply.

The Lewis & Clark Development Group is accepting applications to issue low interest loans to meat and poultry processing facilities located within the state of North Dakota. The funds can be used for:

- purchasing and developing land or buildings,
- infrastructure for public or private commercial purposes including expansion or modernization, or
- purchasing equipment, working capital, startup costs and more.

The program is available now, and the terms are set based on what each loan is meant for. For more information, contact Chris Masse, Loan Officer with the Lewis & Clark Development Group, at 701-667-7602 or [chris@lcdgroup.org](mailto:chris@lcdgroup.org).

## What would you like to read in the next issue?

The Meat Messenger is your newsletter. If you like the content, please feel free to share this issue with your employees, your livestock producers and customers. We welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions for future topics.

Please contact **Nathan Kroh** at [nkroh@nd.gov](mailto:nkroh@nd.gov) or 701-328-4767.

# Welcome the Newest Meat Inspectors: Codee Knutson & Natalie Berquist



Codee Knutson joined the North Dakota Meat and Poultry Inspection Program in September of 2022. A graduate of Bismarck State College, she was the Lead Animal Technician at the Port of Entry in Portal, ND, prior to joining the Meat Inspection Program. She thinks that the meat inspection program is a good fit for her because she learns something new every day. When she isn't on the job, she explores small towns during the winter, and the water and beaches of Lake Sakakawea in the summer. She is married and has three dogs and a cat.



Natalie Bergquist joined the North Dakota Meat and Poultry Inspection Program in October of 2022. She graduated from NDSU and previously worked as an Animal Research Technician. She is based out of Turtle Lake, where she likes hiking with dog, Millie, an Australian Shepard and lab mix.

Her favorite thing about the meat inspection program is that she gets to go out and visit all the different facilities and no two days are the same.

## NDMPIP Welcomes New State Inspected Slaughter Plants



**Pearson's Green Acre Meats** in Wilton is a small family operated butcher shop. They started slaughtering under state inspection in June 2022. They sell the beef they raise and give back to the community. Summer Pearson, the manager, said that it was challenging to plan the facility to incorporate everything they wanted to do. Every day has been a new lesson in learning the whole process from slaughter, to retail, documentation and time management.

The Pearson family operates a farm and ranch as well. When not in the butcher shop, they are feeding, fixing fence, calving and taking care of the cows. They love the outdoors and will make time to enjoy nature and camping in the summer.

Pearson's Green Acres Meats also provides custom slaughter and stocks a retail store full of options. They are located just a few miles east of Wilton, ND.



**Butcher's Edge** in Edgeley started under custom exempt status in June 2022. They became state inspected on October 7, 2022. Manager Tim Moch had experience cutting meat and the wait times had gotten a lot longer for processing beef which eventually drove Tim and his partners into building a facility. They wanted to retail some local beef and give producers more options for marketing their beef, which is also why they wanted to be state inspected. They mainly do beef and hogs currently

and their plant can handle up to 20 beef per week.

# How to Supply Schools with Meat

Every child deserves a wholesome, filling lunch to help them concentrate and learn throughout the day. High quality meat is one of the items that schools have been trying to add more of into their lunch programs, so many schools have been reaching out to local meat processors to purchase.

All meat sold to a school must be sourced from state or federally inspected animals. The meat can then be cut or ground and sold to the schools. Most retail meat shops can sell the products as part of a Hotel Restaurant Institutions (HRI) sales. The limitation would be that HRI sales cannot exceed 25% of total retail meat sales for the calendar year, or no more than \$91,400 to HRI accounts.

The ND Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) sets the nutritional requirements for schools. Plain ground beef and unseasoned meat cuts are not subject to child nutrition labeling requirements. Further processed or seasoned meat products would need to meet the USDA Child Nutrition Labeling Program requirements. More information on Child Nutrition Labeling can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program>.

The NDDPI has been encouraging schools to purchase meat from local suppliers and they have heard many success stories around the state between processors and schools. For information about supplying schools with meat or other food products, contact Lynelle Johnson, Assistant Director of Child Nutrition, at the NDDPI at 701-328-3718 or [lynellejohnson@nd.gov](mailto:lynellejohnson@nd.gov).

## Sportsmen Against Hunger

Some deer hunters are so successful, they can't handle or store all of the venison they harvest. What can they do with the meat? Sportsmen Against Hunger is a Community Action Partnership of North Dakota that pays processors to grind and package wild game. The wild game is then donated to those in need through food pantries throughout North Dakota.



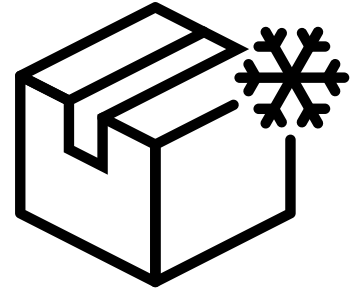
Currently there are 17 processors in North Dakota that are participating in the Sportsmen Against Hunger Program, but several regions are without participating plants. The whole western side of North Dakota does not have any participating plants. If you would like to participate, contact Carmel Froemke, Programs Director, at [programs@capnd.org](mailto:programs@capnd.org) or 701-232-2452.

The program donated 3,996 pounds of meat in 2020, which dropped to 2,770 pounds in 2021. More information can be found at <https://www.capnd.org/programsandinitiatives/statewideprograms/sportsmen-against-hunger/>.

# Shipping Meat Products 101

Do you know how to ship meat to your customers? Common carrier shipping may be more accessible than you realize.

The ultimate goal for shipping meat anywhere is safe and frozen product at the customers front porch. The best way to ensure your products are likely to make the journey is to test your shipping box capabilities. The easiest way to test your shipping boxes is to pack three boxes, exactly like you would like to ship them, then put those boxes in a warm spot. Mechanical rooms or even a car trunk would work. This will essentially simulate high temp exposures that might be found during a 2-3 day shipping expedition. After 24 hours, open box one and determine if product is still frozen. If so, wait until day two, then open box two and examine the product. If still frozen, then you know you can safely ship 2-day ground. The third box can be used to determine if product will stay frozen for a third day or longer. Another option could be placing an inexpensive datalogger inside a single package of frozen meat and then removing it after three days. The data should be able to determine exactly how long the product was cold, and reduce the amount of product used for the experiment.



How should you pack your boxes? The most economical coolant options are ice blankets. These are sheets of dried gel that can be cut to fit almost any box. The light weight sheets are cheaper to purchase and ship to your shop. Once those sheets are hydrated, they can be frozen and then used to wrap your meat. Keep in mind, sausages, bacon, and smaller products tend to thaw much faster.

A thick plastic bag around the meat will limit heat transfer. Then pack the ice blankets around, with more coolant on the top. Stuff the open voids around the coolant with paper shreds or any type of filling. The goal would be to leave a little free space as possible. Only pack your boxes as close to the drop off time as possible or store the packed boxes in the freezer until pickup time. We suggest that you apply a small label to the box that says “No Dry Ice - gel packs only,” so the shipping centers do not inspect your product, because cooler boxes are often filled with dry ice and shipping companies may open to check if dry ice is not declared.

Want to try limited shipping but don't want to buy shipping boxes in bulk? Try your local veterinarian, pharmacy or hospital. They often receive Styrofoam boxes and are likely just throwing them away. Tightly packing ice blankets, ice bricks or gel packs should allow your customers to enjoy your great products - no matter where they are!

## Retail HACCP Requirements

The Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Lodging Unit, in an outreach and education effort, are committed to providing information relating to HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) plans for meat sales at retail. Several processes at retail require a HACCP plan: Reduced oxygen packaging (ROP) of raw meats – whole muscle and ground; ROP of ready-to-eat meats and cheese; smoking for preservation; curing meats; and custom processing in a retail food establishment. The Department has developed templates for reference on developing HACCP plans at retail. The HACCP templates are available at [www.hhs.nd.gov/health/food-and-lodging](http://www.hhs.nd.gov/health/food-and-lodging). For assistance with HACCP plan development or questions, contact Food and Lodging at 701.328.1291 or [foodandlodging@nd.gov](mailto:foodandlodging@nd.gov).

# Proper Labeling: Retail Meat Shops

All meat products, retail-exempt products included, are required to be properly labeled, regardless of where they are processed. Each pre-packaged product set out for sale must comply with labeling requirements. The full labeling requirements are described in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9. § 317.2 Labels: definition; required features.

Commonly found issues in product labeling:

- Inadequate Ingredient Statements. The ingredients for meat products must include all of the sub-ingredients found in the seasonings or other components. For example, “cheese” is not the ingredient. The “cultured pasteurized milk, water, salt, sodium phosphate, natural flavoring, sorbic acid (preservative), added color, enzymes, corn starch and/or cellulose (to prevent caking), natamycin (preservative)” is the ingredient list that must be listed within the ingredient statement.
  - Yes, ingredient statements take up label space, but every sub-ingredient is required
- Improper use of “Safe Handling Instructions.”
- This infographic is required to be applied to all products that contain raw meat or poultry. It is not appropriate to apply this infographic to fully cooked product.
- Net Weight Statements. If the label is larger than 5 sq inches, then the size of the printed wording “Net Weight” is to be at least 1/8th inch tall. Most label machines’ font size is too small for the size of the label. The “Net Weight” must be on the bottom 1/3rd of the label as well.

## Safe Handling Instructions

*This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.*



Keep refrigerated or frozen.  
Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.



Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods.  
Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards),  
utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.



Cook thoroughly.



Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers  
immediately or discard.

The required parts of a compliant retail meat label are:

1. Product Name, with product description statement
2. Ingredient Statement
3. Name and Address of the Business
4. Net Weight Statement
5. Special Handling Statements – i.e. “Keep refrigerated” or “Keep Frozen”
6. Safe Handling Instructions Infographic (not required on ready-to-eat products)
7. Nutrition Facts Information – this may be posted at point of sale for retail exempt products and labeling of each package is voluntary

# Two More State Meat Inspection Programs

Two more states have entered agreements to carry out state meat inspection programs. Oregon was approved in July and Arkansas was approved in October of 2022. Both states have had federal evaluations to determine that they can develop, administer and enforce requirements that are “at least equal to” those implemented in the Federal Meat Inspection Act. State programs help support a more resilient local and regional food production system.

There are now 29 states with meat inspection programs (MPIs). All states with MPIs receive up to 50% of the state’s operating funds, as well as training and other assistance from FSIS, which is approximately \$60 million dollars annually. Among the 29 states, there are about 1,900 small and very small meat and poultry establishments under state MPI programs.

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## Classified Ads

We are always looking for industry related items to advertise in the Meat Messenger. We post sale and want ads FREE. Contact Nathan Kroh (701-328-4767) at [nkroh@nd.gov](mailto:nkroh@nd.gov) with product description and contact information.

**Smokehouse** - Koch Brand- 500 lb. capacity. Call for information and details.

**Globe Meat Slicer** - Functioning, but needs minor work. Call for information and details.

**New one-quart plastic containers with lids:** \$20 per lot of 50.

Please contact Calvin or Alex for more information at 701-743-4451. Located in Parshall.

**Braising Kettle:** Natural gas, needs work. Make an offer.

Maple Valley Locker: Contact Dustin 701-437-3311. Please call for pictures or inquires.

**Smokehouse:** Koch Grand Prize 3: cart, jerky screens, rods and smoke generator. \$35,000

**Hobart 142” meat saw:** slant meat saw. \$4500.

**Butcher Boy Grinder:** #52 plate and large capacity tray. \$3500

Call Dave Selensky- 701-465-3261- Selensky Meats, Drake ND.

**Jarvis Wellsaw:** Model 404, purchased new and only used 1 time. Nothing wrong with it, just not using it. 120V corded saw. \$1500 or best offer. Located in Kief, ND.

Call Alex Volochenko at 701-301-1364.

## **Meat Messenger**

North Dakota Department of Agriculture  
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