



Minnesota

MEAT

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Getting Ready for the 2025 Venison Donation Program

Each year, thousands of pounds of venison are donated to Minnesota food charities through the Hunter-Harvested Venison Donation Program, cooperatively managed by the MDA and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. This popular program allows hunters and processors to supply food shelves with a valuable protein source that wouldn't otherwise be available. Participating processors receive a registration incentive and reimbursement of processing costs up to \$150 per donated deer. Watch for information and registration materials in the mail around the end of this month! In the meantime, [learn more online](#).



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AGRI Meat, Poultry, Egg, and Milk Processing Grant

The MDA's [Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation \(AGRI\) Program Meat, Poultry, Egg, and Milk Processing \(MPEM\) Grant](#) application period is now open. Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. on Thursday, August 7, 2025. The purpose of this grant is to facilitate the startup, modernization, or expansion of meat, poultry, egg, and milk processing businesses in Minnesota. The program intends to increase sales of Minnesota-raised livestock products by investing in equipment and physical improvements that support processing, capacity, market diversification, and market access.

For more information, including the request for proposals, eligibility requirements, and instructions on how to apply, visit the [AGRI grant](#) and [MPEM grant](#) program webpages.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

AURI Provides Grant for Meat Processing Benchmark Program for the First 40 Establishments to Sign Up

The Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) is providing a grant to fund the \$600 participation cost for the first 40 Meat Processors to sign up for a financial benchmarking study conducted by [Christianson Benchmarking](#). There is no obligation to the program if you aren't one of the first 40 to sign. If your establishment is interested in learning about the financial and operational performance of your business, or you would like to register for the program, contact Clay Newton at cnewton@auri.org, or [Kim Nesvig atknesvig@auri.org](mailto:Kim.Nesvig@auri.org).

Establishments who sign up for the benchmarking program will receive a customized report showing their revenues and costs on a per-pound basis in comparison to industry averages. This will be based off 2024 data, including production data, revenue, costs, and balance sheets that establishments will provide to Christianson Benchmarking. Industry averages will be shown on a per-processed-pound basis to help ensure their facility is measured fairly against other facilities of equal size. The report will show where their facility ranks against other participants. The detailed financial and operational data they receive will help them understand where their facilities biggest strengths and challenges are. This data is completely confidential and will be used to establish industry averages and ranges.

Basic Meat Processing Workshop

The University of Wisconsin Madison is hosting Basic Meat Processing Workshop at the Meat Science and Animal Biologics Discovery building on the Madison Campus on August 26-28, 2025. This course will benefit processors of all experience levels and covers meat science, non-meat ingredients, sausage casings, pathogens of concern, cooking and smoking, meat plan sanitation, etc. Registration fee is \$750 per person and includes course materials, handouts, refreshments, lunch, a Wednesday evening reception, and transportation from the DoubleTree Hotel. More information and registration is available through the [U-W Madison Meat Sciences](#).



Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed, Stay Cool

The Minnesota Department of Health has launched the STAY COOL MN campaign. While the message is simple, it has the power to save lives and lessen the impact of extreme heat on affected people and communities. To learn more about keeping yourself, your family, and workers safe, and to share vital information about heat safety, visit mn.gov/heat.

Meat Inspector Calendar No Inspection Dates

July 4, 2025 – Independence Day

September 1, 2025 – Labor Day

November 11, 2025 – Veterans Day

November 27-28, 2025 – Thanksgiving Day and Day after Thanksgiving

December 25, 2025 – Christmas Day

January 1, 2026 – New Years Day

Meat, Poultry, and Egg Inspection Staff

Nikki Neeser, DVM 651-201-6225

Levi Muhl 651-201-6216

Jennifer Stephe 651-248-2566

Andy Siira 320-295-2066

Alex Brandt 651-201-6308

Nicole Droher 651-231-5457

Michaela Gadiant 651-201-6630

Heidi Varberg 651-201-6009

Lisa Wetzel 651-201-6191

Nicole Wilson 651-201-6024

Catrina Andree 507-440-5861

Josie Lenneman 763-710-0447

Katie Brigan 320-385-0034

Kodi Klimek 320-424-8000

Sarah Current 320-874-0926

Sue Gorman 507-456-4570

Ashley Hassler 320-221-6507

Jennifer Hede 651-338-7145

Cullan Hewitt 320-304-4624

Jennifer Hofer 612-396-4941

Megan Jansa 651-396-9176

Justin Jarocki 651-285-8327

Myrrh-Anna Kienitz 651-802-2789

Rayon King 651-285-8495

Carol Konkol 320-492-4151

Grace Martin 651-707-7751

Corrie McQuillan 320-296-1981

Shawn Neumann 218-296-2035

Eileen Schmidt 507-469-5951

Will Schroeder 320-424-2848

Dave Seipel 651-285-8321

Questions? Call the Dairy and Meat Inspection Division at 651-201-6300