



MAMP

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF MEAT PROCESSORS

PROCESSOR NEWS

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AUGUST 2026
EDITION NO. 4

Tony Dehmer, President
401 Central Ave E
St. Michael, MN 55376
763-497-2455
Email: Tonydehmer@aol.com

Jordan McCallum, Executive Director
11373 Neal Ave S
Hastings, MN 55033
Office: 651-247-9966
Email: jordan@mamponline.com

As summer winds down, I can't help but look back at how these past few months have slipped by. If I'm being honest, most of my memories come down to one thing: work. I'm guessing I'm not alone in that. Sometimes, my "to do" list feels endless—longer than anything Santa could dream up. Still, I was lucky enough to carve out time for family and friends, and I wish those moments happened more often. It always feels like the best days go by in a blur, as if someone's pressed fast forward. One blink and summer's already in the rear-view mirror.

Running a small plant means making tough calls, and this year brought its share. We've decided to stop processing whole deer and focus strictly on trimmings. That wasn't easy. Some of our key team members have retired, my son Andy and his wife welcomed their baby in December, and my shoulder has started reminding me I'm not getting any younger. It became clear: sometimes you have to know your limits, double down on what you do best, and let the rest go.

It's also that time of year to start thinking about getting ready for the Fall/Holiday season if you haven't already. Ordering supplies, updating pricing on wild game processing, gift boxes, ordering fresh turkeys and hams, the list goes on! Don't forget to sign up for the Fall Tour, it's a great time. I look forward to this each year, it's like a mini reunion with our fellow meat processors.

In closing, I'd like to take a moment to remember a fellow member and friend we lost in July, Gordy Lindenfelser from Hackenmueller Meats. He proudly ran that shop for 46 years and meant a lot to my father, to me, and to our family. He lived in my hometown of St. Michael and was always there with advice when I needed it most. Gordy used to say, "if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life." I hope that's something we can all hold onto.

Until we
meet
again,

Tony
Dehmer



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Important Phone Numbers



AAMP Office

Elizabethtown - PA 717-367-1168

Website: www.aamp.com

E-mail: aamp@aamp.com

Board of Animal Health

Marion Garcia - 651-201-6805

MN Meat, Poultry and Egg Inspection Program

Levi Muhl - 651-201-6216

MN Beef Council

763-479-1011, E-mail kelly@mnbeef.org

MN Pork Board

507-345-8814, E-mail pam@mnpork.com

Commissioner's Office

Thom Petersen, Commissioner -

651-201-6219

Thom.Petersen@state.mn.us

Small Plant Help Desk

1-877-374-7435

Email: InfoSource@fsis.usda.gov

Website: FSIS Small Plant Help Desk

Retail Food Inspector Supervisor

Ian Erickson, PhD, REHS

1-218-349-4083

Email: ian.erickson@state.mn.us

Fall Tour & Convention Updates

Summer may be winding down, but things are staying busy here at MAMP! We are looking forward to our Fall Tour on September 10th in Owatonna, and there are only a handful of spots remaining. This is always a great opportunity to get out of the shop, visit fellow processors, tour facilities, and connect with other members of the Minnesota meat processing community. If you've been thinking about joining us, now is the time to sign up! Once the remaining spots are filled, registration will close, so don't wait until the last minute.

At the same time, convention planning is in full swing! We've already been working on speakers, seminars, activities, exhibitors, and all of the other details that go into making the MAMP Convention a valuable and enjoyable event for our members. We're excited about what we have in store and look forward to sharing more with you soon.

SAVE THE DATE!

March 18-20, 2027

River's Edge Convention Center | St. Cloud, MN

Mark your calendars now and plan to join us for the **85th Annual MAMP Convention!** We're looking forward to bringing members and industry partners together for another great event filled with education, networking, exhibitors, and opportunities to connect with others in the meat processing industry.

You can expect to find **full convention details in the October issue of the MAMP newsletter**, including registration information, the schedule, speakers and seminars, and other opportunities you won't want to miss. Keep an eye out for the October newsletter and start making plans to join us!

Looking forward to seeing you all soon!

Jordan



MAMP

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF MEAT PROCESSORS

Next MAMP Board of Directors Meeting
September 9th, 2026 @ 11am
Lorentz Meats, Cannon Falls, MN



BY AMERICAN MEAT SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Managing Humidity During Smoking for Color Development

External color is an essential component of producing high-quality smoked products. For many consumers, meat color is an indicator of the flavor, quality, and value of product, therefore ensuring your cooking and smoking process results in a consistent desirable external color of product without defects is essential. Consistent color development is both art and science due to the natural variability in meat, smoke, and environment. Processors should attempt to control the factors that affect cooked and smoked meat quality, with one of the most important being humidity.

Managing humidity in a smokehouse is crucial for developing the color, texture, and flavor of meat products, including sausages. The right humidity levels help ensure proper curing, smoking, and drying, while also impacting the final appearance. The external or outside color of cooked and smoked meat products is mostly a function of the smoke. Typically, temperatures are not high enough during cooking and smoking to “brown” the product surface. If a browned surface color and texture is desired, the process would need to include some direct source of heat.

Understanding the Role of Humidity in Sausage Smoking

Surface Drying:

Smoke “sticks” to wet surfaces, therefore, proper humidity prevents the surface from drying out too quickly. If the surface dries too fast, the smoke won’t adhere well, and the color may not develop evenly. Conversely, if smoke is applied when the product surface or casing is very wet, the product color can become very dark.

Moisture Retention:

Adequate humidity helps maintain moisture levels in the sausage, contributing to a better texture and color.

Heat Transfer:

Heat moves more efficiently in a high-moisture environment, therefore higher humidity cooks meat faster.



Regulatory Considerations



The United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) has published guidance documents pertaining to cooking times, temperature, and humidity. To ensure all potentially pathogenic bacteria are

destroyed during cooking, there are temperature and humidity requirements that must be met. These should be taken into account when developing cooking and smoking schedule. The guidance documents are found at:

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/guidelines/2021-0014>





BY AMERICAN MEAT SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Managing Humidity During Smoking for Color Development

Humidity Levels at Different Stages of Smoking

"Pre-reddening" or Pre-smoking Target Humidity: > 90%

This step is not always used, but does improve cooked meat color. Pre-reddening is a quick step that is either accomplished before product goes in the cooker by spraying with water, or a quick step in the smokehouse program with a high humidity of greater than 90%, or even a quick steam cook, which results in a consistent wetness on the entire surface of all the product. This allows the product to take up smoke color evenly.

Reddening Target Humidity: > 35%

The product surface including casings is dried for a specific amount of time. Shorter drying times result in wetter surfaces and darker smoked color. Excessive drying can result in the surface or casings becoming too dry to take up smoke, resulting in a very pale color.

Smoking may be accomplished using several steps, or can be completed in one step. If using several steps, the order found below is common, for a single step of smoking the final smoking step is used.

Early Smoking Target Humidity: 80% to 90%

In the early stages of smoking, higher humidity helps prevent the sausage casings from drying out too quickly, allowing the smoke to penetrate and develop the desired color. It also promotes even heat distribution within the smokehouse, which ensures a uniform smoking process.

Mid-Smoking Target Humidity: 70% to 80%

As the sausage begins to firm up and color develops, you can reduce the humidity slightly. This allows the surface of the sausage to set and become more stable, while still allowing some moisture loss.

Final Smoking and Cooking or Drying Phase Target Humidity: 60% to 70%

In the final stages, lower humidity promotes the desired texture and surface appearance. The sausage is drying more at this stage, and lower humidity prevents excess moisture retention that could affect both color and texture.

Final Cook Step Target Humidity: Product Specific

During the final cook step, internal product temperature must be met to satisfy food safety and/or regulatory requirements.



Other Factors Affecting Color

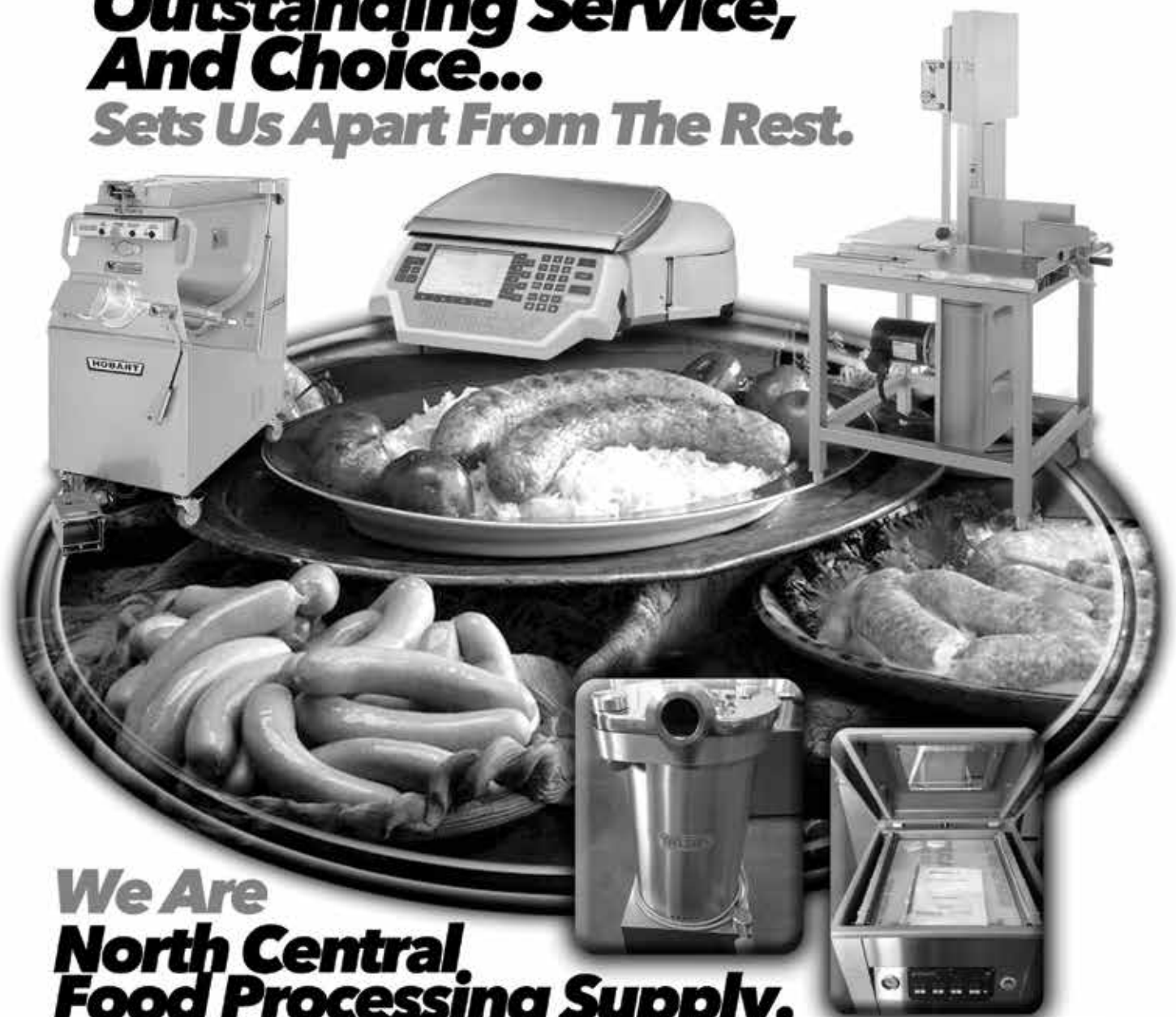
Curing Agents:

The use of curing agents like sodium nitrite can help develop the pinkish color typical of smoked sausages. These chemicals react with the meat proteins to create a more appealing color.

Type of Wood:

The type of wood you use for smoking (e.g., hickory, oak, or applewood) can also impact the color of the sausage. Hardwoods tend to produce a stronger smoke, contributing to darker color and flavor.

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Gordon “Gordy” Lindenfelser

Gordon “Gordy” Lindenfelser’s big and generous heart stopped on July 29, 2026 at the age of 71. He passed away with family by his side and leaves behind a legacy of love grounded in hard work, great meat, generosity, and good humor.

Gordy was born on July 19, 1955 in Monticello, MN to LeRoy and Arlene (Dehmer) Lindenfelser. Growing up on a dairy farm as the 5th of 9 children taught Gordy the value of hard work and joy of a big family. During high school, he played football, basketball, and baseball for St. Michael-Albertville, and on September 17, 1977, he married his high school sweetheart and fellow homecoming royalty, Mary Kay Bruner. Together they settled in nearby St. Michael, MN and raised five children.

Gordy learned the meat cutting trade while working at Lindenfelser Meats and Red Owl in Monticello, MN. In 1979, Gordy and Mary Kay became the proud owners of Hackenmueller’s Meats in Robbinsdale, MN when they purchased the business from twin brothers Harold and Herb Hackenmueller. Gordy often said “if you love what you do, you’ll never work a day in your life”, and he truly loved his work. For 46 years, Gordy and his employees treated every customer as family while serving the best meat in MN. The legacy of quality and customer service lives on at Hackenmueller’s so “Tell ‘em Gordy sent ya” when you stop by to pick up your favorite meal.

Gordy was also a champion in the community and gave generously of his time and treasure to his friends, those in need, and local causes – including sports teams, community events, veterans, and Crescent Cove Children’s Hospice. He understood that his business was connected to the people of Robbinsdale and beyond, and he enjoyed long-time friendships with many customers. It wasn’t uncommon for Gordy to visit a customer in the hospital or make a surprise donation to the causes he loved.

Those who knew him best will miss his encouraging words, demanding spirit, powerful hug, and sense of humor. He was always up for sharing a joke, a good-natured prank, or a Miller Lite in his basement office. His grandchildren especially loved hearing his larger-than-life stories. Gordy also enjoyed watching baseball



– including his 7 grandson’s games – and spending time playing cards and laughing with family around the dining room table.

Gordy is survived by his wife of 49 years, Mary Kay

Lindenfelser, children Katie Lindenfelser (Matt Christensen), Jane Lindenfelser (Kojo Duncan), Sara (Kevin) Williams, Peter (April) Lindenfelser, and Vince (Kali) Lindenfelser, 11 grandchildren: Daniel, Andrew, and Harmon Christensen, Willa and Joy Duncan, Corrinne and Nolan Williams, Gus and Erv Lindenfelser, and Maren and Wesley Lindenfelser, and siblings Sr. Audrey Lindenfelser, Dottie Pollreis, LaDonna (Jerry) Sipe, Doug (LuAnn) Lindenfelser, Jerry (Sandy) Lindenfelser, Joel (Carrie) Lindenfelser, Sharon (Brad) LaPorte, LeRoy (Molly) Lindenfelser, Jr., and dozens of nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents LeRoy and Arlene Lindenfelser, in-laws Ervin & Delphine Bruner and brothers-in-law Rob Pollreis and James Bruner.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Gordon Lindenfelser will be held on Tuesday, August 4th at 11:00 A.M. at The St. Michael Catholic Church in St. Michael. A visitation will be held on Monday, August 3rd from 4-8 p.m. at St. Joseph Hall at The St. Michael Catholic Church in St. Michael. A Prayer service will be held at 7:00 P.M. Further visitation will be held on Tuesday morning, August 4th from 9:30 a.m. until time of Mass.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Crescent Cove Children’s Hospice, Bluebird Education Network, Options for Women, or the St. Michael Endowment.

While Gordy was truly one of a kind and will be deeply missed, the family takes solace in knowing that “Old butchers never die; they just lose their prime”

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Avoiding Uneven Carcass Splits

Yields and speed are essential to ensuring the profitability of any slaughter operation; therefore loss in yield or slowing of fabrication to account for uneven carcass splits can be a major problem. Common causes of uneven carcass splits include equipment and personnel failure. These failures are obvious, and generally easy to correct. However, incremental changes in carcass splitting

over time are harder to detect and may be caused by other factors. Identifying potential problems with carcass splitting can be as simple as implementing quality control check of splitting on a regular basis. For cattle, a proper split should expose the spinal cord in all vertebrae (backbone) from tail to head, and be centered in the body of the vertebrae.

First identify the type of carcass splitting problem. Uneven splits can occur in three directions:

1

Not being centered on the backbone. This split is uncommon in beef and pigs being split manually, as centering the splitting saw is not difficult. Automated hog splitting systems, if not properly calibrated and monitored, are more likely to have this problem.

2

Not splitting perpendicular to the backbone. This is the most common carcass splitting defect. Splitting saws and carcasses that are not aligned perpendicularly will be split at an angle when viewed from the top. Twisting of the splitting saw caused by motor torque, having a platform that is not aligned properly with moving carcasses, carcasses that turn during splitting, or operator error are the common causes of this defect.

3

Drifting during the split. Often carcasses are properly split at the top (tail end) of the carcass, but missplit at the rib or neck. A splitting saw that drifts to one side or the other during splitting is usually the problem. Improper platform alignment and operator error are the common causes.





BY AMERICAN MEAT SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Avoiding Uneven Carcass Splits

Factors Contributing to Uneven Splits & How They Can Be Prevented

Improper Equipment

Beef carcasses require saws designed specifically for splitting. These saws are almost universally bandsaws and usually have some sort of water lubrication and cleaning attached. Well saws and chainsaws are not proper equipment for splitting beef carcasses. Pork carcasses can be split with a well saw.

Carcass Size/Shape Variation

Changes in the shape and size of carcasses are a potential source of uneven splits, especially if the existing equipment is not properly designed. Larger carcasses present the greatest problem due to carcass length. Platforms that do not have adequate clearance through the entire length of the carcass will result in drift and uneven splits toward the neck. This problem is more apparent when carcass size changes dramatically, for example during a switch from sow to market pigs, or from bulls to heifers.

Poor Facility Design

Carcasses to be split must be held steady and perpendicular to the length of the saw. If the carcass can move or twist, proper splitting, especially of beef carcasses becomes very difficult. For small processors, a simple rail latch may be sufficient to prevent carcass movement.

Equipment failure (especially blade failure)

Most slaughter plants have a standard maintenance schedule for the replacement of saw blades. However, saw blades do not necessarily wear on a schedule. Proper training of saw operators to recognize signs of blade failure is essential. Dull blades can fail quickly due to heat buildup during operation. Noticeably slower cutting uneven splitting and drifting during splitting are indications that a blade is ready to fail.

Personnel failure

Personnel splitting carcasses should be well trained and know the importance that splitting has on yields and ultimately profitability. However, anybody can lose concentration or make mistakes. Quality control checks for all personnel that are splitting are important to prevent lost yields due to uneven splitting. In addition, for smaller facilities that are not splitting many carcasses, training can be difficult as there is not much opportunity for practice. If a facility is slaughtering cull animals such as cows that will only be used for ground product, those carcasses are a great opportunity to train in splitting without affecting value greatly.



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Sept. 17-18, 2026

Location: UWRF campus, River Falls, WI

Time: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., both days

Cost: \$1000

Stunning Equipment and Maintenance Testing Workshop

This workshop provides hands-on training in maintaining, repairing and bench testing captive bolt and electrical stunning equipment to ensure reliable and effective stunning.

Oct. 8, 2026

Location: UWRF campus, River Falls, WI

Time: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$750

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Fall TOUR



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SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2026

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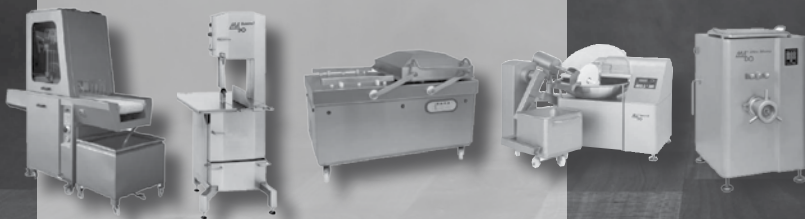
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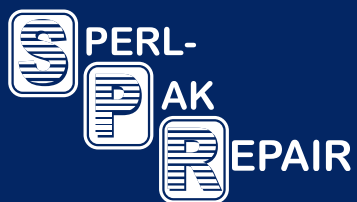


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minnesota Beef Council Names St. Joseph Meat Market as 2026 Retail Beef Backer

MAPLE PLAIN, Minn. – Each year, the Minnesota Beef Council proudly recognizes a Minnesota retailer for its outstanding commitment to excellence in beef promotion. This year's 2026 Minnesota Retail Beef Backer Award goes to St. Joseph Meat Market of St. Joseph, Minnesota, a family-owned establishment whose legacy and innovation have made them a pillar of Minnesota's beef industry.

In 1948, John Pflueger bought the St. Joseph Meat Market from Mike Klein. John was a farmer himself, so he knew the basics when it came to butchering and selling the meat. While John was getting on his feet in the meat business, he hired Al Pfannenstien. Al worked for John for 20 years until John decided to sell it. Al knew that he had to keep the Meat Market up and running – not only to keep his job, but so that the people of St. Joe would not have to travel to get high quality meat.

In 1968, Al Pfannenstien became the new owner. During the years that Al owned the Meat Market, he had all nine of his children work as part of his staff. In 1997, Al's son Harvey Pfannenstien took over as the new owner. Harvey had worked at the meat market for 30 years before taking over, and he is the current owner.



St. Joseph Meat Market is an award-winning, family-owned business that currently employs 30 individuals in its retail store and processing facility. Each employee, many of which are family members including brothers, nephews, nieces, daughters, sons and grandchildren, takes great pride in their work and share a daily commitment to delivering the freshest quality meats and friendly service to our loyal customers.

Beyond products, St. Joseph Meat Market excels in community engagement and customer education. Their staff share cooking tips and product knowledge both in-store and through social media, building trust and helping customers discover new beef options.

They also actively compete yearly in a variety of beef product competitions—including the Minnesota Association of Meat Processors (MAMP) Convention Product Show and Innovative Beef Contest. Wendy from St. Joseph Meat Market currently serves on the MAMP Board and serves as the lead of the Product Show committee.

St. Joseph Meat Market received an engraved plaque to commemorate their award, now proudly displayed in their St. Joseph location. You can check out their meat market on their website at stjosephmeatmarket.com and follow them on

Facebook.

Any independent or chain retailer based in Minnesota is eligible to apply for the Retail Beef Backer Award. Retailers may enter themselves or be nominated by customers, vendors, or community members.

###

About the Minnesota Beef Council

The Minnesota Beef Council was established in 1969 and is funded and managed by beef farmers and ranchers. Through the Beef Checkoff Program, \$1 is obtained for every head of cattle sold. The council utilizes promotion, research, and education to strengthen beef demand and improve the marketing climate of beef. To learn more, visit mnbeef.org and follow us on Facebook and Instagram at Minnesota Beef.

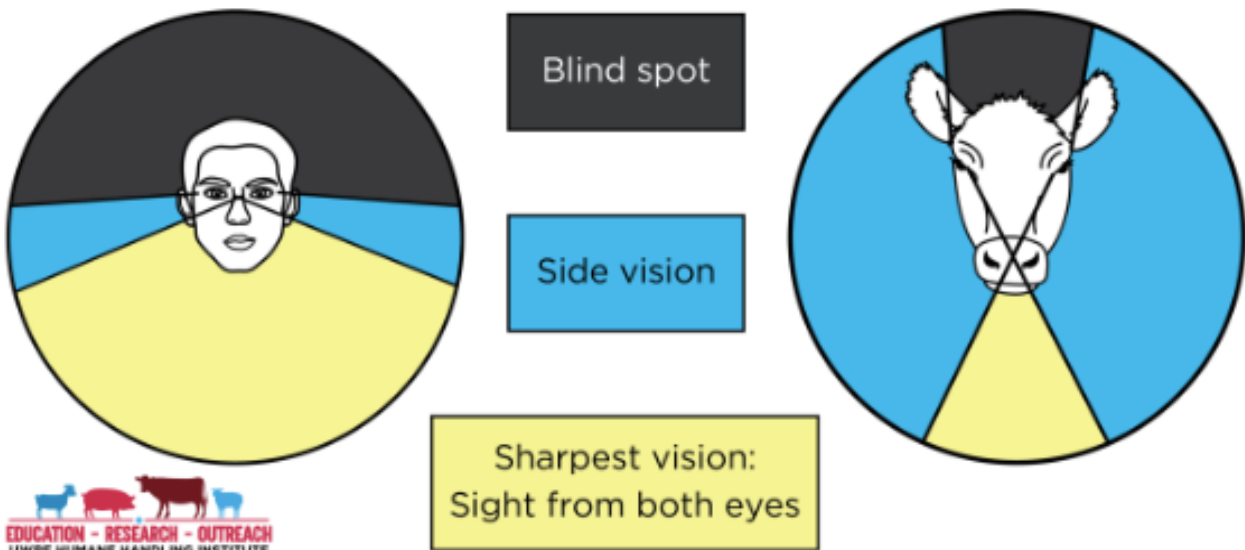
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Training Tip: Human vs. Cattle Vision

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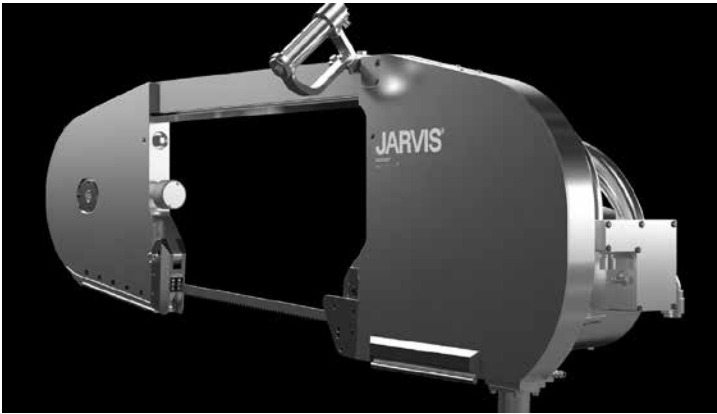
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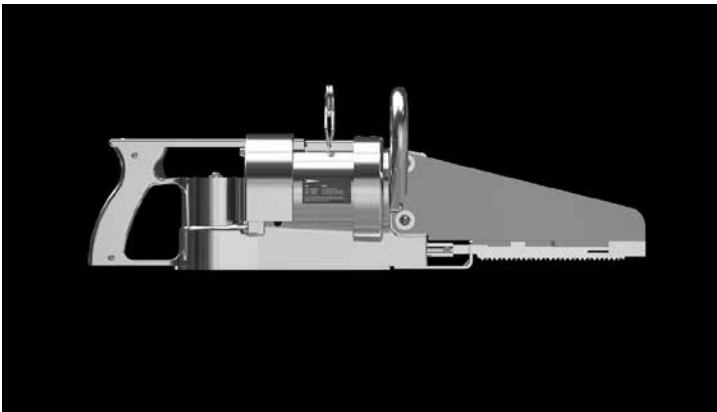
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Q & A

GET TO KNOW THE PROCESSOR



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FUTURE PLANS FOR THE BUSINESS OR WHAT ARE YOU FOCUSING ON FOR THE FUTURE?

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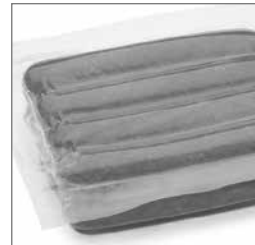
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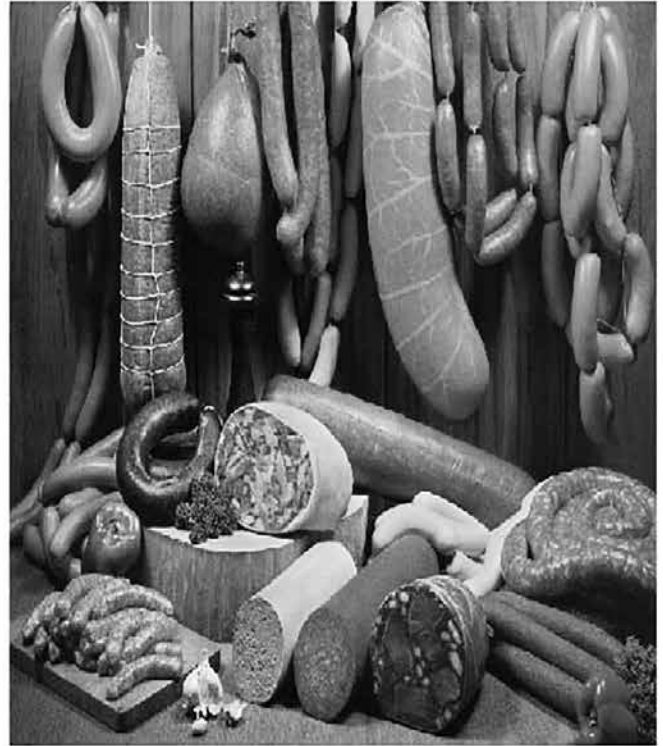
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New Shell Egg Law Allows Greater Food Donations

Food assistance programs can now donate eggs up to 30 days past quality assurance date

August 13, 2026

As of August 1, 2026, charitable food assistance programs in Minnesota that receive donated eggs from retailers are now allowed to distribute them to end consumers up to 30 days past their quality assurance date.

Gov. Tim Walz signed the Shell Egg Bill (SF3891) into law on May 26, 2026. The law supports balanced nutrition for all Minnesota families and reduces food waste across the state.

For eggs, a “best by...” or quality assurance date represents the guarantee of maintaining grade (usually AA or A). It is not an indicator of food safety, and therefore eggs with a past quality assurance date may still be safe to consume, provided they have been stored and handled appropriately.

To be donated, the eggs must meet the following criteria:

- Contained in original packaging (repackaging is not permitted)
- Previously candled and graded
- Not more than 30 days past the original quality assurance date
- Continuously refrigerated

On the receiving end, food assistance programs must apply a new label to the eggs with the following information:

- Name of the food shelf
- “Distribute within 30 days of carton date” OR “Distribute by DATE”
- “Donated Eggs – Not for Resale”

Eggs that have not been distributed to consumers by the end of 30 days past the original quality assurance date must be discarded. For more information, contact the MDA Meat, Poultry, and Egg Inspection program at 651-201-6300 or MDA.MeatPoultryEgg@state.mn.us. Read the full text of the law online.

Media Contact

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USDA Opens Strengthening Processing for U.S. Ranchers Program, \$500 million Available to Strengthen Independent and Regional U.S. Beef Processors

News Release | August 07, 2026

(Washington, D.C., Aug. 7, 2026)?- Today, Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Richard Fordyce announced applications for the Strengthening Processing for U.S. Ranchers (SPUR) program that will provide temporary support for eligible beef processing establishments will be emailed to eligible establishments next week. The SPUR program provides up to \$500 million in payments to eligible entities to support stronger and more stable market opportunities for American ranchers. Beginning, August 10, 2026, USDA will email partially prefilled applications to eligible processing establishments. Completed applications must be returned to USDA by September 11, 2026.

"America's ranchers deserve a strong, competitive marketplace that rewards their hard work and preserves opportunity for generations to come," said Under Secretary Richard Fordyce. "By opening the SPUR program application process and streamlining it to help ensure expedited payments, USDA is delivering timely, much-needed support to small and mid-sized beef processors while strengthening domestically owned processing capacity. This is another important step in our Plan to Fortify the American Beef Industry by expanding market opportunities for ranchers, building a more competitive and resilient beef supply chain, supporting rural communities, and ensuring American families continue to have access to safe, high-quality American beef."

The SPUR program is authorized under the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act and will be administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) at the national office level.

SPUR Eligibility

USDA is using Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) data to determine eligible establishments and payment amounts.

Eligible processing establishments must be:

- Federally inspected or a participant in the Talmadge-Aiken Cooperative Inspection Program or the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program.
- Operational at the time of SPUR application.



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St. Cloud, MN 56301
Chris Gohmann
320-250-6969
A, C, D, I, J

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Mike Skara
651-230-0584
D, N

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28690 N. Ballard Dr.
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Blake Halverson
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C

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Donovan Daws
(970) 776-9881
A, B, C, D, F, G, I, J, L

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Terry Faude
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Karen Slater
763-496-6374
J

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249 Sandstone Dr. NW
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Jennifer Zetah
507-799-0092
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ISG
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Terry Kuechle
507-387-6651
G

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Middletown, CT 6457
Jon Jarvis
402-334-4990
C, F, I, J

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St. Michael, MN 55376
Ken Yeats
763-497-3913
M

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2000 Lufkin Rd
Apex, NC 27539
Christopher Poppy
919-362-8811
C, F, I

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140 Choate Cir
Montoursville, PA 17754
BJ Springman
570-279-2989
C, D

KINETIC LEASING
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2575 41st Street South
Fargo, ND 58106
701-551-7298
C

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Rockway, NJ 07866
Michael Hebrank
973-893-0001
C, F

LK PACKAGING
Matthew Banghart
6000 Sheila Street
Commerce, CA 90040
810-772-9488
J

MAINCA USA
8064 Chivvis Dr.
St. Louis, MO 63123
Dale Schmidt
314-351-4677
C

MAR/CO SALES
11972 Riverwood Dr
Burnsville, MN 55337
Dave Downs
952-854-2231
A, J

MAPRE
Samuel Espinal
600 Territorial Dr STE E
Bolingbrook, IL 60440
815-483-6605
A, D

MF CONSTRUCTION
931 E Frontage Rd
Merville, IA 51039,
712-873-5959
B, C, F

MFU BOTTLENECK PROJECT
Paul Sobosinski,
507-430-1509
L

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305 Roselawn Ave. East
St. Paul, MN 55117
Claudine Arndt
612-202-7872
L

MINNESOTA BEEF COUNCIL
5469 HWY 12
Maple Plain, MN 55359
Jon Dilworth
763-479-1011
L

MINNESOTA PORK BOARD
151 St. Andrews Court STE
810
Mankato, MN 56001
Pam Voelkel
507-381-0309
L

MN VALLEY TESTING LAB INC
1126 N. Front Street
New Ulm, MN 56073
Rob True
507-276-4651
E, J

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11021 N Pomona Ave
Kansas City, MO 64153
Mindi Johnson
816-608-0579
C, J

NASSAU FOODS
7601 Northland Dr. N.
Suite 200
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428
Adam Wright
763-482-1585
A, D, J, N

NORTH AMERICAN LABEL
1731 Margaretha Ave
PO Box 1053
Albert Lea, MN 56007
Nick Kruse
507-320-1397
J

NORTH CENTRAL / HOBART
5013 W 12th St
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
Dan Larson
1-877-306-8457
A, C, D, F, I, J

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PROCESSING**
401 Red River Ave. N.
Cold Spring, MN 56320
Michael Charls
507-251-5497
K

OSSID
400 College Rd
Battleboro, NC 27809
Stacie McCormick
252-446-6177
C, J

OVERSEA CASING COMPANY
601 S. Nevada St.
Seattle, WA 98108
Flavia Simielli
206-245-1367
A, J

PAC KNIFE SALES
311 Meyer Dr
Dorchester, WI 54425
Brody or Kelly
715-654-6275
A, C, D, F, J

POLY-CLIP SYSTEM
1000 Tower Rd
Mundelein, IL 60060
Elina Siegel
e.siegel@polyclip.us
847-949-2800
J

PROSUR INC
40 Shuman Blvd
Naperville, IL 60563
Tim Greiner
331-244-9799
D

QUALITY CASING CO., INC.
2431 Wright Blvd
PO Box 229
Hebron, KY 41048
Alicia Novachich
(800) 328-8701
A

**RIDGEWATER COLLEGE -
MEAT CUTTING PROGRAM**
2101 15th Ave NW
Willmar, MN 56201
Sophia Thommes
320-222-5639
L

**RIVERLAND COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**
Sue Gorman
1900 8th Ave NW
Austin, MN 55912
608-289-4698

ROBERT REISER & CO., INC.
725 Dedham Street
Canton, MA 02021
Andrea Rogers
781-821-1290
C

SANIMAX
2099 Badgerland Dr.
Green Bay, WI 54303
Jack Purvis
920-494-0418
H

SCHILLING SUPPLY
435 Hauser St
LaCrosse, WI 54603
Marc Gloede
608-781-8100
J

SCOTT PEC
1241 Cheyenne Blvd.
Box Elder, SD 57719
Jon & Stephanie Frohling
303-823-5839
C

SILVER-CLIP
41287 Vincenti Ct.
Novi, MI 48375
Mike Prokurat
734-354-6551
C, J

SPERL-PAK REPAIR
N 4854 Sackett Dr.
Medford, WI 54451
John Sperl
715-613-7009
C, F, I

SWANSON MEATS
2700 26th Ave. S
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Jeremy Nelson
612-721-4411
M, N

TEMPAC, LLC.
5590 Lauby Rd. Suite 10
North Canton, OH 44720
Robin Bacopoulos
330-418-4747
K

ULTRASOURCE LLC
1414 West 29th St.
Kansas City, MO 66220
Pat Brune
(816) 360-2081
C, D, F, J

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
MEAT LAB**
1354 Eckles Ave Room 40
Saint Paul, MN 55108
Jordan McCallum
612-624-6615
L

**UW PROVISION COMPANY,
INC.**
2315 Pleasant View Road
Middleton, WI 53562
Jim Yanna
608-836-7421
M

VAN PAPER COMPANY
2107 Stewart Ave
St Paul, MN 55071
Kyle Van
651-690-1751
J

VC999 PACKAGING
419 E 11th Ave
North Kansas City, MO 64116
Amy Moyer
800-728-2999
C, J

VEDEQSA
Hopkins, MN 55343
Christian Akers,
612-542-7894
D

WALTON'S
10321 E 53rd St N,
Bel Aire, KS 67226
Kurt Carter
800-835-2832
A, C, D, F, I, J

WE R FOOD SAFETY
2110 US Hwy 12 W.
PO Box 846
Menomonie, WI 54751
Andrew Lorenz
715-309-2980
K

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Steve Flink
507-376-9221

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- I. REPAIR
- J. SUPPLIES
- K. SOFTWARE
- L. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- M. WHOLESALE MEAT
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Executive Director
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Dehmer's Meat Market
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Jennifer Dierkes - 2028
Vice President
McDonalds Meats
Clear Lake, MN
320-743-2311

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Grand Champion Meats
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Petty Brothers Meats
Annandale, MN
320-274-5615

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Schmidt's Meat Market
Nicollet, MN 56074
507-317-5498

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320-857-2261

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320-838-3669

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Tony Lindgren - 2029
Nassau Foods
Brooklyn Park, MN
763-482-1585

Nathanael Denton - 2027
Kerres USA
715-393-5133

TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Dr. Ryan Cox
U of M Ext Meat Specialist
St. Paul, MN
(612) 624-6615

Chris Gohmann
Gohmann Supply
23784 67th Ave. So.
St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 250-6969

Levi Muhl
MDA Meat Program Mgr.
St. Paul, MN
651-201-6216

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE

Kelly Schmidt
MN Beef Council
406-599-2395

Pam Voelkel
MN Pork Board
Mankato, MN
507-345-8814

Upcoming Events

STATE FAIR PROCESSED MEATS CHAMPIONSHIP

August 26, 2026 at UMN Meat Lab

MAMP BOARD MEETING

September 9, 2026 @ 11am
Lorentz Meats, Cannon Falls, MN

MAMP FALL TOUR

September 10, 2026, Owatonna, MN

MAMP PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP

March 18, 2027

2027 MAMP CONVENTION

March 18-20, 2027

AAMP CONVENTION

July 22-24, 2027 in Lexington, KY



MAMP
MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF MEAT PROCESSORS