



## 2012 Legislative Agriculture Chairs Summit

### Resolution on State Inspected Meat

- Whereas,** the State Ag and Rural Leaders, (SARL) is comprised of agriculture and rural leaders of state and provincial legislative bodies from the US and Canada; and
- Whereas,** as local leaders these members have a unique understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing rural communities and businesses across both countries; and
- Whereas,** the Federal Meat Inspection Act of 1967 and the Poultry Products Inspection Act of 1968 required all state meat and poultry inspection programs to be equivalent to federal standards; and
- Whereas,** twenty-eight states have adopted state meat inspection programs that equal or exceed federal standards and several more are considering the same; and
- Whereas,** other commodities, such as milk, dairy products, fruit, vegetables, fish, shellfish, and complex canned products, which are inspected under state jurisdiction, are allowed to be marketed freely throughout the U.S; and
- Whereas,** foreign-inspected meat can be shipped to and sold anywhere in the U.S. as long as that country's foreign inspection program is equivalent to U.S. federal standards which in practice is the same standard that state-inspected programs must meet; and
- Whereas,** Congress, in the 2008 Farm Bill directed the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop regulations to allow state inspected meat to cross state lines; and
- Whereas,** the new U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations have implemented standards that require state inspected meat programs to be "the same as" rather than "equal to," requiring states to use the same computer programs and other provisions that provide states with no flexibility; and
- Whereas,** the new regulations limit a processor participating in the program to have 25 or fewer employees, disregarding the temporary or part time nature of employees; and
- Whereas,** small and midsized meat and poultry producers are finding a high consumer demand for locally grown and processed meat and poultry products that is not limited to within a state's border; and
- Whereas,** the ban on interstate shipping does not improve food safety, and only serves to slow the growth of small businesses such as farms and processors, limit purchasing options for consumers, impede rural economic development, slow rural job growth and further encourage the concentration of the meat processing industry; now therefore be it

- Resolved,** that SARL wish to thank the members of Congress who supported the interstate shipment of state inspected meat in the 2008 Farm Bill; given that the barriers to such sales now reside in regulation not legislation we urge them to again address the issue either in the 2012 Farm Bill or as stand-alone legislation or guidance to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure regulations are enacted that will allow the intent of the law to be satisfied and finally allow the interstate sale of state inspected meat and poultry; and be it further
- Resolved,** SARL urge Congress to modify language regarding interstate commerce allowing states to exercise their prerogative to regulate meat sold within their borders regardless of where it originates; and be it further
- Resolved,** SARL urge state legislators, state veterinarians and state departments of agriculture to work collaboratively to develop memorandums of understanding that deem meat, inspected under state law, equal to or exceeding the USDA standards, be deemed eligible for sale in another state; and be it further
- Resolved,** SARL urge Congress to specifically allow states to develop their own process and procedures for the intrastate sale and distribution of meat grown and processed within their state borders; and be it further
- Resolved,** that this this resolution be sent to the agriculture committees of the state and provincial legislatures, state agriculture departments and the members of the agriculture committees of the United States Congress and the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

*Approved by members of State Agriculture and Rural Leaders  
Legislative Agriculture Chairs Summit  
January 8, 2012 - Arlington, Virginia*