

RESILIENT FOOD SUPPLY

50 years ago, our meat was processed by thousands of local and regional facilities. Since then, the market has become heavily consolidated, with just a handful of large plants responsible for the majority of processing. While these larger plants may have certain efficiencies, they also create serious supply chain vulnerabilities. If extreme weather, cyberattacks, pandemics, or other disruptions take a few of these facilities temporarily offline, it can back up the national supply chain, resulting in logistical issues for farmers and food shortages for consumers.

As an alternative to the large, inflexible corporations that dominate our food production and distribution, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is ready to boost local and regional food and farm systems, whose shorter supply chains and direct connection to consumers make them better positioned to adapt to new conditions. This would also help protect our domestic food security.

In a July 2021 executive order on competition across the whole economy, President Biden directed hundreds of millions of dollars towards building a more diverse and diffuse food supply, particularly for meat and poultry. It is essential that lawmakers and administration officials follow through on this order to provide more processing options for farmers and ranchers and strengthen food security for consumers.

98%

of all cattle in the U.S. are slaughtered and processed in just 50 plants

In **1968**, there were nearly **10,000** slaughter facilities; today, there are about **2,800**.

WHAT WE CAN DO:

- ✔ Support USDA's plan to provide \$500 million in loans, grants, and technical assistance to build new meat and poultry processing capacity.
- ✔ Thank Congress and USDA for providing \$100 million to reduce the costs of overtime and holiday inspection for small and very small meat and poultry processing facilities across the country.
- ✔ Encourage local processing plants to consider applying for USDA's new Meat and Poultry inspection Readiness Grant (MPIRG) program, which will offer a total of \$55 million to subsidize the cost of inspection certification necessary to ship products across state lines.