

Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, Food & Water Watch, Land Stewardship Project, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, Missouri Rural Crisis Center, National Family Farm Coalition, Organization of Competitive Markets, Ranchers Cattlemen Action Legal Fund – United Stockgrowers of America, Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA, Western Organization of Resource Councils

Our organizations are promoting interrelated reforms to restore competitive livestock markets and fair contracts based on a platform supported by over 200 organizations that represent independent farmers and ranchers, contract growers, and consumers (available at <http://tinyurl.com/3gcty2>).

### **Agricultural Competition Issue Brief 15 of 18: Facilitate Interstate Shipment of Meat from Small State Inspected Slaughterhouses**

**Obama-Biden Position:** “Support Local Family Farmers with Local Foods and Promote Regional Food System Policies: Barack Obama and Joe Biden recognize that local and regional food systems are better for our environment and support family-scale producers. They will emphasize the need for Americans to Buy Fresh and Buy Local, and implement USDA policies that promote local and regional food systems.”

**Relevant Program:** Federal Meat Inspection / Federal Poultry Inspection

**Relevant Agency:** USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service

**Policy Recommendation – Administrative Action:** Expeditiously promulgate regulations to implement Section 11015 of the Livestock Title of the 2008 Farm Bill which provides for the interstate shipment of state-inspected meat and poultry by:

- Holding a series of public meetings in regions around the U.S. in the first part of 2009;
- Developing a regulatory framework that:
  - ensures that small and mid-sized livestock and poultry farmers and ranchers have access to interstate markets for their products; and
  - ensures that safe, high quality meat and poultry products from state-inspected small-scale processing plants are available to consumers.
- Securing adequate funding to launch this initiative, particularly funding for new state coordinators and a new inspection training division.

**Background:** Federal restrictions on interstate shipment of meat and poultry is a particular burden on small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers, who are often shut out of large-scale federally-inspected meat and poultry plants because they do not have contracts with the processors or because they deliver relatively small lots at one time for processing. Twenty-eight states currently have meat and poultry inspection programs. They serve more than 2,000 state-inspected meat processors, which are mostly small, family-owned businesses providing processing services for small farmers and ranchers. Smaller scale processors and the farms and ranches they serve provide significant economic resources for rural communities and are part of growing local and regional food networks. The local and regional markets for these family farmers and ranchers will be increased by implementation of regulations for the interstate shipment of meat and from small state-inspected processing facilities.