



STATE OF OKLAHOMA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

August 31, 2026

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Angie Craig
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Boozman, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Klobuchar, and Ranking Member Craig,

As you continue consideration of the 2027 Farm Bill, I encourage you to consider the outsized impact the meat inspection bureaucracy has on the price of food in our nation.

Oklahoma, one of the top beef producers in the country, currently has several different inspection structures for meat processors. Custom-exempt facilities process livestock for the owner of the animal, and that meat is not permitted to be sold. State-inspected facilities operate under inspection by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) and may sell their products commercially, but generally only within Oklahoma. Federally inspected facilities, including facilities operating through the Talmadge-Aiken Cooperative Inspection Program, may place federally inspected products into interstate commerce.

This creates a significant market limitation for Oklahoma processors. A state-inspected processor may produce safe, wholesome beef for sale throughout Oklahoma but cannot ordinarily sell that same product to a customer across the state line. Expanding the number of Oklahoma processors capable of entering interstate commerce would create new markets for Oklahoma cattle, increase domestic processing capacity, strengthen competition in the packing industry, and put more American beef into the national marketplace.

Importantly, this opportunity does not require sacrificing food safety. Oklahoma operates its state meat inspection program pursuant to a cooperative agreement with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), under which the State must maintain inspection requirements at least equal to federal requirements. ODAFF inspectors already conduct daily onsite inspections when inspected products are being produced. Oklahoma therefore has the regulatory and inspection infrastructure necessary to support expanded federal market access.



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Oklahoma is not unique in this regard. Many states have worked with USDA to match their state standards with minimum federal standards, but their producers are still not able to sell their products into interstate commerce.

We need to reform this process and establish an expedited pathway for qualified processors to obtain interstate market access, including by allowing USDA to promptly review and approve additional Oklahoma establishments for participation under the Talmadge-Aiken Cooperative Inspection Program. I also ask that the Farm Bill include provisions to determine whether participation in the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program can provide an additional expedited pathway for eligible state-inspected processors.

Increasing the supply of beef available to American consumers does not have to depend solely on increasing foreign imports. We should also remove unnecessary barriers that prevent American ranchers and American processors from supplying American consumers. Oklahoma stands ready to work with your committees to do exactly that.

Thank you for your leadership and for your continued support of America's farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Kevin Stitt". The signature is stylized with a large "J" and "K" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

J. Kevin Stitt
Governor