



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **New Interstate Inspection and Shipment Program Expected to Benefit Farmers**

ALEXANDRIA, VA – In a move expected to help thousands of farmers, the USDA has ruled that state-inspected meat and poultry can now be sold across state lines. The ruling establishes a new [voluntary cooperative interstate shipment program](#), and Animal Welfare Approved applauds it as a common sense move that will benefit independent farmers and bolster animal welfare.

Until now, farmers on state borders have faced a difficult decision: limit their meat sales to in-state buyers or travel long distances to a federally inspected plant. Under the new cooperative inspection ruling, farmers can expand their markets while in many cases reducing their travel time and carbon footprint. State plants selected to operate under this new program will be required to comply with all federal standards under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act.

In addition, the change in regulations has the potential to improve animal welfare, as it can help lower travel time and animal stress associated with transport. “We have been following this issue throughout the process and are very happy with USDA’s decision,” says AWA program director Andrew Gunther. “This practical move has the potential to make it easier for independent, pasture-based farmers to meet the growing demand for their products.”

*Animal Welfare Approved is a non-profit organization that audits and certifies farms that raise their animals with the highest animal welfare standards, outdoors, on pasture or range. The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) has lauded these standards as being the most stringent when compared to other third-party certification programs. Visit [www.AnimalWelfareApproved.org](http://www.AnimalWelfareApproved.org) for an online directory of approved farms, as well as restaurants, shops and markets where AWA farmers' products are sold. Choose the one independent food label that means healthy, safe, environmentally responsible and humanely raised.*

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