



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Shapiro Administration Highlights PA Farm Bill Grants that Grow Small Businesses and Expand Pennsylvania Capacity to Meet Demand for Locally-Produced Food

Mechanicsburg, PA – Agriculture **Secretary Russell Redding** visited Route 174 Roadside Market in Cumberland County, one of 54 small Pennsylvania businesses that are better able to meet their customers' demand for locally-produced meat, thanks to support from the Department of Agriculture's [Very Small Meat and Poultry Processor Reimbursement Grant Program](#). The grants reimburse costs associated with opening or expanding operations or meeting federal food safety requirements. Sec. Redding also invited applicants for 2025-26 grants.

“Small meat processors are essential partners for Pennsylvania farmers and critical to strong local economies,” said **Secretary Redding**. “The **Shapiro Administration** is helping these businesses get stuff done so they can grow, create jobs, and give customers what they want and farmers more opportunities to save transportation costs and sell their products close to home. When we invest in small businesses, we strengthen rural communities and build a more resilient food supply chain for Pennsylvania.”

Route 174 Roadside Market, part of a fourth-generation family farm that received a \$100,000 grant in 2022 through the program. With support from the grant, the Paulus family added a butchering room to their farm market to process their pasture-raised beef and poultry, expand cold storage and adding equipment that allows them to sell directly to consumers, and better meet growing demand for locally produced meat.

The market is one of 54 small meat and poultry processing businesses that Pennsylvania has invested in since 2019, providing more than \$3.1 million through the Very Small Meat and Poultry Processor Grant Program. These investments help reduce processing bottlenecks at USDA plants, reducing time and distance to market for livestock producers and keeping more food dollars circulating in Pennsylvania communities.

“During the pandemic we could not get our cattle processed to keep up with the demand in the store,” said **Steve Paulus**, owner of the farm and market. “We decided we needed to do as much of the process here on the farm as possible. The grant helped us

achieve that goal. Without the grant we would not be able to give the variety of meats to our customers. This grant also helped save this small family farm and I am glad I can keep cows in the pasture and crops in the field.”

A total of \$500,000 in funding is available for the 2025–26 grant round, with individual awards up to \$100,000. Applications must be submitted through the [Single Application for Assistance](#) online system, opening on March 23, 2026. Applications must be received by May 8, 2026.

Additional details on the 2025–2025 Very Small Meat and Poultry Processor Reimbursement Grant Program can be found in the March 21 edition of the [PA Bulletin](#).

Since taking office in 2022, **Governor Josh Shapiro** has demonstrated that he understands that Pennsylvania’s economic success depends on our rural communities and farms. Pennsylvania agriculture supports **over 48,800 farms, nearly 600,000 jobs, and contributes \$132.5 billion annually** to the Commonwealth’s economy.

Governor Shapiro’s 2026-’27 budget proposal furthers long-term agricultural growth and resilience by:

- Increasing the nation’s only Ag Innovation Program to \$19 million to help build the future of American agriculture right here in Pennsylvania
- Fully funding the Pennsylvania Farm Bill to support business planning, infrastructure, and workforce development
- Funding a new state-of-the-art animal health laboratory in Western Pennsylvania
- Continuing the Fresh Food Financing Initiative to expand access to local food and support small businesses
- Legalizing adult use cannabis to open a new market for farmers

Agriculture is one of the cornerstones of **Governor Shapiro’s Economic Development Strategy** — Pennsylvania’s first in two decades — and the Shapiro Administration is committed to investing in its continued growth.

Read more about investments to keep Pennsylvania agriculture competitive and thriving in [Governor Shapiro’s 2026-’27 budget proposal](#) and continued support for Pennsylvania farmers at pa.gov/governor.

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