

MISSY THOMAS IRVIN

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**THE SENATE
STATE OF ARKANSAS**

CHAIR:
PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE AND LABOR

VICE-CHAIR:
JOINT BUDGET

MEMBER:
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
INSURANCE AND COMMERCE
EFFICIENCY
JOINT PERFORMANCE REVIEW

October 5, 2020

Elizabeth Thomas Smith, Chair
Arkansas CARES Act Steering Committee
Office of the Medicaid Inspector General
323 Center Street, Suite 1200
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Chairwoman Smith and the Members of the CARES Steering Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully request the Arkansas CARES Act Steering Committee add an additional \$5,453,471.87 in funding to the already approved \$5 million for the Meat Processing Grant Program based on information from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture. I have enclosed a brief summary I have received from Secretary Wes Ward. It outlines the status of the meat processing grant applications and how the additional funds will contribute to increased capacity of processing and job creation to support a growing industry in Arkansas.

Adding these additional funds will not only increase our state's capacity for processing, but it will also increase small, medium and large farming operations all across the state and help provide a stronger economy for rural Arkansas. At this critical time, it is imperative we do all we can to support the agriculture community during this pandemic. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. If I can be of assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Missy Irvin".

Missy Thomas Irvin
State Senator
District 18

Cc: The Honorable Asa Hutchinson, Governor – State of Arkansas

ENCLOSURE

Below is a summary of how we ended up with the meat processing grant applications. Please don't hesitate to let me know if I can answer any questions or provide any additional information.

Meat and Poultry Processing Grant Applications

- 45 facilities requesting \$30,899,742.78
- 14 facilities requesting a total of \$9,353,365.00 were considered non-viable applications due to program guidelines and CARES Act funding guidance.

\$5 Million Distribution

- 15 facilities requesting a total of \$10,104,342.80
- 15 facilities awarded 79.778% of their total request or capped at \$500,000 per application.
- 4 facilities are currently USDA inspected
- 1 facility will be USDA inspected in the very near future.
- **Applicants anticipate increased capacity of 1,266 cattle, 851 hogs, 8 goats/sheep, and 7,400 poultry per month.**
- **Applicants anticipate utilizing 180 full-time positions and 38 part-time positions**

Additional Request if Funding is Available - \$5,453,471.87

- 16 facilities requesting a total of \$11,442,034.98
- 16 facilities awarded 79.778% of their total request or capped at \$500,000 per application equates to total funding amount of \$5,453,471.87.
- Funding would be consistent with funding formula utilized for phase 1 distribution of original \$5 million dollars.
- 16 total facilities, including funding for:
 - o Four mobile processing units
 - o Three educational institutions
 - o Two further processing facilities
- **Anticipated impact is at least 800 head per month; additional further processing and value-added capacity; and, education and workforce development.**
- **Applicants anticipate utilizing 70 full-time positions and 35 part-time positions.**

Review Committee

- Cody Burkham, Arkansas Cattlemen's Association
- Jessica Burkham, Arkansas Farm Bureau
- Terry Chapman, Livestock Marketing Association
- Ronnie Ritter, Hunters Feeding the Hungry
- Ed Mabry, Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission/UA Division of Agriculture
- Liz Simmons, USDA FSIS
- Cheri Ellis, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Patrick Fisk, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Wes Ward, Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Respectfully,

Wes Ward

Secretary of Agriculture
Arkansas Department of Agriculture