



MEAT  
PACKING/PROCESSING

# MEAT PACKING INDUSTRY

The **meat-packing industry** handles the slaughtering, processing, packaging, and distribution of meat from animals such as cattle, pigs, sheep and other livestock. Poultry is generally not included. This greater part of the entire meat industry is primarily focused on producing meat for human consumption, but it also yields a variety of by-products including hides, dried blood, protein meals such as meat & bone meal, and, through the process of rendering, fats (such as tallow).

# EMPLOYING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS

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Meatpacking plants fall under the agricultural sector in the U.S. economy. Agricultural, food and related industries contributed more than \$1 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product in 2020. The food manufacturing portion accounted for 2 million jobs, with meat and poultry manufacturing comprising about 1/3 of these positions. A powerful subsector, the meatpacking industry employs hundreds of thousands.



# GROWTH CONTINUES

According to data collected by [MNI](#), as of July 2022, the U.S. meatpacking industry accounts for 2,276 companies nationwide, employing 204,306 individuals. Employment in the sector has grown by a half percent to 2023.



# WHERE ARE MEAT PACKING PLANTS?

Regionally, the Midwest holds the highest concentration of meatpacking manufacturers, at 45% of the total. The Southern region follows at a distant second with 28% of the total number of meatpacking manufacturers. The Northeast and the West trail with 11% and 16% respectively.



## Top U.S. Meatpacking Plants

Below is a list of the largest U.S. meatpacking facilities based on number of employees.

Company	City	State	Number of Employees
Smithfield Foods, Inc.	Tar Heel	NC	5,000
Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc.	Amarillo	TX	4,200
Tyson Fresh Meats	Amarillo	TX	4,000
Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc.	Dakota City	NE	4,000
Cargill, Inc.	Wayzata	MN	3,500
JBS	Grand Island	NE	3,500
JBS	Cactus	TX	3,450
JBS USA	Greeley	CO	3,200
Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc.	Holcomb	KS	3,100
National Beef Packing Co., LLC	Dodge City	KS	3,000

# LARGEST COMPANIES



- **Smithfield Foods, Inc.**, located in Tar Heel, North Carolina, safely employs 5,000 individuals. The company's aggressive COVID-19 response revolves around keeping their employees safe and securing America's food supply chain. Smithfield's commitment to its employees involves recognizing the efforts of one man who received an award for his supply chain initiatives that enabled the company to benefit operationally, economically and sustainably.
- **Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc.** calls Amarillo, Texas home. The company's 4,200 employees continue to uphold the core values developed by its founder during the Great Depression – to provide a quality, 100% natural product. Pioneers of poultry supply chain management since the 1960s, Tyson continues the tradition with the Tyson Discovery Center. Here, the company anticipates food trends, creating products to meet customers' culinary needs.
- **Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc.** in Dakota City, Nebraska employs 4,000 individuals to prepare various packaged products such as fresh chicken, pre-seasoned chicken, meal kits and a number of frozen chicken products.

# LARGEST COMPANIES



- **Cargill, Inc.** lists its primary mission as the health and safety of its 3,500 employees and the customers they serve during the COVID-19 pandemic. Partnering with global health experts, Cargill continually upgrades its Wayzata, Minnesota facility to protect its employees and the community at large, including a disaster relief fund to help employees adversely impacted by the pandemic.
- **JBS** in Grand Island, Nebraska and its 3,500 workers produce 1855® and Swift® beef products for domestic use and export to Japan, Hong Kong, Mexico, China and other countries. True to JBS's community commitment, associates are involved in the local United Way and other community benefits.
- **JBS** in Cactus, Texas and its 3,450 associates focus on quality beef manufacturing for 80% domestic and 20% export use. This facility primarily produces the Swift® brand beef products. And just like the Nebraska branch, employees here are also involved in the local United Way and other community programs.



# LARGEST COMPANIES



- **JBS USA** in Greeley, Colorado employs 3,200 individuals. This facility also focuses on beef manufacturing, exporting over 30% of its final product to more than 20 different countries worldwide. This facility also participates in community benefit programs.
- **Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc.** also has a plant located in Holcomb, Kansas. Its 3,100 employees are part of the world's largest food processing company. As such, Tyson takes sustainability seriously, exploring new avenues of responsible growth to meet the needs of the world's population.
- **National Beef Packing Co., LLC**, housed in Dodge City, Kansas, is one of the company's highest-volume plants in the world. The facility's 3,000 employees only process family-raised, corn-fed Black Angus beef for the meatpacking industry.

# PROCESSING BEGINS WHEN

- Livestock are slaughtered after being sent to market
- Process includes:
  - Slaughter
  - Skinning/deboning
  - cutting into wholesale cuts (larger cuts)
  - Cutting into market cuts
  - Grinding/mixing (lean meat with extra fat)
  - Packing
- Initial processing stops when seasoning is added, meat is smoked or incased into casings, raw cuts are packaged, etc.



# JOBS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

Common Jobs in the meat packing industry involve work to weigh, clean, wrap, inspect, and package all meat products. Such as the following:

- Debone
- Wrapping
- Cutters/trimmers
- Slaughter
- Meat stuffer
- Meat packing



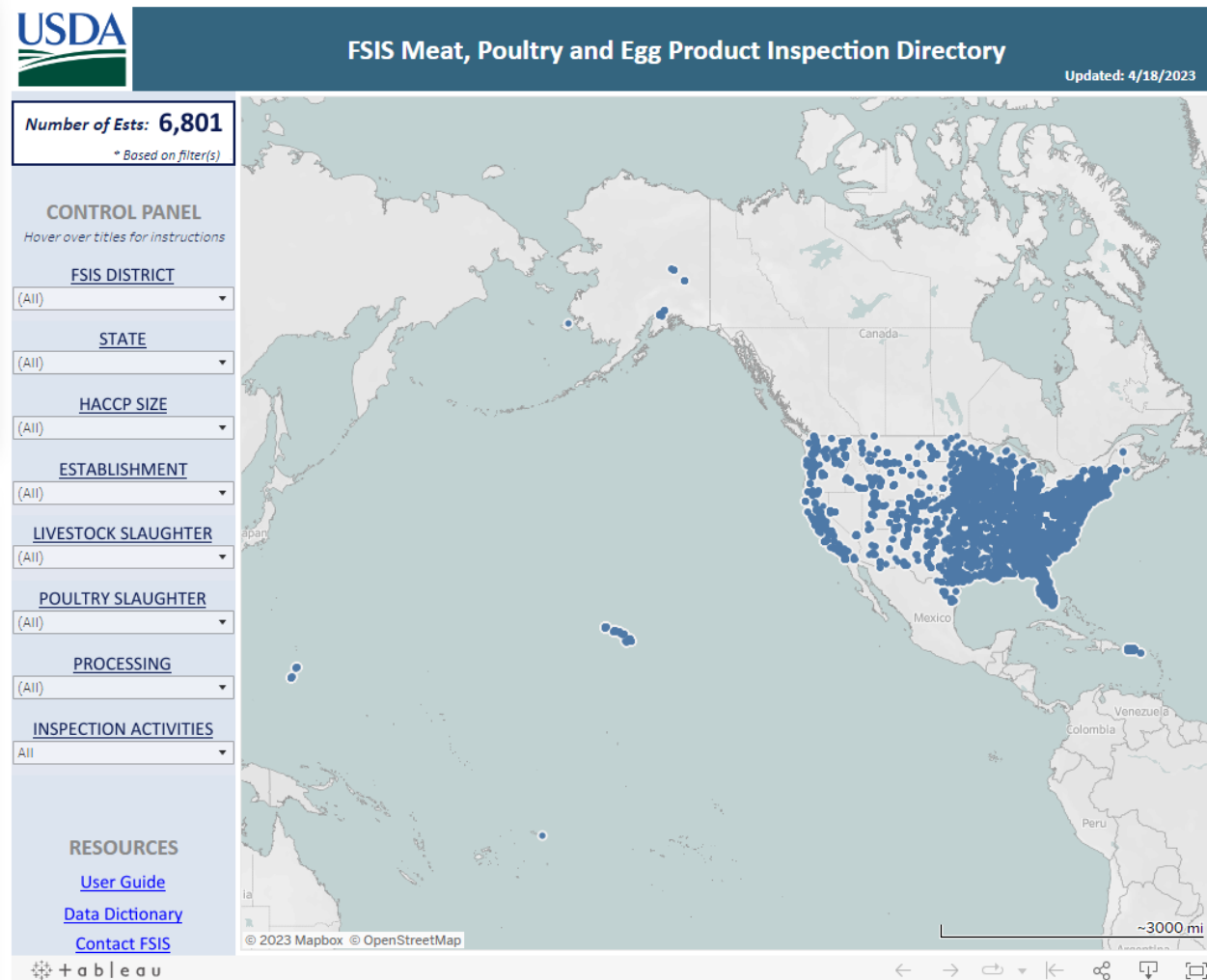
# TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN RECRUITING WITH THIS INDUSTRY

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- ✓ Building strong relationships with Human Resource Departments at meat packing plants is key to finding workers.
- ✓ It can be helpful to ask to talk to workers during their breaks, lunches, or before or after a shift.
- ✓ Some plants may be open to surveying new staff to see if they are eligible for the program.
- ✓ Workers may move around from one area of the plant to another because of the physical and mental demand that some of the jobs require.
- ✓ It may take a bit of coordination and effort to build a relationship that lasts with your local meat processing company.



# HOW TO FIND THIS INDUSTRY IN YOUR STATE



USDA

FSIS Meat, Poultry and Egg Product Inspection Directory

Updated: 4/18/2023

Number of Ests: 6,801  
\* Based on filter(s)

CONTROL PANEL  
Hover over titles for instructions

FSIS DISTRICT  
(All)

STATE  
(All)

HACCP SIZE  
(All)

ESTABLISHMENT  
(All)

LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER  
(All)

POULTRY SLAUGHTER  
(All)

PROCESSING  
(All)

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES  
All

RESOURCES  
[User Guide](#)  
[Data Dictionary](#)  
[Contact FSIS](#)

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Check out the USDA Meat and Poultry Inspection site list for your state.

This is updated frequently by the USDA.  
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection/establishments/meat-poultry-and-egg-product-inspection-directory>