

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4941

To promote meat product innovation, including in specialty meats, and value-added meat product development for the economic benefit of United States farmers and their communities, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2024

Ms. BALDWIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

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## A BILL

To promote meat product innovation, including in specialty meats, and value-added meat product development for the economic benefit of United States farmers and their communities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Meat Business Innova-  
5 tion Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. MEAT PRODUCT AND BUSINESS INNOVATION INI-**  
7 **TIATIVES.**

8 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1           (1) INITIATIVE.—The term “initiative” means a  
2           meat product and business innovation initiative es-  
3           tablished under subsection (b).

4           (2) MEAT BUSINESS.—The term “meat busi-  
5           ness” means a business that develops, processes,  
6           produces, markets, or distributes meat products.

7           (3) MEAT PRODUCT.—The term “meat prod-  
8           uct” means—

9                   (A) a meat food product (as defined in sec-  
10                  tion 1 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21  
11                  U.S.C. 601));

12                  (B) a poultry product (as defined in sec-  
13                  tion 4 of the Poultry Products Inspection Act  
14                  (21 U.S.C. 453));

15                  (C) a food product from an exotic animal  
16                  (as defined in section 352.1 of title 9, Code of  
17                  Federal Regulations (or a successor regula-  
18                  tion)); and

19                  (D) products derived from byproducts of  
20                  meat processing for human food or biomedical  
21                  applications.

22           (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
23           the Secretary of Agriculture.

1 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish  
2 not fewer than 3 regionally located meat product and busi-  
3 ness innovation initiatives for the purposes of—

4 (1) utilizing regional meat production;

5 (2) creating higher-value uses for meat prod-  
6 ucts and byproducts;

7 (3) promoting business development that diver-  
8 sifies farmer income and small, regional economies  
9 through processing and marketing innovation;

10 (4) diversifying meat product markets to reduce  
11 risk;

12 (5) protecting the food supply through proven  
13 food safety innovations; and

14 (6) enhancing consumer confidence by pro-  
15 moting practices that will improve animal welfare  
16 and ensure humane harvesting.

17 (c) SELECTION OF INITIATIVES.—An initiative—

18 (1) shall be located in a region with a history  
19 of livestock farming and meat processing, including  
20 fresh products and those requiring further proc-  
21 essing, and a proven track record in food safety;

22 (2) shall be positioned in proximity to existing  
23 meat industry resources, including research capacity,  
24 academic and industry expertise, a density of live-

1 stock farms or farmland suitable for livestock,  
 2 ranching, and meat businesses of all sizes;

3 (3) may serve—

4 (A) a certain product niche, such as  
 5 artisanal meat; or

6 (B) meat businesses with meat products  
 7 derived from a specific type of animal; and

8 (4) shall serve meat businesses in other regions.

9 (d) ENTITIES ELIGIBLE TO HOST INITIATIVE.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any of the following entities  
 11 may submit to the Secretary an application to host  
 12 an initiative:

13 (A) A State department of agriculture or  
 14 other State entity.

15 (B) A nonprofit entity with capacity to  
 16 provide consultation, expertise, and grant dis-  
 17 tribution and tracking.

18 (C) An institution of higher education.

19 (D) A cooperative extension service with a  
 20 history of supporting small- and medium-sized  
 21 businesses.

22 (2) PARTNERS.—An entity described in para-  
 23 graph (1) may establish partners prior to the sub-  
 24 mission of the application under that paragraph, or

1 add partners on consultation with the Secretary,  
 2 which may include—

3 (A) a generic program to promote and pro-  
 4 vide research and information for meat and  
 5 meat products;

6 (B) a foundation; or

7 (C) any other entity described in subpara-  
 8 graphs (A) through (D) of that paragraph.

9 (3) PREFERENCE.—In considering applications  
 10 from institutions of higher education, the Secretary  
 11 shall give special consideration to an institution of  
 12 higher education that has—

13 (A) biomedical, veterinary, microbiology,  
 14 and entrepreneurship expertise; and

15 (B) expertise in meat science.

16 (e) ACTIVITIES OF INITIATIVES.—

17 (1) DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO MEAT BUSI-  
 18 NESSES.—An initiative shall provide assistance to  
 19 meat businesses in accordance with the following:

20 (A) PROVISION OF DIRECT ASSISTANCE.—

21 Assistance may be provided directly to meat  
 22 businesses in a private consultation or through  
 23 widely available distribution, and may be pro-  
 24 vided—

(i) directly by the entity that hosts the initiative under subsection (d)(1);

(ii) through contracting with industry experts;

(iii) through the provision of technical assistance, such as informational websites, webinars, conferences, trainings, plant tours, and field days; or

(iv) through research institutions, including cooperative extension services.

(B) TYPES OF ASSISTANCE.—Eligible forms of assistance include—

(i) business consulting, including business plan development for processed meat products;

(ii) accounting and financial literacy training;

(iii) market evaluation;

(iv) strategic planning assistance;

(v) training in animal handling, animal welfare, and humane harvesting practices;

(vi) research on product innovation, including research relating to value-added products derived from meat byproducts;

- 1                   (vii) marketing and branding assist-  
2                   ance, including market messaging, con-  
3                   sumer assessments, and evaluation of re-  
4                   gional, national, and international markets;
- 5                   (viii) innovation in emerging market  
6                   opportunities, including agritourism, and  
7                   marketing communication methods;
- 8                   (ix) packaging, distribution, and sup-  
9                   ply chain innovation;
- 10                  (x) food safety training and assistance  
11                  with the development of effective food safe-  
12                  ty programs;
- 13                  (xi) meat product production training,  
14                  including in new, rare, or innovative tech-  
15                  niques;
- 16                  (xii) reduction of enteric methane  
17                  emissions;
- 18                  (xiii) process and processing facility  
19                  improvement, including planning for and  
20                  implementing plant upgrades, food safety  
21                  modernization, energy and water efficiency,  
22                  byproduct reprocessing and use maximiza-  
23                  tion, and waste treatment; and

1 (xiv) training for Federal and State  
2 inspectors and other professionals who are  
3 critical for growth of the meat industry.

4 (2) COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO MEAT BUSI-  
5 NESSES.—An initiative shall provide competitive  
6 grants for new and existing meat businesses for the  
7 purposes of—

8 (A) modernization, specialization, and mar-  
9 ket diversification for livestock farms;

10 (B) value chain and commodity innovation  
11 and facility and process updates for meat proc-  
12 essors;

13 (C) product development, packaging, and  
14 marketing of meat products;

15 (D) innovation in biomanufacturing to ad-  
16 dress the need for—

17 (i) byproduct reprocessing and use  
18 maximization; and

19 (ii) improving sustainability;

20 (E) providing food safety education and  
21 training to better meet shifting regulatory de-  
22 mands;

23 (F) improving and modernizing food safety  
24 infrastructure, including technological adapta-

tions, equipment, and food safety programs;  
and

(G) improving and modernizing animal  
handling safety infrastructure, including tech-  
nological adaptations, equipment, and animal  
welfare programs.

(f) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds made available  
to carry out this section, the Secretary shall provide  
not fewer than 3 awards to eligible entities described  
in subsection (d)(1) for the purposes of carrying out  
the activities under subsection (e).

(2) MULTIYEAR FUNDING.—The Secretary is  
encouraged—

(A) to award funds under paragraph (1) in  
multiyear funding allocations; and

(B) to require frequent reporting, as ap-  
propriate.

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The funds awarded to  
an eligible entity under paragraph (1) may be  
used—

(i) for program administration of an  
initiative, including staff costs;

(ii) for research activities that—

1 (I) directly benefit meat busi-  
 2 nesses;

3 (II) have been identified as prior-  
 4 ities by meat businesses; and

5 (III) require facilities, resources,  
 6 research, education, and expertise pro-  
 7 vided by a funded entity that—

8 (aa) are necessary for the  
 9 identified research priorities; and

10 (bb) would otherwise not be  
 11 accessible to meat businesses;  
 12 and

13 (iii) for workshops or other informa-  
 14 tional sessions that—

15 (I) directly benefit meat busi-  
 16 nesses, processors and entrepreneurs,  
 17 and livestock farmers; or

18 (II) enhance the capacity of pro-  
 19 viders of technical assistance to meat  
 20 businesses and livestock producers.

21 (B) ALLOCATION.—Not less than 50 per-  
 22 cent of the funds awarded to an eligible entity  
 23 under paragraph (1) shall be allocated to di-  
 24 rectly benefit new meat businesses or meat

1 businesses that wish to update their products or  
2 processes using a grant under subsection (e)(2).

3 (4) PRIORITY.—In providing direct assistance  
4 under subsection (e)(1) and grants under subsection  
5 (e)(2), an eligible entity shall give priority to—

6 (A) small- and medium-sized livestock  
7 farms and meat businesses;

8 (B) employee-owned meat businesses;

9 (C) cooperatives;

10 (D) meat businesses that establish con-  
11 tracting mechanisms that return profits to  
12 farmers who supply their meat;

13 (E) meat businesses that, in addition to  
14 salary and wage compensation, return profits to  
15 employees;

16 (F) meat businesses that seek to create  
17 meat products that add substantial value in  
18 processing or marketing, such as specialty  
19 meats;

20 (G) meat businesses or allied startup com-  
21 panies that seek to address the increasing vol-  
22 ume of otherwise discarded byproducts from  
23 animal production waste streams generated by  
24 the meat industry; and

1 (H) meat businesses that seek to reduce  
2 water usage, carbon footprint, or improve over-  
3 all sustainability efforts.

4 (5) REQUIREMENT.—In the case of direct as-  
5 sistance under subsection (e)(1) or a grant under  
6 subsection (e)(2) that is provided to a specific meat  
7 business and does not benefit the general public, as  
8 determined by the Secretary, the assistance or grant  
9 shall exclusively be available to meat businesses  
10 owned in the United States.

11 (6) SUPPLEMENTATION.—To the extent prac-  
12 ticable, the Secretary shall ensure that funds pro-  
13 vided to an initiative supplement, and do not dupli-  
14 cate or replace, existing meat product research, de-  
15 velopment, and promotion activities.

16 (g) MATCHING FUNDING.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall encour-  
18 age, but not require, an eligible entity described in  
19 subsection (d)(1) to provide matching funding to  
20 carry out this section.

21 (2) ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—After an initial  
22 term of funding provided to an eligible entity de-  
23 scribed in subsection (d)(1), the Secretary is encour-  
24 aged to work with the eligible entity to develop addi-  
25 tional funding streams to supplement the Federal in-

1 vestment, including from funds of a generic program  
 2 to promote and provide research and information for  
 3 a specific agricultural commodity, if the provision of  
 4 funds is approved by the members of the generic  
 5 program.

6 (h) REPORTING.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
 8 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary  
 9 shall submit to Congress a report describing the im-  
 10 plementation of this section.

11 (2) INNOVATION REPORTS.—The Secretary, in  
 12 coordination with the Chief Economist, shall publish  
 13 an annual report on the status of—

14 (A) innovation in meat products;

15 (B) product development under the pro-  
 16 gram under this section;

17 (C) growth areas for meat product develop-  
 18 ment; and

19 (D) barriers inhibiting majority member-  
 20 owned domestic meat firms from—

21 (i) updating capacity;

22 (ii) performing competitively in the  
 23 marketplace; and

24 (iii) returning gains to members or re-  
 25 investing the gains in ways that benefit the

1 long-term financial stability of the majority  
2 member-owned domestic meat firm and the  
3 members of that firm.

4 (i) FUNDING.—

5 (1) MANDATORY FUNDING.—Of the funds of  
6 the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary  
7 shall use to carry out this section \$30,000,000, to  
8 remain available until expended.

9 (2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

10 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
11 this section \$30,000,000 for each fiscal year.

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