

Gov. Pritzker Celebrates Groundbreaking Of New Saline River Farms Facility

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CREAL SPRINGS – Governor JB Pritzker and Saline River Farms today joined local leaders and partners to break ground on Saline River Farms’ new state-of-the-art USDA meat processing facility. Supported by the Economic Development for a Growing Economy Tax Credit (EDGE) program and a \$1.5 million grant through the [Meat & Poultry Supply Chain Capital Grant Program](#) along with a \$6 million grant from the

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Saline River Farms' expansion will create more than 400 jobs over the next several years.

"This facility will soon become a state-of-the-art, 60,000 square-foot USDA meat processing plant — simultaneously improving our nation's food supply by producing hundreds of thousands of pounds of beef a day while creating good-paying full-time jobs," said Governor JB Pritzker. "More food getting to consumers' grocery aisles and more jobs for hard-working Southern and Central Illinoisans is a win-win. This groundbreaking brings Creal Springs and its surrounding communities an opportunity to rebuild and revitalize, and I'm grateful to USDA and Williamson County for working together to make today possible."

"In Illinois, we are committed to building resilient communities and Saline River Farms is a testament to the work that makes our state great. This new state-of-the-art meat processing facility will provide a meaningful path to good jobs, greater opportunities for our livestock producers, and access to locally sourced food," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "Our administration will continue to invest in communities and the food systems that provide for us, as well as the hard-working Illinoisans who move us forward."

Designed to support independently owned meat and poultry companies to bolster the supply chain, the Meat & Poultry Grant program will provide additional capital to help Saline River Farms build capacity through improvements and an expansion of an existing facility. As part of the program, Saline River Farms is investing a total of \$34.5 million to repair and expand its existing 60,000 square foot facility.

"USDA Rural Development is proud to make this investment, working in tandem with our state partners, to support Saline River Farms in creating job growth, expanding regional capacity and fortifying our food supply chain," said Betsy Dirksen Londrigan, Illinois State Director of the United States Department of Agriculture.

"Under Governor Pritzker's leadership, DCEO is supporting independent meat processors like Saline River Farms in order to bolster Illinois' meat and poultry supply chain, create new jobs, and level the playing field within the industry," said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. "This expansion – which was also bolstered by EDGE - will create hundreds of new jobs for working families while spurring economic development in Southern Illinois."

The company's expansion has also been supported by the state's EDGE program. A full link to the agreement can be found [here](#).

Launched in 2022, the Meat & Poultry Supply Chain Capital Grant Program aims to support communities by helping independently owned companies build capacity, create jobs, and strengthen our meat processing supply chain in Illinois, thereby making food products more affordable and accessible. In order to meet these goals, eligibility for this program is restricted to plants that are not operated by the four largest meat processing companies that own most of the nation's meat processing market share.

Combined with the Illinois Grocery Initiative, which was recently signed into law, Governor Pritzker has prioritized efforts to ensure Illinoisans have access to healthy, affordable food while bolstering local economies and creating jobs.