

## Governor, KDA Raise Meat Processing Sequestration Concerns

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback and Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman raised concerns regarding United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack's recent comments regarding the sequester process to furlough Food Safety and Inspection Service personnel in a letter Thursday.

Vilsack announced earlier this month that USDA might furlough Food Safety Inspection employees for 15 days to help achieve cost reductions required by sequestration.

In the letter, Governor Brownback emphasized that "failing to provide these inspections will negatively impact consumers, farmers and ranchers, meat processors and their employees." Additionally, the letter strongly encourages Secretary Vilsack "to seek options other than furloughing front-line safety inspectors to meet USDA's spending reduction obligations."

Full text of the letter may be seen below.

*Dear Secretary Vilsack:*

*Your recent comments indicating the sequester process will necessitate furloughing Food Safety and Inspection Service personnel causes great concern for me and many other Kansans. Under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and related legislation, USDA is charged with providing federal inspection of meat, poultry and egg products. Failing to provide these inspections will negatively impact consumers, livestock producers, meat processors and their employees.*

*Without federal inspectors in place, Kansas meat processing plants will be forced to close as production, processing and interstate distribution of meat products without inspection is prohibited. Without access to these plants, livestock producers will be unable to market their animals in a timely manner, creating an excess of market-ready livestock. In addition, consumers will face limited meat supplies and potentially higher prices.*

*Kansas beef producers market nearly 25% of cattle each year. Your agency estimates these furloughs will lead to more than \$10 billion in production losses. It is clear this action will lead to lost production in the hundreds of millions of dollars for Kansas producers.*

*I strongly encourage you to seek options other than furloughing front-line safety inspectors to meet USDA's spending reduction obligations. The costs of these proposed furloughs to consumers, livestock producers, meat processors and their employees warrant focusing your efforts in other areas.*

*Sincerely,*

Sam Brownback

Governor

State of Kansas

Dale Rodman  
Secretary of Agriculture  
State of Kansas