



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF
MEAT PROCESSORS

EPA PROPOSED WASTE WATER TREATMENT FOR MEAT PROCESSORS

Have you heard about the EPA's intent to regulate wastewater in the meat and poultry processing industry and how it might put hundreds or thousands of small processors out of business?



Background

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced earlier this year that it intends to update its water pollution rules for meat and poultry processing facilities for the first time in nearly 20 years, following a lawsuit from environmental groups and animal rights activists arguing current standards are too weak.

Proposal

Meat and Poultry facilities of nearly all sizes are impacted.

Initial costs of **\$5,000 to \$3.2 million** to regulate conventional, nitrogen and phosphorous in wastewater.

Annual operating costs of **\$5,000-\$400,000**

Unknown what equipment is necessary.

Unknown what the level of support will be available for the annual maintenance and testing.

**These are estimates from the EPA but precise numbers have not been made available*

Impacts



Food Supply Chain

The cost, both up front and annually for maintenance will be too much for small to midsized processors to afford. This will cause many to close their doors permanently. When processors close, there will be a significant change in the food supply chain. Many farmers will lose their ability to have their livestock slaughtered or face hardships finding a new processor. The loss of meat and poultry processors will cause a major disruption to the food supply chain in the country.



Economic impacts

For those processors who do remain open, they will have to raise their prices to cover the costs of meeting the demands of these regulations. That will make many noncompetitive in the market, and their viability will be in question. When small and midsized processors close, it creates an opportunity for larger processors to pay farmers less for their livestock while charging more to the consumer. The economic impacts will be well beyond just those of the industry; it will be felt in the pockets of consumers nationwide. The loss of processing plants would also cause a significant loss of jobs.

These regulations could cost meat and poultry processors MILLIONS in an already volatile market!

SOURCES

EPA website
SBREFA presentation
EPA press release

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is in the process of updating the water pollution rules for meat and poultry processors for the first time in nearly 20 years, following a lawsuit from environmental groups and animal rights activists arguing current standards are too weak.

TIMELINE

Proposed regulations are scheduled to come out in December 2023, followed by a public comment period.

Final regulations are expected to be implemented in December of 2025.



EXAMPLE

One EPA example shows that a meat processing plant processing more than 1 million pounds per year (the equivalent to processing 16 – 1200 lb. beef per week), may have initial capital costs of \$800k and annual operating costs of over \$40k to meet the proposed regulations.

VALUE OF LOCAL PROCESSORS

Small to mid-sized meat and poultry processors have a vital role in the industry and the economy. This was proven during the pandemic and ensuring food was available to families. We must save these facilities!

WHO IS IMPACTED

The EPA shows disconnect as to how this will impact facilities and the industry. The proposed changes are NOT sustainable for most processors.



Poultry Processors

This will impact poultry processors of all sizes.



Consumers

Shortages in the store and rising prices for proteins



Meat Processors

Meat processors across the country will be impacted.



Farmers

Limited options for processing of their poultry & livestock. Being compensated less.

Example Regulatory Structure: Indirect Meat Further Processor

Production (million lbs/yr)*	<1	1 – 20	>20
Regulated Pollutants	No numeric discharge standards	Oil & Grease, TSS, BOD	Nitrogen, Phosphorus, TSS, BOD, Oil & Grease, Ammonia
Technology Basis	Pollution Prevention	Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF)	DAF, Chemical P Removal, Nitrification/Denitrification
High-Chloride Waste Streams	No requirements	Pollution Prevention	Segregation and management via zero discharge
Example Facility Size (Mlb/yr)	0.5	10	30
Wastewater flow (gal/day)	1,500	8,500	80,000
Capital Cost (one time)	\$5,000	\$800,000	\$3.2 M
Annual O&M	\$5,000	\$41,000	\$400,000
Annual Monitoring Cost**	No requirements	\$4,000	\$6,000

*Examples for illustration – production thresholds in proposed rule will be based on statutory factor analysis

**Assumes monthly samples for all regulated pollutants

1. Contact your state's congressmen and senators and tell them you want to see this stopped or amended.
2. Make sure meat processors and livestock producers are aware of this potential regulation and how it might devastate their businesses.
3. Watch for the EPA's proposed regulations and make your voice heard during the comment period.

It's time to

TAKE ACTION

