

# Local Meat & Poultry Processing

WASHTENAW COUNTY



## Washtenaw County NEEDS Local Animal Processing

Washtenaw County lacks the necessary processing infrastructure for small farmers to meet consumer demand for locally-produced meat. (1)

Currently, Southeast Michigan livestock producers must trailer their animals 50-150 miles (one way) for processing. (2) This distance negatively impacts their overall bottom line and makes small animal farming financially difficult in the region.

## Why Did the Chicken Cross the County?

The only USDA-inspected **poultry** processing facility is **42 MILES** outside of Washtenaw **BUT** there are **NO** available processing slots through **2020**

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## Processing Plants: A Scarce Commodity



There are currently no USDA inspected processing facilities for beef, hogs, sheep, and goats within a 50-mile radius of central Washtenaw County. (2)



With only one USDA-inspected poultry processing facility near Washtenaw County, farmers have little say as to the quality or cost for processing.



The lack of organic certified processors in Michigan leaves many producers with no options for entering into new markets with organic meats.



Consolidation of large meat processing companies increases risk for supply chain issues in the event of a pandemic, fire, or other natural disaster.

## Barriers to Entry for Local Niche-Processors

In many townships, slaughterhouses require a **special-use permit** on either agricultural\* or industrial zoned parcels. These permits can be challenging to obtain due to common perceptions of slaughter facilities. A thoughtfully regulated small or mid-scale processing plant is necessary for the local food economy and can have minimal impact.

*\*agricultural zoned land is often more conducive for successful processing plants. Most small processing plants in Michigan are built on agricultural-zoned land.*

## Impact on Local Livestock Farmers

*"I am frustrated by the lack of local processing options for beef. It's important to have a close relationship with the butcher, and that's hard to do when the best option is two hours away. Customers want a local product and to me that means locally processed." - John Cox, Baseline Farm, Scio Twp*

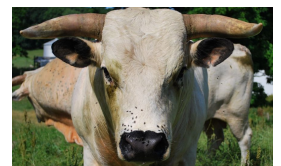


Photo Credit: John Cox, Baseline Farm

### Citations:

1. William Knudson and Brenda Reau, 2014, "An Assessment of the Potential to Expand Agricultural Production, Processing, and Distribution in Washtenaw and Surrounding Counties," Michigan State Product Center.
2. Based on data from USDA, retrieved July 2020: : <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fgis/topics/inspection/mpi-directory>.

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Map of USDA Processing Facilities in South MI

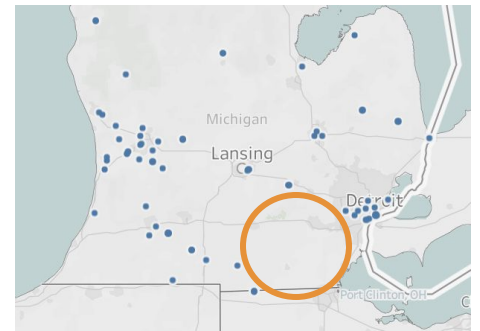


Figure 1: USDA Meat and Poultry Processors

## What Do Small Meat Processing Facilities Actually Look Like?

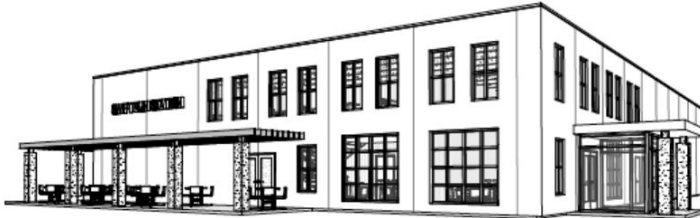


Image: Proposed poultry processing facility in Pittsfield Twp.

### Very Small Facility

2,000 sq. ft.  
4 FTE  
< 1,000 animals / yr  
Custom-exempt

### Small Facility

4,000 sq. ft.  
10 FTE  
1-3,000 animals / yr  
Custom-exempt or  
USDA-inspected

### Regional Facility

15,000 sq. ft.  
60 FTE  
3,000 + animals / yr  
USDA-inspected

Figure 2

The above image is for a proposed multi-species processing facility in Pittsfield Township. Small processing facilities look more like light industrial buildings typical of Washtenaw County.

Note that this facility design includes mixed uses. Many small processors require mixed revenue streams in order to be profitable. This design illustrates 6,000 sq. ft. for processing and 2,000 sq. ft. for retail.

## What about the smell and noise?

Local communities **can regulate** these with ordinances that limit hours of operation or number of animals processed per week.

Noise from processing generally comes from **unloading animals from trailers**. The lower volumes of smaller facilities limits noise to immediate neighbors.

Local smells are often generated from **rendering**. Facilities should have a location to store waste for pick up or have an environmentally-friendly plan for composting on-site.

## Humane Animal Handling

The most humane processing plants are quiet both inside and out, with slower line speeds, and with managers trained in humane animal handling practices. This is more common in smaller processing plants. (3)

## What Happens to the Waste?

The waste from processing plants is either: trucked off facility by a rendering company, composted on-site, or processed via an anaerobic digester. This is a point where local townships can weigh in and regulate the facility to protect the community's sense of place.



## Typical Water Use

- Small processing facilities use between 4,000 gallons of water per 8-hour shift (meat) and 3,000 gallons per 8-hour shift (poultry). (4)
- On-site septic systems with an engineered drain-field are pumped about 1x per month
- Plants that are connected to a municipal sewer system are appropriately charged for their impact on the system.
- Blood is always collected separately and is removed or composted with the waste.
- There are no manure lagoons at processing facilities.

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### Citations:

1. Figure 1: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food/inspection/mpi-directory>
2. Figure 2: Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network, Oregon State University Extension Service, [https://www.nichemeatprocessing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CrashCourseThree.Final\\_revised\\_8.31.pdf](https://www.nichemeatprocessing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CrashCourseThree.Final_revised_8.31.pdf)
3. Grandin, Temple. Making Slaughterhouses More Humane for Cattle, Pigs and Sheep: [https://www.grandin.com/references/making\\_slaughterhouses\\_more\\_humane.html](https://www.grandin.com/references/making_slaughterhouses_more_humane.html)
4. Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network, Oregon State University Extension Service, <https://www.nichemeatprocessing.org/wastewater-treatment-for-meat-processors/>