

Bullet Points

How this “Unfair Practices” Rule Affects WFU Policy and Members

- Fair markets and fair practices are essential for farmers to make sure that they have equitable access to resources, fair prices, and sustainable livelihoods.
- This rule will streamline the process for reporting and addressing unfair practices including reducing the burden of navigating complex regulatory language.
- It clarifies the definition of the term “Unfair Practices” and allows farmers to better protect their rights, challenge exploitative behaviors, and secure a more just and competitive marketplace for farm products.
- Regulators will be able to better evaluate the extent to which a practice prevents a farmer’s participation in a market. They will also be able to determine whether a company’s conduct prevents a producer from getting the full value of their products or services.
- The rule would put in place a workable standard to protect family livestock producers from harm by corporate monopolies in the meat industry; specifically in livestock, meat, and poultry markets.

ACTION ALERT:

Dear Friend of the Farmers Union,

We are asking for members to leave public comments on a new proposed rule under the Packers and Stockyards Act: Fair and Competitive Livestock and Poultry Markets.

Summary provided by USDA:

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA or Department) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) proposes to amend the regulations under the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 (the P&S Act or the Act) to clarify the unfair practices that the P&S Act prohibits. The proposed rule would define unfair practices as conduct that harms market participants and conduct that harms the market. Combined, these comprehensively define the contours of “unfair practices” under the P&S Act. The purpose of this proposed rule is to promote fair and competitive markets in the livestock, meats, poultry, and live poultry markets.

In other words:

The proposed rule would amend the Packers and Stockyards Act (P&S Act) to clarify that the “unfair practices” prohibited are those that harm marketplace participants and those that harm the market. This would give clarity to the regulators and allow them to better promote and enforce fair and competitive markets in the livestock, meats, poultry, and live poultry markets.

This rule would:

- Clarify the regulatory framework that allows USDA and others to enforce the P&S Act - including reducing the burden of navigating complex regulatory language

- Clarify the definition of what constitutes “Unfair Practices” and allow farmers to better protect their rights, challenge exploitative behaviors, and secure a more just and competitive marketplace for farm products
- Allow regulators to better evaluate the extent to which a practice restricts a farmer’s participation in the market and determine whether a company’s conduct prevents a producer from getting the full value of their products or services
- Overall, the P&S Act applies to livestock, meat, and poultry markets. This rule would put in place a workable standard to protect family livestock producers from harm by corporate monopolies in the meat industry.

We are urging members to participate in the rulemaking process so that our voices are heard when Agencies such as the USDA decide on rules that affect our livelihoods and ability to participate in the market.

Please follow this link for Regulations.gov to leave your comment Now:

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/AMS-FTPP-21-0046-0001>

Follow this link to our short video that covers the *step-by-step process of making public comments*:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CE6hiZ_VGkQ

If you do not feel comfortable writing your own comment feel free to use the template we have created for you [here](#).

Please take this opportunity to make your voice heard and create more clarity around what “unfair practices” look like in agricultural marketplaces.

If you’d like more information, please check out National Farmers Union’s action alert, as well:

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-usda-ensure-farmers-and-ranchers-have-fair-and-competitive-livestock-markets/>

Template for comment:

I am writing as a member of the Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) to express my support for the proposed rule for Fair and Competitive Livestock and Poultry Markets under the Packers and Stockyards Act.

As a farmer, it is crucial that we have clear and comprehensive definitions of unfair practices to protect our ability to participate in the market fairly. The proposed rule, which defines unfair practices as “conduct that harms market participants” and the market itself, is a significant step towards ensuring fair and competitive markets in the livestock, meats, poultry, and live poultry sectors. This will allow us to hold bad actors accountable to unacceptable conduct.

This rule will enable regulators to assess the extent to which certain practices restrict a farmer's market participation and whether a company's conduct denies a producer the full value of their products or services. Such clarity is essential for safeguarding farmers' rights and promoting a just marketplace.

By addressing and prohibiting unfair practices, this proposed rule will help create a level playing field for all market participants, ensuring that farmers like myself can compete fairly and sustainably. This is not only beneficial for individual farmers but also for the overall health and integrity of our agricultural markets. The rule puts into place a workable standard to protect family livestock producers from harm by corporate monopolies in the meat industry.

I urge the USDA to adopt this proposed rule and continue to work towards promoting fairness and competitiveness in our agricultural markets. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]