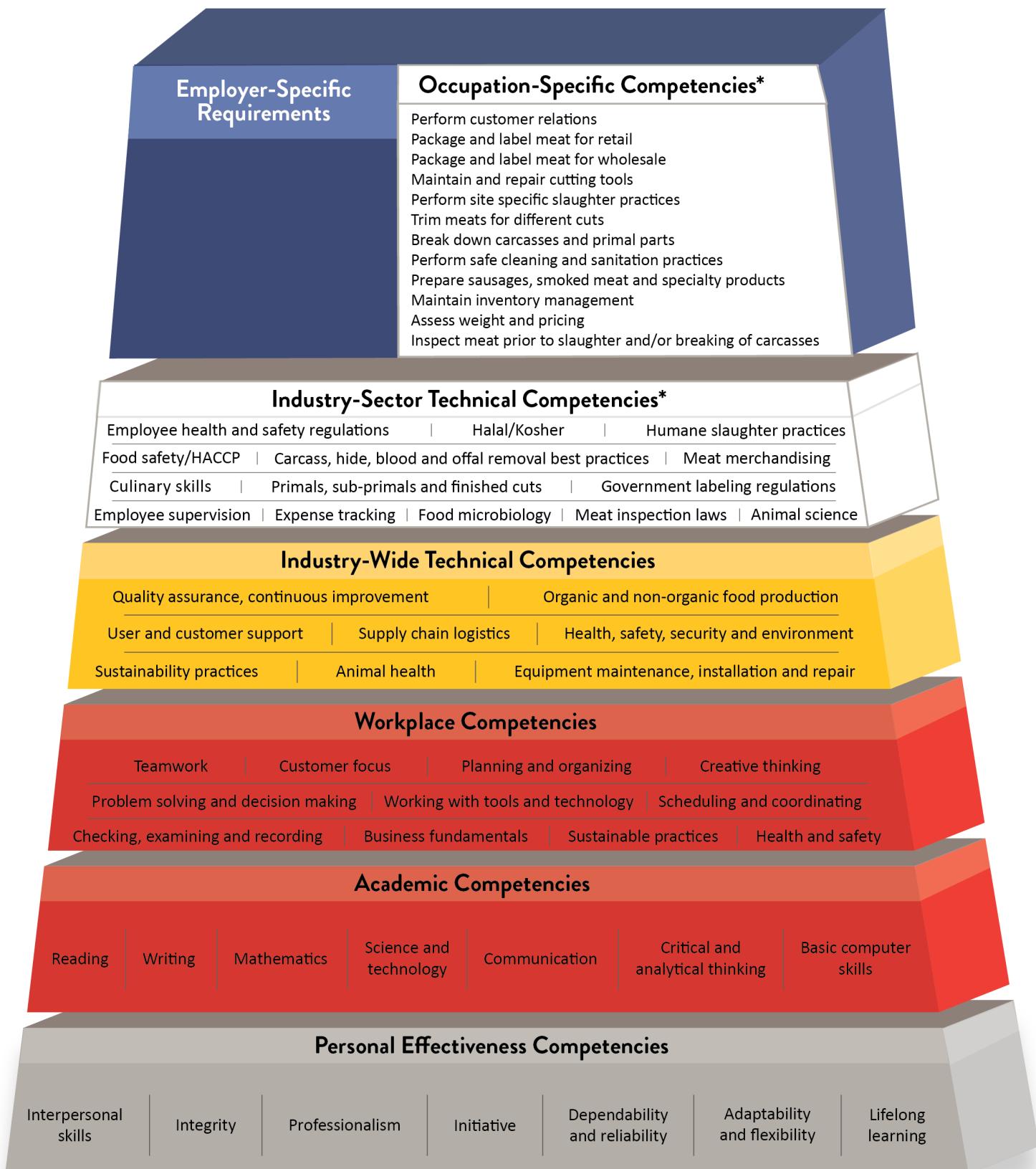


Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline

Competency Model for Agriculture

Occupation: Meat Cutter/Meat Processor



Based on: Building Blocks for Competency Models – Foundational Competencies, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, February 2025. For more detailed information about competency model creation and sources, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/agriculture.



Competency Model for Meat Cutter/Meat Processor

Meat Cutter/Meat Processor – A meat cutter/meat processor oversees meat preparation and cutting of beef, pork, lamb, poultry, bison, wild game, etc. for sale. This individual is responsible for cutting and trimming the meat into different cuts that are suitable for wholesale and/or retail sales. This person also leads the safe handling practices to ensure product meets health and sanitation guidelines. A meat cutter/meat processor may also be responsible for the slaughter of the animal as well as for the preparation of product such as ground beef and/or sausage.

*Pipeline recommends the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies as formal training opportunities (provided through related instruction) and the Occupation-Specific Competencies as on-the-job (OJT) training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies

Related Instruction for dual training means the organized and systematic form of education resulting in the enhancement of skills and competencies related to the dual trainee's current or intended occupation.

- **Employee health and safety regulations** – Understand how to ensure that employees working with the meats are practicing cutting, trimming and slaughter methods that mitigate any potential risk of injury to themselves or staff.
- **Halal/Kosher** – Understand what guidelines must be followed for processing a meat product to be considered Halal and/or Kosher.
- **Humane slaughter practices** – Understand how to safely and humanely kill the animal so that it ensures safe food practices while also being performed in a manner that has as minimal amount of pain or suffering for the animal at the end of its life.
- **Food safety/HACCP** – Understand theory and practices of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) management system and ability to review associated business production practices to ensure conformance.
- **Carcass, hide, blood and offal removal best practices** – Know how to properly remove the bones, hide, blood and offal (entrails and internal organs) from the animal in a manner that ensures proper health and safety protocols are being met.
- **Meat merchandising** – Know how to sell varieties of meat to the customer and how best to display and market the product so that it sells well.

- **Culinary skills** – Understand basic recipes and suggestions for how to cook and prepare different cuts of meat in order to help and advise the customer.
- **Primals, sub-primals and finished cuts** – Know how to prepare the different cuts of meat from the primals (those first taken off the carcass) to the sub-primals (top round, whole tenderloin, ribeye, etc) and finally the finished cuts such as well trimmed ribs, prepared stew meat, etc.
- **Government labeling regulations** – Understand the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) laws and any other state or local regulations that govern how meat is to be properly labeled.
- **Employee supervision** – For some individuals in the role of meat cutter/ meat processor, it is possible that the individual may supervise others and so it is important to know employee management best practices for how to be an effective supervisor.
- **Expense tracking** – Know how to track orders and the expenses that go into both the inventory for the business as well as expenses related to meat processing equipment.
- **Food microbiology** – Understand the scientific properties of microorganisms both in food and for the production of food. Know how these organisms can both contaminate and/or enhance the quality of food.
- **Meat inspection laws** – Know the laws that govern meat packaging, meat safety, meat storage, etc. in order to ensure product safety and compliance with local, state and federal laws.
- **Animal science** – Understand the basic anatomy and physiology of animals that are used for consumption such as poultry, beef, fish, bison, deer, lamb, goat, etc.

Occupation-Specific Competencies

On-the-Job Training is hands-on instruction completed at work to learn the core competencies necessary to succeed in an occupation. Common types of OJT include job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation and discussion-based training.

- **Perform customer relations** – Know how to communicate well with customers in order to sell the meat product.
- **Package and label meat for retail** – Understand how to properly package and label the various cuts of meat so that they are presentable and ready to be sold in a retail market setting.
- **Package and label meat for wholesale** – Know how to properly package and label meat to be distributed in larger packaging to be sent for wholesale distribution.

- **Maintain and repair cutting tools** – Know the wide variety of cutting tools both hand and power based, and how to sufficiently sharpen, maintain and repair them.
- **Perform site specific slaughter practices** – Each location will have slightly different approaches to how to do slaughter and so it is important to know the best practices and methods for doing slaughtering on the job site of the meat cutter/ meat processor's location.
- **Trim meats for different cuts** – Know how to do the final process of cutting meats to trim them into a wide variety of different cuts that are ready for commercial sale.
- **Break down carcasses and primal parts** – Understand how to 'break down' the meat so that it can be made ready to be prepared into different cuts.
- **Perform safe cleaning and sanitation practices** – Know how to safely clean knives and power tools, as well as the room where butchering is being performed in a manner that ensures safety while also not damaging the tools or equipment.
- **Prepare sausages, smoked meats, and specialty products** – Understand basic recipes for making sausage and for smoking meats, as well as other products such as pre-prepared meat loaf, etc. and how to package and sell those products.
- **Maintain inventory management** – Know how to maintain the meat inventory for the business and place orders, manage supply, etc. so that there is the right amount of product for the business.
- **Assess weight and pricing** – Know the differences between hanging weight vs. market weights for individual cuts of meat and how to properly attach pricing to these weights.
- **Inspect meat prior to slaughter and/or breaking of carcasses** – Know how to inspect the kind and quality of the meat prior to slaughter and/or breaking of carcasses to determine if exactly how the meat should be cut, i.e. all ground, combination of steaks and ground, etc. as well as validate that the animal is safe and eligible to be processed.

Updated December 2025