

Trump orders DOJ probe into big meat packers over alleged price fixing and market manipulation

12 November 2025 | News

The investigation will target the “Big Four” meat packers JBS (based in Brazil), Cargill, Tyson Foods, and National Beef



The investigation will target the “Big Four” meat packers JBS (based in Brazil), Cargill, Tyson Foods, and National Beef

U.S. President Donald J. Trump has directed the Department of Justice (DOJ) to investigate the nation's largest meatpacking companies. This investigation comes amid allegations of potential collusion, price fixing, and price manipulation within the industry. The focus is on a small group of powerful conglomerates accused of inflating meat prices while taking advantage of American farmers and ranchers.

According to the announcement, the investigation will target the “Big Four” meat packers JBS (based in Brazil), Cargill, Tyson Foods, and National Beef, which together control approximately 85 per cent of the U.S. beef processing market, a significant increase from just 36 per cent in 1980. Notably, two of these companies, including the world's largest meat processor, are either foreign-owned or significantly influenced by foreign entities. This fact has raised concerns about the integrity of America's food supply chain and national food security.

“For too long, a handful of giant meat packers have squeezed America's cattle producers, shrunk herds, and jacked up prices at the grocery store,” Trump stated. “This investigation will root out any illegal collusion, restore fair competition, and protect our food security.”

Industry consolidation has been a longstanding concern for U.S. ranchers and regulators. In the 1980s, the top four processors purchased about one-third of all fed cattle; by the mid-1990s, their market share had surged to over 80 per cent and has remained at that level or higher ever since.

Critics argue that this concentration of power has led to reduced payments to ranchers, lower herd sizes, higher consumer prices, and a more vulnerable meat supply chain, a reality that became evident during past crises such as the COVID-19

pandemic.

The DOJ's investigation aims to determine whether major packers have engaged in coordinated pricing or capacity restrictions that violate U.S. antitrust laws. If wrongdoing is identified, the companies could face substantial fines or be required to implement structural reforms to restore competition in the multibillion-dollar meat industry.

The investigation is expected to take several months, and industry representatives have not yet issued formal responses. However, this move is likely to revive debates over foreign ownership, food security, and the concentration of corporate power in the American agricultural sector.