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## Easter Sunday Brunch

**March 31, 2013  
10am- 2pm**

- Roast Beef
- Quiche
- Bacon
- Eggs
- Pancakes
- Smoked Hardwood Ham
- Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
- Turkey Legs
- Baked Potato
- Fruit Salad
- Steamed Veggies
- Desserts
- Beverage

**Adults \$14.49  
Children \$6.99  
(10 and under)**

# Raziels

RESTAURANT

13 W. Main Street • Downtown Vermillion • (605) 624-9696

## Maybe Big Ag should grill lawmakers

**By David Lias**  
david.lias@plaintalk.net  
Wow. It's supposed to warm up to 50 degrees plus by the end of this week.

Before you know it, we'll be leaving our houses each morning in short sleeves and will be cleaning up our outdoor grills in anticipation of some delicious, outdoor-prepared burgers, steaks, hot dogs and bratwurst.

Except, right at about the time we all may be itching to throw something on the grill – in early April when we know warm weather is here to stay – the full effects of sequestration will kick in. And that may, or may not, have a bearing on whether there's any fresh meat on store shelves when grilling season arrives.

Although federal budget cuts were scheduled for March 1, it could be months before a threatened shutdown of U.S. meat plants would occur because of a furlough of meat inspectors, according to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Vilsack said work rules vary for USDA employees, who get from 30 to as many as 120 days, or four months, notice of impending layoffs.

"I'm not sure what it is in the food safety area," Vilsack told reporters at the annual USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum earlier this month

after warning that a two-week furlough of all inspectors may be unavoidable.

USDA has raised the prospect of the furlough repeatedly in late February as the nation was on the brink of going over the fiscal cliff – the self-imposed \$85 billion in federal budget cuts agreed to as part of a budget deal back in 2011. They were cuts that were never expected to happen, because, it was thought at the time, Congress and the White House would surely come to their senses by then and work out a deal to avoid the cuts.

As far as our outdoor grilling prospects this spring, we may be in good shape, even if the sequestration lasts a long time. Sounds like we have between a one and four-month cushion – the amount time meat inspectors must be given notice before being laid off.

Of course, if Washington still hasn't gotten it act together after a month or two or even four, things could start getting dicey. This game of budget chicken could result in the meat industry temporarily shutting down. If meat and poultry inspectors are furloughed, meatpackers and processors can't ship beef, pork, lamb and poultry meat. An estimated \$10 billion in production would be lost during a

two-week furlough and consumers could see higher prices and empty shelves as a result, Reuters reports.

I'm not too worried, yet. There's not a whole that Joe and Jane Citizen can do to influence members of Congress and the White House to stop this tomfoolery, but politicians will surely sit and up and listen to big ag corporations.

Tyson Foods, for example. Tyson is the second-largest food production company in the Fortune 500, the largest meat producer in the world, and according to Forbes one of the 100 largest companies in the United States. And, it likes to throw money around to Congressional campaign funds each election cycle.

One could speculate that members of Congress will not want to see our nation's food supply disrupted, and they'll especially not want to tick off the likes of Tyson and other big ag companies.

It would nice if Washington's primary concern, while contemplating food supply/safety, would be our nation's farmers and the general citizenry. Money speaks volumes, however, and no doubt the people who work on Capitol Hill will respond quickly if corporate America complains loudly enough.

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