



128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 175

H.P. 131

House of Representatives, January 24, 2017

An Act Regarding the Regulation of Rabbit Production for Local Consumption

Reference to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative DAUGHTRY of Brunswick.
Cosponsored by Representatives: BERRY of Bowdoinham, DEVIN of Newcastle, HICKMAN of Winthrop, MADIGAN of Waterville, McCREA of Fort Fairfield, O'NEIL of Saco, STEARNS of Guilford, TEPLER of Topsham.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §2512, sub-§1, ¶A**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 354, §2, is
3 further amended to read:

4 A. Require ante mortem and post mortem inspections, quarantine, segregation and
5 reinspections with respect to the slaughter of livestock and poultry and the
6 preparation of livestock products and poultry products at all establishments in this
7 State, except those exempted under section 2517-C ~~or 2517-E~~ or exempted by the
8 commissioner under subsection 2, paragraph K, at which livestock or poultry are
9 slaughtered or livestock products or poultry products are prepared for human food
10 solely for distribution in intrastate commerce;

11 **Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §2514-A, sub-§1, ¶C**, as amended by PL 2015, c. 329, Pt. A,
12 §8, is further amended to read:

13 C. Poultry producer who processes fewer than 1,000 birds annually under section
14 2517-C; ~~or~~

15 **Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §2514-A, sub-§1, ¶C-1** is enacted to read:

16 C-1. Rabbit producer who processes fewer than 1,000 rabbits annually under section
17 2517-E; or

18 **Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §2517-E** is enacted to read:

19 **§2517-E. Slaughter and inspection; producer exemptions for rabbits**

20 **1. Exemption for processing fewer than 1,000 rabbits annually.** Notwithstanding
21 section 2512 and whether or not the rabbits are intended for human consumption,
22 inspection is not required for the slaughter of rabbits or the preparation of rabbit products
23 as long as the rabbits are slaughtered by the producer that raised the rabbits and the rabbit
24 products are prepared on the farm where the rabbits were raised and:

25 A. Fewer than 1,000 rabbits are slaughtered annually on the farm;

26 B. No rabbits are offered for sale or transportation in interstate commerce;

27 C. Any rabbit products sold are sold only as whole rabbit carcasses;

28 D. The rabbit producer is registered under section 2514-A;

29 E. The rabbit producer assigns a lot number to all rabbit products sold and maintains
30 a record of assigned lot numbers and the point of sale;

31 F. The rabbit products are sold in accordance with the restrictions in subsection 2;
32 and

33 G. The rabbit products are labeled with:

34 (1) The name of the farm, the name of the rabbit producer and the address of the
35 farm including the zip code;

1 (2) The number of the registration issued to the rabbit producer in accordance
2 with section 2514-A and the lot number for the rabbit products pursuant to
3 paragraph E;

4 (3) The statement "Exempt under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section
5 2517-E NOT INSPECTED." The statement must be prominently displayed with
6 such conspicuousness that it is likely to be read and understood; and

7 (4) Safe handling and cooking instructions as follows: "SAFE HANDLING
8 INSTRUCTIONS: Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or
9 microwave. Keep raw rabbit meat separate from other foods. Wash working
10 surfaces, including cutting boards, utensils and hands after touching raw rabbit
11 meat. Cook thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 160° Fahrenheit
12 maintained for at least 15 seconds. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers
13 immediately or discard."

14 **2. Restrictions on point of sale.** Rabbit products sold under this section may be
15 sold only by the rabbit producer and in the following locations or manner:

16 A. At the farm on which the rabbits were raised;

17 B. At a farmers' market as defined in Title 7, section 415, subsection 1, paragraph A;

18 C. Delivered to a consumer's home by the rabbit producer whose name and
19 registration number appear on the label under subsection 1, paragraph G;

20 D. Received by a person who is a member of a community-supported agriculture
21 farm that has a direct marketing relationship with the rabbit producer. For the
22 purposes of this paragraph, "community-supported agriculture" means an
23 arrangement whereby individual consumers have agreements with a farmer to be
24 provided with food or other agricultural products produced on that farm;

25 E. To a locally owned grocery store; or

26 F. To a locally owned restaurant.

27 **3. Rules.** The commissioner shall adopt rules to establish requirements for the
28 physical facilities and sanitary processes used by rabbit producers whose rabbit products
29 are exempt from inspection under this section. Rules adopted under this subsection are
30 major substantive rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

31 **4. Enforcement.** The commissioner shall enforce the provisions of this section.

32 **5. Violation; penalty.** A person who violates this section is subject to penalties
33 under section 2524.

34 **Sec. 5. 22 MRSA §2518, sub-§1,** as repealed and replaced by PL 2015, c. 329,
35 Pt. A, §11, is amended to read:

36 **1. Review by inspector.** The commissioner may require establishments that are
37 required to be licensed under section 2514 or registered under section 2514-A but are
38 exempt from inspection under section 2512, subsection 2, paragraph K to be periodically
39 reviewed by inspectors to ensure that the provisions of this chapter and the rules adopted

1 under this chapter are satisfied and that the public health, safety and welfare are
2 protected. The commissioner shall require establishments that are required to be licensed
3 under section 2514 or registered under section 2514-A but are exempt from inspection
4 under section 2517-C or 2517-E to be reviewed annually by inspectors to ensure that the
5 provisions of this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter are satisfied and that
6 the public health, safety and welfare are protected.

7

SUMMARY

8 This bill permits a rabbit producer to sell rabbit products without inspection at the
9 farm on which the rabbits were raised, at farmers' markets, by delivery to consumers'
10 homes, to members of community-supported agriculture farms with which the rabbit
11 producer has a direct marketing relationship, to locally owned grocery stores and to
12 locally owned restaurants, as long as the farm slaughters fewer than 1,000 rabbits
13 annually.