



127th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2015

Legislative Document

No. 709

H.P. 485

House of Representatives, March 5, 2015

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: BROOKS of Lewiston, HICKMAN of Winthrop, SAUCIER of Presque Isle, TEPLER of Topsham.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §2517-E** is enacted to read:

3 **§2517-E. Slaughter and inspection; producer exemptions for rabbits**

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

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

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

11 C. Any rabbit products sold are sold only as whole rabbits;

12 D. The rabbit producer is registered under section 2515;

13 E. The rabbit producer assigns a lot number to all rabbits sold and maintains a record
14 of assigned lot numbers and the point of sale;

15 F. The rabbits are sold in accordance with the restrictions in subsection 2;

16 G. The rabbits are sold at the farm on which the rabbits were raised or delivered to a
17 consumer's home by the rabbit producer; and

18 H. The rabbit products are labeled with:

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

21 (2) The number of the registration issued to the rabbit producer in accordance
22 with section 2515 and the lot number for the rabbit products pursuant to
23 paragraph E;

24 (3) The statement "Exempt under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section
25 2517-E NOT INSPECTED." The statement must be prominently displayed with
26 such conspicuousness that it is likely to be read and understood; and

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

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

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

37 B. At a farmers' market as defined in Title 7, section 415;

1 C. Delivered to a consumer's home by the rabbit producer whose name and license
2 number appear on the label under subsection 3;

3 D. Received by a person who is a member of a community supported agriculture
4 farm that has a direct marketing relationship with the rabbit producer. For the
5 purposes of this section, "community supported agriculture" means an arrangement
6 whereby individual consumers have agreements with a farmer to be provided with
7 food or other agricultural products produced on that farm;

8 E. To a locally owned grocery store; or

9 F. To a locally owned restaurant.

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

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

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

17 **SUMMARY**

18 This bill permits rabbit producers to sell rabbit products without inspection at the
19 farm on which the rabbits were raised, at farmers' markets, by delivery to consumers'
20 homes, to community supported agriculture farms with which the rabbit producer has a
21 direct marketing relationship, to locally owned grocery stores and to locally owned
22 restaurants.