

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND THIRTEEN

—
H.P. 179 - L.D. 218

An Act To Promote Small-scale Poultry Farming

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

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §2511, sub-§41-A is enacted to read:

41-A. Registered establishment. "Registered establishment" means a person registered under section 2515.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §2511, sub-§45-A is enacted to read:

45-A. Small enterprise. "Small enterprise" means a person licensed under section 2514 that processes 20,000 birds or fewer in a calendar year and that elects to operate under an exemption pursuant to section 2517-C, subsection 1-B.

Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §2514, sub-§1, ¶G-1 is enacted to read:

G-1. Mobile poultry processing unit operators;

Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §2515 is enacted to read:

§2515. Registration

1. Registration permitted. A person that is not licensed under section 2514 may engage in intrastate commerce in the business of buying, selling, preparing, processing, packing, storing, transporting or otherwise handling meat, meat food products or poultry products, if that person is registered under this section, and that person is a:

A. Custom slaughterer, except that an itinerant custom slaughterer that slaughters solely at a customer's home or farm and that does not own, operate or work at a slaughtering plant is exempt from the registration provisions of this section;

B. Custom processor; or

C. Producer that processes fewer than 1,000 birds annually under section 2517-C.

The commissioner may by rule establish additional categories of registrants.

Sec. 5. 22 MRSA §2517-C, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 354, §3, is amended to read:

§2517-C. Slaughter and inspection; producer exemptions for poultry

1. Exemption for processing fewer than 1,000 birds annually. Notwithstanding section 2512 and whether or not the poultry are intended for human consumption, inspection is not required for the slaughter of poultry or the preparation of poultry products as long as the poultry are slaughtered or the poultry products are prepared on the farm where the poultry were raised and:

- A. Fewer than 1,000 birds are slaughtered annually on the farm;
- B. No birds are offered for sale or transportation in interstate commerce;
- C. Any poultry products sold are sold only as whole birds;
- ~~D. The poultry producer has a valid license issued under section 2514;~~
- D-1. The poultry producer is registered under section 2515;
- ~~E. The facilities for slaughtering and processing are in compliance with rules adopted under subsection 4;~~
- F. The poultry producer assigns a lot number to all birds sold and maintains a record of assigned lot numbers and the point of sale; ~~and~~
- G. The poultry are sold in accordance with the restrictions in subsection 2-~~;~~
- H. The poultry are sold at the farm on which the poultry were raised or delivered to a consumer's home by the poultry producer; and
- I. The poultry products are labeled with:
 - (1) The name of the farm, the name of the poultry producer and the address of the farm including the zip code;
 - (2) The statement "Exempt under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 2517-C NOT INSPECTED"; and
 - (3) Safe handling and cooking instructions as follows: "SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. Keep raw poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, including cutting boards, utensils and hands, after touching raw poultry. Cook thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 165° Fahrenheit maintained for at least 15 seconds. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard."

1-A. Exemption for processing fewer than 20,000 birds annually. A poultry producer may slaughter and process that producer's own poultry without an inspector being present during processing if all the following criteria are met; a producer that does not meet these criteria does not qualify for this exemption and shall seek state or United States Department of Agriculture inspection of poultry products intended to be sold:

- A. The producer is licensed as a commercial processor pursuant to section 2514;

B. The producer's facilities conform to the rules of the department governing food processing and manufacturing, including a:

- (1) Separate area for slaughter, bleeding and defeathering;
- (2) Separate area for evisceration and cooling; and
- (3) Water supply that is tested twice annually for nitrates, nitrites and coliforms;

C. The producer raises, slaughters and processes, on that producer's premises, no more than 20,000 poultry in a calendar year. The producer must declare to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry that it is exempt under this subsection at the beginning of each calendar year. Records must demonstrate numbers of birds raised. A producer that does not maintain accurate records does not qualify for the exemption under this subsection;

D. The producer's facility is not used to slaughter or process poultry by any other person or business without prior approval from the commissioner in accordance with the requirements of the federal Food Safety and Inspection Service Administrator;

E. The producer does not purchase birds for resale that have been processed under any exemption under this section;

F. Poultry are healthy when slaughtered;

G. Slaughter and processing are conducted using sanitary standards, practices and procedures to produce poultry products that are not adulterated;

H. The producer does not engage in Internet or interstate sales;

I. The shipping containers of the poultry bear the following labeling:

- (1) Producer's name, address and zip code;
- (2) Common name of product or list of ingredients;
- (3) Weight of product in shipping container or immediate container;
- (4) Lot number, which must consist of a coded number in some combination of the number of the day of the year on which the poultry was slaughtered;
- (5) The statement "Exempt P.L. 90-492"; and
- (6) Safe handling and cooking instructions as follows: "SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. Keep raw poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, including cutting boards, utensils and hands, after touching raw poultry. Cook thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 165° Fahrenheit maintained for at least 15 seconds. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard."

The producer may further process poultry carcasses into parts and other products. The producer may sell retail poultry products to the household consumer and may sell wholesale poultry products to retail stores, hotels, restaurants and institutions, with the appropriate licenses.

1-B. Small enterprise exemption. A small enterprise may slaughter, dress and cut up poultry without an inspector being present during processing if all the following criteria are met; a small enterprise that does not meet these criteria does not qualify for the exemption and shall seek state or United States Department of Agriculture inspection of poultry products intended to be sold.

A. The small enterprise is licensed as a commercial processor pursuant to section 2514;

B. The small enterprise's facilities conform to the rules of the department governing food processing and manufacturing, including a:

(1) Separate area for slaughter, bleeding and defeathering;

(2) Separate area for evisceration and cooling; and

(3) Water supply that is tested twice annually for nitrates, nitrites and coliforms;

C. The small enterprise raises, slaughters and dresses poultry, or purchases live poultry to slaughter and dress, or purchases dressed poultry, in a combination of no more than 20,000 birds in a calendar year. The small enterprise must declare to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry that it is exempt under this subsection at the beginning of each calendar year. Records must show numbers of birds raised, purchased or purchased as dressed. A small enterprise that does not maintain accurate records does not qualify for the exemption under this subsection;

D. The small enterprise's further processing is limited to whole and cut up poultry only;

E. The facility is not used to slaughter or process poultry by any other person or business without prior approval from the commissioner in accordance with the requirements of the federal Food Safety and Inspection Service Administrator;

F. Slaughter and processing are conducted using sanitary standards, practices and procedures to produce poultry products that are not adulterated;

G. Poultry are healthy when slaughtered;

H. The small enterprise does not engage in Internet or interstate sales;

I. The small enterprise does not cut up and distribute poultry products to a business operating under any exemption under this section;

J. The shipping or immediate containers of the poultry bear the following labeling:

(1) Business name, address and zip code;

(2) Common name of product;

(3) Weight of product in shipping container or immediate container;

(4) Lot number, which must consist of a coded number in some combination of the number of the day of the year on which the poultry was slaughtered;

(5) The statement "Processed by a Licensed Commercial Food Processor/Small Enterprise Exempt from State or United States Department of Agriculture continuous bird-by-bird inspection"; and

(6) Safe handling and cooking instructions as follows: "SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. Keep raw poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, including cutting boards, utensils and hands, after touching raw poultry. Cook thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 165° Fahrenheit maintained for at least 15 seconds. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard."

The small enterprise may sell poultry products wholesale to hotels, restaurants and institutions, prepackaged products to retail stores and retail products to household consumers, with the appropriate licenses.

2. Restrictions on point of sale. Poultry Except as provided in subsections 1-A and 1-B, poultry products sold under this section may only be sold by the poultry producer and in the following locations or manner:

- A. At the farm on which the poultry were raised;
- B. At a farmers' market as defined in Title 7, section 415;
- C. Delivered to a consumer's home by the poultry producer whose name and address appear on the label under subsection 1 or whose name and license number appear on the label under subsection ~~3~~ 1-A or 1-B; or
- D. Received by a person who is a member of a community supported agriculture farm that has a direct marketing relationship with the poultry producer. For the purposes of this section, "community supported agriculture" means an arrangement whereby individual consumers have agreements with a farmer to be provided with food or other agricultural products produced on that farm.

~~**3. Labeling requirements for sales at farmers' markets.** A poultry producer may not sell poultry products that have not been inspected at a farmers' market pursuant to subsections 1 and 2 unless the poultry products are labeled with:~~

- ~~A. The name of the farm, the name of the poultry producer and the address of the farm including the zip code;~~
- ~~B. The number of the license issued to the poultry producer in accordance with section 2514 and the lot number for the poultry products pursuant to subsection 1, paragraph F;~~
- ~~C. The statement "Exempt under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 2517-C NOT INSPECTED." The statement must be prominently displayed with such conspicuousness that it is likely to be read and understood; and~~
- ~~D. Safe handling and cooking instructions as follows: "SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. Keep raw poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, including cutting boards, utensils and hands, after touching raw poultry. Cook thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit maintained for at least 15 seconds. Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard."~~

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

5. Enforcement. The commissioner shall enforce the provisions of this section.

6. Violation; penalty. A person who violates this section is subject to penalties under section 2524.

Sec. 6. 22 MRSA §2518, as amended by PL 2009, c. 354, §4, is further amended to read:

§2518. Periodic review of noninspected licensed and registered establishments

1. Review by inspector. The commissioner may cause establishments that are required to be licensed under section 2514 or registered under section 2515 but are exempt from inspection under section 2512, subsection 2, paragraph K to be periodically reviewed by inspectors to ensure that the provisions of this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter are satisfied and that the public health, safety and welfare are protected. The commissioner shall cause establishments that are required to be licensed under section 2514 or registered under section 2515 but are exempt from inspection under section 2517-C to be reviewed annually by inspectors to ensure that the provisions of this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter are satisfied and that the public health, safety and welfare are protected.

2. Review of certain slaughter or preparation establishments. Inspection may not be provided under this chapter at any establishment for the slaughter of livestock or poultry or the preparation of any livestock products or poultry products that are not intended for use as human food, but these products must, prior to their offer for sale or transportation in intrastate commerce, unless naturally inedible by humans, be denatured or otherwise identified, as prescribed by rules of the commissioner, to deter their use for human food. These licensed or registered establishments are subject to periodic review.

3. Subject to review. A periodic review under this section must include an examination of:

- A. The licensed or registered establishment's sanitation practices;
- B. Sanitation in the areas where meat and poultry products are prepared, stored and displayed;
- C. The adequacy of a refrigeration system used for meat food products and poultry products;
- D. Labeling; and
- E. Meat food products or poultry products for wholesomeness or adulteration.

In addition, the inspector conducting the periodic review may conduct any other examination necessary to ensure compliance with this chapter and the rules adopted pursuant to this chapter.

4. Access. For purposes of a periodic review of a licensed or registered establishment, inspectors have access during normal business hours to every part of a licensed or registered establishment required to have inspection under this chapter, whether the licensed or registered establishment is operated or not.

Sec. 7. Legislative intent. It is the intent of the Legislature to provide maximum flexibility to Maine's poultry processors while still maintaining compliance with federal requirements. It is the intent of the Legislature that Maine's meat and poultry inspection program continue to attain its high standards while allowing for maximum flexibility.