

# Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

*Joshua Schauer 271-3077*

**HB 1013**, relative to games wherein the object is to capture a pig.

**Hearing Date:** April 8, 2026

**Time Opened:** 11:10 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 11:29 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Rosenwald and Pearl

**Members of the Committee Absent :** Senators Avard, McConkey and Watters

**Bill Analysis:** This bill requires the commissioner of the department of agriculture, markets, and food to develop best practices and recommendations for games in which the object is to capture a pig and to develop rules for enforcement of such practices.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. C. Harvey

Rep. Bixby

Rep. Gruber

Rep. Newell

Rep. Berch

Sen. Watters

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**Who supports the bill:** 13 Individuals signed in Support of the legislation. Please contact [Joshua.Schauer@gc.nh.gov](mailto:Joshua.Schauer@gc.nh.gov) for more information.

**Who opposes the bill:** 9 Individuals signed in Opposition of the legislation. Please contact [Joshua.Schauer@gc.nh.gov](mailto:Joshua.Schauer@gc.nh.gov) for more information.

**Summary of testimony presented:**

**Representative Judy Aron,**

- Rep. Aron introduced the legislation and also created the amendment that significantly changed the bill.
- The original bill proposed an outright ban on contests involving pigs. In discussing the issue, she highlighted concerns about the treatment of pigs and emphasized the importance of best practices.
- The events involving pigs were later reconsidered. The bill was amended to allow such events, provided they are educational and conducted in a humane manner. The amendment also requires the Department to develop and publish a set of best practices outlining proper care and handling of the animals.

- She said the goal is to ensure that event organizers have clear guidelines to follow—both to protect the welfare of the animals and to ensure the safety of participants.
- Additionally, the Department of Agriculture (DOA) would be authorized to adopt rules for enforcing these standards.

**Kurt Ehrenburg, Humane World**

- Mr. Ehrenbrug said they were in support of the original bill, and while the amendment does not go as far, it is better than nothing.
- He said that the bill establishes a set of standards that organizers can follow, providing clearer guidance and a baseline for accountability.

**Robert Johnson, NH Farm Bureau**

- He said the Bureau is in support of the bill and believe that, when conducted properly, these events do not result in improper treatment of the animals. They are supportive of establishing and following best practices.

**Joan Obrien, Animal Rights league**

- She expressed support for the bill as amended, noting that the inclusion of best practices is a positive step. She also shared that she was impressed by the way some fairs handle and care for the animals, even providing photos of piglets to illustrate improper versus proper treatment.
- At the same time, she raised concerns about how these events may be confusing for children, particularly because they involve interacting with animals that may later be slaughtered.
- She also pointed out that many pigs are typically raised in windowless sheds, and suggested that, in comparison, scrambles may offer a more humane experience than some conventional farming practices.

**Commissioner Shawn Jasper, Department of Agriculture**

**Senator Pearl** asked what the current level of oversight is.

**Commissioner Jasper** expressed partial opposition to the bill as written. He noted that the Department did not testify in the House because it had been involved in the original version of the bill.

- He stated that the House did not consult the Department before adding new responsibilities in the amended version.
- He explained that the Department does not know how many of these events take place across the state and is not aware of all of them. Referring to Chairman Aron’s testimony, he suggested that the bill could imply an investigatory role for the Department, which it is not equipped to fulfill. He emphasized that his staff

is not trained for investigative work, stating that such responsibilities are more appropriate for law enforcement.

- He also raised concerns that the bill could place the Department in a position related to animal cruelty enforcement. While he expressed support for Section 1 of the bill, he identified Section 2 as problematic. He explained that the Department is typically used as a “safe harbor” for agricultural practices, but the bill introduces potential penalties for failing to follow best practices, which could conflict with that role.
- He stated that there is not enough time to put the rules in place as required by the bill.

**Senator Pearl** asked what the current oversight of these events is.

**Commissioner Jasper** responded that there is none beyond what individual event organizers establish themselves.

**Senator Pearl** then asked whether it is fair to assume there is at least a basic standard in place.

**Commissioner Jasper** agreed but emphasized that situations involving potential misconduct or harm are matters for law enforcement and should be addressed by the police. He added that the Department could easily implement best practices by the end of the year.