7Jan2026... 3090h
05/07/2026 1719s
4Jun2026... 2155EBA

2026 SESSION

25-0749
08/09

HOUSE BILL ***396***

AN ACT relative to the processing of cattle, swine, sheep, and goats at facilities not certified by the United States Department of Agriculture.

SPONSORS: Rep. Comtois, Belk. 7; Rep. J. Aron, Sull. 4; Rep. Granger, Straf. 2; Rep. Kofalt, Hills. 32; Rep. Layon, Rock. 13; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. Pearl, Dist 17

COMMITTEE: Environment and Agriculture

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill allows for a limited number of cattle, swine, sheep, and goats to be processed per month by a farm or a producer at a facility that is not certified by the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT relative to the processing of cattle, swine, sheep, and goats at facilities not certified by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 Exemptions; Food Service Licensure. Amend RSA 143-A:5, IX to read as follows:

IX. A farm owned or operated by any person, firm, or corporation that raises bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer***, cattle, swine, sheep, or goats*** for human consumption, and the direct sale within this state of the carcasses, parts, ***and*** meat[~~, and meat food products~~] of such animals, ***and meat food products of uninspected bison, elk, cattle, swine, sheep, goats, or red deer*** when slaughtered and processed in accordance with RSA 427:2-a, IV, to the consumer from such farm, at the producer's farm stand, and by the producer at farmers' markets, or when sold to a licensed restaurant in accordance with RSA 143-A:20.

2 Uninspected Bison, Elk, or Red Deer; Cattle, Swine, Sheep, and Goats Included. Amend RSA 143-A:18 to read as follows:

143-A:18 Definition of Uninspected Bison, Elk, [~~or~~] Red Deer***, Cattle, Swine, Sheep, or Goats***.

For purposes of this subdivision, "uninspected bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer***, cattle, swine, sheep, or goats***" means carcasses, parts, ***and*** meat[~~, and meat food products~~] of bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer***, cattle, swine, sheep, or goats, and meat food products of bison, elk, or red deer*** slaughtered and processed [~~in accordance with RSA 427:16, XII~~] and sold or to be sold [~~as provided in RSA 427:2-a, IV~~].

3 Labeling; Meat from Uninspected Bison, Elk, or Red Deer; Cattle, Swine, Sheep, and Goats Included. Amend RSA 143-A:19 to read as follows:

143-A:19 Labeling; Meat from Uninspected Bison, Elk, [~~or~~] Red Deer***, Cattle, Swine, Sheep, and Goats***.

All packaging containing uninspected bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer***, cattle, swine, sheep, or goats*** shall be clearly labeled to include a description of the product, the name, address, and telephone number of the farm where the product originates, and the date of slaughter.

4 Purchase of Uninspected Bison, Elk, or Red Deer by Licensed Restaurants; Cattle, Swine, Sheep, and Goats Included. Amend RSA 143-A:20 to read as follows:

143-A:20 Purchase of Uninspected Bison, Elk, [~~or~~] Red Deer***, Cattle, Swine, Sheep, or Goats*** by Licensed Restaurants.

I. A licensed restaurant, as defined in RSA 143-A:14, II, may purchase from bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer***, cattle, swine, sheep, or goat*** producers uninspected bison, elk***,*** [~~or~~] red deer***, cattle, swine, sheep, or goat*** that is labeled in accordance with RSA 143-A:19.

II. For at least 90 days from the date of each purchase, the licensed restaurant shall keep on file the receipt of purchase to include the product purchased, the date of purchase, the name of the producer, the name and address of the farm, and phone number.

III. The licensed restaurant shall clearly label any menu item containing uninspected bison, elk, or red deer with the following statement: "This product was [~~slaughtered~~] *initially processed* at the farm and is exempt from state and federal inspection."

III-a. The licensed restaurant shall clearly label any menu item containing uninspected cattle, swine, sheep, or goat with the following statement: "This product was initially processed at the farm and is exempt from state inspection."

5 Purchase of Uninspected Bison, Elk, or Red Deer by Retailers; Cattle, Swine, Sheep, and Goats Included. Amend RSA 143-A:20-a to read as follows:

143-A:20-a Purchase of Uninspected Bison, Elk, [~~or~~] Red Deer*, Cattle, Swine, Sheep, or Goat* by Retailers.

I. A retailer may purchase from bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer*, cattle, swine, sheep, or goat* producers uninspected bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer*, cattle, swine, sheep, or goat* that is labeled in accordance with RSA 143-A:19 for resale.

II. For at least 90 days from the date of each purchase, the retailer shall keep on file the receipt of purchase to include the product purchased, the date of purchase, the name of the producer, the name and address of the farm, and phone number.

III. The retailer shall clearly label any product containing uninspected bison, elk, or red deer with the following statement: "This product was [~~slaughtered~~] *initially processed* at the farm and is exempt from state and federal inspection."

IV. The retailer shall clearly label any product containing uninspected cattle, swine, sheep, or goat with the following statement: "This product was initially processed at the farm and is exempt from state inspection."

6 Exemptions; Cattle, Swine, Sheep, and Goats. Amend RSA 427:2-a, IV to read as follows:

IV. The slaughter of bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer*, cattle, swine, sheep, or goats* on a farm for purposes of sale, as provided in RSA 143-A:5, IX, shall be exempt from the provisions of this subdivision requiring inspection of the slaughter of animals and preparation of the carcasses, parts thereof, meat *of such animals*, and meat food products *of bison, elk, or red deer* for sale within this state to the public. The slaughter of a bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer*, cattle, swine, sheep, or goats* under this paragraph shall be permitted only:

(a) When the owner of the bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer*, cattle, swine, sheep, or goat* designates a slaughter area on the farm premises *which is maintained in sanitary condition*.

(b) When the bison, elk, [~~or~~] red deer*, cattle, swine, sheep, or goat* is slaughtered in a humane method, as defined in RSA 427:33, III, by the owner [~~or~~]*,* the owner's full time or seasonal employee*, or the owner's agent*.

(c) [~~From September 1 to April 30.~~

~~(d)~~] When no more than 12 hours passes from the time of slaughter to the [~~placement~~] *storage* of the carcass [~~in a refrigerated facility~~] at or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit.

[~~(e)~~] *(d)* When a veterinarian licensed under RSA 332-B conducts an ante-mortem examination of each *non-amenable* herd on an annual basis and the documents related to his or her examination are kept on file with all relevant information including:

(1) Species being inspected;

(2) Herd condition; and

(3) Location and time of inspection.

[~~(f)~~] ***(e)*** When such ***non-amenable*** animal is transported to and processed at a facility that is eligible to conduct custom exempt activities as regulated by the USDA pursuant to 21 U.S.C. section 623(a) and associated departmental regulations.

[~~(g)~~] ***(f)*** When the owner of the bison, elk, or red deer retains the original copy of the report made in [~~subparagraph(e)~~] ***subparagraph (d)***. A copy of such report shall accompany the bison, elk, or red deer carcass to the processing facility. The processing facility shall retain a copy of the report for one year.

[~~(h)~~] ***(g)*** When bison, elk, or red deer meat is ground for sale, ground meat from every second animal processed shall be tested by the processing facility for Escherichia coli and salmonella at the owner's expense. All aspects of the testing, including sampling, shall be done in a manner that complies with standards and procedures of the USDA, and may include the services of an outside laboratory. The owner of the meat shall not sell it until he or she is in receipt of the test result that indicates the product is safe to eat. The test result shall be kept by the owner for at least one year.

[~~(i)~~] ***(h)*** Prior to sale, as provided in RSA 143-A:5, IX, it is labeled as required in RSA 143-A:19.

[~~(j)~~] ***(i)*** When the elk or red deer are sourced, kept, and propagated consistent with the rules pursuant to RSA 207:14, RSA 212:25, and RSA 436:24.

[~~(k)~~] ***(j)*** When, in the event any atypical death of a red deer or elk on the farm, that animal's carcass is tested for chronic wasting disease under rules established by the department of fish and game and the resulting test is negative.

V. No more than the following number of animals shall be processed per month under this paragraph:

(a) Three cattle.

(b) Five swine.

(c) Ten sheep or goats, or a combination thereof.

7 Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food; Rulemaking. The department of agriculture, markets, and food, shall adopt rules under RSA 541-A relative to providing an annual training program for farmers to include, but not be limited to, training about safety, food quality, and product labeling and distribution.

8 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

VETOED July 10, 2026 / Veto Sustained August 19, 2026