

HB 779-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2025 SESSION

25-0813

08/09

HOUSE BILL **779-FN**

AN ACT allowing the sale of rabbit meat in intrastate commerce.

SPONSORS: Rep. Verville, Rock. 2; Rep. Ammon, Hills. 42; Rep. J. Aron, Sull. 4; Rep. Comtois, Belk. 7; Rep. Creighton, Hills. 30; Sen. Murphy, Dist 16; Sen. Pearl, Dist 17

COMMITTEE: Environment and Agriculture

ANALYSIS

This bill allows for the sale of uninspected rabbit meat in intrastate commerce.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT allowing the sale of rabbit meat in intrastate commerce.

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

1 1 New Paragraph; Rabbits. Amend RSA 143-A:5 by inserting after paragraph IX the following
2 new paragraph:

3 X. A farm owned or operated by any person, firm, or corporation that raises 1,000 or fewer
4 rabbits per year for human consumption, and the direct sale within this state of the whole carcasses
5 of such animals, when slaughtered and processed in accordance with RSA 427:2-a, IV, to the
6 consumer from such farm, at the producer's farm stand, and by the producer at farmers' markets, or
7 when sold to a licensed restaurant in accordance with RSA 143-A:20-c.

8 2 New Subdivision; Meat from Uninspected Rabbits; Labeling. Amend RSA 143-A by inserting
9 after section 20 the following new subdivision:

10 Meat from Uninspected Rabbits

11 143-A:20-a Definition of Uninspected Rabbit. For purposes of this subdivision, "uninspected
12 rabbit" means whole carcasses of rabbits slaughtered and processed on the farm where the rabbits
13 were raised and by the producer that raised the rabbits.

14 143-A:20-b Labeling; Meat from Uninspected Rabbits. All packaging containing uninspected
15 rabbit shall be clearly labeled to include:

16 I. The name of the farm, the name of the rabbit producer and the address of the farm
17 including the zip code;

18 II. The lot number for the rabbit products pursuant to RSA 427:2-a, V;

19 III. The statement "Exempt under RSA 427:2-a NOT INSPECTED." The statement shall be
20 prominently displayed with such conspicuousness that it is likely to be read
21 and understood; and

22 IV. Safe handling and cooking instructions as follows:

23 "SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: Keep refrigerated or frozen. Thaw in refrigerator or
24 microwave. Keep raw rabbit meat separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, including
25 cutting boards, utensils, and hands after touching raw rabbit meat. Cook thoroughly to an internal
26 temperature of at least 160° Fahrenheit maintained for at least 15 seconds. Keep hot foods hot.
27 Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard."

28 143-A:20-c Purchase of Uninspected Rabbit by Licensed Restaurants.

29 I. A licensed restaurant, as defined in RSA 143-A:14, II may purchase from uninspected
30 rabbit producers uninspected rabbit that is labeled in accordance with RSA 143-A:20-b.

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1 II. For at least 90 days from the date of each purchase, the licensed restaurant shall keep on
2 file the receipt of purchase to include the lot number of the rabbit carcass, the date of purchase, the
3 name of the producer, the name and address of the farm, and the phone number.

4 III. The licensed restaurant shall clearly label any menu item containing uninspected rabbit
5 with the following statement: "This product was slaughtered at the farm and is exempt from state
6 and federal inspection."

7 3 New Paragraph; Exemptions; Slaughter of Rabbits. Amend RSA 427:2-a by inserting after
8 paragraph IV the following new paragraph:

9 V. Producers of 1,000 rabbits or fewer annually with respect to rabbits of their own raising
10 on their own farms if such producers slaughter not more than 1,000 rabbits during the calendar year
11 for which this exemption is being determined and such rabbit producers do not engage in buying or
12 selling rabbit products other than those produced from rabbit raised on their own farms, and such
13 rabbits are only sold within the state of New Hampshire, directly to the consumer at the farm or at a
14 farmers market, or to restaurants pursuant to RSA 143-A:20-c, and such producers follow USDA
15 regulations and prescribed sanitary standards, practices, and procedures. In order to be exempt
16 under this paragraph, producers shall assign a lot number to all rabbit products sold and maintain a
17 record of assigned lot numbers at the point of sale.

18 4 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

**HB 779-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT allowing the sale of rabbit meat in intrastate commerce.

FISCAL IMPACT: This bill does not provide funding.

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenue	\$0	Indeterminable (Less than \$10,000)	Indeterminable (Less than \$10,000)	Indeterminable (Less than \$10,000)
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	General Fund			
Expenditures*	\$0	Indeterminable	Indeterminable	Indeterminable
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	None			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill

*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

METHODOLOGY:

This bill allows farms in New Hampshire raising 1,000 or fewer rabbits annually to sell whole rabbit carcasses directly to consumers, farm stands, farmers' markets, and licensed restaurants, provided they comply with specific slaughter, labeling, and record-keeping regulations. Rabbit meat exempt from inspection must include clear labeling with producer information, a disclaimer of inspection exemption, and safe handling instructions. Licensed restaurants purchasing uninspected rabbit must retain purchase records and disclose the exemption status on their menus.

The Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food states this bill appears to alter existing federal exemptions regarding the sale of uninspected rabbit meat. Under current federal regulations, producers processing fewer than 1,000 rabbits annually are exempt from inspection requirements, provided specific federal criteria are met. This bill seems to remove or modify those criteria from state law. At this time, the Department will not provide a fiscal note for legislation that appears to conflict with federal law.

The Department of Health and Human Services estimates an indeterminable fiscal impact of less than \$10,000 annually resulting from this bill. Currently, under RSA 143-A, the sale of uninspected rabbit meat to licensed restaurants in New Hampshire is permitted. The proposed legislation expands this allowance to include sales directly from producers at farm stands and

farmers' markets. This change may reduce the number of farms seeking food licensure, leading to a potential decrease in the annual license fees paid, which are deposited into the General Fund. As a result, the fiscal impact on state revenue from this decrease in licensure is indeterminable.

Additionally, the Department notes they do not have jurisdiction over the provisions in RSA 427 as well as the bill conflicts with existing regulations for the sale of uninspected rabbit meat in RSA 143-A:14, 143-A:15, 143-A:16, and 143-A:17.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food and Department of Health and Human Services