

## **H.860: An Act Relating to On-farm Livestock Slaughter: Overview and Summary**

- Under federal and State law, a person slaughtering livestock for sale must meet specific licensing and inspection requirements, provided that federal law allows for certain exceptions to licensing and inspection for personal slaughter or other limited slaughter.
- In 2007, the Legislature attempted to expand the exemptions from meat inspection and allow an itinerant slaughterer to provide slaughter services at a livestock owner's home or at a farm where the livestock was being raised for the owner under a contract.
- After enactment of Act No. 207 in 2007, the USDA informed the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets that the exemption for slaughter under a contract was not authorized under federal law.
- But, there remained a demand for specific, limited slaughter activities, especially for those communities in Vermont with religious requirements for slaughter.
- In 2013, the General Assembly attempted to clarify the slaughter exemptions in Act No. 83.
- The Committees reviewed statute in other states and worked closely with USDA to allow for limited slaughter on farms without a license or inspection.
- Act No. 83, provided that a slaughter license and inspection was not required for:
  - Slaughter by an individual of livestock that the individual raised for their exclusive use;
  - Slaughter by an individual for use by members of his or her household or nonpaying guest; or
  - Slaughter of livestock that occurs under the following conditions:
    1. An individual purchases livestock from a farmer that raised the livestock;
    2. The individual who purchased the livestock performs the act of slaughtering the livestock;
    3. The act of slaughter occurs, after approval from the farmer who sold the livestock, on a site on the farm where the livestock was purchased;
    4. The slaughter is conducted under sanitary conditions;
    5. The farmer who sold the livestock to the individual does not assist in the slaughter;
    6. No more than the following number of livestock per year are slaughtered per year under the exemption: (A) 10 swine; (B) three cattle; (C) 25 sheep or goats; or (D) any combination of swine, cattle, sheep, or goats, provided that no more than 3,500 pounds of the live weight of livestock are slaughtered per year; and
    7. The farmer who sold the livestock maintains a record of each slaughter conducted and reports to the Agency regarding all slaughter activity conducted under this exemption.
- Act No. 83 included a sunset of the exemptions for slaughter on July 1, 2016 so that the Legislature and the agency would revisit the issue to see if the exemptions posed any problems.
- H.860, as passed by the House, simply extended the sunset of the individual and on-farm slaughter exemptions for three years until July 1, 2019.

## **Senate Proposal of Amendment**

### **Sec. 1. 6 V.S.A. § 3311a. On-Farm Slaughter**

- Amends the on-farm slaughter provisions in 6 V.S.A. § 3311a(c).
  - § 3311a(c)(2): Requires a farmer selling livestock for the purposes of on-farm slaughter to register with the Agency of Agriculture.
  - § 3311a(c)(7): Increases the number of animals that a farmer can sell for on-farm slaughter each year:
    - From 10 to 15 swine
    - From 3 to 5 cattle
    - From 25 to 40 sheep or goats
    - From 3,500 to 6,000 pounds of live weight of any combination
  - § 3311a(c)(8): Amends the farmer's reporting requirements to provide that they will be required quarterly on a form provided by the Agency of Agriculture.
    - If the farmer fails to submit the required reports, the Agency may suspend the farmer's authority to conduct on-farm slaughter.

### **Sec. 2. Extension of Sunset of On Farm Slaughter**

- Section 2 extends the sunset of the on-farm slaughter authority until July 1, 2019.

### **Sec. 3. Education and Outreach**

- Requires the Agency of Agriculture, in consultation with interested parties, to develop educational materials regarding the availability of and requirements for on-farm livestock slaughter.

### **Sec. 4. Effective Dates**

- The act goes into effect on passage.