
This act summary is provided for the convenience of the public and members of the General Assembly. It is intended to provide a general summary of the act and may not be exhaustive. It has been prepared by the staff of the Office of Legislative Counsel without input from members of the General Assembly. It is not intended to aid in the interpretation of legislation or to serve as a source of legislative intent.

Act No. 47 (H.420). Agriculture; weights and measures; livestock; water quality; hemp

An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects

This act amends multiple miscellaneous agricultural statutes. The act repeals the sunset of the on-farm slaughter authority and increases the number of animals that may be slaughtered annually under on-farm slaughter authority. The act clarifies that livestock dealers include online or remote transactions, but a person buying animals for a farming operation is not a livestock dealer required to register with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM). The act, however, authorizes AAFM to require a person to obtain a livestock dealer license if AAFM determines the person is trying to circumvent license requirements.

The act renames the Large Animal Veterinarian Loan Repayment Program as the Food Animal Veterinarian Education Loan Repayment Program for consistency with a similar U.S. Department of Agriculture program. The act also amends eligibility for the program by requiring recipients to be significantly dedicated to treating food animals. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets is granted authority to determine what constitutes significant dedication.

The act amends the definition of “commercial weighing and measuring device” to clarify what weights or scales must register with AAFM. The definition of commercial weighing device does not include a device in a business used internally to determine weight, measure, or count of a commodity or thing while manufacturing, processing, or preparing the commodity or thing for market. The definition of “commercial weighing and measuring device” also does not include a pharmacy device used to determine appropriate dosage of medication or medical treatment or a U.S. Postal Service scale.

The act extends to February 1, 2023, the authorized operation of the Payment for Ecosystem Services and Soil Health Working Group. The act also requires custom applicators to be certified to apply manure or agricultural waste, instead of the current certification for application of manure or nutrients. The act clarifies that information that AAFM collects in databases is public, but identifying information of farms or businesses shall be redacted or removed prior to public distribution.

The act authorizes operation of the State Hemp Program under the 2014 federal Farm Bill pilot program until January 1, 2022. The act also directs AAFM to update the Agriculture Annex to the State Emergency Management Plan to improve State capacity to maintain food supply during emergency or other food insecurity.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on June 1, 2020