



Repeal the Registration and Reporting Requirements for On-Farm Slaughter!

Sign On Letter, Rural Vermont, March 24, 2022

Dear Legislators,

A community of small-scale farmers who struggle to find nearby meat processing facilities that meet their needs and who decided it would be best for their animals to be slaughtered on the farm where they were raised need your support!

On-Farm Slaughter is being penalized with new restrictions that the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets announced January 6, 2022, as coming from the superseding federal agency, the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS). These restrictions now require every livestock owner, who purchased the animal from a farmer for its slaughter on the farm, to be at least present during the act of slaughter if not engaging also in the slaughter themselves. In testimony, VAAFM staff further stated that farmers who organize On-Farm Slaughter would not be allowed to hire itinerant slaughterers on behalf of the owners of the livestock they raise. Finally, VAAFM penalizes those who demand local meat in direct relationship to their farmer by stating in testimony to the House Agriculture and Forestry Committee that the agency would understand the owners, and not farmers, need to be the ones to transport the carcass off the farm and to the butcher. Sincerely, would you have the skill, vehicle, and machinery to transport a quarter of a cow? We have not seen any of these restrictions in writing coming from FSIS in guidance nor can we find related provisions in state or federal law. Rural Vermont members of the agricultural community have successfully advocated for over a decade to improve Vermont state law through the democratic process just to find these laws not implemented, supported or yet even promoted by our state agency. In consequence many practitioners remain confused about the legalities of on-farm slaughter and rather continue to operate under the radar.

We are grateful for the legislators of the Senate Committee on Agriculture support in reaching out to FSIS via letter from January 31, 2022 stating: *"There is no reference in the FSIS guidance to a requirement that all owners be physically present at the site of the slaughter, and, frankly, we do not know if this requirement is documented anywhere."*

Signatories kindly ask legislators to consider the urgency that farmers face now that spring is here and a new generation of livestock sold for being slaughtered on the farm where they were raised is being born. Without the confidence that VAAFM will not enforce against their practice (without sufficient legal basis) these farmers might lose their good standing with the agency and thus access to any future state support for their agricultural practices. After the legislature allowed for multiple owners per animal in 2019, repealed the sunset of 6 V.S.A § 3311a and increased the allowances for on-farm slaughter in 2021 to now 10 cattle, 30 swine, or 80 sheep or goats - we now ask to repeal the registration and reporting requirements for farmers who organize on-farm slaughter in 6 V.S.A. § 3311a (c) (2) and (8). While we desire VAAFM to promote On-Farm Slaughter in Vermont - this measure appears urgently needed to protect practitioners NOW.

In support,

Rural Vermont, Caroline Gordon, Legislative Director
NOFA-VT, Maddie Kempner, Policy Director
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (TX), Judith McGeary, Executive Director
Family Farm Defenders (WI), John E. Peck, Executive Director
National Hmong American Farmers (CA), Chukou Thao, Executive Director
Browns Custom Meat Processing, Phil Brown, Glover
Shire Beef LLC, Nikolaus Horster, Vershire
Vermont Greenery, Frederick Morin, Charlotte
Brandon Bless, Bread and Butter Farm, Shelburne
Butterworks Farm, Christine Lazor, Westfield
Broadbrook Mountain Farm, Tico Wolff, Royalton
Besa mis burros Farm, Michael Kornfeld, Norwich
Black Dog Acres, Jen Hirschak, Hyde Park
Birdsong Farm, Lucia Tonachel, Stockbridge
Chicken Wiggle Farm, Steven Thomas, Chelsea
Center Farm, Erica Zimmerman, East Montpelier
Crow Hollow Farm, Russ Ford, Berkshire
Cobble Croft, Joshua Faulkner, Starksboro
Deep Meadow Farm, Jon Cohen, Ascutney
Doolittle Farm, Martha Hammond, Shoreham
Evernow Gardens, Michael R Beattie, Middletown Springs
Four Springs Farm, Virginia Hardy Cleland, Royalton
Giant Journey Farm, Kendra Dias, Newfane
GK Farm, Ryan Hollister Grapsas, Bradford
Hogwash Farm, Leslie O'Hara, Norwich
Heritage Breed Cheese Project, Sam Frank, Putney
Hooker Mtn. Farm, Kempton Randolph, Cabot
Hillside Farm, Hannah Pearce, Albany
High Fields Farm, Frances Rose Subbiondo, Randolph
Hobby Hill Farm, Erica Walch, Newfane
Infinity Farm, C Terry Holden, Cambridge
Johanna M Gardner, farms in Newfane
Kindred Mountain Farm, Moriah Floyd
Kilborn Hill Farm, Thomas Moseley, Derby
Larson Farm and Creamery, Richard Larson, Wells
Lathe Farm, Jennifer Linck, Craftsbury
Meadows Bee Farm, Alicia Merinoff and Rachel Stecker, Windham
Metanoia of Vermont, Lisa Kutolowski, Strafford
Mighty Oak Farm, Nancy LaRowe, Norwich
Northwind Farm, Geordie Lynd, Cabot

Old Gelding Farm, Thomas MacCarty, Middletown Springs
Osprey Hill Farm, Kimberly Hagen, North Middlesex
Pequin Family Farm, Erin Pequin, Cabot
Sarah Maes, farms in Putney
Shincracker Icelandinc Sheep Farm, Curt C. Peterson, Hartland
Sugar Top Farm LLC, Kristin Plante, Hyde Park
Starksboro Farm, Theresa O'Reilly, Waitsfield
Runamuck Farm, Catherine Peters, Pomfret
Robinson Hill Beef, Graham Unangst-Rufenacht, Marshfield
Sunrise Farm, Eleanor Denison, Hartford
Sweet Roots Farm, Jane MacLean, Charlotte
Stark Mt Farm, Heather Ragsdale, Starksboro
Terra Madre Farm, Joanna Bagnulp, Goshen
Tell A Tale Farm, Philip Prevosto, Rutland
Three Square Farm, Melissa Malandrinos, Weathersfield
Tilia Hills, Ethan Kramer, Fairfield
Uphill Farm, Kevin Dougherty, Rochester
Union Brook Farm, Emily Virzi, Northfield
Wandering Water Farm, Heidi Thunberg
Windfall Farmstead, Nicholas Laskovski, Roxbury
Valley Clayplain Forest Farm, Mark Krawczyk, New Haven
Bending Birch Homestead, Dwyer Haney, Starksboro
Restless Haven Homestead, Heather P., Fletcher
Serenity Homestead, Justine Cavacas, Stockbridge
Alice Berlow, Putney
Alice Sky, Plainfield
Andrew Haggan, Newbury
Amy Stender, South Royalton
Anna Compere, East Randolph
Anna Slack, Bradford
Anne-Marie Trudeau, St. Johnsbury
Anthony Myrick, Bristol
Ariel Brumbaugh, Starksboro
Audrey Kiely, Morrisville
Brian Smale, Morrisville
Brian Mohr, Moretown
Brittni L. Cook, Killington
Blache Montesi, South Royalton
Carly Monahan, Wolcott
Caitlin O'Neil, Fairfax
Colene Reed, South Royalton
Connie Gunther, Jay

Charlotte Boyden, Barnet
Carl Bucholt, Manchester Center
Carissa Brewton, Brattleboro
Cheyenne Hatin, Newport
Coco Moseley, Lincoln
Caitlin Gildrien, Leicester
Dan Kirk, Burlington
Dale Frattaroli, Wheelock
Daniel Jones, Montpelier
Darien Chouinard, Barre
Diane Ashworth, Hyde Park
Dionysus Lemon, Craftsbury
Douglas Reaves, Fairfax
E. Rachel Hochman, Woodstock
Emily Millard Landenberger, Weybridge
Emily French, Lincoln
Erin Buckwalter, Starksboro
Erin Wheeler, Lincoln
Faye Mack, Londonderry
G. Debus, Danby
Indigo Woods, Burlington
Jeanna Jensen-Segal, Rochester
Jack Zeilenga, East Montpelier
Jess Huyghebaert, Hardwick
Jamie Deacon, Starksboro
Jess Messer, Starksboro
Justin B Farrar, Springfield
Justin Squizzero, Newbury
Joan Klappert, Danville
Joshua McGovern, Poultney
Jennifer Paquin, East Montpelier
John Klar, Vermont Liberty Network, Brookfield
Jordi Loaeza, Bradford
Karen Wiseman, Worcester
Katherine Wolinsky, Saint Albans
Keith Roberts Gallagher Jr., West Pawlet
Kelsey Crelin, West Glover
Laurel Stevenson, Hartland
Lily Hammerling, Burlington
Mark Clement, Bolton
Mark Kutolowski, Strafford
Marilyn Lambert, Randolph Center

Meg Riege, Hartford
Nate Gusakov, Starksboro
Nicole Antal, Sharon
Paul Jivoff, Morristown
Ross Conrad, Dancing Bee Gardens, Middlebury
Roozbeh Nazari, Hartland
Robert Szpila, Brattleboro
Riva Reynolds, Craftsbury
Robin Lenfest, Burlington
Rye Crofter, Thetford
Sylvia Davatz, Hartland
Scott Fitzstephens, Highgate
Sarah M. McGrath, Starksboro
Sarah White, Hartland
Sarah Heath, Burlington
Susan Quesnel, Salisbury
Susanne Abetti, White River Junction
Simone Oliva, Norwich
Ted Benoit, Wheelock
Valerie A Gillen, Starksboro
Vivian Stein, Plainfield
Weston Nicoll, Ludlow
Wil Morin, Springfield

Total signature count as of 3/23/22, 11am: 155