

2023-2024 Acts from the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry

| Act No. | Summary |
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| <p align="center">Act No. 21 of 2023 (H.161)</p> <p>An act relating to issuance of burning permits</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorizes ANR to approve in writing, during periods of increased fire hazard, specified periods during which no burning permits shall be issued by town fire wardens. |
| <p align="center">Act No. 42 of 2023 (S.115)</p> <p>An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) to order a quarantine of domestic animals that are suspected of having been exposed to biological or chemical agents that may cause milk or dairy products to be adulterated or otherwise unsafe for human consumption. • Updated the State’s laws regarding the sale of eggs. • Increased the maximum amount of an administrative penalty AAFM can assess for violation of laws it administers. • Clarified municipalities cannot assess stormwater fees on property subject to the RAPs. |
| <p align="center">Act No. 73 of 2023 (H.472)</p> <p>An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified the process and formula for awards of operational grants to agricultural fairs and field days. • Amended the time period under which AAFM is required to inspect a weights and measures device by allowing up to 24 months from the date of original application for a weights and measures license for AAFM to do the inspection. • Repealed statutory requirements for the issuance of certified livestock brands. • Required an apiary to be inspected within 45 days of sale of the bees from the apiary, and repealed the permit exemption for bees transported into the State when the bees are registered in Vermont, were transported not more than 75 miles from the registered Vermont location, and are imported back into the State within 30 days of transport. • Required products to improve distinct types of horticultural growing, such as hydroponics, to register with AAFM. • Required persons in the business of selling, installing, or distributing nursery stock to get a nursery dealer license. • Repealed the requirements that AAFM compensate owners of nursely stock when the stock is ordered to be destroyed due to disease or infestation. • Extended for one year the sales tax exemption on advanced wood boilers. |

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| <p>Act 93 of 2024 (H.603) An act relating to the poultry slaughter exception to inspection</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed persons exempt from inspection of poultry slaughter to sell parts of an exempt, slaughtered bird. |
| <p>Act 153 of 2024 (H.614) An act relating to land improvement fraud and timber trespass</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established the crime of land improvement fraud, including fraudulent forestry operations. • Required a person to post a surety bond or letter of credit with the Attorney General if they knowingly commit multiple violations of land improvement fraud, knowingly or recklessly commit multiple violations of timber trespass, or is subject to two or more unpaid timber trespass civil judgements. |
| <p>Act 167 of 2024 (H.626) An act relating to animal welfare</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established an Animal Welfare Division at Department of Public Safety. • Division will initially be one person, a Director. The Director shall develop a plan for coordinated enforcement of animal welfare laws in the State. • The rabies surcharge is increased from \$1.00 to \$2.00. The additional dollar is deposited into Animal Welfare Fund. |
| <p>Act 101 of 2024 (H.664) An act relating to designating a State Mushroom</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated the <i>Heridium Americanum</i>, commonly known as the bear's head tooth mushroom, as the State Mushroom. |
| <p>Act 182 of 2024 (H.706) An act relating to banning the use of neonicotinoid pesticides</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibited/regulated certain uses of neonicotinoid pesticides beginning July 1, 2025. AAFM may issue exemptions from the prohibition for agricultural emergencies or environmental emergencies. • Prohibited use of neonicotinoid treated article seed beginning July 1, 2029. AAFM may issue an exemption from the prohibition if supply of seed is insufficient or presents serious financial hardship. |
| <p>Act 160 of 2024 (H.877) An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended eligibility for the Farm Agronomic Practices Program. • Adopted additional standards under the weights and measures law. • Amended how training can be provided for certified pesticide applicators. • Amended provisions related to mosquito control and provisions. • Amended provisions related to the regulation of fertilizer, limes, plant amendment, plant biostimulants, and soil amendments. |

| Act No. | Summary |
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| <p>Act 141 of 2024 (S.301)</p> <p>An act relating to miscellaneous agricultural subjects</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended the existing Vermont Seeding and Filter Strip Program at AAFM to eliminate the requirement that a participating farmer commit to a 10-year term during which land in proximity to water will be out of production. • Eliminated the need for milk handlers and slaughterhouses to obtain an agricultural warehouse license. • Made several changes to the services and eligibility for services under the Vermont Agricultural Credit Program (VACP). • Prohibited pet shops from selling dogs and cats beginning on July 1, 2024, except in certain circumstances. • Prohibited the sale of the paws and internal organs of black bears except when the paws are sold as part of a taxidermy product. |

2023-2024 Bills Voted Out of Committee But Included in Other Acts

| Bill Number and Name | Bills Voted Out of Committee, But Included in Other Acts |
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| <p>H.205 of 2023</p> <p>An act relating to establishing the Small Farmer Diversification and Transition Program</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As passed by the House, H.205 proposed the establishment of a Small Farmer Diversification and Transition Assistance Program at AAFM to provide small farmers with State financial assistance to diversify production on a farm or to transition from one form of farming to another. The House proposed a one-time appropriation of \$350,000 for the program. • The Senate Committee on Agriculture proposed that that the Program would be more effectively run through the Working Lands Enterprise Program so that staff of that Program could administer the grant process. The Senate Committee retained the \$350,000 proposed appropriation. • The Senate Appropriations Committee chose not to vote on H.205, but included in the Big Bill an appropriation of \$150,000 to AAFM for a Small Farmer Diversification and Transition Program to be staffed by the Working Lands Enterprise staff. |
| <p>Dr 23-0998 of 2023</p> <p>An act relating to providing financial assistance to organic dairy farms</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee on Agriculture drafted a committee bill to establish a program at AAFM to provide financial assistance to organic dairy farmers in the State. • The language that the Committee drafted and approved was included in Act No. 78, the Big Bill. Under Act 78, \$6,900,000 was appropriated to AAFM to establish an organic dairy farm assistance program. • The application deadline was October 20, 2023. There may be a need for some additional appropriation for the program. |

2023-2024 Bills that Passed out of House Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry But Not Enacted

| Bill | Summary |
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| <p align="center">H.81 of 2023</p> <p>An act relating to fair repair of agricultural equipment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established duty for manufacturers to make available parts, tools, and documentation to owners and independent repair providers. • Prohibited manufacturer from imposing an additional cost or burden on the owner or independent repair provider that is not reasonably necessary for the repair, including an obligation to use or restriction on the use of tools necessary to repair or a condition that the owner or independent repair provider become an authorized repair provider of the manufacturer. • Passed House. Senate proposed amendment. House proposed amendment to Senate amendment. Senate did not not pass House further proposal. |
| <p align="center">H.624 of 2024</p> <p>An act relating to providing financial assistance to the forest economy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFPR shall as a pilot expand the Water Quality Assistance Program, to provide financial assistance to logging contractors to ensure implementation of water quality protection and climate adaptation practices. • In addition to other funds appropriated to the DFPR in FY 2025, \$45,000.00 GF is appropriated to DFPR to provide the financial assistance for logger safety and master logger certification pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 2622c. |
| <p align="center">H.673 of 2024</p> <p>An act relating to Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) shall conduct the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study. • In FY 2025, the sum of \$100,000 GF is appropriated to DFPR for one full-time program support specialist to staff the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council. • In FY 2025, \$50,000.00 GF is appropriated to DFPR for the purpose of hiring a contractor, in partnership with Vermont Trails and Greenways Council to develop of a set of universal trail best management practices. |
| <p align="center">H.813 of 2024</p> <p>An act relating to establishing the Tree Fruit Farmer Assistance Program</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall establish the Fruit Farmer Assistance Program consistent with the requirements of this section. • “Fruit” means all perennial grape, berry, stone fruit, and pome fruit crops. • A farm that grows fruit is eligible for assistance under this section if: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the farm is currently operating and producing fruit; (2) the farm suffered production losses in May of 2023 due to freezing or frost conditions; (3) the farm is in good standing with AAFM; and (4) the farm submits an application for assistance to the AAFM by a date specified by the Agency. • \$2,000,000.00 GF is appropriated to AAFM to implement the Fruit Farmer Assistance Program |