

**The Agricultural Viability Act of 2007 was passed by the legislature and signed into law by the Governor on May 21, 2007.**

**The new law includes a provision that allows Vermont farmers to process poultry on-farm and sell the birds at farmers' markets and directly to restaurants!!**

**Your farm's poultry will be exempt from inspection if:**

- The farm slaughters fewer than 1000 birds annually, *and*
- No birds are offered for sale or transportation in interstate commerce (i.e., across state lines), *and*
- The farmer sells only birds raised on his/her own farm, *and*
- The poultry products are sold as whole birds only, from the farm, at a farmers' market, or to a food restaurant licensed by the commissioner of health.

**When selling the poultry to a restaurant you must label the poultry properly (see other side of this sheet) AND:**

- Obtain a signed statement from the restaurant owner to be filed with the Department of Health (see the sample statement). The statement must show that the restaurant is aware:
  - The poultry is exempt from inspection, *and*
  - There are menu labeling requirements as described above.
- You need 3 copies of this statement: A copy of the statement must be sent to the Department of Health, along with a copy of your label. You should also give a copy of this statement to the restaurant owner. You must also keep a copy on the farm.
- It's also a good idea to label each bird separately for sale to restaurants, even though this is not a requirement. The restaurant must maintain the identity of each bird, so the individual labeling will make it easier for the restaurant to comply with their requirements.
- Keep records of how many birds you process each day, and how many and to which restaurants you are selling the birds. Keep these records on your farm with your copy of the signed statement.

**A few good practices:**

- ✓ Keep good records of how many birds you are processing on the farm, and how many birds you sell each day – including sales from the farm, at farmers' markets, and to restaurants. Keep these records in an organized place, so you can produce them if the Agency of Agriculture asks for them.
- ✓ Contact local chefs to alert them of the new law.
- ✓ One way to develop a business relationship with a Vermont restaurant is to offer Thanksgiving turkeys.
- ✓ When selling farm-processed birds be ready to answer questions about how your birds are raised and how you process the birds.
- ✓ Make sure you chill your birds to 40° F or lower, immediately after processing, and keep them properly chilled during storage and transport. Keep them at 40° F or lower until they are sold. Do not chill birds before evisceration – finish each bird, then chill immediately.