



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Raised Bill No. 5295

LCO No. 1609



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

AN ACT CONCERNING AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 22-11c of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

3 (a) As used in sections 22-11d to 22-11f, inclusive, "aquaculture"
4 means the controlled rearing, cultivation and harvest of aquatic plants
5 and animals in land-based and marine-based culture systems, tanks,
6 containers, impoundments, floating or submerged nets, longlines or
7 pens and ponds.

8 (b) For purposes of this chapter "agriculture", as defined in subsection
9 (q) of section 1-1, shall include aquaculture.

10 Sec. 2. Section 22-26e of the general statutes is repealed and the
11 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

12 (a) There is hereby established a Governor's Council for Agricultural
13 [Development for advisory] Innovation within the Department of

14 Agriculture for administrative purposes only, consisting of the
15 following members: (1) The Commissioner of Agriculture, who shall
16 serve as the chairperson of the council, (2) the dean of the College of
17 Agriculture and Natural Resources at The University of Connecticut, or
18 the dean's designee, who shall serve as co-vice-chairperson, (3) the
19 chairperson of the Connecticut [Milk Promotion Board] Farm Bureau,
20 or the chairperson's designee, (4) six members appointed by the
21 Governor, [who shall each be actively engaged in agricultural
22 production,] (5) one member appointed by the speaker of the House of
23 Representatives, [who shall be engaged in agricultural processing,] (6)
24 one member appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate,
25 [who shall be engaged in agricultural marketing,] (7) one member
26 appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, [who
27 shall be engaged in agricultural sales,] (8) one member appointed by the
28 majority leader of the Senate, [who shall be from a trade association,] (9)
29 one member appointed by the minority leader of the House of
30 Representatives, [who shall be from the green industry, and] (10) one
31 member appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, [who shall be
32 actively engaged in agricultural education] and (11) the director of the
33 Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, who shall serve as the co-
34 vice-chairperson.

35 (b) The council shall make recommendations to the Department of
36 Agriculture on ways to increase [the percentage of consumer dollars
37 spent on Connecticut-grown fresh produce and farm products,
38 including, but not limited to, ways to increase the amount of money
39 spent by residents of the state on locally-grown farm products, by 2020,
40 to not less than five per cent of all money spent by such residents on
41 food] agriculture in the state by developing innovative market
42 opportunities including, but not limited to, urban agriculture,
43 integration and adoption of new technologies, controlled environment
44 agriculture, and diversification of products and opportunities. The
45 council shall also make recommendations concerning the development,
46 diversification and promotion of [agricultural products, programs and
47 enterprises] agriculture in this state and shall provide for an interchange

48 of ideas from the various commodity groups and organizations
49 represented.

50 (c) The council shall meet not less than once per calendar quarter, or
51 as often as deemed necessary by the chairperson. Any vacancy in the
52 membership of the council shall be filled by the [Governor]
53 Commissioner of Agriculture. The members shall serve without
54 compensation or reimbursement for expenses. Any member absent
55 from more than two meetings in a calendar year shall be deemed to have
56 resigned.

57 Sec. 3. Subsection (d) of section 22-26bb of the general statutes is
58 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
59 *1, 2022*):

60 (d) "Development rights" means the rights of the fee simple owner of
61 agricultural land to develop, construct on, sell, lease or otherwise
62 improve the agricultural land for uses that result in rendering such land
63 no longer agricultural land, but shall not be construed to include: (1) The
64 uses defined in subsection (q) of section 1-1, (2) the rights of the fee
65 owner of agricultural land to develop, construct on, sell, give or transfer
66 in any way the property in its entirety, or any part thereof, lease the
67 property in its entirety, or any part thereof, for a term of less than
68 twenty-five years or otherwise improve the agricultural land to
69 preserve, maintain, operate or continue such land as agricultural land,
70 including but not limited to construction thereon of residences for
71 persons directly incidental to farm operation and buildings for animals,
72 roadside stands and farm markets for sale to the consumer of food
73 products and ornamental plants, facilities for the storing of equipment
74 and products or processing thereof or such other improvements,
75 activities and uses thereon as may be directly or incidentally related to
76 the operation of the agricultural enterprise, as long as the acreage and
77 productivity of arable land for crops is not materially decreased and due
78 consideration is given to the impact of any decrease in acreage or
79 productivity of such arable land upon the total farm operation, except
80 that new construction or modification of an existing farm building

81 necessary to the operation of a farm on prime farmland, as defined by
82 the United States Department of Agriculture, of which the state has
83 purchased development rights shall be limited to not more than five per
84 cent of the total of such prime farmland, (3) the rights of the fee owner
85 to provide for the extraction of gravel or like natural elements to be used
86 on the farm for purposes directly or incidentally related to the operation
87 of the agricultural enterprise or (4) the existing water and mineral rights,
88 exclusive of gravel, of the fee owner;

89 Sec. 4. Section 22-47 of the general statutes is repealed and the
90 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

91 Producers selling eggs of their own producing direct to household
92 users are exempt from the provisions of this part provided: (1) Such eggs
93 shall be clean, stored at an ambient air temperature of not greater than
94 forty-five degrees Fahrenheit and are not adulterated, and (2) the label
95 shall contain the producer's name and address, the type of eggs if not
96 chicken eggs, the quantity of eggs, safe food handling instructions and
97 not otherwise contain misleading or false statements or any claim of
98 grade or quality. All types of shippers selling eggs to a first receiver who
99 will grade them into the proper size and grade before reselling are
100 exempt from the provisions of this part.

101 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) The Commissioner of Agriculture
102 shall be the state official in charge of inspecting any producer, including
103 any producer that also operates as a rabbit processing facility. Any
104 inspection conducted pursuant to this section by the commissioner, or
105 the commissioner's designated agent, shall be consistent with the
106 requirements of any applicable provision of the Code of Federal
107 Regulations, including, but not limited to, any health, sanitary and
108 safety related provision. Rabbit processing facilities that have passed
109 Department of Agriculture facility inspections pursuant to this section
110 shall be designated as approved food sources for household consumers,
111 restaurants, hotels, boarding houses and retail food establishments. For
112 purposes of this section, "producer" means any person, firm or
113 corporation engaged in the breeding, raising or keeping of not more

114 than one thousand rabbits in a calendar year for the purpose of food
115 production.

116 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) On and after January 1, 2023,
117 the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall issue CT Grown number
118 plates of a design to enhance public awareness of the state and local
119 efforts to raise awareness of CT Grown and Connecticut agriculture. The
120 Department of Agriculture shall design the number plates and the
121 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall agree to any such design. No use
122 shall be made of such plates except as official registration marker plates.

123 (b) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall establish, by
124 regulations adopted in accordance with chapter 54 of the general
125 statutes, a fee to be charged for CT Grown number plates in addition to
126 the regular fee or fees prescribed for the registration of a motor vehicle.
127 The fee shall be for such number plates with letters and numbers
128 selected by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. The Commissioner of
129 Motor Vehicles may establish a higher fee for: (1) Such number plates
130 which contain letters in place of numbers as authorized by section 14-49
131 of the general statutes in addition to the fee or fees prescribed for plates
132 issued under said section; and (2) such number plates which are low
133 number plates, in accordance with section 14-160 of the general statutes,
134 in addition to the fee or fees prescribed for plates issued under said
135 section. All fees established and collected pursuant to this section shall
136 be deposited in the CT Grown account, established by the
137 Commissioner of Agriculture.

138 (c) No additional renewal fee shall be charged for renewal of
139 registration for any motor vehicle bearing CT Grown number plates
140 which contain letters in place of numbers, or low number plates, in
141 excess of the renewal fee for CT Grown number plates with letters and
142 numbers selected by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. No transfer
143 fee shall be charged for transfer of an existing registration to or from a
144 registration with CT Grown number plates.

145 (d) The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, in consultation with the

146 Commissioner of Agriculture, shall adopt regulations, in accordance
147 with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, to establish
148 standards and procedures for the issuance, renewal and replacement of
149 CT Grown number plates.

150 Sec. 7. Sections 22-11e and 26-192m of the general statutes are
151 repealed. (*Effective from passage*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	22-11c
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	22-26e
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	22-26bb(d)
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	22-47
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>	Repealer section

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) make changes to the Agricultural Development Council, (2) prescribe requirements for producers selling eggs directly for home consumption, (3) authorize rabbit processing facilities in the state, (4) establish a CT Grown license plate, and (5) repeal the Aquaculture Advisory Council.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]