

FAQ's WITH REGARD TO ON-FARM PROCESSING OF POULTRY IN LOUISIANA

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Who is eligible for an exemption from Federal Poultry Inspection Requirements?

Federal inspection requirements do not apply to poultry producers:

- Who slaughter or process 20,000 or fewer poultry per year;
- Who do not slaughter or process poultry products at a facility used for slaughtering or processing poultry by any other person;
- Who slaughter sound and healthy poultry that are raised, slaughtered and processed by the poultry producer on his or her own farm;
- Who slaughter and otherwise process and handle the poultry under sanitary conditions, practices and procedures so that the products are sound, clean, and fit for human food;
- Who include a label on the products that includes the producer's name and address, and the statement "Exempted-P.L. 90-492" and the poultry products are not otherwise misbranded;
- Who distribute the poultry directly to household consumers for use in their own dining rooms, or in the preparation of meals for sales to direct consumers;
- Who distribute the poultry products only within the state in which the poultry are raised; and
- Who do not engage, in the current calendar year, in the business of buying or selling any poultry products other than as described in this exemption

What defines "sanitary conditions"?

The Federal regulations require that:

- The operation must have a pest management program in place,
- Buildings must be kept in good repair and be large enough to allow processing, handling, and storage of the product so that adulteration does not occur,
- Walls of the buildings must be built of durable materials impervious to moisture and cleaned/sanitized as necessary,
- Lighting must be of good quality and sufficient intensity to ensure sanitary conditions are maintained,
- Rooms where edible product is processed, handled, or stored must be separate and distinct from rooms where inedible product is processed, handled, or stored,
- Ventilation must be adequate,
- Plumbing must be installed to carry sufficient water throughout the operation, to carry sewage and liquid disposable waste from the establishment, and prevent adulteration of products,
- Floor drainage must be adequate,
- Sewage disposal must be sufficient to prevent backup of sewage into areas where the product is processed, handled or stored,

- An adequate supply of running water must be maintained,
- Dressing rooms, lavatories and toilets must be sufficient in number and conveniently located but separate from rooms in which product is processed, stored, or handled,
- Equipment and utensils must be sufficient for their purpose,
- Employees must maintain cleanliness, appropriate attire and disease control activities.

What about the requirements for the state of Louisiana?

Poultry inspection in Louisiana is governed by the Meat and Poultry Inspection Law and is carried out by the USDA for large poultry operations. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's Meat and Poultry Division conducts inspection for operations with fewer than 20,000 birds. The Meat and Poultry Division also grants exemptions upon written request of an operator and follows up with quarterly compliance checks on those granted exemptions.

Who do I contact to get an exemption?

Write a letter stating your intentions to:

Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry
 P.O. Box 1951
 Baton Rouge, LA 70821
 Telephone 225-922-1358

In response, your processing area will be inspected and, if adequate, you will get a letter giving you an exemption under P. L. 90-492 that will give details regarding how the poultry product is to be packaged and the information needed on the label.

Can I put other information on the package?

Yes. In fact, one producer includes safe handling instructions on each package. These instructions, from the USDA, can be found on inspected meat in the supermarket and are similar to the following:

"Some products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions: Keep refrigerated or frozen, Thaw in refrigerator or microwave, Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods, Wash working surfaces, including cutting boards, utensils and hands after touching raw meat or poultry, Keep hot foods hot, Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard"

What about liability insurance?

Liability insurance is very difficult to obtain for this sort of operation. Even if an underwriter is found, the insurance may be very expensive.

Note: The information contained in this document is not intended to provide legal advice to poultry producers. Those wishing to market on-farm processed poultry should consult a local attorney when setting up their business. This document is only offered as a starting point for discussion of the inspection requirements in Louisiana.