

# Understanding Poultry Regulations

Adapted from information originally posted on eXtension.org

## State Contacts: Missouri Department of Agriculture

Animal Health Division  
Missouri Meat and Poultry  
Inspection Program  
(573) 522-1242  
(573) 751-3377

Missouri Poultry Health  
& Improvement Program  
NPIP  
(573) 522-3377

Weights &  
Measures Division  
Missouri Egg Law  
(573) 751-4316



*Are you in the process of considering a poultry enterprise for your farm?*

Have you researched breeds, production methods and markets? More importantly, have you thought about the regulations involved?

There are four basic levels of government that may have some influence in what you do as a producer: federal, state, county and, possibly, city.

## Selling Processed Birds

If you are selling at a farmers' market, a restaurant or other institutions, there may be a different set of rules and/or restrictions at each, which you will have to follow in order to sell to them.

## Federal Regulations

Beginning at the federal level is the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) tasked with protecting the health and welfare of consumers with regards to meat and meat products. FSIS is part of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). All regulations follow the guidelines of these four acts of congress: the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, the Egg Inspection Act and the Humane Slaughter Act. These laws are the starting point for understanding what you can legally do.

There is an exemption to these acts that you, as a small producer, will benefit from. The chart below comes from an eXtension bulletin and simplifies the exemption language. As a small producer, you are mainly concerned with the Producer/Grower exemptions of



1,000 and 20,000 bird limits. Both exemptions are good for a calendar year. You are not allowed to sell meat through interstate commerce.

The buying and selling of birds produced by others is not allowed. According to the federal law, you are allowed to produce your own birds, process them and sell directly to consumers, hotels, restaurants, institutions, distributors and retail stores. Even though you are exempt, you will still need to follow the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Service Manual, chapters 2-8, with some exceptions. As a table egg producer, you are exempt from the federal egg requirements if your laying flock is less than 3,000 birds.

## State Regulations

At the state level, the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) is the first point of contact. The MDA has a cooperative agreement with the USDA and has adopted all the federal regulation for processing and selling poultry.



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The Missouri Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (MMPIP) see to it that these regulations are carried out in the state. They are there to help you produce, process and deliver health products to consumers. In the case of meat, you will first contact the MDA Agriculture Meat and Poultry Inspection Program to register for the appropriate exemption. To get started, contact your regional field inspector or compliance person. They will review your proposal and may even visit your farm to discuss your unique situation.

To legally sell eggs, a completed application to sell eggs accompanied by five dollars is all that is required. Eggs should be candled and held at 45° F. In the Missouri Revised Statutes there is an exception for eggs sold directly from the farm, which requires no license.

To legally sell hatching eggs and baby poultry in Missouri, you must participate in the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) or an equivalent program. The MDA administers this program at the state level. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) does not regulate poultry.

## County and City

Each county and city may have regulations that will require you, the individual producer, to find out about. They are county specific and can normally be found in the planning and zoning office of the county you live in. At this level, the health department may be involved. For further instructions, check with your county health department.

The city regulations will be found in your planning and zoning and health departments of the city in which you live.

Good luck in your poultry venture.

(Compiled by Jim Pierce and Katie Nixon, LUCE ISFOP Staff, reviewed by Charlotte Clifford-Rathert, DVM, LUCE Small Ruminants State Extension Specialist, and Rose Foster, Poultry Health & Improvement Program Coordinator, Missouri Department of Agriculture.)

**Summary Table of Exemptions and Regulations**

Criteria	Custom	Producer/Grower 1,000 Bird Limit	Producer/Grower 20,000 bird limit	Producer/Grower or other person 20,000 bird limit	Small Enterprise
Slaughter Limit	No Limit	YES-1,000 per Calendar Year	YES-20,000 per Calendar Year	YES-20,000 per Calendar Year	YES-20,000 per Calendar Year
Further Processing	YES	YES	YES	YES	Cut Up Only
Sell to Home consumer	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Sell to HRI*	NO	YES	YES	Not to all HRI**	YES
Sell to Distributor	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
Sell to Retail Store	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
Inter-State Sale	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Buy Live Birds from Farmers for Processing and Sell Back for Distribution by Farmers (for others)***	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
*HRI = Hotels, Restaurants, and Institutions					
**Product produced under the Producer/Grower or Other Person Exemption may not be sold to institutions.					
***Restrictions apply, see below for further details.					

Adapted from USDA FSIIS

## Web sources

Code of Federal Regulations: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>

Federal Safety Inspection Service: [www.fsis.usda.com](http://www.fsis.usda.com)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.hhs.gov/>

Missouri Department of Agriculture: [www.mda.mo.gov](http://www.mda.mo.gov)

Department of Health and Human Services: [www.dhss.mo.gov](http://www.dhss.mo.gov)

State Egg license application and requirements: [www.mda.mo.gov/weights/device/egglic.php](http://www.mda.mo.gov/weights/device/egglic.php)

## Sites Of Interest

National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service: [www.attra.org](http://www.attra.org)

Cooperative Extension: [http://www.extension.org/pages/Understanding\\_Poultry\\_Exemptions](http://www.extension.org/pages/Understanding_Poultry_Exemptions)

Missouri Alternative Center: <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/>

Municipal Codes online library: <http://www.municode.com/Library/Library.aspx>

The American Pastured Poultry Producer Association: [www.appa.org](http://www.appa.org)