



COLORADO
Department of Agriculture
Inspection & Consumer Services Division



Produced in cooperation with the Colorado State University Center for Meat Safety & Quality

SMALL FLOCK POULTRY PROCESSING

In May 2016, the Custom Processing Of Meat Animals Act (Meat Act) was changed to exempt small poultry producers who raise and process (no more than 1,000) of their own poultry from Colorado licensing and inspection requirements when selling processed poultry directly to individuals at venues such as farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) organizations and/or "on farm" sales if certain conditions are met.

Exemption Conditions:

- They (producers) comply with recordkeeping and labeling requirements (see below).
- **The producer does not buy or sell poultry products other than those produced from poultry raised on the producer's own farm.**
- The poultry do not move in interstate commerce.
- The poultry are properly labeled as described below.
- The poultry are healthy when slaughtered and the slaughter and processing are conducted under sanitary standards, practices, and procedures that produce poultry products that are sound, clean and fit for food as human food when distributed (sold) by the producer.

Please be aware that the Colorado Department of Agriculture AND the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) do not inspect these small poultry producers / processors.

Unlicensed Poultry processors (exempt producers / processors) who raise and process less than 1,000 birds **CANNOT** sell their non-inspected poultry to Food Handling Establishments such as restaurants and grocery stores, or institutions such as schools, hospitals, hotels.

Colorado does not differentiate between bird species when counting total birds processed as some states do. For example in Colorado: 249 chickens, 249 turkeys, 249 ducks, 249 geese = 996 birds processed.

Recordkeeping for EXEMPT Poultry Processors (for each transaction):

Records must be maintained for 2 years from the date of the transaction by the producer/processor:

- Date of slaughter
- Date of sale
- Name and address of the buyer
- Description of the meat or meat products processed, including species and quantity
- Name and address of the owner (producer)

Labeling requirements for EXEMPT (UNLICENSED) poultry processors that sell less than 1,000 birds:

- The statement "EXEMPT P.L. 90-492"
- Description of the meat or meat products, including species and quantity
- The statement "THIS POULTRY WAS PRODUCED IN A FACILITY THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO LICENSURE OR INSPECTION. THIS PRODUCT IS NOT INTENDED FOR RESALE"
- Safe handling instructions (see below)
- Pack or processing date
- Name and address of the producer/processor

In addition to the labeling requirements above, ALL poultry producers must provide the following Safe Handling Instructions on their label:

- Some Food 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.
- Cook Thoroughly To 165° F Internal Temperature.
- Keep Hot Foods Hot. Refrigerate Leftovers Immediately Or Discard

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What types of birds does this act apply to?

A: **Poultry means:** any domesticated bird: including chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, or squabs. Poultry refers to both live at the time of processing and any processed poultry.

Q: How about hand raised quail, dove or pheasant?

A: Quail, dove, and pheasant are not listed in the law/rules as poultry, therefore they are not exempt from inspection.

Q: May I sell birds by the cut? May I sell birds by the pound?

A: The law intends the birds (poultry) to be sold whole not cut into pieces. If you sell by the pound, you must be in compliance with additional measurement standards requirements.

Q: Does the slaughter facility have to be located on my property? May birds be slaughtered outside or should it all be done inside a building?

A: The law/rules do not specify that the processing must take place on the farms where the birds were raised. A condition of the exemption is that: "the slaughter and processing are conducted under sanitary standards, practices, and procedures that produce poultry products that are sound, clean and fit for food as human food when distributed (sold) by the producer."

Q: Are producers required to buy product liability insurance? Is it recommended?

A: The law does not require producers to obtain liability insurance. Because there are food borne illness risks associated with the sale of raw chicken meat the producer determines if liability insurance is needed for their farm.

Please contact the program manager if you have any additional questions:

Steven Blunt - CDA Meat Program Manager
Phone: 303-867-9237
Email: steve.blunt@state.co.us

A CDA License is required to raise/process/sell 1,000 or more and less than 20,000 poultry directly to individuals at venues such as farmers' markets and/or "on farm" sales. If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact the Program Manager, Steve Blunt, at (303) 867-9237.

Additional Resources

Food Safety Information:

Chicken and Other Poultry: https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/ad74bb8d-1dab-49c1-b05e-390a74ba7471/Chicken_from_Farm_to_Table.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

Regulations:

Meat Program Website: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/aginspection/meat-custom-processing>

Link to Laws and Regulations: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/aginspection/laws-and-regulations-13>

Overview of Colorado Poultry Processing Rules:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/OVERVIEW%20OF%20POULTRY%20PROCESSING%20Updated%2011.30.16%20%281%29.pdf>

USDA/FSIS Guidance For Determining Whether A Poultry Slaughter Or Processing Operation Is Exempt From PPIA Inspection: http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/USDAPoultry_Slaughter_Exemption_0406.pdf