



1 them to exhibit natural behaviors, including scratch areas,  
2 perches, nest boxes, and dust bathing areas; and within which  
3 farm employees can provide care while standing within the hens'  
4 usable floor space. "Cage-free housing system" includes:

- 5 (1) Multi-tiered aviaries;
- 6 (2) Partially-slatted systems; and
- 7 (3) Single-level all-litter floor systems.

8 "Cage-free housing systems" does not include systems  
9 commonly described as battery cages, colony cages, enriched  
10 cages, enriched colony cages, modified cages, convertible cages,  
11 furnished cages, or similar cage systems.

12 "Confined in a cruel manner" means the confinement of an  
13 egg-laying hen in an enclosure other than a cage-free housing  
14 system with less than:

- 15 (1) One square foot of usable floor space per hen in  
16 multi-tiered aviaries, partially-slatted systems, or  
17 any other cage-free system that provides hens with  
18 unfettered access to vertical space; or
- 19 (2) One and a half square feet of usable floor space per  
20 hen in a single-level all-litter floor system, or any



1 other cage-free system that does not provide hens with  
2 unfettered access to vertical space.

3 "Egg-laying hen" means a female domesticated chicken,  
4 turkey, duck, goose, or guinea fowl kept for the purpose of  
5 commercial egg production.

6 "Egg products" means eggs of an egg-laying hen broken from  
7 the shells and intended for human food, whether in liquid,  
8 solid, dried, or frozen form; whether raw or cooked; and with  
9 the yolks and whites in their natural proportions, or with the  
10 yolks and whites separated, mixed, or mixed and strained. The  
11 term does not include combination food products, including  
12 pancake mixes, cake mixes, cookies, pizzas, cookie dough, ice  
13 cream, or similar food products that consist of more than egg  
14 products, sugar, salt, water, seasoning, coloring, flavoring,  
15 preservatives, stabilizers, and similar food additives.

16 "Enclosure" means a structure used to confine an egg-laying  
17 hen or hens.

18 "Farm" means the land, building, support facilities, and  
19 other equipment that are wholly or partially used for the  
20 commercial production of animals or animal products used for  
21 food. The term does not include live animal markets,



1 establishments, or other official plants at which mandatory  
2 inspection is maintained under the Federal Egg Products  
3 Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. section 1031, et seq.).

4 "Farm owner or operator" means any person who owns or  
5 controls the operations of a farm.

6 "Multi-tiered aviary" means a cage-free housing system in  
7 which hens have unfettered access to multiple elevated platforms  
8 that provide hens with usable floor space both on top of and  
9 underneath the platforms.

10 "Partially-slatted system" means a cage-free housing system  
11 in which hens have unfettered access to elevated flat platforms  
12 under which manure drops through the flooring to a pit or litter  
13 removal belt below the platform.

14 "Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, joint  
15 venture, association, limited liability company, corporation,  
16 estate, trust, receiver, or syndicate.

17 "Sale" means a commercial sale by a business that sells any  
18 item covered by this chapter, but does not include any sale  
19 undertaken at an establishment at which mandatory inspection is  
20 maintained under the Federal Egg Products Inspection Act (21  
21 U.S.C. section 1031, et seq.). For purposes of this chapter, a



1 "sale" shall be deemed to occur at the location where the buyer  
2 takes physical possession of the item.

3 "Shell egg" means a whole egg of an egg-laying hen in its  
4 shell form that is intended for use as human food.

5 "Single-level all-litter floor system" means a cage-free  
6 housing system bedded with litter, in which hens have limited or  
7 no access to elevated flat platforms.

8 "Usable floor space" means the total square footage of  
9 floor space provided to each egg-laying hen, as calculated by  
10 dividing the total square footage of floor space provided to the  
11 animals in an enclosure by the number of animals in that  
12 enclosure. "Usable floor space" includes both ground space and  
13 elevated level or nearly level flat platforms upon which hens  
14 can roost but does not include perches or ramps.

15 § -B Prohibitions. (a) Notwithstanding any other  
16 provision of law to the contrary, beginning December 31, 2025,  
17 it shall be unlawful for a farm owner or operator within the  
18 State to knowingly cause any egg-laying hen to be confined in a  
19 cruel manner.

20 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the  
21 contrary, beginning December 31, 2025, it shall be unlawful for



1 a business owner or operator to knowingly engage in the sale in  
2 the State of any shell egg or egg product that the business  
3 owner or operator knows or should know was produced by an egg-  
4 laying hen that was confined in a cruel manner.

5 § -C **Exceptions.** This chapter shall not apply during:

- 6 (1) Medical research;
- 7 (2) Examination, testing, or individual treatment or  
8 operation for veterinary purposes performed by or  
9 under the direct supervision of a veterinarian;
- 10 (3) Transportation;
- 11 (4) State or county fair exhibitions, 4-H programs, and  
12 similar exhibitions;
- 13 (5) Slaughter in accordance with any applicable laws,  
14 rules, and regulations; or
- 15 (6) Temporary periods for animal husbandry purposes for no  
16 more than six hours in a twenty-four hour period and  
17 no more than twenty-four hours total in a thirty-day  
18 period.

19 § -D **Applicability.** This chapter shall not apply to a  
20 farm owner or operator who exclusively produces shell eggs, with



1 an annual egg production from a flock of ten thousand or fewer  
2 egg-laying hens provided that:

3 (1) The farm owner or operator does not knowingly cause  
4 any egg-laying hen to be confined with less than one  
5 square foot of usable floor space per hen, unless such  
6 confinement is exempt pursuant to section -C; and

7 (2) Any egg-laying hen added to the flock after  
8 December 31, 2025, that raises the farm's total flock  
9 size to more than ten thousand egg-laying hens is not  
10 confined in a cruel manner.

11 § -E Penalties. (a) Any person who violates any  
12 provision of this chapter shall be subject to a fine in an  
13 amount not less than \$500 and not to exceed \$1,000 per  
14 violation.

15 (b) In addition to the penalties listed in subsection (a),  
16 a violation of section -B(b) shall be considered an unfair  
17 method of competition and unfair or deceptive trade practice  
18 under chapter 481A, upon which any person may bring an action.

19 § -F Defense. It shall be a defense to any action to  
20 enforce this chapter that a business owner or operator relied in  
21 good faith upon a written certification by the supplier that the



1 shell egg or egg product was not derived from an egg-laying hen  
2 that was confined in a cruel manner.

3       § -G Rules. The department of agriculture shall adopt  
4 rules, pursuant to chapter 91, necessary for the purposes of  
5 this chapter.

6       § -H Construction. The provisions of this chapter shall  
7 be in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other law protecting  
8 animal welfare. This chapter shall not be construed to limit  
9 any other state laws or rules protecting the welfare of animals  
10 or to prevent the counties from adopting and enforcing  
11 ordinances, laws, and rules that are more restrictive than this  
12 chapter."

13       SECTION 3. If any provision of this Act, or the  
14 application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held  
15 invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or  
16 applications of the Act that can be given effect without the  
17 invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions  
18 of this Act are severable.

19       SECTION 4. In codifying the new sections added by  
20 section 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute



1 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating  
2 the new sections in this Act.

3 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

Egg-Laying Hens; Confinement Standards; Agriculture

**Description:**

Requires farm owner or operators to confine egg-laying hens in accordance with the standards established in this measure. Effective 12/31/25, prohibits a business owner or operator from selling shell eggs or egg products that are produced by egg-laying hens that were confined in a cruel manner. (SD1)

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