

House Bill 817

By: Representatives Dickey of the 134th, Meeks of the 178th, and Dawson of the 65th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 6 of Title 4 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to livestock dealers, so as to provide for source verification requirements for
3 large-scale meat producers; to provide for written disclosures; to provide for disclosures and
4 health risk management for older livestock; to provide for avian influenza testing for
5 large-scale poultry producers; to regulate multispecies producers; to provide for enforcement
6 and penalties; to provide for definitions; to provide legislative findings and declarations; to
7 provide for a short title; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to
8 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Meat Transparency and Source
12 Verification Act."

13 **SECTION 2.**

14 The General Assembly finds and declares that the purpose of this Act is to enhance
15 transparency in the marketing and sale of meat products labeled as "grassfed,"

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16 "pasture-raised," "regeneratively raised," or similar designations by requiring large-scale
17 producers to verify the origin and management history of their livestock. This Act also
18 establishes public health safeguards by implementing testing protocols for older cattle and
19 avian influenza in pasture-raised poultry.

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SECTION 3.

21 Article 1 of Chapter 6 of Title 4 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
22 livestock dealers, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

23 "4-6-13.

24 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

25 (1) 'Avian influenza testing' means a diagnostic procedure conducted to detect the
26 presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza or low pathogenic avian influenza in live
27 poultry populations.

28 (2) 'Culling' means any method of removing livestock from primary production,
29 including but not limited to sale through livestock markets, sale for processing due to
30 health or age factors, or transfer to nonspecialty production systems.

31 (3) 'Large-scale meat producer' means a meat producer with annual gross sales of meat
32 products of at least \$1 million per year.

33 (4) 'Large-scale poultry producer' means a poultry producer with annual gross sales of
34 poultry products of at least \$250,000.00 per year.

35 (5) 'Livestock market' means any facility where livestock are bought, sold, or traded
36 through public or private sale, including but not limited to auctions, stockyards, and
37 trading barns.

38 (6) 'Meat producer' means any person engaged in the production, processing, or sale of
39 meat in this state, including beef, pork, lamb, and goat, but excluding poultry, marketed
40 under grassfed, pasture-raised, regenerative, or similar agriculture labels.

41 (7) 'Older cattle' means any livestock over five years of age at the time of slaughter.

42 (8) 'Poultry producer' means any person engaged in the production, processing, or sale
43 of poultry in this state marketed under grassfed, pasture-raised, regenerative, or similar
44 agriculture labels.

45 (9) 'Regenerative' means a system of farming that seeks to improve soil health,
46 biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience, often associated with livestock production claims.

47 (b)(1) All large-scale meat producers located in this state shall maintain records verifying
48 the source and management history of all livestock used in their meat production,
49 including:

50 (A) Birth records, identifying the original producer or ranch;

51 (B) Any transfers of ownership or location changes, including feedlots, auctions, or
52 direct-to-slaughter transactions; and

53 (C) Documentation proving continuous compliance with United States Department of
54 Agriculture approved standards applicable to their specific marketing claims, such as
55 100 percent grassfed and pasture-raised.

56 (2) Such records shall be made available for inspection by the department upon request
57 and retained for a minimum of five years.

58 (c)(1) Any meat marketed or sold in this state under the designations covered in this
59 Code section shall include a clear, written disclosure stating whether the livestock:

60 (A) Have ever been sold through a livestock market or auction;

61 (B) Have ever been subject to a culling process prior to final sale;

62 (C) Have been continuously managed under the specified production protocols without
63 interruption;

64 (D) Were finished on feed that deviates from the marketed designation, such as
65 grassfed cattle receiving grain at any point; and

66 (E) Were over the age of five years at the time of slaughter.

67 (2) This disclosure shall be made available at the point of sale, on packaging or
68 promotional materials, and on any official website or sales platform used by the producer.

69 (d)(1) Any large-scale meat producer marketing beef from cattle older than five years at
70 the time of slaughter shall publicly disclose this fact through:

71 (A) A label on packaging stating: 'This beef is from cattle over 5 years of age'; and

72 (B) Online sales listings or menus specifying when beef is sourced from older cattle.

73 (2) Any beef from cattle over five years old shall undergo testing for specified risk
74 materials associated with transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, including but not
75 limited to:

76 (A) Testing for abnormal prion proteins linked to bovine spongiform encephalopathy;

77 (B) Removal and proper disposal of spinal cords, brains, eyes, and other high-risk
78 tissues as required under United States Department of Agriculture and United States
79 Food and Drug Administration regulations; and

80 (C) Documentation proving compliance with specific risk materials removal and
81 testing requirements, to be retained for no less than five years.

82 (e)(1) All poultry producers shall conduct routine avian influenza testing as follows:

83 (A) A minimum of 3 percent of live poultry flocks shall be tested weekly for highly
84 pathogenic avian influenza and low pathogenic avian influenza;

85 (B) Testing shall be conducted by an accredited laboratory using United States
86 Department of Agriculture approved methods; and

87 (C) Records of all testing shall be maintained for a minimum of five years and made
88 available to the department upon request.

89 (2) If a positive case of highly pathogenic avian influenza is detected, the producer shall:

90 (A) Immediately notify the department and United States Department of Agriculture
91 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service;

92 (B) Cease sales and distribution of poultry products from the affected flock until
93 further guidance is provided by state and federal authorities; and

94 (C) Implement biosecurity measures to prevent disease spread, including flock culling
95 if required by United States Department of Agriculture regulations.

96 (3) Any failure to comply with avian influenza testing requirements shall result in
97 penalties as outlined in subsection (g) of this Code section.

98 (f)(1) Large-scale meat producers and large-scale poultry producers marketing multiple
99 types of meat under regenerative or pasture-based claims shall ensure separate and
100 verifiable tracking for each species to avoid cross-contamination of claims.

101 (2) Large-scale meat producers and large-scale poultry producers engaged in
102 direct-to-consumer online sales shall provide consumers with accessible sourcing
103 verification through a scannable QR code, detailed webpage, or other verifiable digital
104 record.

105 (g) Any large-scale meat producer or large-scale poultry producer found in violation of
106 this Code section shall be subject to:

107 (1) A civil penalty not to exceed \$5,000.00 per violation for a first offense;

108 (2) A civil penalty not to exceed \$10,000.00 per violation for subsequent offenses; and

109 (3) Revocation or suspension of the producer's ability to market meat or poultry products
110 under the covered designations within this state for repeated noncompliance."

111 **SECTION 4.**

112 This Act shall become effective on January 1, 2026.

113 **SECTION 5.**

114 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.