

1 H.289

2 Introduced by Representative Rachelson of Burlington

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Agriculture; shell eggs; animal cruelty

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
7 Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to create a voluntary label for shell
8 eggs sold in Vermont that were produced by domesticated egg-producing
9 chickens in compliance with Vermont's animal cruelty laws.

10 An act relating to the sale of shell eggs

11 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

12 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

13 The General Assembly finds that:

14 (1) Confined living spaces may increase stress levels in egg-producing
15 chicken hens.

16 (2) Stress increases the risk of salmonella infection among
17 egg-producing chicken hens.

18 (3) Federal law does not prevent a state from enacting more protective
19 animal welfare laws or from taking actions to reduce the risk of salmonella in
20 unpasteurized shell eggs sold in Vermont.

1 access to food and water and continuous access to the outdoors during the
2 laying cycle. The outdoor area may be covered with a netting-like material,
3 fenced, or both.

4 Sec. 4. 6 V.S.A. chapter 27A is added to read:

5 CHAPTER 27A. SHELL EGG SALES AND LABELING

6 § 359. PURPOSE

7 The purpose of this chapter shall be to:

8 (1) prevent animal cruelty by promoting the humane treatment of
9 egg-producing chickens;

10 (2) reduce any food safety risks associated with egg-producing chickens
11 living under stressful conditions;

12 (3) provide consumers with information that they can use when
13 purchasing eggs; and

14 (4) uphold the integrity of Vermont agricultural products.

15 § 360. SHELL EGG LABELING

16 (a) Definition. As used in this chapter, “shell eggs” means eggs that are a
17 product of the domesticated chicken hen and that are in the shell.

18 (b) Voluntary label; cage free. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and
19 Markets shall produce a “Vermont Cage-Free Compliant” label with a mark or
20 statement, or both, that an egg producer may use on the packaging for the shell
21 eggs, provided that:

1 (1) the producer’s shell eggs are produced under conditions consistent
2 with 13 V.S.A. § 365(k)(1); and

3 (2) the shell eggs are sold or offered for retail sale in Vermont.

4 (c) Voluntary label; free range. The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and
5 Markets shall produce a “Vermont Free-Range Compliant” label with a mark
6 or statement, or both, that an egg producer may use on the packaging for the
7 shell eggs, provided that:

8 (1) the producer’s shell eggs are produced under conditions consistent
9 with 13 V.S.A. § 365(k)(2); and

10 (2) the shell eggs are sold or offered for retail sale in Vermont.

11 Sec. 5. RULEMAKING; SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND
12 MARKETS

13 The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall adopt rules necessary
14 to carry out the provisions of 6 V.S.A. chapter 27A.

15 Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATES

16 (a) This section and Sec. 5 shall take effect on passage.

17 (b) Secs. 1, 2, 3, and 4 shall take effect on July 1, 2020.