



# 2025 Acts Affecting Animals and Agriculture

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## Notice to Readers

This report provides summaries of new laws (public acts) significantly affecting animals and agriculture enacted during the 2025 regular legislative session. OLR's other Acts Affecting reports, including Acts Affecting Environment, are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Each summary indicates the public act (PA) number. Not all provisions of the acts are included. The report does not include vetoed acts unless the veto was overridden. Complete summaries of public acts are, or will soon be, available on [OLR's website](#).

Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the [General Assembly's website](#) or the Connecticut State Library.

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## **Animals**

### ***Adoption of Research Animals***

Under a new law, public and private higher education institutions must offer any rabbit, guinea pig, or ferret used for research or testing to an animal adoption or rescue organization for adoption when the (1) research or testing is complete; (2) destruction of the animal is not required; and (3) animal is no longer needed by the institution ([PA 25-129](#), effective October 1, 2025).

### ***Animal Abuse Conviction Probation Period***

A new law adds conviction of animal cruelty to the list of crimes for which the law provides a probation period and sets the probation period for that crime at five years ([PA 25-91](#), §§ 27 & 28, effective October 1, 2025).

### ***Dispensing Veterinary Drugs***

A new law allows a licensed veterinarian to authorize another person to dispense a prescription veterinary drug if done:

1. under a veterinarian's lawful written or oral order in the course of the veterinarian's professional practice and following federal and state laws and regulations on dispensing prescription veterinary drugs,
2. for an animal for which the veterinarian has access to the animal's medical records and has a veterinarian-client-patient relationship, and
3. under the veterinarian's direct supervision.

The authorizing veterinarian must ensure that all requirements for dispensing the drug are followed. The act allows the Department of Public Health (DPH) commissioner, in consultation with the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) and the Connecticut Board of Veterinary Medicine, to adopt regulations to implement these provisions ([PA 25-171](#), § 2, effective upon passage).

### ***Dog Tag Costs***

A new law allows the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner to charge municipalities the actual cost to obtain and distribute dog tags, rather than five cents per tag as under prior law. By law, dog owners must license their dogs with and get a dog tag from their town clerk, and town clerks must order the necessary number of dog tags from the agriculture commissioner ([PA 25-152](#), § 4, effective October 1, 2025).

## ***Endangered Species Act Environmental Review Report***

A new law requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to prepare a report evaluating potential improvements to its Endangered Species Act environmental reviews (e.g., recommendations for improving review processing and an assessment of other states' similar programs). DEEP must submit the report to the Environment Committee and post it on the department's website by February 1, 2026. By law, these reviews are determinations of whether state agency actions threaten the existence of any protected species or result in the destruction or degradation of its habitat ([PA 25-84](#), § 3, effective upon passage).

## ***Rabies Quarantine***

Under a new law, the owner or keeper of an animal that was attacked and potentially exposed to rabies must have the animal (1) quarantined for at least four months and (2) vaccinated against rabies as soon as medically appropriate. The quarantine must be as directed by a licensed veterinarian or the state veterinarian ([PA 25-7](#), effective upon passage).

## ***State Veterinarian Duties***

This session, the legislature passed a new law that allows the agriculture commissioner to designate one or more veterinarians to perform state veterinarian duties at any time, instead of just in the state veterinarian's absence as under prior law. The designation must be within existing resources and for up to two months ([PA 25-152](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

## **Agriculture**

### ***Agritourism Liability Immunity***

A new act grants immunity from civil liability to agritourism businesses that offer the general public the opportunity to observe or participate in agriculture-related activities on a farm (e.g., you-pick operations, corn mazes, hay rides). Under the act, an agritourism provider (i.e. an agritourism activity's owner, operator, or sponsor and their employees) is not civilly liable for a participant's property damage or personal injury resulting from an agritourism activity's inherent risks unless the provider (1) acts negligently or with willful or wanton disregard for the participant's safety; (2) purposely causes a participant's personal injury or property damage; or (3) commits criminal conduct that causes a participant's personal injury or property damage ([PA 25-152](#), § 10, effective October 1, 2025).

## ***Cannabis Social Equity Cultivation and Hemp Producer Lot Leases***

A new law allows certain social equity applicants, between January 1, 2026, and December 31, 2027, to receive a cultivator or micro-cultivator license to have a facility outside a disproportionately impacted area under certain conditions, including leasing a certain hemp producer's lot. Under the law, all hemp located on the lot subject to the lease continues to be deemed hemp until DCP issues a final license (after which the hemp is deemed cannabis and subject to all cannabis requirements) ([PA 25-166](#), § 9, effective upon passage).

## ***Community Investment Account***

In 2025, the legislature made several changes in laws on the community investment account. Primarily, it (1) increased, from \$40 to \$50, the land record recording fee that funds the account; (2) generally increased the amount that town clerks and municipalities receive for collecting this fee; (3) increased the amounts the designated recipients receive from the account; and (4) renamed the account the "Donald E. Williams, Jr. community investment account." By law, the account provides funding for, among other things, milk producers and projects related to open space, farmland preservation, and agriculture promotion ([PA 25-168](#), §§ 411-414, effective July 1, 2025).

## ***Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Employees***

A new act allows the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) control board to approve a CAES employee's service as a board member of, or compensation by, a start-up company that develops and commercializes a product based on the employee's inventions and discoveries subject to certain conditions. The act requires the CAES control board to establish policies and procedures so that these employee rights and restrictions are consistent with (1) the rights and restrictions of researchers at public universities and agencies in Connecticut and (2) applicable legal and ethical requirements ([PA 25-10](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Drone Use in Agriculture***

A new act requires the DEEP commissioner, by March 1, 2026, to amend existing regulations on pesticide applications from aircraft to allow qualifying applicators to use unmanned aircraft (i.e. drones) to (1) plant seeds and (2) analyze, treat, and apply pesticides and fertilizers to crops. Under the act, this authority applies only to licensed commercial or private pesticide applicators who are Federal Aviation Administration-licensed to operate unmanned aircraft ([PA 25-152](#), § 7, effective upon passage).

## ***Eastern Oysters***

Under a new act, the DoAg commissioner must review a study on the appropriate minimum harvest length for eastern oysters in Connecticut done by an in-state university-based marine research, education, and outreach program. In doing the review, he may consult with scientific experts on the appropriate minimum length. The act also requires him to issue a detailed recommendation to the Environment Committee by February 1, 2026, on the minimum harvest length for eastern oysters ([PA 25-14](#), § 1, effective upon passage).

## ***Farm Investment Tax Credit***

The FY 26-27 budget and implementer act creates a new refundable business tax credit for farmers' investments in eligible machinery, equipment, and buildings equal to 20% of the amount spent or incurred on the eligible property. To qualify for the credit, the farmer must be a Connecticut taxpayer whose federal gross income from farming for the income or tax year is at least two-thirds of their federal gross income from all sources over \$30,000. Credit-eligible property includes (1) machinery and equipment purchased by an eligible farmer on or after January 1, 2026, and (2) buildings and structural components an eligible farmer acquired, constructed, reconstructed, or erected and placed in service on or after that date, subject to specified conditions and requirements ([PA 25-168](#), § 373, effective January 1, 2026, and applicable to income and tax years beginning on or after that date).

The legislature also passed another act that creates a similar refundable business tax credit for farmers' investments in eligible machinery, equipment, and buildings, but applies it to a broader range of agricultural production ([PA 25-152](#), § 5, effective January 1, 2026, and applicable to income and tax years beginning on or after that date).

## ***Farm Machinery Property Tax Exemption***

This session, the legislature increased, from \$100,000 to \$250,000 in assessed value, the mandatory property tax exemption for farm machinery, other than motor vehicles. As under existing law, municipalities may exempt up to an additional \$250,000 in assessed value for farm machinery by local option ([PA 25-152](#), § 6, and [PA 25-168](#), § 455, effective October 1, 2025, and applicable to assessment years beginning on or after that date).

## ***Fertilizer and Soil Amendments***

A new law caps the annual fertilizer registration fee at \$75 and imposes an annual soil amendment registration fee of up to \$75. It also (1) extends a ban on soil amendments with biosolids containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) to fertilizers; (2) requires the DoAg



commissioner to enforce this provision and authorizes him to request certificates of compliance from manufacturers and suppliers; and (3) requires the DEEP commissioner to coordinate with DoAg, DCP, and DPH to enforce the state's law regulating the sale of certain consumer products containing PFAS ([PA 25-152](#), §§ 2-3 & 21-22, effective upon passage).

## ***Grant Programs***

***Agricultural Preservation and Farmland Access.*** New legislation allows DoAg, within available appropriations, to establish and administer a grant program to fund agricultural land preservation by agricultural nonprofits, municipalities, groups of municipalities, municipalities in a regional interlocal agreement, or regional councils of governments. Grantees may use the funds to develop new farmland access and affordability programs. However, grants cannot be used for any purpose that conflicts with farmland preservation ([PA 25-141](#), effective July 1, 2027).

***Farmers' Crop Loss Reimbursement.*** A new act (1) creates a grant program within DoAg to reimburse Connecticut farmers for crop loss incurred from major weather events and (2) requires DoAg to set the program parameters, including eligibility, funding prioritization, maximum reimbursements, and triggering weather events ([PA 25-152](#), § 9, effective July 1, 2025).

***Manure Management.*** A new act (1) creates a grant program within DoAg to support farmers in adopting best practices for maintaining manure management systems and (2) requires DoAg to set the program parameters, including eligibility, funding prioritization, and maximum reimbursements ([PA 25-152](#), § 18, effective July 1, 2025).

***Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition.*** A new law broadens the purposes for which certain Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition program grants may be used to include repurposing open space land for urban agricultural use. Existing law allows DEEP to award grants under the program to certain municipalities and land trusts to restore or protect open space land they already own. By law, the program generally provides grants to municipalities, land trusts, and water companies to buy land to be preserved as open space in perpetuity ([PA 25-125](#), § 16, effective upon passage).

***Shipping Container Farms.*** Under a new act, DoAg must administer a program to provide grants for purchasing and operating shipping container farms to grow fresh vegetables for schools and local food pantries. The program may become a part of any other DoAg program for which the schools and pantries are eligible ([PA 25-152](#), § 20, effective July 1, 2025).

## ***Hoop Houses***

A new act specifies that, regardless of any State Building Code provision, the agricultural use of structures commonly known as “hoop houses” or “high tunnels” are not subject to any permitting or construction standards. A hoop house, also known as a high tunnel, is a structure used in agricultural applications to provide protected growing space for crops or livestock ([PA 25-152](#), § 8, effective October 1, 2025).

## ***Invasive Plants***

A new act adds, over a period of years, 10 plants to the list of invasive plants that are generally banned in the state (e.g., cannot be imported, sold, or purchased): (1) beginning on the act’s passage, the star of Bethlehem; (2) as of October 1, 2028, the Glossy buckthorn, European buckthorn, reed canary grass, winged euonymus, European privet, black locust, miscanthus, and Japanese barberry; and (3) as of October 1, 2030, the Norway maple. It also prohibits municipalities from adopting ordinances on the retail sale or purchase of invasive plants ([PA 25-126](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Local Food for Schools Incentive Program***

A new law makes various changes to the Local Food for Schools Incentive Program, which reimburses eligible entities for purchases of locally or regionally sourced food for eligible meal programs. The changes include, among other things, (1) expanding the program to include child care providers; (2) making the State Department of Education (SDE), rather than DoAg, the lead administering agency; and (3) requiring SDE to use some of its annual program appropriation for supplemental services (e.g., outreach, training, and technical assistance) ([PA 25-168](#), § 300, effective July 1, 2025).

## ***Local Food Programs Legislative Hearing***

Under a new act, the Environment Committee may hold a hearing to get information on the funding and administration of certain programs, including the (1) CT Grown for CT Kids Grant program, which helps local and regional boards of education develop farm-to-school programs, and (2) Local Food for Schools Incentive Program ([PA 25-152](#), § 19, effective July 1, 2025).

## ***Manufacturer Hemp Products***

A new law requires manufacturer hemp products (i.e. those intended for human ingestion, inhalation, absorption, or other internal consumption) that a hybrid retailer (i.e. licensed to sell both cannabis and medical marijuana products) sells to be derived from hemp grown by a U.S.

Department of Agriculture-licensed hemp producer under an approved state or tribal hemp production plan.

The same law also (1) specifies that ingestible manufacturer hemp sold in the state must be from a federally licensed hemp producer and (2) eliminates the requirement that the manufacturer hemp product statement disclosure include warnings directed at children ([PA 25-166](#), §§ 24 & 40, various effective dates).

### ***Neonicotinoids***

A new act generally prohibits, beginning October 1, 2027, using a pesticide that has any neonicotinoid unless, upon receiving a request, the DEEP commissioner determines that there is no other effective control option available. The act exempts from the ban any neonicotinoid that is (1) for use in, or application to, agriculture, seeds, ornamental shrubbery, or trees or (2) not labeled for plant use, like those for personal care products, pet care, veterinary purposes, or indoor or structural pest control. It authorizes the DEEP commissioner to assess a civil penalty of up to \$2,500 per violation to anyone who violates the ban ([PA 25-33](#), § 32, effective upon passage).

### ***Second-Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides***

A new act requires DEEP, by January 1, 2026, to classify all second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides as restricted use pesticides. By law, this classification requires pesticides to be applied only by, or under the direct supervision of, a certified applicator or subject to other restrictions the commissioner imposes through regulations ([PA 25-33](#), § 31, effective upon passage).

### ***Shellfish***

This session, the legislature made numerous changes related to shellfish. A new act (1) eliminates state requirements that are not in line with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance; (2) shortens the state's commercial shellfish harvest season; (3) requires the owner of shellfish grounds or a franchise within the state's exclusive jurisdiction to certify to the DoAg commissioner that he or she completed all required business and shellfish-related state tax filings for the prior year and, relatedly, grants appeal rights; and (4) increases the allowed power dredge limit, from 30 to 60 pounds, for gathering shellfish ([PA 25-152](#), §§ 11-17, effective upon passage).

### ***Solar Facility on Prime Farmland or Forestland***

A new act prohibits the Connecticut Siting Council from approving by declaratory ruling a two-megawatt or more solar photovoltaic facility on prime farmland or forestland unless the project applicant provides a decommissioning bond (e.g., a bond to cover the costs of decommissioning

the facility and restoring the land). Existing law already prohibits the council from issuing a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need approving these facilities on prime farmland or forestland unless the project applicant provides a decommissioning bond ([PA 25-127](#), effective upon passage).

### ***Statutes on Obsolete or Defunct Programs Repealed***

A new law eliminates statutes concerning (1) a shellfish recovery vessel (the John H. Volk) that DoAg no longer owns; (2) the Lobster Restoration Advisory Committee; and (3) the Natural Area Preserves Advisory Committee ([PA 25-170](#), §§ 13 & 14, effective upon passage). Another new law also repeals the shellfish recovery vessel statute ([PA 25-152](#), § 23, effective upon passage).

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