



Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

Public Act No. 26-75

AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO AQUACULTURE-RELATED STATUTES AND PROVIDING FOR CERTAIN FARMING-RELATED PROGRAMS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) There is established the Dairy Modernization Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture. The purpose of such program shall be to assist dairy farmers in the state with investments in equipment, infrastructure and operational upgrades. Not later than January 1, 2027, the department shall establish the parameters of such grant program, including, but not limited to: (1) Eligibility criteria for such dairy farmers, (2) prioritization rules for the use of funds available to said department for such program, (3) the establishment of maximum award amounts under such program, (4) eligible projects that program funds can be invested toward, (5) the application process for any grant request, and (6) definitions for the terms "infrastructure" and "operational upgrades".

Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 12-217vv of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage and applicable to income and taxable years commencing on or after January 1, 2028*):

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Eligible farmer" means a taxpayer in this state whose federal gross income from farming for the income or taxable year is at least two-thirds of excess federal gross income or not less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars;

(2) "Excess federal gross income" means the amount of federal gross income from all sources for the income or taxable year in excess of thirty thousand dollars;

(3) "Agricultural production" has the same meaning as provided in subdivision (63) of section 12-412;

(4) "Farm investment property" means machinery and equipment that are acquired by purchase by an eligible farmer on or after January 1, 2026, and buildings and structural components of buildings that are acquired, constructed, reconstructed or erected by an eligible farmer and placed in service on or after January 1, 2026, and (A) are situated in this state, (B) have a class life of more than four years, as described in Section 168(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as amended from time to time, (C) are acquired by an eligible farmer from a person other than a related person, (D) are not acquired to be leased, and are not leased, to another person or persons during the twelve full months following their acquisition or placement in service, and (E) will be held and used in this state by the eligible farmer in the ordinary course of agricultural production for not less than five full years following the date of acquisition of such machinery and equipment or the date of placement in service of such buildings;

(5) "Related person" means (A) a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association or trust controlled by the taxpayer, (B) an individual, corporation, limited liability company, partnership,

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

association or trust that is in control of the taxpayer, (C) a corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association or trust controlled by an individual, corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association or trust that is in control of the taxpayer, or (D) a member of the same controlled group as the taxpayer; and

(6) "Control" means (A) with respect to a corporation, ownership, directly or indirectly, of stock possessing fifty per cent or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of the stock of such corporation entitled to vote, or (B) with respect to a trust, ownership, directly or indirectly, of fifty per cent or more of the beneficial interest in the principal or income of such trust. The ownership (i) of stock in a corporation, (ii) of a capital or profits interest in a partnership or association, or (iii) of a beneficial interest in a trust shall be determined in accordance with the rules for constructive ownership of stock provided in Section 267(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as amended from time to time, other than paragraph (3) of said section.

Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established, within the Department of Agriculture, a Dairy Farming Sustainability Working Group to develop long-term support recommendations for the state's dairy industry. Such recommendations shall include, but not be limited to: (1) Potential use and efficacy of a reimbursable tax credit program for dairy producers, (2) use of Community Investment Act funding for dairy sustainability, (3) processing capacity within the state, (4) use and efficacy of property tax exemptions for such farmers, including both mandatory and optional local exemptions.

(b) Such working group shall consist of the following members: (1) The Commissioner of Agriculture, or the commissioner's designee, (2) the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee, (3) the Commissioner of Revenue Services, or the commissioner's designee, (4) the executive director of the Connecticut

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

Farm Bureau, or the executive director's designee, (5) not less than three representatives of the dairy industry, as appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture, (6) one representative from each of the major dairy cooperatives in the state, as appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture, (7) one independent dairy producer, as appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture, and (8) any additional members, as deemed necessary by the Commissioner of Agriculture.

(c) On or before January 1, 2027, the Commissioner of Agriculture shall submit the recommendations of such working group to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters related to the environment, appropriations and finance, revenue and bonding.

Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Notwithstanding the provisions of the general statutes, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall reinstate the land use values for forest land established in the October 1, 2025, recommended values and best practices report. Such values shall remain in effect until the next valuation date.

Sec. 5. (*Effective from passage*) The Public Utilities Regulatory Authority shall conduct a study of natural gas rates, including, but not limited to, any applicable demand charges, for commercial and agricultural natural gas customers who have intermittent peak monthly demand to determine if a significant number of such customers are charged rates that do not fairly reflect such customers' use due to such demand charges. If the authority determines that such demand charges have the effect of unfairly increasing rates for such customers, the authority shall provide detailed recommendations concerning how such charges may be recalculated or otherwise applied to such customers. Not later than January 15, 2027, the authority shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, that contains such recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to energy

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

and technology.

Sec. 6. Section 22-26gg of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

The commissioner shall, in consultation with the Farmland Preservation Advisory Board established under section 22-26ll, adopt, in accordance with chapter 54, such regulations as the commissioner deems necessary to carry out the purposes of sections 22-26aa to 22-26nn, inclusive. [Such regulations shall provide that individual landowners applying for such program shall be eligible to receive not more than twenty thousand dollars per acre for development rights, and the schedule of the state's contribution for joint ownership projects initiated by municipalities shall be increased accordingly.]

Sec. 7. Subsections (b) and (c) of section 26-192e of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(b) The department shall [, by written order, promulgate] determine definite bounds of the area or areas closed to shellfishing when classified as conditional-closed, conditionally restricted, restricted or prohibited. Such [order] determination shall become effective when (1) [the closure classification is published in a newspaper having circulation in towns, cities and boroughs in which or adjacent to which any such area is situated; (2)] the classification is filed in writing or electronically in the offices of the clerk and the director of health in each such town, city or borough, [and (3)] (2) signs are posted at points on or near every such classified area, and (3) notice of the closure is posted on the department's Internet web site.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, when the Commissioner of Agriculture, after consultation with the Commissioner of Public Health, finds that tidal flats, shores or coastal

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

waters which may contain shellfish are so contaminated or polluted that a health emergency exists, [he] the commissioner may close such area for the duration of such emergency by giving notice of such emergency closure [(1)] in writing to the municipal or district health authority [, and (2) to the general public by publication in a newspaper having general circulation in the town, city or borough within which such area lies] and any applicable municipal shellfish commission. Such notice shall state when the closing shall take effect.

Sec. 8. Section 22-6g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

For the purposes of sections 22-6g to 22-6p, inclusive, as amended by this act:

(1) "Application" means a request made by an individual to the department for [vendor] farmer certification in CFM/WIC on a form provided by the department;

(2) ["Authorized farmers' market"] "Authorized benefit location" means a farmers' market, farm stand or mobile market that operates within the service area and is a site authorized by the department for the exchange of [vouchers] benefits and Connecticut-grown fresh produce and honey;

(3) ["Certified vendor"] "Certified farmer" means an individual who has met all CFM/WIC conditions as outlined by the department and who is guaranteed payment on all [vouchers] benefits accepted, provided compliance is maintained by that individual regarding all CFM/WIC rules and procedures as outlined in the [vendor] farmer certification handbook;

[(4) "Certified vendor identification stamp" means a department-issued stamp that shall be utilized by the certified vendor during each occurrence of voucher deposit in the financial institution of certified

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

vendor choice. This stamp shall remain the sole property of the department and shall be forfeited by the certified vendor to the department in the event of suspension;]

[(5) "Certified vendor identification sign"] (4) "Certified farmer identification sign" means a department-issued sign which shall be clearly displayed by the certified [vendor] farmer at all times when accepting or intending to accept [vouchers] benefits in an authorized [farmers' market] benefit location. Signs shall remain the sole property of the department and shall be forfeited by the certified [vendor] farmer to the department in the event of suspension;

[(6) "Certified vendor number" means a personal identification number issued by the department and assigned to an individual whom the department has identified as a certified vendor;]

[(7)] (5) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Agriculture;

[(8)] (6) "Department" means the Department of Agriculture;

[(9)] (7) "Designated distribution WIC clinic" means a site authorized by the department for dispersal of [vouchers] benefits by the local WIC agency;

[(10)] (8) "Distribution" means the process outlined by the department and the means by which local WIC agencies actually [dispense vouchers] distribute benefits to eligible participants;

[(11)] (9) "Farm products" means any fresh fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, nuts, shell eggs, honey or other bee products, maple syrup or maple sugar, flowers, nursery stock and other horticultural commodities, livestock food products, including meat, milk, cheese and other dairy products, food products of "aquaculture", as defined in subsection (q) of section 1-1, including fish, oysters, clams, mussels and other molluscan shellfish taken from the waters of the state or tidal

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

wetlands, products from any tree, vine or plant and their flowers, or any of the products listed in this subdivision that have been processed by the participating farmer, including, but not limited to, baked goods made with farm products;

[(12)] (10) "Farmers' market" means a cooperative or nonprofit enterprise or association that consistently occupies a given site throughout the season, which operates principally as a common marketplace for a group of farmers, at least two of whom are selling Connecticut-grown fresh produce, to sell Connecticut-grown farm products directly to consumers, and where the products sold are produced by the participating farmers with the sole intent and purpose of generating a portion of household income;

[(13)] (11) "Fresh produce" means fruits and vegetables that have not been processed in any manner and chicken eggs;

[(14)] (12) "CFM/WIC" means the Connecticut farmers' market [supplemental food] nutrition program for women, infants and children participants as administered by the department;

[(15)] (13) "Local WIC agency" means an entity that [administers local health programs and which has entered into contract for voucher distribution and related service with the department] contracts with the Department of Public Health for the administration of the WIC program and distributes benefits to eligible WIC participants;

[(16)] (14) "Connecticut-grown" means produce and other farm products, [that have a traceable point of origin within Connecticut] as defined in section 22-38;

[(17)] (15) "Posted hours and days" means the operational time frames stated in assurances submitted by a duly authorized representative of an authorized [farmers' market] benefit location which includes a beginning and an ending date for each year of operation;

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

[(18)] (16) "Participant" means a client of WIC who is at least one year of age, who possesses one of the WIC classification codes selected for inclusion by the Department of Public Health and who is an active participant in a designated distribution clinic;

[(19)] (17) "Season" means a clearly delineated period of time during a given year that has a beginning date and ending date, as specified by the department, which correlates with a major portion of the harvest period for Connecticut-grown fresh produce;

[(20)] (18) "Service area" means the geographic areas that encompass all of the designated distribution clinics and authorized [farmers' markets] benefit locations within Connecticut for a given season;

[(21)] (19) "USDA-FNS" means the United States Department of Agriculture-Food and Nutrition Service;

[(22) "Vendor certification handbook"] (20) "Farmer certification handbook" means a publication by the department that is based on USDA-FNS mandates and guidelines, addresses CFM/WIC rules and procedures applicable to a certified [vendor,] farmer and provides the basis for [vendor] farmer training. A copy of the publication shall be issued to each individual prior to application. New editions supersede all previous editions;

[(23) "Voucher"] (21) "Benefit" means a [negotiable instrument] monetary amount issued by the department to participants that is redeemable only for Connecticut-grown fresh unprocessed produce from certified [vendors] farmers at authorized [farmers' markets] benefit locations, with a limited negotiable period that directly correlates to the season designated by the department; and

[(24)] (22) "WIC" means the special supplemental food program for women, infants and children, as administered by the Department of Public Health.

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

Sec. 9. Section 22-6h of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) There is established the Connecticut Farmers' [Market/Women,] Market Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children [Nutrition Program] which [shall] may be jointly funded by the state of Connecticut and the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. The program shall supply Connecticut-grown fresh produce to participants of the [special supplemental food] CFM/WIC program through the distribution of [vouchers] benefits that are redeemable only at [designated Connecticut farmers' markets] authorized benefit locations in Connecticut. The program is designed to provide both a supplemental source of fresh produce for the dietary needs of women, infants and children who are [judged] determined to be at nutritional risk and to stimulate an increased demand for Connecticut-grown fresh produce at authorized Connecticut [farmers' markets] benefit locations.

(b) The program shall be administered by the Commissioner of Agriculture who shall maintain all conditions as outlined in the farmers' market nutrition program agreement entered into with USDA-FNS, as amended.

Sec. 10. Section 22-6i of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) The Department of Public Health WIC client screening processes and records shall provide the basis for identifying participants eligible for receipt of [vouchers] benefits.

(b) Local WIC agencies shall distribute [vouchers] benefits at designated distribution clinics to participants in the manner specified by the department in the program and procedures guide for distribution clinic staff. Local WIC agency services shall ensure that:

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

[(1) Vouchers are distributed only to participants through verification that the client name and number on the distribution registry provided by the Department of Public Health correspond with the client name and number printed on the WIC identification folder in the possession of the participant.]

[(2)] (1) Each eligible participant is issued [five three-dollar vouchers during each distribution as authorized by the department] a benefit amount, determined annually, based on the federal and state allocation for the given program year.

[(3) The voucher serial numbers issued to the participant correspond to the number in the distribution registry in which the participant signature is affixed.

(4) Each voucher issued and the distribution registry are properly signed by the participant in the presence of local agency staff at the time of distribution or, if a proxy is utilized, a written, electronic or verbal communication is made by the participant or such proxy which acknowledges receipt from the local agency staff at the time of distribution.]

[(5)] (2) Any adult may act as a proxy provided the participant designates such adult as [his or her] such adult's proxy in writing.

[(6)] (3) Each participant is provided a thorough explanation of program guidelines and participant responsibility as outlined by the department.

[(7)] (4) All CFM/WIC support materials are put into use as outlined by the department.

[(8)] (5) Accurate and complete records of all related CFM/WIC activities in the possession of a WIC local agency are maintained and retained for a minimum of [four] three years. In the event of litigation,

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

negotiation, or audit findings, the records shall be retained until all issues arising from such actions have been resolved or until the end of the regular [four-year] three-year period, whichever is later.

[(9)] (6) All agency records pertaining to this program shall be made available for inspection to representatives of USDA-FNS, the Comptroller General of the United States, the state Auditors of Public Accounts, the department, and the Department of Public Health as necessary, at any time during normal business hours, and as frequently as is deemed necessary for inspection and audit. Confidentiality of personal information shall be maintained as to all program participants at all times.

Sec. 11. Section 22-6j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

Participants shall be responsible for:

(1) [Qualifying under WIC program guidelines and attending] Attending a designated distribution clinic during the relevant distribution cycles when [vouchers are dispersed] benefits are disbursed;

[(2)] Properly countersigning a voucher prior to use;

[(3)] (2) Using [vouchers] benefits only to purchase Connecticut-grown fresh produce from certified [vendors] farmers who display [CFM/WIC signs at authorized farmers' markets] a certified farmer identification poster at authorized benefit locations;

[(4)] (3) Redeeming [vouchers] benefits on or before the expiration date [printed on the face] of the [voucher] benefit or surrendering all claim to the value of [vouchers] benefits that remain unredeemed;

[(5)] (4) Ensuring [vouchers] benefits that are received are not

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

assigned to any other party other than as provided by the [department] program;

[(6)] (5) Reporting violations or problems to the department or the local agency; and

[(7)] (6) Reporting all incidents of lost or stolen [vouchers] benefits to the local agency.

Sec. 12. Section 22-6k of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Each authorized [farmers' market] benefit location shall maintain records of operation which shall be provided to the department and which shall include posted hours and days and shall be signed by a duly authorized representative of the [farmers' market] benefit location. [Farmers' market] Benefit location assurances shall be submitted in a manner outlined by the department and shall provide evidence of:

(1) Whether a [farmers' market] benefit location possesses the capability to serve the additional demands brought about by distribution of [vouchers] benefits in the area without causing undue harm to the existing farmers' market, farm stands or mobile market consumer base; and

(2) A willingness by persons associated with the [farmers' market] authorized benefit location to meet all [CFM/WIC] program requirements. Information submitted by a [farmers' market] benefit location shall include, but not be limited to:

(A) The number of Connecticut-grown fresh produce [vendor] farmer participants;

(B) Hours of operation to be maintained per week;

(C) Season of operation; and

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

(D) Accessibility and consistency of [farmers' market] benefit location.

(b) The department shall give priority to a [farmers' market] benefit location with previous involvement in CFM/WIC provided the [farmers' market] benefit location has maintained the conditions outlined in its [farmers' market] assurances and does not have a high incidence of certified [vendor] farmer noncompliance or suspensions.

[(c) In determining a farmers' market's authorization, the commissioner shall consider the number of eligible applications received by the department prior to the first of May which indicate the intent to participate in the proposed farmers' market. The standard for the authorization of a single or principal farmers' market in a county shall be one eligible application for every one hundred participants who participate in the distribution clinic in said county. A minimum of two or more eligible applications shall be required for a farmers' market to receive authorization.

(d) The number of farmers' markets authorized for the season shall be determined by the department no later than the thirty-first day of May prior to each season.]

Sec. 13. Section 22-6l of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) [Vendor] Farmer certification shall not be in effect and [vouchers] benefits shall not be accepted until receipt by the applicant of a certified [vendor] farmer identification [stamp, a certified vendor identification sign] poster and the applicant copy of the [department-vendor] department-farmer agreement.

(b) Each [vendor] farmer certification shall be valid for three years. The department shall not limit the number of [vendors] farmers who may become certified under CFM/WIC. A [vendor] farmer who

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

satisfies all the following criteria shall be certified to accept [vouchers] benefits:

(1) Agrees to maintain only Connecticut-grown fresh produce on display in a certified [vendor] farmer stall;

(2) Indicates an intent to participate in one or more authorized [farmers' markets] benefit locations;

(3) [~~Demonstrates participation~~] Participates in training on CFM/WIC rules and procedures through attendance in an entire session of one of the scheduled training meetings conducted by department staff [;] and completes an annual online learning module and receives a passing score on a knowledge test; and

[(4) Submits a signed statement of receipts of a vendor certification handbook;]

[(5)] (4) Submits a timely completed application and crop plan to the department [prior to the deadline established by the department; and] utilizing the application form and processes established by the department.

[(6) Submits completed and signed certified vendor agreements to the department.]

Sec. 14. Section 22-6m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) A certified [vendor] farmer may accept [vouchers] benefits only for a transaction that takes place at [a certified farmers' market] an authorized benefit location and only in exchange for Connecticut-grown fresh produce and may accept [vouchers] benefits as payment for Connecticut-grown fresh produce only if presented [on or before the usage expiration date printed on the face of the voucher] by an eligible

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

participant.

(b) A certified [vendor] farmer shall (1) prominently display a certified [vendor identification sign] farmer identification poster as outlined in the certified [vendor] farmer handbook, (2) provide Connecticut-grown fresh produce and honey to participants upon receipt of [a valid and properly completed voucher, which is signed by the WIC client] benefits, (3) handle transactions with [WIC] participants in the same manner as transactions with all other customers, (4) not collect state or local taxes on purchases involving [vouchers] benefits, (5) charge participants a price for Connecticut-grown fresh produce that is equal to or less than the current price charged to nonparticipant customers, (6) not levy a surcharge based on the use of [vouchers] benefits by participants, (7) return no cash or issue credit in any form to participants during sales transactions that involve [vouchers] benefits only and in the event of a single transaction in which a participant presents a combination of cash and [vouchers] benefits for the purchase of Connecticut-grown fresh produce and honey, cash or credit up to the value of the cash portion of the payment shall be given to the participant, (8) participate in training as the department deems necessary to carry out the intent of CFM/WIC, (9) cooperate with the department in the evaluation of each season by completely and accurately responding to a survey, with resubmission to the department in a specified and timely manner, (10) immediately inform the department in the event of loss, destruction [,] or theft of [either the certified vendor endorsement stamp or] a certified [vendor] farmer identification [sign] poster so that a replacement may be issued, and (11) comply with all procedures and rules as herein outlined and as delineated in the [department-vendor] department-farmer agreement, the certified [vendor] farmer handbook and official written notices of clarification issued by the department to the [vendor] farmer.

Sec. 15. Section 22-6n of the general statutes is repealed and the

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) [The commissioner shall return a voucher to a certified vendor unpaid if the certified vendor identification number is not properly affixed to the back of the voucher, the certified vendor does not endorse the voucher or the participant's signature is missing on the face of the voucher. A voucher] A transaction may be resubmitted for payment in the event that the [signature or vendor certification identification] error can be properly and legally corrected by the certified [vendor] farmer. Violations of CFM/WIC procedures and rules applicable to a certified [vendor] farmer shall be identified as Class I violations, Class II violations and Class III violations. Violations involving the use of multiple [vouchers] benefits in a single sales transaction shall be considered as a single violation. Violations involving multiple sales transactions, regardless of time elapsed, shall be considered multiple violations at a standard of one violation per sales transaction.

(b) For Class I violations, the commissioner shall issue a warning letter to the violating certified [vendor] farmer. Failure to appropriately display the certified [vendor] farmer identification [sign] poster and prices as specified in the signage requirements shall constitute a Class I violation.

(c) For Class II violations, the commissioner shall issue an official written citation of noncompliance to the violating certified [vendor] farmer. The following shall constitute Class II violations:

(1) Noncompliance with rules and procedures as outlined in the [vendor] farmer certification handbook and in the [department-vendor] department-farmer agreement which is not specifically identified as a Class I violation;

(2) Participant is charged a price that is greater than that charged nonparticipant or is charged for items not received;

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

(3) Refusal to accept valid [vouchers] benefits for Connecticut-grown fresh produce and honey;

(4) Failure to permit or comply with procedures regarding inspection of evidence by the department when point of origin of fresh produce and honey on display or offered for sale in a certified [vendor] farmer staff is in question;

(5) Abusive or discriminatory treatment of participants or CFM/WIC staff;

(6) Displaying or offering for sale non-Connecticut-grown fresh produce and honey in a certified [vendor] farmer stall;

(7) An authorized [farmers' market] benefit location is neither open nor staffed during posted hours and days during the season in which the certified [vendor] farmer is a designated participant; or

(8) The second like instance of a Class I violation by a single certified [vendor] farmer.

(d) For Class III violations, the commissioner shall suspend the violating [vendor] farmer from participation in CFM/WIC. The following shall constitute Class III violations:

(1) A third Class I violation by a single [vendor] farmer;

(2) The second of two Class II violations of the same type by a single [vendor;] farmer; or

(3) Exchanging ineligible products or cash for [vouchers; or] benefits.

[(4) Cashing vouchers for a noncertified market.]

(e) The commissioner shall issue a written official notice of noncompliance to the certified [vendor] farmer within seventy-two

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

hours of receipt of evidence involving an act of noncompliance. Suspension of a certified [vendor] farmer from participation in CFM/WIC shall remain in effect for the remainder of the season. An exception shall occur when suspension occurs within thirty days of the expiration date for [voucher] benefit usage by participants. In such case, suspension shall also include the entire season of the following calendar year. In the event of a suspension, the [vendor] farmer shall reimburse the commissioner for the value of any [vouchers] benefits deposited and paid upon after the official date of suspension notification. At the conclusion of a suspension period, the [vendor] farmer may reapply for certification in order to resume participation in CFM/WIC.

(f) Any [vendor] farmer successfully recertified following a suspension shall be on probationary status for one full season. Recurrence of a Class II violation during the probationary period and for which the certified [vendor] farmer has been cited shall be sufficient grounds for immediate and automatic suspension.

Sec. 16. Section 22-60 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

A written notice of noncompliance or suspension from the department shall be pending for seventy-two hours of receipt by the certified [vendor] farmer. The certified [vendor] farmer shall be granted the pending period for presenting sufficient evidence to the department to substantiate a reversal. Remedies undertaken in response to receipt of written notice of a pending citation of noncompliance or suspension shall not constitute evidence in defense of such citation. Failure to present any evidence to the department within the specified pending period shall constitute acceptance of the citation of noncompliance or suspension by the certified [vendor] farmer. Submission of insufficient evidence by the certified [vendor] farmer for determination of reversal on the pending citation by the department shall result in an official citation of noncompliance or suspension upon completion of the

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

pending period.

Sec. 17. Section 22-6p of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Assurances, on forms provided by the department, [must] shall be submitted no later than the first day of March in order for the [farmers' market] authorized benefit location to receive consideration of authorization for the upcoming season.

[(b) All applications shall be submitted no later than one month preceding the last date in which vouchers may be used by participants at authorized farmers' markets.]

[(c)Vouchers] (b) Benefits shall be valid from the time of issue through the season ending date as designated by the department. [Such date shall be clearly printed on the voucher face. Voucher] Benefit usage shall be null and void after [expiration date] the end of the season.

[(d) All vouchers accepted by a certified vendor shall be deposited on or before thirty days following the date of expiration for voucher usage by participants. Such date shall be clearly printed on the front of vouchers. Any claim to voucher payment beyond the voucher reimbursement expiration date is not valid and shall be denied.]

[(e)] (c) Deadlines for submission of records, reports, survey instruments and undistributed [vouchers] benefits by local agencies shall be established by the department and specified in the agreement entered into with the local agency.

[(f)] (d) The department shall develop and submit a completed operations report in January in a manner prescribed by USDA-FNS which summarizes the [CFM/WIC] program operations for the previous year.

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

Sec. 18. Section 22-6q of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) There is established the Connecticut Farmers' Market/Senior Nutrition Program which shall be provided for from funds available to the commissioner and from other sources as such funds may become available. The program shall supply Connecticut-grown fresh produce and honey to senior participants through the distribution of [vouchers] benefits that are redeemable only at designated Connecticut [farmers' markets] benefit locations. For purposes of this section, a "senior participant" is defined as a person who is sixty years of age or older and is currently residing in elderly housing, or is a participant of a registered congregate meal site, or has been identified by a municipal elderly agent as being at nutritional risk. The program is designed to provide both a supplemental source of fresh produce and honey for the dietary needs of seniors who are [judged] determined to be at nutritional risk and to stimulate an increased demand for Connecticut-grown produce and honey at Connecticut [farmers' markets] benefit locations. For purposes of this section, "fresh produce" means fruits and vegetables that have not been processed in any manner and chicken eggs.

(b) The program shall be administered by the Commissioner of Agriculture who shall maintain all conditions for its operations.

Sec. 19. Section 22-26k of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

[(a)] There is established a farm transition grant program which shall be administered by the Department of Agriculture. Matching grants shall be made to farmers and agricultural cooperatives for diversification of existing farm operations, transitioning to value added agricultural production and sales, and developing farmers' markets and other venues in which a majority of products sold are grown in the state.

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

[(b) The Commissioner of Agriculture shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, for the administration of the program established by this section. Such regulations shall require the development of business plans by applicants as part of the application process.]

Sec. 20. Section 22-34 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

No person shall use any words, titles or names designated by the Commissioner of Agriculture, under the provisions of sections 22-27, 22-28 and 22-29 [,] and subsection (b) of section 22-31, [and section 22-33,] for use in grading or marketing of farm products, unless the products which he is identifying, advertising, designating or describing thereby fully meet the requirements of the official grade indicated by such words, titles or names. If, in the opinion of the Commissioner of Agriculture or his representative, any lot or lots of such products so identified, advertised, designated or described are not of the grade indicated, said commissioner shall cause inspections thereof to be made by regularly appointed inspectors for the purpose of determining the actual grade of such products. Any person, firm or corporation which violates any provision of this section shall be fined not more than fifty dollars for the first offense and not more than two hundred dollars for each subsequent offense.

Sec. 21. Subsection (b) of section 51-164n of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes, any person who is alleged to have committed (1) a violation under the provisions of section 1-9, 1-10, 1-11, 2-71h, 4b-13, 7-13, 7-14, 7-35 or 7-41, subsection (c) of section 7-66, section 7-83, 7-147h, 7-148, 7-283, 7-325, 7-393, 8-12, 8-25, 8-27, 9-63, 9-322, 9-350, 10-185, 10-193, 10-197, 10-198, 10-230, 10-251, 10-

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

254, 10a-35, 12-52, 12-54, 12-129b or 12-170aa, subdivision (3) of subsection (e) of section 12-286, section 12-286a, 12-292, 12-314b or 12-326g, subdivision (4) of section 12-408, subdivision (3), (5) or (6) of section 12-411, section 12-435c, 12-476a, 12-476b, 12-476c, 12-487, 13a-26b, 13a-71, 13a-107, 13a-113, 13a-114, 13a-115, 13a-117b, 13a-123, 13a-124, 13a-139, 13a-140, 13a-143b, 13a-253, 13a-263 or 13b-39f, subsection (f) of section 13b-42, section 13b-90 or 13b-100, subsection (a) of section 13b-108, section 13b-221 or 13b-292, subsection (a) or (b) of section 13b-324, section 13b-336, 13b-337, 13b-338, 13b-410a, 13b-410b or 13b-410c, subsection (a), (b) or (c) of section 13b-412, section 13b-414 or 14-4, subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of section 14-12, subsection (d) of section 14-12, subsection (f) of section 14-12a, subsection (a) of section 14-15a, section 14-16c, 14-20a or 14-27a, subsection (f) of section 14-34a, subsection (d) of section 14-35, section 14-43, 14-44j, 14-49, 14-50a, 14-58 or 14-62a, subsection (b) of section 14-66, section 14-66a or 14-67a, subsection (g) of section 14-80, subsection (f) or (i) of section 14-80h, section 14-97a or 14-98, subsection (a), (b) or (d) of section 14-100a, section 14-100b, 14-103a, 14-106a, 14-106c, 14-145a, 14-146, 14-152, 14-153, 14-161 or 14-163b, subsection (f) of section 14-164i, section 14-213b or 14-219, subdivision (1) of section 14-223a, subsection (d) of section 14-224, section 14-240 or 14-250, subdivision (2) of subsection (e) of section 14-251, section 14-253a, 14-261a, 14-262, 14-264, 14-266, 14-267a, 14-269, 14-270, 14-272b, 14-274, 14-275 or 14-275a, subsection (c) of section 14-275c, section 14-276, subsection (a) or (b) of section 14-277, section 14-278, 14-279 or 14-280, subsection (b), (e) or (h) of section 14-283, section 14-283d, 14-283e, 14-283f, 14-283g, 14-289l, 14-291, 14-293b, 14-296aa, 14-298a, 14-300, 14-300d, 14-300f, 14-319, 14-320, 14-321, 14-325a, 14-326, 14-330 or 14-332a, subdivision (1), (2) or (3) of section 14-386a, section 15-15e, 15-25 or 15-33, subdivision (1) of section 15-97, subsection (a) of section 15-115, section 16-15, 16-16, 16-44, 16-256e, 16-278 or 16a-15, subsection (a) of section 16a-21, section 16a-22, subsection (a) or (b) of section 16a-22h, section 16a-106, 17a-24, 17a-145, 17a-149 or 17a-152, subsection (b) of section 17a-227, section 17a-465, subsection (c) of

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

section 17a-488, section 17b-124, 17b-131, 17b-137, 19a-33, 19a-39 or 19a-87, subsection (b) of section 19a-87a, section 19a-91, 19a-102a, 19a-102b, 19a-105, 19a-107, 19a-113, 19a-215, 19a-216a, 19a-219, 19a-222, 19a-224, 19a-286, 19a-287, 19a-297, 19a-301, 19a-309, 19a-335, 19a-336, 19a-338, 19a-339, 19a-340, 19a-425, 19a-442, 19a-502, 19a-565, 20-7a, 20-14, 20-153a, 20-158, 20-231, 20-233, 20-249, 20-257, 20-265, 20-324e, 20-329c or 20-329g, subsection (b) of section 20-334, section 20-341l, 20-366, 20-482, 20-597, 20-608, 20-610, 20-623, 21-1, 21-38, 21-39, 21-43, 21-47, 21-48 or 21-63, subsection (d) of section 21-71, section 21-76a or 21-100, subsection (c) of section 21a-2, subdivision (1) of section 21a-19, section 21a-20 or 21a-21, subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 21a-25, section 21a-26, subsection (a) of section 21a-37, section 21a-46, 21a-61, 21a-63, 21a-70b or 21a-77, subsection (b) or (c) of section 21a-79, section 21a-85 or 21a-154, subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of section 21a-159, section 21a-278b, subsection (c), (d) or (e) of section 21a-279a, section 21a-415a, 21a-421eee, 21a-421fff or 21a-421hhh, subsection (a) of section 21a-430, section 22-12b, 22-13, 22-14, 22-15, 22-16, 22-26g, 22-30, 22-34, as amended by this act, 22-35, 22-36, 22-38, 22-39, 22-39f, 22-49, [22-54,] 22-61j or 22-61l, subdivision (1) of subsection (n) of section 22-61l, subsection (f) of section 22-61m, subdivision (1) of subsection (f) of section 22-61m, section 22-84, 22-89, 22-90, 22-96, 22-98, 22-99, 22-100 or 22-111o, subsection (d) of section 22-118l, section 22-167, subsection (c) of section 22-277, section 22-278, 22-279, 22-280a, 22-318a, 22-320h, 22-324a or 22-326, subsection (b), subdivision (1) or (2) of subsection (e) or subsection (g) of section 22-344, subsection (a) or (b) of section 22-344b, subsection (d) of section 22-344d, section 22-344f, 22-350a, 22-354, 22-359, 22-366, 22-391, 22-413, 22-414, 22-415, 22-415c, 22a-66a or 22a-246, subsection (a) of section 22a-250, section 22a-256g, subsection (e) of section 22a-256h, section 22a-363 or 22a-381d, subsections (c) and (d) of section 22a-381e, section 22a-449, 22a-450, 22a-461, 23-4b, 23-38, 23-45, 23-46 or 23-61b, subsection (a) or subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of section 23-65, section 25-37 or 25-40, subsection (a) of section 25-43, section 25-43d, 25-135, 26-18, 26-19, 26-21, 26-31, 26-40, 26-40a, 26-42, 26-

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

43, 26-49, 26-54, 26-55, 26-56, 26-58 or 26-59, subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of section 26-61, section 26-64, subdivision (1) of section 26-76, section 26-79, 26-87, 26-89, 26-91, 26-94, 26-97, 26-98, 26-104, 26-105, 26-107, 26-114a, 26-117, subsection (b) of section 26-127, 26-128, 26-128a, 26-131, 26-132, 26-138, 26-139 or 26-141, subdivision (1) of section 26-186, section 26-207, 26-215, 26-217 or 26-224a, subdivision (1) of section 26-226, section 26-227, 26-230, 26-231, 26-232, 26-244, 26-257a, 26-260, 26-276, 26-280, 26-284, 26-285, 26-286, 26-287, 26-288, 26-290, 26-291a, 26-292, 26-294, 27-107, 28-13, 29-6a, 29-16, 29-17, 29-25, 29-143o, 29-143z or 29-156a, subsection (b), (d), (e), (g) or (h) of section 29-161q, section 29-161y or 29-161z, subdivision (1) of section 29-198, section 29-210, 29-243 or 29-277, subsection (c) of section 29-291c, section 29-316 or 29-318, subsection (b) of section 29-335a, section 29-381, 30-19f, 30-48a or 30-86a, subsection (b) of section 30-89, subsection (c) or (d) of section 30-117, section 31-3, 31-10, 31-11, 31-12, 31-13, 31-14, 31-15, 31-16, 31-18, 31-23, 31-24, 31-25, 31-32, 31-36, 31-47 or 31-48, subsection (b) of section 31-48b, section 31-51, 31-51g, 31-52, 31-52a, 31-53 or 31-54, subsection (a) or (c) of section 31-69, section 31-70, 31-74, 31-75, 31-76, 31-76a, 31-89b or 31-134, subsection (i) of section 31-273, section 31-288, 31-348, 33-624, 33-1017, 34-13d or 34-412, subdivision (1) of section 35-20, subsection (a) of section 36a-57, subsection (b) of section 36a-665, section 36a-699, 36a-739, 36a-787, 38a-2 or 38a-140, subsection (a) or (b) of section 38a-278, section 38a-479qq, 38a-479rr, 38a-506, 38a-548, 38a-626, 38a-680, 38a-713, 38a-733, 38a-764, 38a-786, 38a-828, 38a-829, 38a-885, 42-133hh, 42-470 or 42-480, subsection (a) or (c) of section 43-16q, section 45a-283, 45a-450, 45a-634 or 45a-658, subdivision (13) or (14) of section 46a-54, section 46a-59, 46a-81b, 46b-22, 46b-24, 46b-34, 46b-38d, 47-34a, 47-47 or 47-53, subsection (i) of section 47a-21, subdivision (1) of subsection (k) of section 47a-21, section 49-2a, 49-8a, 49-16, 52-143 or 52-289, subsection (j) of section 52-362, section 53-133, 53-199, 53-212a, 53-249a, 53-252, 53-264, 53-280, 53-290a, 53-302a, 53-303e, 53-311a, 53-314, 53-321, 53-322, 53-323 or 53-331, subsection (b) of section 53-343a, section 53-344, subsection (b) or (c) of section 53-344b, subsection (b) of section 53-345a,

Substitute Senate Bill No. 148

section 53-377, 53-422 or 53-450 or subsection (i) of section 54-36a, or (2) a violation under the provisions of chapter 268, or (3) a violation of any regulation adopted in accordance with the provisions of section 12-484, 12-487 or 13b-410, or (4) a violation of any ordinance, regulation or bylaw of any town, city or borough, except violations of building codes, the health code or an ordinance described in subdivision (5) of this subsection, for which the penalty exceeds ninety dollars but does not exceed two hundred fifty dollars, unless such town, city or borough has established a payment and hearing procedure for such violation pursuant to section 7-152c, or (5) a violation of any ordinance adopted by a town, city or borough pursuant to section 14-224a, 14-390 or 14-390m for which the penalty does not exceed two thousand dollars, unless such town, city or borough has established a payment and hearing procedure for such violation pursuant to section 7-152c, shall follow the procedures set forth in this section.

Sec. 22. Sections 22-33, 22-50 to 22-54, inclusive, and 26-206 of the general statutes are repealed. (*Effective from passage*)