

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Robert Rivas, Chair

AB 888 (Levine) – As Amended April 22, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Mobile slaughter operations: sheep and goats

**SUMMARY:** Provides an exemption to animal slaughter inspections for a Mobile Slaughter Operator (MSO) who provides services to an owner of sheep, goats and swine, where the slaughter occurs on the premises of the person who raised the sheep, goats, and swine. Specifically, *this bill*:

- 1) Allows MSOs to provides service to the owner of sheep, goats, and swine if the slaughter take place on the premise of the person who raised the sheep, goats, and swine and is not the current owner of the sheep, goats, and swine, if the following condition are meet:
  - a) Requires, if the person who raised the sheep, goats and swine is registered with CDFA’s Bureau of Sheep, Goats, and Swine. Identification that shows the names and addresses of the owners of the unlicensed mobile slaughterer and any other information the secretary may require.
  - b) The meat is not for sale, but used exclusively by the owner for personal use, as specified.
  - c) Requires, if conducting multiple slaughter operations at a premises, a MSO must maintain, for a period of one year, a record of the total number of sheep and goats slaughtered, the tag identification number ID tag animals slaughtered, and the premises identification number where the slaughter occurred, as specified.
  - d) Requires a MSO to follow the guidelines published by the Association of Food and Drug Officials in the Guidelines for Exempt Slaughter and Processing Operations publication.
- 2) Prohibits the sheep, goats and swine MSO exemption to no more than 35 head of sheep, goats and swine, combined at single location per calendar month.
- 3) Requires MSO operation in this section to comply with all other applicable state and Federal environmental and zoning laws.
- 4) Defines “Person who raised the sheep or goats” to means the person who owned and was responsible for feeding and caring for the sheep, goats, and swine before their sale and slaughter on the person’s premises.
- 5) Defines “Raised,” to mean fed and care of the sheep, goats, and swine for a period of 30 calendar days or more before the sale and slaughter of the sheep, goats, and swine.
- 6) Requires a MSO performing the service of slaughtering sheep, goats, and swine to register with CDFA as an unlicensed mobile slaughterer, as specified.

- 7) Requires the registration fee not exceed the regulatory costs of CDFA and not be more than one hundred dollars (\$100) per year.
- 8) Requires MOS to register with Bureau of Livestock Identification before MSO's began sheep, goats, and swine slaughter operations.
- 9) Allows the Secretary of CDFA to cancel the registration of a MSO for failure to comply with record keeping, as specified.
- 10) Requires a registered MSO to maintain records of every sheep, goats, and swine slaughters for two years, as specified and allow the records to be reviewed by authorized persons.
- 11) Requires every custom-exempt processor that processes sheep, goats, and swine keep specified records for two years.
- 12) Requires every producer that produced sheep, goats, and swine that are slaughtered by a MSO to maintain records of every sheep, goats, and swine slaughters for two years, as specified and allow the records to be reviewed by authorized persons.
- 13) Defines "custom-exempt processor" to mean a person or entity that, for sheep, goats, or swine belonging to someone else and slaughtered by a mobile slaughter operator, processes the carcasses and parts, for the exclusive use, in the household of that owner, by the owner, members of the owner's household, nonpaying guests, or employees.
- 14) Defines "producer" to mean a person what raised or sold the sheep, goats, or swine specified in this section.
- 15) Makes technical and conforming changes.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Provides an exemption to animal slaughter inspections for MSO who provides services to an owner of cattle, where the slaughter occurs on the premises of the person who raised the cattle.
- 2) Requires each person to be licensed before operating a meat processing establishment or a custom sheep, goats, and swine slaughterhouse and provides for the inspection of those establishments.
- 3) Exempts from licensing and inspection requirements certain persons and activities, including owners of sheep, goats, and swine who slaughter, on their own premises, sheep, goats, and swine of their own raising, as specified, and a mobile slaughter operator who provides services to that owner, where the slaughter occurs on the owner's premises and the meat is then transported for the owner to an establishment for further processing.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** Current law allows an MSO to harvest sheep, goats, or swine for an individual that also owns the property where the cattle are harvested so long as the meat is consumed solely by the owner, their family or invited guests and is not resold. Individuals seeking to purchase an animal for their own use and consumption but do not have an appropriate location to harvest the animal must currently transport the animal for slaughter to a state or federally licensed facility. This can be time consuming and a licensed facility is typically far in distance from a consumer's or producer's premises. The need to transport an animal that will be entirely consumed by the purchaser to a licensed facility to be harvested is just one additional hurdle for individuals who wish to consume locally raised meat.

AB 2114 of 2018 created the exemption for MOS pertained only to beef cattle and did not extend the same flexibility to other agricultural animals slaughtered for human consumption, including goats and sheep. While consumer meat preferences continue to change, this bill seeks to provide greater flexibility for California's sheep and goat ranchers who provide fresh, locally grown and raised products to those Californians preferring a different animal meat product.

According to the author, this bill is not a vehicle for replacing any of California's brick-and-mortar slaughter operations. COVID-19 has exposed systemic weaknesses in both California's and the nation's food supply chain. COVID-19's rate of infection and potential spread, especially in high-density industries and communities, requires new approaches. This bill is providing another, albeit limited, link in the food supply chain for individuals desiring meat from sheep and/or goats. This bill does not allow for the sale of the meat by any individual and the meat must be used exclusively for the consumption by the individual who purchased the animal for slaughter, members of the owner's family, the owner's employees or nonpaying guests.

Supporters state, this bill is a limited exception that provides greater food security, greater availability of protein and can be used in limited circumstances to avoid the potential food disruptions that may occur during the COVID-19 crisis. In order to meet the new realities being realized during this pandemic, California must innovate and do so in real-time to promote economic recovery and a strong food supply chain. This bill is a component of that needed innovation. Furthermore, this bill will help address meat-processing bottlenecks by providing more options to safely harvest limited numbers of goats, sheep, and swine on the ranch where they are raised. This builds on existing law that allows on farm slaughter for small-scale cattle producers by providing the same allowances for goats, sheep, and swine. By allowing for diversification in ranch revenue streams, this bill ensures that small ranchers can stay on the land, bringing down fuel loads and feeding families.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:****Support**

Apricot Lane Farms  
Barinaga Ranch

Bay Area Ranchers' Cooperative, INC  
California Certified Organic Farmers  
California Farm Bureau Federation  
California State Grange  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)  
Lost Coast Ranch  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
Paicines Ranch  
Roots of Change  
Spring Coyote Ranch  
18 individuals

**Opposition**

None on file

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