



Background

Small-scale poultry operations provide a way for farmers and ranchers to diversify their income and provide local food to consumers. Plumas and Sierra County poultry operations that sell retail only and meet criteria for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and California Department of Food and Agriculture (or CDFA) inspection exemptions can operate with only County Environmental Health Services oversight.

Harvest (slaughter), processing, and sale of poultry products are subject to state California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and local regulations. Poultry operations that qualify for one of the seven USDA exemptions come under the jurisdiction of the CDFA, except in two specific situations described below, where they can be exempt from state inspections.

Poultry operations that make retail sales in Plumas or Sierra County must comply the County Environmental Health (EH) retail food regulations and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Strictly wholesale operations may be eligible for exemptions from USDA daily federal inspection, but cannot be exempted from state inspections, and are not subject to EH retail food sales regulations.

Under the federal Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA), USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspects "domesticated poultry" which is defined as chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, ratites,¹ and squab. Unlike cattle, swine, sheep and goats, there are multiple exemptions from daily USDA inspections for poultry. A producer does not have to apply for a USDA exemption, but because inspection requirements, exemptions, and areas of jurisdiction are often complex, if you plan to operate under one of the USDA exemptions it may be



U.S. consumption of chicken has increased steadily and is currently the most consumed meat in the USA. In 2011, chicken consumption was 100.4 pounds per person.

~National Chicken Council~

necessary to contact the USDA office in Alameda to be certain that your operation qualifies.

Definitions

Adulterated Product contains a substance that makes it injurious to health, or if it has been held, packed or produced under unsanitary conditions. Specific definitions of circumstances that define adulteration are detailed in Title 9 Code of the Federal Regulations and is included Attachment 5 to *Guidance for Determining Whether a Poultry Slaughter or Processing Operation is Exempt from Inspection Requirements of the Poultry Products Inspection Act (Guidance)* at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/0c410cbe-9f0c-4981-86a3-a0e3e3229959/Poultry_Slaughter_Exemption_0406.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

Amenable poultry Poultry species (turkeys, chickens, ducks, geese, guinea fowl and ratites) subject to USDA regulations.

Exempt Certain types of poultry slaughter and processing operations qualify to operate without USDA inspection on a daily basis, and continuous bird-by-bird inspection, and the presence of inspectors during slaughter and processing is not required.

Misbranded This basically means mislabeled. Poultry that is shipped or distributed off of the farm must meet specific labeling requirements. If produced under an exemption, poultry products cannot bear inspection marks, but shipping packages must include specific information pertinent to the type of exemption under which it was produced.

Producer Includes only an individual producer who does not employ, except in unforeseeable exigencies, any person except members of his immediate family.

Processed and Processing These terms refer to operations in which the carcasses of slaughtered poultry are defeathered, eviscerated, cut-up, skinned, boned, canned, salted, stuffed, rendered, or otherwise manufactured or processed.

Federal – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Exemptions

There are seven different types of exemptions from requirements for daily USDA inspections. To qualify for any of these, a business must slaughter or process poultry under sanitary conditions, complying with “sanitary standards and procedures” under the following categories: sanitary operating conditions; grounds and pest control; sewage and waste disposal; water supply and water ice, and solution reuse; facilities (maintenance); dressing rooms, lavatories, and toilets; and inedible material control. These

standards and procedures are described in detail in the *Guidance*. In addition, slaughtering or processing facilities that qualify for exemptions from daily USDA inspection must produce poultry that is not adulterated or misbranded.

Exemptions from daily USDA inspection can be made for poultry that is harvested (slaughtered) and processed under the following categories:

Personal Use Exemption All poultry must be for the private use of the: grower, producers, owner; members of his or her household and his or her nonpaying guests and employees. The harvest and processing is performed by the owner. This exempt poultry is not sold or donated for use as human food.



Custom Slaughter/Processing Exemption For slaughter and processing poultry belonging to someone else.

Producer/Grower – 1,000 Limit Exemption Cannot buy or sell poultry from others; must be under sanitary conditions; other criteria specified on page 9 of the *Guidance*.

Producer/Grower – 20,000 Limit Exemption Must meet eight criteria specified on pages 10 and 11 of the *Guidance*, including meeting sanitary standards.

Producer/Grower or Other Person (PGOP) Exemption

The single entity can be a poultry grower or a person who purchases live poultry then slaughters and processes it. Poultry can be sold only directly to household consumers, restaurants, hotels, and boarding houses to be served in those homes or dining rooms for the preparation of meals sold directly to customers. Criteria and other restrictions on pages 11 through 13 of the *Guidance*.

Small Enterprise Exemption

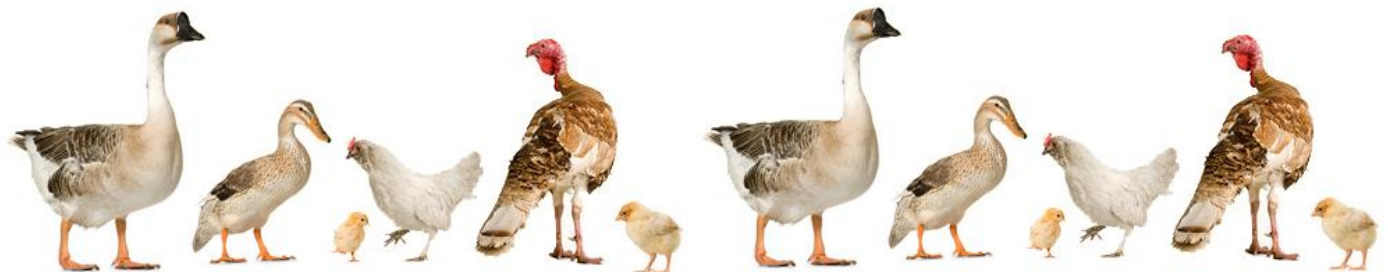
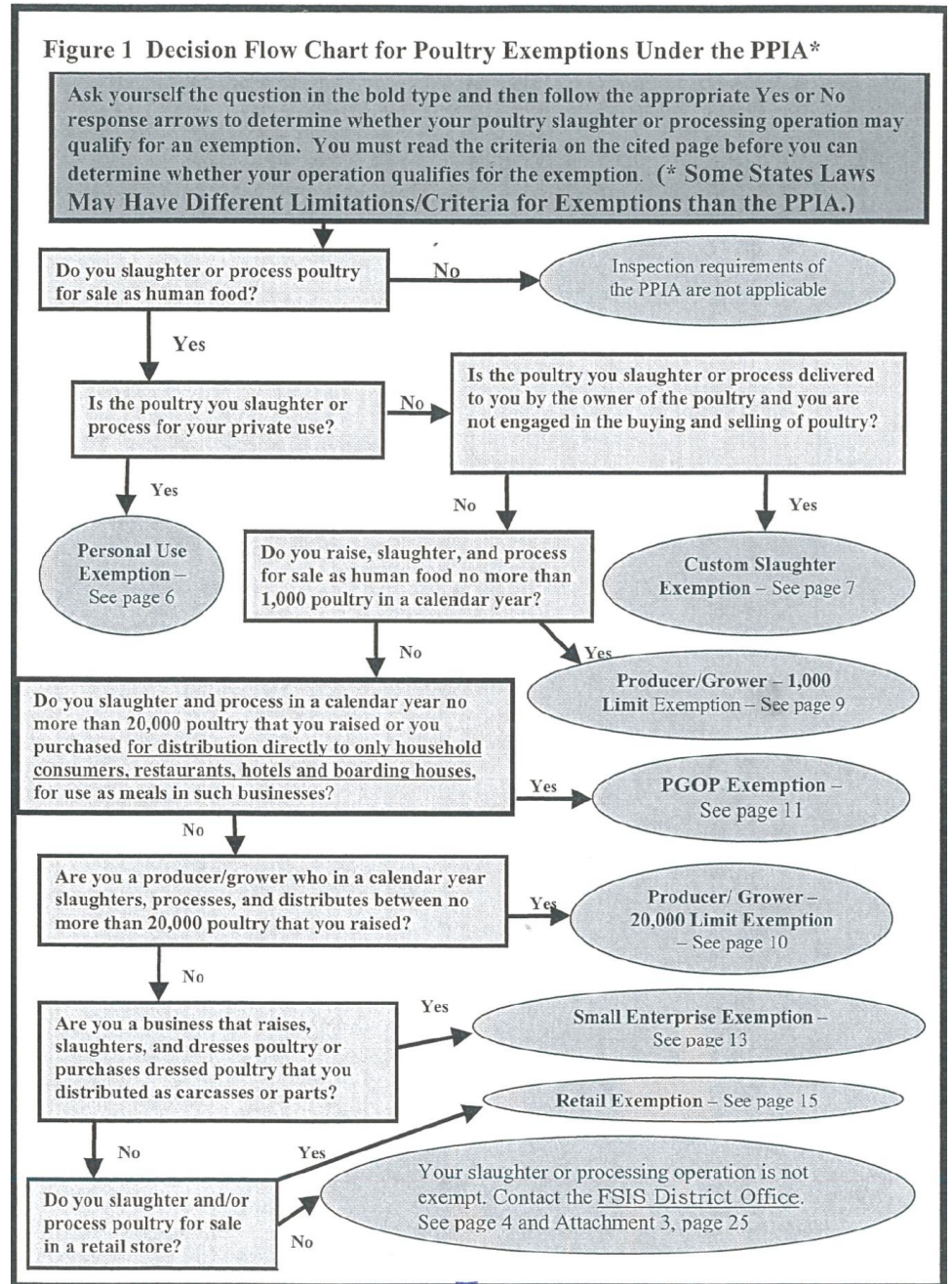
This can cover a producer/grower, a business that purchases live poultry, then slaughters and dresses it, or a business that purchases dressed poultry and distributes it.

Retail Exemption

(Store/Dealer/Restaurant)

There are actually three types of retail exemptions under this – see the *Guidance* for detailed information.

Figure 1, Decision Flow Chart for Poultry Exemptions Under the PPAI, on page 5 of the *Guidance* is helpful in determining which exemptions a poultry business may qualify for.



State - California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Exemptions

As a rule of thumb, any poultry operation that is exempt from daily USDA inspection falls under CDFA jurisdiction, except in two very specific situations:

California Food and Agriculture Code section 24713 allows exemptions from state inspection if poultry is sold directly to household consumers at the farm, at their homes, or at farmer's market stands operated by the producer. In this case, there can be no employees involved in the operation other than members of the producer's immediate family.

California Food and Agriculture Code section 24714 allows for exemptions from state inspection if the entire output of poultry from an operation is sold directly to household consumers on the same premises where they are produced and slaughtered. In this case, the poultry operation may utilize employees.

In no event can poultry produced under these exemptions be sold wholesale to restaurants, grocery stores, or middlemen, such as distributors, wholesalers, or jobbers.

Operations that meet requirements for USDA as well as either of the two CDFA exemptions do not need to be inspected on a daily basis. However, the CDFA does perform periodic reviews of exempt poultry plants for the USDA under their Cooperative Agreement.

Plumas and Sierra County Environmental Health (EH) Approvals

Plumas – If poultry has meet the requirements that allow direct sales at a farmers market a *Temporary Food Facility Permit* from Environmental Health and completion of a *Self-Certification* checklist is required.

Plumas County and Sierra County EH departments oversee below ground waste disposal and retail food sales.

Retail Facilities Retail food sales are subject to County EH regulations for operation of a retail food establishment. Poultry operations that qualify for federal and state exemptions may fall under EH inspection, as the state exemptions allow only retail sales. For more information on retail food facilities and to discuss your particular poultry operation, contact your local EH department.

Septic/Waste Disposal Poultry operations must have a properly functioning waste disposal system to handle wastewater and to comply with federal exemption requirements for "sanitary standards and procedures". Below-ground (septic) waste disposal comes under the jurisdiction of County EH Department. Existing septic systems may be adequate to handle low volumes of low-strength wash water, but septic improvements may be necessary in some cases. If the septic system was installed without County permits, it would need to be inspected, evaluated and documented by a septic engineer. There must be an adequate "fail safe" area set aside for replacement of the septic system should it malfunction. Contact local EH for septic system requirements.

If wastes are disposed of above ground the [State Regional Water Quality Control Boards](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/) (<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/>) have jurisdiction, rather than County Environmental Health.

Water Potable water is required during poultry harvest and processing and for equipment cleaning and sanitization. If the water source is a permitted public water system, then periodic water quality testing is already being done to ensure potable water. If the water source is a private well, then additional water quality testing may be required. Contact Environmental Health to determine what testing is required.

Land Use, Zoning & Planning Permits

The production, processing and sales of poultry varies in Plumas and Sierra County depending upon the land use and zoning regulations. A building permit may be required if a new building is constructed or an existing building is remodeled.

Depending on Plumas or Sierra County zoning, certain standards may apply to poultry operations, which are defined as “Livestock Operations, Small Animals (land use)” by the *Plumas or Sierra County Code*. **Check with respective County Planning Department for detailed zoning/building codes.**

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE KEEPING OF SMALL ANIMALS

(Chickens, Ducks, Exotics, Geese, Guinea Fowl, Peacocks, Rabbits, Roosters and Similar Animals)

PLUMAS COUNTY

Examples:

- Most *Single-Family Residential* and *Multiple-Family Residential* zones do not allow small animal husbandry. Only 4-H/FFA animals are permitted with a Special Use Permit (no fee required).
- Small animal husbandry (chickens, ducks, and rabbits) allowed in *residential zones* > 1-acre.
- Home businesses are allowed in all *residential zones*, subject to limitations in certain zones. Processing would be allowed in those zones that allow "home industry" subject to the issuance of a Special Use Permit.

SIERRA COUNTY

Examples:

- Raising poultry and egg production is permitted in *Rural Residential (RR) Districts* greater than 1-acre and in *Open Space (OS) Residential Districts* greater than 20-acres.

Labeling Requirements

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) – Department of Measurement Standards requires the the following on poultry packaging:

- **Identity** - Chicken
- **Responsibility** – Name, Address, Zip Code
- **Weight (pounds)**



Please note that other agencies may have different or additional labeling requirements.

Safe Handling

Safe Handling Instructions

This product was prepared from inspected and passed meat and/ or poultry. Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.



Keep refrigerated or frozen.
Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.



Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.



Cook thoroughly.



Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

Other Sources of Information

1. **California Department of Food and Agriculture, Animal Health and Food Safety Services, Meat and Poultry Inspection Branch.** This state office website has information about various aspects of meat production and links to associated organizations.
<http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/mpes/index.html>
2. **USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service** website has links to regulations regarding slaughter and processing and is useful for searching related topics.
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/>
3. **USDA District 5 Office**
620 Central Avenue, Building 2C
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 337-5000
Dr. Neal Westgerdes, District Manager
4. **[Plumas County Environmental Health](#)**
Debbie Anderson (530) 283-6355
Environmental Health Specialist
DebbieAnderson@countyofplumas.com

[Sierra County Environmental Health](#)
Elizabeth Morgan (530) 993-6701
Environmental Health Director
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5. **[Plumas County Planning Department](#)**
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With permission from the original authors Lisa Bush and Ellie Rilla who prepared the 2008 Grown in Marin factsheet Holly George & Cheree Childers modified it for Plumas-Sierra Counties, 2014.

More information about diversifying your operation is available by calling the Plumas-Sierra UCCE Farm Advisor's office at 530-283-6270 or visiting our website at <http://ucce-plumas-sierra>

¹ Ratites include emu, ostrich, and rhea