

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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**Legislative Document**

**No. 1619**

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H. P. 1339

House of Representatives, April 13, 1977

On Motion of Mr. Mahany of Easton, referred to the Committee on Agriculture. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Wood of Sanford.

Cosponsors: Mr. Spencer of Standish and Mr. Wyman of Pittsfield.

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STATE OF MAINE

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IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED  
SEVENTY-SEVEN

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**AN ACT to Promote Direct-Marketing of Agricultural Commodities.**

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Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

Sec. 1. 7 MRSA c. 101, subchapter I-A is enacted to read:

**SUBCHAPTER I-A**

**DIRECT MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES**

§ 411. Definitions

As used in this subchapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings.

1. Commissioner. "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Agriculture.

2. Direct-marketing. "Direct-marketing" means the marketing of agricultural commodities by farmers directly to consumers.

§ 412. Research and preparation of information

The commissioner shall research and prepare information designed to develop and promote direct-marketing. The commissioner shall consult with the faculty of the College of Agriculture of the University of Maine, and with the various county extension agents in compiling information under this section. The information shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Description and evaluation. A description and evaluation of the various methods of direct-marketing, such as farmers' markets, roadside stands and sales to consumer cooperative;

2. Practical information. Prepare practical information concerning the establishment and operation of various methods of direct-marketing, including promotion, advertisement, management, food stamp purchases and liability insurance;

3. Survey. A survey, by county, of the present demand for agricultural commodities to enable farmers to plan future production in closer accord with marketing demands;

4. Feasibility study. A study of the feasibility of direct-marketing to institutions, such as hospitals and schools; and

5. List of farmers. A list of the names and addresses of all Maine farmers and of the agricultural commodities which each produces.

#### § 413. Distribution

The commissioner shall develop suitable means to distribute information compiled under section 412 to all Maine farmers. If the commissioner considers the cost of distributing any research or instructional publication prohibitive, he shall, by whatever means appropriate, notify farmers of the availability of the information. Distribution may be accomplished by means currently within the Department of Agriculture.

#### § 414. Assistance

The commissioner shall assist and advise individual farmers or groups of farmers in their efforts to market more effectively directly to consumers by;

1. Soliciting participation. Informing farmers of, and soliciting their participation in, any proposed method of direct-marketing;

2. Technical assistance. Providing technical assistance in such areas as lease and contract negotiation; and

3. Referral. Referring farmers to other appropriate sources of assistance, such as the University of Maine, College of Agriculture, the county extension offices and the United States Department of Agriculture.

#### § 415. Direct-marketing consultant

The commissioner may appoint, subject to the Personnel Law, a direct-marketing consultant to assist in carrying out the purposes of this subchapter. The commissioner may appoint additional personnel as is necessary to carry out the purposes of this subchapter.

Sec. 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated to the Department of Agriculture from the General Fund for the fiscal years 1977-78 and 1978-79, the sum of \$21,000 to be used to carry out the purposes of this Act. The breakdown shall be as follows:

	1977-78	1978-79
AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF		
Personal Services	(2) \$ 2,000	(2) \$11,000
All Other	1,000	6,500
Capital Expenditures	500	
Total	\$ 3,500	\$17,500

## STATEMENT OF FACT

The intent of this bill is to develop and promote the marketing of agricultural commodities by farmers directly to consumers in a manner calculated to lower the cost to the consumer and increase the financial return to the farmer. In carrying out the intent of this bill, the Department of Agriculture compile information and provide assistance to farmers in developing direct-marketing techniques.

A larger number of small Maine farmers cannot market their produce effectively because existing markets are designed for volume sellers. This bill will provide for the development of a number of alternative direct-markets to enable small farmers to market their produce effectively.