

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1 FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
2

3 ONE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH LEGISLATURE  
4

5 Legislative Document

No. 725

6  
7 H.P. 452

House of Representatives, February 27, 1985

8 Submitted by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources  
pursuant to Joint Rule 24.

9 Speaker laid before the House and on motion of Representative Carter of  
Winslow, referred to the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.  
10 Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed. EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative Crouse of Caribou.

11 Cosponsored by Representative Lisnik of Presque Isle, Senator Erwin of  
Oxford and Representative Bragg of Sidney.

12 STATE OF MAINE  
13

14 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
15 NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIVE  
16

17 AN ACT to Initiate Agricultural Technology  
18 Transfer and Special Project Programs.  
19

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

22 7 MRSA c. 9 is enacted to read:

23 CHAPTER 9

24 AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND

25 SPECIAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

26 §321. Findings

27 1. Technology transfer needs. The Legislature  
28 finds that many new agricultural technologies have  
29 been developed in other states and countries that  
30 have not been tested or demonstrated in this State.  
31 Many of these new technologies could be applied to  
32 Maine agricultural production, storage and processing

1 systems. More rapid testing and demonstration of new  
2 technologies would improve efficiency of Maine agri-  
3 cultural production and therefore its competitive po-  
4 sition. Agriculture is a key economic activity in  
5 many parts of the State and vital to the state's ru-  
6 ral economy.

7 2. Short-term research needs. Occasionally  
8 technical problems related to production, storage or  
9 processing of agricultural commodities arise  
10 unexpectedly and must be addressed expediently if the  
11 problems are to be effectively resolved. The State  
12 must ensure that these short-term applied research  
13 needs may be met in a timely and effective manner in  
14 order to assure the well-being of its agricultural  
15 industries.

16 3. Role of the University of Maine. All agri-  
17 cultural research and demonstration activities within  
18 the State should take advantage of the technical ex-  
19 pertise resident in the land grant college system.  
20 Testing and field demonstrations of new technologies  
21 should utilize the research and educational expertise  
22 at the University of Maine.

23 4. Funding needs. The Maine Agricultural Exper-  
24 iment Station has an overriding responsibility for  
25 agricultural research in this State. The station's  
26 research program is generally guided by a long-term  
27 research agenda which reflects basic food production  
28 research needs and regional research priorities. The  
29 Cooperative Extension Service is generally responsi-  
30 ble for providing farmers with information on new ag-  
31 ricultural practices. Both the Cooperative Extension  
32 Service and the Maine Agricultural Experiment Sta-  
33 tion, because of their substantial federal funding,  
34 have relatively long-term planning and budget cycles.  
35 In both cases, additional state funds are needed for  
36 expanded technology transfer programs, including new  
37 technology testing and demonstration projects and for  
38 other short-term applied research projects.

39 §322. Technology transfer program

40 1. Program initiated. The commissioner may ini-  
41 tiate an agricultural technology transfer program to  
42 accelerate adoption of advantageous technologies by  
43 Maine producers by:

1           A. Testing new technologies to determine their  
2           suitability and adaptability to Maine agricul-  
3           ture; and

4           B. Demonstrating new technologies which are  
5           proven beneficial to Maine producers.

6           2. Program operation. The commissioner may es-  
7           tablish a challenge grant program to test and demon-  
8           strate new technologies related to the production,  
9           storage and processing of Maine agricultural commo-  
10           dities. Applications may be submitted by commodity  
11           groups, associations or individuals. Each proposed  
12           new technology testing or demonstration project shall  
13           include an appropriate role for the Maine Agricultural  
14           Experiment Station, the Cooperative Extension Ser-  
15           vice or other University of Maine personnel to assure  
16           the validity of test results and that demonstration  
17           information is appropriately distributed. Criteria  
18           for grant awards, including specific technological  
19           problems and commodities to be addressed, shall be  
20           established by rule in accordance with the Maine Ad-  
21           ministrative Procedure Act, Title 5, chapter 375 and  
22           shall be guided by the following criteria:

23           A. In the case of research on new technologies,  
24           awards shall be based on the technology's appar-  
25           ent applicability, the quality of the research  
26           design, impact of the proposed technology on re-  
27           gional agricultural needs when defined under sec-  
28           tion 314 and such other criteria as the commis-  
29           sioner may establish; and

30           B. In the case of technology demonstration  
31           projects, awards shall be based on the  
32           technology's potential economic benefit, espe-  
33           cially in terms of any regional needs or opportu-  
34           nities defined under section 314, the number of  
35           producers involved in the demonstration project,  
36           planned mechanisms for outreach and education and  
37           such other criteria as the commissioner may es-  
38           tablish.

39           3. Advisory committee. The commissioner may es-  
40           tablish a Technology Transfer Committee to evaluate  
41           technology transfer grant applications and project  
42           results and disseminate information about the bene-

1 fits of new technologies. This committee shall in-  
2 clude a representative of the cooperative extension  
3 service, the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station, a  
4 financial institution and other representatives of  
5 Maine agriculture that the commissioner may desig-  
6 nate, but the committee shall include no more than 7  
7 members.

8 §323. Special projects

9 The commissioner may contract directly with the  
10 Agricultural Experiment Station or the Maine Coopera-  
11 tive Extension Service for testing new technologies  
12 and for research on pressing, short-term technical  
13 problems related to the production, storage and pro-  
14 cessing of agricultural commodities.

15 §324. Special revenues

16 Funds contributed by commodity groups, associa-  
17 tions or individuals for special projects or for com-  
18 petitive technology transfer projects shall be depos-  
19 ited in a dedicated account which shall not lapse.  
20 Commodity groups, associations or individuals may  
21 specify that funds contributed to this account may be  
22 used to initiate projects affecting specific commodi-  
23 ties.

24 §325. Annual review

25 The commissioner, the Director of the Agricultur-  
26 al Experiment Station and the Director of the Cooper-  
27 ative Extension Service shall, on an annual basis,  
28 review the effectiveness of the programs operated un-  
29 der the provisions of this chapter in facilitating  
30 the introduction of new technologies for Maine agri-  
31 cultural operations.

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STATEMENT OF FACT

2           The continued economic viability of Maine agri-  
3 culture depends upon rapid adoption of technical in-  
4 novations in the production, storage and processing  
5 of agricultural products. Individual farmers or com-  
6 modity groups often do not have the resources to test  
7 new technologies or demonstrate a new technology's  
8 effectiveness in this State. The Cooperative Extension  
9 Service and the Agricultural Experiment Station  
10 often do not have funds to conduct field testing and  
11 field demonstrations. This bill establishes a com-  
12 petitive grant program which would encourage individ-  
13 uals and commodity groups to explore the benefits of  
14 new technologies which have been developed elsewhere  
15 and to demonstrate to Maine farmers new technologies  
16 which prove to be applicable in this State.

17           In addition, pressing technical production prob-  
18 lems occasionally arise unexpectedly and need to be  
19 addressed in a timely and expedient manner. The  
20 Maine Cooperative Extension Service and experiment  
21 station budgeting process often does not allow suffi-  
22 cient funds to respond on a short-term basis to these  
23 research needs even though those organizations are  
24 the most appropriate to deal with such problems.  
25 Current administrative procedures within State Gov-  
26 ernment inhibit direct contracting between the de-  
27 partment and the university to address these short-  
28 term problems. This bill allows the department to  
29 sole source contract with the Cooperative Extension  
30 Service or the Agricultural Experiment Station for  
31 research and testing of new technologies to meet  
32 these pressing needs in a timely fashion.

33           General Fund revenues to fund some technology  
34 testing and demonstration grants and other short-term  
35 research projects are included in the department's  
36 Part II budget. It is anticipated that this bill  
37 will encourage additional funding from the private  
38 sector for these activities.

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