

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2023 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Agriculture

CS/CS/HB 1279 — Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

by Infrastructure Strategies Committee; Agriculture, Conservation and Resiliency Subcommittee; and Rep. Alvarez and others (CS/CS/SB 1164 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; and Senator Collins)

The bill addresses various issues related to agriculture and certain powers and duties of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department). The bill:

- Creates a Farm Tax Exempt Agricultural Materials (TEAM) card for use by a farmer to claim applicable sales tax exemptions in lieu of a certificate or affidavit.
- Requires state agencies, universities, and colleges to, by 2025 or the expiration of any existing food service contract, give preference to food commodities grown or produced in the state.
- Authorizes the fee for a food permit issued by the department to be prorated.
- Amends definitions, including but not limited to “milk,” “dairy farm,” “frozen dessert,” “milk transport tank,” and “pasteurization.”
- Permits the department to collect samples for testing from all facilities engaged in the production, processing, holding, or transfer of milk and milk products.
- Removes the prohibition of a person to test for milkfat content. It also removes the prohibition for a person to repasteurize milk.
- Provides that if the estimated value of a conservation easement exceeds \$5 million, two appraisals must be conducted, and if the purchase price exceeds \$5 million, the purchase of a conservation easement must be approved by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund.
- Revises the timeframe for when the department provides written notice and renewal forms for the registration of honeybee colonies.
- Revises the department’s authority and responsibilities related to regulation and development of aquaculture.
- Revises the composition of the Aquaculture Review Council.
- Revises the composition of the Viticulture Advisory Council.
- Eliminates certain agricultural advisory councils.
- Authorizes a non-law enforcement employee of the department, for all lawful purposes within the department’s authority, to use drones.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 109-0