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States' Farm Animal Welfare Statutes: *Rhode Island*



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Rhode Island Statutes § 4-1.1-1 through 4-1.1-6

§ 4-1.1-1

Note: Effective until July 1, 2026.

Current with effective legislation through Chapter 74 of the 2022 Regular Session of the Rhode Island Legislature.

For the purposes of this chapter:

- (1) "Calf raised for veal" means a calf of the bovine species kept for the purpose of producing the food product referred to as veal.
- (2) "Crate" means a "gestation crate" for sows or a "veal crate" for calves.
- (3) "Farm" means the land, building, support facilities, and other equipment that are wholly or partially used for the commercial production of animals or animal products used for food or fiber; and does not include live animal markets.
- (4) "Farm owner or operator" means any person who owns or controls the operation of a farm, and does not include any non-management employee, contractor, or consultant.
- (5) "Fully extending the animal's limbs" means fully extending all limbs without touching the side of an enclosure.
- (6) "Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, joint venture, association, limited liability company, corporation, estate, trust, receiver, or syndicate.
- (7) "Sow during gestation" means a pregnant pig of the porcine species kept for the purpose of breeding.
- (8) "Turning around freely" means turning in a complete circle without any impediment including a tether, and without touching the side of a crate.

§ 4-1.1-2. Purpose

Note: Effective until July 1, 2026.

The purpose of this chapter, subject to exceptions set forth in § 4-1.1-4, is to prohibit the confinement of calves raised for veal and sows during gestation.

§ 4-1.1-3. Unlawful confinement



Note: Effective until July 1, 2026.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person is guilty of unlawful confinement of a sow or calf if the person is a farm owner or operator who knowingly tethers or confines any sow or calf in a manner that prevents such animal from turning around freely, lying down, standing up, or fully extending the animal's limbs.

§ 4-1.1-4. Exceptions

Note: Effective until July 1, 2026.

This chapter shall not apply:

- (1) During medical research;
- (2) Temporary confinement prior to and during examination, testing, individual treatment or operation for veterinary purposes;
- (3) During transportation;
- (4) During rodeo exhibitions, state or county fair exhibitions, 4-H programs, and similar exhibitions or educational programs;
- (5) During temporary confinement for animal husbandry purposes for no more than six (6) hours in any twenty-four-hour (24) period unless ordered by a licensed veterinarian;
- (6) During the humane slaughter of a sow or pig in accordance with the provisions of chapter 4-17, and other applicable laws and regulations;
- (7) To a sow during the fourteen-day (14) period prior to the sows expected date of giving birth and extending for a duration of time until the piglets are weaned. This period may be modified upon the order of a licensed veterinarian;
- (8) To calves being trained to exhibit; and
- (9) To calves being trained to accept routine confinement in dairy and beef housing.

<Text of section effective July 1, 2026>

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- (1) During medical research;
- (2) Temporary confinement prior to and during examination, testing, individual treatment or operation for veterinary purposes;
- (3) During transportation;
- (4) During rodeo exhibitions, state or county fair exhibitions, 4-H programs, and



similar exhibitions or educational programs;

(5) During temporary confinement for animal husbandry purposes for no more than six (6) hours in any twenty-four-hour (24) period, unless ordered by a licensed veterinarian;

(6) During the humane slaughter of a covered animal in accordance with the provisions of chapter 17 of this title, and other applicable laws and regulations;

(7) To a sow during the five-day (5) period prior to the sow's expected date of giving birth and any day that the sow is nursing piglets;

(8) To calves being trained to exhibit; and

(9) To calves being trained to accept routine confinement in dairy and beef housing.

§ 4-1.1-5. Penalty

Note: Effective until July 1, 2026.

(a) The provisions of this chapter are in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other laws protecting animal welfare. This chapter may not be construed to limit any other state laws or rules protecting the welfare of animals or to prevent a local governing body from adopting and enforcing its own animal welfare laws and regulations.

(b) It is not an affirmative defense to alleged violations of this chapter that the calf or sow was kept as part of an agricultural operation and in accordance with customary animal husbandry or farming practices.

(c) Any person who violates the provisions of this chapter or any rules or regulations promulgated hereunder shall be fined not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500), or both.

§ 4-1.1-6. Severability

If any provision of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is held invalid or unconstitutional, that invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect other provisions or applications of this chapter that can be given effect without the invalid or unconstitutional provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this chapter are declared to be severable.

