

(2) Except as otherwise provided by law, the Secretary shall appoint and remove all other personnel in accordance with the provisions of the State Personnel and Pensions Article.

(3) The Secretary may delegate the authority to appoint and remove personnel of any unit to the administrator of the unit.

(E) (1) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF §§ 15-502 THROUGH 15-504 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, AN INDIVIDUAL WHO OWNS OR OPERATES A FARM THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF THE DEPARTMENT MAY BE ~~APPOINTED AS SECRETARY OR DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OR~~ EMPLOYED WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT, IF THE INDIVIDUAL, WITH RESPECT TO THE FARM ACTIVITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S FARM, DOES NOT EXERCISE ANY REGULATORY OR SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S CAPACITY AS AN EMPLOYEE ~~OR APPOINTEE~~ OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(2) THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION, SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO GOVERN CONFLICTS OF INTEREST WITH RESPECT TO EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WHO OWN OR OPERATE A FARM UNDER THIS SUBSECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That on or before December 31, 2010, the Department of Agriculture and the State Ethics Commission shall jointly prepare and submit a report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, that includes:

(a) The number of employees hired by the Department, on or after October 1, 2007, who own or operate a farm;

(b) The positions for which the employees identified in subsection (a) of this section were hired; and

(c) Information on how the Department addressed any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest in hiring the employees identified in subsection (a) of this section.

SECTION ~~2~~ 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2007.

Approved by the Governor, May 8, 2007.