

LEGISLATIVE BILL 536

Approved by the Governor May 29, 2003

Introduced by Hudkins, 21

AN ACT relating to wines and wineries; to amend sections 53-101.02 and 53-123.11, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 53-103 and 53-304, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2002; to restate intent; to redefine a term; to change provisions relating to farm winery licenses and payments required by Nebraska wineries; and to repeal the original sections.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 53-101.02, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

53-101.02. It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage the production, use in manufacturing, and consumption of agricultural products grown within the state by providing for the existence of ~~small, local~~ farm winery operations. The Legislature recognizes that the creation of ~~small~~ farm wineries will stimulate the creation of jobs and investments in small communities, encourage the use of lands upon which grapes and other wine-related crops may be grown, and provide tax revenue which would not otherwise be realized.

Sec. 2. Section 53-103, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2002, is amended to read:

53-103. For purposes of the Nebraska Liquor Control Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) Alcohol means the product of distillation of any fermented liquid, whether rectified or diluted, whatever the origin thereof, and includes synthetic ethyl alcohol. Alcohol does not include denatured alcohol or wood alcohol;

(2) Spirits means any beverage which contains alcohol obtained by distillation, mixed with water or other substance in solution, and includes brandy, rum, whiskey, gin, or other spirituous liquors and such liquors when rectified, blended, or otherwise mixed with alcohol or other substances;

(3) Wine means any alcoholic beverage obtained by the fermentation of the natural contents of fruits or vegetables, containing sugar, including such beverages when fortified by the addition of alcohol or spirits;

(4) Beer means a beverage obtained by alcoholic fermentation of an infusion or concoction of barley or other grain, malt, and hops in water and includes, but is not limited to, beer, ale, stout, lager beer, porter, and near beer;

(5) Alcoholic liquor includes alcohol, spirits, wine, beer, and any liquid or solid, patented or not, containing alcohol, spirits, wine, or beer and capable of being consumed as a beverage by a human being. Alcoholic liquor also includes confections or candy with alcohol content of more than one-half of one percent alcohol. The act does not apply to (a) alcohol used in the manufacture of denatured alcohol produced in accordance with acts of Congress and regulations adopted and promulgated pursuant to such acts, (b) flavoring extracts, syrups, medicinal, mechanical, scientific, culinary, or toilet preparations, or food products unfit for beverage purposes, but the act applies to alcoholic liquor used in the manufacture, preparation, or compounding of such products or confections or candy that contains more than one-half of one percent alcohol, or (c) wine intended for use and used by any church or religious organization for sacramental purposes;

(6) Near beer means beer containing less than one-half of one percent of alcohol by volume;

(7) Original package means any bottle, flask, jug, can, cask, barrel, keg, hogshead, or other receptacle or container used, corked or capped, sealed, and labeled by the manufacturer of alcoholic liquor to contain and to convey any alcoholic liquor;

(8) Manufacturer means every brewer, fermenter, distiller, rectifier, winemaker, blender, processor, bottler, or person who fills or refills an original package and others engaged in brewing, fermenting, distilling, rectifying, or bottling alcoholic liquor, including a wholly owned affiliate or duly authorized agent for a manufacturer;

(9) Nonbeverage user means every manufacturer of any of the products set forth and described in subsection (4) of section 53-160, when such product contains alcoholic liquor, and all laboratories, hospitals, and sanatoria using alcoholic liquor for nonbeverage purposes;

(10) Manufacture means to distill, rectify, ferment, brew, make, mix, concoct, process, blend, bottle, or fill an original package with any alcoholic liquor and includes blending but does not include the mixing or other preparation of drinks for serving by those persons authorized and permitted in the act to serve drinks for consumption on the premises where sold;

(11) Wholesaler means a person importing or causing to be imported into the state or purchasing or causing to be purchased within the state alcoholic liquor for sale or resale to retailers licensed under the act, whether the business of the wholesaler is conducted under the terms of a franchise or any other form of an agreement with a manufacturer or manufacturers, or who has caused alcoholic liquor to be imported into the state or purchased in the state from a manufacturer or manufacturers and was licensed to conduct such a business by the commission on May 1, 1970, or has been so licensed since that date. Wholesaler does not include any retailer licensed to sell alcoholic liquor for consumption off the premises who sells alcoholic liquor other than beer or wine to another retailer pursuant to section 53-175, except that any such retailer shall obtain the required federal wholesaler's basic permit and federal wholesale liquor dealer's special tax stamp. Wholesaler includes a distributor, distributorship, and jobber;

(12) Person means any natural person, trustee, corporation, partnership, or limited liability company;

(13) Retailer means a person who sells or offers for sale alcoholic liquor for use or consumption and not for resale in any form except as provided in section 53-175;

(14) Sell at retail and sale at retail means sale for use or consumption and not for resale in any form except as provided in section 53-175;

(15) Commission means the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission;

(16) Sale means any transfer, exchange, or barter in any manner or by any means for a consideration and includes any sale made by any person, whether principal, proprietor, agent, servant, or employee;

(17) To sell means to solicit or receive an order for, to keep or expose for sale, or to keep with intent to sell;

(18) Restaurant means any public place (a) which is kept, used, maintained, advertised, and held out to the public as a place where meals are served and where meals are actually and regularly served, (b) which has no sleeping accommodations, and (c) which has adequate and sanitary kitchen and dining room equipment and capacity and a sufficient number and kind of employees to prepare, cook, and serve suitable food for its guests;

(19) Club means a corporation (a) which is organized under the laws of this state, not for pecuniary profit, solely for the promotion of some common object other than the sale or consumption of alcoholic liquor, (b) which is kept, used, and maintained by its members through the payment of annual dues, (c) which owns, hires, or leases a building or space in a building suitable and adequate for the reasonable and comfortable use and accommodation of its members and their guests, and (d) which has suitable and adequate kitchen and dining room space and equipment and a sufficient number of servants and employees for cooking, preparing, and serving food and meals for its members and their guests. The affairs and management of such club shall be conducted by a board of directors, executive committee, or similar body chosen by the members at their annual meeting, and no member, officer, agent, or employee of the club shall be paid or shall directly or indirectly receive, in the form of salary or other compensation, any profits from the distribution or sale of alcoholic liquor to the club or the members of the club or its guests introduced by members other than any salary fixed and voted at any annual meeting by the members or by the governing body of the club out of the general revenue of the club;

(20) Hotel means any building or other structure (a) which is kept, used, maintained, advertised, and held out to the public to be a place where food is actually served and consumed and sleeping accommodations are offered for adequate pay to travelers and guests, whether transient, permanent, or residential, (b) in which twenty-five or more rooms are used for the sleeping accommodations of such guests, and (c) which has one or more public dining rooms where meals are served to such guests, such sleeping accommodations and dining rooms being conducted in the same buildings in connection therewith and such building or buildings or structure or structures being provided with adequate and sanitary kitchen and dining room equipment and capacity;

(21) Nonprofit corporation means any corporation organized under the laws of this state, not for profit, which has been exempted from the payment of federal income taxes;

(22) Bottle club means an operation, whether formally organized as a club having a regular membership list, dues, officers, and meetings or not, keeping and maintaining premises where persons who have made their own purchases of alcoholic liquor congregate for the express purpose of consuming such alcoholic liquor upon the payment of a fee or other consideration, including among other services the sale of food, ice, mixes, or other fluids for alcoholic drinks and the maintenance of space for the storage of alcoholic liquor belonging to such persons and facilities for the dispensing of such liquor through a locker system, card system, or pool system, which shall not be deemed or considered a sale of alcoholic liquor. Such operation may be conducted by a club, an individual, a partnership, a limited liability company, or a corporation. An accurate and current membership list shall be maintained upon the premises which contains the names and residences of its members. This section does not prohibit the sale of alcoholic liquor for consumption on the premises to any person who is not a current member of such bottle club;

(23) Minor means any person, male or female, under twenty-one years of age, regardless of marital status;

(24) Brand means alcoholic liquor identified as the product of a specific manufacturer;

(25) Franchise or agreement, with reference to the relationship between a manufacturer and wholesaler, includes one or more of the following: (a) A commercial relationship of a definite duration or continuing indefinite duration which is not required to be in writing; (b) a relationship by which the wholesaler is granted the right to offer and sell the manufacturer's brands by the manufacturer; (c) a relationship by which the franchise, as an independent business, constitutes a component of the manufacturer's distribution system; (d) a relationship by which the operation of the wholesaler's business is substantially associated with the manufacturer's brand, advertising, or other commercial symbol designating the manufacturer; and (e) a relationship by which the operation of the wholesaler's business is substantially reliant on the manufacturer for the continued supply of beer;

(26) Territory or sales territory means the wholesaler's area of sales responsibility for the brand or brands of the manufacturer;

(27) Suspend means to cause a temporary interruption of all rights and privileges of a license;

(28) Cancel means to discontinue all rights and privileges of a license;

(29) Revoke means to permanently void and recall all rights and privileges of a license;

(30) Generic label means a label which is not protected by a registered trademark, either in whole or in part, or to which no person has acquired a right pursuant to state or federal statutory or common law;

(31) Private label means a label which the purchasing wholesaler, retailer, or bottle club licensee has protected, in whole or in part, by a trademark registration or which the purchasing wholesaler, retailer, or bottle club licensee has otherwise protected pursuant to state or federal statutory or common law;

(32) Farm winery means any enterprise which produces and sells wines produced from grapes, other fruit, or other suitable agricultural products of which at least seventy-five percent of the finished product is grown in this state;

(33) Campus, as it pertains to the southern boundary of the main campus of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, means the south right-of-way line of R Street and abandoned R Street from 10th to 17th streets;

(34) Brewpub means any restaurant or hotel which produces on its premises a maximum of ten thousand barrels of beer per year;

(35) Manager means a person appointed by a corporation to oversee the daily operation of the business licensed in Nebraska. A manager shall meet all the requirements of the act as though he or she were the applicant, except for residency and citizenship;

(36) Shipping license means a license granted pursuant to section 53-123.15;

(37) Sampling means consumption on the premises of a retail licensee of not more than five samples of one fluid ounce or less of alcoholic liquor by the same person in a twenty-four-hour period;

(38) Microbrewery means any small brewery producing a maximum of ten thousand barrels of beer per year;

(39) Craft brewery means a brewpub or a microbrewery;

(40) Local governing body means (a) the city council or village board of trustees of a city or village within which the licensed premises are located, (b) in the case of a Class D-1 license, the city council or village

board of trustees of the city or incorporated village outside whose corporate limits but within whose extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction the licensed premises is located, or (c) if the licensed premises are not licensed pursuant to a Class D-1 license and are not within the corporate limits of a city or village, the county board of the county within which the licensed premises are located; and

(41) Consume means knowingly and intentionally drinking or otherwise ingesting alcoholic liquor.

Sec. 3. Section 53-123.11, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

53-123.11. (1) A farm winery license shall entitle the holder to:

(a) Sell wines produced at the farm winery onsite at wholesale and retail and to sell wines produced at the farm winery at off-premises sites holding the appropriate retail license;

(b) Sell wines produced at the farm winery at retail for consumption on the premises;

(c) Ship wines produced at the farm winery by common carrier and sold at retail to recipients in and outside the State of Nebraska, if the output of such farm winery for each calendar year as reported to the commission by December 31 of each year does not exceed ~~fifteen~~ thirty thousand gallons. In the event such amount exceeds ~~fifteen~~ thirty thousand gallons, the farm winery shall be required to use a licensed wholesaler to distribute its wines for the following calendar year, except that this requirement shall not apply to wines produced and sold onsite at the farm winery pursuant to subdivision (1)(a) of this section; and

(d) Allow sampling of the wine at the farm winery and at one branch outlet in the state in reasonable amounts.

(2) No farm winery shall manufacture wine in excess of fifty thousand gallons per year.

Sec. 4. Section 53-304, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2002, is amended to read:

53-304. Each Nebraska winery shall pay to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission twenty dollars for every ~~ten of grapes crushed~~ sixty gallons of juice produced or received by its facility. Gifts, grants, or bequests may be received for the support of the Nebraska Grape and Winery Board. Funds paid pursuant to the charge imposed by this section and funds received from gifts, grants, or bequests shall be remitted to the State Treasurer for credit to the Winery and Grape Producers Promotional Fund which is hereby created. For administrative purposes, the fund shall be located in the Department of Agriculture. All revenue credited to the fund shall be used by the department, at the direction of and in cooperation with the board, to develop and maintain programs for the research and advancement of the growing, selling, marketing, and promotion of grapes, fruits, berries, honey, and other agricultural products and their byproducts grown and produced in Nebraska for use in the wine industry. Such expenditures may include, but are not limited to, all necessary funding for the employment of experts in the fields of viticulture and enology, as deemed necessary by the board, and programs aimed at improving the promotion of all varieties of wines, grapes, fruits, berries, honey, and other agricultural products and their byproducts grown and produced in Nebraska for use in the wine industry.

Funds credited to the fund shall be used for no other purposes than those stated in this section. Any funds not expended during a fiscal year may be maintained in the fund for distribution or expenditure during subsequent fiscal years. Any money in the fund available for investment shall be invested by the state investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska State Funds Investment Act.

Sec. 5. Original sections 53-101.02 and 53-123.11, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 53-103 and 53-304, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2002, are repealed.