Meat and Poultry Handler Requirements

Dr. Martha Styles
Unless you operate under State or Federal Inspection, you are required by law to register with the NCDA & CS, Meat and Poultry Inspection Division if you deal in meat or poultry products in or for commerce.
Requirements

- Animals have to be slaughtered and processed under State or Federal Inspection.
- Registered Meat and Poultry Handlers may not further process any meat or poultry items, which includes opening packages and handling exposed product, re-labeling product, applying a net weight, or repackaging product.
USDA vs. NCDA Meat Inspection

- NCDA and USDA inspected slaughter and processing plants follow the same regulations to ensure that meat and poultry products are wholesome and safe for human consumption.

- NCDA inspected meat and poultry products can only be sold within the State.

- USDA inspected meat and poultry products can be sold across state lines, by mail and online.
State Inspection Legend with Dimensions

[Diagram showing inspection dimensions]

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USDA Poultry Legend
“Custom Slaughter” Facility (1)

- No federal or state inspector on duty; therefore the meats from these facilities are not considered inspected meats.

- Inspected for sanitation, but the animals are not inspected for disease or other abnormalities.
“Custom Slaughter” Facility (2)

- Facility is used by people who want an animal slaughtered or processed for personal use.

- Product is labeled “Not For Sale”.

- Product cannot be sold to the general public.
On-farm Animal Slaughter & Processing (1)

- Can slaughter animals of your own raising on your farm as long as the meat is for your personal use.
- Cannot sell the meat from animals you have slaughtered on your farm.
- Allowable exemptions for slaughtering chickens and rabbits on your farm.
On-farm Animal Slaughter & Processing (2)

- Cannot sell a live animal to a customer and slaughter “their animal” on your farm.

- Cannot sell a live animal to a customer and allow customer to slaughter the animal on your farm.
Poultry/Rabbit Exemption

- For chickens/rabbits of one’s own raising:
  - May slaughter up to 1,000 per year without any inspection;
  - If slaughter more than 1,000 but less than 20,000, must do so in a facility inspected for sanitation;
  - If slaughter over 20,000, must be fully inspected by NCDA or USDA.
- Exemption also applies to Turkeys.
Questions to ask an Inspected Facility (1)

- Is facility willing to slaughter and process the animal under inspection oversight?

- Can I develop my own label? If so, How?

- How are the animals handled?

- What part of the animal do I get to keep?
Questions to ask an Inspected Facility (2)

- Can the facility label each individual package for resale?

- How are the meats packaged?

- How long do you allow a beef to age or hang?

- What is the kill fee? Packaging fee?
Proper Meat and Poultry Labeling (1)

- Each individual package must be labeled with the product name, including the species (e.g. lamb, beef, pork, etc.).
- Ingredients must be listed.
- Safe handling instructions are required to be on the package and “Keep refrigerated or Frozen” is required on the label.
Proper Meat and Poultry Labeling (2)

- Mark of inspection (NCDA or USDA)

- Net weight on each package. Cannot be applied by Meat Handler.

- Name and address of the processing plant or if the name and address are other than the producer, it must be qualified by a statement identifying the person or firm associated with the product (e.g. “Packed for __________” or Distributed by____________________.”).
Can I have the product labeled with a claim?

- Claims (Such as: raised without antibiotics, no added hormones, free range, grass feed, 100% Angus Beef, etc.) may **not** be applied to the product label **unless** approval is granted to the Inspected Establishment producing the product by the USDA Label Policy Branch in Washington, DC or the NCDA & CS, Meat and Poultry Inspection Division.
Storage of Product

- Dedicated household chest type freezers, cannot mix personal use items with inspected product.

- Approved off-site storage facilities.

- Commercial type freezers.

- Product must not be exposed to any conditions such as leaks, condensation, rodent/pest problems, poor sanitation or housekeeping, etc. that could cause adulteration of the product during storage.
Transporting Product

- Refrigerated trucks, chest type freezers or chest coolers with alternative cooling such as ice packs, dry ice or inverters.
- Freezers, coolers and transport vehicles must be clean.
- All meat and poultry products must be transported under conditions which will not lead to the adulteration of the product due to temperature abuse.
Where can I sell my product?

- Grocery stores.
- Restaurants.
- Online if USDA inspected product.
- Farmers Market.
- Outside the state if USDA inspected product.
- Farmers may sell inspected meats directly off their farm.
How can I register as a Meat & Poultry Handler?

Contact the NCDA&CS Meat and Poultry Inspection Division at 919-733-4136.
Handouts

- MPIS Notice 2-05: Meat and Poultry Handler Requirements.

- On Farm Slaughter notice.

- Inspection requirements for Meat and Poultry Businesses.