

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Egg and Cheese Guidelines

Meat and Poultry

Products that can be sold at market include meat and eggs from animals raised on the vendor's premises. All slaughter animals shall be in the vendor's immediate custody, care and direct control for the minimum period of time listed below. In addition to following state and federal laws, vendors must comply with market rules and guidelines pertaining to the sale of meat at the market.

Rabbits: All rabbits sold must be bred on the farm or held for at least one year

Poultry: Meat poultry must be purchased by seller by 2 weeks of age or be held for at least one year.

Egg layers: Layers must be purchased by 8 weeks of age.

Livestock: Livestock must be purchased at weaning or held for at least one year.

Sellers must keep on file both receipts of purchase, or birth log, and slaughter of livestock and poultry. Upon inspection seller must be able to produce receipts.

All meats sold at market must be processed in a NCDA/USDA inspected facility. However, exceptions will be made by the market on a case-by-case basis for poultry slaughtered on farm as per NCDA rules, which currently allow farmers to process and sell without inspection up to 20,000 total poultry they have raised themselves in a calendar year. If more than 20,000 chickens and/or turkeys are processed the NCDA must inspect the facilities for sanitation. Anyone applying to sell farm-slaughtered poultry at market must submit to a farm inspection of their facilities by market management to ensure meat is processed in a safe, sanitary and wholesome manner.

Any vendor selling meat or dairy products regulated by the NCDA and/or USDA are responsible for satisfying any regulatory requirements before selling that product. Meat sellers must have a meat handler's license obtained from the NCDA Division of Meat and Poultry. Vendors must file a copy of NCDA Form MP-2 (Registration of Poultry and Meat Handlers) with the market manager and keep a copy of this license with them at all times while selling at the market. Vendors must inform the market of any change in licensing status immediately.

Meat products may be sold fresh or frozen. If items are frozen, they must remain frozen at the point of sale. If sold fresh, cooler must have a thermometer and be maintained at 42 degrees or below.

Product labels must include product name, statement of ingredients, inspection legend applied by the processor, net weight, farm name and address and a safe handling statement applied by the processor. Meat handlers may not open packages, re-label products, repackage products or apply net weights. No water or ice that comes in contact with meat may be deposited or allowed to drain onto the market premises.

No cooked or preserved meats may be sold except those processed in a USDA inspected facility.

No animals may be sold or given away at the market

Value Added Meat Products:

Value-added meat products are created when meat is processed into other products. Examples include sausages and hot dogs.

Value added meat product allowed for sale at the farmers market are made from raw ingredients which, by law, are processed by and in an inspected facility, usually not owned by the farmer.

With the exception of spices and casings, farmer vendors must raise 100% of the raw ingredients in a value added meat product.

Non-Farm produced value added meat products are made wholly or partly from ingredients not grown and produced by the vendor. These products will be allowed for sale, as long as they are made primarily with locally raised ingredients. The sale of these products must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the market's board of directors.

Fish

Wild, fresh caught salt water fish from North Carolina controlled waters sold at the market by the fisherman/waterman who caught them is the only exception to the market's 50-mile radius local-only rule. Fish landed in North Carolina will be allowed for sale in order to make a high quality, in-demand North Carolina product available to market customers. As it applies to fish, local only shall mean fish caught in US waters off the coast of North Carolina. The waterman's fishing operation and vessels will be inspected, just like any other grower's operation is inspected, before the market's board of directors makes a decision on an application for market membership. The following stipulations apply:

Fish allowed for sale must be fresh caught by a small-scale, licensed commercial waterman using sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.

The seller's home port must be in North Carolina and he or she must be the original producer (in this case, fisherman) and must have a valid North Carolina commercial fishing license, fish dealer license and the appropriate federal fisheries permits from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Fish must be eviscerated before sale and must be held at 41 degrees or below after being caught and before sale at the market and must never be frozen. Fish may be sold whole or filleted.

Eggs

Farmers who sell eggs must adhere to the North Carolina Egg Law, which addresses labeling, standards, grading, sanitation, and marketing. Eggs that are for sale must be clean and placed in clean cartons. Anyone selling more than 30 dozen eggs per week must grade the eggs and label cartons with the grade. The farmer's name and address must be included on the cartons and any incorrect information on the cartons should be crossed through.

Cheese

Cheese vendors must comply with state dairy ordinances. Cheese sellers must have proper certification and the producer must supply the market manager with documentation of such compliance. Farmstead cheese must be made on the seller's premises and must include milk from animals raised by the seller. Cheeses must be kept properly chilled on the market premises.

Cheese made with milk that does not come from the seller's animals is allowed under Value Added Dairy Products rules. It must be made with milk sourced from small North Carolina family farms and sellers must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the market's board of directors.

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