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State Meat Inspection Laws:

North Carolina



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A National Agricultural Law Center Research Publication
State Meat Inspection Laws: North Carolina

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The statutes and Constitution are current through the end of the 2019 Regular Session of the General Assembly, subject to changes made pursuant to direction of the Revisor of Statutes.

§ 106-549.15. Definitions

As used in this Article, except as otherwise specified, the following terms shall have the meanings stated below:

(1) “Adulterated” shall apply to any carcass, part thereof, meat or meat food product under one or more of the following circumstances:

a. If it bears or contains any poisonous or deleterious substance which may render it injurious to health; but in case the substance is not an added substance, such article shall not be considered adulterated under this clause if the quantity of such substance in or on such article does not ordinarily render it injurious to health;

b. 1. If it bears or contains (by reason of administration of any substance to the live animal or otherwise) any added poisonous or added deleterious substance (other than one which is (i) a pesticide chemical in or on a raw agricultural commodity; (ii) a food additive; or (iii) a color additive) which may, in the judgment of the Commissioner, make such article unfit for human food;

2. If it is, in whole or in part, a raw agricultural commodity and such commodity bears or contains a pesticide chemical which is unsafe within the meaning of section 408 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act;
3. If it bears or contains any food additive which is unsafe within the meaning of section 409 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act;
4. If it bears or contains any color additive which is unsafe within the meaning of section 721 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act: Provided, that an article which is not adulterated under clause 2, 3, or 4 shall nevertheless be deemed adulterated if use of the pesticide chemical, food additive or color additive in or on such article is prohibited by order of the Commissioner in establishments at which inspection is maintained under this Article;
- c. If it consists in whole or in part of any filthy, putrid, or decomposed substance or is for any other reason unsound, unhealthful, unwholesome, or otherwise unfit for human food;
- d. If it has been prepared, packed, or held under insanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated with filth, or whereby it may have been rendered injurious to health;
- e. If it is, in whole or in part, the product of an animal which has died otherwise than by slaughter;
- f. If its container is composed, in whole or in part, of any poisonous or deleterious substance which may render the contents injurious to health;
- g. If it has been intentionally subjected to radiation, unless the use of the radiation was in conformity with a regulation or exemption in effect pursuant to section 409 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act;
- h. If any valuable constituent has been in whole or in part omitted or abstracted therefrom; or if any substance has been substituted, wholly or in part therefor; or if damage or inferiority has been concealed in any manner; or if any substance has been added thereto or mixed or packed therewith so as to increase its bulk or weight, or reduce its quality or strength, or make it appear better or of greater value than it is; or
- i. If it is margarine containing animal fat and any of the raw material used therein consist in whole or in part of any filthy, putrid, or decomposed substance.

(2) "Animal food manufacturer" means any person, firm, or corporation engaged in the business of manufacturing or processing animal food derived wholly or in part from carcasses, or parts or products of the carcasses, of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equines.

(3) "Authorized representative" means the Director of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

(4) "Board" means the North Carolina Board of Agriculture.

(5) "Capable of use as human food" shall apply to any carcass, or part or product of a carcass, of any animal, unless it is denatured or otherwise identified as required by regulations prescribed by the Board to deter its use as human food, or it is naturally inedible by humans.

(6) "Commissioner" means the North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture or his authorized representative.

(7) "Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act" means the act so entitled, approved June 25, 1938 (52 Stat. 1040), and acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto.

(8) "Federal Meat Inspection Act" means the act so entitled approved March 4, 1907 (34 Stat. 1260), as amended by the Wholesome Meat Act (81 Stat. 584).

(9) "Firm" means any partnership, association, or other unincorporated business organization.

(10) "Intrastate commerce" means commerce within this State.

(11) "Label" means a display of written, printed, or graphic matter upon the immediate container (not including package liners) of any article.

(12) "Labeling" means all labels and other written, printed, or graphic matter (i) upon any article or any of its containers or wrappers, or (ii) accompanying such article.

(13) "Meat broker" means any person, firm, corporation engaged in the business of buying or selling carcasses, parts of carcasses, meat, or meat food products of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, bison, horses, mules, or other equines on commission, or otherwise negotiating purchases or sales of such articles other than for his own account or as an employee of another person, firm, or corporation.

(14) "Meat food product" means any product capable of use as human food that is made wholly or in part from any meat or other portion of the carcass of any cattle, sheep, swine, goats, bison, fallow deer, or red deer, excepting products that contain meat or other portions of such carcasses only in a relatively small proportion or historically have not been considered by consumers as products of the meat food industry, and that are exempted from definition as a meat food product by the Board under such conditions as it may prescribe to assure that the meat or other portions of such carcasses contained in such product are not adulterated and that such products are not represented as meat food products. This term as applied to food products of equines shall have a meaning comparable to that provided in this subdivision with respect to cattle, sheep, swine, goats, and bison.

(15) "Misbranded" shall apply to any carcass, part thereof, meat or meat food product under one or more of the following circumstances:

a. If its labeling is false or misleading in any particular;

b. If it is offered for sale under the name of another food;

c. If it is imitation of another food, unless its label bears, in type of uniform size and prominence, the word "imitation" and immediately thereafter, the name of the food imitated;

d. If its container is so made, formed, or filled as to be misleading;

e. If in a package or other container unless it bears a label showing (i) the name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor; and (ii) an accurate statement of the quantity of the contents in terms of weight, measure, or numerical count; provided, that under clause (ii) of this paragraph e, reasonable variations may be permitted, and exemptions as to small packages may be established, by regulations prescribed by the Board;

f. If any word, statement, or other information required by or under authority of this or the subsequent Article to appear on the label or other labeling is not prominently placed thereon with such conspicuousness (as compared with other words, statements, designs, or devices, in the labeling) and in such terms as to render it likely to be read and understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use;

g. If it purports to be or is represented as a food for which a definition and standard of identity or composition has been prescribed by regulations of the Board under G.S. 106-549.21 unless (i) it conforms to such definition and standard, and (ii) its label bears the name of the food specified in the definition and standard and, insofar as may be required by such regulations, the common names of optional ingredients (other than spices, flavoring, and coloring) present in such food;

h. If it purports to be or is represented as a food for which a standard or standards of fill of container have been prescribed by regulations of the Board under G.S. 106-549.21, and it falls below the standard of fill of container applicable thereto, unless its label bears, in such manner and form as such regulations specify, a statement that it falls below such standard;

i. If it is not subject to the provisions of paragraph g, unless its label bears (i) the common or usual name of the food, if any there be, and (ii) in case it is fabricated from two or more ingredients, the common or usual name of each such ingredient; except that spices, flavorings, and colorings may, when authorized by the Commissioner, be designated as spices, flavorings, and colorings without naming each: Provided, that, to the extent that compliance with the requirements of clause (ii) of this paragraph i is impracticable, or results in deception or unfair competition, exemptions shall be established by regulations promulgated by the Board;

j. If it purports to be or is represented for special dietary uses, unless its label bears such information concerning its vitamin, mineral, and other dietary properties as the Board determines to be, and by regulations prescribes as, necessary in order fully to inform purchasers as to its value for such uses;

k. If it bears or contains any artificial flavoring, artificial coloring, or chemical preservatives, unless it bears labeling stating that fact: Provided, that, to the extent that compliance with the requirements of this paragraph k is impracticable, exemptions shall be established by regulations promulgated by the Board; or

l. If it fails to bear, directly thereon or on its container, as the Board may by regulations prescribe, the inspection legend and, unrestricted by any of the foregoing, such other information as the Board may require in such regulations to assure that it will not have false or misleading labeling and that the public will be informed of the manner of handling required to maintain the article in a wholesome condition.

(16) "Official certificate" means any certificate prescribed by regulations of the Board for issuance by an inspector or other person performing official functions under this or the subsequent Article.

(17) "Official device" means any device prescribed or authorized by the Board for use in applying any official mark.

(18) "Official inspection legend" means any symbol prescribed by regulations of the Board showing that an article was inspected and passed in accordance with this or the subsequent Article.

(19) "Official mark" means the official inspection legend or any other symbol prescribed by regulations of the Board to identify the status of any article or animal under this or the subsequent Article.

(20) "Pesticide chemical," "food additive," "color additive," and "raw agricultural commodity" shall have the same meanings for purposes of this Article as under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

(21) "Prepared" means slaughtered, canned, salted, smoked, rendered, boned, cut up, or otherwise manufactured or processed.

(21a) "Ratite" means a bird whose breastbone is smooth so that flight muscles cannot attach, such as an ostrich, an emu, and a rhea. These birds are subject to the provisions of this Article and Article 49C to the same extent as any other meat food product.

(22) "Renderer" means any person, firm, or corporation engaged in the business of rendering carcasses, or parts or products of the carcasses, of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, horses, mules, or other equines, except rendering conducted under inspection under this Article.

§ 106-549.16. Statement of purpose

Meat and meat food products are an important source of the nation's total supply of food. It is essential in the public interest that the health and welfare of consumers be protected by assuring that meat and meat food products distributed to them are wholesome, not adulterated, and properly marked, labeled, and packaged. Unwholesome, adulterated, or misbranded meat or meat food products are injurious to the public welfare, destroy markets for wholesome, not adulterated, and properly labeled and packaged meat and meat food products, and results in sundry losses to livestock producers and processors of meat and meat food products, as well as injury to consumers. The unwholesome, adulterated, mislabeled, or deceptively packaged articles can be sold at lower prices and compete unfairly with the wholesome, not adulterated, and properly labeled and packaged articles, to the detriment of consumers and the public generally. It is hereby found that regulation by the Board and cooperation by North Carolina and the United States as contemplated by this and the subsequent Article are appropriate to protect the health and welfare of consumers and otherwise effectuate the purposes of this and the subsequent Article.

§ 106-549.17. Inspection of animals before slaughter; humane methods of slaughtering

(a) For the purpose of preventing the use in intrastate commerce, as hereinafter provided, of meat and meat food products which are adulterated, the Commissioner shall cause to be made, by inspectors appointed for that purpose, an examination and inspection of all cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, and other equines before they shall be allowed to enter into any slaughtering, packing, meat-canning, rendering, or similar establishment in this State in which slaughtering and preparation of meat and meat food products of such animals are conducted for intrastate commerce; and all cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, and other equines found on such inspection to show symptoms of disease shall be set apart and slaughtered separately from all other cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, or other equines, and when so slaughtered, the carcasses of said cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, or other equines shall be subject to a careful examination and inspection, all as provided by the rules and regulations to be prescribed by the Board as herein provided for.

(b) For the purpose of preventing the inhumane slaughtering of livestock, the Commissioner shall cause to be made, by inspectors appointed for that purpose, an examination and inspection of the method by which cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, and other equines are slaughtered and handled in connection with slaughter in the slaughtering establishments inspected under this law. The Commissioner may refuse to provide inspection to a new slaughtering establishment or may cause inspection to be temporarily suspended at a slaughtering establishment if the Commissioner finds that any cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, or other equines have been slaughtered or handled in connection with slaughter at such establishment by any method not in accordance with subsection (c) of this section until the establishment furnishes assurances satisfactory to the Commissioner that all slaughtering and handling in connection with slaughter of livestock shall be in accordance with such a method.

(c) Either of the following two methods of slaughtering of livestock and handling of livestock in connection with slaughter are found to be humane:

(1) In the case of cattle, calves, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, sheep, swine, and other livestock, all animals are rendered insensible to pain by a single blow or gunshot or an electrical, chemical, or other means that is rapid and effective, before being shackled, hoisted, thrown, cast, or cut; or

(2) By slaughtering in accordance with the ritual requirements of the Jewish faith or any other religious faith that prescribes a method of slaughter whereby the animal suffers loss of consciousness by anemia of the brain caused by the simultaneous and instantaneous severance of the carotid arteries with a sharp instrument and handling in connection with such slaughtering.

§ 106-549.18. Inspection; stamping carcass

For the purposes hereinbefore set forth the Commissioner shall cause to be made by inspectors appointed for that purpose, as hereinafter provided, a post mortem examination and inspection of the carcasses and parts thereof of all cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, and other equines, capable of use as human food, to be prepared at any slaughtering, meat-canning, salting, packing, rendering, or similar establishment in this State in which such articles are prepared for intrastate commerce; and the carcasses and parts thereof of all such animals found to be not adulterated shall be marked, stamped, tagged, or labeled, as "Inspected and Passed"; and said inspectors shall label, mark, stamp, or tag as "Inspected and Condemned," all carcasses and parts thereof of animals found to be adulterated; and all carcasses and parts thereof thus inspected and condemned shall be destroyed for food purposes by the said establishment in the presence of an inspector, and the Commissioner or his authorized representative may remove inspectors from any such establishment which fails to so destroy any such condemned carcass or part thereof, and said inspectors, after said first inspection shall, when they deem it necessary, reinspect said carcasses or parts thereof to determine whether since the first inspection the same have become adulterated and if any carcass or any part thereof shall, upon examination and inspection subsequent to the first examination and inspection, be found to be adulterated, it shall be destroyed for food purposes by the said establishment in the presence of an inspector, and the Commissioner or his authorized representative may remove inspectors from any establishment which fails to so destroy any such condemned carcass or part thereof.

§ 106-549.19. Application of Article; place of inspection

The foregoing provisions shall apply to all carcasses or parts of carcasses of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, and other equines or the meat or meat products thereof, capable of use as human food, which may be brought into any slaughtering, meat-canning, salting, packing, rendering, or similar establishment, where inspection under this Article is maintained, and such examination and inspection shall be had before the said carcasses or parts thereof shall be allowed to enter into any department wherein the same are to be treated and prepared for meat food products; and the foregoing provisions shall also apply to all such products which, after having been issued from any such slaughtering, meat-canning, salting, packing, rendering, or similar establishment, shall be returned to the same or to any similar establishment where such inspection is maintained. The Commissioner or his authorized representative may limit the entry of carcasses, part of carcasses, meat and meat food products, and other materials into any establishment at which inspection under this Article is maintained, under such conditions as he may prescribe to assure that allowing the entry of such articles into such inspected establishments will be consistent with the purposes of this and the subsequent Article.

§ 106-549.20. Inspectors' access to businesses

For the purposes hereinbefore set forth the Commissioner or his authorized representative shall cause to be made by inspectors appointed for that purpose an examination and inspection of all meat food products prepared in any slaughtering, meat-canning, salting, packing, rendering, or similar establishment, where such articles are prepared for intrastate commerce and for the purposes of any examination and inspection said inspectors shall have access at all times during regular business hours to every part of said establishment; and said inspectors shall mark, stamp, tag, or label as "North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Inspected and Passed" all such products found to be not adulterated; and said inspectors shall label, mark, stamp, or tag as "North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Inspected and Condemned" all such products found adulterated, and all such condemned meat food products shall be destroyed for food purposes, as hereinbefore provided, and the Commissioner or his authorized representative may remove inspectors from any establishment which fails to so destroy such condemned meat food products.

§ 106-549.21. Stamping container or covering; regulation of container

(a) When any meat or meat food product prepared for intrastate commerce which has been inspected as hereinbefore provided and marked "North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Inspected and Passed" shall be placed or packed in any can, pot, tin, canvas, or other receptacle or covering in any establishment where inspection under the provisions of this Article is maintained, the person, firm, or corporation preparing said product shall cause a label to be attached to said can, pot, tin, canvas, or other receptacle or covering, under supervision of an inspector, which label shall state that the contents thereof have been "North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Inspected and Passed" under the provisions of this Article, and no inspection and examination of meat or meat food products deposited or inclosed in cans, tins, pots, canvas, or other receptacle or covering in any establishment where inspection under the provisions of this Article is maintained shall be deemed to be complete until such meat or meat food products have been sealed or inclosed in said can, tin, pot, canvas, or other receptacle or covering under the supervision of an inspector.

(b) All carcasses, parts of carcasses, meat and meat food products inspected at any establishment under the authority of this Article and found to be not adulterated shall at the time they leave the establishment bear, in distinctly legible form, directly thereon or on their containers, as the Commissioner or authorized representative may require, the information required under subdivision (15) of G.S. 106-549.15.

(c) The Board whenever it determines such action is necessary for the protection of the public, may prescribe:

(1) The styles and sizes of type to be used with respect to material required to be incorporated in labeling to avoid false or misleading labeling of any articles or animals subject to this and the subsequent Article;

(2) Definitions and standards of identity or composition for articles subject to this Article and standards of fill of container for such articles not inconsistent with any such standards established under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, or under the Federal Meat Inspection Act, and there shall be consultation between the Commissioner or his authorized representative and the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States prior to the issuance of such standards to avoid inconsistency between such standards and the federal standards.

(d) No article subject to this Article shall be sold or offered for sale by any person, firm, or corporation, in intrastate commerce, under any name or other marking or labeling which is false or misleading, or in any container of a misleading form or size, but established trade names and other marking and labeling and containers which are not false or misleading, and which are approved by the Commissioner or the Commissioner's authorized representative, are permitted.

(e) If the Commissioner or the Commissioner's authorized representative has reason to believe that any marking or labeling or the size or form of any container in use or proposed for use with respect to any article subject to this Article is false or misleading in any particular, the Commissioner or the authorized representative may direct that this use be withheld unless the marking, labeling, or container is modified in such a manner as the Commissioner or the authorized representative prescribes so that it will not be false or misleading. If the person, firm, or corporation using or proposing to use the marking, labeling or container does not accept the determination of the Commissioner or the Commissioner's authorized representative, the person, firm, or corporation may request a hearing, but the use of the marking, labeling, or container shall, if the Commissioner so directs, be withheld pending hearing and final determination by the Commissioner. A person who uses or proposes to use the marking, labeling, or container and who does not accept the determination of the Commissioner may commence a contested case under G.S. 150B-23. If directed by the Commissioner, the marking, labeling, or container may not be used pending a final decision.

§ 106-549.22. Rules and regulations of Board

The Commissioner or his authorized representative shall cause to be made, by experts in sanitation, or by other competent inspectors, such inspection of all slaughtering, meat-canning, salting, packing, rendering, or similar establishments in which cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, and other equines are slaughtered and the meat and meat food products thereof are prepared for intrastate commerce as may be necessary to inform himself concerning the sanitary conditions of the same, and the Board shall prescribe the rules and regulations of sanitation under which such establishments shall be maintained; and where the sanitary conditions of any such establishment are such that the meat or meat food products are rendered adulterated, the Commissioner or his authorized representative shall refuse to allow said meat or meat food products to be labeled, marked, stamped, or tagged as "North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Inspected and Passed."

§ 106-549.23. Prohibited slaughter, sale and transportation

No person, firm, or corporation shall, with respect to any cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, or other equines, or any carcasses, parts of carcasses, meat or meat food products of any such animals:

(1) Slaughter any of these animals or prepare any of these articles which are capable of use as human food, at any establishment preparing any such articles for intrastate commerce except in compliance with the requirements of this and the subsequent Article;

(2) Slaughter, or handle in connection with slaughter, any such animals in any manner not in accordance with G.S. 106-549.17(c) of this Article;

(3) Sell, transport, offer for sale or transportation, or receive for transportation, in intrastate commerce:

a. Any of these articles which (i) are capable of use as human food and (ii) are adulterated or misbranded at the time of sale, transportation, offer for sale or transportation, or receipt for transportation; or

b. Any articles required to be inspected under this Article unless they have been so inspected and passed; or

(4) Do, with respect to any of these articles which are capable of use as human food, any act while they are being transported in intrastate commerce or held for sale after such transportation, which is intended to cause or has the effect of causing the articles to be adulterated or misbranded.

§ 106-549.24. Prohibited acts regarding certificate

(a) No brand manufacturer, printer, or other person, firm, or corporation shall cast, print, lithograph, or otherwise make any device containing any official mark or simulation thereof, or any label bearing any such mark or simulation, or any form of official certificate or simulation thereof, except as authorized by the Commissioner or his authorized representative.

(b) No person, firm, or corporation shall

(1) Forge any official device, mark or certificate;

(2) Without authorization from the Commissioner or his authorized representative use any official device, mark, or certificate, or simulation thereof, or alter, detach, deface, or destroy any official device, mark, or certificate;

(3) Contrary to the regulations prescribed by the Board, fail to use, or to detach, deface, or destroy any official device, mark, or certificate;

(4) Knowingly possess, without promptly notifying the Commissioner or his authorized representative, any official device or any counterfeit, simulated, forged, or improperly altered official certificate or any device or label or any carcass of any animal, or part or product thereof, bearing any counterfeit, simulated, forged, or improperly altered official mark;

(5) Knowingly make any false statement in any shipper's certificate or other nonofficial or official certificate provided for in the regulations prescribed by the Board;

(6) Knowingly represent that any article has been inspected and passed, or exempted, under this Article when, in fact, it has, respectively, not been so inspected and passed, or exempted.

§ 106-549.25. Slaughter, sale and transportation of equine carcasses

No person, firm, or corporation shall sell, transport, offer for sale or transportation, or receive for transportation, in intrastate commerce, any carcasses of horses, mules, or other equines or parts of such carcasses, or the meat or meat food products thereof, unless they are plainly and conspicuously marked or labeled or otherwise identified as required by regulations prescribed by the Board to show the kinds of animals from which they were derived. When required by the Commissioner or his authorized representative, with respect to establishments at which inspection is maintained under this Article, such animals and their carcasses, parts thereof, meat and meat food products shall be prepared in establishments separate from those in which cattle, sheep, swine, fallow deer, red deer, bison, or goats are slaughtered or their carcasses, parts thereof, meats or meat food products are prepared.

§ 106-549.26. Inspection of establishment; bribery of or malfeasance of inspector

The Commissioner or his authorized representative shall appoint from time to time inspectors to make examination and inspection of all cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, and other equines the inspection of which is hereby provided for, and of all carcasses and parts thereof, and of all meats and meat food products thereof, and of the sanitary conditions of all establishments in which such meat and meat food products hereinbefore described are prepared; and said inspectors shall refuse to stamp, mark, tag or label any carcass or any part thereof, or meat food product therefrom, prepared in any establishment hereinbefore mentioned, until the same shall have actually been inspected and found to be not adulterated; and shall perform such other duties as are provided by this and the subsequent Article and by the rules and regulations to be prescribed by said

Board and said Board shall, from time to time, make such rules and regulations as are necessary for the efficient execution of the provisions of this and the subsequent Article, and all inspections and examinations made under this Article shall be such and made in such manner as described in the rules and regulations prescribed by said Board not inconsistent with the provisions of this Article and as directed by the Commissioner or his authorized representative. Any person, firm, or corporation, or any agent or employee of any person, firm, or corporation, who shall give, pay, or offer, directly or indirectly, to any inspector, or any other officer or employee of this State authorized to perform any of the duties prescribed by this and the subsequent Article or by the rules and regulations of the Board or by the Commissioner or his authorized representative any money or other thing of value, with intent to influence said inspector, or other officer or employee of this State in the discharge of any duty herein provided for, shall be deemed guilty of a Class I felony which may include a fine not less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) nor more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000); and any inspector, or other officer or employee of this State authorized to perform any of the duties prescribed by this Article who shall accept any money, gift, or other thing of value from any person, firm, or corporation, or officers, agents, or employees thereof, given with intent to influence his official action, or who shall receive or accept from any person, firm, or corporation engaged in intrastate commerce any gift, money, or other thing of value given with any purpose or intent whatsoever, shall be deemed guilty of a Class I felony and shall, upon conviction thereof, be summarily discharged from office and may be punished by a fine not less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) nor more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

§ 106-549.27. Exemptions from Article

(a) The provisions of this Article requiring inspection of the slaughter of animals and the preparation of the carcasses, parts thereof, meat and meat food products at establishments conducting such operations shall not

(1) Apply to the slaughtering by any person of animals of his own raising, and the preparation by him and transportation in intrastate commerce of the carcasses, parts thereof, meat and meat food products of such animals exclusively for use by him and members of his household and his nonpaying guests and employees; nor

(2) To the custom slaughter by any person, firm, or corporation of cattle, sheep, swine, fallow deer, red deer, bison, or goats delivered by the owner thereof for such slaughter, and the preparation by such slaughterer and transportation in intrastate commerce of the carcasses, parts thereof, meat and meat food products of such animals, exclusively for use, in the household of such owner, by him, and members of his household and his nonpaying guests and employees: Provided, that all carcasses, parts thereof, meat and meat food products derived from custom slaughter shall be identified as required by the Commissioner, during all phases of slaughtering, chilling, cooling, freezing, packing, meat canning, rendering, preparation, storage and transportation; provided further, that the custom slaughterer does not engage in the business of buying or selling any carcasses, parts thereof, meat or meat food products of any cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, or equines, capable of use as human food, unless the carcasses, parts thereof, meat or meat food products have been inspected and passed and are identified as having been inspected and passed by the Commissioner or the United States Department of Agriculture.

(b) The provisions of this Article requiring inspection of the slaughter of animals and the preparation of carcasses, parts thereof, meat and meat food products shall not apply to operations of types traditionally and usually conducted at retail stores and restaurants, when conducted at any retail store or restaurant or similar retail-type establishment for sale in normal retail quantities or service of such articles to consumers at such establishments. Meat food products coming under this subsection may be stored, processed, or prepared at any freezer locker plant provided such meat food products are identified and kept separate and apart from other meat food products bearing the official mark of inspection while in the freezer locker plant.

(c) In order to accomplish the objectives of this Article, the Commissioner shall exempt any other operations which the Commissioner shall determine would best be exempted to further the purposes of this Article, to the extent such exemptions conform to the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the regulations thereunder.

(d) The slaughter of animals and preparation of articles referred to in paragraphs (a)(2) and (b) of this section shall be conducted in accordance with such sanitary conditions as the Board may by regulations prescribe. Willful violation of any such regulation is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(e) The adulteration and misbranding provisions of this title, other than the requirement of the inspection legend, shall apply to articles which are not required to be inspected under this section.

§ 106-549.28. Regulation of storage of meat

The Board may by regulations prescribe conditions under which carcasses, parts of carcasses, meat, and meat food products of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, fallow deer, red deer, bison, horses, mules, or other equines, capable of use as human food, shall be stored or otherwise handled by any person, firm, or corporation engaged in the business of buying, selling, freezing, storing, or transporting, in or for intrastate commerce, such articles, whenever the Board deems such action necessary to assure that such articles will not be adulterated or misbranded when delivered to the consumer. Willful violation of any such regulation is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

§ 106-549.29. North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services responsible for cooperation

(a) The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is hereby designated as the State agency which shall be responsible for cooperating with the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States under the provisions of section 301 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and such agency is directed to cooperate with the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States in developing and administering the meat inspection program of this State under this and the previous Article in such a manner as will effectuate the purposes of this and the previous Article.

(b) In such cooperative efforts, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is authorized to accept from said Secretary advisory assistance in planning and otherwise developing the State program, technical and laboratory assistance and training (including necessary curricular and instructional materials and equipment), and financial and other aid for administration of such a program.

(c) The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is further authorized to recommend to the said Secretary of Agriculture such officials or employees of this State as the Commissioner shall designate, for appointment to the advisory committees provided for in Section 301 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act; and the Commissioner or his authorized representative shall serve as the representative of the Governor for consultation with said Secretary under paragraph (c) of Section 301 of said act.

§ 106-549.30. Refusal of Commissioner to inspect and certify meat

The Commissioner may (for such period, or indefinitely, as he deems necessary to effectuate the purposes of this and the previous Article) refuse to provide, or withdraw, inspection service under Article 49B with respect to any establishment if he determines, after opportunity for a hearing is accorded to the applicant for, or recipient of, such service, that such applicant or recipient is unfit to engage in any business requiring inspection under Article 49B because the applicant or recipient, or

anyone responsibly connected with the applicant or recipient, has been convicted, in any federal or state court, of (i) any felony, or (ii) more than one violation of any law, other than a felony, based upon the acquiring, handling, or distributing of unwholesome, mislabeled, or deceptively packaged food or upon fraud in connection with transactions in food. This section shall not affect in any way other provisions of this or the previous Article for withdrawal of inspection services under Article 49B from establishments failing to maintain sanitary conditions or to destroy condemned carcasses, parts, meat or meat food products.

For the purpose of this section a person shall be deemed to be responsibly connected with the business if he was a partner, officer, director, holder, or owner of ten per centum (10%) or more of its voting stock or employee in a managerial or executive capacity. The determination and order of the Commissioner with respect thereto under this section shall be final and conclusive unless the affected applicant for, or recipient of, inspection service files application for judicial review within 30 days after the effective date of such order in the appropriate court as provided in G.S. 106-549.33.

§ 106-549.31. Enforcement against uninspected meat

Whenever any carcass, part of a carcass, meat or meat food product of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equines, or any product exempted from the definition of a meat food product, or any dead, dying, disabled, or diseased cattle, sheep, swine, goat, or equine is found by any inspector of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services upon any premises where it is held for purposes of, or during or after distribution in intrastate commerce, and there is reason to believe that any such article is adulterated or misbranded and is capable of use as human food, or that it has not been inspected, in violation of the provisions of Article 49B or of the Federal Meat Inspection Act or the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, or that such article or animal has been or is intended to be distributed in violation of any such provisions, it may be detained by such inspector, upon approval of his supervisor, for a period not to exceed 20 days, pending action under G.S. 106-549.33, and shall not be moved by any person, firm, or corporation from the place at which it is located when so detained, until released by the area supervisor of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service. All official marks may be required by such inspector to be removed from such article or animal before it is released unless it appears to the satisfaction of the area supervisor that the article or animal is eligible to retain such marks.

§ 106-549.32. Enforcement against condemned meat; appeal

(a) Any carcass, part of a carcass, meat or meat food product of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules or other equines, or any dead, dying, disabled, or diseased cattle, sheep, swine, goat, or equine, that is being transported in intrastate commerce, or is held for sale in this State after such transportation, and that (i) is or has been prepared, sold, transported or otherwise distributed or offered or received for distribution in violation of this or the previous Article, or (ii) is capable of use as human food and is adulterated or misbranded, or (iii) in any other way is in violation of this or the previous Article, shall be liable to be proceeded against and seized and condemned, at any time, on a complaint in any proper court as provided in G.S. 106-549.33 within the jurisdiction of which the article or animal is found. If the article or animal is condemned it shall, after entry of the order be disposed of by destruction or sale as the court may direct and the proceeds, if sold, less the court costs and fees, and storage and other proper expenses, shall be paid into the general fund of this State, but the article or animals shall not be sold contrary to the provisions of this or the previous Article. Provided, that upon

the execution and delivery of a good and sufficient bond conditioned that the article or animal shall not be sold or otherwise disposed of contrary to the provisions of this or the previous Article, the court may direct that such article or animal be delivered to the owner thereof subject to such supervision by the authorized representative of the Commissioner as is necessary to insure compliance with the applicable laws. When an order of condemnation is entered against the article or animal and it is released under bond, or destroyed, court costs and fees, and storage and other proper expenses shall be awarded against the person, if any, intervening as claimant of the article or animal. The proceedings in such cases shall be heard by the superior court without a jury, with the right of the aggrieved party to appeal to the Court of Appeals, and all such proceedings shall be at the suit of and in the name of this State. No appeal shall lie from the Court of Appeals.

(b) The provisions of this section shall in no way derogate from authority for condemnation or seizure conferred by other provisions of this or the previous Article, or other laws.

§ 106-549.33. Jurisdiction of superior court

The superior court is vested with jurisdiction specifically to enforce, and to prevent and restrain violations of this and the previous Article, and shall have jurisdiction in all other kinds of cases arising under this and the previous Article, provided however, all prosecutions for criminal violations under this and the previous Article shall be in any court having jurisdiction over said violation.

§ 106-549.34. Interference with inspector

Any person who willfully assaults, resists, opposes, impedes, intimidates, or interferes with any person while engaged in or on account of the performance of his official duties under this or the previous Article shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. For the purposes of this section, "impede," "oppose," and "intimidate," or "interfere" shall include, but not be limited to, the use of profane and indecent language, or any act or gesture, verbal or nonverbal, which tends to cast disrespect on an inspector or the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service. Whoever, in the commission of any such acts, uses a deadly weapon, shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

§ 106-549.35. Punishment for violation

(a) Any person, firm, or corporation who violates any provision of this or the previous Article or any regulation of the Board for which no other criminal penalty is provided by this or the previous Article is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor; but if such violation involves intent to defraud, or any distribution or attempted distribution of an article that is adulterated (except as defined in G.S. 106-549.15(1)h, such person, firm or corporation is guilty of a Class H felony which may include a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). Provided, that no person, firm, or corporation shall be subject to penalties under this section for receiving for transportation any article or animal in violation of this or the previous Article if such receipt was made in good faith, unless such person, firm, or corporation refuses to furnish on request of a representative of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service the name and

address of the person from whom he received such article or animal, and copies of all documents, if any there be, pertaining to the delivery of the article or animal to him.

(b) Nothing in this Article shall be construed as requiring the Commissioner or his authorized representative to report for prosecution or for the institution of condemnation or injunction proceedings, minor violations of this Article whenever he believes that the public interest will be adequately served by a suitable written notice of warning.

(c) The Commissioner may assess a civil penalty of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) against any person who violates a provision of this Article or Article 49B, or any rule promulgated thereunder. In determining the amount of the penalty, the Commissioner shall consider the degree and extent of harm caused by the violation.

The clear proceeds of civil penalties assessed pursuant to this subsection shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

§ 106-549.36. Gathering information; reports required; use of subpoena

(a) The Commissioner shall also have power--

(1) To gather and compile information concerning and, to investigate from time to time the organization, business, conduct, practices, and management of any person, firm, or corporation engaged in intrastate commerce, and the relation thereof to other persons, firms, or corporations;

(2) To require, by general or special orders, persons, firms, and corporations engaged in intrastate commerce, or any class of them, or any of them to file with the Commissioner, in such form as the Commissioner may prescribe, annual or special, or both annual and special, reports or answers in writing to specific questions, furnishing to the Commissioner such information as he may require as to the organization, business, conduct, practices, management, and relation to other persons, firms, and corporations, of the person, firm, or corporation filing such reports or answers in writing. Such reports and answers shall be made under oath, or otherwise, as the Commissioner may prescribe, and shall be filed with the Commissioner within such reasonable period as the Commissioner may prescribe, unless additional time be granted in any case by the Commissioner.

(b) For the purposes of this and the previous Article the Commissioner shall at all reasonable times have access to, for the purpose of examination, and the right to copy any documentary evidence of any person, firm, or corporation being investigated or proceeded against, and may require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of all documentary evidence of any person, firm, or corporation relating to any matter under investigation. The Commissioner may sign subpoenas and may administer oaths and affirmations, examine witnesses, and receive evidence.

(1) Such attendance of witnesses, and the production of such documentary evidence, may be required at any designated place of hearing. In case of disobedience to a subpoena the Commissioner may

invoke the aid of any court designated in G.S. 106-549.33 in requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of documentary evidence.

(2) Any of the courts designated in G.S. 106-549.33 within the jurisdiction of which such inquiry is carried on may, in case of contumacy or refusal to obey a subpoena issued to any person, firm, or corporation, issue an order requiring such person, firm, or corporation, to appear before the Commissioner or to produce documentary evidence if so ordered, or to give evidence touching the matter in question; and any failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by such court as a contempt thereof.

(3) Upon the application of the Attorney General of this State at the request of the Commissioner, the superior court shall have jurisdiction to issue writs of mandamus commanding any person, firm, or corporation to comply with the provisions of this or the previous Article or any order of the Commissioner made in pursuance thereof.

(4) The Commissioner may order testimony to be taken by deposition in any proceeding or investigation pending under this Article at any stage of such proceeding or investigation. Such depositions may be taken before any person designated by the Commissioner and having power to administer oaths. Such testimony shall be reduced to writing by the person taking the deposition, or under his direction and shall then be subscribed by the deponent. Any person may be compelled to appear and depose and to produce documentary evidence in the same manner as witnesses may be compelled to appear and testify and produce documentary evidence before the Commissioner as hereinbefore provided.

(5) Witnesses summoned before the Commissioner shall be paid the same fees and mileage that are paid witnesses in the courts of this State, and witnesses whose depositions are taken and the persons taking the same shall severally be entitled to the same fees as are paid for like services in such courts.

(6) No person, firm, or corporation shall be excused from attending and testifying or from producing books, papers, schedules of charges, contracts, agreements, or other documentary evidence before the Commissioner or in obedience to the subpoena of the Commissioner whether such subpoena be signed or issued by him or his delegate, or in any cause or proceedings, criminal or otherwise, based upon or growing out of any alleged violation of this or the previous Article, or of any amendments thereto, on the ground or for the reason that the testimony or evidence, documentary or otherwise, required of him or it may tend to incriminate him or it or subject him or it to a penalty or forfeiture; but no person shall be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on account of any transaction, matter, or thing concerning which he is compelled, after having claimed his privilege against self-incrimination, to testify or produce evidence, documentary or otherwise, except that any person so testifying shall not be exempt from prosecution and punishment for perjury committed in so testifying.

(c) Any person, firm, or corporation that shall neglect or refuse to attend and testify or to answer any lawful inquiry, or to produce documentary evidence, if in his or its power to do so, in obedience to the subpoena or lawful requirement of the Commissioner shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(1) Any person, firm, or corporation that shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry or statement of fact in any report required to be made under this Article, or that shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry in any account, record, or memorandum kept by any person, firm, or

corporation subject to this Article or that shall willfully neglect or fail to make, or to cause to be made, full, true, and correct entries in such accounts, records, or memoranda, of all facts and transactions appertaining to the business of such person, firm, or corporation, or that shall willfully remove out of the jurisdiction of this State, or willfully mutilate, alter, or by any other means falsify any documentary evidence of any such person, firm, or corporation or that shall willfully refuse to submit to the Commissioner or to any of his authorized agents, for the purpose of inspection and taking copies, any documentary evidence of any such person, firm, or corporation in his possession or within his control, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

(2) If any person, firm, or corporation required by this Article to file any annual or special report shall fail so to do within the time fixed by the Commissioner for filing the same, and such failure shall continue for 30 days after notice of such default, such person, firm, or corporation shall forfeit to this State the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each and every day of the continuance of such failure, which forfeiture shall be payable into the general fund of this State, and shall be recoverable in a civil suit in the name of the State brought in the superior court where the person, firm, or corporation has his or its principal office or in Wake County. It shall be the duty of the Attorney General of this State, to prosecute for the recovery of such forfeitures. The costs and expenses of such prosecution shall be paid out of the amount recovered in such action.

(3) Any officer or employee of this State who shall make public any information obtained by the Commissioner without his authority, unless directed by a court, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

§ 106-549.37. Jurisdiction coterminous with federal law

The requirements of this Article shall apply to persons, firms, corporation establishments, animals, and articles regulated under the Federal Meat Inspection Act only to the extent provided for in section 408 of said federal act.

§ 106-549.38. Rules and regulations of State Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

All rules and regulations of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services not inconsistent with the provisions of this Article shall remain in full force and effect until amended or repealed by the Board.

§ 106-549.39. Hours of inspection; overtime work; fees

(a) Overtime Fees.--The Commissioner is not required to furnish meat inspection services during the following times unless the establishment under inspection pays the Department for the services:

(1) More than eight hours in a day.

(2) More than 40 hours in a calendar week.

(3) On a Sunday.

(4) On a legal holiday.

The Commissioner may establish a fee at an hourly rate to be paid by an establishment inspected during the times listed above. The fee shall be credited to the Department as a departmental receipt and applied to the cost of inspecting the establishment.

(b) Inspection Fees.--The Commissioner may establish a fee at an hourly rate to be paid by an establishment preparing an animal listed in this subsection as a meat food product. The fee shall be credited to the Department as a departmental receipt and applied to the cost of inspecting these animals to be used for food. The animals whose inspection is subject to the fee imposed under this subsection are:

(1) Bison.

(2) Repealed by S.L. 2009-102, § 1, eff. June 15, 2009.