



Steven W. Troxler
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
Meat and Poultry Inspection Division

Joseph W. Reardon
Assistant Commissioner
for Consumer Protection

Dr. Beth Yongue
Director

November 13, 2019

CERTIFIED MAIL/RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Brian Blankenship
Claymore d.b.a. Hobe's Country Ham
1601 Industrial Drive
Wilkesboro, NC 28697

NOTICE OF WARNING

We have an investigative case report showing that you violated the North Carolina Compulsory Meat Inspection Law. This reported violation was discussed with you on September 25, 2019. Specifically, our investigation revealed that you had processed, stored and transported misbranded meat products (bins of country hams) to Merchant's Distributors, Inc., 5005 Alex Blvd., Hickory, NC 28601 for the sole purpose of storage, that were processed under the benefit of Federal (USDA) inspection but failed to place the USDA mark of inspection (Est. # 6699A) on the product. In a statement dated September 25, 2019, you stated that you processed, stored, transported misbranded meat products to a distributorship for the sole purpose of storage for approximately two (2) years.

Please be advised that the sale of misbranded and/or non-inspected meat products and the sale of misbranded and/or non-inspected poultry products is a violation of North Carolina General Statute (N.C.G.S.) §106-549.23 and §106-549.56 with civil and/or criminal penalties. Please be advised that you will not receive any further warning with regard to this violation. If you should continue to sell misbranded and/or non-inspected meat and poultry products, we will pursue legal action against you to invoke the penalties associated with these continued violations. I certainly hope this expensive action will not be necessary. An officer from this department will visit you periodically to verify compliance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Beth Yongue
State Director

cc: Mr. Joe Reardon, Assistant Commissioner
Ms. Tina Hlabse, General Counsel
Mr. Chris McLennan, Assistant Attorney General