NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND CONSUMER SERVICES
MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION DIVISION
Raleigh, North Carolina

Steve Troxler, Commissioner

MPID NOTICE	**11-25**	**7-2-2025**

LABELING AND POINT OF PURCHASE CLAIMS

I. PURPOSE

This document provides guidance for Inspected Establishments and Registered Meat and Poultry Handlers wanting to make labeling claims. Claims made on product labels and on printed materials displayed at the point of purchase must comply with State and Federal regulations so that consumers are not misled and meat and/or poultry products are not misrepresented.

II. REFERENCES

USDA, FSIS Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book
USDA, FSIS Labeling Policy Information
9 CFR 317.8, 9 CFR 381.129
North Carolina General Statutes §106-549.15 (12) and (15), §106-549.51 (16) and (17)
FSIS Directive 7221.1
FSIS Compliance Guideline for Label Approval

III. CANCELLATION

MPID Notice 6-21 dated 9-7-21

IV. BACKGROUND

North Carolina General Statute §106-549.15 (12) defines labeling as "all labels and other written, printed, or graphic matter (i) upon any article or any of its contents or wrappers or (ii) accompanying such article." Furthermore, any meat or meat food product is considered misbranded per North Carolina General Statute §106-549.15 (15) "if its labeling is false or misleading in any particular." Identical verbiage concerning poultry products is outlined in North Carolina General Statute §106-549.51 (16) and (17). These statutes require that the immediate wrapper of a meat and/or poultry product be properly labeled and that any other printed material at the point of sale be truthful and not misleading to the consumer. A list of required label features can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 Required Labeling Features

Feature	Reference	Location	Applies to
Product Name	9 CFR 317.2(c)(1) or 381.117	Principal display panel	All products
Inspection Legend	9 CFR 317.2(c)(5) or 381.123	Principal display panel	All products
Handling Statement (e.g., “Keep Frozen”)	9 CFR 317.2(k) or 381.125(a)	Principal display panel	Products requiring special handling to maintain wholesomeness
Net Weight Statement	9 CFR 317.2(h) or 381.121	Principal display panel	Product sold at retail, unless the net weight is applied at retail
Ingredients Statement*	9 CFR 317.2(f) or 381.118	Information panel or Principal display panel	Products with multiple ingredients
Address Line	9 CFR 317.2(g) or 381.112	Information panel or Principal display panel	All products
Nutrition Facts Panel	9 CFR 317.300 or 381.400	Information panel or Principal display panel	Products not exempted by 9 CFR 317.400 or 381.500
Safe Handling Instructions	9 CFR 317.2(l) or 381.125(b)	Any panel	Products with a not-ready-to-eat meat or poultry component

V. CLAIMS

Any printed or graphic informational materials (e.g. pamphlets, brochures, posters, etc.) that accompany or are applied to products or to any of their containers or wrappers at the point of purchase are deemed labeling as are any claims contained on such material. While point of purchase materials are not subject to specific prior approval, they must be in compliance with State and Federal regulations and all current labeling policies.

Claims related to nutrition must be made in accordance with all current nutrition labeling regulations (9 CFR 317.300-400 for meat products and 9 CFR 381.400-500 for poultry products) even if the product would otherwise be exempt per 9 CFR 317.400 and 9 CFR 381.500.

Some claims on labels are required to have approval prior to applying the label to the product. FSIS Guideline for Label Approval provides a detailed list of those that may or may not require approval. Additionally, support for animal raising claims requirements can be found in FSIS Guideline on Substantiating Animal-Raising or Environment-Related Labeling Claims.

Commonly approved claims:

- Raised Without Added Hormones
- Raised Without Antibiotics
- Not Fed Animal By-Products
- Free Range
- Free Roaming
- Grass Fed
- Corn Fed
- Grain Fed
- Certified Organic (By Certifying Entity)

Claims which cannot be approved on product labels or displayed on point of purchase materials:

- Antibiotic Free
- Hormone Free
- Residue Free
- Residue Tested
- Naturally Raised
- Naturally Grown
- Drug Free
- Chemical Free

NOTE: Hormones are only approved for use in beef cattle, swine, and lamb production. They are not approved for use in poultry, goats, veal calves, mature sheep or exotic, non-amenable species. Therefore, the phrase "no hormones administered" on a chicken label cannot be approved unless it is directly followed by the statement “There are no hormones approved for use in poultry by Federal Regulations."

VI. APPROVAL PROCESS

For products slaughtered and processed in facilities under Federal Inspection, an establishment may submit any label, marking or sketch directly to USDA-FSIS Labeling and Program Delivery Staff (LPDS) in Washington, D.C. for approval. For each label or sketch submitted, the establishment should complete an FSIS Form 7234-1 “Application for Approval of Labeling, Marking, or Device,” in duplicate. Include a label, marking or sketch and all claim-supporting documentation with each copy of the application. Then:

- enter the request into the FSIS Label Submission and Approval System (LSAS), (preferred method)
- mail the hard copies directly to LPDS from an establishment, or
- submit to LPDS from a central labeling office (as may be the case in large companies with several establishments located throughout the country)

Questions about necessary documentation for supporting claims in Federal establishments may be directed to:

USDA, FSIS, OPPD, LPDS
Labeling Distribution Unit
Stop Code 3786, Patriots Plaza III, 8-168
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700
Phone: 301-504-0878

For products slaughtered and processed in facilities under State Inspection, an establishment may submit any label, marking or sketch using MPID Form 11 "Labeling Approval Form," along with claim-supporting documentation to the NCDA&CS, Meat and Poultry Inspection Division in Raleigh, NC, through their in-plant inspector.

Questions about necessary documentation for supporting claims in State establishments may be directed to:

NCDA&CS Meat and Poultry Inspection Division
1001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1001
Phone: 919-707-3180

Dr. Karen Beck
State Director

DISTRIBUTION:	**SUBJECT CATEGORY:**
MPID Personnel; Registered Meat and Poultry Handlers; State and Talmadge-Aiken Inspected Establishments	Compliance