



USDA Food Safety Inspection Service Nutrition Labeling Compliance Guidelines for NC Meat Handlers and Meat Processors

What is the Nutritional Labeling Law?

The Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, recently issued a nutrition labeling rule that applies to the sale of single ingredient, raw meat and poultry products. The official rule, known as the Nutrition Labeling of Single-Ingredient Products and Ground or Chopped Meat and Poultry Products, was made effective March 1, 2012. The rule applies to anyone who is selling and/or producing (as a final product) MAJOR CUTS¹ of SINGLE INGREDIENT, RAW meat and poultry products for sale to customers. The rule requires *either* that nutrition labeling be placed on the packaging of major cuts by an inspected

processor or retailer that deals with further processing OR that nutrition information be supplied at point of purchase (POP). POP materials (e.g., signs, posters, or pamphlets) can be provided by an inspected processor, retailer, Meat Handler, or any person selling whole major cuts directly to consumers. This rule does NOT apply to “non-major” cuts. Examples of non-major cuts include beef flank steak, beef ribs, and chicken tenders and whole raw cuts that are not listed under major cuts. In addition, all GROUND or CHOPPED meat and poultry products must have nutritional labels on the package. Unlike raw “major” cuts, use of point of pur-

chase nutritional labeling materials is NOT considered sufficient for ground or chopped products. However, this ground or chopped regulation does NOT apply to businesses, including farmers, who operate as registered meat handlers since they are not permitted to alter the finished product. Furthermore, most meat processors and retail shops will qualify for an exemption from the nutrition labeling requirements for ground or chopped products if they are considered a small business (see below).

Also, the final rule requires that if labels on “whole major cuts” and ground or chopped products claim a lean package

statement, such as 70% lean or 85% lean, they must also include a percentage of its fat content on the label.²

Attention Meat Handlers: If you are selling major cuts of raw beef, pork, lamb, poultry, goat or other meat products directly to consumers, then you need to post point of purchase (POP) materials at your place of sale, unless your processor has included nutritional labels on each individual product you sell. Follow this link to download an example poster to display nutrition information at point of purchase (http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_and_Policies/Nutrition_Labeling/index.asp).

Exemptions

The following products are not considered raw, single-ingredient major cuts according to this rule and thus are exempt from the nutrition labeling requirement.

- Products intended for further processing
- Products that are not for sale directly to consumers (e.g. sold to hotels, restaurants, and institutions)
- Products in small packages that are individually wrapped and of less than ½ ounce net weight
- Products that are custom slaughtered or prepared and labeled as “not for sale”
- Products intended for export

Please note that these products are NOT exempt if they contain nutrition claims on the labels (e.g., “lean” or “reduced fat”).

NC Choices promotes the advancement of local and niche meat supply chains in North Carolina through networking, educational programming and technical assistance for producers, processors and buyers.

<http://ncchoices.com/>, <http://www.carolinameatconference.com/>

For the full USDA Nutritional Label text, visit <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/RDAD/FRPubs/2005-0018F.pdf>



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Exemptions Continued...

The following exemptions exist for ground or chopped products:

- A small business exemption would apply to an inspected processing business if it meets the following small business criteria: Fewer than 500 employees AND produces less than 100,000 lbs. of a ground or chopped item per year.
- Products that are ground or chopped at an individual customer's request and that are prepared and served at retail. (For example: a full service meat counter, where none of the meat is packaged until a customer selects the ground product or product to be chopped and then it is weighed and wrapped for the customer does not have to comply with the nutritional labeling. However, a full service meat counter that sells the major cuts of single-ingredient, raw meat and poultry products is not exempt from the nutrition labeling final rule and will need to provide point-of-purchase materials for the "major cuts" it sells.)
- Ground or chopped products in packages that are less than 12 square inches, including an address or telephone number on the label.
- A small exempt businesses that uses statements of percent fat and percent lean on a ground product (e.g., 90% Lean/10%Fat) is exempt from a nutritional label as long as they include no other nutrition claims (e.g., good source of iron, high in protein, or no sugar added) or nutrition information on the product.

Please note these exemptions do not apply if nutrition claims appear on the labels (e.g., "lean" or "reduced fat").

Attention Inspected Processors/Small Plants: If your business employs fewer than 500 people AND you sell less than 100,000 pounds of ground product per year, then you do not need to include nutrition labeling on your ground product (unless you make nutrition-related claims³).

¹ "Major Cuts" are defined in §§ 317.344 and 381.444: **Meat:** beef chuck blade roast, beef loin top loin steak, beef rib roast large end, beef round eye round steak, beef round top round steak, beef round trip roast, beef chuck arm pot roast, beef loin sirloin steak, beef round bottom round steak, beef brisket, beef rib steak small, beef loin tenderloin steak, pork loin chop, pork loin country style ribs, pork loin top loin chop boneless, pork loin rib chop, pork spareribs, pork loin tenderloin, pork loin sirloin roast, pork shoulder blade steak, pork loin top roast boneless, lamb shank, lamb shoulder arm chop, lamb shoulder blade chop, lamb rib roast, lamb loin chop, lamb leg, veal shoulder blade steak, veal rib roast, veal loin chop, and veal cutlets. **Poultry:** Whole chicken, chicken breast, chicken wing, chicken drumstick, chicken thigh, whole turkey, turkey breast, turkey wing, turkey drumstick, and turkey thigh.

² The statement of fat percentage must be contiguous to, in lettering of the same color, size, and type as, and on the same color background as, the statement of lean percentage.

³ If a small businesses produced ground or chopped product and included a statement of lean percentage and fat percentage on the product's label, the small business would have been required to include nutrition information on the product label. More information can be found at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/RDAD/FRPubs/2005-0018F.pdf> pg.82150 .