

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Columbus County

North Carolina · Whiteville · FIPS 37047 · Population 50,827 ·
Crosodo Index #2801*

STATE BASELINE	STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
02 NCAC 9C.0307	Good	—	MEDIUM	2026-05-05

IMPORTANT — NOT LEGAL ADVICE

This report compiles publicly-available statutes, regulations, and county zoning rules into a research reference. It is **not legal advice** and is provided **without warranty** as to accuracy, completeness, or current applicability.

Cottage food law changes frequently. Counties may amend zoning, health departments may issue new permits, and state legislatures may update statutes after the publication date shown above.

Always verify rules directly with your state department of health/agriculture and your county health and planning offices before relying on them for any business or regulatory decision. Consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation.

How to start — 60-second path

Columbus County, North Carolina — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Conditional

STATE SALES CAP

—

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Conditional

INSPECTION

Yes

PETS

Pets absolutely prohibited in the home at any time — presence of any indoor pet disqualifies the applicant.

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under North Carolina cottage food rules (county cannot expand a state ban).
- ☐ **2. Pickup & zoning** — Home occupation and porch pickup cells above; HOA/lease may still block customer traffic.
- ☐ **3. Local tax / license** — Business license or sales tax certificate if your city/parish requires it (common even with no state food permit).
- ☐ **4. Training** — Food handler or state registration before market day.
- ☐ **5. Labels** — Disclaimer, allergens, ingredients, net quantity, producer info.
- ☐ **6. Call if unclear** — County health and planning for your exact address.

LABEL FIELDS TO INCLUDE

- ☐ Product name · producer name · address (or allowed alternative)
- ☐ Ingredients by weight · major allergens · net weight/quantity
- ☐ North Carolina home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)

[North Carolina label one-pager →](#)

[Local notes & questions →](#)

Planning path only — not legal advice. Rules change. Always verify with state and local offices before selling.

NORTH CAROLINA: COLUMBUS COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2801* · FIPS 37047 · Whiteville

Columbus County

Population 50,827 · State baseline: 02 NCAC 9C.0307 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Conditional (Home kitchen must pass NCDA&CS inspection before production begins. No pets allowed in home at any time. Kitchen must meet 21 CFR 117 Subpart B (GMP) standards. Only shelf-stable, non-refrigerated products allowed. Must verify with Columbus County planning that food business is permitted at property. Garage, basement, or separate building kitchens not allowed under home processor program.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Pets absolutely prohibited in the home at any time — presence of any indoor pet disqualifies the applicant.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Applicants must verify with Columbus County planning department that operating a food business is permitted at the property. County-level permit requirements vary.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Conditional

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Initial inspection required before production. NCDA&CS Food Regulatory Specialist contacts applicant within 2 weeks of application. Annual re-inspection applies.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Conditional — Home kitchen must pass NCDA&CS inspection before production begins. No pets allowed in home at any time. Kitchen must meet 21 CFR 117 Subpart B (GMP) standards. Only shelf-stable, non-refrigerated products allowed. Must verify with Columbus County planning that food business is permitted at property. Garage, basement, or separate building kitchens not allowed under home processor program.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

Pets absolutely prohibited in the home at any time — presence of any indoor pet disqualifies the applicant.

WATER SUPPLY

Public water: attach current bill. Well/non-public water: must have water tested for coliforms within one year of application.

HANDWASHING

Running water at suitable temperature and pressure required. Standard household sinks acceptable.

FOOD STORAGE

Only shelf-stable products; no refrigerated products permitted.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED

Yes — Initial inspection required before production. NCDA&CS Food Regulatory Specialist contacts applicant within 2 weeks of application. Annual re-inspection applies.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT

Conditional — Applicants must verify with Columbus County planning department that operating a food business is permitted at the property. County-level permit requirements vary.

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE

Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Products may be sold directly to consumers at retail stores, restaurants, and farmers markets, or via direct-to-consumer delivery. No explicit state-level delivery restrictions.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified in state home processor rules; county zoning may impose limits.

Relevant county code

NC Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act; 21 CFR 117 Subpart B; 02 NCAC 9C.0307

RESEARCH NOTES

North Carolina home processor program requires annual kitchen inspection and prohibits pets. Columbus County is a rural southeastern NC county. No Columbus County-specific cottage food ordinances found. Must check with Columbus County planning to confirm home food business is permitted at the property.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.columbuscounty.gov>

<https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/food-drug-protection/food-program/food-drug-food-program-home-processor>

<https://www.ncagr.gov/food-drug/fdpd-home-processing-app-pdf/download?attachment=>

Questions about this county? Local notes and a place to leave a question: crosodo.com/nb/north-carolina/columbus-county-discuss

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Columbus County	Pender County	Robeson County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Conditional	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Pets absolutely prohibited in the home at any time — presence of any indoor pet disqualifies the applicant.	No pets allowed in the home at all — presence of pet animals in the home disqualifies the applicant under GMP requirements (21 CFR 117 Subp...	Pets anywhere in the home disqualify the applicant for a home processor permit. This is a complete pet prohibition, not limited to producti...
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional	Conditional	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Products may be sold directly to consumers at retail stores, restaurants, and farmers markets, or via direct-to-consumer delivery. No expli...	Sales permitted at farms, farm stands, farmers markets, craft fairs, home delivery, and online (within NC). Indirect sales to stores permit...	North Carolina allows direct and indirect sales (retail stores, restaurants allowed). No sales cap. Products must be shelf-stable. No onlin...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Varies	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Home kitchen must pass NCDA&CS inspection before production begins. No pets allowed in home at any time. Kitchen must meet 21 CFR 117 Subpa...	NC state law requires annual home kitchen inspection by NCDA&CS. Pets in the home disqualify the applicant entirely. Shelf-stable, low-risk...	North Carolina requires an annual kitchen inspection by NCDA&CS. Pets anywhere in the home disqualify the applicant (full prohibition, not ...
FOOD STORAGE	Only shelf-stable products; no refrigerated products permitted.	Shelf-stable storage required; products must be non-refrigerated.	Shelf-stable products only. Acidified foods require pH or water activity testing. Refrigerated/frozen products prohibited.
POPULATION	50,827	61,592	117,573

State context — North Carolina cottage food law

Columbus County's rules sit on top of North Carolina's state cottage food framework. The state law sets the floor — counties can add but cannot remove protections.

STATUTE	ANNUAL SALES CAP
02 NCAC 9C.0307	—
REGISTRATION REQUIRED	FOOD HANDLER CERT
Yes	No
KITCHEN INSPECTION	DIRECT SALES ONLY
Yes	No
INDIRECT SALES	

Yes — Home processors may sell to retail stores, restaurants, and directly to consumers. Sales at farmers markets are permitted. Labels are required for wholesale and packaged self-service retail; direct hand-to-consumer sales (e.g., from home or at events) may be exempt from affixed labels if ingredient info is available on request. NC requires annual home kitchen inspection, which is unusual among no-cap states.

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the **North Carolina cottage food law report** on Crosodo, or open the live guide: crosodo.com/states/north-carolina.

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <http://reports.oah.state.nc.us/ncac/title%2002%20-%20agriculture%20and%20consumer%20services/chapter%2009%20-%20food%20and%20drug%20protection/subchapter%20c/02%20ncac%2009c%20.0307.pdf>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/food-drug-protection/food-program/fdpd-food-program-home-processor>

Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/north-carolina/>

Questions about Columbus County? Local notes and a place to leave a question are on Crosodo. We monitor new threads — start with zoning, permits, or porch pickup.

crosodo.com/nb/north-carolina/columbus-county-discuss

Classifieds

Resources for cottage food & home bakers · crosodo.com/advertise

NATIONAL

SUPPLIES

Advertise here — Supplies

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

COURSES

Advertise here — Courses

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

INSURANCE

Advertise here — Insurance

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

LOCAL

Advertise here

Reach home bakers in Columbus County, North Carolina. Supply stores, farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and bakery services welcome.

crosodo.com/advertise

Your business here

Local cottage food listings, kitchen rentals, co-packer referrals, and community events — post yours on Crosodo.

crosodo.com/nb/north-carolina/columbus-county-discuss

Free ad space available

Let us know if you're a non-profit or community organization. Farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and cottage food events near you welcome.

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