

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Johnston County

North Carolina · Smithfield · FIPS 37101 · Population 219,042
· Crosodo Index #1817*

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

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

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

—

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

Yes

PETS

Pets in the home are a disqualifying factor under NC home processor program. Indoor pets are considered pests under GMP requirements (21 CFR 117 Subpart B).

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: JOHNSTON COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1817* · FIPS 37101 · Smithfield

Johnston County

Population 219,042 · State baseline: 02 NCAC 9C.0307 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (North Carolina requires all home processors to have their home kitchen inspected by the NCDA&CS Food and Drug Protection Division before selling food. Kitchen must be in the home (not a separate building/garage/basement). Pets in the home disqualify the applicant. Only shelf-stable, low-risk foods allowed. Johnston County applicants must verify with local planning/zoning that a food business is permitted at the residence.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Pets in the home are a disqualifying factor under NC home processor program. Indoor pets are considered pests under GMP requirements (21 CFR 117 Subpart B).

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (NC home processor program requires verification with local county/city planning that a food business is permitted at the residence. Johnston County Planning and relevant municipalities (Smithfield, Clayton, Selma, etc.) may require a home occupation permit. HOA approval recommended.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Initial inspection arranged by NCDA&CS Food Regulatory Specialist 8-12 weeks after application. Annual re-inspection required. No permit issued; notice of inspection provided.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Yes — North Carolina requires all home processors to have their home kitchen inspected by the NCDA&CS Food and Drug Protection Division before selling food. Kitchen must be in the home (not a separate building/garage/basement). Pets in the home disqualify the applicant. Only shelf-stable, low-risk foods allowed. Johnston County applicants must verify with local planning/zoning that a food business is permitted at the residence.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

Pets in the home are a disqualifying factor under NC home processor program. Indoor pets are considered pests under GMP requirements (21 CFR 117 Subpart B).

WATER SUPPLY

Public water: attach current bill. Non-public/well water: coliform test required within one year of application; store-bought test kits not accepted.

HANDWASHING

Adequate handwashing facilities verified during initial kitchen inspection.

FOOD STORAGE

Only shelf-stable, non-refrigerated finished products permitted. Standard GMP storage. Ingredient/material storage areas inspected.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED

Yes — Initial inspection arranged by NCDA&CS Food Regulatory Specialist 8-12 weeks after application. Annual re-inspection required. No permit issued; notice of inspection provided.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT

Conditional — NC home processor program requires verification with local county/city planning that a food business is permitted at the residence. Johnston County Planning and relevant municipalities (Smithfield, Clayton, Selma, etc.) may require a home occupation permit. HOA approval recommended.

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE

Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	NC home processors may sell to retail stores, restaurants, and directly to consumers. No internet-sale prohibition at state level. Verify local zoning for home pickup.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	NCDA&CS application requests anticipated number of employees; no explicit statutory cap. Home occupation zoning may restrict non-resident employees.

Relevant county code

02 NCAC 09C .0307; Johnston County Planning ordinances (contact required per NC program Step 4)

RESEARCH NOTES

North Carolina state baseline applies. Johnston County (county seat: Smithfield) is a growing suburban county south of Raleigh. No Johnston County-specific cottage food pages or overrides found. State process requires local zoning verification. The NC home processor program is administered entirely at the state level; county health departments are not the primary point of contact (NCDA&CS handles it).

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.johnstoncounty.gov>

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

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

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Johnston County	Harnett County	Wayne County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Pets in the home are a disqualifying factor under NC home processor program. Indoor pets are considered pests under GMP requirements (21 CF...	No pets allowed in the home — any pets disqualify the applicant from the NC home processor program.	Pets anywhere in the home disqualify the applicant for a home processor permit. Complete pet prohibition.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	NC home processors may sell to retail stores, restaurants, and directly to consumers. No internet-sale prohibition at state level. Verify l...	Direct and indirect sales permitted within NC — home, farmers markets, roadside stands, restaurants, and retail stores.	North Carolina allows direct and indirect sales (retail stores, restaurants). No sales cap. Shelf-stable products only.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Varies	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	North Carolina requires all home processors to have their home kitchen inspected by the NCDA&CS Food and Drug Protection Division before se...	Annual inspection by NCDA&CS required. Pets in the home disqualify the applicant entirely. Products must be shelf-stable; no refrigerated o...	North Carolina requires annual kitchen inspection by NCDA&CS. Pets anywhere in the home disqualify the applicant. Wayne County follows stat...
FOOD STORAGE	Only shelf-stable, non-refrigerated finished products permitted. Standard GMP storage. Ingredient/material storage areas inspected.	Shelf-stable only; products stored per good manufacturing practices.	Shelf-stable products only. Acidified foods require pH/ water activity testing. Refrigerated/frozen prohibited.
POPULATION	219,042	134,718	117,480

State context — North Carolina cottage food law

Johnston 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 Johnston 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/johnston-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 Johnston 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/johnston-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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