

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Lee County

North Carolina · Sanford · FIPS 37105 · Population 63,560 ·
Crosodo Index #2727*

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.

NORTH CAROLINA: LEE COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2727* · FIPS 37105 · Sanford

Lee County

Population 63,560 · State baseline: 02 NCAC 9C.0307 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (NC requires annual inspection by NCDA&CS. Pets in the home disqualify applicants. Kitchen must meet GMP requirements. No sales cap.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Pets in the home DISQUALIFY the applicant entirely from the NC Home Processor program

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (Lee County includes Sanford in the NC Sandhills region. No specific county-level home occupation permit for cottage food identified. Contact Lee County Planning at (919) 718-4646.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Conditional

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Annual inspection by NCDA&CS)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — NC requires annual inspection by NCDA&CS. Pets in the home disqualify applicants. Kitchen must meet GMP requirements. No sales cap.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Pets in the home DISQUALIFY the applicant entirely from the NC Home Processor program
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water required; private well may require testing
HANDWASHING	Handwashing sink required
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable low-risk foods; proper storage required

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes — Annual inspection by NCDA&CS
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies — Lee County includes Sanford in the NC Sandhills region. No specific county-level home occupation permit for cottage food identified. Contact Lee County Planning at (919) 718-4646.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct and indirect sales allowed; no sales cap; products must be shelf-stable
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	No specific limit stated

Relevant county code

Contact Lee County Planning for local zoning

RESEARCH NOTES

NC Home Processor program requires annual NCDA&CS kitchen inspection. Pets disqualify applicants. Lee County is in the NC Sandhills/Piedmont area. No county-specific overrides found. No county URLs in input.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.leecounty.gov>

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

Questions? Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss your county's specific zoning rules at <https://crosodo.com/nb/north-carolina/lee-county-discuss>

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Lee County	Chatham County	Moore County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Pets in the home DISQUALIFY the applicant entirely from the NC Home Processor program	Pets in the home disqualify the applicant from the NC home processor program — this is a strict statewide requirement per 02 NCAC 9C.0307.	PETS IN THE HOME DISQUALIFY APPLICANTS ENTIRELY for the NC Home Processor registration. No animals permitted per GMP requirements (21 CFR 1...
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct and indirect sales allowed; no sales cap; products must be shelf-stable	Direct and indirect sales permitted. No sales cap. Products may be sold at farmers markets, roadside stands, online, and through other chan...	Direct-to-consumer and some wholesale/retail sales permitted within North Carolina. Online and delivery sales permitted within state.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies	Varies	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	NC requires annual inspection by NCDA&CS. Pets in the home disqualify applicants. Kitchen must meet GMP requirements. No sales cap.	Shelf-stable, low-risk foods. Annual home kitchen inspection required by NCDA&CS. Pets in the home disqualify the applicant entirely.	North Carolina home processor program requires annual inspection of the home kitchen by NCDA&CS. Shelf-stable, low-risk foods permitted inc...
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable low-risk foods; proper storage required	Shelf-stable products must be stored appropriately. Products requiring refrigeration prohibited.	Shelf-stable, non-refrigerated/ non-frozen products only. Prohibited: refrigerated/frozen products, low-acid canned foods, dairy products, s...
POPULATION	63,560	76,754	100,759

State context — North Carolina cottage food law

Lee 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](#).

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? Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss Lee County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

<https://crosodo.com/nb/north-carolina/lee-county-discuss>

Classifieds

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

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LOCAL

Advertise here

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crosodo.com/advertise

Your business here

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

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