

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Orange County

North Carolina · Hillsborough · FIPS 37135 · Population
145,919 · Crosodo Index #2783*

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: ORANGE COUNTY

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Orange County

Population 145,919 · State baseline: 02 NCAC 9C.0307 · MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Conditional (North Carolina requires annual home kitchen inspection by NCDA&CS and registration (Home Processor permit). No sales cap. Allowed: shelf-stable non-refrigerated baked goods, jams, jellies, preserves, candies, dried mixes, spices, acidified foods (pickles, BBQ sauce). Pets in the home DISQUALIFY the applicant entirely. Annual renewal required.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Pets in the home DISQUALIFY the applicant from a Home Processor permit. No pets allowed in the residence where cottage food is produced.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Orange County and Chapel Hill may require home occupation permits under local zoning (UNC Chapel Hill is located here). Orange County has its own planning/zoning department. No county-specific cottage food overlay identified beyond state requirements.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Annual inspection by NCDA&CS inspector required before permit issuance and annually thereafter.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Conditional — North Carolina requires annual home kitchen inspection by NCDA&CS and registration (Home Processor permit). No sales cap. Allowed: shelf-stable non-refrigerated baked goods, jams, jellies, preserves, candies, dried mixes, spices, acidified foods (pickles, BBQ sauce). Pets in the home DISQUALIFY the applicant entirely. Annual renewal required.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Pets in the home DISQUALIFY the applicant from a Home Processor permit. No pets allowed in the residence where cottage food is produced.
WATER SUPPLY	No specific water testing requirement in standard state rules, though facility must meet GMP standards.
HANDWASHING	Adequate handwashing facility required per NCDA&CS Home Processor rules.
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable, non-refrigerated products only. Products in compliant packaging required.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes — Annual inspection by NCDA&CS inspector required before permit issuance and annually thereafter.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — Orange County and Chapel Hill may require home occupation permits under local zoning (UNC Chapel Hill is located here). Orange County has its own planning/zoning department. No county-specific cottage food overlay identified beyond state requirements.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct sales and indirect sales allowed (no sales cap). Permitted venues: farm, farm stand, farmers market, other direct-to-consumer and some retail channels.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified by state law; local zoning may apply.

Relevant county code

Orange County Zoning Ordinance; 02 NCAC 09C .0307

RESEARCH NOTES

Verified-large county. NC Home Processor program requires annual inspection. Pet disqualification is an absolute rule. No Orange County-specific cottage food code identified beyond state requirements. County URL verified.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.orangecountync.gov>

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

<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>

<https://www.orangecountync.gov>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Orange County	Alamance County	Durham County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Conditional	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Pets in the home DISQUALIFY the applicant from a Home Processor permit. No pets allowed in the residence where cottage food is produced.	Pets in home disqualify applicant entirely per GMP requirements (21 CFR 117 Subpart B).	No pets or animals in the home at any time — strict NC requirement
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct sales and indirect sales allowed (no sales cap). Permitted venues: farm, farm stand, farmers market, other direct-to-consumer and so...	Direct sales at home, farmers markets, and retail stores. Online permitted. No sales cap.	Direct and indirect sales; retail stores, restaurants, farmers markets, online all permitted within NC
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Conditional	Yes
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Yes
RESTRICTIONS	North Carolina requires annual home kitchen inspection by NCDA&CS and registration (Home Processor permit). No sales cap. Allowed: shelf-st...	Annual kitchen inspection required by NCDA&CS. Registration required. Pets in the home disqualify the applicant. Shelf-stable, low-risk foo...	Initial home kitchen inspection required; no pets/animals in home at any time; kitchen must be in primary residence (not separate building)...
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable, non-refrigerated products only. Products in compliant packaging required.	Shelf-stable storage; products must not require refrigeration.	Shelf-stable foods stored in sanitary conditions
POPULATION	145,919	171,779	325,101

State context — North Carolina cottage food law

Orange 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 02 NCAC 9C.0307	ANNUAL SALES CAP —
REGISTRATION REQUIRED Yes	FOOD HANDLER CERT No
KITCHEN INSPECTION Yes	DIRECT SALES ONLY 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 Orange County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

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

Classifieds

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

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

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

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