

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Rutherford County

North Carolina · Rutherfordton · FIPS 37161 · Population
64,680 · Crosodo Index #2729*

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

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

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

—

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Conditional

INSPECTION

Yes

PETS

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

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: RUTHERFORD COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2729* · FIPS 37161 · Rutherfordton

Rutherford County

Population 64,680 · 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 (Rutherford County is in western NC foothills. No specific county-level home occupation permit for cottage food identified. Contact Rutherford County Planning at (828) 287-6180.)

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 separate from food preparation
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable low-risk foods; proper storage required

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes — Annual inspection by NCDA&CS
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies — Rutherford County is in western NC foothills. No specific county-level home occupation permit for cottage food identified. Contact Rutherford County Planning at (828) 287-6180.
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 online shipping restriction; products must be shelf-stable
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	No specific limit stated

Relevant county code

Contact Rutherford County Planning for local zoning

RESEARCH NOTES

NC Home Processor program requires annual NCDA&CS kitchen inspection — the key restriction. Pets disqualify applicants entirely. No sales cap. Rutherford County in western NC foothills area. No county-specific overrides found. No county URLs in input.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.rutherfordcounty.gov>

<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/rutherford-county-discuss

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Rutherford County	Burke County	Cleveland 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	Any pets in the home at any time disqualify the applicant from the NC Home Processor program.	PETS IN THE HOME DISQUALIFY APPLICANTS ENTIRELY for the NC Home Processor registration.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional	Conditional	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct and indirect sales allowed; no online shipping restriction; products must be shelf-stable	Same as all NC counties: sales allowed at farmers markets, from home, at events, to retail stores, and to restaurants after passing inspect...	Direct-to-consumer and some wholesale/retail sales permitted within North Carolina. Online and delivery sales permitted within state.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies	Conditional	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.	Same as all NC counties: home kitchen inspection by NCDA&CS required before any sales. Pets (including indoor pets) completely disqualify a...	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	Detailed storage plan required with application. All storage areas inspected.	Shelf-stable, non-refrigerated/ non-frozen products only. Prohibited: refrigerated/frozen products, low-acid canned foods, dairy products, s...
POPULATION	64,680	87,799	99,527

State context — North Carolina cottage food law

Rutherford 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 Rutherford 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/rutherford-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 Rutherford 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/rutherford-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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