



[HOME](#)

[ABOUT US](#)

[OUR PEOPLE](#)

[PROGRAMS](#)

[EVENTS](#)

[SERVICES](#)

[PUBLICATIONS](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

[FBNS WEB SITE](#)



Initial Steps to Consider When Starting a Food Business

Before you invest time and resources in a product or seek technical advice, we suggest you start working on a *business plan*. Please see [State and Federal Resources for Small Businesses](#) for further information.

Regulation requirements vary according to the category of the product and how it is preserved. Read the following questions and what applies to your business situation.

How will your product be sold?

As ready-to-eat? See [Ready to Eat Foods](#)

As a packaged food? See [Regulation of Packaged Foods](#)

Ready-to-Eat Foods

Prepared and ready-to-eat foods are regulated by [County Health Departments](#) under statewide rules adopted by the [Food and Lodging Sanitation Branch](#) of the NC Department of the Environmental Health.

Regulation of Packaged Foods

Which category best fits your food product?

Fluid milk product

Regulated by NC Division of Environmental Health, [Milk Sanitation Branch](#)

Fresh shellfish product

Regulated by NC Division of Environmental Health, [Shellfish Sanitation Branch](#)

Raw or processed meat or poultry-containing product

Regulated by NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, [Meat and Poultry Inspection Division](#)

Most other processed foods are regulated by NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Food and Drug Protection Division.

All must meet [Good Manufacturing Practices](#) (GMP) standards.

Raw or minimally processed fruit or vegetables

[Click here](#) for US FDA Produce and Plant Product Guidance for Industry

Non-shellfish seafood products

Regulated by NC Food and Drug Protection Division and must meet FDA Seafood HACCP Standards. [Click here](#) to visit the Seafood Network Information Center for more information.

North Carolina State
University • Department of
Food, Bioprocessing and
Nutrition Sciences Extension
Program • Raleigh, NC 27695
• 919.515.2956

Dried product or baked product such as a cookie, a syrup or chocolate sauce

Download *Low Water Activity Foods*

Canned vegetable product or soup (other than tomato products)

Download *Low Acid Canned Foods*

Shelf-stable sauce, marinade, beverage, pickle, fruit or similar product

Download [Acid or Acidified Foods](#)

Refrigerated or frozen product

Download *Refrigerated Foods: Some Rules for Handling*

In addition to the above information, visit [Publications for Developing a Food Business](#) or contact the department for more information.