

Article 49C.

Federal and State Cooperation as to Meat Inspection; Implementation of Inspection.

§ 106-549.29. North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services responsible for cooperation.

(a) The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is hereby designated as the State agency which shall be responsible for cooperating with the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States under the provisions of section 301 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and such agency is directed to cooperate with the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States in developing and administering the meat inspection program of this State under this and the previous Article in such a manner as will effectuate the purposes of this and the previous Article.

(b) In such cooperative efforts, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is authorized to accept from said Secretary advisory assistance in planning and otherwise developing the State program, technical and laboratory assistance and training (including necessary curricular and instructional materials and equipment), and financial and other aid for administration of such a program.

(c) The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is further authorized to recommend to the said Secretary of Agriculture such officials or employees of this State as the Commissioner shall designate, for appointment to the advisory committees provided for in Section 301 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act; and the Commissioner or his authorized representative shall serve as the representative of the Governor for consultation with said Secretary under paragraph (c) of Section 301 of said act. (1969, c. 893, s. 15; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 1014, s. 155(a); 1997-261, s. 59.)

§ 106-549.29:1. Repealed by Session Laws 1969, c. 893, s. 26.

§ 106-549.30. Refusal of Commissioner to inspect and certify meat.

The Commissioner may (for such period, or indefinitely, as he deems necessary to effectuate the purposes of this and the previous Article) refuse to provide, or withdraw, inspection service under Article 49B with respect to any establishment if he determines, after opportunity for a hearing is accorded to the applicant for, or recipient of, such service, that such applicant or recipient is unfit to engage in any business requiring inspection under Article 49B because the applicant or recipient, or anyone responsibly connected with the applicant or recipient, has been convicted, in any federal or state court, of (i) any felony, or (ii) more than one violation of any law, other than a felony, based upon the acquiring, handling, or distributing of unwholesome, mislabeled, or deceptively packaged food or upon fraud in connection with transactions in food. This section shall not affect in any way other provisions of this or the previous Article for withdrawal of inspection services under Article 49B from establishments failing to maintain sanitary conditions or to destroy condemned carcasses, parts, meat or meat food products.

For the purpose of this section a person shall be deemed to be responsibly connected with the business if he was a partner, officer, director, holder, or owner of ten per centum (10%) or more of its voting stock or employee in a managerial or executive capacity. The determination and order of the Commissioner with respect thereto under this section shall be final and conclusive unless the affected applicant for, or recipient of, inspection service files application for judicial review within 30 days after the effective date of such order in the appropriate court as provided in G.S. 106-549.33. (1969, c. 893, s. 16.)

§ 106-549.31. Enforcement against uninspected meat.

Whenever any carcass, part of a carcass, meat or meat food product of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules, or other equines, or any product exempted from the definition of a meat food product, or any dead, dying, disabled, or diseased cattle, sheep, swine, goat, or equine is found by any inspector of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services upon any premises where it is held for purposes of, or during or after distribution in intrastate commerce, and there is reason to believe that any such article is adulterated or misbranded and is capable of use as human food, or that it has not been inspected, in violation of the provisions of Article 49B or of the Federal Meat Inspection Act or the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, or that such article or animal has been or is intended to be distributed in violation of any such provisions, it may be detained by such inspector, upon approval of his supervisor, for a period not to exceed 20 days, pending action under G.S. 106-549.33, and shall not be moved by any person, firm, or corporation from the place at which it is located when so detained, until released by the area supervisor of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service. All official marks may be required by such inspector to be removed from such article or animal before it is released unless it appears to the satisfaction of the area supervisor that the article or animal is eligible to retain such marks. (1969, c. 893, s. 17; 1997-261, s. 109.)

§ 106-549.32. Enforcement against condemned meat; appeal.

(a) Any carcass, part of a carcass, meat or meat food product of cattle, sheep, swine, goats, horses, mules or other equines, or any dead, dying, disabled, or diseased cattle, sheep, swine, goat, or equine, that is being transported in intrastate commerce, or is held for sale in this State after such transportation, and that (i) is or has been prepared, sold, transported or otherwise distributed or offered or received for distribution in violation of this or the previous Article, or (ii) is capable of use as human food and is adulterated or misbranded, or (iii) in any other way is in violation of this or the previous Article, shall be liable to be proceeded against and seized and condemned, at any time, on a complaint in any proper court as provided in G.S. 106-549.33 within the jurisdiction of which the article or animal is found. If the article or animal is condemned it shall, after entry of the order be disposed of by destruction or sale as the court may direct and the proceeds, if sold, less the court costs and fees, and storage and other proper expenses, shall be paid into the general fund of this State, but the article or animals shall not be sold contrary to the provisions of this or the previous Article. Provided, that upon the execution and delivery of a good and sufficient bond conditioned that the article or animal shall not be sold or otherwise disposed of contrary to the provisions of this or the previous Article, the court may direct that such article or animal be delivered to the owner thereof subject to such supervision by the authorized representative of the Commissioner as is necessary to insure compliance with the applicable laws. When an order of condemnation is entered against the article or animal and it is released under bond, or destroyed, court costs and fees, and storage and other proper expenses shall be awarded against the person, if any, intervening as claimant of the article or animal. The proceedings in such cases shall be heard by the superior court without a jury, with the right of the aggrieved party to appeal to the Court of Appeals, and all such proceedings shall be at the suit of and in the name of this State. No appeal shall lie from the Court of Appeals.

(b) The provisions of this section shall in no way derogate from authority for condemnation or seizure conferred by other provisions of this or the previous Article, or other laws. (1969, c. 893, s. 18.)

§ 106-549.33. Jurisdiction of superior court.

The superior court is vested with jurisdiction specifically to enforce, and to prevent and restrain violations of this and the previous Article, and shall have jurisdiction in all other kinds of cases arising under this and the previous Article, provided however, all prosecutions for criminal violations under this and the previous Article shall be in any court having jurisdiction over said violation. (1969, c. 893, s. 19.)

§ 106-549.34. Interference with inspector.

Any person who willfully assaults, resists, opposes, impedes, intimidates, or interferes with any person while engaged in or on account of the performance of his official duties under this or the previous Article shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. For the purposes of this section, "impede," "oppose," and "intimidate," or "interfere" shall include, but not be limited to, the use of profane and indecent language, or any act or gesture, verbal or nonverbal, which tends to cast disrespect on an inspector or the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service. Whoever, in the commission of any such acts, uses a deadly weapon, shall be guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor. (1969, c. 893, s. 20; 1993, c. 539, s. 801; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2023-63, s. 5.1(b).)

§ 106-549.35. Punishment for violation.

(a) Any person, firm, or corporation who violates any provision of this or the previous Article or any regulation of the Board for which no other criminal penalty is provided by this or the previous Article is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor; but if such violation involves intent to defraud, or any distribution or attempted distribution of an article that is adulterated (except as defined in G.S. 106-549.15(1)h, such person, firm or corporation is guilty of a Class H felony which may include a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). Provided, that no person, firm, or corporation shall be subject to penalties under this section for receiving for transportation any article or animal in violation of this or the previous Article if such receipt was made in good faith, unless such person, firm, or corporation refuses to furnish on request of a representative of the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service the name and address of the person from whom he received such article or animal, and copies of all documents, if any there be, pertaining to the delivery of the article or animal to him.

(b) Nothing in this Article shall be construed as requiring the Commissioner or his authorized representative to report for prosecution or for the institution of condemnation or injunction proceedings, minor violations of this Article whenever he believes that the public interest will be adequately served by a suitable written notice of warning.

(c) The Commissioner may assess a civil penalty of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) against any person who violates a provision of this Article or Article 49B, or any rule promulgated thereunder. In determining the amount of the penalty, the Commissioner shall consider the degree and extent of harm caused by the violation.

The clear proceeds of civil penalties assessed pursuant to this subsection shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2. (1969, c. 893, s. 21; 1995, c. 516, s. 5; 1998-215, s. 17; 1999-408, s. 6.)

§ 106-549.36. Gathering information; reports required; use of subpoena.

(a) The Commissioner shall also have power –

(1) To gather and compile information concerning and, to investigate from time to time the organization, business, conduct, practices, and management of any

person, firm, or corporation engaged in intrastate commerce, and the relation thereof to other persons, firms, or corporations;

- (2) To require, by general or special orders, persons, firms, and corporations engaged in intrastate commerce, or any class of them, or any of them to file with the Commissioner, in such form as the Commissioner may prescribe, annual or special, or both annual and special, reports or answers in writing to specific questions, furnishing to the Commissioner such information as he may require as to the organization, business, conduct, practices, management, and relation to other persons, firms, and corporations, of the person, firm, or corporation filing such reports or answers in writing. Such reports and answers shall be made under oath, or otherwise, as the Commissioner may prescribe, and shall be filed with the Commissioner within such reasonable period as the Commissioner may prescribe, unless additional time be granted in any case by the Commissioner.

(b) For the purposes of this and the previous Article the Commissioner shall at all reasonable times have access to, for the purpose of examination, and the right to copy any documentary evidence of any person, firm, or corporation being investigated or proceeded against, and may require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of all documentary evidence of any person, firm, or corporation relating to any matter under investigation. The Commissioner may sign subpoenas and may administer oaths and affirmations, examine witnesses, and receive evidence.

- (1) Such attendance of witnesses, and the production of such documentary evidence, may be required at any designated place of hearing. In case of disobedience to a subpoena the Commissioner may invoke the aid of any court designated in G.S. 106-549.33 in requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of documentary evidence.
- (2) Any of the courts designated in G.S. 106-549.33 within the jurisdiction of which such inquiry is carried on may, in case of contumacy or refusal to obey a subpoena issued to any person, firm, or corporation, issue an order requiring such person, firm, or corporation, to appear before the Commissioner or to produce documentary evidence if so ordered, or to give evidence touching the matter in question; and any failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by such court as a contempt thereof.
- (3) Upon the application of the Attorney General of this State at the request of the Commissioner, the superior court shall have jurisdiction to issue writs of mandamus commanding any person, firm, or corporation to comply with the provisions of this or the previous Article or any order of the Commissioner made in pursuance thereof.
- (4) The Commissioner may order testimony to be taken by deposition in any proceeding or investigation pending under this Article at any stage of such proceeding or investigation. Such depositions may be taken before any person designated by the Commissioner and having power to administer oaths. Such testimony shall be reduced to writing by the person taking the deposition, or under his direction and shall then be subscribed by the deponent. Any person may be compelled to appear and depose and to produce documentary evidence in the same manner as witnesses may be compelled to appear and testify and

produce documentary evidence before the Commissioner as hereinbefore provided.

- (5) Witnesses summoned before the Commissioner shall be paid the same fees and mileage that are paid witnesses in the courts of this State, and witnesses whose depositions are taken and the persons taking the same shall severally be entitled to the same fees as are paid for like services in such courts.
- (6) No person, firm, or corporation shall be excused from attending and testifying or from producing books, papers, schedules of charges, contracts, agreements, or other documentary evidence before the Commissioner or in obedience to the subpoena of the Commissioner whether such subpoena be signed or issued by him or his delegate, or in any cause or proceedings, criminal or otherwise, based upon or growing out of any alleged violation of this or the previous Article, or of any amendments thereto, on the ground or for the reason that the testimony or evidence, documentary or otherwise, required of him or it may tend to incriminate him or it or subject him or it to a penalty or forfeiture; but no person shall be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty or forfeiture for or on account of any transaction, matter, or thing concerning which he is compelled, after having claimed his privilege against self-incrimination, to testify or produce evidence, documentary or otherwise, except that any person so testifying shall not be exempt from prosecution and punishment for perjury committed in so testifying.

(c) Any person, firm, or corporation that shall neglect or refuse to attend and testify or to answer any lawful inquiry, or to produce documentary evidence, if in his or its power to do so, in obedience to the subpoena or lawful requirement of the Commissioner shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

- (1) Any person, firm, or corporation that shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry or statement of fact in any report required to be made under this Article, or that shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry in any account, record, or memorandum kept by any person, firm, or corporation subject to this Article or that shall willfully neglect or fail to make, or to cause to be made, full, true, and correct entries in such accounts, records, or memoranda, of all facts and transactions appertaining to the business of such person, firm, or corporation, or that shall willfully remove out of the jurisdiction of this State, or willfully mutilate, alter, or by any other means falsify any documentary evidence of any such person, firm, or corporation or that shall willfully refuse to submit to the Commissioner or to any of his authorized agents, for the purpose of inspection and taking copies, any documentary evidence of any such person, firm, or corporation in his possession or within his control, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.
- (2) If any person, firm, or corporation required by this Article to file any annual or special report shall fail so to do within the time fixed by the Commissioner for filing the same, and such failure shall continue for 30 days after notice of such default, such person, firm, or corporation shall forfeit to this State the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each and every day of the continuance of such failure, which forfeiture shall be payable into the general fund of this State, and shall be recoverable in a civil suit in the name of the State brought in the

superior court where the person, firm, or corporation has his or its principal office or in Wake County. It shall be the duty of the Attorney General of this State, to prosecute for the recovery of such forfeitures. The costs and expenses of such prosecution shall be paid out of the amount recovered in such action.

- (3) Any officer or employee of this State who shall make public any information obtained by the Commissioner without his authority, unless directed by a court, shall be deemed guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1969, c. 893, s. 22; 1993, c. 539, s. 802; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 106-549.37. Jurisdiction coterminous with federal law.

The requirements of this Article shall apply to persons, firms, corporation establishments, animals, and articles regulated under the Federal Meat Inspection Act only to the extent provided for in section 408 of said federal act. (1969, c. 893, s. 23.)

§ 106-549.38. Rules and regulations of State Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

All rules and regulations of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services not inconsistent with the provisions of this Article shall remain in full force and effect until amended or repealed by the Board. (1969, c. 893, s. 27; 1997-261, s. 60.)

§ 106-549.39. Hours of inspection; overtime work; fees.

(a) Overtime Fees. – The Commissioner is not required to furnish meat inspection services during the following times unless the establishment under inspection pays the Department for the services:

- (1) More than eight hours in a day.
- (2) More than 40 hours in a calendar week.
- (3) On a Sunday.
- (4) On a legal holiday.

The Commissioner may establish a fee at an hourly rate to be paid by an establishment inspected during the times listed above. The fee shall be credited to the Department as a departmental receipt and applied to the cost of inspecting the establishment.

(b) Inspection Fees. – The Commissioner may establish a fee at an hourly rate to be paid by an establishment preparing an animal listed in this subsection as a meat food product. The fee shall be credited to the Department as a departmental receipt and applied to the cost of inspecting these animals to be used for food. The animals whose inspection is subject to the fee imposed under this subsection are:

- (1) Bison.
- (2) Repealed by Session Laws 2009-102, s. 1, effective June 15, 2009. (1969, c. 893, s. 27(a); 1993, c. 311, s. 2; 1995, c. 194, s. 12; 2009-102, s. 1.)

§§ 106-549.40 through 106-549.48. Repealed by Session Laws 1969, c. 893, s. 26.