

What is considered a meat or poultry food product?

A food product is amenable (qualifies as a meat or poultry food product) if it contains greater than 2% cooked or 3% raw meat or poultry. This includes but is not limited to raw whole muscle cuts, ground meat or poultry, wraps, burritos, meat pies, soups, dumplings, quiche, empanadas, lasagnas and other meals or entrees containing meat or poultry. There are several exceptions to this rule, including a closed-face sandwich containing meat or poultry and poultry broth. For more information on this please see the section labeled “Amenability” on page 10 in the USDA 2005 [Food standards and labeling policy book](#).

What is the retail exemption from inspection?

All meat and poultry food products are required to be processed under either [VT State Inspection](#) or USDA [Federal inspection](#), unless it is processed under an exemption. Retail exempt meat and poultry products are those prepared by a retail vendor for sales direct to the end consumer. This includes raw, heat treated, and fully cooked meat and poultry food products; including cooked meals or entrees that are cooled down and/or frozen, packaged, and placed on display for retail sale. Meat and poultry products prepared under the retail store exemption **are not served or delivered to the end consumer for immediate consumption; they typically require further preparation or heating prior to consumption**. For more information about licensing requirements and the difference between the retail store exemption and the restaurant and catering exemption please review our [Guidelines For Prepared Meals & Other Products Containing Meat & Poultry](#).

What are the labeling requirements for retail exempt meat and poultry?

6 V.S.A 3308 prohibits the sale of misbranded meat and poultry products as defined in [6 V.S.A 3302 \(25\)](#) and [9 CFR 301.2](#). The misbranding provisions of the Federal Meat Inspections Act and the [Vermont Meat and Poultry Inspection Laws](#) apply to meat and poultry food products that are prepared under the retail exemption. Labeling of retail exempt meat and poultry food products is enforced by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets MIS Investigators and Inspectors. A retail meat or poultry food product would be misbranded, **if in a package or container**, unless it bears a label showing:

- a) **Address Line:** the name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor; 9 CFR 317.2(g), 381.122.
- b) **Net Weight:** an accurate statement of the quantity of the contents in terms of weight, measure, or numerical count; 9 CFR 317.2(h), 381.122.
- c) **Safe Handling Statement:** any word, statement, or other information (such as Safe Handling Instructions for meat products **that are not Ready-To-Eat**) required by or under authority of the Act; 9CFR 317.2(l), 381.125(b).
- d) **Product Name:** the common or usual name of the food, if any there be; 9 CFR 317.2(c)(1), 381.117.
- e) **Statement of Ingredients:** the common or usual name of each ingredient if the product is fabricated from two or more ingredients; 9 CFR 317.2(f), 381.118.
- f) **Handling Statement:** a handling statement such as “Keep Refrigerated” or “Keep Frozen” if product requires special handling to maintain its wholesomeness; 9 CFR 317.2(k), 381.125(a).

For more information on how to appropriately label retail exempt meat and poultry product please contact VAAFM Meat Inspection Service at: 802-828-2426 or agr.meatinspection@vermont.gov

Retail Label Examples

