



# Building a Brand for Local Meat LABELING

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## Important:

**In the interests of the general public, the government takes correct labeling of food very seriously.**

The penalties for mislabeling products can be quite severe. Before you sell a food, nutritional supplement, or cosmetic product with a label you have produced yourself, make sure that :

- 1. The label does not mislead the consumer.
- 2. Font sizes and location of items on your label are in compliance with FDA regulations.
- 3. Your business counselor or advisor or other expert has reviewed it for compliance with FDA regulations.

## Designing Your Brand Identity: Labels

Under ODA regulations there are two types of red meat processors; the fully inspected plant and the custom meat plant.

The fully inspected plant has an established inspection program and an identification mark in the shape of the state of Ohio is applied to all products that meet the criteria. All products with this stamped identification mark can be re-sold and distributed throughout the state of Ohio.

The custom red meat plant has facilities and equipment approved for slaughter and processing but does not have a regular inspection program. Livestock may be slaughtered and processed into meat products for the owner of the livestock but those products must be identified by stamping all product packages with the wording "NOT FOR SALE". These products can't be resold.

The first step to selling meat products to neighbors or in a public market is to find a processor that is a state inspected facility.

If the livestock owner desires to have a farm label attached to the meat product that is being sold, that is possible. The livestock owner must work with the inspected plant and the state meat inspector assigned to that plant to develop a farm label that can be included with the state label on the meat products. Expect a 6 to 9 month time period for this process.



Products on sale at Keller Market House in Lancaster, Ohio.



Bacon packaged for sale at the Athens Farmers Market by Farm on the Ridge in Jackson, Ohio.

## Labeling in Ohio

In Ohio, labels for meat must contain a description of the product, a complete statement of ingredients, statement of responsibility (where the meat was packed or distributed if not distributed by the person whose name appears on the label), the net quantity of the contents, safe handling instructions, nutritional labels, best by dates and a UPC code.

Stickers like the ones developed by Pork and Pickles (right) are a valuable investment for producers because they can be used for anything – given away to customers to increase brand recognition, stuck on products, etc.

The generic stickers also easily allow for diversifying product offerings without requiring new brand labels.



Pork and Pickles Label



Example of versatile stickers to allow for flexibility of weight in producing meat products. These stickers reinforce the brand identity using the distinctive Pork and Pickles purple color and wild ramp.

inspection marks, dietary claims, safe handling instructions, and when you must use descriptions such as “imitation” or “artificial flavoring”.

All meat products sold must have a label that includes the Product name, inspection legend with establishment number, and the plant or company address. Products with more than one ingredient must have an ingredients statement.

Only shelf-stable products do not need a handling statement. Most products require the net weight to be listed on the label. Your processor and/or the WVDA will often be able to help you determine what should be on your label.

The minimum requirements for meat labels at a farmers market, include the common name of the product, net weight of the product, and any other information required by WVDA and USDA safe-handling. According to the WVDA, a commercial label must have the product name, USDA or WVDA inspection,

safe handling statement, net weight, ingredients statement, address of producer or processor, nutrition facts, and safe handling instructions.

## Labeling in West Virginia

In the state of West Virginia federal and state laws contain detailed labeling requirements for meat products. These include rules regarding size and location of labels, name and address of of the manufacturer, packager, or distributor; name of the product, official



Swift Level Meats ground beef products ready for retail sale.

### Ohio Labeling Resources:

- Ohio Department of Agriculture : [www.agri.ohio.gov/](http://www.agri.ohio.gov/)
- Acenet : [www.acenetworks.org](http://www.acenetworks.org)

### West Virginia Labeling Resources:

- West Virginia Department of Agriculture : <https://agriculture.wv.gov/>
- Unlimited Futures: <http://www.unlimitedfuture.org/>
- Value Chain Cluster Initiative: [www.vc2.org](http://www.vc2.org)