

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

H

1

HOUSE BILL 134

Short Title: Prohibit Misbranding of Certain Food Products. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Dixon.

*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Commerce and Economic Development, if favorable, Agriculture and Environment, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

February 18, 2025

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO PROHIBIT THE MISBRANDING OF CERTAIN FOOD PRODUCTS.

3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 106-549.15 reads as rewritten:

5 **"§ 106-549.15. Definitions.**

6 As used in this Article, except as otherwise specified, the following terms shall have the  
7 meanings stated below:

8 ...

9 (1a) "Agricultural food animal" means a domesticated animal belonging to the  
10 bovine, caprine, ovine, or porcine species.

11 ...

12 (5a) "Cell-cultured food product" means a food product having one or more  
13 sensory attributes that resemble a type of tissue originating from an  
14 agricultural food animal but that, in lieu of being derived from meat  
15 processing, is derived from manufacturing cells, in which one or more stem  
16 cells are initially isolated from an agricultural food animal, are grown in vitro,  
17 and may be manipulated, as part of a manufacturing operation.

18 (5b) "Close proximity" means any of the following:

19 a. Immediately before or after the name of the product.

20 b. In the line of the label immediately before or after the line containing  
21 the name of the product.

22 c. Within the same phrase or sentence containing the name of the  
23 product.

24 ...

25 (9a) "Identifying meat term" means any word or phrase that states, indicates,  
26 suggests, or describes a meat product, regardless of whether the word or  
27 phrase is used individually, as a portmanteau, or as a compound word. This  
28 term includes all of the following:

29 a. A common name for the species of the agricultural food animal subject  
30 to slaughter and processing, including a calf or cow, goat or kid, hog  
31 or pig, lamb, or sheep.



\* H 1 3 4 - V - 1 \*



agricultural food animal but that, in lieu of being derived from meat processing, is derived from manufacturing plant or fungus parts.

...

(21a) "Qualifying term" means a word, compound word, or phrase that would clearly disclose to a reasonable purchaser of meat products that a food product is not a meat product. This includes the following terms: "cell-cultured," "fake," "grown in a lab," "insect," "insect-based," "insect-protein," "lab-created," "lab-grown," "meat free," "meatless," "plant," "plant-based," "vegan," "vegetable," "vegetarian," or "veggie."

(21b) "Ratite" means a bird whose breastbone is smooth so that flight muscles cannot attach, such as an ostrich, an emu, and a rhea. These birds are subject to the provisions of this Article and Article 49C to the same extent as any other meat food product.

...."

**SECTION 1.(b)** Article 49B of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 106-549.28A. Labeling of manufactured-protein food products.**

(a) The label of any manufactured-protein food product that contains an identifying meat term shall also contain in at least 20-point font or the size of the surrounding type, whichever is greater, and in close proximity to the name of the product, an appropriate qualifying term.

(b) A manufactured-protein food product that does not meet the requirements of this section shall be deemed misbranded for purposes of this Article."

**SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 106-549.51 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 106-549.51. Definitions.**

For purposes of this Article, the following terms shall have the meanings stated below:

...

(4a) "Cell-cultured food product" means a food product having one or more sensory attributes that resemble a type of tissue originating from poultry but that, in lieu of being derived from meat processing, is derived from manufacturing cells, in which one or more stem cells are initially isolated from poultry, are grown in vitro, and may be manipulated, as part of a manufacturing operation.

(4b) "Close proximity" means any of the following:

a. Immediately before or after the name of the product.

b. In the line of the label immediately before or after the line containing the name of the product.

c. Within the same phrase or sentence containing the name of the product.

...

(10a) "Identifying poultry term" means any word or phrase that states, indicates, suggests, or describes a poultry product, regardless of whether the word or phrase is used individually, as a portmanteau, or as a compound word. This term includes all of the following:

a. A common name for the species of the poultry subject to slaughter and processing, including chicken, poultry, or turkey.

b. A common name for a characteristic of a species of the poultry subject to slaughter and processing based on age, breed, or sex.

c. Meat, broiler, fryer, poulet, or yearling.

d. A common name used to describe a major cut of poultry slaughtered and processed, including a poultry product such as breast, drumstick,

- 1                                   giblet, thigh, or wing; or the common name of an organ or offal,  
 2                                   including gizzard, heart, liver, kidney, or tongue.  
 3                   e.   Any other common name that a reasonable purchaser would  
 4                                   immediately and exclusively associate with a poultry product prepared  
 5                                   for sale in normal commercial channels.  
 6  
 7                   ...  
 8                   (11a) "Insect-protein food product" means a food product having one or more  
 9                                   sensory attributes that resemble a type of tissue originating from poultry but  
 10                                   that, in lieu of being derived from meat processing, is derived from  
 11                                   manufacturing insect parts.  
 12                   ...  
 13                   (16a) "Manufactured-protein food product" means a cell-cultured food product,  
 14                                   insect-protein food product, or plant-protein food product.  
 15                   (17) "Misbranded" shall apply to any poultry product under one or more of the  
 16                                   following circumstances:  
 17                                   a.    If its labeling is false or misleading in any particular;  
 18                                   b.    If it is offered for sale under the name of another food;  
 19                                   c.    If it is an imitation of another food, unless its label bears, in type of  
 20                                   uniform size and prominence, the word "imitation" and immediately  
 21                                   thereafter, the name of the food imitated;  
 22                                   ...  
 23                                   m.    If it is a manufactured-protein food product and it is not labeled in  
 24                                   accordance with G.S. 106-549.55(e).  
 25                   ...  
 26                   (24a) "Plant-protein food product" means a food product having one or more  
 27                                   sensory attributes that resemble a type of tissue originating from poultry but  
 28                                   that, in lieu of being derived from meat processing, is derived from  
 29                                   manufacturing plant or fungus parts.  
 30                   ...  
 31                   (26) "Poultry product" means any poultry carcass, or part thereof; or any product  
 32                                   which is made wholly or in part from any poultry carcass or part thereof, or  
 33                                   any cell-cultured food product made from cells of poultry, excepting products  
 34                                   which contain poultry ingredients only in a relatively small proportion or  
 35                                   historically have not been considered by consumers as products of the poultry  
 36                                   food industry, and which are exempted by the Board from definition as a  
 37                                   poultry product under such conditions as the Board may prescribe to assure  
 38                                   that the poultry ingredients in such products are not adulterated and that such  
 39                                   products are not represented as poultry products.  
 40                   ...  
 41                   (28a) "Qualifying term" means a word, compound word, or phrase that would  
 42                                   clearly disclose to a reasonable purchaser of poultry products that a food  
 43                                   product is not a poultry product. This includes the following terms:  
 44                                   "cell-cultured," "fake," "grown in a lab," "insect," "insect-based,"  
 45                                   "insect-protein," "lab-created," "lab-grown," "meat free," "meatless," "plant,"  
 46                                   "plant-based," "vegan," "vegetable," "vegetarian," or "veggie."  
 47                   ...."  
 48                   **SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 106-549.55 reads as rewritten:**  
 49                   **"§ 106-549.55. Labeling standards; false and misleading ~~labels.~~labels; labeling of**  
 50                                   **manufactured-protein food products.**  
 ...

1       (e)    The label of any manufactured-protein food product that contains an identifying  
2 poultry term shall also contain in at least 20-point font or the size of the surrounding type,  
3 whichever is greater, and in close proximity to the name of the product, an appropriate qualifying  
4 term."

5               **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2025, and applies to products  
6 sold or offered for sale on or after that date.