

Lowes Foods Local Niche Meat Vendor Inquiry

Date _____

Business name and contact name: _____

Phone and email: _____

Website: _____

Store host you are working with (if applicable): _____

Dear valued farmer,

Thank you for your interest in being a supplier for Lowes Foods!

Founded in 1954, Lowes Foods employs nearly 9,000 people and operates over 100 full-service supermarkets in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Locally owned and operated, Lowes Foods is truly a homegrown company committed to bringing community back to the table, by providing our guests with the freshest and most innovative local products from local suppliers like yourself!

Please attach a description addressing the questions on pages 3 and 4. Return this to the store host with whom you have been working or mail your proposal to the address below. Please expect to hear from us within 2 weeks of mailing your application.

Krista Morgan
Locally Grown Accounts Representative
Lowes Foods
PO Box 24908
Winston-Salem, NC 27114-4908

For questions: Krista Morgan
krista.morgan@lowesfoods.com 336.775.3218 ext. 53218

Do you have consistent product *quality*? Consistent product quality is KEY to ensuring a successful product. Please describe how you assure this consistency.

Do you have consistent *volume*? Consistent volume is typically important, but we may have the flexibility to “sell out” of special items and/or only carry product in select stores, so we may be willing to adapt to changes in volume. Please describe openly in your narrative.

Do you have a business model that can work with wholesale pricing? In other words, if you have been selling direct to consumers, for example at a farmers market, the purchase price from Lowes Foods to you will likely be less than what you have received.

Do you have consistent cold storage and transportation throughout the supply chain?

Many state departments of agriculture (including North Carolina's) require that poultry product be stored and transported properly to prevent product adulteration due to temperature abuse. Meat should be transported and handled with consistent cooling methods with maintained temperatures of between 33-40° F in order to maintain a product temperature of 40 degrees or below. Please describe.

Do you use a state or federal processing facility to slaughter and process your product?

Meat and poultry products processed in a state plant can only be sold within the state. Products processed in federal plants may be sold within NC and out of state. Lowes Foods can only sell products processed in federal plants.

Do you have a retail ready product including professional packaging? Rollstock packaging is preferred but not required in all cases. Please include photos of your products. Are UPCs on all products to be sold? If not, are you willing to obtain them, either from a UPC reseller or the GS1 system?

Do you have a copy of supporting documentation to back up any label claim made on your product, including information on brochures, websites, and point of sale material? Make sure all marketing materials list only approved label claims (see the NCGT/NC Choices *Niche Meat Production, Voluntary Labeling Claims, and the Approval Process*, ncgrowingtogether.org).

Do you carry product liability insurance? Lowes Foods requires a Comprehensive General Liability Insurance of at least \$1 million.

Do you have an established brand and customer base that will attract customers to your product in a retail setting? Having an established presence in the community around the stores your product will be in will help sell the products, including social media presence.

Can you price your product at a competitive rate we includes our margins? In the grocery trade, margins for meat are typically 25% or more.

Are you able to deliver product to select stores? Are you able to arrange suitable transport?

You will be responsible for marketing your product in the store locations. Do you have the ability to sample your product on a regular basis and provide marketing materials to tell your story? As a new vendor, our guests may not know of your farm or brand. Sampling, staff support, and face time with guests is strongly suggested.

Product that does not sell within a certain amount of days may be price-reduced for quick sale. Are you comfortable with this?

Do you have other buyer outlets? Most grocers cannot promise full utilization from your entire carcass. Potential producers should consider other products and marketing outlets when developing a full carcass utilization plan.

We may require changes be made to your product labels and marketing materials. Do you have the ability to work with your processor and make those changes in an efficient manner?

Do you have a good relationship with your processor? When dealing with packaging, labeling, volume, and product changes, good communication and cooperation with your processor is key.

We may require producers to obtain an independent audit to verify food safety standards. We can share this information with you after reviewing your narrative.