



## A Letter from the Meat Inspection Director regarding Applying for a License

Dear Prospective Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in producing meat products under the Georgia Meat Inspection Section (GMIS) program. Opening and operating a licensed meat establishment can be expensive and bumpy at times. While we cannot help you with the expense, hopefully, we can help smooth out some of the bumps. Please note that meat is one of the most intensely regulated food products in the country. Your operations will be inspected by either our program or the USDA Food Safety Inspection Services (FSIS).

**Please also note that compliance is additionally required with all other applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and ordinances, whether or not administered by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Therefore, you will need to check with your local city and/or county authorities to verify zoning laws within your desired facility location, and receive all required approvals, prior to completing your application for meat inspection.**

There are four types of Meat Licenses you may apply for:

- 1) A Small Poultry Exempt (PE) License will enable you to slaughter, process, and sell twenty thousand (20,000) birds or less of your own raising within a calendar year. This operation must take place on your own premises. Under the small poultry exemption, you may not buy or sell poultry products prepared under another exemption in which you claim the Producer/Grower Exemption. The facility used to slaughter or process exempt poultry must meet GMIS basic minimum requirement guidelines and may not be used to slaughter or process another person's poultry. These exempt products can only be sold as raw whole or raw cut up poultry parts, and only within intra-state commerce. Poultry products produced under this license are exempt from full mandatory inspection. A \$100 annual licensing fee is required.

Guideline: [Poultry Exempt](#)

- 2) A Custom Exempt (CE) License will enable you to slaughter and/or process livestock (including feral swine) for use by the owner of the livestock, members of the livestock owner's household, nonpaying guests of the livestock owner, or for the livestock owner's employees. Products produced under this license must be marked "Not For Sale", and are exempt from full, mandatory meat inspection.

Guideline: [Custom Exempt](#)

- 3) A [State of Georgia Meat Inspection License](#) allows you to slaughter and process livestock, and ship your finished products to consumers in the State of Georgia (**Intrastate only**). During slaughter operations, GMIS Inspection personnel are required to be present at your facility for inspection of each animal slaughtered. During meat processing operations, GMIS Inspection personnel are required to be present to inspect at least part of your daily operations. GMIS will work with you prior to licensure to develop a "Work Schedule Agreement". Inspection for livestock is provided at no charge up to eight hours per day and forty hours per week, dependent upon GMIS staffing resources in your area.

- An optional service under this license is Voluntary Inspection services. Voluntary Inspection Service is a service relating to the slaughter and processing of Non-Traditional Livestock



(bison, buffalo, elk, deer other than white-tailed deer, and water buffalo, etc.) and Non-Traditional Poultry and the processing of such products. All inspection services shall apply to the slaughter, the preparation, and labeling of the meat, meat products, poultry and poultry products processed under this inspection service. Fees and charges for this service shall be paid by the applicant.

- 4) [A USDA FSIS Inspection License](#) allows you to slaughter and process livestock or poultry under federal meat inspection and, as such, ship your finished products to consumers anywhere in the U.S. These products are also eligible for export if you meet the requirements for the specific country you are shipping to. You may request to have a State of Georgia inspector staff your federally inspected establishment by requesting that your establishment be a Talmadge Aiken (TA) establishment (i.e. a federal establishment staffed with a state inspector). (PLEASE NOTE: the decision to designate an establishment as TA belongs to the FSIS Atlanta District Office and is determined by current FSIS and GMIS staffing resources in your area.)

Here are the basics you need to know as you begin the process of applying for a PE, CE, State, State Voluntary or TA-federal Meat Inspection License. The State of Georgia application is included below. You must complete an application form and return it to the address on the application as soon as possible. Once you have met all GMIS requirements, regulations, and passed a final onsite plant review, the application will be submitted for approval.

Depending on the type of application you are applying for, there are four (4) to seven (7) basic steps required for obtaining a license from GMIS. (These steps are also explained in the provided GMIS website link below). \*Blue font indicates links to example

- 1.  File an Application for PE License, CE License, State of Georgia Meat Inspection License, State Voluntary License or for federal/TA license (Note: Must have the name and address of plant on application block 8, Color photo ID included, and have the O.C.G.A. 50-36 Secure and Verifiable Affidavit notarized).
  - a) For information to apply for **PE/CE/State/State Voluntary** please visit the following link: [GMIS Application for Meat Inspection](#)
  - b) For information to apply for **federal/TA** please visit the following link: [Apply for Grant of Inspection](#)
- 2.  [Provide three blueprints/drawings of the facility](#)
  - a) Complete drawings with specifications of the floor plans of the establishment for which inspection is requested, showing the locations of principal pieces of equipment, floor drains, principal drainage lines, hand-washing basins, and hose connections for clean-up purposes;
  - b) A plot plan showing the limits of the establishment's premises, locations in outline of buildings on the premises, cardinal points of the compass, and roadways and railways serving the establishment; and
  - c) A room schedule showing the finish of walls, floors, and ceilings of all rooms in the establishment. The specifications shall include statements describing the water supply,



plumbing, drainage, refrigeration, equipment, lighting, and operations of the establishment. Applicants for inspection may request information from the GMIS office concerning the requirements before submitting plans.

There are no requirements for who drafts blueprints/drawings, but they must be the layout of the facilities and include all required information as stated above. **(applicable to all PE, CE, State, State Voluntary, TA applications).**

3.  Meet GMIS/USDA Facility [Regulatory Performance Standards](#) **(applicable to all PE, CE, State, State Voluntary, and TA applications).**
4.  Obtain Approved Labels, Brands, and/or Stamps:
  - a) Obtaining approved labels for PE, State/State Voluntary (Request label approval forms from New Facility Coordinator), and [TA](#)
  - b) Obtain the “Brand Authorization Certificate” from District Supervisor once the establishment number is assigned for State and TA licenses.
  - c) Custom Exempt licensed establishments must mark the carcass and products with “Not for Sale” in letters at least 3/8”.
5. Obtain Required Documentation **(All applications):**
  - [Approved Local Water Quality/Potability Report. \(City/County Water- one \(1\) time per year- Private well- two \(2\) times per year\)](#)
  - [Approved Sewage System Letter.](#)
  - Inedible Permit. (Can be taken to landfills)
  - [Material Safety Data \(MSD\) for any chemicals used in plant.](#)  
Sample: [Safety Data Sheet](#)
  - [Letters of Guarantees for Product Ingredients](#) (PE & CE Recommended)
  - [Letters of Guarantees for Packaging Materials](#) (PE & CE Recommended)
6.  [Provide a Written Standard Operating Procedure for Sanitation](#) **(State/TA Only)**
7.  [Provide a Written Hazard Analysis and HACCP Plan](#) **(State/TA Only)**  
Sample: [FSIS HACCP & HACCP Support](#)
8.  [How to Develop A Meat and Poultry Product Recall Plan](#) **(State/TA Only)**
9.  [How to Develop a Food Defense Plan](#) **(State/TA Only – Recommended)**



Once you complete these steps, please contact **GMIS** and we will put you in contact with a team member who can further assist you with any questions and information. The approval process takes approximately four to six (4 to 6) weeks on average. If interested in the Federal **TA** program, please ask **GMIS** about federal overtime charges.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a part of one of the greatest food industries in America, and please let us know how we can help.

Respectfully,

**Andrea Smith**

State Director of Meat Inspection

**Georgia Department of Agriculture**

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<https://agr.georgia.gov/meat-inspection>

<https://agr.georgia.gov/title-vi-notice-non-discrimination>

Enclosures

Cc: File