



## 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**). You will also need to check with local city and/or county zoning laws prior to completing your application for meat inspection.

There are three types of Meat License you may apply for:

- 1) A Custom 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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 State, Custom Exempt (CE), or TA-federal Meat Inspection License. The State of Georgia application, GMIS 01-2010, is included in the furnished, requested emailed packets or online at the GMIS website. 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).

1.  File an Application for State Meat Inspection, CE License, or for federal/TA inspections (Note: Must have the name and address of plant on application block 8, Color photo ID included, and have the O.C.G.A. Affidavit notarized).
  - a) For information to apply for **State/CE** please visit the following link  
<http://agr.georgia.gov/meat-inspection.aspx>
  - b) For information to apply for **federal/TA** please visit the following link  
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/inspection/apply-for-a-federal-grant-of-inspection>.
2.  Provide blueprints of the facility. (Please note: Three (3) sets of blueprints are required, which include a floor plan, plumbing plan, and a plot plan with the Compass Rose North, along with a room finish schedule and door schedule. Floor drains with sewer traps in all wash down areas not connect to sewage system lines unless lines outside the facilities are connected by a backup prevention device e.g. grease trap, check valve, etc. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service can provide assistance in obtaining blueprints. There are no requirements for who drafts blueprints but they must be the layout of the facilities and include all required information as stated above. (**TA and State/CE applications**).
3.  Meet GMIS/USDA Facility Regulatory Performance Standards (**TA and State/CE applications**).
  - a)  Sanitation Performance Standards:  
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/compliance-guides-index/sanitation-performance-standards/sanitation-compliance-guide>
  - b)  Guide to Designing a Small Red Meat Plant:  
<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/13058>
4.  Obtain Approved Labels, Stamps, and/or Brands: If the applicant is requesting State inspection, a “Brand Authorization Certificate” will be issued once the Establishment number has been assigned. Custom Exempt licensed establishments must stamp their products with “Not for Sale” in letters at least 3/8”.

5. Obtain Required Documentation (**TA and State/CE 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 Sheets (MSDS) for any chemicals used in plant.
- Letters of Guarantees for Product Ingredients
- Letters of Guarantees for Packaging Materials

6.  Provide a Written Standard Operating Procedure for Sanitation (**State/TA Application Only**)

7.  Provide a Written Hazard Analysis and HACCP Plan (**State/TA Application Only**)

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. (PLEASE NOTE: You will be responsible for voluntary or overtime charges over 8 hours per day, weekends, or holidays worked at approximately \$28/hr. (Hourly rate is subject to change). If interested in the Federal **TA** program, please ask **GMIS** about federal overtime charges.

If you need assistance in developing your Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan (for State and/or Federal TA Inspection only), you can access models of various HACCP Workshop plans on the FSIS Website listed below, through the University of Georgia's website below, and/or **GMIS**.

Finally, to enhance your knowledge of the State and/or Federal TA requirements, **GMIS** recommends you become acquainted with the Title 9 in the Federal Code of Regulations Website at:

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?collectionCode=CFR&searchPath=Title+9%2FChapter+III&oldPath=Title+9&isCollapsed=true&selectedYearFrom=2017&ycord=236> .

Also, the **GMIS** Website at <http://www.agr.georgia.gov/meat-inspection.aspx> and the USDA-FSIS Website at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/home> have an abundance of information concerning "Meat Inspection".

For supporting scientific documents for HACCP plans or more specialized help, you can reach out to the experts and tools including askFSIS Website at <https://askfsis.custhelp.com/app/home>, or the FSIS Small Plant Help Desk at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/regulatory-compliance/svsp/sphelpdesk>. “Contacts for Each State” are available at [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Contact\\_Us/State\\_HACCP\\_Contacts\\_&\\_Coordinators/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Contact_Us/State_HACCP_Contacts_&_Coordinators/index.asp) and the University of Georgia’s website at <http://extension.uga.edu/content/extension/programs-services/detail.html?id=22&name=HACCP%20Certification%20Short%20Course%20for%20Meat%20&%20Poultry>.

Save these Websites as a Favorite or Bookmark. For State and TA Inspection, you should focus particularly on Title 9 Code of Federal (9 CFR), Chapter III 305, 307, 381 (Poultry), 416 (Sanitation) and 417 (HACCP) that apply to facilities, sanitation and HACCP.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron Knighton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Aaron Knighton**

State Director of Meat Inspection

**Georgia Department of Agriculture**

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[www.agr.georgia.gov/meat-inspection.aspx](http://www.agr.georgia.gov/meat-inspection.aspx)

Enclosures

Cc: File