

## **Developing Labels for Official State Inspection**

One of the more complicated aspects of obtaining a grant of official state inspection is the label review process. The label review process can seem overwhelming, but the more you know about it, the easier it becomes. Let's look at the steps to creating an approved label.

1. Give the inspector/person you are working with a complete ingredient list including (ingredients of ingredients-cheese needs the whole ingredient statement, not just "cheese") and amounts of each ingredient to be added per 100 lbs. of meat. This is treated as confidential information and will NOT be shared with anyone outside of the required staff.
2. The inspector will input the information into a processing procedure form and you will be asked to verify it for accuracy.
3. The processing procedure will be mailed to the label review officer who will check it for accuracy and regulatory requirements.
4. If the label review officer finds any errors/issues they will return it to the inspector who will clarify with plant management.
5. Once the label officer has reviewed the processing procedure, either the inspector or the label review officer will fill out a Letter of Authorization form. ND state laws require authorization to cast, print, or otherwise make a device containing an official mark, simulation of an official mark, label bearing a mark or simulation, or form of official certificate or simulation. This means that you will need to obtain a letter of authorization prior to adding the official inspection legend to pre-printed labels, and each time that labels are re-ordered.
6. If the establishment is creating their own labels using a scale/label machine they will also need to get a Letter of Authorization filled out to program or input the official mark of inspection into their machine. This is a one time authorization.
7. If the owner is ordering labels they can submit the Letter of Authorization to the printing company and have labels printed\*.

\*Note-labels need to accurately describe the ingredients of the product. Ordering large quantities of pre-printed labels for multiple ingredient products is not recommended, if you change your formulation or your supplier reformulates one of your ingredients you will be left with a large quantity of incorrect labels.