

Got to Be NC Membership Information

“When you want the BEST...IT’S GOT TO BE NC!”



It is our mission to provide services that promote and improve agriculture, agribusiness and forests; protect consumers and businesses; and conserve farmland and natural resources for the prosperity of all North Carolinians.

N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services | **Got to Be NC Marketing Program**
Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture | Peter Thornton, Director of Marketing

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About NCDA&CS and the Got to Be NC Brand

About Our Program

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) works to support our state's diverse economy within the agriculture, food, fiber and forestry sectors through services, regulation, legislation, research and market development.

"Got to Be NC" is the official statewide marketing brand and membership program for these key industry sectors, concentrating on our states food and fiber sectors. It is our mission to provide services that promote and improve agriculture, agribusiness and forests; protect consumers and businesses; and conserve farmland and natural resources for the prosperity of all North Carolinians.

In 2005, the Goodness Grows in NC program was rebranded as Got to Be NC. From then to now, our work with North Carolina growers and agricultural organizations continues to raise the awareness and availability of North Carolina products to consumers both locally and around the world.

When you want the BEST, it's Got to Be NC.

The Got to Be NC brand serves to heighten awareness and availability of North Carolina products to consumers, as well as retail and wholesale industries, while meeting the needs of our members who desire connections to buyers either directly or through sponsored events. The program provides business to business networking opportunities, industry trade shows, consumer shows, statewide fairs and festivals, branded contests and promotions. The Got to Be NC program works to serve both member companies as well as consumers who buy local products.

Our involvement and support of various consumer shows, statewide fairs and festivals, branded contests, partnerships, competitions and sponsorships are designed to increase consumer awareness of local products, leading to increased sales of North Carolina products...reinforcing the Buy Local, Find local and Support Local Theme.

Got to Be NC Membership

So much of what we do is because of and for the members of our Got to Be NC program. Membership not only benefits agriculture and the total food industry throughout our state, it also serves to support and strengthen individual participants. Through the dedicated efforts of our NCDA&CS marketing team, your company and products are positioned and presented as representative of the very best among North Carolina's quality goods. The program provides our members with access to decision-makers within the retail, grocery, specialty food, restaurant and food services industries, either directly or through sponsored events and trade shows. We develop programs that promote North Carolina products and connect consumers with those that grow their food.

Membership Benefits

Got to Be NC members represent the farmers and agribusinesses that produce our state's agricultural products. Membership in the program not only allows us to bring our members' goods to market and into the hands of consumers, it benefits North Carolina's agriculture industry as a whole.

Through members-only events, trade shows, marketing initiatives and more, we support members of all sizes, from wholesale producers and processors to individual specialty food entrepreneurs. The Got to Be NC program is a business development program. It is designed to assist companies that are in business to grow and expand market share. The program is not for the hobbyist.



Got to Be NC Member Benefits Include:

- Specialized cooperative programming with the retail and foodservice industries
- Got to Be NC brand power – Utilization of the iconic trademarked Got to Be NC logo on packaging, labels and point-of-sale material
- Cooperative and umbrella advertising opportunities
- Comprehensive marketing and media programs
- Consumer-directed promotions
- Eligible to participate in NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services trade shows, food shows and events
- Digital marketing campaigns
- Special presentations to the food industry
- Consultation availability with trade specialists for retail, foodservice, institutional, specialty and international markets
- Grower meetings and farm tours
- Eligible to participate in Grower/Buyer Exchange programs
- Subscription to electronic monthly industry newsletter
- Be followed by Got to Be NC handle on social media accounts
- Company listing on Got to Be NC website
- Approval to donate product to select Got to Be NC events
- Listing in the Member Spotlight section of the monthly newsletter



Got to Be NC Membership Criteria

Got to Be NC Membership Criteria

The following criteria must be met to qualify for membership in the Got To Be NC program:

- A business that owns, leases or has contractual obligations within the state of North Carolina for growing operations (fields, nurseries, greenhouses, etc.), or with processing/packaging/production facilities that is producing a market-ready, raw or processed, FOOD OR FIBER PRODUCT from cultivated crops or livestock animals.

Food and fiber defined: Food provides fuel and nutritional support and can be metabolized for energy, growth and development and is consumed for taste and nutritional value. Fiber is field crops from cotton, flax, hemp, jute used for paper, cloth and rope products. Fiber and fleece from animals include products with wool, silk, mohair, angora, and leather. ***Note criteria on next page specific to hemp.***



- Market ready products, NOT FROM FOOD OR FIBER, are limited to wax products and candles, wood products, animal feeds, and animal milk soaps.
- Topicals or ingested tinctures, dietary supplements, oils, extracts, syrups, infusions, mists, creams, salves, ointments etc., do not meet our food or fiber definition.
- For a business whose product is produced outside of North Carolina, we require verification that the main ingredient is sourced from North Carolina.
- Facilities and products are required to meet all applicable Federal, State and County regulations and inspections. Regulations require that all inspections are current. Nursery, greenhouse, and tree farms are required to be certified by the [NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division](#).
- A business whose ONLY North Carolina connection for their product is through a Call Center, Fulfillment Center or Sales/Broker office, is not eligible for membership.
- Membership into the program does not imply automatic eligibility into our signature shows and events.
- Products with claims relating to cures or prevention of disease, including therapeutic or medical benefits, unless FDA approved, are ineligible.
- Business operations that reflect a genuine commitment and willingness to sourcing supplies, ingredients, products and services first from North Carolina vendors.

Membership Eligibility

Got to Be NC Membership Eligibility

1. There is no fee to be a Got to Be NC member.
2. **Current business liability insurance is required** for membership in the Got to Be NC program. Proof of insurance may be requested.
3. A commitment to promoting your own business. A minimum digital footprint that includes a business email address and a business owned website and/or active business social media account (preferably both) is required for membership.
4. Online application must be **completed in its entirety** to be eligible for review.
5. Agriculture business service providers/outlets (financial institutions, farm equipment companies, co-packers, etc.) as well as retail/wholesale operations, (i.e., grocery stores, food distributors and specialty stores) are key partners in the success of the Got to Be NC program. For directory purposes, these will be listed in our resource, support, and service provider section on the Got to Be NC website.
6. Business must have a market ready finished product to qualify for membership.
7. Brokerage firms do not qualify for membership in the Got to Be NC program.
8. Green Industry (nursery, greenhouse, trees, etc.) items must be grown in North Carolina.
9. **Sellers of meat must provide a meat handler's license number to qualify for membership.**
10. Packaging and marketing materials/assets (including websites) must avoid claims of medicinal benefits or implications that a product prevents, treats, or cures a condition.

Criteria For Producers of Hemp and Hemp Derivatives

The 2018 Farm Bill removed hemp from the Controlled Substances Act, legalizing the crop and its derivatives. However, the US Food and Drug Administration currently considers the following to be “**prohibited acts**” and **unlawful** within its regulatory authority relating to Cannabidiol (CBD):

- The sale of food and beverage products to which CBD has been added
- The sale of CBD products as a dietary supplement
- The sale of CBD products with claims of medicinal/ health benefits or with implications that it prevents, treats, or cures a condition.

Accordingly, products falling within any of these prohibited acts are NOT approved for membership and cannot bear the Got to Be NC marketing brand nor can the products be marketed, sold or sampled at any Got to Be NC event/facility.

However, other hemp derived products not associated with the prohibited acts above and which meet all other state and federal regulations, are considered eligible for membership. Once you place products into the marketplace, you have a responsibility to understand and comply with all federal, state and local laws.



How to Apply to Be a Got to Be NC Member

Application Process

Got to Be NC membership is made by application to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, and may only be claimed by qualified and approved producers or processors of North Carolina agricultural and food products.

Apply [online](#) for membership today! Prospective members looking to download a paper application form can do so [here](#). Please note, paper applications take longer to process.

1. To be considered for membership, you must submit a **completed** application form. Incomplete applications will not be processed. **If you require county, state or federal inspections for your business, copies may be requested in order to process your application.**
2. Applications for membership and directory listing will be reviewed by the Got to Be NC application committee.
3. Photo documentation of product/label/operation or site visit may be requested in order to process your application.
4. Please allow up to four weeks to review your application. If accepted into the Got to be NC program, you will be notified via email.

<https://gottobenc.com/members/member-sign-up/>



Find Local Member Category Types

Member Category Types

(More than one category may be chosen)

Agritourism: Agritourism is a segment of rural / nature tourism that encompasses a commercial enterprise within an agricultural setting that offers outdoor tours, field (pick your own) & recreational activities/ experiences, seasonal experiences such as fall fun and holiday themes, ag awareness through education/ entertainment, hospitality services encompassing food, lodging, guides and direct farm product retail sales.

- Tours and activities can encompass saltwater experiences through North Carolina fishing charter boats that provide recreation, education and awareness for our state's seafood industry.

Farmers Markets: A farmer's market is a public and recurring assembly of farmers or their representatives selling the food that they produced directly to consumers. The category is not intended for companies which sell at farmers markets.

Foodservice/Restaurants: The foodservice industry encompasses all of the activities, services and business functions involved in preparing and serving food to people eating away from home. This includes all types of restaurants from fine dining to fast food. It also includes institutional food operation at locations such as schools and hospitals, as well other specialty vendors such as food truck operators and catering businesses.

Growers/Producers: Growers/Producers are considered farms that grow/produce market ready food and fiber products from cultivated crops and/or livestock animals.

Products: Products are defined as a value-added/ manufacturer/ processor of food/ beverage, livestock/ meat, fruits/vegetables, dairy, seafood/ aquaculture and non-food products.

Resource, Support and Service Providers: Resource, support and service providers are critical partners in the general support of our state's agriculture, food, and fiber sectors and our Got to Be NC membership. Here you will find a growing list of partners that support the products our members grow, raise, and make. It covers retailers, wholesalers, resellers and ecommerce operations, processing, co-packing, and delivery services along with how to connect directly to our own NCDA marketing specialists.all to support our members success and longevity.

The above categories must have business liability insurance and a minimum digital footprint that includes a business email, business-owned/branded web page and/or an active business social media account. Exceptions on the digital footprint handled on a case by case basis and may include select field crop "grow/harvest" operations.

Logo Usage and Brand Guidelines

Members enjoy the exclusive benefit of being able to use the Got to Be NC logo on product packaging, labels and marketing materials to make it easy for consumers to identify products grown or produced in North Carolina.

- Permission to use the Got to Be NC logo will be granted upon Got to Be NC committee approval of application. Only current Got to Be NC Members are authorized to utilize the Got to Be NC logo. Application and products will be under continual review by the Got to Be NC committee. All decisions of the Got to Be NC committee are final.
- Any person, firm, partnership, corporation or association who violates any provision or gives false information in the application to package products under the Got to Be NC label, shall be subject to a suspension of his/her authority to use the Got to Be NC label. Nothing herein shall be construed to exempt any person or firm from provisions of other applicable laws or regulations. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services reserves the right to change these by-laws as necessary.
- Operations that are processing food, fiber, and forestry products are encouraged to seek out and use NC ingredients as components of the product at the highest levels possible. **Products not produced, raised or caught in North Carolina are not eligible to display any version of the Got to Be NC logo.**
- The Got to Be NC brand is registered and cannot be altered in any way either with typography or graphics. It is registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State's office and controlled by the N.C. Department of Agriculture Marketing Division. All graphic files for both the brand and tagline are produced and controlled by the Division's Graphic Arts Section.
- Logos can be downloaded from our [About](#) page.

The Brand Standard for Agriculture



The Brand Standard for Seafood



Guidelines for Farm to School Program Logo

The North Carolina Farm to School program has been operated by the NCDA&CS since 2008. Through USDA funding, and support from NCDA Food Distribution and Marketing Divisions, North Carolina schools can place orders and receive local seasonal North Carolina produce for their food service operations.

Companies that produce a market ready processed food and beverage product and meet all program requirements for both the North Carolina Farm to School Program and the Got to Be NC Marketing Program are granted permission to use the official Got to Be NC Farm to School Program logo (shown below) on product packaging for those products specifically marketed and sold exclusively to North Carolina schools with a main ingredient from North Carolina. This is a specific deviation as outlined and our standard logo versions and usage regulations would apply otherwise.



Certified Roadside Market Program

1. The Certified Roadside Farm Market Program is designed to promote North Carolina roadside farm markets that primarily sell produce (horticultural crops) grown by the operator and other local farmers. The goal of this program is to increase sales to consumers of products grown and sold by North Carolina farmers. The program also seeks to assist roadside farm markets with improving their marketing skills, to improve the quality of products sold, and to promote fair and honest marketing practices.
2. To qualify for participation in this program, a roadside farm market must sell primarily agricultural commodities direct to the public, with a minimum of 51% of total sales from farm products grown by the market operator. Applicants must submit a NCDA&CS Grower's Certification, signed by their county extension agent, along with their application.
3. The operator of any roadside farm market as herein defined, may apply to the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Division of Marketing, for participation in this program. A separate application must be filed for each location.

Certified Roadside Market Program continued on next page

Certified Roadside Market Program continued

4. Membership in the North Carolina Certified Roadside Farm Market program will be granted upon NCDA&CS committee approval of application. Membership will be under continual review by the NCDA&CS Division of Marketing.
5. The business whose name appears on the Certified Roadside Farm Market application shall give written assurance of the business's compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and ordinances, including all applicable license and permit requirements.
6. Certified Roadside Farm Markets will receive a sign to display at their market that identifies them as a North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Certified Roadside Farm Market. The sign shall at all times remain the property of the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services. Certified markets will also receive a marketing kit with posters and price cards to use in their displays, a checklist of suggestions for successful roadside markets (information on displays, market appearance, product quality, parking, etc.), camera ready logo to use in ads, sample newspaper or radio ads, and sample press releases.
7. The applicant shall have a permanent sign posted in a prominent and visible location at the roadside market that states the name of the business.
8. If ownership of an approved roadside farm market changes, the new owner must reapply for membership. In no event shall market approval or signs be transferable from one location to another.
9. All approved farm markets must maintain adequate parking space for all vehicles to park clear of the highway and highway right-of-way.
10. Produce or other agricultural products packaged with the topping or facing of containers exposing produce with inferior produce or products concealed underneath shall constitute "False Packs" and as such shall not be offered for sale at any Certified Roadside Farm Market.
11. With respect to size, quality, weights, volumes, packaging, and labeling, all products sold at a Certified Roadside Farm Markets must comply with all laws and rules and regulations applicable to that product.
12. Failure to comply with the membership criteria of the Certified Roadside Market Program shall constitute grounds for disapproval of any application for participation or for revocation of any approval previously granted.



[Certified Roadside Farm Market Program – Membership Application \(PDF\)](#)

[Certified Roadside Farm Market Program – Grower Certification \(PDF\)](#)

Livestock Tag Program/State Fair Competitions

Got to Be NC Livestock Tag Program

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has launched a tag program to promote livestock born and raised in North Carolina. [View Tag Program Brochure](#)

The Got to Be NC tag program uses special ear tags to identify North Carolina born-and-bred cattle, swine, sheep and goats. The voluntary program is a collaboration between the department's Got to Be NC marketing program, Livestock, and Veterinary Division.

To qualify for the program, ranchers must be North Carolina residents and complete the Got to Be NC application and participating animals must be conceived and born in the state. Participating livestock must be identified with an official Got to Be NC tag purchased by the producer before they are sold. The tags cost \$5 apiece. Ranchers must complete a producer tag record and submit it to the department after tagging their animals. (Instructions below)

Application to the Got to Be NC Livestock Tag Program must be made by completing and submitting the below forms in addition to and separate from your Got to Be NC application. Please download the forms and submit via the instructions provided on the document.

In addition to promoting livestock, the tags also will help producers comply with state and federal laws governing interstate transportation of animals.

[How to Properly Tag Video](#)

[Tag Order Form](#)

[Producer Tag Report](#) – After tagging, return to Neil Bowman via email: neil.bowman@ncagr.gov or mail: Attn: Neil Bowman, Producer Tag Report, 1020 Mail Service Center Raleigh NC 27699-1020.

Got to Be NC State Fair Livestock Competitions

To qualify for the Got to Be NC competitions, producers who have traditionally sold their animals as North Carolina Born and Bred during the fair will need to participate in the new tag program.

Click [here](#) for ear tag order forms and more information.

QUESTIONS: Contact the NCDA&CS Livestock Marketing Section Manager, Neil Bowman at (919) 707-3151, neil.bowman@ncagr.gov.

Contact Us

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