GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 135 Committee Substitute Favorable 4/29/25

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Misbranding/Cell-Cultured Meat/WNC Donations. Short Title: (Public) Sponsors: Referred to: February 18, 2025 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT TO REQUIRE LABELING OF CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS; TO PROHIBIT COMMUNITY COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM PURCHASING CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS; TO ESTABLISH A VOLUNTARY DONATION PROGRAM TO SUPPORT FARMS AFFECTED BY HURRICANE HELENE; AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR A FARM AND FORESTRY DISASTER RELIEF EFFICIENCY AUDIT. The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts: REQUIRE LABELING OF CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS **SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 106-549.15 reads as rewritten: "§ 106-549.15. Definitions. As used in this Article, except as otherwise specified, the following terms shall have the meanings stated below: "Agricultural food animal" means a domesticated animal belonging to the (1a) bovine, caprine, ovine, or porcine species. "Cell-cultured food product" means a food product having one or more (5a) sensory attributes that resemble a type of tissue originating from an agricultural food animal but that, in lieu of being derived from meat processing, is derived from manufacturing cells, in which one or more stem cells are initially isolated from an agricultural food animal, are grown in vitro, and may be manipulated, as part of a manufacturing operation. "Close proximity" means any of the following: (5b)Immediately before or after the name of the product. In the line of the label immediately before or after the line containing <u>b.</u> the name of the product. Within the same phrase or sentence containing the name of the <u>c.</u> product. "Identifying meat term" means any word or phrase that states, indicates, (9a) suggests, or describes a meat product, regardless of whether the word or phrase is used individually, as a portmanteau, or as a compound word. This



term includes all of the following:

1 A common name for the species of the agricultural food animal subject a. 2 to slaughter and processing, including a calf or cow, goat or kid, hog 3 or pig, lamb, or sheep. 4 A common name for a characteristic of a species of the agricultural <u>b.</u> 5 food animal subject to slaughter and processing based on age, breed, 6 7 Meat; beef or veal; cabrito or chevon; lamb or mutton; or pork. <u>c.</u> 8 d. A common name used to describe a major cut of a meat of an 9 agricultural food animal slaughtered and processed, including a major meat cut specified in 9 C.F.R. § 317.344, or the common name of an 10 11 organ or offal, including heart, liver, kidney, or tongue. Any other common name that a reasonable purchaser would 12 <u>e.</u> 13 immediately and exclusively associate with a meat product prepared for sale in normal commercial channels such as bacon, baloney, 14 bologna, bone, brat or bratwurst, brisket, burger or hamburger, butt, 15 chop, chuck, cold cut, cutlet, filet, flat iron, frank or frankfurter, ham, 16 17 hock, hot dog, jerky, liverwurst, loin, London broil, lunch meat, New York strip, pepperoni, porterhouse, ribeye, roast, rib or sparerib, 18 salami, sausage, shank, sirloin, tenderloin, or a comparable word or 19 20 phrase. 21 22 (14)"Meat food product" means any product capable of use as human food that is 23 made wholly or in part from any meat or other portion of the carcass of any 24 cattle, sheep, swine, goats, bison, fallow deer, or red deer, or any cell-cultured 25 food product made from cells of those animals, excepting products that 26 contain meat or other portions of such carcasses only in a relatively small 27 proportion or historically have not been considered by consumers as products 28 of the meat food industry, and that are exempted from definition as a meat 29 food product by the Board under such conditions as it may prescribe to assure 30 that the meat or other portions of such carcasses contained in such product are 31 not adulterated and that such products are not represented as meat food 32 products. This term as applied to food products of equines shall have a 33 meaning comparable to that provided in this subdivision with respect to cattle, 34 sheep, swine, goats, and bison. "Misbranded" shall apply to any carcass, part thereof, meat or meat food 35 (15)36 product under one or more of the following circumstances: 37 If its labeling is false or misleading in any particular; a. 38 If it is offered for sale under the name of another food; b. 39 If it is imitation of another food, unless its label bears, in type of c. 40 uniform size and prominence, the word "imitation" and immediately thereafter, the name of the food imitated; 41 42 . . . 43 The product is a cell-cultured food product and it is not labeled in m. accordance with G.S. 106-549.28A. 44 45 46 (21a) "Qualifying term" means a word, compound word, or phrase that would 47 clearly disclose to a reasonable purchaser of meat food products that a food 48 product is a cell-cultured meat product. This includes the following terms: "cell-cultured," "fake," "lab-grown," or "grown in a lab." 49 50 "Ratite" means a bird whose breastbone is smooth so that flight muscles (21b)

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cannot attach, such as an ostrich, an emu, and a rhea. These birds are subject

1			provisions of this Article and Article 49C to the same extent as any other
2		meat	food product.
3	"		
4			.(b) Article 49B of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes is amended by
5	adding a new sec		
6	-		ing of cell-cultured food products.
7			any cell-cultured food product that contains an identifying meat term
8			ast 20-point font or the size of the surrounding type, whichever is greater,
9			o the name of the product, an appropriate qualifying term.
10			ed food product that does not meet the requirements of this section shall
11	•		for purposes of this Article."
12			(c) G.S. 106-549.51 reads as rewritten:
13	"§ 106-549.51. П		
14	For purposes	of this	Article, the following terms shall have the meanings stated below:
15	(4.)	"C 11	
16	<u>(4a)</u>		-cultured food product" means a food product having one or more
17			ry attributes that resemble a type of tissue originating from poultry but
18			in lieu of being derived from meat processing, is derived from
19			facturing cells, in which one or more stem cells are initially isolated from
20		-	ry, are grown in vitro, and may be manipulated, as part of a
21	(41.)		facturing operation.
22	<u>(4b)</u>		e proximity" means any of the following:
23		<u>a.</u>	Immediately before or after the name of the product.
24		<u>b.</u>	In the line of the label immediately before or after the line containing
25		_	the name of the product.
26		<u>c.</u>	Within the same phrase or sentence containing the name of the
27			product.
28	(10°)	"I dom	tifying moulton town! means one would be about that atotas indicates
29	<u>(10a)</u>		tifying poultry term" means any word or phrase that states, indicates,
30			ests, or describes a poultry product, regardless of whether the word or
31 32		-	e is used individually, as a portmanteau, or as a compound word. This
			includes all of the following:
33 34		<u>a.</u>	A common name for the species of the poultry subject to slaughter and
35		h	processing, including chicken, poultry, or turkey.
36		<u>b.</u>	A common name for a characteristic of a species of the poultry subject to slaughter and processing based on age, breed, or sex.
37		0	Meat, broiler, fryer, poulet, or yearling.
38		<u>c.</u> <u>d.</u>	
39		<u>u.</u>	A common name used to describe a major cut of poultry slaughtered and processed, including a poultry product such as breast, drumstick,
39 40			- · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
41			giblet, thigh, or wing; or the common name of an organ or offal, including gizzard, heart, liver, kidney, or tongue.
42		0	Any other common name that a reasonable purchaser would
43		<u>e.</u>	immediately and exclusively associate with a poultry product prepared
44			for sale in normal commercial channels.
45			101 Sale III normal commercial chamiers.
46	(17)	"Mick	oranded" shall apply to any poultry product under one or more of the
40 47	(17)		ving circumstances:
48			If its labeling is false or misleading in any particular;
48 49		a. b.	If it is offered for sale under the name of another food;
サフ		υ.	if it is offered for safe under the hame of another food,

1 2 3		c.	If it is an imitation of another food, unless its label bears, in type of uniform size and prominence, the word "imitation" and immediately thereafter, the name of the food imitated;
4			
5		<u>m.</u>	If it is a cell-cultured food product and it is not labeled in accordance
6			with G.S. 106-549.55(e).
7	•••		
8	(26)	"Poult	try product" means any poultry carcass, or part thereof; or any product
9	,		is made wholly or in part from any poultry carcass or part thereof, or
10			ell-cultured food product made from cells of poultry, excepting products
11			contain poultry ingredients only in a relatively small proportion or
12			ically have not been considered by consumers as products of the poultry
13			industry, and which are exempted by the Board from definition as a
14			y product under such conditions as the Board may prescribe to assure
15			be poultry ingredients in such products are not adulterated and that such
16			cts are not represented as poultry products.
17		produ	ets are not represented as pountry products.
18	(28a)	"Onoli	if ying term" mans a word compound word or phress that would
19	<u>(20a)</u>	_	ifying term" means a word, compound word, or phrase that would y disclose to a reasonable purchaser of poultry products that a food
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20		-	ct is a cell-cultured food product. This includes the following terms:
21	,,	cen-c	cultured," "fake," "lab-grown," or "grown in a lab."
22	····	TON 1	(d) C C 10(540 55 and a second to the secon
23			(d) G.S. 106-549.55 reads as rewritten:
24	"§ 106-549.55.		ling standards; false and misleading labels. labeling of
25	<u>cen-ct</u>	<u>murea</u>	food products.
26	(a) The le	halafa	way call cultured food and duct that contains on identifying acultury town
27	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		any cell-cultured food product that contains an identifying poultry term
28			ast 20-point font or the size of the surrounding type, whichever is greater,
29	-	-	the name of the product, an appropriate qualifying term."
30			(e) This section becomes effective October 1, 2025, and applies to
31	products sold or o		for sale on or after that date
32		nieleu	for sale on or after that date.
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33		MMU	NITY COLLEGES, PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, AND PUBLIC
34	SCHOOLS FRO	MMUI M PUI	NITY COLLEGES, PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, AND PUBLIC RCHASING CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS
34 35	SCHOOLS FRO SECT	MMUI M PUI	NITY COLLEGES, PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, AND PUBLIC RCHASING CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS (a) G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:
34 35 36	SCHOOLS FRO SECT	MMUI M PUI ION 2.	NITY COLLEGES, PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, AND PUBLIC RCHASING CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS (a) G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read: asses of meat and poultry products. – The State Board of Education shall
34 35 36 37	SCHOOLS FRO SECT	MMUN OM PUI ION 2. Purcha	NITY COLLEGES, PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, AND PUBLIC RCHASING CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS (a) G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read: asses of meat and poultry products. — The State Board of Education shall bit public school units from purchasing cell-cultured food products as
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34 35 36 37 38 39	SCHOOLS FRO SECT "(50) SECT	MMUN OM PUI TION 2. Purcha prohib define TION 2.	NITY COLLEGES, PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, AND PUBLIC RCHASING CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS (a) G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read: asses of meat and poultry products. — The State Board of Education shall bit public school units from purchasing cell-cultured food products as ad in G.S. 106-549.15 or G.S. 106-549.51." (b) Part 2 of Article 17 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is
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34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47	SECT "(50) SECT amended by addir "§ 115C-264.6. I Local boards cell-cultured food SECT "(p) Purcha cell-cultured food SECT	MMUN OM PUI TION 2. Purchas prohib define TION 2. ng a nev Purchas of educ produc TION 2. ases of produc TION 2.	NITY COLLEGES, PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, AND PUBLIC RCHASING CELL-CULTURED FOOD PRODUCTS (a) G.S. 115C-12 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read: asses of meat and poultry products. — The State Board of Education shall bit public school units from purchasing cell-cultured food products as add in G.S. 106-549.15 or G.S. 106-549.51." (b) Part 2 of Article 17 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is as section to read: (c) G.S. 106-549.15 or G.S. 106-549.51." (c) G.S. 115C-218.75 is amended by adding a new subsection to read: Meat and Poultry Products. — A charter school shall not purchase ets as defined in G.S. 106-549.15 or G.S. 106-549.51." (d) G.S. 115C-238.66 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:
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"c.

Food services. – The laboratory school shall strive to ensure that one hundred percent (100%) muscadine grape juice is made available to students as a part of the school's nutrition program or through the operation of the school's vending facilities. The laboratory school shall not purchase cell-cultured food products as defined in G.S. 106-549.15 or G.S. 106-549.51. Upon request, the local school administrative unit in which the laboratory school is located shall administer the National School Lunch Program for the laboratory school in accordance with G.S. 115C-264."

SECTION 2.(f) G.S. 115D-20 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115D-20. Powers and duties of trustees.

The trustees of each institution shall constitute the local administrative board of such institution, with such powers and duties as are provided in this Chapter and as are delegated to it by the State Board of Community Colleges. The powers and duties of trustees shall include the following:

• • •

(16) To establish policies to prevent the purchase of cell-cultured food products as defined in G.S. 106-549.15 or G.S. 106-549.51."

SECTION 2.(g) Part 5 of Article 1 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 116-43.26. Purchases of meat and poultry products.

Each constituent institution shall establish policies to prevent the purchase of cell-cultured food products as defined in G.S. 106-549.15 or G.S. 106-549.51."

SECTION 2.(h) This section becomes effective October 1, 2025. Subsections (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) of this section apply beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. Subsections (f) and (g) of this section apply beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

ESTABLISH A VOLUNTARY DONATION PROGRAM TO SUPPORT FARMS AFFECTED BY HURRICANE HELENE

SECTION 3.(a) Definitions. – Unless otherwise provided, the following definitions apply in this section:

- (1) Affected area. The counties designated before, on, or after the effective date of this section under a major disaster declaration by the President of the United States under the Stafford Act (P.L. 93-288) as a result of Hurricane Helene.
- (2) Department. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- (3) Foundation. The North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.
- (4) Fund. The Western North Carolina Farm Relief Fund established in subsection (b) of this section.

SECTION 3.(b) There is created the Western North Carolina Farm Relief Fund as an interest-bearing, nonreverting special fund in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The State Treasurer shall be the custodian of the Fund and shall invest its assets in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 147-69.2 and G.S. 147-69.3. The Department shall award grants from the Fund to individual farmers located in the affected area with verifiable crop losses or damage to farm infrastructure due to Hurricane Helene to assist with any of the following priorities:

- (1) Removal of debris from stream channels, road culverts, and bridges.
- (2) Reshape and protect eroded banks.
- (3) Repair damaged drainage facilities.
- (4) Establish cover on critically eroding lands.
- (5) Repair damaged levees and structures.

(6) Repair conservation practices.

SECTION 3.(c) The Department, in collaboration with the Foundation, shall develop a voluntary plan by which retailers may offer consumers the option to round up the amount of their purchases to the nearest dollar or make a greater contribution and remit the collected funds to the Fund. The Department shall develop criteria for the prioritization of funds and requirements for the matching of funds by grant recipients, if any. A retailer may retain one percent (1%) of the funds collected by the retailer to offset the costs of participation in the program. The Foundation may use up to one percent (1%) of the funds in the Fund for the administration of the program and two percent (2%) of the funds in the Fund for marketing and advertising of the program.

SECTION 3.(d) This section is effective when it becomes law and expires June 30, 2030. Any unexpended, unencumbered funds remaining in the Fund on June 30, 2030, shall revert to the State Emergency Response and Disaster Relief Fund established in G.S. 166A-19.42.

FARM AND FORESTRY DISASTER RELIEF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AUDIT

SECTION 4.(a) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services the amount of one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year for the Department, in consultation with North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, and North Carolina Cooperative Extension, in the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 fiscal years to map damage to agricultural and forestry operations in Western North Carolina using drone and satellite data in order to determine the efficiency of the State's response to Hurricane Helene. The Department shall take all steps necessary to establish baseline data as soon as possible in the 2025-2026 fiscal year. The Department shall compare the baseline data to data collected as soon as possible after the beginning of the 2026-2027 fiscal year. The Department shall report its findings to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources no later than February 1, 2027.

SECTION 4.(b) The funds appropriated under this section shall not revert but shall remain available for purposes consistent with this section until the project is complete.

SEVERABILITY CLAUSE AND EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 5.(a) If any section or provision of this act is declared unconstitutional or invalid by the courts, it does not affect the validity of this act as a whole or any part other than the part declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

SECTION 5.(b) Except as otherwise provided, this act becomes effective October 1, 2025.