



Sandra J. Adams
Commissioner

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Animal and Food Industry Services
Office of Dairy & Foods

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www.vdacs.virginia.gov

Starting a Food Processing Business in Virginia

General Information

Thank you for your inquiry regarding starting a food business in Virginia. The following documents are enclosed/attached, or are available at the VDACS website for you:

- VDACS Application - Food Processing Operation
- Virginia Food Laws
- 21 CFR 110 Current Good Manufacturing Practices
- Other information pertaining to your food business

If, after reviewing the application and other materials, you have any questions, please contact your Regional VDACS Food Safety Program office.

Northern Virginia Regional Office: 804-786-3520
Southwest Regional Office: 540-562-3641
Tidewater Regional Office: 757-363-3840

Please be advised that section 3.2-5130 of the Virginia Food Law requires that your kitchen/food processing and storage areas be inspected prior to starting your food operation. An inspection of your operation will not be conducted until all of the necessary information requested in the application has been reviewed by the VDACS Food Safety Program office. You will be notified when this has been completed.

Also, there is a \$40.00 fee for home food processing businesses. You will not be required to pay this fee at the time of your initial inspection; however, you will receive a bill during our next billing cycle. If you have questions about this inspection fee, you may visit this [page](#).

Sincerely,

Pamela Miles
Program Supervisor
Food Safety Program
Office of Dairy & Foods
Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Application for a Food Processing Operation

Date of Application:		County in which commercial kitchen is located:	
Business Name:			
Business Mailing Address:			
Owner Name:			
Phone:			
Email Address:			
Commercial Kitchen Name:			
Commercial Kitchen Address:			
Water Supply:	Public	Private	Type (drilled, bored, etc)
Sewage Disposal:	Public	Private	

Checklist of Required Information

	Documentation of community kitchen approval to operate a food business on the property
	Diagram of food processing and storage areas
	If private water supply is used, a copy of water test results showing Coliform bacteria are "Absent"
	List of all products submitted for review with planned method and place of distribution
	List of all ingredients used in your business, with the source of each
	Product information sheet for each product
	Copies of labels are included for each product
	If making acidified foods, copy of letter from Process Authority letter
	If making acidified foods, copy of Better Process Control School certificate of completion

Application Instructions

1. Complete page 1, providing all of the requested basic business/owner information.
2. Provide written documentation that you have approval from your local zoning office to operate a home food processing business on your property. Any verifiable documentation from the zoning office is acceptable, such as email correspondence, official letter or other.
3. Provide a diagram of the food processing and storage areas. See example on Page 5.
4. If you are using a private water supply (e.g. well), you must provide evidence that the water is free of harmful bacteria. A copy of lab results showing that Coliform bacteria were “absent” in a sample of your well water is required. The water test results must be recent (less than six months old). The testing laboratory that you use must be certified by the Virginia Safe Drinking Water Program. A list of labs that are certified for water testing can be found at this link: [Virginia Safe Drinking Water Certified Laboratories](#)
5. Provide a list of all products you plan to make, as well as the planned method and place of distribution.
6. Provide a list of all of the ingredients you will be using, and the source of those ingredients.
7. Complete a Product Information Sheet for each product you plan to make. Mark “Trade Secret” if your formulation is confidential. We will not share your recipe, but you must provide it. See example on page 7.
8. Provide a copy of the label for each product (mock labels are acceptable if actual labels have not yet been made). Incomplete labels will cause your application to be returned to you. See instructions on page 8 and 9. More guidance on labeling is available from VDACS’ Food Safety Program and from [FDA](#).
9. **Acidified Foods Only:** If your proposal involves acidified foods (pickled products, salsa, pumpkin/sweet potato butter, barbecue sauces, chow-chow, relishes, hot pepper jelly, hot sauces, etc.), or products containing garlic in oil, your process must be evaluated by a competent processing authority and a copy of the evaluation letter furnished with your application. A list of process authorities is available at this [website](#). Virginia Tech also provides this service. Joell Eifert is the Director of the Food Innovations Program and can be reached at 540-231-2483 or joell.eifert@vt.edu. In addition, acidified food processors must successfully complete Better Process Control School and provide a copy of the certificate. You may send inquiries to the Food Innovations Program for course offerings.
10. Submit your completed application to the VDACS Food Safety office that is located in the region in which your business is located. If you are unsure about which of the three regions you are located, you may contact any of the offices with questions. Submit your application by mail, fax or email, with email being the preferred method. An incomplete application will cause delay in it being processed.
11. Once your application is submitted, it will be reviewed, and you will be contacted by the reviewer if there are any questions. When the application review is complete, a Food Safety Specialist will contact you to schedule your initial home kitchen inspection.

Northern VA Region Office
VDACS Food Safety Program
PO Box 1163
Richmond, VA 23218
Emma.lofton@vdacs.virginia.gov
Phone: 804-786-3520
Fax: 804-371-7792

Southwest Region Office
VDACS Food Safety Program
2943-E Peters Creek Rd
Roanoke, VA 24019
Anne.Smith@vdacs.virginia.gov
Phone: 540-562-3641
Fax: 540-562-3649

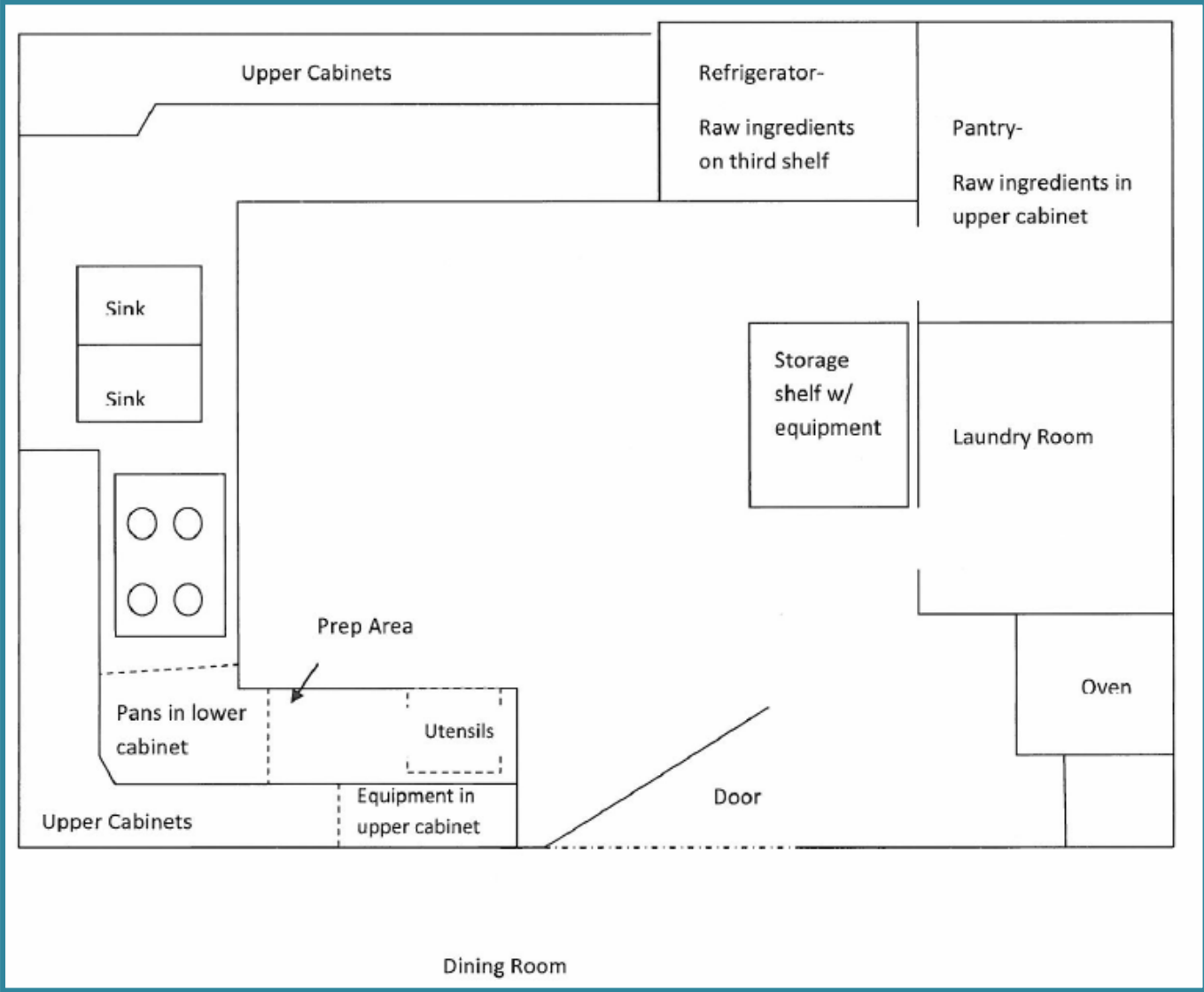
Tidewater Region Office
VDACS Food Safety Program
5700 Thurston Ave, Suite 104
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
Annie.McCullough@vdacs.virginia.gov
Phone: 757-363-3840
Fax: 757-363-3838

Zoning Approval

Attach your zoning approval here or on a separate sheet.

Example: diagram of food processing and storage areas

The diagram may be drawn using computer software or drawn by hand. If there are pets in the home, make it clear in the diagram how the food processing and storage areas are inaccessible to pests at all times.



Food Processing/Storage Area Diagram

Attach your diagram here or on a separate sheet.

Example: product information sheet

Product Information Sheet

Business Name: Grannie's Cookies, 111 Happy Ln, Anytown, VA 22554

Date: 1-1-2017

Product Name: Chocolate Chip Cookies

Trade Secret:

Recipe

Ingredients:

3 ½ cup all-purpose flour
2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
8 tablespoons butter
1 cup chopped walnuts
¾ cup granulated sugar
¾ cup brown sugar
2 whole eggs
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon vanilla

Step-By-Step Instructions:

1. Wash and sanitize utensils and preparation area.
2. Assemble ingredients and equipment.
3. Preheat oven to 375°F.
4. Combine flour, baking soda, and salt in small bowl.
5. Beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla in large mixer bowl.
6. Add eggs one at a time to butter/sugar mixture, beating well after each addition.
7. Gradually beat in flour mixture.
8. Stir in chocolate morsels and nuts.
9. Drop by rounded tablespoons onto greased baking sheet.
10. Bake at 375°F for 9-11 minutes or until golden brown.
11. Let cool for 2 minutes, then remove to wire racks to cool completely.
12. After cookies have cooled, place in packages.

Basic Labeling Requirements

The following are labeling components required for all packaged foods. Failure to provide labels in the format described below will cause your application to be returned.

Product Name:

- Must be on the front panel
- Must be an accurate description of the product
- Must be in bold print
- Must be the largest type on the panel

Net Weight:

- Must be on the front panel
- Must be stated in both standard and metric units
- Must be in bold print
- Must be located on the bottom of the panel

Ingredients Statement: Must appear on the same panel as the name and address of your business. It must be on the front panel or the panel directly to the right of the front panel. Ingredients must be listed in order of heaviest to least heavy. Ingredients like chocolate chips, for example, have multiple ingredients in themselves, and these sub-ingredients must be listed in parentheses next to the main ingredient. When one of the 8 major food allergens is an ingredient or sub-ingredient, it must be identified by name, either within the ingredient statement OR in a separate statement directly below the ingredient statement. This is called a “contains statement” and must follow the format shown below. The only words that may be used to identify the allergens are the following: Milk, Wheat, Eggs, Peanuts, Tree Nuts (name the specific type of nut), Soybeans, Fish (name the specific species of fish), and Crustacean Shellfish (name the specific species of crustacean).

Allergens* listed in ingredient statement:

Ingredients: all-purpose flour (bleached **wheat** flour, malted barley flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), semi-sweet chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate, cocoa butter, **soy** lecithin, vanillin, natural flavor), butter (cream (**milk**), salt), **walnuts**, granulated sugar, brown sugar (molasses), **eggs**, sodium bicarbonate, vanilla extract (vanilla bean extractives in water, alcohol), salt.

*Text does not need to appear in red.

Allergens* listed in contains statement:

Ingredients: all-purpose flour (bleached wheat flour, malted barley flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), semi-sweet chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate, cocoa butter, soy lecithin, vanillin, natural flavor), butter (cream, salt), walnuts, granulated sugar, brown sugar (molasses), eggs, sodium bicarbonate, vanilla extract (vanilla bean extractives in water, alcohol), salt. **Contains: wheat, soy, milk, walnuts, eggs**

OR

Name and Address of Manufacturer, Distributor, or Packer: Must appear on the same panel as the ingredient statement. It must be on the front panel or the panel directly to the right of the front panel. The address of the business must be listed in full—street name, city, state and zip. A PO Box, telephone number, email address, website address or other cannot substitute.

EXAMPLE LABEL

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Ingredients: all-purpose flour (bleached wheat flour, malted barley flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), semi-sweet chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate, cocoa butter, soy lecithin, vanillin, natural flavor), butter (cream, salt), walnuts, granulated sugar, brown sugar (molasses), eggs, sodium bicarbonate, vanilla extract (vanilla bean extractives in water, alcohol), salt. Contains: wheat, soy, milk, walnuts, eggs

Grannie's Cookies, 111 Happy Ln, Anytown, VA 22554

Net wt. 10 oz (283 g)

Nutrition Labeling Exemption for Small Businesses

Since you are applying to make food from your home kitchen, you are most likely not required to have a nutrition facts panel on your label. In order to qualify as a small business that is exempt from including a nutrition facts panel, you must have less than 10 full-time employees and sell less than 10,000 units of product in one year. Also, you may not have claims on the label if a nutrition facts panel is not present. Examples of claims can include: “low fat”, “no added sugar”, “healthy”, “high in fiber”, and etc. In addition, your product would have to meet the definition of these claims.

If you voluntarily include a nutrition facts panel, even though you are not required to have one, it must be correct and include all the required formatting and components. Below is a graphic showing what the Standard Format looks like. All components are required. If you are interested in including a nutrition facts panel, [Virginia Tech](#) offers this service, although you may choose to look elsewhere for this service.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving

Calories 260 **Calories from Fat 120**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 13g
Saturated Fat 5g
Trans Fat 2g

Cholesterol 30mg
Sodium 660mg
Total Carbohydrate 31mg
Dietary Fiber 0g
Sugars 5g

Protein 5g

Vitamin A 4% • Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 15% • Iron 4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Annotations:

- Helvetica Regular 8 point with 1 point of leading
- Franklin Gothic Heavy or Helvetica Black, flush left & flush right, no smaller than 13 point
- 3 point rule
- 7 point rule
- 1/4 point rule centered between nutrients (2 points leading above and 2 points below)
- 6 point Helvetica Black
- 8 point Helvetica Regular with 4 points of leading
- All labels enclosed by 1/2 point box rule within 3 points of text measure
- 1/4 point rule
- 8 point Helvetica Regular, 4 points of leading with 10 point bullets
- Type below vitamins and minerals (footnotes) is 6 point with 1 point of leading

This image was taken from FDA’s Food Labeling Guide. For more information on nutrition labeling, visit their website [here](#).

Product List and Planned Distribution

Products submitted for review	Planned distribution
<i>Example: Chocolate Chip Cookies</i>	<i>Example: Farmer's Market, local grocery stores, internet</i>

Ingredient List and Source

Ingredient Name	Ingredient Source
<i>Example: All-purpose flour</i>	<i>Example: Walmart, Food Lion, Wegmans</i>

Product Information Sheet

Business Name:

Date:

Product Name:

Trade Secret:

Recipe

Ingredients:

Step-By-Step Instructions:

Product Label

Attach copies of your labels here or on a separate sheet

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for users to attach copies of their product labels.

Product Information Sheet

Business Name:

Date:

Product Name:

Trade Secret:

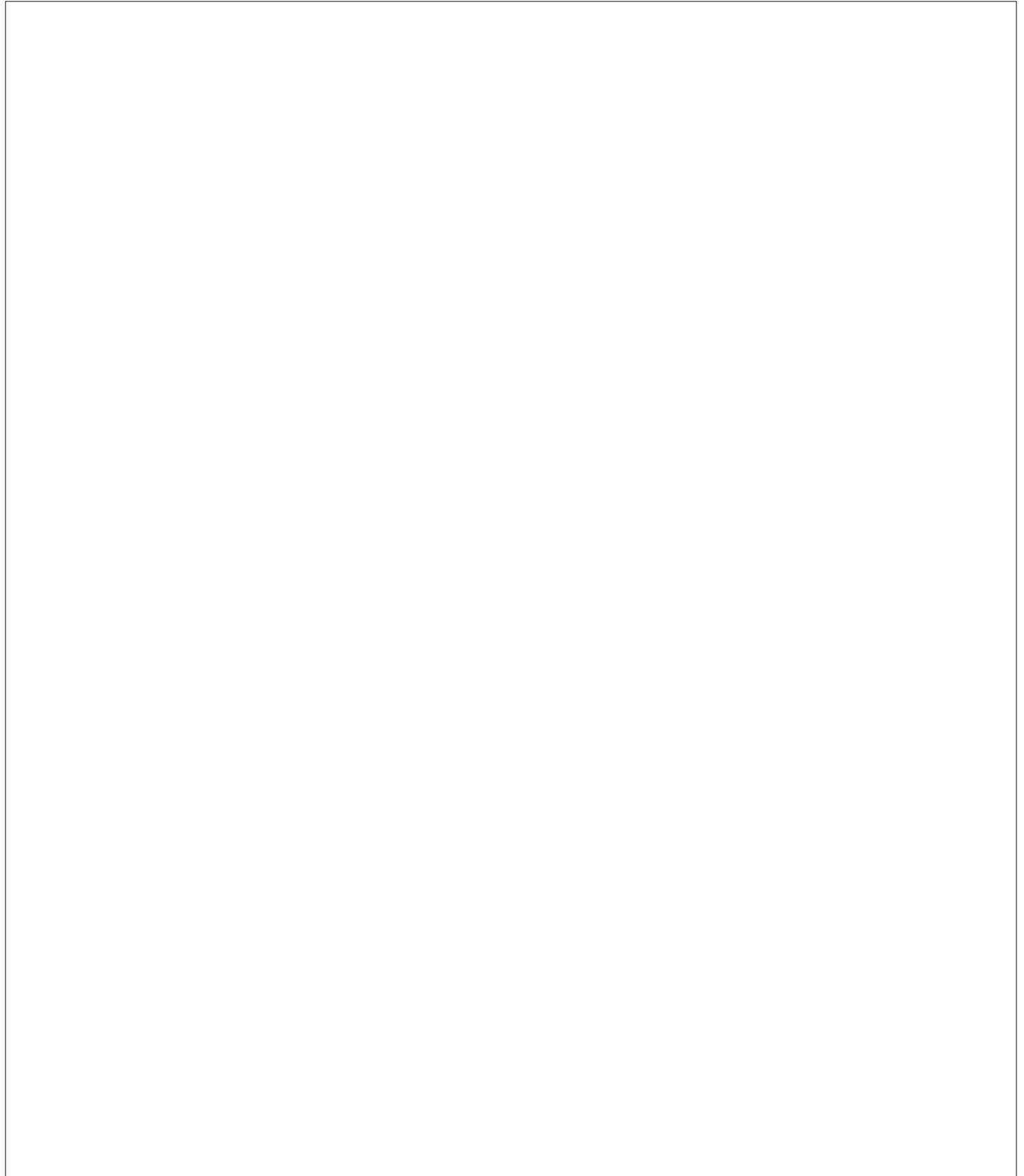
Recipe

Ingredients:

Step-By-Step Instructions:

Product Label

Attach copies of your labels here or on a separate sheet



Product Information Sheet

Business Name:

Date:

Product Name:

Trade Secret:

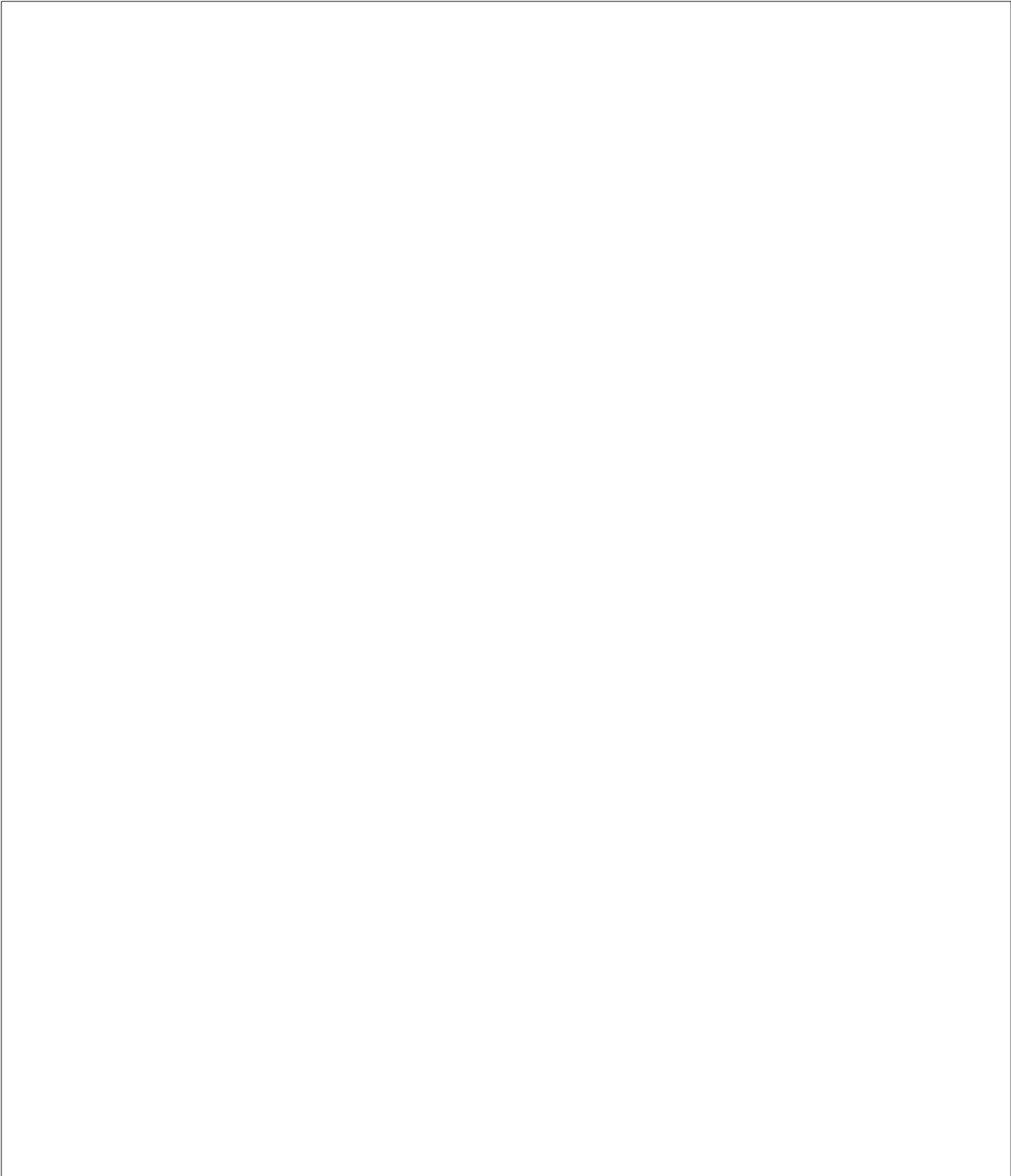
Recipe

Ingredients:

Step-By-Step Instructions:

Product Label

Attach copies of your labels here or on a separate sheet



Product Information Sheet

Business Name:

Date:

Product Name:

Trade Secret:

Recipe

Ingredients:

Step-By-Step Instructions:

Product Label

Attach copies of your labels here or on a separate sheet

