



Food Licensing



Exclusions and Exemptions

Some food businesses are not required to be licensed because of legal exclusions and exemptions. However, all food businesses are still required to produce safe, sanitary food products.

Product of the Farm or Garden Licensing Exclusion

Products of the farm or garden are foods that you grow or raise on land that you occupy (own, rent, or lease). You do not need a food license or Cottage Food Producer Registration for these types of products. Common products of the farm or garden include:

- Fruits, vegetables, and herbs
- Honey and maple syrup
- Eggs, meat, and poultry
- A product of the farm or garden may also be processed (e.g., washed, cut, frozen) prior to sale. Please visit the [MDA Produce Safety Program](https://www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/produce-safety-program) website for more information on fresh produce.

A product may no longer be considered a product of the farm or garden if off-farm ingredients are added. An example would be adding off-farm ingredients (e.g., salt, spices) to tomatoes you've grown to produce a pasta sauce. Adding ingredients that you did not grow, produce, or raise yourself means you no longer meet the product of the farm exemption.

Resources

MDA Produce Safety Program: www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/produce-safety-program

MDA Cottage Food Program: www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/cottage-food-law-guidance

If you have questions, please contact the MDA at mda.foodlicensingliaison@state.mn.us or 651-201-6081.

Cottage Food Licensing Exemption

A Cottage Food Producer registration is required if you make or sell certain foods from your home.

There are some limitations to foods that can be made and how they can be sold under the Minnesota Cottage Food Law. Cottage foods must be non-potentially hazardous, which means they are at low risk for the growth of pathogens that make people sick. For example, meat, poultry, fish, or unbaked eggs and dairy are not allowable items. Foods that may be made under the cottage food licensing exemption include:

- Baked foods like bread, cookies, and bars
- Canned foods like jams, jellies, and pickled vegetables
- Other goods like candy and dried seasoning mixes

Cottage foods can be sold direct to the customer from your home, a farmers' market, or a community event. They cannot be wholesaled or sold at retail stores.

To operate as a cottage food producer, you must register with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Please visit the [MDA Cottage Food Program](https://www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/cottage-food-law-guidance) website for more information.