

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Johnson County

Iowa · Iowa City · FIPS 19103 · Population 153,360 · Crosodo
Index #762*

STATE BASELINE

Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED

2026-05-05

IMPORTANT — NOT LEGAL ADVICE

This report compiles publicly-available statutes, regulations, and county zoning rules into a research reference. It is **not legal advice** and is provided **without warranty** as to accuracy, completeness, or current applicability.

Cottage food law changes frequently. Counties may amend zoning, health departments may issue new permits, and state legislatures may update statutes after the publication date shown above.

Always verify rules directly with your state department of health/agriculture and your county health and planning offices before relying on them for any business or regulatory decision. Consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation.

How to start — 60-second path

Johnson County, Iowa — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

—

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

No

PETS

No specific state restriction on pets in home for cottage food exemption.

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under Iowa cottage food rules (county cannot expand a state ban).
- ☐ **2. Pickup & zoning** — Home occupation and porch pickup cells above; HOA/lease may still block customer traffic.
- ☐ **3. Local tax / license** — Business license or sales tax certificate if your city/parish requires it (common even with no state food permit).
- ☐ **4. Training** — Food handler or state registration before market day.
- ☐ **5. Labels** — Disclaimer, allergens, ingredients, net quantity, producer info.
- ☐ **6. Call if unclear** — County health and planning for your exact address.

LABEL FIELDS TO INCLUDE

- ☐ Product name · producer name · address (or allowed alternative)
- ☐ Ingredients by weight · major allergens · net weight/quantity
- ☐ Iowa home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)

[Iowa label one-pager →](#)

[Local notes & questions →](#)

Planning path only — not legal advice. Rules change. Always verify with state and local offices before selling.

IOWA: JOHNSON COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #762* · FIPS 19103 · Iowa City

Johnson County

Population 153,360 · State baseline: Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Iowa has two pathways: (1) cottage food exemption under §137F.20 — no license, no cap, direct sales only, most non-TCS foods including pH-tested acidified foods ($\text{pH} \leq 4.6$ or $\text{aw} \leq 0.85$); (2) Home Food Processing Establishment (HFPE) registration allows broader foods including perishables and indirect retail sales. State law explicitly prohibits local government from adding restrictions under §137F.20(1).)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state restriction on pets in home for cottage food exemption.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (State law prohibits local governments from adding restrictions on cottage food operations under §137F.20(1). However, Johnson County/Iowa City may have general home occupation requirements for business licensing purposes. Local zoning rules may still apply for non-food-specific aspects.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (Iowa DIAL may inspect upon complaint. No routine inspection for exempt operations.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Yes — Iowa has two pathways: (1) cottage food exemption under §137F.20 — no license, no cap, direct sales only, most non-TCS foods including pH-tested acidified foods ($\text{pH} \leq 4.6$ or $\text{aw} \leq 0.85$); (2) Home Food Processing Establishment (HFPE) registration allows broader foods including perishables and indirect retail sales. State law explicitly prohibits local government from adding restrictions under §137F.20(1).

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

No specific state restriction on pets in home for cottage food exemption.

WATER SUPPLY

No specific requirement under Iowa cottage food exemption.

HANDWASHING

Good manufacturing practices apply.

FOOD STORAGE

Non-TCS foods only under exemption. Acidified foods (pickles, salsas) allowed if each batch pH-tested (≤ 4.6) or water activity tested ($\text{aw} \leq 0.85$) with production date on label.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED

No — Iowa DIAL may inspect upon complaint. No routine inspection for exempt operations.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT

Conditional — State law prohibits local governments from adding restrictions on cottage food operations under §137F.20(1). However, Johnson County/Iowa City may have general home occupation requirements for business licensing purposes. Local zoning rules may still apply for non-food-specific aspects.

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE

Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct-to-consumer sales only under exemption. From home, at farmers markets, events, roadside stands. HFPE pathway allows indirect retail sales. No out-of-state sales under either pathway.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified by state law; local rules may apply but state preempts added cottage food restrictions.

Relevant county code

Johnson County Zoning Code; Iowa Code §137F.20

RESEARCH NOTES

Verified-large county. State baseline governs. Iowa explicitly prohibits local government from adding restrictions under §137F.20(1). Johnson County is home to University of Iowa and Iowa City. No county-specific cottage food code identified. County URL verified.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov>

<https://dia.iowa.gov/food-safety/home-food-establishment>

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/137F.pdf>

Questions about this county? Local notes and a place to leave a question: crosodo.com/nb/iowa/johnson-county-discuss

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Johnson County	Linn County	Benton County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific state restriction on pets in home for cottage food exemption.	Not specified in state statute; kitchen must be sanitary	No state or county-specific rule found; good practice is to exclude pets from food prep areas.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Yes	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct-to-consumer sales only under exemption. From home, at farmers markets, events, roadside stands. HFPE pathway allows indirect retail ...	Direct sales only to end consumers: home, farmers markets, events, online with local delivery. No wholesale. Separate HFPE registration pat...	Direct-to-consumer sales only under the cottage food exemption. Customers may pick up at home, or operator may sell at farmers markets, roa...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	No	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	No	No
RESTRICTIONS	Iowa has two pathways: (1) cottage food exemption under §137F.20 — no license, no cap, direct sales only, most non-TCS foods including pH-t...	No license required under cottage food exemption (§137F.20). No sales cap. Non-TCS foods including pH-tested acidified foods allowed. Direc...	No license, registration, or inspection required under Iowa cottage food exemption (Iowa Code §137F.20). Allowed non-TCS foods include bake...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS foods only under exemption. Acidified foods (pickles, salsas) allowed if each batch pH-tested (≤ 4.6) or water activity tested ($a_w \leq \dots$)	Non-TCS foods including acidified foods if pH tested ($\text{pH} \leq 4.6$) or water activity tested ($a_w \leq 0.85$) with production date on label	Cottage food products must be stored to prevent contamination; TCS foods not permitted under the cottage food exemption.
POPULATION	153,360	229,308	25,645

State context — Iowa cottage food law

Johnson County's rules sit on top of Iowa's state cottage food framework. The state law sets the floor — counties can add but cannot remove protections.

STATUTE

Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20

ANNUAL SALES CAP

—

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

No

FOOD HANDLER CERT

No

KITCHEN INSPECTION

No

DIRECT SALES ONLY

Yes

INDIRECT SALES

Limited (see notes) — Cottage food direct-to-consumer sales only; however, a separate Home Food Processing Establishment (HFPE) license allows indirect retail and wholesale sales of almost any food including perishables.

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the **Iowa cottage food law report** on Crosodo, or open the live guide: crosodo.com/states/iowa.

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/137F.pdf>

State dept cottage food page: <https://dia.iowa.gov/food-safety/home-food-establishment>

Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/iowa/>

Questions about Johnson County? Local notes and a place to leave a question are on Crosodo. We monitor new threads — start with zoning, permits, or porch pickup.

crosodo.com/nb/iowa/johnson-county-discuss

Classifieds

Resources for cottage food & home bakers · crosodo.com/advertise

NATIONAL

SUPPLIES

Advertise here — Supplies

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

COURSES

Advertise here — Courses

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

INSURANCE

Advertise here — Insurance

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

LOCAL

Advertise here

Reach home bakers in Johnson County, Iowa. Supply stores, farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and bakery services welcome.

crosodo.com/advertise

Your business here

Local cottage food listings, kitchen rentals, co-packer referrals, and community events — post yours on Crosodo.

crosodo.com/nb/iowa/johnson-county-discuss

Free ad space available

Let us know if you're a non-profit or community organization. Farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and cottage food events near you welcome.

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