

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Polk County

Iowa · Des Moines · FIPS 19153 · Population 493,378 ·
Crosodo Index #184*

STATE BASELINE

Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

CONFIDENCE

HIGH

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

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

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

—

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

No

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

No

PETS

No specific state cottage food pet restriction

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: POLK COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #184* · FIPS 19153 · Des Moines

Polk County

Population 493,378 · State baseline: Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20 · **HIGH**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Non-TCS foods (§137F.20 exemption), no license, no cap, direct sales only. Acidified foods allowed if each batch pH-tested ($\text{pH} \leq 4.6$) or water activity tested ($\text{aw} \leq 0.85$). Alternatively, Home Food Processing Establishment (HFPE) license under §137F.8B allows broader foods including perishables and indirect retail sales.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state cottage food pet restriction

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

No (Iowa Code §137F.20(1) explicitly prohibits local governments from imposing restrictions on cottage food exemption activities. No local home occupation permit required for cottage food operations. This is one of the strongest preemption provisions in the country.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (Iowa §137F.20 explicitly prohibits local governments from adding restrictions; no inspection required for cottage food exemption)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Yes — Non-TCS foods (§137F.20 exemption), no license, no cap, direct sales only. Acidified foods allowed if each batch pH-tested ($\text{pH} \leq 4.6$) or water activity tested ($\text{aw} \leq 0.85$). Alternatively, Home Food Processing Establishment (HFPE) license under §137F.8B allows broader foods including perishables and indirect retail sales.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

No specific state cottage food pet restriction

WATER SUPPLY

No specific water testing requirement in state cottage food law

HANDWASHING

No specific requirement in state cottage food law

FOOD STORAGE

Standard home kitchen storage for approved non-TCS foods

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED

No — Iowa §137F.20 explicitly prohibits local governments from adding restrictions; no inspection required for cottage food exemption

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT

No — Iowa Code §137F.20(1) explicitly prohibits local governments from imposing restrictions on cottage food exemption activities. No local home occupation permit required for cottage food operations. This is one of the strongest preemption provisions in the country.

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE

No

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct sales only within Iowa. Farmers markets, roadside stands, home pickup/delivery, events. No retail/restaurant wholesale under the §137F.20 exemption. HFPE license allows broader sales including indirect retail. No annual cap under §137F.20.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not restricted by state cottage food law

Relevant county code

Iowa Code §137F.20 (cottage food exemption with local preemption). Polk County has no authority to add restrictions.

RESEARCH NOTES

Iowa is a Good-tier state with unusually strong local preemption. Iowa Code §137F.20(1) explicitly prohibits local governments from adding restrictions to the cottage food exemption. No license, no inspection, no cap, no training required. Polk County (Des Moines) cannot impose additional requirements. Acidified foods allowed with pH/water activity testing. HFPE license is available for broader foods. Confidence high: state preemption is unambiguous in statute.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.polkcountyiowa.gov>

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

<https://ij.org/issues/economic-liberty/homemade-food-seller/iowa/>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Polk County	Dallas County	Story County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific state cottage food pet restriction	No specific state restriction for cottage food exemption.	No specific restriction under Iowa cottage food exemption.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct sales only within Iowa. Farmers markets, roadside stands, home pickup/delivery, events. No retail/restaurant wholesale under the \$13...	Direct-to-consumer sales only under cottage food exemption. Home pickup, farmers markets, events permitted. HFPE pathway allows indirect re...	Direct sales only to end consumers from home, farmers markets, events. No indirect retail/wholesale under cottage food exemption. Separate ...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	No	Conditional	No
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	No	Varies	No
RESTRICTIONS	Non-TCS foods (§137F.20 exemption), no license, no cap, direct sales only. Acidified foods allowed if each batch pH-tested (pH ≤4.6) or wat...	Iowa's cottage food exemption (§137F.20): No license required, no sales cap, direct sales only. Virtually all non-TCS foods permitted, incl...	Iowa cottage food exemption (§137F.20): no license, no cap, no registration, direct sales only to end consumers. Most non-TCS foods allowed...
FOOD STORAGE	Standard home kitchen storage for approved non-TCS foods	Non-TCS foods allowed. Acidified foods allowed with pH test (pH ≤4.6 or water activity ≤0.85) and production date on label. Perishable bake...	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods; acidified foods must be batch pH-tested.
POPULATION	493,378	100,367	98,573

State context — Iowa cottage food law

Polk 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 Polk 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/polk-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 Polk 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/polk-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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