

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Washington County

Iowa · Washington · FIPS 19183 · Population 22,631 · Crosodo
Index #248*

STATE BASELINE

Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED

2026-05-06

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

Washington 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 pet restriction in Iowa cottage food law.

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: WASHINGTON COUNTY

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Washington County

Population 22,631 · State baseline: Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20 · MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Iowa cottage food law (§137F.20, amended 2022 by HF 2431) allows sale of non-TCS shelf-stable foods directly to consumers from a private residence. No license, inspection, or sales cap. Local ordinances are expressly preempted by state law.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific pet restriction in Iowa cottage food law.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

No (Iowa §137F.20 expressly preempts local government from adding restrictions on cottage food operations. No county-level home occupation permit required for cottage food in Washington County.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (No routine inspection for cottage food operations. Home Food Processing Establishment (HFPE) license pathway requires initial inspection.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Iowa cottage food law (§137F.20, amended 2022 by HF 2431) allows sale of non-TCS shelf-stable foods directly to consumers from a private residence. No license, inspection, or sales cap. Local ordinances are expressly preempted by state law.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No specific pet restriction in Iowa cottage food law.
WATER SUPPLY	No specific water testing requirement under Iowa cottage food law.
HANDWASHING	No specific handwashing mandate under Iowa cottage food law beyond general food safety practices.
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS (non-time/temperature control for safety) shelf-stable foods only. Acidified foods (pickles, salsas) allowed if each batch is pH-tested (pH ≤4.6) or water-activity tested (aw ≤0.85) and production date is on label.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — No routine inspection for cottage food operations. Home Food Processing Establishment (HFPE) license pathway requires initial inspection.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	No — Iowa §137F.20 expressly preempts local government from adding restrictions on cottage food operations. No county-level home occupation permit required for cottage food in Washington County.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	No

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct sales only under cottage food exemption. Allowed venues: home, farmers markets, roadside stands, special events, online (direct to consumer). HFPE license allows additional retail/indirect sales up to \$50,000/year.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified in Iowa cottage food statute.

Relevant county code

No county-specific cottage food ordinance identified. State preemption under Iowa Code §137F.20(1) applies.

RESEARCH NOTES

Iowa state law (§137F.20) explicitly preempts local ordinances for cottage food operations — no county-specific restrictions apply in Washington County. Two state pathways: (1) Cottage food exemption — no license, no cap, direct sales only; (2) HFPE license (\$50/year) — allows some TCS foods and indirect retail sales up to \$50,000/year. Defaulted to state baseline.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.washingtoncounty.gov>

<https://dial.iowa.gov/licenses/food-establishments-hotels/cottage-food-law>

<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/washington-county-discuss

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Washington County	Henry County	Iowa County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific pet restriction in Iowa cottage food law.	No state or county-specific rule found; good practice is to exclude pets from food prep areas.	No specific pet restriction in Iowa cottage food law.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Yes	Conditional	Yes
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct sales only under cottage food exemption. Allowed venues: home, farmers markets, roadside stands, special events, online (direct to c...	Direct-to-consumer sales only under the cottage food exemption. Customers may pick up at home, or operator may sell at farmers markets, roa...	Direct sales only under cottage food exemption. Allowed venues: home, farmers markets, roadside stands, special events, online (direct to c...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	No	Conditional	No
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	No	No	No
RESTRICTIONS	Iowa cottage food law (§137F.20, amended 2022 by HF 2431) allows sale of non-TCS shelf-stable foods directly to consumers from a private re...	No license, registration, or inspection required under Iowa cottage food exemption (Iowa Code §137F.20). Allowed non-TCS foods include bake...	Iowa cottage food law (§137F.20, amended 2022 by HF 2431) allows sale of non-TCS shelf-stable foods directly to consumers from a private re...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS (non-time/temperature control for safety) shelf-stable foods only. Acidified foods (pickles, salsas) allowed if each batch is pH-te...	Cottage food products must be stored to prevent contamination; TCS foods not permitted under the cottage food exemption.	Non-TCS (non-time/temperature control for safety) shelf-stable foods only. Acidified foods (pickles, salsas) allowed if each batch is pH-te...
POPULATION	22,534	19,954	16,575

State context — Iowa cottage food law

Washington 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	ANNUAL SALES CAP
Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20	—
REGISTRATION REQUIRED	FOOD HANDLER CERT
No	No
KITCHEN INSPECTION	DIRECT SALES ONLY
No	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 Washington 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/washington-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 Washington 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/washington-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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