

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Hancock County

Maine · Ellsworth · FIPS 23009 · Population 55,851 · Crosodo
Index #688*

STATE BASELINE

7 M.R.S.A. §282 (Food Sovereignty Act); statewide Home Food Processor License

STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Freedom	—	MEDIUM	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

Hancock County, Maine — 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

Yes

PETS

**Under statewide license pathway:
'uncontrolled children' prohibited in
kitchen during production. Standard
sanitation applies for pets.**

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under Maine 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
- ☐ Maine home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)

[Maine label one-pager →](#)

[Local notes & questions →](#)

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

MAINE: HANCOCK COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #688* · FIPS 23009 · Ellsworth

Hancock County

Population 55,851 · State baseline: 7 M.R.S.A. §282 (Food Sovereignty Act); statewide Home Food Processor License · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Two pathways: (1) Statewide Home Food Processor License requires kitchen inspection by DACF, well/septic testing if not on public systems, most non-TCS shelf-stable foods allowed, some acidified foods need UMaine lab approval (~\$26-39/product). (2) Local Food Sovereignty Ordinances: if Hancock County municipality has adopted ordinance, broader direct-to-consumer sales including potentially hazardous foods allowed. Multiple Hancock County municipalities (e.g., Brooklin, Penobscot, Surry, and others) have adopted food sovereignty ordinances.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Under statewide license pathway: 'uncontrolled children' prohibited in kitchen during production. Standard sanitation applies for pets.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Statewide Home Food Processor License required for sales beyond home municipality or at farmers markets (with additional Mobile Food Vendor license). Food sovereignty municipalities allow direct sales without state license. Hancock County seat is Ellsworth. Check individual municipality for food sovereignty ordinance adoption.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Statewide license pathway requires pre-operational kitchen inspection by DACF. Food sovereignty pathway is inspection-exempt for direct producer-to-consumer transactions.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Yes — Two pathways: (1) Statewide Home Food Processor License requires kitchen inspection by DACF, well/septic testing if not on public systems, most non-TCS shelf-stable foods allowed, some acidified foods need UMaine lab approval (~\$26-39/product). (2) Local Food Sovereignty Ordinances: if Hancock County municipality has adopted ordinance, broader direct-to-consumer sales including potentially hazardous foods allowed. Multiple Hancock County municipalities (e.g., Brooklin, Penobscot, Surry, and others) have adopted food sovereignty ordinances.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

Under statewide license pathway: 'uncontrolled children' prohibited in kitchen during production. Standard sanitation applies for pets.

WATER SUPPLY

Under statewide license: well water testing required if not on public water supply. Food sovereignty pathway: no such requirement for direct producer-to-consumer transactions.

HANDWASHING

Standard sanitation required under statewide license; no formal requirement under food sovereignty pathway.

FOOD STORAGE

Under statewide license: non-TCS shelf-stable products only. Under food sovereignty: broader including potentially hazardous foods if sold directly.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes — Statewide license pathway requires pre-operational kitchen inspection by DACF. Food sovereignty pathway is inspection-exempt for direct producer-to-consumer transactions.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — Statewide Home Food Processor License required for sales beyond home municipality or at farmers markets (with additional Mobile Food Vendor license). Food sovereignty municipalities allow direct sales without state license. Hancock County seat is Ellsworth. Check individual municipality for food sovereignty ordinance adoption.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Under statewide license: sales at farm, farm stands, farmers markets (with additional license), and home direct sales. Under food sovereignty: direct producer-to-consumer sales broadly allowed in participating municipalities.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified; must be producer's home kitchen.

Relevant county code

7 M.R.S.A. §282-284 (Food Sovereignty Act); Maine Home Food Processor License regulations under DACF

RESEARCH NOTES

Hancock County is in coastal Maine (Acadia National Park area). Maine's food sovereignty movement is particularly active in rural Maine; by 2025 over 80 municipalities have adopted food sovereignty ordinances. Multiple Hancock County municipalities have adopted these ordinances. The statewide license (dating to 1980s) requires pre-operational inspection plus well/septic testing if not on public systems. PL 2025, c. 309 made significant amendments expanding the food producer definition.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.hancockcounty.gov>

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/qar/inspection/home_food_processor.shtml

<https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/7/title7sec282.html>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Hancock County	Penobscot County	Knox County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Conditional	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Under statewide license pathway: 'uncontrolled children' prohibited in kitchen during production. Standard sanitation applies for pets.	Under statewide license: 'uncontrolled children' prohibited in kitchen during production; no specific pet restriction listed but good pract...	Under statewide license: animals typically excluded from production areas during production.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Under statewide license: sales at farm, farm stands, farmers markets (with additional license), and home direct sales. Under food sovereign...	Statewide license: sales from home, at farmers markets (with Mobile Food Vendor license), online, direct-to-consumer, and some retail. Food...	Under statewide license: direct and indirect sales allowed. Under food sovereignty ordinances: direct producer-to-consumer sales allowed. S...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Conditional	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Two pathways: (1) Statewide Home Food Processor License requires kitchen inspection by DACF, well/septic testing if not on public systems, ...	Maine has two pathways: (1) Statewide Home Food Processor License — requires license, kitchen inspection by DACF, and well/septic testing i...	Two pathways: (1) Statewide Home Food Processor License from ME DACF — requires kitchen inspection, well/septic testing if applicable, most...
FOOD STORAGE	Under statewide license: non-TCS shelf-stable products only. Under food sovereignty: broader including potentially hazardous foods if sold ...	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods for statewide license. Acidified foods need lab approval. Almost anything allowed under food sovereignty ordinan...	Shelf-stable foods required under statewide license. Acidified foods may require University of Maine lab approval.
POPULATION	55,851	152,640	40,729

State context — Maine cottage food law

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

STATUTE	ANNUAL SALES CAP
7 M.R.S.A. §282 (Food Sovereignty Act)	—
REGISTRATION REQUIRED	FOOD HANDLER CERT
Yes	No
KITCHEN INSPECTION	DIRECT SALES ONLY
Yes	No
INDIRECT SALES	
Yes — Under the statewide Home Food Processor License, producers may sell at any venue including restaurants, retail stores, farmers markets, and online, with no sales limit; indirect wholesale and retail channels are allowed once licensed and kitchen-inspected.	

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/7/title7sec282.html>

State dept cottage food page: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/qar/inspection/home_food_processor.shtml

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

Questions about Hancock 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/maine/hancock-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 Hancock County, Maine. 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/maine/hancock-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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