



Maine Farm Stand FAQ

Understanding and obtaining the appropriate license or permit is more than meeting regulatory requirements; it's an investment in your business and your customers. Licensing can help you build consumer confidence, expand your market opportunities, and connect you with valuable technical resources and expertise.

At the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, our goal is to help producers understand the licensing process, answer questions early, and support successful food businesses across Maine.

This resource answers the questions we hear quite often.

Do I Need a License?

I'm selling fresh fruits and vegetables. Do I need a license?

Usually, no.

If you're selling products in essentially the same condition in which they were grown or harvested, you generally do not need a food processing license.

Examples include:

- Fresh fruits
- Fresh vegetables
- Herbs
- Fresh flowers
- Whole pumpkins
- Whole squash
- Other unprocessed agricultural products

I'm washing or sorting my vegetables. Does that count as processing?

No.

Normal harvesting, washing to remove soil but not to make ready-to-eat, trimming, sorting, and displaying fresh produce do not typically require a food processing license.

I'm baking bread and cookies. Do I need a license?

Most baked goods require a **Home Food Processor License**.

The Home Food Processor License fee is \$20 per year and helps ensure products are made using safe ingredients, safe water, proven processes, sanitary kitchens, and proper labeling so consumers can buy with confidence while helping home-based businesses succeed. To learn more, read DACF's "[Home Food Processor 101](#)." It's a great place to start.

Examples include:

- Bread
- Cookies
- Brownies
- Muffins
- Biscotti
- Granola

Important

Home Food Processor Licenses are generally intended for shelf-stable foods that do not require refrigeration for food safety.

If your product must be refrigerated to remain safe, additional kitchen and licensing requirements are likely to apply.

Examples include:

- Cheesecake
- Cream pies
- Custard pies
- Cream-filled pastries
- Desserts containing cream cheese or whipped cream

When in doubt, ask before you bake.

I'm making jam, jelly, pickles, salsa, or canned foods.

Yes, these products generally require licensing.

Depending on the product, you may also need:

- Approved recipes
- Product testing
- Additional food safety review

Some acidified foods are subject to additional kitchen, licensing, and regulatory requirements.

Can I sell honey or maple syrup?

Yes, packaging and selling honey or maple syrup may require licensing and labeling requirements, depending on your operation.

Contact DACF before offering packaged products for sale.

Can I sell eggs?

Yes, small-scale producers may sell eggs directly to consumers, but labeling and handling requirements still apply.

Requirements vary depending on your operation. [Learn more.](#)

Dairy Products

Can I sell raw milk?

Yes, dairy products are regulated separately from most other farm stand foods.

Unlike many farm products, milk and milk products require permits or licenses depending on how they are produced and sold, not on the amount produced.

Is there a licensing exemption if I produce less than 20 gallons of milk per day?

No.

There is no exemption from dairy licensing or permitting based on the volume of milk produced or sold in Maine.

What dairy products are regulated?

Examples include:

- Fluid milk
- Goat milk
- Cream
- Flavored milk
- Yogurt
- Kefir
- Butter

- Cheese
- Sour cream
- Eggnog
- Ice cream
- Gelato
- Frozen yogurt

Some foods made with milk, such as puddings and candies, are regulated under other food licensing programs rather than the Dairy Program.

What dairy license do I need?

It depends on your operation.

Milk Producer Permit

Generally required if you produce milk that will be sent to a licensed facility for further processing.

Milk Distributor License

Generally required if you process or pasteurize milk or dairy products that will be sold in their final form. The base licensing fee for small-volume producers starts at \$35.

Both

If you both produce milk and manufacture finished dairy products for sale, you may need both a Milk Producer Permit and a Milk Distributor License. The [Dairy Inspection Program](#) can help determine which applies.

Can I sell raw milk as pet food?

Raw milk marketed as pet food or animal feed may be subject to different regulatory requirements than milk sold for human consumption.

Before marketing raw milk for animal consumption, contact the [Quality Assurance Program](#) to determine what requirements apply.

Common Mistakes

“I can sell any homemade baked good.”

Not necessarily.

If the product requires refrigeration for food safety, such as cheesecake or cream pie, it likely requires a license beyond a Home Food Processor License.

“I’m a small producer, so I don’t need a dairy license.”

Incorrect.

Maine does not provide a licensing exemption based on the volume of milk produced or sold.

Still Not Sure?

One conversation can save time and frustration.

If you’re unsure whether your product requires a permit or license, [contact the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry](#) before investing in equipment, labels, packaging, or inventory. Department staff can help determine which requirements apply to your operation and connect you with the appropriate licensing program.