

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Ford County

Illinois · Paxton · FIPS 17053 · Population 13,451 · Crosodo Index #2030*

STATE BASELINE

410 ILCS 625/4 (Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act)

STATE TIER

Great

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.

ILLINOIS: FORD COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2030* · FIPS 17053 · Paxton

Ford County

Population 13,451 · State baseline: 410 ILCS 625/4 (Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act) ·

MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Must register with local health department (Ford County Health Department or adjacent county health dept if none) for up to \$50/year. Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM-level) certification required for all persons who prepare or package food. Inspection is complaint-based only. Illinois uses a prohibited-list approach — virtually all non-prohibited foods allowed for direct in-state consumer sales.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state prohibition; good manufacturing practice applies

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (Ford County local zoning ordinances may regulate home-based business activities (parking, signage, customer traffic). Illinois state cottage food law preempts local restrictions that are inconsistent with state law, but operators should verify home occupation permit requirements with the county zoning/planning office or municipality of residence.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (Consumer complaint or suspected foodborne illness)

Home kitchen rules

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED | Yes — Must register with local health department (Ford County Health Department or adjacent county health dept if none) for up to \$50/year. Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM-level) certification required for all persons who prepare or package food. Inspection is complaint-based only. Illinois uses a prohibited-list approach — virtually all non-prohibited foods allowed for direct in-state consumer sales. |
| SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN | No |
| PET RESTRICTIONS | No specific state prohibition; good manufacturing practice applies |
| WATER SUPPLY | Potable water required; if on private well, annual coliform testing may be required |
| HANDWASHING | Handwashing sink required in kitchen |
| FOOD STORAGE | Proper storage of shelf-stable and non-TCS foods; acidified foods require pH documentation and food safety plan; fermented foods have additional requirements |

Inspection & permitting

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| INSPECTION REQUIRED | Upon-complaint — Consumer complaint or suspected foodborne illness |
| HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT | Varies — Ford County local zoning ordinances may regulate home-based business activities (parking, signage, customer traffic). Illinois state cottage food law preempts local restrictions that are inconsistent with state law, but operators should verify home occupation permit requirements with the county zoning/planning office or municipality of residence. |
| LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE | Varies |

Customer-facing rules

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP | Yes |
| ON-SITE SIGNAGE | Conditional |
| DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES | Direct sales to consumers only (in person, at farmers markets, online orders). In-state shipping of non-perishable items permitted within Illinois. Out-of-state shipping prohibited. No third-party resale or distribution. |
| MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME | No specific limit; all food preparers/packagegers must hold CFPM certification |

Relevant county code

Contact Ford County Health Department for local registration requirements under 410 ILCS 625/4

RESEARCH NOTES

Illinois cottage food law (PA 102-0633 eff. Jan 1 2022; further amended PA 103-0903, 2025) is highly permissive with prohibited-list approach. Registration required with local health department (\$50/year cap). Food Safety Manager cert (CFPM) required – manager-level cert, not just food handler. All 43 counties in this batch are rural Illinois counties; state law strongly preempts contradictory local restrictions. Ford County in east-central IL; county seat Paxton. Very rural agricultural county. No county-specific cottage food deviations found. Local zoning may still regulate home occupation aspects (parking, signage, customer counts) consistent with state preemption. University of Illinois Extension and Illinois Stewardship Alliance offer county-level guidance. Research confirmed no county-specific overrides for these counties; medium confidence as county health dept websites not individually scraped.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/food-safety/cottage-food.html>

<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=2625&ChapterID=35>

Questions? Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss your county's specific zoning rules at <https://crosodo.com/nb/illinois/ford-county-discuss>

State context — Illinois cottage food law

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

| | |
|---|---|
| STATUTE 410 ILCS 625/4 (Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act, §4) | ANNUAL SALES CAP — |
| REGISTRATION REQUIRED Yes | FOOD HANDLER CERT Yes (specific course) |
| KITCHEN INSPECTION Upon-complaint | DIRECT SALES ONLY Yes |
| INDIRECT SALES No — Illinois prohibits sales to restaurants, retail stores, and wholesale; direct in-state sales are allowed anywhere including home, online, farmers markets, events, and roadside stands; non-perishable items may be shipped within Illinois only. | |

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Illinois cottage food law report](#).

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=2625&ChapterID=35>

State dept cottage food page: <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/food-safety/cottage-food.html>

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

Questions?

Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss Ford County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

<https://crosodo.com/nb/illinois/ford-county-discuss>
