

## COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

# Dubuque County

Iowa · Dubuque · FIPS 19061 · Population 98,812 · Crosodo  
Index #225\*

## STATE BASELINE

Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20

## STATE TIER

Good

## ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

—

## CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

## 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.

## IOWA: DUBUQUE COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #225\* · FIPS 19061 · Dubuque

## Dubuque County

Population 98,812 · State baseline: Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20 · **MEDIUM****QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY****HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?**

Yes (Iowa cottage food exemption (§137F.20) requires no license, no cap, no registration. Direct sales only to end consumers. Most non-TCS foods allowed, including pH-tested acidified foods (pH ≤4.6 per batch). Local government expressly prohibited from adding restrictions per §137F.20(1).)

**SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?**

No

**PETS ALLOWED?**

No specific restriction under Iowa cottage food exemption.

**HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?**

No (Iowa §137F.20(1) expressly preempts local government restrictions on cottage food operations. No home occupation permit required for cottage food.)

**ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?**

Yes

**INSPECTION REQUIRED?**

No (No inspection authority for Iowa cottage food operations under §137F.20.)

**Home kitchen rules**

<b>HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED</b>	Yes — Iowa cottage food exemption (§137F.20) requires no license, no cap, no registration. Direct sales only to end consumers. Most non-TCS foods allowed, including pH-tested acidified foods (pH ≤4.6 per batch). Local government expressly prohibited from adding restrictions per §137F.20(1).
<b>SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN</b>	No
<b>PET RESTRICTIONS</b>	No specific restriction under Iowa cottage food exemption.
<b>WATER SUPPLY</b>	No specific requirement for Iowa cottage food operations.
<b>HANDWASHING</b>	No specific statutory requirement; good manufacturing practices recommended.
<b>FOOD STORAGE</b>	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods; acidified foods must be pH-tested per batch; production date must be on label.

**Inspection & permitting**

<b>INSPECTION REQUIRED</b>	No — No inspection authority for Iowa cottage food operations under §137F.20.
<b>HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT</b>	No — Iowa §137F.20(1) expressly preempts local government restrictions on cottage food operations. No home occupation permit required for cottage food.
<b>LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE</b>	No

**Customer-facing rules**

<b>ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP</b>	Yes
<b>ON-SITE SIGNAGE</b>	Conditional
<b>DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES</b>	Direct sales only to end consumers. Sales allowed from home, at farmers markets, events. Indirect sales not permitted under cottage food exemption (separate Home Food Processing Establishment license pathway allows broader distribution).
<b>MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME</b>	No employee limit specified for Iowa cottage food exemption; typically operated by single producer.

## Relevant county code

No Dubuque County-specific cottage food code section; state preemption applies.

### RESEARCH NOTES

No Dubuque County-specific cottage food rules found. Iowa §137F.20(1) explicitly prohibits local governments from adding restrictions, making this one of the more operator-friendly state frameworks. Dubuque County is in eastern Iowa; city of Dubuque may have business license requirements unrelated to cottage food. Iowa reorganized its food safety agency as Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL) in 2023.

---

### SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

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

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/137F.pdf>

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

## State context — Iowa cottage food law

Dubuque 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.

---

<b>STATUTE</b>	<b>ANNUAL SALES CAP</b>
Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20	—
<b>REGISTRATION REQUIRED</b>	<b>FOOD HANDLER CERT</b>
No	No
<b>KITCHEN INSPECTION</b>	<b>DIRECT SALES ONLY</b>
No	Yes
<b>INDIRECT SALES</b>	
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](#).

---

### 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?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/iowa/dubuque-county-discuss>

---