

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.

IOWA: WASHINGTON COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #248* · FIPS 19183 · Washington

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

<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/washington-county-discuss>

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](#).

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 Washington County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

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