

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Worth County

Iowa · Northwood · FIPS 19195 · Population 7,599 · Crosodo
Index #1162*

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: WORTH COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1162* · FIPS 19195 · Northwood

Worth County

Population 7,599 · State baseline: Iowa Code §137F.1 / §137F.20 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Must operate from primary residence. No license or inspection required for cottage food. Only non-TCS foods. Direct sales to end consumer only. Acidified foods allowed only if pH or water activity tested per batch.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state or county rule, but good manufacturing practices recommend excluding pets during food production.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Worth County is a small rural Iowa county. Iowa counties typically regulate home occupations through their zoning ordinances as accessory residential uses, requiring operations to be secondary to residential use, conducted by a resident, with no exterior commercial evidence, and limited to a portion of the home. No specific Worth County zoning ordinance text found in research; county-specific rules should be verified with Worth County Planning & Zoning or the Board of Supervisors in Northwood.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Conditional

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (No routine inspection. DIAL may investigate upon complaint or suspected foodborne illness.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Must operate from primary residence. No license or inspection required for cottage food. Only non-TCS foods. Direct sales to end consumer only. Acidified foods allowed only if pH or water activity tested per batch.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No specific state or county rule, but good manufacturing practices recommend excluding pets during food production.
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water required; no additional testing mandate for cottage food.
HANDWASHING	Standard good hygiene practices; no specific statutory requirement.
FOOD STORAGE	Products stored at primary residence; safe handling to prevent adulteration.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — No routine inspection. DIAL may investigate upon complaint or suspected foodborne illness.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — Worth County is a small rural Iowa county. Iowa counties typically regulate home occupations through their zoning ordinances as accessory residential uses, requiring operations to be secondary to residential use, conducted by a resident, with no exterior commercial evidence, and limited to a portion of the home. No specific Worth County zoning ordinance text found in research; county-specific rules should be verified with Worth County Planning & Zoning or the Board of Supervisors in Northwood.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Iowa cottage food law requires direct sales from producer to consumer. Home pickup is permitted. Delivery to consumers is permitted. No wholesale or restaurant sales.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified; typical Iowa rural county home occupation rules restrict non-resident employees.

Relevant county code

Worth County Zoning Ordinance (unincorporated areas); contact Worth County for current text.

RESEARCH NOTES

Worth County is a small, rural northern Iowa county (pop. ~7,600). No specific county zoning ordinance text was located for Worth County in research. Iowa cottage food law (§137F.1/§137F.20) governs food safety; no license or inspection required; direct sales only; non-TCS foods. County zoning home occupation rules are assumed to follow standard Iowa rural county patterns (accessory use, resident-operated, no exterior display). Defaulting to state baseline with medium confidence. Operators should contact Worth County at (641) 324-2316 for county-specific zoning confirmation.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.worthcountyiowa.gov>

<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/worth-county-discuss>

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Worth County	Cerro Gordo County	Hancock County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific state or county rule, but good manufacturing practices recommend excluding pets during food production.	No state or county-specific rule found; good practice is to exclude pets from food prep areas.	No state or county-specific rule found; good practice is to exclude pets from food prep areas.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Iowa cottage food law requires direct sales from producer to consumer. Home pickup is permitted. Delivery to consumers is permitted. No who...	Direct-to-consumer sales only under the cottage food exemption. Customers may pick up at home, or operator may sell at farmers markets, roa...	Direct-to-consumer sales only under the cottage food exemption. Customers may pick up at home, or operator may sell at farmers markets, roa...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	No	No
RESTRICTIONS	Must operate from primary residence. No license or inspection required for cottage food. Only non-TCS foods. Direct sales to end consumer o...	No license, registration, or inspection required under Iowa cottage food exemption (Iowa Code §137F.20). Allowed non-TCS foods include bake...	No license, registration, or inspection required under Iowa cottage food exemption (Iowa Code §137F.20). Allowed non-TCS foods include bake...
FOOD STORAGE	Products stored at primary residence; safe handling to prevent adulteration.	Cottage food products must be stored to prevent contamination; TCS foods not permitted under the cottage food exemption.	Cottage food products must be stored to prevent contamination; TCS foods not permitted under the cottage food exemption.
POPULATION	7,599	42,285	10,838

State context — Iowa cottage food law

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

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