

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Hancock County

Maine · Ellsworth · FIPS 23009 · Population 55,851 · Crosodo Index #688*

STATE BASELINE

7 M.R.S.A. §282 (Food Sovereignty Act); statewide Home Food Processor License

STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Freedom	—	MEDIUM	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.

MAINE: HANCOCK COUNTY

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Hancock County

Population 55,851 · State baseline: 7 M.R.S.A. §282 (Food Sovereignty Act); statewide Home Food Processor License · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Two pathways: (1) Statewide Home Food Processor License requires kitchen inspection by DACF, well/septic testing if not on public systems, most non-TCS shelf-stable foods allowed, some acidified foods need UMaine lab approval (~\$26-39/product). (2) Local Food Sovereignty Ordinances: if Hancock County municipality has adopted ordinance, broader direct-to-consumer sales including potentially hazardous foods allowed. Multiple Hancock County municipalities (e.g., Brooklin, Penobscot, Surry, and others) have adopted food sovereignty ordinances.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Under statewide license pathway: 'uncontrolled children' prohibited in kitchen during production. Standard sanitation applies for pets.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Statewide Home Food Processor License required for sales beyond home municipality or at farmers markets (with additional Mobile Food Vendor license). Food sovereignty municipalities allow direct sales without state license. Hancock County seat is Ellsworth. Check individual municipality for food sovereignty ordinance adoption.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Statewide license pathway requires pre-operational kitchen inspection by DACF. Food sovereignty pathway is inspection-exempt for direct producer-to-consumer transactions.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Two pathways: (1) Statewide Home Food Processor License requires kitchen inspection by DACF, well/septic testing if not on public systems, most non-TCS shelf-stable foods allowed, some acidified foods need UMaine lab approval (~\$26-39/product). (2) Local Food Sovereignty Ordinances: if Hancock County municipality has adopted ordinance, broader direct-to-consumer sales including potentially hazardous foods allowed. Multiple Hancock County municipalities (e.g., Brooklin, Penobscot, Surry, and others) have adopted food sovereignty ordinances.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Under statewide license pathway: 'uncontrolled children' prohibited in kitchen during production. Standard sanitation applies for pets.
WATER SUPPLY	Under statewide license: well water testing required if not on public water supply. Food sovereignty pathway: no such requirement for direct producer-to-consumer transactions.
HANDWASHING	Standard sanitation required under statewide license; no formal requirement under food sovereignty pathway.
FOOD STORAGE	Under statewide license: non-TCS shelf-stable products only. Under food sovereignty: broader including potentially hazardous foods if sold directly.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes — Statewide license pathway requires pre-operational kitchen inspection by DACF. Food sovereignty pathway is inspection-exempt for direct producer-to-consumer transactions.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — Statewide Home Food Processor License required for sales beyond home municipality or at farmers markets (with additional Mobile Food Vendor license). Food sovereignty municipalities allow direct sales without state license. Hancock County seat is Ellsworth. Check individual municipality for food sovereignty ordinance adoption.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Under statewide license: sales at farm, farm stands, farmers markets (with additional license), and home direct sales. Under food sovereignty: direct producer-to-consumer sales broadly allowed in participating municipalities.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified; must be producer’s home kitchen.

Relevant county code

7 M.R.S.A. §282-284 (Food Sovereignty Act); Maine Home Food Processor License regulations under DACF

RESEARCH NOTES

Hancock County is in coastal Maine (Acadia National Park area). Maine’s food sovereignty movement is particularly active in rural Maine; by 2025 over 80 municipalities have adopted food sovereignty ordinances. Multiple Hancock County municipalities have adopted these ordinances. Input batch had data formatting errors in state_dept_name and state_tier fields. The statewide license (dating to 1980s) requires pre-operational inspection plus well/septic testing if not on public systems. PL 2025, c. 309 made significant amendments expanding the food producer definition.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

- https://www.maine.gov/dacf/qar/inspection/home_food_processor.shtml
- <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/7/title7sec282.html>

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

State context — Maine cottage food law

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

STATUTE 7 M.R.S.A. §282 (Food Sovereignty Act)	ANNUAL SALES CAP —
REGISTRATION REQUIRED Yes	FOOD HANDLER CERT No
KITCHEN INSPECTION Yes	DIRECT SALES ONLY No
INDIRECT SALES Yes — Under the statewide Home Food Processor License, producers may sell at any venue including restaurants, retail stores, farmers markets, and online, with no sales limit; indirect wholesale and retail channels are allowed once licensed and kitchen-inspected.	

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/7/title7sec282.html>

State dept cottage food page: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/qar/inspection/home_food_processor.shtml

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

Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/maine/hancock-county-discuss>
