

## COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

# Howell County

Missouri · West Plains · FIPS 29091 · Population 40,762 ·  
Crosodo Index #1404\*

## STATE BASELINE

Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298

## STATE TIER

Great

## ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

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## 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.

MISSOURI: HOWELL COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1404\* · FIPS 29091 · West Plains

# Howell County

Population 40,762 · State baseline: Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298 · **MEDIUM**

**QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY**

**HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?**

Yes (Missouri Cottage Law is narrow: only nonperishable baked goods, canned jams/jellies, and dried herbs/mixes are permitted. All other foods require food establishment licensing. Direct sales only; no consignment or wholesale. Online/in-state shipping allowed since 2022 amendment. No sales cap. Local health departments prohibited from regulating cottage food production per §196.298(3)(1).)

**SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?**

No

**PETS ALLOWED?**

No explicit state restriction; standard food safety practices apply.

**HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?**

Yes (Howell County typically requires a home occupation permit for home-based businesses in residential zones. Business must be secondary to residential use. Common conditions: no on-site employees beyond household members, no external signage, limited customer visits, no hazardous materials. Missouri Cottage Law (§196.298) prohibits local health departments from regulating production, but zoning/home occupation permits are a separate local requirement. Many rural Missouri counties have limited formal zoning in unincorporated areas; verify with the West Plains county courthouse.)

**ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?**

Conditional

**INSPECTION REQUIRED?**

No (No routine inspections under cottage law. Health departments may investigate foodborne illness reports.)

## Home kitchen rules

<b>HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED</b>	Yes — Missouri Cottage Law is narrow: only nonperishable baked goods, canned jams/jellies, and dried herbs/mixes are permitted. All other foods require food establishment licensing. Direct sales only; no consignment or wholesale. Online/in-state shipping allowed since 2022 amendment. No sales cap. Local health departments prohibited from regulating cottage food production per §196.298(3)(1).
<b>SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN</b>	No
<b>PET RESTRICTIONS</b>	No explicit state restriction; standard food safety practices apply.
<b>WATER SUPPLY</b>	Potable water supply required.
<b>HANDWASHING</b>	Adequate handwashing per food safety practices.
<b>FOOD STORAGE</b>	Shelf-stable storage for baked goods, jams, jellies, dried herbs.

### Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — No routine inspections under cottage law. Health departments may investigate foodborne illness reports.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes — Howell County typically requires a home occupation permit for home-based businesses in residential zones. Business must be secondary to residential use. Common conditions: no on-site employees beyond household members, no external signage, limited customer visits, no hazardous materials. Missouri Cottage Law (§196.298) prohibits local health departments from regulating production, but zoning/home occupation permits are a separate local requirement. Many rural Missouri counties have limited formal zoning in unincorporated areas; verify with the West Plains county courthouse.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

### Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	No
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct sales at home and in-state delivery. Farmers markets, online sales with in-state delivery allowed since 2022. No interstate sales.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Typically household members only per home occupation permit conditions.

### Relevant county code

Howell County Zoning Ordinance (home occupations, if applicable); Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298

#### RESEARCH NOTES

Missouri’s cottage food law (§196.298) is narrow (baked goods, jams/jellies, dried herbs only) with no sales cap and no registration or inspection required. Local health departments are explicitly prohibited from regulating cottage food production. Howell County is a largely rural county; many unincorporated areas may lack formal zoning, but where residential zoning exists a home occupation permit is typically required as in most Missouri counties. The county seat is West Plains. Defaulted to state baseline with medium confidence due to limited county-specific zoning data found in research. Producers should verify directly with the Howell County Courthouse or planning/zoning office for current home occupation permit requirements.

#### SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

- <https://health.mo.gov/safety/foodsafety/pdf/home-based-kitchen-food-prod-guidance.pdf>
- <https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=196.298>

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

## State context — Missouri cottage food law

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

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<b>STATUTE</b>	<b>ANNUAL SALES CAP</b>
Mo. Rev. Stat. §196.298	—
<b>REGISTRATION REQUIRED</b>	<b>FOOD HANDLER CERT</b>
No	No
<b>KITCHEN INSPECTION</b>	<b>DIRECT SALES ONLY</b>
No	Yes

### INDIRECT SALES

No — Under §196.298, sales must be directly to consumers from the producer’s home. Events, farmers markets, restaurants, retail stores, and roadside stands are not permitted under this law. Internet/online sales are allowed but only if both the producer and buyer are located in Missouri. Local health departments are explicitly prohibited from regulating the production of food at cottage food operations. A separate Missouri statute (individual stands law) allows sales at events and roadside stands in counties that have adopted it, permitting most other nonperishable foods.

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

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### STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=196.298>

State dept cottage food page: <https://health.mo.gov/safety/foodsafety/cottagefood.php>

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

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## Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/missouri/howell-county-discuss>

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