

## COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

# Pondera County

Montana · Conrad · FIPS 30073 · Population 5,813 · Crosodo Index #1448\*

## STATE BASELINE

Mont. Code §50-50-116 and §50-50-117 (cottage food); Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq. (Local Food Choice Act)

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

## How to start — 60-second path

Pondera County, Montana — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

### HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

**Yes**

### STATE SALES CAP

—

### HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

**Varies**

### ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

**Yes**

### INSPECTION

**Upon-complaint**

### PETS

**Pets must be excluded from kitchen during production**

### BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under Montana cottage food rules (county cannot expand a state ban).
- ☐ **2. Pickup & zoning** — Home occupation and porch pickup cells above; HOA/lease may still block customer traffic.
- ☐ **3. Local tax / license** — Business license or sales tax certificate if your city/parish requires it (common even with no state food permit).
- ☐ **4. Training** — Food handler or state registration before market day.
- ☐ **5. Labels** — Disclaimer, allergens, ingredients, net quantity, producer info.
- ☐ **6. Call if unclear** — County health and planning for your exact address.

### LABEL FIELDS TO INCLUDE

- ☐ Product name · producer name · address (or allowed alternative)
- ☐ Ingredients by weight · major allergens · net weight/quantity
- ☐ Montana home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

### CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)

[Montana label one-pager →](#)

[Local notes & questions →](#)

Planning path only — not legal advice. Rules change. Always verify with state and local offices before selling.

## MONTANA: PONDERA COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1448\* · FIPS 30073 · Conrad

## Pondera County

Population 5,813 · State baseline: Mont. Code §50-50-116 and §50-50-117 (cottage food); Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq. (Local Food Choice Act) · **MEDIUM**

## QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

## HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Must produce in primary residence kitchen. Pets must be excluded during production. No routine inspection. One-time \$40 registration fee with local Environmental Health Agency. Direct-to-consumer sales only within Montana. Farmers market sales exempt from registration.)

## SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

## PETS ALLOWED?

Pets must be excluded from kitchen during production

## HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (Pondera County is a rural agricultural county in north-central Montana near the Rocky Mountain Front. No formal county-level home occupation ordinances found specific to cottage food. The 2021 Montana Local Food Choice Act preempts local restrictions on homemade food sales. Cottage food registration (\$40 one-time fee) administered through local Environmental Health office.)

## ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

## INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (Consumer complaint or illness investigation only)

## Home kitchen rules

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED       | Yes — Must produce in primary residence kitchen. Pets must be excluded during production. No routine inspection. One-time \$40 registration fee with local Environmental Health Agency. Direct-to-consumer sales only within Montana. Farmers market sales exempt from registration. |
| SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| PET RESTRICTIONS           | Pets must be excluded from kitchen during production                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| WATER SUPPLY               | Standard residential water supply                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| HANDWASHING                | Sanitary food preparation operations required                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| FOOD STORAGE               | Products stored appropriately; temporary vehicle storage for transport only                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## Inspection &amp; permitting

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| INSPECTION REQUIRED    | Upon-complaint — Consumer complaint or illness investigation only                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT | Varies — Pondera County is a rural agricultural county in north-central Montana near the Rocky Mountain Front. No formal county-level home occupation ordinances found specific to cottage food. The 2021 Montana Local Food Choice Act preempts local restrictions on homemade food sales. Cottage food registration (\$40 one-time fee) administered through local Environmental Health office. |
| LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE | Varies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

**Customer-facing rules**

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP | Yes                                                                                                                                                                            |
| ON-SITE SIGNAGE         | Conditional                                                                                                                                                                    |
| DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES | Face-to-face transaction required. Online advertising allowed but actual sale must be in-person. No third-party delivery services. Producer may deliver directly to purchaser. |
| MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME   | Not specified                                                                                                                                                                  |

**Relevant county code**

Not identified; state law governs

**RESEARCH NOTES**

Montana Freedom-tier state. 2021 Local Food Choice Act preempts local ordinances statewide. No Pondera County-specific cottage food or home occupation ordinances found. State baseline applied.

**SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME**

<https://www.ponderacounty.gov>

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/fcs/foodsafety/cottagefoods>

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/publichealth/FCS/CottageFood/cottagefoodfrequentlyaskedquestions2024.pdf>

**Questions about this county?** Local notes and a place to leave a question: [crosodo.com/nb/montana/pondera-county-discuss](https://crosodo.com/nb/montana/pondera-county-discuss)

## Bordering counties — cottage food law

| Regulation                 | Pondera County                                                                                                                                  | Chouteau County                                                                                                                                 | Glacier County                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED       | Yes                                                                                                                                             | Yes                                                                                                                                             | Yes                                                                                                                                             |
| SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN | No                                                                                                                                              | No                                                                                                                                              | No                                                                                                                                              |
| PETS ALLOWED               | Pets must be excluded from kitchen during production                                                                                            | Not specified in state cottage food law; individual county health departments may have additional requirements.                                 | Not specified in state cottage food law; individual county health departments may have additional requirements.                                 |
| INSPECTION REQUIRED        | Upon-complaint                                                                                                                                  | Upon-complaint                                                                                                                                  | Upon-complaint                                                                                                                                  |
| ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP    | Yes                                                                                                                                             | Yes                                                                                                                                             | Yes                                                                                                                                             |
| ON-SITE SIGNAGE            | Conditional                                                                                                                                     | Conditional                                                                                                                                     | Conditional                                                                                                                                     |
| DELIVERY / PICKUP          | Face-to-face transaction required. Online advertising allowed but actual sale must be in-person. No third-party delivery services. Producer...  | Direct-to-consumer sales permitted at farmers markets, events, and from home. Under standard cottage food (\$50-50-116), no consignment, ret... | Direct-to-consumer sales permitted at farmers markets, events, and from home. Under standard cottage food (\$50-50-116), no consignment, ret... |
| HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT     | Varies                                                                                                                                          | Conditional                                                                                                                                     | Conditional                                                                                                                                     |
| LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE     | Varies                                                                                                                                          | Varies                                                                                                                                          | Varies                                                                                                                                          |
| RESTRICTIONS               | Must produce in primary residence kitchen. Pets must be excluded during production. No routine inspection. One-time \$40 registration fee wi... | Cottage food operations must register with local health authority under Mont. Code \$50-50-117. Non-potentially-hazardous foods only under s... | Cottage food operations must register with local health authority under Mont. Code \$50-50-117. Non-potentially-hazardous foods only under s... |
| FOOD STORAGE               | Products stored appropriately; temporary vehicle storage for transport only                                                                     | Products must be non-potentially hazardous (standard cottage food track) or properly disclosed as unlicensed/uninspected (MLFCA track). Pro...  | Products must be non-potentially hazardous (standard cottage food track) or properly disclosed as unlicensed/uninspected (MLFCA track). Pro...  |
| POPULATION                 | 5,813                                                                                                                                           | 5,897                                                                                                                                           | 13,781                                                                                                                                          |

## State context — Montana cottage food law

Pondera County's rules sit on top of Montana'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>  |
| Mont. Code §50-50-116 and §50-50-117 (cottage food); Mont. Code §§50-49-201 et seq. (Local Food Choice Act)                                                                                                                                                                                            | —                        |
| <b>REGISTRATION REQUIRED</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>FOOD HANDLER CERT</b> |
| Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | No                       |
| <b>KITCHEN INSPECTION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>DIRECT SALES ONLY</b> |
| Upon-complaint                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Yes                      |
| <b>INDIRECT SALES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                          |
| No — Consignment sales at retail food establishments or through wholesale establishments are explicitly prohibited under §50-50-116(3). The Montana Local Food Choice Act also requires direct producer-to-informed-end-consumer transactions only; retail locations require a wholesale food license. |                          |

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Montana cottage food law report](#) on Crosodo, or open the live guide: [crosodo.com/states/montana](https://crosodo.com/states/montana).

### STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: [https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title\\_0500/chapter\\_0500/part\\_0010/section\\_0160/0500-0500-0010-0160.html](https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0500/chapter_0500/part_0010/section_0160/0500-0500-0010-0160.html)

State dept cottage food page: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/fcs/foodsafety/cottagefoods>

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

**Questions about Pondera County?** Local notes and a place to leave a question are on Crosodo. We monitor new threads — start with zoning, permits, or porch pickup.

[crosodo.com/nb/montana/pondera-county-discuss](https://crosodo.com/nb/montana/pondera-county-discuss)

## Classifieds

Resources for cottage food & home bakers · [crosodo.com/advertise](https://crosodo.com/advertise)

### NATIONAL

#### SUPPLIES

##### Advertise here — Supplies

Reach home bakers across the country. [crosodo.com/advertise](https://crosodo.com/advertise)

#### COURSES

##### Advertise here — Courses

Reach home bakers across the country. [crosodo.com/advertise](https://crosodo.com/advertise)

#### INSURANCE

##### Advertise here — Insurance

Reach home bakers across the country. [crosodo.com/advertise](https://crosodo.com/advertise)

### LOCAL

#### Advertise here

Reach home bakers in Pondera County, Montana. Supply stores, farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and bakery services welcome.

[crosodo.com/advertise](https://crosodo.com/advertise)

#### Your business here

Local cottage food listings, kitchen rentals, co-packer referrals, and community events — post yours on Crosodo.

[crosodo.com/nb/montana/pondera-county-discuss](https://crosodo.com/nb/montana/pondera-county-discuss)

#### Free ad space available

Let us know if you're a non-profit or community organization. Farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and cottage food events near you welcome.

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