

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Lancaster County

Pennsylvania · Lancaster · FIPS 42071 · Population 553,202 ·
Crosodo Index #2493*

STATE BASELINE	STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
3 Pa.C.S. §§5721–5737	Good	—	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.

PENNSYLVANIA: LANCASTER COUNTY

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Lancaster County

Population 553,202 · State baseline: 3 Pa.C.S. §§5721–5737 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Must produce only non-hazardous foods not requiring finished-product refrigeration. Kitchen must pass state inspection. Registration required with Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (\$35/yr). Acidified/fermented foods require lab testing and approval. Must first obtain local municipality zoning approval.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific state cottage food pet restriction; general sanitation standards apply per inspection

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Yes (Pennsylvania LFE application packet requires local municipality zoning approval as first step. Lancaster County has 60 municipalities (townships, boroughs, and the city of Lancaster). Lancaster County also has a significant Amish/Mennonite farming community with direct farm markets, which may operate under separate rules. Each municipality has independent zoning. Note: Lancaster County is a major food production region; cottage food is common and generally well-accommodated in rural zoning.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Routine inspection by Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture required before registration and on ongoing basis annually)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Must produce only non-hazardous foods not requiring finished-product refrigeration. Kitchen must pass state inspection. Registration required with Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (\$35/yr). Acidified/fermented foods require lab testing and approval. Must first obtain local municipality zoning approval.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No specific state cottage food pet restriction; general sanitation standards apply per inspection
WATER SUPPLY	Private well water requires testing; municipal water acceptable
HANDWASHING	Required as part of routine home inspection compliance
FOOD STORAGE	Food must be stored in compliant home kitchen conditions

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes — Routine inspection by Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture required before registration and on ongoing basis annually
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes — Pennsylvania LFE application packet requires local municipality zoning approval as first step. Lancaster County has 60 municipalities (townships, boroughs, and the city of Lancaster). Lancaster County also has a significant Amish/Mennonite farming community with direct farm markets, which may operate under separate rules. Each municipality has independent zoning. Note: Lancaster County is a major food production region; cottage food is common and generally well-accommodated in rural zoning.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	All venues permitted: direct from home, online, retail stores, restaurants, interstate. Retail Food Facility License may be required for farmers market and event sales. No annual sales cap.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified at state level; local zoning may restrict

Relevant county code

3 Pa.C.S. §§5721–5737. 60 municipalities with independent zoning codes in Lancaster County.

RESEARCH NOTES

Same Pennsylvania LFE state baseline as Bucks and Delaware Counties. Lancaster County is notable for its large rural/agricultural population and active cottage food/direct market culture. 60 municipalities. Local zoning approval prerequisite to PDA application. No annual sales cap; broad food types allowed (including acidified/fermented with lab testing); all sales venues permitted. Confidence medium: state law confirmed; Lancaster County municipality-level zoning not retrieved.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://co.lancaster.pa.us>

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pda/food/food-safety/limited-food-establishment->

<https://ij.org/issues/economic-liberty/homemade-food-seller/pennsylvania/>

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

State context — Pennsylvania cottage food law

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

STATUTE	ANNUAL SALES CAP
3 Pa.C.S. §§5721–5737	—
REGISTRATION REQUIRED	FOOD HANDLER CERT
Yes	No
KITCHEN INSPECTION	DIRECT SALES ONLY
Yes	No

INDIRECT SALES

Limited (see notes) — Registration includes sales direct from the production site including internet sales. However, a separate Retail Food Facility License may be required for sales at events or Farmers Markets. Businesses aiming to sell across state lines might also need FDA registration. The registration covers home-based operations in residential kitchens as well as residential-style kitchens in alternate locations such as churches, fire halls, or remodeled garages. Not available in Philadelphia County.

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/LI/consCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&t1=03&div=0&chpt=57>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pda/food/limited-food-establishment.html>

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

Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/pennsylvania/lancaster-county-discuss>
