

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Hardin County

Texas · Kountze · FIPS 48199 · Population 56,576 · Crosodo Index #1052*

STATE BASELINE

Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq. (amended by SB 541, 2025; cap \$150,000)

STATE TIER

Great

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

150000

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED

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.

TEXAS: HARDIN COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1052* · FIPS 48199 · Kountze

Hardin County

Population 56,576 · State baseline: Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq. (amended by SB 541, 2025; cap \$150,000) · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (All non-TCS foods allowed including most baked goods, candy, jams, pickles, dried herbs, vinegar, acidified foods, fermented vegetable products, dried meats. Annual cap \$150,000 (as of 2025 SB 541). No inspection or registration. Health departments have no regulatory authority except to prevent immediate public health threat.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No specific TX state or Hardin County restriction on pets; standard food safety practices apply.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (Hardin County is largely unincorporated rural area. Texas state law preempts local health regulation of cottage food operations. A local home occupation permit may be required under general county zoning for home-based business activity. Contact Hardin County government in Kountze.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

No (Only to prevent immediate and serious threat to human life or health (DSHS or local health authority). No routine inspections.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — All non-TCS foods allowed including most baked goods, candy, jams, pickles, dried herbs, vinegar, acidified foods, fermented vegetable products, dried meats. Annual cap \$150,000 (as of 2025 SB 541). No inspection or registration. Health departments have no regulatory authority except to prevent immediate public health threat.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No specific TX state or Hardin County restriction on pets; standard food safety practices apply.
WATER SUPPLY	No formal requirement; primary residence kitchen.
HANDWASHING	No formal state requirement; recommended best practices.
FOOD STORAGE	Products must be non-TCS and not require refrigeration (with exceptions). Proper labeling required.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	No — Only to prevent immediate and serious threat to human life or health (DSHS or local health authority). No routine inspections.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies — Hardin County is largely unincorporated rural area. Texas state law preempts local health regulation of cottage food operations. A local home occupation permit may be required under general county zoning for home-based business activity. Contact Hardin County government in Kountze.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct and some indirect sales allowed. Online orders with in-person delivery or pickup permitted. The 2025 SB 541 amendment created the 'cottage food vendor' intermediary allowing third-party sales.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	TX statute does not specify a cap for cottage food operations.

Relevant county code

Tex. Health & Safety Code §437.001 et seq.; no Hardin County-specific ordinance identified

RESEARCH NOTES

Texas is one of the most permissive cottage food states. The 2025 SB 541 raised the cap to \$150,000 and added nonprofits and cottage food vendors. Hardin County is a rural East Texas county. No county-specific cottage food overrides found. Prohibited items include meat, poultry, seafood, ice products, and low-acid canned goods.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/food-establishments/cottage-food-production-operations>

<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.437.htm>

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

State context — Texas cottage food law

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

STATUTE	ANNUAL SALES CAP
Tex. Health & Safety §437.001 et seq.	150000
REGISTRATION REQUIRED	FOOD HANDLER CERT
No	No
KITCHEN INSPECTION	DIRECT SALES ONLY
No	No

INDIRECT SALES
 Limited (see notes) — Sales must be made directly to consumers or to a 'cottage food vendor' (a new category created by SB 541 in 2025 – a person with a contractual relationship who sells on behalf of the cottage food operation to consumers in-state). Cottage food products may not be sold as ingredients to a food service establishment. No retail grocery store or wholesale sales permitted under the pre-2025 framework; SB 541 (2025) adds the cottage food vendor intermediary option. Products must be delivered to consumer or vendor at point of sale or consumer-designated location.

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

- State statute: <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.437.htm>
 - State dept cottage food page: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/food-establishments/cottage-food-production-operations>
 - Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/texas/>
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Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/texas/hardin-county-discuss>
