



MARYLAND Department of Health

On-Farm Home Processing Foods and Definitions

This document provides guidance for allowable foods to be produced and sold from an on-farm home processing business located in Maryland. COMAR 10.15.04.18 states the Department may issue a food processing plant license to an individual who owns a farm to process food in a home or domestic kitchen located on the individual's farm and has annual revenues from the sale of on-farm products in an amount not exceeding \$40,000. If you have any questions regarding these products, please contact our office at (410) 767-8400.

*Examples of Foods that **might be allowed** to be on-farm home processed:*

- Breads and pastries without potentially hazardous toppings or fillings
- Pies, turnovers and fruit tarts from the fruits listed below
- Baked breads, biscuits, cakes, cookies and muffins
- Canned acid foods such as:
 - Fruit, jelly, jam and preserves from the fruits listed below
 - Fruit butter from apple, apricot, grape, peach, plum, prune and quince
- Fruits with a natural pH of 4.6 or less:
 - Apple
 - Apricot
 - Blackberry
 - Boysenberry
 - Cherry
 - Cranberry
 - Grape
 - Nectarine
 - Orange
 - Peach
 - Plum
 - Quince
 - Raspberry
 - Red Currants
 - Strawberry
 - Tangerine
- Tomatoes and tomato products, such as salsa. ***Note: These foods are not allowed unless they are a variety with a pH of 4.6 or below or are acidified to a pH of 4.6 or below during processing. Additional training and licensure are required for acidification.***
- Toppings, glazes, icings or fillings that may be stored without temperature control prior to use in other products
- Finfish cleaned, weighed, packaged, labeled and sold or distributed from the home fish farm only, excluding fish associated with histamine intoxication, such as tuna, mackerel and mahi mahi

- Meat, such as beef, lamb and pork, weighed, packaged, labeled and sold or distributed from the home farm only, where the animals are raised commercially and then slaughtered and chilled at a USDA inspected and regulated plant
- Dried fruits and vegetables
- Honey
- Peanut butter
- Hard candy

*Examples of Foods that **would not be allowed** to be On-Farm Home Processed:*

- Foods that have a natural pH above 4.6:
 - Artichokes
 - Asparagus
 - Beans (i.e. lima, string, kidney, Boston style, soy, waxed)
 - Beets
 - Broccoli
 - Brussel Sprouts
 - Cabbage
 - Carrots
 - Cauliflower
 - Sweet corn
 - Cucumber
 - Eggplant
 - Figs
 - Garlic
 - Horseradish
 - Mushrooms
 - Onions
 - Peas
 - Peppers
 - Potatoes
 - Pumpkin
 - Squash
 - Spinach
 - Turnips
 - Vegetable soup
 - Zucchini
- Pumpkin, banana or pear butters
- Foods that require refrigeration for safety such as fresh salsa and pesto
- Cheese, ice cream and yogurt
- Apple cider and fruit juices
- Tuna, mackerel or Mahi Mahi
- Specialty breads such as focaccia, or pastries containing fresh, canned, frozen or rehydrated vegetables or soft cheeses added prior to baking
- Pastries filled or topped with potentially hazardous foods
- Pies made from pumpkin, custard, sweet potato or meringue
- Cheesecake or bakery products filled or topped with cream, crème, custard or cheese after baking
- Cured foods such as country ham, bacon, corned beef, pastrami, salted and smoked fish (sable, salmon, shad, chub and tuna)
- Fermented foods such as sauerkraut and certain pickles
- Rehydrated spices in oil

Definitions of terms for Farm Processing

Acid foods are foods that have a natural pH of 4.6 or below.

Acidified foods are low-acid foods to which acids or acid foods are added to achieve a finished equilibrium pH of 4.6 or below.

Low acid foods are any foods, other than alcoholic beverages, with a finished equilibrium pH greater than 4.6 and a water activity (a_w) great than 0.85. Low-acid foods do not include tomatoes and tomato products having a finished equilibrium pH less than 4.7.

pH is the symbol for the negative logarithm of the hydrogen ion concentration which is the degree of acidity or alkalinity of a food. Values from zero to seven indicate acidity, and values above seven up to 14 indicate alkalinity. The value for pure distilled water, regarded as neutral, is seven.

Potentially hazardous foods are natural or synthetic foods that requires temperature control because the food is in a form capable of supporting:

- a) The rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms
- b) The growth and toxin production of *Clostridium botulinum*
- c) In raw shell eggs, the growth of *Salmonella Enteritidis*

Potentially hazardous foods are not foods with a:

- a) Water activity (a_w) value of 0.85 or less
- b) pH level of 4.6 or below when measured at 75°F
- c) Commercially sterile food in a hermetically sealed container

Water activity (a_w) is the water in food that is not bound to food molecules so it can support the growth of bacteria, yeasts and molds.