Cottage Food Law...

What is the Cottage Food Operation law?

The Cottage Food Operation law (P.A.097-0393) became effective in Illinois on January 1, 2012. This new law allows certain foods made in home kitchens to be sold at Illinois farmers' markets with limited regulation. The purpose of the law is to promote and support the Illinois agriculture and cottage food industries.

The products that can be made in a home kitchen and sold at a farmers' market include:

- Certain fruit-based jams, jellies and preserves.
- Fruit butters.
- Baked goods (i.e. breads, cookies, cakes, pies, and pastries).
- Dried foods (i.e. herbs and teas).

For a complete list of the foods allowed to be sold follow the link at the end of this article to view a copy of the entire law. The law does not allow these homemade products to be sold in retail stores or any location other than an Illinois farmers' market. In addition, the products must meet specific labeling requirements and the vendor must register the cottage food operation with the local health department where the business is located. For more information on this new law, you can go to http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=041006250K4 to access a copy of the law.

How do I operate under this new law?

If you would like to operate under the Cottage Food Operation law please follow these simple steps:

Step 1) Obtain an Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) approved food service sanitation management certificate.

If you are not already certified, you may go to the IDPH website to obtain a list of trainers by region at http://dph.illinois.gov/fssmccourses/.

Please be aware the classroom-based certification training requires a total of 15 hours and is usually conducted over two to three days followed by an exam. There are fees associated with the certification training. It may take up to four weeks to obtain your certificate from the State once you pass the certification exam and pay an additional $35 fee to IDPH. Periodic refresher courses are required once you become certified. Please refer to the http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/fdd/fdd_faq_fssmanagercert.htm for information about training waivers and certification through reciprocity.

Step 2) Register with Crawford County Health Department.

You will next need to register with us after you have received your Illinois Department of Public Health approved food service sanitation management certificate. The certification number from Step 1 is needed to be entered onto the registration form. The completed and signed registration form may be returned to us via the following options:

Mail:
Crawford County Health Department
Environmental Health
202 N. Christopher Blvd.
Robinson, IL 62454
Phone:
(618) 544-8798
Fax:
(618) 544-9398
Email:
mnewman@cchd.net
bsnyder@cchd.net

Registration confirmation will be provided to you. You may need to take the registration confirmation with you to other counties. There is no fee for registration in Crawford County to operate under the Cottage Food Operations law. Registrations should be submitted to us annually. Please let us know whenever your contact information changes.

Step 3) Follow all other requirements in the law.

You are responsible for all other provisions in the law including but not limited to:

- Product packaging,
- Product labeling,
- Displaying a placard with the required language,
- Not exceeding gross receipts of $25,000 in a calendar year from the sale of food exempted under this law, and
- Selling allowed foods only at farmers' markets in Illinois.

Are there any fees associated with operating under this new law?

There is no fee to register with the Crawford County Health Department to operate under the Cottage Food Operations law. However, there are fees associated with the food service sanitation management certification training, certificate, and related refresher courses.

Who can I talk to if I have more questions?
How can I obtain a paper copy of the registration form?

Please contact our Environmental Health Department at (618) 544-8798 for more information or to request a paper copy of the registration form be mailed to you. You may also download the application from the CCHD website at www.cchd.net