

# COTTAGE FOODS

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

GARY W. BLACK, COMMISSIONER

FOOD SAFETY DIVISION



# WHAT IS A COTTAGE FOOD BUSINESS?

- The cottage food industry is intended to be a business incubator
- Allows start-up businesses to work in a home kitchen
- Avoids overhead costs of a commercial kitchen:
  - Commercial kitchen facility requirements
  - Local business license expense
  - Utilities (electrical, water, gas, etc.)
  - Taxes

# STARTING A COTTAGE FOOD BUSINESS

- Cottage food sales are now allowed by the Department's Regulations Chapter 40-7-19
- Licensed Cottage Food operators are only allowed to manufacture and sale non-potentially hazardous foods (Foods that do not require refrigeration/low water activity)
- Sales are limited to retail transactions only
- Sales are limited to intra-state commerce only (no shipping across state lines)

# WHAT FOODS ARE ALLOWED?

- LOAF BREADS, ROLLS, AND BISCUITS
- CAKES (EXCEPT THOSE THAT REQUIRE REFRIGERATION)
- PASTRIES AND COOKIES
- CANDIES AND CONFECTIONS
- FRUIT PIES
- JAMS, JELLIES, AND PRESERVES (NOT TO INCLUDE FRUIT BUTTERS)
- DRIED FRUITS

# APPROVED COTTAGE FOODS

- DRY HERBS, SEASONINGS, AND MIXTURES
- CEREALS, TRAIL MIXES, AND GRANOLA
- COATED AND UNCOATED NUTS
- VINEGAR AND FLAVORED VINEGARS
- POPCORN AND POPCORN BALLS
- COTTON CANDY

EXAMPLE: BREAD (APPROVED)  
CHEESE SPREAD (NOT APPROVED)



# DEFINITIONS

- Cottage Food Operator: a person who produces cottage food products only in the home kitchen of that person's primary domestic residence and only for sale directly to the consumer.
- Domestic Residence: a single-family dwelling or an area within a rental unit where a single person or family actually resides; but does not include any group or communal residential setting within any type of structure

# DEFINITIONS

- **Equipment:** means a normal household article that is used in the manufacture of Cottage Food products such as a freezer, grinder, hood, ice maker, mixer, oven, refrigerator, scale, sink, slicer, store, table, temperature measuring device, or warewashing machine; but does not include industrial or commercial grade equipment that, due to their size, cannot be effectively cleaned in residential sinks or dishwashers.
- **Home Kitchen:** means a kitchen primarily intended for use by the residents of a home. It may contain one or more stoves or ovens, which may be a double oven, designed for residential use. It shall not include commercial equipment.



# REGISTRATION

- Cottage food operators must register with the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Division prior to engaging in cottage food operations.
- Completion of application to include:
  - Business name and address
  - Food(s) to be produced
  - Public/Private water source information
  - Verification of Food Safety Training (American National Standards Institute accreditation)
  - Verification that operator has checked with local government to ensure a home business is allowed

# RIGHT OF ENTRY

- Registration application allows the Georgia Department of Agriculture the “Right of Entry” to the residence during normal business hours, or at other reasonable times, for investigation of consumer complaints, a foodborne disease outbreak, or other public health emergency.

# LICENSING

- Annual Fee - \$100.00 (calendar year)
- Prorated to \$50.00 for initial license fee if after June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Registration shall be required to be completed on an annual basis (update to the Department each year on production)
- One-time initial inspection of the home kitchen will be required prior to issuance of license (two inspectors will be present for home inspections)

# WATER REQUIREMENTS

- Public Water Source – Copy of water bill to be submitted at time of licensing
- Private Water – Must be sampled prior to licensing
  - May be performed by a private lab, County Health Department, or Georgia Department of Agriculture
  - If GDA – Cost will be \$100.00
  - Water to be tested for coliform bacteria and nitrates
  - This will be required on an annual basis!

# LIMITATIONS

- Sales – Cottage Food sales are limited to the end user only. No wholesale distribution. A Food Sales Establishment License would be required for wholesale of food products.
- Cottage Food Operator may only produce the items listed on their registration form.
- Cottage Food Products shall be produced at times separate from domestic activities (Example: family meal preparation).
- Home canned produce cannot be used in production - with the exception of jams and jellies. Ingredients must be from an “approved source”.

# LICENSE

- Must be displayed at “Point of Sale”
- License will state: “This license allows for the retail sale of home produced food. Food sold under this license shall be to the end consumer. Food produced in this facility is not subject to routine inspection, nor should this license be construed as a substitute for the Department’s Food Sales Establishment License”

# PRE-OPERATION INSPECTION

- Educational meeting to review regulations and limitations
- Verification of residential kitchen
- Verification of sanitary conditions
- Completion and receipt of license application, fee and supporting documents (training certificate, water sample lab report or copy of public water bill)

# SALE OF PRODUCT BY WEIGHT

- Only an approved scale may be used if sale of food product is by weight
- Scale will be checked for accuracy and certification sticker affixed to the scale at time of inspection
- Look for statement on scale “Not Legal for Trade”



# MINIMUM BEST PRACTICES

- Hand washing
- Bare Hand Contact with Ready to Eat Foods
- Hair restraints and Clean Outer Garments
- Eating, Drinking, Use of Tobacco during production
- Preventing Contamination When Tasting
- Cottage Food Operator Health
- Unauthorized Personnel
- Food Contact Surfaces
- Proper Storage
- Pest Control
- Pets

# PRODUCT LABELS

- Business name and home address
- The following statement shall be conspicuously displayed on all cottage foods: “Made in a cottage food operation that is not subject to state food safety inspections”
- Common name of product
- Ingredients in descending order of predominance by weight
- Net weight or volume of product
- Allergen statement
- Nutritional information if applicable

# GA DEPT OF AG WEBSITE

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Georgia Department of Agriculture website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://agr.georgia.gov/>. The website header includes the text "Georgia Department of Agriculture" and "Commissioner Gary W. Black". A navigation menu contains links for Home, About, Divisions, News, Market Bulletin, and Forms. A featured article titled "Farm Tours" includes a photograph of five men in a field and a text snippet: "Ag Commissioner Black joined Congressman Austin Scott for a district tour this month with Randy Hudson, Scott Hudson and Phil Croft of at Hudson Pecan Company in Oscilla.. Click Here to Read!". Below this, there is a section titled "MEETING THE NEEDS OF GEORGIA'S CITIZENS" with a sub-section "Tour of the Monticello Farmers Market". A "CURRENT NEWS" section lists several news items with buttons for "News Briefs", "Press", and "Consumer". At the bottom, there are links for "Ga Market News" and "Market Bulletin". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the date and time as 10:20 AM on 10/11/2012.

Site Map | Search

## Georgia Department of Agriculture

Commissioner Gary W. Black

- Home
- About
- Divisions
- News
- Market Bulletin
- Forms

### Farm Tours

Ag Commissioner Black joined Congressman Austin Scott for a district tour this month with Randy Hudson, Scott Hudson and Phil Croft of at Hudson Pecan Company in Oscilla.. [Click Here to Read!](#)

### MEETING THE NEEDS OF GEORGIA'S CITIZENS

The Georgia Department of Agriculture administers a variety of programs which all have a primary goal - to maintain the state's viable farm industry and protect the consuming public.

#### Tour of the Monticello Farmers Market

### CURRENT NEWS

- [News Briefs](#) [Press](#) [Consumer](#)
- Japan holds the key to U.S. beef exports; by easing restrictions the U.S. can export more
- Nebraska's corn and soybean harvests are well ahead of schedule
- Kentucky fruit growers are facing a new insect challenge now that the spotted wing Drosophila fly has been found in the state
- Strong economic growth in Asia will benefit Southeast growers
- 37th Annual American Agri-Women Convention will take place Nov. 7-

**Ga Market News**  
Marketing and Statistical Information for Poultry and Livestock products

**Market Bulletin**  
The Farmers and Consumers Market Bulletin

10:20 AM  
10/11/2012

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