



## 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. The Code of Maryland Regulations (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.

*Examples of foods that **might be allowed** to be processed with an On-farm license:*

- 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
  - Granberry
  - Grape
  - Nectarine
  - Orange
  - Peach
  - Plum
  - Quince
  - Raspberry
  - Red Currants
  - Strawberry
  - Tangerine
- Acidified foods such as tomatoes and tomato products, pickled vegetables, and sauces. These types of products 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
- Flavored honey - (Note - raw, unflavored honey is a raw agricultural product)
- Hard candy

*Examples of foods that **would not be allowed** to be processed with an On-Farm license:*

- Foods that have a natural pH above 4.6 **and are not being acidified:**
  - Artichokes
  - Asparagus
  - Beans (i.e. lima, string, kidney, Boston style, soy, waxed)
  - Beets
  - Broccoli
  - Brussel Sprouts
  - Cabbage
  - Carrots
  - Cauliflower
  - Garlic
  - Horseradish
  - Mushrooms
  - Onions
  - Peas
  - Peppers
  - Potatoes
  - Pumpkin
  - Squash
- 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
- Fermented foods such as sauerkraut and certain pickles
- Rehydrated spices in oil

If you have any questions regarding these products, please contact our office at (410) 767-8400.

## 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 (aw) greater 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:

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

Potentially hazardous foods are not foods with a:

- Water activity (aw) value of 0.85 or less
- pH level of 4.6 or below when measured at 75<sup>0</sup>F
- Commercially sterile food in a hermetically sealed container

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