



Cottage Food Producer Registration Training

Required for Gross Annual Food Sales of \$5,000 or Less (Tier 1)

Revised August 1, 2021



In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Training Agenda

- Summary of Changes Effective August 1, 2021
- Overview of the Cottage Foods Exemption
 - Who qualifies?
 - What makes a food non-potentially hazardous?
 - Which foods and pet treats can and cannot be sold?
 - Where can foods and pet treats be sold?
- Safe Food Handling Practices
- Packaging and Labeling
- Registration Process



What Changed in August 2021?

- Sales cap raised to \$78,000 (up from \$18,000)
- Pet treats added for cats and dogs (not pet food)
- An individual registrant can organize their cottage food business as a business entity recognized by state law.
- Labeling must now include the individuals name and registration number **OR** the individuals name and address; and the statement “These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection.”
- Water activity value of 0.85 specified in what makes a food non-potentially hazardous



Who Qualifies as a Cottage Food Producer?

- An individual who is exempt from licensure under Minnesota Statute 28A.152 (cottage foods exemption) and/or MS 25.391 (pet treat exemption)
- A registered individual does not need a food or feed license if they meet the requirements in this training
- This exemption applies to individuals
 - An individual who qualifies for the exemption may organize the individual's cottage food business as a business entity recognized by state law.

Who Qualifies as a Cottage Food Producer?

An individual who:

- Prepares non-potentially hazardous food without a license or inspection
- Manufactures food in their home that does not require time or temperature controls for safety
- Sells and deliver the food directly to the end consumer (cannot mail the food)
- Sells from the home, at farmers' markets, community events, or online
- Produces and sell home-canned pickles, fruits, and vegetables with an equilibrium pH of 4.6 or lower **only in Minnesota**

Who Qualifies as a Cottage Food Producer?

An individual who:

- Sells up to \$78,000 gross annual sales per year
- Displays a sign that states, “These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection”
- Registers annually with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture after required training
- Follows local city, county, or township business licensing, sales prohibitions, and zoning requirements

Check Your Understanding

Question:

An individual who qualifies for the cottage food licensing exemption may organize their cottage food business as an entity recognized by state law. Which of the following may REGISTER as a cottage food producer?

- A. Groups of persons
- B. Business entities
- C. An individual person
- D. All of the above

Check Your Understanding

Answer:

C. An individual who qualifies for the cottage food licensing exemption may organize their cottage food business as an entity recognized by state law.

- Individuals must register; however, you can organize your business as an entity such as an LLC.

What Is A Non-Potentially Hazardous Food?

- Home-canned pickles, fruits and vegetables with an equilibrium pH of 4.6 or lower (which means the food is acidic, making it more difficult for bacteria to grow).
- A food that has a water activity of 0.85 or below (which means the food product is relatively dry or has a high sugar or salt content that binds up the water, making it more difficult for bacteria to grow).
- If you need to refrigerate food to keep it safe, then the food does not qualify for the cottage food exemption

Food Product Testing

- If you use a standardized (Extension service or USDA approved and tested) canning recipe, testing your food product for pH or water activity is not required
 - Follow the recipe exactly
 - Retain recipe and source as documentation
- If using a non-standard recipe, you must have the product tested for safety by a lab
 - Test for pH (≤ 4.6), water activity (≤ 0.85) as appropriate
 - May also require a process authority evaluation
 - Alcohol content of some foods may need to be tested (E.g., flavored extracts)

Check Your Understanding

Question:

What is the pH OR water activity level a food product must have to be sold under the cottage food exemption?

- A. pH of 4.1 and water activity of 0.90
- B. pH of 4.6 and water activity of 0.85
- C. pH of 5.0 and water activity of 0.80
- D. None of these are correct

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

B. pH of 4.6 and water activity of 0.85

- The highest pH value allowed for canned products under this exemption is 4.6 and the highest water activity allowed is 0.85.



Examples of Non-Potentially Hazardous Foods You CAN Make and Sell

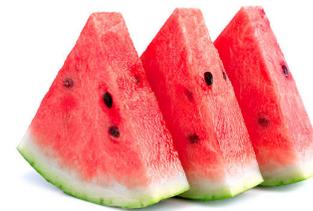
- Acidified or acidic, home-canned and home-processed:
 - Fruits
 - Pickles
 - Vegetables
 - Fermented Foods
 - Vinegar
 - Condiments
- Baked goods
- Candy and confections
- Dried, dehydrated and roasted Items (beans, herbs, nuts, seeds)
- Icings, frostings, sugar art
- Jams, jellies, preserves, fruit butters
- Hulled hemp seeds, hemp seed oil, hemp seed powder can be added as ingredients in human foods



Depending on the recipe, some of these items *could be* potentially hazardous and may need to be lab tested

Examples of Foods You CANNOT Make and Sell

- Food that originated from an animal or aquatic species (raw or cooked), such as charcuterie boards, baked salmon, dehydrated beef jerky
- Cooked plant food, such as cooked rice or steamed green beans
- Food that consists of raw seed sprouts, cut melons, cut fresh tomatoes, cut leafy greens, or garlic-, vegetable-, or herb-based oil mixtures (pesto is an example)



Examples of Foods You CANNOT Make and Sell

- Foods that contain Cannabidiol (CBD)
- Cheesecake
- Fresh **cut** fruit as a topping or garnish
- Fresh fruit or vegetable juice that is not heat treated
- Eggrolls or spring rolls



Check Your Understanding

Question:

Which of the example product(s) listed below can be made and sold under the cottage food exemption?

- A. Roasted walnuts
- B. Pickled green beans
- C. Chocolate chip cookies
- D. All of the above

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

D. All of the above

- Roasted walnuts, pickled green beans, and chocolate chip cookies can all be made and sold under the cottage food exemption.

Check Your Understanding

Question:

True or False?

Food products containing cannabidiol (CBD) can be made and sold under the cottage food exemption.

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

False

- Cannabidiol (CBD) is not an approved ingredient for use in food products, which includes food products produced under the cottage food exemption.

Check Your Understanding

Question:

Which of the example product(s) listed below can be made and sold under the cottage food exemption?

- A. Cakes topped with cut fresh fruit garnish
- B. Cheesecake
- C. Charcuterie boards
- D. Canned, pickled cucumbers

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

D. Canned, pickled cucumbers

- Fresh cut fruits, cheesecake, and charcuterie are considered potentially hazardous foods. They may not be prepared and sold under the cottage food exemption.



Pet Treats You CAN Make and Sell

- Baked or dehydrated dog and cat treats
 - E.g., oatmeal peanut butter biscuits
- Must also be considered “human safe”
- Must be appropriate and safe for the intended pet species



Pet Treats You CANNOT Make and Sell

- Pet treats containing hemp, hemp extract, hemp derivative, and CBD
- Pet treats of animal origin

Examples: Frozen liver, raw ground venison,
dehydrated turkey jerky



Pet Treats You CANNOT Make and Sell

- Pet treats containing common human food ingredients that are **not safe** for dogs and/or cats, include, but are not limited to:

- Chocolate/cacao
- Xylitol
- Hops
- Macadamia nuts
- Onions
- Garlic
- Grapes and raisins



For more information about ingredients or products that are potentially toxic to dogs or cats, visit the links below.

<https://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/>

<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>

If you have questions about the safety of a specific ingredient, contact the MDA Pet Food Unit at 651-201-6221

Check Your Understanding

Question:

Pet treats can be produced and sold for which animal(s)?

- A. Cats
- B. Birds, fish, and reptiles
- C. Dogs
- D. Both A and C

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

D. Both A and C

- Home-processed pet treats can only be made for dogs and cats under the exemption for cottage food producers.



Check Your Understanding

Question:

Which of the example pet treat product(s) listed below can be made and sold under the cottage food exemption?

- A. Frozen beef liver
- B. Raw ground venison
- C. Dehydrated turkey jerky
- D. Oatmeal peanut butter biscuit

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

D. Oatmeal peanut butter biscuit

- A, B, and C are from animal origin. They may not be sold under the cottage food exemption.

Check Your Understanding

Question:

True or False?

Pet treats containing hemp, hemp extract, including cannabidiol (CBD), can be made and sold under the cottage food exemption.

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

False

- Hemp, hemp extract, including CBD are not approved ingredients for use in pet treats.

Where Cottage Food and Pet Treats CAN be Sold

- Farmers' markets
- Community events
- Online (delivered in-person)
- From your home if approved by local ordinances



Where Cottage Food and Pet Treats CANNOT be Sold

- Retail stores
 - Examples: grocery stores, coffee shops, gift shops, clothing stores, consignment stores
- Restaurants
- Shipped through the mail or a delivery service



Check Your Understanding

Question:

True or False?

Cottage Food producers can mail homemade food and/or pet treats to the consumer.

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

False

- Cottage food and pet treats are not allowed to be mailed to the end consumer. All products made under the cottage food exemption must be delivered in-person to the consumer.

Check Your Understanding

Question:

Where can products made under the cottage food exemption be sold?

- A. In retail businesses
- B. Directly from your home, online, farmers' markets, and community events
- C. Through the mail
- D. At a restaurant

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

B. Directly from your home, online, farmers' markets, and community events

- Cottage food products may be sold directly from homes, online, farmers' markets, and community events.

Safe Food Handling Practices

In this section you will learn about:

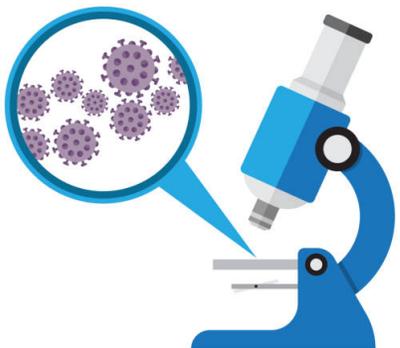
- What is a foodborne illness?
- The symptoms of a foodborne illness
- How you can prevent spreading a foodborne illness
- How to clean and sanitize equipment and work surfaces
- How to clean up vomiting and diarrheal events



What is a Foodborne Illness?

An illness caused by consuming food or beverages that contain harmful pathogens or other contaminants

- Pathogens are microscopic organisms that can cause disease or illness
- Can be viruses, bacteria, parasites



Foodborne illness is also known as “food poisoning”

Check Your Understanding

Question:

True or False?

Foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, is caused by consuming food or beverages containing harmful pathogens or other contaminants.

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

True

- Foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, results from eating food or beverages containing harmful pathogens or other contaminants.

What Practices Cause Most Foodborne Illness?

- Sick food workers
 - 1 out of 3 outbreaks are linked to infected food handlers
- Touching food with dirty hands
- Time and temperature abuse
 - Food not kept sufficiently hot or cold
- Contaminated ingredients or food
- Using contaminated equipment
 - Poor cleaning and sanitizing

Check Your Understanding

Question:

The most common practice(s) that cause foodborne illness are?

- A. Sick food workers
- B. Using dirty equipment
- C. Dirty hands
- D. All of the above

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

D. All of the above

- Sick food workers, using contaminated equipment, and touching food with dirty hands are among the most common practices that cause foodborne illness.

Symptoms of Foodborne Illness



- Most common symptoms of foodborne illness are **vomiting and/or diarrhea**
- Other symptoms might include abdominal cramps, nausea, fever, joint/back aches, and fatigue.
- Symptoms can appear within 30 minutes to 6 weeks after eating unsafe food
 - Symptoms typically last 1-7 days

If you suspect you have a foodborne illness, call the Minnesota Department of Health Foodborne Illness Hotline

1-877-FOOD-ILL

Symptoms of Foodborne Illness

If you or a member of your household has been sick with vomiting or diarrhea, wait 72 hours after you no longer have symptoms before you produce, package, or sell food.

Additional restrictions may apply if you are diagnosed with:

- Norovirus
- Salmonella
- Shigella
- Hepatitis A virus
- Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC)
- Infection with another bacterial, viral or parasitic pathogen



More information at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/foodborne/index.html>

Dangers of Preparing Food When Sick

- You can transfer your illness to others through the food you prepare.
- Most foodborne illness outbreaks have been caused by people who prepared food when they were sick.
- Norovirus is a virus easily transmitted, and the most common cause of short-term diarrhea and vomiting
 - Has been spread through frosting on cakes and cookies
 - Handling food with bare hands



Keeping It Clean

To prevent food contamination:

- Use clean clothes, aprons
- Maintain short, clean fingernails
- Cover cuts
- Limit jewelry on hands
- Restrain loose hair (cover or tie back)
- Do not touch ready-to-eat foods like baked goods with bare hands – use gloves, tongs, spatula, etc.
- Change gloves when soiled or switching tasks

Most importantly, wash hands often!

Gloves do not replace handwashing!



When to Wash Your Hands?

Before:

- Preparing food
- Beginning a new task



After:

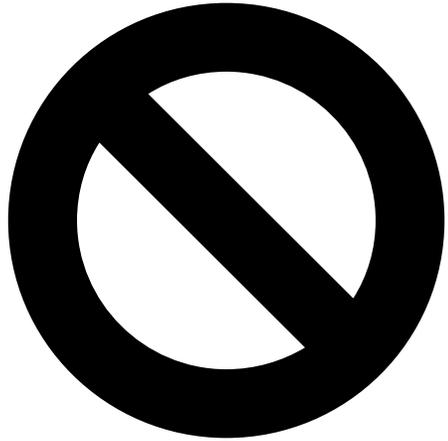
- Using the restroom
- Handling raw meat/poultry, eggs, produce
- Handling animals and pets
- Eating, smoking, coughing, blowing nose
- Touching hair, face, body
- Handling garbage
- Cleaning
- Shaking hands, using phone

Handwashing Steps

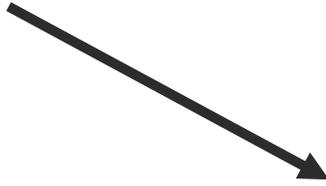
1. Wet hands and forearms with hot water
2. Apply soap
3. Scrub hands, fingernails, and forearms for at least 20 seconds
4. Rinse off soap, turn off faucet with paper towel
5. Dry with single use paper towel



Do Not Touch Food With Bare Hands



NO



Do not touch ready-to-eat foods like baked goods with bare hands.

Use gloves, tongs, spatula, etc.

Glove Use

- Disposable gloves can spread germs
- Not a substitute for handwashing
- Use for a single task – Do not reuse
- Wash hands before putting on a new pair of gloves
- Change gloves when:
 - Damaged
 - Soiled
 - Task is interrupted



Check Your Understanding

Question:

What is the MOST important step you can take to prevent foodborne illness?

- A. Wash your hands often
- B. Use a hair restraint
- C. Keep your fingernails covered
- D. Reuse single use plastic gloves

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

A. Wash your hands often

- Good handwashing removes pathogens and is the most important step you can take to prevent the spread of foodborne illness.

Protect your Food from Contamination

During storage and transport:

- Keep food wrapped or in a covered container
- Set food in a clean, dry container for transport
- Store food off the floor or ground
- Keep away from potential sources of contamination such as plumbing and chemicals

During display:

- Keep food covered, wrapped or sealed in packaging
- Do not handle with bare hands; use utensils or disposable gloves
- Store food off the floor or ground

Check Your Understanding

Question:

Select the **BEST** answer. Cottage food products not displayed for sale should be stored _____.

- A. Under the handwashing station
- B. Directly on the grass or ground under the table
- C. Off the ground in clean, dry containers
- D. Wherever there is space available

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

C. Off the ground in clean, dry containers

- Cottage food products must be protected from contamination during preparation, storage, and sale.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Clean and sanitize sinks, equipment, utensils, tables, and counter tops before, during and after food preparation

1. Wash with hot, soapy water
2. Rinse with clean water
3. Apply a sanitizer safe for food contact surfaces
4. Air dry equipment and surfaces



Cleanup of Vomit or Diarrhea

You can make others sick if vomit or diarrhea in your home is not cleaned up properly

- Protect yourself and others
- Clean surfaces to remove liquid and debris
- Sanitize surfaces using a bleach water mixture
- Wash clothing, rugs, bedding
- Wash hands after clean up



Specific instructions can be found at <https://extension.umn.edu/sanitation-and-illness/norovirus-step-step-clean-vomit-and-diarrhea>

Your Pets Cannot Help Make the Treats

- Keep pets out of the food preparation area while preparing foods under the cottage food exemption
- If pets come into the area, clean and sanitize food preparation surfaces



Check Your Understanding

Question:

True or False?

Food preparation surfaces need to be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before food is prepared, and at any point during preparation that the surfaces become dirty.

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

True

- Food contact surfaces need to be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before starting food preparation, and at any point during preparation that the surfaces become dirty.

Packaging and Labeling

- Package your food in a clean, dry place to protect it from contamination
- Remember not to touch food with bare hands
- Do not misrepresent your products, for example, by using materials that make the product look different than it is, like colored plastic wrap



Label Your Food Products

Label must include:

- Name and **address** OR name and **registration number** of the individual preparing and selling the food
- The date the food was prepared
- List of ingredients, including any allergens
- Possible allergens: Eggs, Milk, Wheat, Tree Nuts, Peanuts, Soy, Fish, Crustacean Shellfish
- The statement **“These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection”**



Signage Requirements at the Point of Sale

**“THESE PRODUCTS
ARE HOMEMADE AND
NOT SUBJECT TO
STATE INSPECTION.”**

Example of sign required where you sell cottage foods,
and wording required on cottage food labels.

Check Your Understanding

Question:

True or False?

Major allergens from food ingredients that must be declared on cottage food labels, but not pet treats, are milk, soy, wheat, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and crustacean shellfish.

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

True

- Any of the eight major allergens present in cottage food products, except pet treats, must be declared on the label. The eight major allergens are milk, soy, wheat, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and crustacean shellfish.

Check Your Understanding

Question:

True or False?

Prepared food offered for sale must be labeled with:

- The name and registration number or the name and address of the individual preparing and selling the food
- The date on which the food was prepared
- The ingredients and any possible allergens
- The statement “These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection.”

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

True

All cottage food product labels must contain the name and registration number OR the name and address of the producer, the date the food was prepared, a list of ingredients, any allergens, and the statement “These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection.”

Product Label Example for Human Food

Chocolate Chip Cookies with Walnuts

Made on: 7/10/2021

Sally Baker

Cottage Food Registration # 12345678

Ingredients: Enriched flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine, mononitrate, riboflavin and folic acid), butter (milk, salt), chocolate chips [sugar, chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, butterfat (milk)], walnuts, sugar, eggs, salt, artificial vanilla extract, baking soda.

CONTAINS: Wheat, eggs, milk, walnuts

THESE PRODUCTS ARE HOMEMADE AND NOT SUBJECT TO STATE INSPECTION

Health and Nutrition Claims

Nutrition facts panels are NOT needed for cottage food products in Minnesota unless you make a claim on your label:

- Nutrition claim such as 'fat-free' or 'low sodium'
- Health claim such as 'prevents heart disease'

Claims are regulated under Title 21, Part 101 of the Code of Federal Regulations and require nutritional analysis.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 3 oz. (85g)			
Serving Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories	200	Calories from Fat 120	
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat	15g		20 %
Saturated Fat	5g		28 %
Trans Fat	3g		
Cholesterol	30mg		10 %
Sodium	650mg		28 %
Total Carbohydrate	30g		10 %
Dietary Fiber	0g		0 %
Sugars	5g		
Protein	5g		
Vitamin A	5%	•	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium	15%	•	Iron 5%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
		Calories	2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300mg	375mg
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Pet treat labels must include:

- Name and **address** OR name and **registration number** of the individual preparing and selling the pet treat
- The date on which the pet treat was prepared
- Ingredients
- The statement **“These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection”**

Peanut Butter & Pumpkin Dog Biscuits

Date Prepared: 8/1/2021

Sally Baker

Cottage Food Registration #12345678

Ingredients: Whole Wheat Flour, Peanut
Butter, Pumpkin, Vegetable Oil, Cinnamon

**THESE PRODUCTS ARE HOMEMADE AND
NOT SUBJECT TO STATE INSPECTION**

Check Your Understanding

Question:

Each individual pet treat package offered for sale must be labeled with:

- A. Name and registration number OR name and address of individual preparing pet treat
- B. Date on which the pet treat was prepared
- C. Ingredients
- D. The statement “These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection”
- E. All of the above

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

E. All of the above

- All pet treat packages must be labeled with the name and registration number OR name and address of the individual preparing the pet treat, the date on which the pet treat was prepared, ingredients, and the statement, “These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection.”

How to Become Registered

- **Step 1: Determine if you are eligible to register for this license exemption.** This includes verifying the food you plan to make is non-potentially hazardous and that your local city, county, or township does not have home sales prohibitions based on zoning requirements. Reviewing this training is helpful to verify eligibility.
- **Step 2: If you are eligible, complete the training and exam for the Cottage Food Producer Registration.** Your training and exam requirements will depend on your expected gross annual sales.
 - If your sales are expected to be less than \$5,000 per year, complete this Tier 1 training and exam.
 - If your sales are expected to be more than \$5,000 per year, you will need to take an in-person or online training through the University of Minnesota Extension program before registering with the MDA. Find training information here: [University of Minnesota Extension cottage food course information](#)

How to Become Registered

- **Step 3: Complete the online registration application and exam:**
- [Online Licensing and Payment System](#)
 - Choose “Cottage Foods Producer Registration” from the dropdown menu
- If you do not have access to a computer, you may request a paper application, training and exam by calling 651-201-6062. Leave a detailed message, including your first and last name and mailing address.



License Application and Renewal

New Application

License Type

Cottage Foods Producer Registration

[Apply for License](#)

[Cancel](#)

[MDA Licensing Regulations and Policies](#)

How to Become Registered

- **Step 4: MDA will send you a registration card in the mail with a unique registration number.** Post the registration card in a location visible to customers where you are selling your food or have it with you and make it available upon request.
 - Please note that registration may take at least 3-4 weeks to process.
 - You may check the status of your registration at [Licensing Information Search](#)
 - If your registration has been processed, you will be listed and can sell your cottage food items.

Registration Renewal

- Cottage food registrations received by the MDA before December 16th of each year expire at the end of that same calendar year (December 31st)
- Cottage food registrations received after December 16th of each year will expire the following year on December 31st
- Cottage food registrants will receive a renewal form in the mail approximately 6 weeks prior to the end of the year.
- You must renew your registration each year to continue producing and selling your food.

Registration Renewal Requirements

Tier	Gross Annual Sales	Registration Renewal Due	Annual MDA Registration Fee	Training and Exam Frequency
Tier 1	\$0 - \$5,000	Yearly	None	Yearly <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online - MDA website• Paper version available for those without a computer
Tier 2	\$5,001 – \$78,000	Yearly	\$50	Every 3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-person or online cottage food course through University of MN Extension (\$50 course fee)

Check Your Understanding

Question:

True or False?

Cottage food registration and training for Tier 1 (up to \$5,000 in gross annual food sales) and Tier 2 (\$5,001 to \$78,000 in gross annual food sales) cottage food producers are BOTH required every year.

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

False

- **Registration** as a cottage food producer is required every calendar year.
- **Training** for Tier 1 must take place **each year**.
- **Training** for Tier 2 sales is required **once every three years**.

Check Your Understanding

Question:

Fill in the blank with the BEST answer.

Before registering with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as a cottage food producer, I need to confirm that _____ allow home-based food businesses.

- A. Food and retail businesses
- B. Neighborhood groups and city councils
- C. Local units of government such as city, county, or township licensing and zoning agencies
- D. Food and safety inspectors

Check Your Understanding

Correct Answer:

C. Local units of government such as city, county, or township licensing and zoning agencies.

- Local units of government, such as a city/county/township/zoning agency, may have business licensing requirements or sanitation, public health, or zoning ordinances that you are required to follow, in addition to the cottage food exemption requirements.

Thank you!

Your training is complete!

The next step is to apply and become registered as a cottage food producer at our [Online Licensing and Payment System](#). With a completed application and passing score, your registration application will be processed.