



Farm Direct, Value Added

A Resource Guide to Making and Selling Food in Oregon



Value-added foods – jams and jellies, pickles and sauerkraut, syrups – can be a valuable and delicious way for farmers to increase their product offerings and extend the market season. They also meet growing consumer demand for local, farm-direct foods. Making value-added foods requires appropriate recipes and equipment, and sound food safety practices.

This guide provides information useful to Oregon farmers who want to make and sell products either (1) direct to consumers under Oregon’s Farm Direct exemption or (2) to restaurants, retailers, distributors, and institutions, and/or sell products not allowed under that exemption.

What Is the Farm Direct Law? What Are the Rules?

Oregon’s Farm Direct Law exempts farm direct marketers – farmers who sell products directly to end consumers – from the need to obtain an Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) license to produce and sell certain processed products made from ingredients they grow. Exempt products do not have to be made in a licensed facility. Products covered by the law include:

- Fruit based syrups and fruit in syrup
- Jams, jellies, and preserves
- Acidified fruits and vegetables
- Lacto-fermented fruits and vegetables

The principal ingredients must come from the farm, with the exception of herbs, spices, salt, vinegar, pectin, juice, honey, and sugar. Only direct sales to consumers are exempt. Resale or consignment sales of producer-processed products are not permitted.

ODA Food Safety oversees the Farm Direct Law. Learn more about the Farm Direct rules related to producer-processed products, including which products are eligible and labeling and facility requirements, here:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/FoodSafety/FarmDirectMarketingProcessedProducers.pdf>

Additional requirements apply to some producer-processed foods. Foods acidified to decrease the pH below 4.6 (such as vinegar pickles, salsas and chutneys) require additional recordkeeping and must use recipes approved by a recognized process authority – which includes commonly available references (see list below) – but they do not have to be made in a licensed facility.



Process Authorities and Other References

ODA recognizes the following references as providing approved processes and formulations (recipes) for acidified products sold under the Farm Direct exemption:

- *USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning*:
http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html
- *So Easy to Preserve*, from the National Center for Home Food Preservation:
<http://nchfp.uga.edu/>
- Pacific Northwest Extension Food Preservation publications: more than 60 short (2-3pp), downloadable guides offering a wide range of home food preservation instructions and information <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>

Alternatively, farmers may submit samples and processes to a recognized process authority.

Going Beyond the Farm Direct Exemption – Next Steps

Value added products not covered under the Farm Direct exemption – including products made from recipes not listed by an approved source or with ingredients not grown by the farmer – must be made in a licensed facility. One option is to find a co-packer, a local food processor that will make, package, and label your product for you following an approved recipe in their licensed facility. Contact FIC at 503-872-6680 for a list of co-packers: <http://fic.oregonstate.edu/>.

To qualify for a license, farmers must meet additional requirements, including:

(1) *pH Testing of product*

Your product must be tested for pH level by a certified food lab. The OSU Food Science and Technology Extension Program maintains an updated list of certified labs, including:

- Columbia Food Labs, in Corbett: 503-695-2287
- OMIC USA, in Portland: 503-223-1497
- Exova, in Portland: 503-253-9136
- Purity Laboratories, in Lake Oswego: 503-297-3636
- Neilson Research Corp, in Medford: 541-770-5678
- OSU Food Innovation Center, Portland: 503-872-6680 (not certified but ODA recognizes FIC testing results as reliable)

(2) *Presence of a certified supervisor during processing*

To become certified as a supervisor for food processing, you must attend the Acidified Foods, Better Process Control School, by OSU Food Science and Technology Extension: Dr. Mark Daeschel, OSU Extension; mark.daeschel@oregonstate.edu; (541) 737-6519.
<http://oregonstate.edu/foodsci/fst-extension-schedule>

(3) *Production in an inspected, licensed facility*

Facility requirements and inspections are provided by ODA's Food Safety Division.
http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/FSD/pages/program_food.aspx



(4) Product submitted to a Process Authority for final approval

Before you can sell your product, you must submit your recipe and product to a recognized process authority for review. Contact Dr. Daeschel; contact information above.

The OSU Food Innovation Center (FIC) can help with product development and testing. FIC offers initial consultations to help entrepreneurs identify the necessary steps and contacts for bringing a product to market. FIC is an approved food testing lab that can conduct required tests before you submit your product to a Process Authority for final approval. A good alternative to building your own facility is to rent space in a commercial or commissary kitchen. Search online for “commercial kitchens for rent.”

NOTE: Some of these four requirements do not apply to some lower-risk products, including most jams and jellies. Contact ODA Food Safety for clarification

Finally, check the requirements for selling products at your venue. Farmers’ markets may have guidelines or restrictions regarding sales of producer-processed, Farm Direct products.

Classes and Workshops

OSU and others provide a variety of classes and training opportunities for farmers interested in making and selling value-added foods.

OSU Extension Service offers hands-on food preservation classes through many county extension offices. These classes provide a great starting point, whether you intend to stay within the limits of the Farm Direct law or go beyond. Classes vary by county. Class instruction is based on USDA recommended procedures for home food preservation. Contact your local office for a class schedule and list of topics: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/find-us>

These three courses provide more in-depth training:

Food Entrepreneur Seminars at the FIC: OSU’s Food Innovation Center, located in Portland, offers an educational series of classes for food entrepreneurs and start-ups. There are four different classes, 2 hours each, covering the following topics:

- ***Quick Overview #1:*** Product Formulation, Nutritional Labeling and Food Safety.
- ***Quick Overview #2:*** Processing, Packaging and Shelf Life Studies.
- ***Packaging & Shelf Life #3:*** How to select the right food packaging and conduct shelf life testing for food products.
- ***Food Safety Basics #4:*** Food safety fundamentals: Microbial Hazards, Water Activity, pH testing, Temperature, etc.

Contact the FIC: 503-872-6680 or <http://fic.oregonstate.edu/entrepreneur-consultation-meeting>. FIC also works with local OSU Extension offices to offer classes around Oregon.



Getting Your Recipe to Market: Ready for more? The Food Innovation Center, Portland Community College, and New Seasons Market together offer a 12-week intensive course designed to train food entrepreneurs in business, organizational, and product development, food safety, packaging, production, and distribution. The course is held in Portland.

Learn more here: <https://www.pcc.edu/climb/small-business/launching/recipe.html>

Recipe to Market Online: Can't attend a class in Portland? Prefer online education? OSU's Professional and Continuing Education offers a new three-course online certificate designed for prospective and new, small and mid-sized food businesses. The courses cover food safety and sanitation regulations, business planning and market analysis, efficient production strategies, and sales and marketing. The course features insights from successful food entrepreneurs in Portland.

Learn more here: <https://pace.oregonstate.edu/recipe2market>

More about Oregon's Farm Direct Law

In addition to producer-processed products, Oregon's Farm Direct exemption covers other agricultural products, including:

- Fresh, cured, or dried fruits, vegetables, edible flowers, and herbs
- Shelled and unshelled nuts
- Whole eggs
- Honey
- Whole, hulled, crushed, or ground grain, legumes, and seeds that are customarily cooked prior to eating
- Parched or roasted grains that are customarily cooked prior to eating
- Popcorn, nuts, peppers, and corn that are roasted by the farm direct marketer at the place of purchase

Read more here:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/shared/Documents/Publications/FoodSafety/FarmDirectMarketingAgProducts.pdf>

Questions?

Contact your local OSU Extension Office: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/find-us>

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