



Supporting Vermont Farms To Adapt and Shift Markets During COVID-19

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets has received inquiries about the requirements for licensing, registration, and labeling for farms that are shifting away from wholesale sales to institutions and restaurants and toward retail and direct to consumer markets. Find answers to frequently asked questions below.

Producers Selling Meat and Dairy

Q: I am a producer that previously sold dairy and meat to wholesale and institutional markets, what licenses or permits do I need to sell directly to the consumer?

A: Dairy and meat producers interested in selling their products directly to consumers will need to purchase retail licenses. The application for a retail license for selling dairy and meat is the same application and can be found [here](#)^[1]. View all VAAFM licenses at our website^[2]. Meat processors that previously sold to institutions or restaurants, and are considering offering differently packaged products for retail or direct to consumer, must contact the Meat Section before making changes to their processing lines.

- For questions about meat, please contact Julie Boisvert at 802-828-2426 or Julie.Boisvert@vermont.gov.
- For questions about dairy, please contact E.B. Flory at 802-828-2433 or Elizabeth.Flory@vermont.gov.

Q: Do I need an additional license/registration to deliver food to customers' homes?

A: Once a meat or dairy producer has a retail license to sell direct-to-consumer on-farm, there are no additional license requirements for transporting and delivering the product directly to customers.

Q: My farm sells our own produce and farm fresh eggs at our farm stand and CSA. If I start adding meat and dairy products from other farms and processors to our farm stand/CSA, will I need a license?

A: If you don't already sell meat and dairy at your farm stand or in your CSA, you will need to obtain retail licenses in order to do so.

Aggregators and Food Hubs

Q: What about aggregators and food hubs that haven't previously aggregated and sold meat and dairy?

A: If you do not already aggregate meat and dairy products, for delivery or pick-up, you will need to obtain retail licenses in order to do so. Once an aggregator has a retail license for the product they've aggregated, there are no additional license requirements for delivering the product directly to customers in their residences.

Q: Do I need a license to repackage foods I receive from farms into smaller containers for direct to consumer retail?

A: A meat processing license is required for repackaging meat, and a milk handlers license is required for repackaging dairy. You do not need a license to repackage produce. Please keep in mind that if an aggregator is packaging items for sale at a later date, labeling requirements may apply. If you have questions about labeling pre-packed goods, contact the Weights and Measures Section at 802-828-2426 or Marc.Paquette@vermont.gov.

Please keep in mind that even though licenses aren't always required, an entity that repackages food is subject to food safety regulations under the appropriate regulatory body, such as the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets or the Vermont Department of Health. For questions about food safety regulations that may apply to your operation, contact Ian Wilson at 802-505-1169 or Ian.Wilson@vermont.gov.





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Best Practices

Q: What should producers, processors, and aggregators keep in mind across products?

A: Maintain best practices to protect public health and slow the spread of coronavirus. Find resources to help protect essential workers in the food system below. In addition, please refer to general workplace guidance from OSHA^[3], CDC^[4], and the WHO^[5].

Food Business Workplace Guidance

- Vermont Department of Health - COVID-19 Guidance for Food and Lodging Businesses^[6]
- Food and Drug Administration - Best Practices for Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services^[7]

COVID-19 Resources for Agriculture Businesses

- Learn more about current resources available at: agriculture.vermont.gov/covid-19-information
- FDA has issued temporary flexibility for federal food labeling and other requirements to support the food supply chain and meet consumer demand during COVID-19^[8].

The Bottom Line

When selling or delivering meat or dairy for the first time, please contact the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to determine what licenses you need.

- Meat Section: Julie Boisvert at 802-828-2426 or Julie.Boisvert@vermont.gov.
- Dairy Section: E.B. Flory at 802-828-2433 or Elizabeth.Flory@vermont.gov.

Other helpful contacts:

- For questions about labeling and scales, contact Marc Paquette at 802-828-2426 or Marc.Paquette@vermont.gov.
- For general questions about food safety regulations, contact Ian Wilson at 802-505-1169 or Ian.Wilson@vermont.gov.
- If you are preparing or selling value-added food products for the first time, contact the Vermont Department of Health Food and Lodging Program at 802-863-7221 or FoodLodging@vermont.gov.

Links to Resources

1. Application For Retail License. agriculture.vermont.gov/sites/agriculture/files/doc_library/Retail_License_Application_Form.pdf.
2. Licensing & Registration Library. agriculture.vermont.gov/license-and-registrations/licensing-registration-library.
3. Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19. www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf.
4. Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (2020). www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html.
5. Getting Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19 (2020). www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/advice-for-workplace-clean-19-03-2020.pdf.
6. COVID-19 Guidance for Food and Lodging Businesses (2020). www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/EH-COVID-19-Food-Lodging-Business-Fact-Sheet.pdf.
7. Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic § (n.d.). www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-updelivery-services-during-covid-19?utm_campaign=CFSANCU_COVIDretail_04092020&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Eloqua#pickupdelivery.
8. FDA Provides Flexibility to the Food Industry to Support Food Supply Chain and Meet Consumer Demand During COVID-19. https://www.fda.gov/news-events/fda-voices-perspectives-fda-leadership-and-experts/fda-provides-flexibility-food-industry-support-food-supply-chain-and-meet-consumer-demand-during?utm_campaign=FoodCOVID_Voices_04212020&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Eloqua

