



Information for Value-added Producers

Value-added products include any item grown or sourced that is locally processed or crafted so that the end product can be sold for more than the unprocessed product. This can include cottage foods (such as pickles, preserves and shelf stable baked goods), products made using local meat, milk, honey, fruit or grains, (such as craft beverages), items hand-crafted from fiber, leather, wood, clay, stone, or found items, etc., and locally made soaps and lotions.

LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS, AND TRAINING

1. [On-Farm Processing and Starting a Specialty Food Business in Maryland](#)
2. [Application for On-farm Processor License](#)
 - a. Tutorial: [How to Apply for the Maryland On-Farm Processor License for Farm-Raised Meats](#)
 - b. Tutorial: [A Step-by-Step Guide to On-Farm Processing of Acidified Foods](#)
3. [Rules for Specific Foods](#)
4. [Maryland Egg License](#)
5. [Maryland Honeybee License](#)
6. [Register Your Flock](#)
7. [University Maryland Extension – Technical Assistance](#)
8. [Nutrient Voucher for Maryland nutrient applicators](#) - information for in-person or online training
9. [Pesticide Safety Training](#) - information for in-person or online training
10. [Farm and Agribusiness Management Programs](#)

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - FACILITY AND PROCESS REVIEWS

Office of Food Protection (OFP) conducts plan, process, and HACCP reviews for all Food Processing Plants, Warehouses, Milk and Dairy Plants, and Chain/franchise retail food service facilities. OFP issues licenses, inspects, and enforces food safety regulations for Food Processing, Warehousing, and Milk/Dairy Facilities.

1. [Plan Review Application](#)
2. [Processing Plant Plan Review Guidelines](#)
3. [Guidelines for Food Establishment Construction](#)
4. [On-Farm Home Processing Plan Review Guidelines](#)

- a. [On-Farm Step by Step Process Licensing](#)
- b. [On-Farm Foods and Definitions](#)
- 5. [On-Farm Meat and Poultry Guidelines](#)
- 6. [Rabbit and Poultry Processing](#)
- 7. [Producer Mobile Guidelines](#)
- 8. [Processing and Selling Value Added Food Products in Maryland](#)
- 9. [Dairy Products Review Guidelines](#)

GENERAL LOCATION AND OPERATIONAL CRITERIA

- 1. Producers need to properly establish their business in order to operate in the County. DED provides a guidance document for [“Starting a Business in St Mary’s County MD?”](#) that provides the basic steps that may be required for getting a business started.
- 2. Many value-added products are produced in existing homes at a scale that does not trigger any requirement to conform to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. However,
 - a. if a value-added operation results in the business having nonfamily employees, regular commercial deliveries, and/or regular visits by customers to the site of the business, the producer will need approval as Use 116. Home Occupation that conforms to CZO Schedule 50.4 Use Classifications, Use Types and Location within Zoning Districts, CZO Section 51.2. General Regulations and Standards for All Uses and to CZO Chapter 51: Use Regulations and Standards and approval for a Home Occupation Permit will be required. See DLUGM’s [Customer Assistance Guide 22: How to Obtain a Home Occupation Permit](#).
 - i. **Use 116. Home Occupation** is defined as Accessory commercial uses allowed in a dwelling unit where the occupation, profession, activity, or use is clearly a customary, incidental, and secondary use of a residential dwelling unit that does not alter the exterior of the property or affect the character of the neighborhood. The use shall conform to CZO Section 51.2.116 (standards from CZO quoted in the box below).

a. Accessory Standards:

- (1) Permit approval shall be required.
- (2) A home occupation may be conducted entirely within a dwelling or within an accessory structure.
A home occupation may not exceed 200 square feet in residential or mixed use districts or 500 square feet in the RPD or RSC.
- (3) No outdoor storage of equipment used for the home occupation shall be permitted in areas visible from adjoining roadways or parcels in residential use.
- (4) There shall be no change in the outside appearance of the building or premises and the existence of a home occupation shall not be apparent beyond the boundaries of the site except for one sign which shall not exceed 6 square feet.
- (5) The maximum number of persons other than residents of the dwelling who can be employed on-site or report to work at the site in the conduct of a home

occupation is two in residential or mixed use districts or three in RPD or RSC zones.

- (6) No more than 10 off-street parking spaces may be provided.
- (7) No equipment or process shall be used that creates noise, vibration, glare, fumes, odors, or electrical interference detectable beyond the boundaries of the lot.
- (8) Any authorized County employee may inspect the premises of a home occupation at any reasonable time to ascertain compliance with these conditions and any requirements of this Ordinance. The Planning Director shall revoke the certificate for a home occupation that is not operated in compliance with these provisions 30 days written after written notice has been 1 served on the owner or occupant of the property unless the home occupation is brought into compliance.
- (9) Funeral homes, motor vehicle repair, auto body work and food and beverage sales shall not be permitted as home occupations.
- (10) One off-site advertising sign may be posted on private property only with the permission of the property owner.
 - (a) Signs shall indicate direction only and shall not be located more than 10 miles from the subject business location.
 - (b) Signs shall be limited to six square feet in size and shall be no more than 18 feet high.
 - (c) Signs shall be subject to a minimum setback of five feet from the road right of way.
 - (d) Signs shall not be lighted.

b. Production of value-added products that exceeds criteria for a Home Occupation must conform to CZO Schedule 50.4 Use Classifications, Use Types and Location within Zoning Districts, CZO Section 51.2. General Regulations and Standards for All Uses and to CZO Chapter 51: Use Regulations and Standards for be regulated based on the type of production per the but will typically fall within one of the following uses defined in the CZO:

- i. Use 4. Aquaculture defined as “Agricultural Activity primarily engaged in farming or culturing of finfish, shellfish, other aquatic plants or animals, or both. Use includes land or water based aquaculture that utilizes natural or manmade impoundments—lakes, and other natural or artificial water bodies or tanks. Activities may include hatching, cultivating, raising, and harvesting of aquatic plants and animals and maintenance or construction of necessary equipment, buildings, and growing areas.” The use shall conform to CZO Section 51.2.4 (standards from CZO quoted in the box below)

a. General Standards:

- (1) *Site plan approval shall be required.*
- (2) *Land and water-based aquaculture activities that are not operated for profit, e.g., ponds stocked for private fishing, oysters grown in floats at private piers for*

consumption by the landowner, etc., are not regulated and may occur in any district.

b. Limited Standards:

(1) A minimum 75-foot setback shall be provided between any adjoining property and any tank or structure built in relation to or area of aquaculture operation activity.

- ii. Use 12. Agricultural Alcoholic Beverage Production defined as “A facility that is related to the manufacture, packaging, storage, promotion, or sale of alcoholic beverages that uses ingredients produced on the land or any associated agricultural land. An Agricultural Alcohol Production facility located outside the AICUZ may serve alcoholic beverages produced by the licensee to customers at the facility. Onsite consumption of alcoholic beverages is not allowed at an Agricultural Alcoholic Beverage Production facility located within the AICUZ.” The use shall conform to CZO Section 51.2.12 (standards from CZO quoted in the box below)

a. General Standards:

(1) Minor Site plan approval is required.

(2) Must be located on real property that has an agricultural use assessment by the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation.

b. Limited Standards:

(1) An agricultural alcoholic beverage production use located outside the AICUZ may serve alcoholic beverages produced by the licensee to customers at the facility. Onsite consumption of alcoholic beverages is not allowed at an agricultural alcoholic beverage production facility located within the AICUZ.

- iii. Use 83. Production Industry, Custom defined as “On-site production of goods by hand manufacturing involving the use of hand tools and small-scale equipment. This classification includes custom carpentry, cabinet and small scale furniture making and woodworking, blacksmiths, welding, machine shops, sail lofts, small-scale sawmills for custom work.” The use shall conform to CZO Section 51.2.83 (standards from CZO quoted in the box below)

a. General Standards:

.....(1) Site plan approval shall be required.

b. Limited Standards:

.....(1) Material storage areas shall be fully screened from dissimilar uses on adjoining properties.

.....(2) Sawmills shall be subject to the following additional standards:

.....(a) Stationary sawmills in RSC, RCL, VMX, TMX, and CMX zones shall be entirely enclosed within a building.

.....(b) *Portable sawmills for cutting timber grown on the premises shall be permitted in any zone, provided the sawmill is removed from the property at the conclusion of the milling of the on-site timber.*

- iv. Use 85. Production Industry, Limited defined as “Manufacturing of finished products or parts, primarily from previously prepared materials, and provision of industrial services; both within an enclosed building. This classification includes commercial bakeries and businesses engaged in processing, fabrication, assembly, treatment, and packaging, but excludes basic industrial processing from raw materials, food processing, and vehicle/equipment services.” The use shall conform to CZO Section 51.2.85 (standards from CZO quoted in the box below)

a. General Standards:

(1) Site plan approval shall be required.

b. Limited Standards:

(1) All activities, including storage of materials, goods, and supplies, must be inside an enclosed building.

- v. 86. Slaughterhouse defined as “Establishments engaged in killing and butchering livestock.” The use shall conform standards if CZO Section 51.2.86 (standards from CZO quoted in the box below)

a. General Standards:

(1) Site plan approval shall be required.

b. Conditional Standards:

(1) Site shall have direct access to a minor or principal arterial roadway.

(2) Waste, by-products, or any decomposable residue that results from the slaughtering of animals, must be refrigerated while on the premises. Waste or any decomposable residue from the slaughterhouse operation may not be disposed of by spreading on and/or plowing under on a farm unless the farm contains at least 100 acres and Health Department approval is obtained.

(3) Adequate measures must be developed for the abatement of offensive and obnoxious odors, dust, smoke, or similar nuisances. Adequate measures meeting construction code requirements for a sound level reduction (SLR) of 25 decibels (dB) must be installed for the abatement of noises.

(4) In RPD zones, Slaughterhouse uses may be located on a minimum of 20 acres or a minimum of 100 acres if the slaughterhouse includes a feedlot. Stock pens or building associated with the slaughterhouse operation not meeting the SLR 25 requirements must be a minimum of 300 feet from any public road right-of-way and 500 feet from any other property line.

(5) In I zones:

(a) Minimum lot size shall be five acres.

(b) All structures shall be located a minimum 200 feet from property lines, except that if the facility includes a retail sales outlet, the front of the retail sales outlet may be as close as 50 feet from the right-of-way boundary of a major collector street.

(c) Holding of live animals is not to exceed 24 hours, except as may be required by the Department of Agriculture or the Health Department.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT CRITERIA FOR COTTAGE FOODS

Maryland's modified Cottage Food Law allows citizens to operate from a home-based kitchen or on-farm food processing kitchen to produce cottage foods. A cottage food product is a non-hazardous food sold at a farmer's market or public events. For more information visit

1. [Maryland Cottage Food Businesses](#)
2. [Code of Maryland Regulations \(COMAR\) 10.15.03.02B\(17-1\) Food Service Facilities](#), defines a cottage food business that "(a) produces or packages cottage food products in a residential kitchen in Maryland; and (b) has annual revenues from the sale of cottage food products in an amount not exceeding \$25,000." It also defines a cottage food product as a non-potentially hazardous food (see discussion below) that is sold in the State directly to a consumer from a residence, at a farmer's market, at a public event, by personal delivery, or by mail delivery; or directly to a retail food store (defined below). Interstate sales or sales outside of Maryland are prohibited.
3. Maryland Department of Health document: [Guidelines for Cottage Food Businesses](#)
4. University of Maryland Extension publication: [Launching a Cottage Food Business in Maryland](#)