



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

## Cottage Food in MN – An Outbreak Case Study

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Photos: Left – Olmstead County Public Health;  
Right – Minnesota Department of Agriculture Licensing  
("Cottage Food Guidance")



# Cottage Foods in Minnesota

- Minnesota Cottage Foods Law went into place on July 1, 2015
- Previously known as the “pickle bill”
- Individuals may register as cottage food producers and cannot make more than \$18,000
- These producers can make non-potentially-hazardous products at home and sell them directly to the consumer in Minnesota only
- Labeling requirements

## Minnesota Cottage Foods Law

### MN COTTAGE FOODS LAW

*It's the law!* As of July 1, 2015, you can make cottage foods in your home kitchen (baked foods, pickled, canned, jams, jellies, etc.) *without* a license BUT you must first take a MDA-approved food safety training and register with the MDA.



### HELPFUL COTTAGE FOOD RESOURCES

**MFMA Fact Sheet: 2015 MN Cottage Foods Law** An explanation of the new law.

**MN Revenue Fact Sheet 148: Tax Information on Cottage Foods**

A list of the cottage foods that are taxable in Minnesota.

**The Non-Potentially Hazardous Foods List**  
A list of the foods allowed and not allowed under the Cottage Foods Exemption. MFMA updates this list as needed. The last revision: July 18, 2017.

**Cottage Foods Producer Registration Form**

This form can be filled online or mailed in.

**Detailed Cottage Foods Training YouTube Video**

**Click here** for further MDA information



Photo: Minnesota Farmers' Market Association – Cottage Foods page - <https://www.mfma.org/CFL>

# Cottage Foods in Minnesota

- Tier 1: \$0-\$5,000
- Tier 2: \$5,001-\$18,000
- Both tiers require training
  - Tier 1: online
  - Tier 2: in person
- Tier 2: \$50 registration fee
- Prepare and sell only non-potentially hazardous food and/or home-canned pickles, vegetables or fruits with a pH of 4.6 or lower ONLY IN MN
- Complete the training every 3 years
- No-nos: animal products, cooked foods, potentially-hazardous foods (cut melons or tomatoes; garlic or herb-based oil mixtures)

# The Outbreak

- March 2018, Olmstead County Health Dept. and MN Dept. of Health reported an outbreak of norovirus among attendees of a high school hockey banquet (n=26)
- Banquet catered by local grocery store deli; MDA investigation at the deli did not reveal any practices of concern
- Olmstead County and MDH determined that cookies were also provided at the banquet, sourced from a home bakery

# The Outbreak

- Home bakery was a “Tier 1” MN cottage food producer (<\$5,000 sales per year)
- Specialty – hand-decorated cookies
- Case-control study conducted determined the cookies were the only significant exposure
- Two ill cases did not attend banquet, but ate cookies brought home from the banquet

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Photo: Minnesota Department of Agriculture Licensing  
("Cottage Food Guidance")

# The Culprits: Hockey Jersey Cookies



Photo: Collected by Olmstead County Public Health

# The Culprits: What we saw when we got this picture



Hockey boys photo: Collected by Olmstead County Public Health  
Norovirus photos: <http://www.foodsafetynews.com/files/2015/12/norovirus.jpg>



# First In-Home Cottage Food Outbreak Follow-up

- Inspector set up meeting with producer
- Producer stated she had been ill with diarrhea and vomiting but had avoided food handling for 24 hours after her illness was resolved
- Also revealed her son was ill at the same time and had vomited in the bathroom downstairs – cleaning took place, but no sanitation
- All equipment for producing cookies stored separate from personal use kitchen items on a cart in the dining room

# “That’s A Good Question”: Outcomes of the Discussion

- Tier 1 training slide: “Clean and sanitize sinks, equipment and countertops before, during, and after food preparation.”
  - How? With what type of cleaner? Sanitizer?
  - Producer requested vomit/diarrhea clean-up procedures
- Illness exclusion not discussed on slides
  - Producer familiar with 24-hour rule
  - Consider 72-hour rule?
  - Illness in any household member (not just producer)?

# Lessons Learned

- Our cottage foods producers need more information on Norovirus!
- Working on improvements to the cottage food training for Tier 1 producers
  - Additional details about cleaning and sanitizing
    - What kills norovirus?
  - Expanded exclusion recommendations
    - 72 hours
    - For any illness in the household

# Thank you!

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