

# Two MS cottage food law updates aid entrepreneurs

**Bonnie A. Coblentz**  
**MSU Extension Service**  
Cottage food laws enacted to allow new entrepreneurs to start small-scale food businesses in their homes were updated recently to stay current with the business climate.

Cottage food products are non-potentially hazardous foods that are made in the kitchen of a private home. In 2013, the Mississippi Legislature passed laws to define what foods can be made and sold from home kitchens, and under what circumstances these activities can be done. Previously, vendors could sell some products in

person, direct to consumers, only at farmers markets. Courtney Crist, a food safety specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, said farmers markets continue to be a major outlet for cottage food products in Mississippi. “Cottage food products I generally see when visiting farmers markets are pickled products, jams, jellies and a variety of baked goods such as cookies and breads,” Crist said. “Currently, Mississippi cottage food industries do not need to register with Mississippi State Department of Health, so it can be

difficult to gauge the number of people participating in Mississippi cottage food operations.” While products are not directly regulated, they are overseen by the Department of Health, which provides laws, regulations and guidelines for cottage food products. All cottage food products must be made and stored within the private home and in compliance with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Retail Food Code. Crist said the Department of Health recently made two updates to cottage food laws dealing with advertising and

the amount of sales a cottage industry can have annually. “Cottage food operations are allowed to advertise cottage food products over the internet, including through social media, but sales still must be directly from the producer to the end consumer and not online,” Crist said. “Also, you are limited to \$35,000 in gross annual sales of cottage food products, which is an increase over the \$20,000 limit previously imposed.” Alba Collart, an Extension agricultural economist, said these changes by the Mississippi Legislature will help the state’s cottage food entrepreneurs by increasing the supplemental income they will be able to earn and the outlets they can use for advertising during times of economic uncertainty in the aftermath of COVID-19. “Cottage food entrepreneurs that might need to continue operating during the pandemic and are not restricted by law to do so will also welcome the increased sales limit and the use of online advertising when venues like farmers markets are closed or operating under safety restrictions,” she said. “However, it is crucial that these cottage food entrepreneurs follow the latest Mississippi State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations and requirements for individuals and food businesses to prevent COVID-19 in their homes and in the community,” Collart said.

Collart said the cottage food laws in Mississippi support local business development, create jobs for cottage food entrepreneurs and strengthen the local economy. “Compared to other states’ laws, Mississippi’s cottage food laws allow the sale of a variety of food products, follow the typical labeling requirements, and do not impose cost-prohibiting registration, licensing or permitting fees,” Collart said. She said Mississippi has one category of cottage food production and one set of regulations for these producers. Thirteen states have developed tiered systems of cottage food production, where different categories of food producers have different opportunities for sales

and revenue but also different rules they must follow. The MSU Extension Service has publications dedicated to the cottage food industry. Find MSU Extension publications searchable by keyword at <https://extension.msstate.edu/publications>. Find Crist’s publication, “Mississippi Cottage Food Operations: Regulations and Guidance,” at <https://bit.ly/3k102F9>. Or learn more from Collart’s “Cottage Food Laws in Mississippi: Key Guidelines and Policy Implications” at <https://bit.ly/35j7F5J>. The National Agricultural Law Center offers a map that provides state-by-state details on cottage food laws. Find it at <https://nationalaglawcenter.org/state-compilations/cottagefood/>.



Mississippi’s cottage food laws make it possible for individuals to prepare food products in their own home and sell them in person to others, providing income to these small-scale entrepreneurs. (File Photo by MSU Extension Service/Kevin Hudson)

## Deadline approaching for local governments to apply for CARES Act Funds through MEMA

**Press Release**  
In August, Governor Tate Reeves and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency launched the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Program. Through the Mississippi Legislature, MEMA was allocated \$70 million of CARES Act money to reimburse county and municipal governments for COVID-19 expenses. To be reimbursed through the COVID-19 Relief Program, the county/municipal-

ity must have their application and specific project (what type of expense they’re being reimbursed for) approved by MEMA. Currently, we have approved 112 applications and are in the process of validating those applicants’ project requests. To date, MEMA has approved nine county projects and two city projects, totaling nearly \$3 million. Those include: DeSoto, Hancock (two approved projects), Harrison (two approved projects), Lafayette (three approved projects), and Pike counties, plus, Starkville and Vicksburg. To see which counties and municipalities have applied for COVID-19 Relief Funds, go to [MSEMA.org](https://msema.org). For local governments to receive those approved funds, each must sign an agreement with the state to certify their projects meet CARES Act criteria. Once received, MEMA will release those funds.

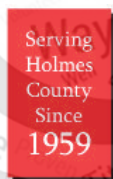
## Spring scholars named at Univ. of Southern Miss.

**Press Release**  
The University of Southern Mississippi has released its president’s and dean’s lists for the 2020 spring semester. The president’s list includes full-time students who earned a perfect 4.0 grade point average (all A’s). Dean’s list scholars are those with at least a 3.5 grade point average, but less than a 4.0. Students recognized from the local area include the following:

- GOODMAN**  
Dean’s List: Alexius Washington;  
**LEXINGTON**  
President’s List: Allijahjuan Wade;  
**PICKENS**  
Dean’s List: Najah Flowers.

“There are millions of dollars sitting there waiting to be distributed; we need those local governments to act with haste given the rapidly approaching October 15th deadline. Many cities and counties have taken a hard hit financially because of COVID-19. While this isn’t a fix-all, every little bit of money put back into our local economies can help remove a small burden off taxpayers,” says MEMA Executive Director Greg Michel. MEMA is urging local and county governments to apply for these CARES Act funds before the deadline, October 15. According to Senate Bill 3047, monies must be obligated by November 30 or will be returned to Governor Reeves.

Stay connected to  
your community  
by subscribing to the



HOLMES COUNTY

HERALD

Sign-up Online  
Anytime • 24/7  
[www.holmescountyherald.com](http://www.holmescountyherald.com)

