

# Impact of New Cottage Food Operation License on Maple Syrup and Honey Producers

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## Issue

How did the creation of the Department of Consumer Protection's (DCP) cottage food operation license impact maple syrup and honey producers?

## Summary

The creation of DCP's cottage food operation license in autumn 2018 gave maple syrup and honey producers an additional option for legally producing and selling their products. Prior to the creation of the new license:

1. honey producers needed a [food manufacturing establishment license](#) (i.e., commercial kitchen license) and
2. maple syrup producers needed a commercial kitchen license unless they were producing maple syrup in the living quarters of a residential farm and selling the syrup on that farm or at a farmers market.

## Cottage Food Operation License (CGS § 21a-62b et seq.)

Since October 2018, DCP has been accepting cottage food operation license applications from individuals seeking to sell food prepared in a home kitchen. DCP offers cottage food operation licenses to individuals who (1) produce cottage food products only in their private residential dwelling's home kitchen and for sale directly to the consumer and (2) do not operate as a food

service establishment (e.g., restaurant), food retailer, distributor, or manufacturer. Licensees may not have annual gross sales over \$25,000.

In order to obtain a cottage food operation license, an applicant must open his or her kitchen to a DCP inspection, during which DCP must confirm compliance with the cottage food law's requirements. Food produced by a cottage food licensee must be labeled with certain information, including the following statement printed in at least 10-point type: "Made in a Cottage Food Operation that is not Subject to Routine Government Food Safety Inspection" (CGS § 21a-62b et seq.).

DCP has identified honey and maple syrup as generally permissible cottage food products to produce with a cottage food operation license.

For more information on cottage food licenses, see this OLR [Issue Brief](#) and DCP's [Operator Manual](#).

## **Honey (CGS §§ 21a-62b et seq. & [21a-151 et seq.](#))**

The law requires honey producers to have either a food manufacturing license or a cottage food operation license ([CGS § 21a-152](#)). Prior to the passage of [PA 18-141](#) (§§ 13-19), the only option for honey producers who sought to sell their product was to undergo commercial kitchen licensing.

In addition to DCP's licensing requirements, the law requires honey bee keepers to register with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) and submit to hive inspections ([CGS §§ 22-89 & 22-90](#)). More information on these requirements is available on [CAES' website](#).

## **Maple Syrup ([CGS §§ 21a-24b](#), 21a-62b et seq., & [21a-151 et seq.](#))**

Since at least 1995, Connecticut law has permitted individuals to produce maple syrup in the living quarters of a residential farm (i.e., on a farm that serves as the owner's primary residence) without a commercial kitchen license. Such operations are not subject to state and local inspections, but syrup produced under this exception must be sold on the farm or at a farmers market and must be labeled in 10-point type: "Not prepared in a government-inspected kitchen" ([CGS § 21a-24b](#)).

The passage of [PA 18-141](#) (§§ 13-19) allows maple syrup producers who do not qualify for the above exception to apply to DCP for a cottage food operation license to produce maple syrup in the home kitchen of any private residential dwelling (CGS § 21a-62b et seq.).

Lastly, maple syrup producers may opt to obtain a food manufacturing license (and such a license is required if they seek to sell their product through a store or wholesaler) (CGS § [21a-151 et seq.](#)).

JB:bd