



California Farm Stand Fact Sheet

A farm stand piled high with fresh-picked peaches is a timeless picture of summer in California. Farmers have been selling their produce at roadside stands just about as long as there have been roads and customers to drive on them. Farm stands in California are regulated by [California Health and Safety Codes](#) (statewide) and county or municipal land use regulations (zoning ordinances).

Field Retail Stands & Farm Stands

Field Retail Stands

Field Retail Stands are a low-barrier way to sell farm products direct-to-consumer. They are producer-owned and operated, located on or near the location where the product was grown. Only whole produce and shell eggs produced by the operator can be sold in field retail stands. Most counties allow field retail stands “by right” on agricultural zoned land; this means that they do not require permitting, as long as appropriate standards are met, and are exempt from standard wholesale size and pack requirements. However, because each county has the jurisdiction to regulate, farmers should consult with their county planning department. The premise must comply with requirements for size, set-back from the road, signage, etc., as determined by the county.

Farm Stands

Farm Stands are field retail stands, that, in addition to selling whole produce and shell eggs produced by the operator on or near the location of the farm stand, can also sell nonpotentially hazardous prepackaged food products:

- Grown or produced in close proximity to the farm stand.

- Not grown or produced in close proximity to farm stand are limited to 50 square feet.

Nonpotentially Hazardous Prepackaged Food Products

Farm stands are allowed to sell nonpotentially hazardous (shelf-stable) food products from an approved source. This includes “value-added” products with ingredients produced on or near the farm, as long as they were prepared in a facility approved by the health department, such as a Cottage Food or commercial kitchen. Examples include:

- Jams & jellies
- Pickles
- Cured olives
- Bottled water & soft drinks
- Bagged chips

Can I Offer Samples?

Typically, only samples of non-potentially hazardous products that were prepared in certified home or commercial kitchens, such as Cottage Food Operations, are allowed. In order to offer other food samples, such as cut produce, approved toilet and handwashing facilities are required.

Food Safety Rules

- All food must be stored at least six inches above the floor or ground.
- No live animals, fowl or other birds are permitted within 20 feet of any area where food is stored or held for sale. This does not apply to guide dogs, signal dogs, or service dogs when used in the manner specified in Section 54.1 of the Civil Code. This section of the civil code addresses individuals with disabilities or medical conditions and their right to full and free use of all public places that are available to the general public.
- All garbage and refuse must be stored and disposed in an appropriate manner.
- All prepackaged processed food products offered for sale must be from approved sources and be stored in approved vermin proof structures or containers when the farm stand is closed.
- Food sampling: No food preparation at the farm stand, other than sampling. Food sampling is allowed if:
 - at least a portable toilet and temporary hand-washing facilities are available for use by employees.
 - Samples shall be kept in clean, non-absorbent, and covered containers. Any cutting or distribution of samples shall only occur under a tent, canopy, or other overhead covering.
 - All food samples shall be distributed by the producer in a manner that is sanitary and in which each sample is distributed without the possibility of a consumer touching the remaining samples.
 - Clean, disposable plastic gloves shall be used when cutting food samples.

Getting Started

- Check with your county: Consult with your county's Planning Department and/or Health Department to learn if field retail and farm stands are allowed on your zoning. They can also tell you what licenses or permits, if any, will be required. Licenses and permits may include registering as a Certified Producer/Approved Source with CDFA, applying for an Egg Handlers Permit with CDFA, or a Cottage Food license with your county.
- Get informed: Visit the California Agritourism website (ucanr.edu/sites/agritourism), to learn more about operating a farm stand and see examples. Reach out to your local UC ANR Cooperative Extension Advisor (UCCE) to ask questions or ask for help.

Resources

- [California Retail Food Code](#) – California Division of Environmental Health
www.cdph.ca.gov
- California Agritourism Program: The UC Agritourism Program provides resources, information, and trainings for those involved in California agritourism, and beyond. The California Agritourism website provides resources, guides, fact sheets, presentations and contacts to support those involved in agritourism.
ucanr.edu/sites/agritourism
- UC Cooperative Extension: County-based advisors and staff helping farmers and communities.
https://ucanr.edu/sites/ucanr/County_Offices