

Selling Homemade Food on social media, including Facebook

Selling food grown or made in your home carries endless possibilities for enjoyment and profit; however, it also carries substantial **responsibilities** for the safety of the public who purchases and consumes your food products.

The Rock Island County Health's environmental health team shares the Dos and Don'ts of selling homemade food on social media, including Facebook.

1. "Can you sell food on Facebook?"
2. "Is it safe to buy advertised food on Facebook?"

"Can you sell food on Facebook?"

Yes, you can sell food on Facebook. However, there are **limitations** to the kind of food that can be sold on Facebook or other social media. In order to prevent foodborne illness, the Illinois Department of Public Health has **Cottage Food Laws** in place.

Before delving into the details of how to sell baked goods online and how to sell food on Facebook, especially, you need to be sure that you understand and are in compliance with what is known as Cottage Food Laws, which can vary significantly from state to state. "**Cottage food**" refers to the types of foods that are prepared in a person's home or other location that does not meet the standards of a professional, commercial kitchen. Because of this, some places regulate the type of venues in which a person can sell these types of goods.

With these laws, shelf-stable foods, or non-potentially hazardous foods that do not require refrigeration to keep safe, such as baked goods, jams, jellies, dry blends, and properly acidified food products, **CAN** be prepared in a domestic kitchen and sold directly to customers.

Food products including meat, poultry, seafood, shellfish, and dairy-based ingredients are **NOT ALLOWED** under the Cottage Food Laws because they can become harmful if not cooked properly and kept at the proper temperature. Low-acid canned meals are also prohibited, as are pies or pastries with potentially dangerous toppings or fillings. If food is going to be sold on Facebook, only appropriate items should be advertised.

"Is it safe to buy advertised food on Facebook?"

The answer is maybe. When buying advertised food on Facebook, you will want to make sure that the seller is either a licensed cottage food seller, a licensed food establishment, or that the food was made in a licensed commercial kitchen. All of these licensed entities will have proper food safety training.

Items that are hazardous to buy on Facebook are those with meat, poultry, seafood, shellfish, and dairy-based ingredients. This is because these food products are more susceptible to foodborne illness if not held at the proper temperatures or cooled properly. A licensed cottage food vendor would not be selling these products.

If you would like to read more about becoming a Cottage Food vendor, please read the [Illinois Cottage Food guide](#) or contact the Environmental Health Department at 309-558-2841.