

Frequently Asked Questions

Community Food Production

The Food Production law (AB 1990, Gordon), which became effective January 1, 2015, is part of the movement to increase community access to fresh, locally grown produce. This law authorizes a “Community Food Producer” or a “Gleaner,” unless prohibited by a local ordinance, to be recognized as an approved food source, and to sell or provide whole uncut fruits or vegetables and up to 15 dozen shell eggs per month directly to the public, a permitted restaurant, food bank or cottage food operator.

Information in this document will help to answer questions about this new law and provide instructions on how to register with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health as a Community Food Producer or Gleaner. If you will be operating in the cities of Long Beach, Pasadena or Vernon, please contact that city’s health enforcement agency for registration information.

What is a “Community Food Producer” (CFP)?

A “Community Food Producer” is someone who grows produce on land not zoned for a farm, but who follows land use and zoning laws about personal gardens, community gardens, school gardens, and culinary gardens (California Retail Food Code (Cal Code), Section 113752).

What is a “Gleaner”?

A “Gleaner” is a person who has legal permission from an owner to gather the remains of an agricultural crop after it has been harvested. (Cal Code, Section 113796).

What does the law do?

The law authorizes a city or county health enforcement agency to:

- Require a Community Food Producer or Gleaner to register annually and to provide certain information about the operation.
- Inspect the operation of a Community Food Producer or Gleaner in response to a food safety recall or food safety complaint.
- Issue a cease and desist order for violations of the law and conduct re-inspections to verify violations are corrected before operation resumes.
- Recover reasonable costs associated with inspections and registration.

Community Food Producers have a legal obligation to implement the best management practices described in this document and must be in compliance with applicable local land use and zoning restrictions.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

What agencies should I contact to obtain approvals needed for my Community Food Operation?

Land Use and Zoning approval: Contact your local planning or Community Development Agency to verify that it is legal for you to produce, glean or sell food from your specific site.

Sales permit/license: Contact your local jurisdiction to obtain a business license or peddling permit, if required.

Egg Sales registration: Register with the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Egg Safety and Quality Management Program. Registration information can be found at: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/mpes/esqm.html>

Pesticide use: Contact the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/ Weights & Measures at (626) 575-5466 if you are planning to use pesticides.

How do I register to become a Community Food Producer or a Gleaner?

Complete the Community Food Production Registration Form and follow the Registration Requirements listed in the first section of the form. The registration form can be found at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/index.htm> under the links for Community Food Production.

How long does the registration last?

Your registration is valid for one year from the date of issuance and will need to be renewed annually. The renewal fee is \$65.00.

Will my property be inspected if I become a Community Food Producer or a Gleaner?

No, your property will not receive a routine inspection by County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health. Inspections of Community Food Producer or Gleaners will only be conducted in response to a food safety recall or food safety complaint (Cal Code, Section 114376.5). The Community Food Producer or Gleaner will be charged the applicable fee to recover costs, as allowed by law.

What do I need to do to sell eggs as a Community Food Producer?

A Community Food Producer who raises chickens may sell up to 15 dozen shell eggs per month. The registration process is the same as for a Community Food Producer except that producer must register with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Egg Safety and Quality Management Program. Registration information can be found at: <http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/mpes/esqm.html>

For more information, please contact the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/ Weights & Measures at (562) 622-0426.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

What type of community food products from my garden can I sell?

You can sell the following food products from your garden:

- **Whole uncut fruits and vegetables, including unshelled nuts**
- **Shell eggs (up to 15 dozen per month)**

The food must be grown according to the Food Safety Guidelines for Small Farms published by the California State Department of Food and Agriculture. These guidelines provide Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect food safety and can be found at: http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/is/i_c/sffsg.html.

Note: Cutting beyond that required during harvesting is considered food processing and not allowed in the operation of Community Food Producers or Gleaners. For example, cutting lettuce to harvest is allowed, but cutting it further to make a salad mix is not allowed.

I understand that I can sell my whole uncut fruits or vegetables and shell eggs to a restaurant. Can I also sell them to a market (such as a grocery store)?

No, currently the law does not allow you to sell your community food products directly to a market. The law only specifies the public, permitted restaurants and cottage food operators.

Where can Community Food Producers and Gleaners sell or provide their produce?

Community Food Producers and Gleaners may sell or donate their produce from the actual site where the produce is grown (home or the local community garden), a community event, or at a special event. It is important to check with the local jurisdictions as additional permits may be required to sell from these locations.

Can a Community Food Producer or Gleaner sell their produce and eggs at a Certified Farmers' Market?

A Community Food Producer or Gleaner may sell their produce and eggs at a Certified Farmers' Market if they have registered as a Certified Producer with the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/ Weights & Measures. For more information, contact the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/ Weights & Measures at (626) 575-5466.

Can a Community Food Producer or Gleaner donate produce and eggs to a nonprofit organization such as a food bank?

While not specifically included in this law, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health will allow food banks to receive these products if the producer or gleaner is registered with the County Environmental Health Division, Specialized Food Services Program.

Can a group of community producers grow and sell from one common location?

Yes. People who have a garden or garden plot at a community garden and have registered can sell their products directly to the public from the community garden. However, check with your local jurisdiction as additional permits may be required.

I am a Cottage Food Operator; can I use the produce from my garden for my cottage food products?

Yes, as long as the product meets State requirements for cottage food. For more information about Cottage Food Operations please visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/misc/CAHomemadeFood.htm>

Can a Community Food Producer sell other products such as bottled water?

Yes, however a separate permit may be required. Contact the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division, Specialized Food Services Program at 626-430-5421 for more information.

Can I take orders online?

Yes. A community food producer may advertise and can take both orders and payments via the Internet or phone. However, a community food producer **must deliver (in person) to the customer**. A community food producer may not deliver any products via US Mail, UPS, FedEx or any other third-party delivery service.

Can I deliver my food products out of state?

No. A community food producer can only sell within the State of California.

APPROVED SOURCE OF FOOD

Can any garden be considered an approved source of community food products?

Yes, any garden, such as a home garden, school garden, community garden, or culinary garden, can be considered an approved source of community food products as long as the producer is registered as a Community Food Producer.

I would like to sell the produce grown in my Community Food Operation to a restaurant. How can I show that my produce comes from an approved source?

Provide the restaurant with an invoice of the products delivered and a copy of your Los Angeles County Community Food Production Operation Certificate for their files.

LABELING

Are there specific labeling requirements for the agricultural products I sell?

Yes. All agricultural products must be properly labeled and packaged in accordance with all applicable labeling and packaging laws. For more information, contact the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/ Weights & Measures at (626) 575-5466.

At a minimum, agricultural products must be labeled with the Doing Business As (DBA) company name, mailing address, phone number and registration number of the community food producer. If a label is not available, a conspicuous sign must be provided with the DBA, mailing address, phone number and registration number of the Community Food Producer.

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