



## Pickle Bill Fact Sheet

This fact sheet addresses legislation, also known as the “Pickle Bill,” that allows the limited sale of certain home-processed and home-canned foods (M.S. Chapter 28A.15 Subd.10).

### What special precautions do I need to take in making home-canned and home-processed food under this exemption?

- Home-canned and home-processed food must have an equilibrium pH value of 4.6 or lower. (See attachment A for information on pH and acidity.)
- A sign or placard must be placed at the point of sale which states:
  - **These canned goods are homemade and not subject to state inspection.**
- Each food container must be labeled with:
  - **Name and address of the person who processed and canned the food.**
  - **Date of food processing and canning.**
- Persons producing and selling these products are urged to:
  - Successfully complete a better process school recognized by the Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture.
  - Have the recipe and manufacturing process reviewed by a person knowledgeable in the food canning industry and recognized by the Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture as a process authority.
  - Have documentation of the formulation (recipe) and the equilibrium pH results available when requested by regulatory authorities.

### What types of home-processed and home-canned products are allowed?

- Pickles, vegetables or fruits
- Specific examples of products that **may** be allowed:
  - sweet or dill pickles, tomatoes, salsa, apples, cherries, grapes, plums, peaches, flavored vinegars, and naturally fermented foods such as sauerkraut, pickles and Kim Chi (a Korean style of fermented vegetables) **as long as the equilibrium pH is 4.6 or less.**

### What types of home-processed and home-canned products are not allowed?

- Foods that are **not** pickles, vegetables or fruits.
- Foods that have an equilibrium pH of greater than 4.6.
- **Fish, pickled eggs, and meat** even if the product's equilibrium pH is 4.6 or less.
- Specific examples of home canned and home-processed foods that are **NOT** allowed

- Peas, green beans, beets, sweet corn, carrots etc that processed by either the use of a boiling water bath or by the use of a home pressure cooker or any other means **unless the equilibrium pH is 4.6 or less**

## How much home-processed and home-canned food can I sell?

- Up to \$5,000 per year.

## Where can I sell my home-canned and home-processed food?

- Farmers markets
- Community Events
- Social Events

## Where can't I sell my home-canned and home-processed food?

- Consignment Shops
- Private craft shows or for-profit events
- To other businesses for resale
- On the internet
- Across state lines
- From the home

## Additional Information

The following links provide information on home processing and home canning:

- USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning (**PDF: 275 KB / 23 pages** [[http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications\\_usda.html](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications_usda.html)].)
- **Home Food Preservation** [<http://extension.usu.edu/html/publications/by=category/category=319>]
- **Colorado State Food & Nutrition Fact Sheets** [[http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/pubs.html#nutr\\_health](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/pubs.html#nutr_health)]
- **Home Canning** [[http://southernfood.about.com/od/canning/Home\\_Canning.htm](http://southernfood.about.com/od/canning/Home_Canning.htm)]
- Numerous other links can be found just by typing in home-canned foods or pickles in a search engine such as **Google Search** [<http://www.google.com/>].

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## Attachment A

### What is pH?

pH is a measurement of acidity or alkalinity using a numerical scale between 1 and 14. A pH value of 1 is most acidic, a pH value of 7 is neutral and values above 7 are referred to as basic or alkaline.

### How is pH measured?

- Electronic pH meters are very accurate and pocket sized units are available for around \$100.

- Paper strips are NOT accurate enough to measure acidity of home-canned and home-processed foods.

### What is equilibrium pH?

- The pH of a food product after the food acid (e.g. vinegar) is distributed equally throughout the product.
- For example, the initial pH of the pickled cucumber that has been recently canned, will not be the same a few weeks later. It takes time for the vinegar (which is acid) to penetrate and distribute into the cucumbers. Therefore, testing the pH of only the brine (liquid) portion of a recently canned and processed product is not accurate.

### How do you determine a product's equilibrium pH?

- For foods canned and processed less than 2 months:
  - Food sample need to be finely ground in a blender prior to pH testing.
- For foods with a process date greater than 2 months:
  - pH may be taken of the brine only since all contents of the canned product should be in equilibrium.

### Who can test for pH?

- The person that processed the food as long as they are s capable of performing an accurate pH test.
  - When testing, follow the same recipe and procedures for each batch of food to be tested.
  - A separate pH test is required for each different product offered for sale under this exemption
- Private laboratory

### Examples of pH for different foods

- Dill pickles (pH 2.6-3.8)
- Tomatoes (pH 3.7-4.9)
- Distilled water (pH 7)
- Garlic (pH 5.3-6.3)

### Where can I find pH values for common foods?

- [U. S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition web site.](http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/Product-SpecificInformation/AcidifiedLow-AcidCannedFoods/default.htm)  
[<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/Product-SpecificInformation/AcidifiedLow-AcidCannedFoods/default.htm>]

## MDA Contact

[Dairy & Food Inspection Division \[en/about/divisions/dairyfood.aspx\]](/en/about/divisions/dairyfood.aspx)  
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