



## **COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCT TESTING**

*Food sold under the Alaska Food Code exemption [18 AAC 31.012\(a\)](#).*

### **WHY ARE FOODS REQUIRED TO BE TESTED?**

The regulation requires that documentation of demonstrating product safety be provided upon request. You must demonstrate that either pH, water activity, or both are sufficient to prevent dangerous bacteria from growing. Please see the [Cottage Food Exemption](#) factsheet for information regarding what type of testing is required for the type of product

### **WHAT KIND OF TESTING DO I NEED TO DO?**

For products like salsas, pickled vegetables and fermented foods a pH test result of 4.6 or below is needed. For products like dehydrated foods a water activity test result of 0.88 or below is required.

### **I WANT TO SELL BAKED GOODS. DO I NEED TO GET A WATER ACTIVITY OR PH TEST?**

If your baked goods are nonpotentially hazardous (i.e. no cream cheese frosting, custards, meringues, etc) then the only documentation that you will need to provide is recipe formulation.

### **WHERE CAN I GET MY PRODUCT TESTED?**

Any number of Food Labs would be able to test your product. You can check around locally to see if anyone can provide that service. Otherwise [Alaska DEC Environmental Laboratory Services](#) or Cooperative Extension Services can provide pH and water activity testing at a minimal cost. You can also purchase your own water activity or pH meter to test your product.

### **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO GET MY PRODUCT TESTED?**

Testing costs may vary depending on where you get your product tested. Water activity and pH testing done through the [Alaska DEC Environmental Laboratory Services](#) (a pH test is \$20 and water activity is \$10 per sample) or [Cooperative Extension Services](#) (pH test is \$15 and water activity is \$15 per sample).

### **DO I NEED TO PROVIDE ADEC WITH A COPY OF MY TEST RESULTS?**

No – you just need to keep a copy with you so you can demonstrate that the product is safe

### **I WANT TO SELL MY PRODUCT AT THIS WEEK'S FARMER'S MARKET. THERE ISN'T TIME TO GET MY PRODUCT TESTED – DOES THAT MEAN I CAN'T SELL?**

You need to have proof, if asked, that the product you are selling is safe. Until you have that documentation your product is not considered safe.