

**Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs**

Office of the Minister

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**Ministère de l'Agriculture, de
l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales**

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Ontario

February 11, 2020

Michael Di Lullo
CAO
Municipality of Middlesex Centre
dilullo@middlesexcentre.on.ca

Dear Michael Di Lullo:

The best small businesses are born out of a passion and a dream.

When it comes to many home-based food businesses, they start with a love of food and a cherished family recipe. Whether passionate about making grandma's coveted baked goods or a new take on homegrown pickles, jams and preserves, we are making it easier for Ontarians to share their homemade goods with their communities and turn their passion into a successful business.

As our government recently announced, Ontario has made changes to the Food Premises Regulation under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* that allow more flexibility for small, independent businesses to sell their low-risk, home-prepared foods from their homes or at special events like farmers' markets, festivals and fairs. While these changes came into effect on January 1, 2020, the desire to start low-risk, home based food businesses has only increased during COVID, which is why we're clarifying the rules now.

Low-risk foods are non-hazardous and do not require refrigeration. They include such items as baked goods, pickles, jams and preserves, chocolates, hard candies and brittles, fudge and toffees, granola, trail mix, nuts and seeds, and coffee beans and tea leaves.

These regulatory changes support Ontario's entrepreneurs in running a home-based food business, without compromising our high standards for food safety. The changes also give Ontarians new opportunities to buy locally produced foods.

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The Ministry of Health has published a guide to help such entrepreneurs take the recommended steps to succeed, in a food-safe way, in their homemade food business efforts:

www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/selling_low_risk_food.pdf I welcome you to use your networks to share this important information with those who may be interested.

Starting a home-based food business is an excellent opportunity for people across Ontario to share their culinary creativity, build a business for themselves and be part of the province's agri-food sector. Our government is committed to encouraging this growing part of the economy and to support all the good things that are grown and produced right here in Ontario.

Thank you for your support of this initiative and for all your efforts to partners with us as we strive to build strong communities and a vibrant economy in Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernie Hardeman', with a large, stylized initial 'E'.

Ernie Hardeman

Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

COVID-19 Reminders

- Practise physical distancing – stay 2 metres away from others in public
- Wash your hands – with soap and water thoroughly and often
- Get the facts - www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread