

Turning grandma's recipe into profit

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

If you have an old secret recipe that people have always said you should try putting a label on the jar and selling it, now may be a good time to show a little entrepreneurial spirit.

The Ontario Government is supporting home-based food business by providing a guide on how to start a such an enterprise. This includes regulatory changes that allow more flexibility to sell low-risk home-prepared foods.

The guide includes an overview of public health requirements that need to be followed as a food producer.

This is part of an effort to help small independent businesses succeed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"For many local entrepreneurs, they start with a love of food and a cherished family recipe, whether it's grandma's apple pie or that new take on homegrown pickles, jams and preserves, and try and turn their passion into a successful business," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

"Our government applauds them for their vision and effort and we are doing everything we can to help them seize new opportunities without compromising Ontario's high standards for food safety."

The guide is for foods considered low-risk that are non-hazardous and do not require refrigeration. This includes items such 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.

"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," said Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "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."

Starting your own home-based food business can be a rewarding enterprise but you must still follow proper regulations. This includes adhering to requirements under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, and the Food Premises Regulation.

Anyone starting their own home-based food production business can also expect periodic inspections by their local health unit. Home based businesses that prepare only low risk foods are exempt from some regulatory requirements such as specified hand washing stations, compliance with commercial dishwashing requirements and food handling training certification.

That old family recipe that everyone loves may provide entrepreneurs the chance to turn it into a successful home-based business.