



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bureau of Aquaculture & Laboratory Services



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Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Updated Guidance for the Direct Marketing of Shellfish by Licensed Shellstock Shippers During COVID-19

Effective April 1, 2020

Bureau of Aquaculture & Laboratory

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BACKGROUND

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAG) is the Connecticut shellfish control authority and licenses all commercial shellfish harvesters and dealers in accordance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance (United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), 2018). In order to be licensed by the DoAG, Shellstock Shippers must be trained in sanitation and in the application of seafood Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). Shellstock Shippers that have been licensed by the DoAG are listed on the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) Interstate Certified Shellfish Shippers List (ICSSL) and are considered an Approved source of food. The ICSSL may be accessed at <https://www.fda.gov/food/federalstate-food-programs/interstate-certified-shellfish-shippers-list>.

Shellstock Shipper I license-holders may sell directly to the consumer at their land-based facility or from a conveyance capable of maintaining adequate temperature control that has been inspected and certified by the department. All Shellstock Shipper I facilities and conveyances are inspected by DoAG and considered to be a critical part of the dealer's facility. Approved methods of temperature control such as the use of ice and insulated totes that have been evaluated by DoAG inspector may also be used. These conveyances must meet specific requirements in order to be used for the transport of shellfish and are not added to a license until they have been inspected and certified by the DoAG as suitable for temperature-controlled storage of shellfish.

This document may be used as a supplement to the existing Connecticut Sea Grant and DoAG REGULATORY GUIDANCE FOR THE DIRECT MARKETING OF MOLLUSCAN SHELLFISH IN CONNECTICUT (Connecticut Sea Grant, 2019).

<https://seagrant.uconn.edu/2019/04/29/new-guide-for-direct-marketing-of-shellfish-available/>

COVID-19 Response in Connecticut

According to Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7H: Restrictions on Workplaces for Non-Essential Businesses (State of Connecticut, 2020):

Effective on March 23, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. Non-essential businesses or not-for-profit entities shall reduce their in-person workforces at any workplace locations by 100% not later than March 23, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. *Any essential business or entity providing essential goods, services or functions shall not be subject to these in-person restrictions.*

For purposes of Executive Order 7H, "essential business," means:

Essential workers in the 16 Critical Infrastructure Sectors, as defined by the federal Department of Homeland Security unless otherwise addressed in a prior or future executive order pertaining to the existing declared public health and civil preparedness emergency.

Essential Food and Agriculture businesses include the following:

- farms and farmer’s markets
- food banks
- food manufacturing, processing, storage, and distribution facilities
- restaurants/bars (provided compliance with all applicable executive orders is maintained)
- all manufacturing and corresponding supply chains, including agriculture

Licensed Shellstock Shippers I operations are considered an **Essential Food and Agriculture** business, and shellfish sold by these businesses are an Approved food source. These operations may sell directly to the public from either their land-based facility or at a designated pickup location, provided they are selling from an approved conveyance that has been inspected and licensed by DoAG for temperature-controlled storage of shellfish. They may also deliver shellfish direct to the consumer from a DoAG licensed conveyance.

This direct to consumer model protects human health from exposure to COVID-19 while allowing these critical agriculture producers to sustain their industry during this public health crisis. This model also allows the shellfish industry to benefit from businesses that have maintained foot traffic during the COVID-19 crisis, by permitting them to designate pickup locations at breweries, wineries, land-based farms, restaurants offering take-out, etc. Many of these businesses are also struggling, and these partnerships could help bring in much needed revenue, as well as connect the consumer directly to a fresh and local source of food.

Please note that this method of distribution is not a new practice, however in response to the current COVID-19 crisis, DoAG is providing this updated guidance document to clarify the existing licensing requirements for direct sales and to add additional COVID-19 specific guidance to protect the public as well as the producers.

This guidance was developed using the best information available at the time and may be subject to change.

Licensing Requirements for Direct Sales from a Licensed Shellstock Shipper I (Harvester/Dealer)

In order to conduct direct sales of shellfish, the dealer must be a *currently licensed* Shellstock Shipper I. Any conveyance to be used for direct sales must be inspected and listed on a Shellstock Shipper I license. Only DoAG inspected conveyances with adequate temperature control may be used for direct sales of shellfish at an offsite location.

If a licensed shellstock shipper is interested in marketing shellstock from an offsite location, they should work with the business owner at each location to establish an arrangement. If a licensed Shellstock Shipper I would like to be included on the CT Grown Map (<https://guide.ctnofa.org/>) for direct sales from their facility or off-site location, they must complete the [online form](#)* at the DoAG website. A new form

should be completed for each off-site location that will be used as a point-of-sale. Once DoAG receives the application, it will be reviewed by shellfish program staff to ensure that they are a licensed Shellstock Shipper I and appear on the ICSSL. Only currently licensed Shellstock Shippers will be added to the CT Grown Farm Map.

This map will allow the LDH to view off-site direct sales locations to allow for follow-up if there is any complaint or question about the activity.

The following format should be used when completing the online form so that both operations are clearly identified on the CT Grown map:

<p>Farm Name: Company Name (CT # SS) at Offsite Location Example: Awesome CT Oysters (CT 1 SS) at Connecticut Brewery Name</p>

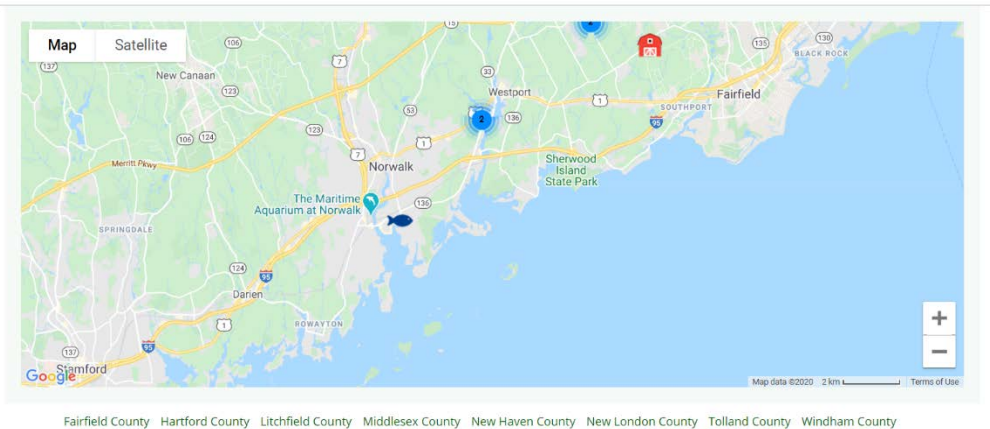
Online Platforms Available to Connecticut Farmers:

CT Grown Farm Map

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, CT Northeast Organic Farming Association (CT NOFA) has partnered with DoAG to expand the list of farms, farmers' markets, and farm stands beyond the current CT NOFA membership - free of charge and online. It is a joint effort to promote the availability of all Connecticut farmers who can provide food and other farm products in this time of crisis.

In order to register each location that will be used for offsite pickup for inclusion on the CT Grown Map (<https://guide.ctnofa.org/>) the producer should complete the [online form](#)*. A new form should be completed for each off-site location that will be used as a point-of-sale.

Locations selling shellfish products will be visualized on the map with a fish icon (Figure 1). When a user clicks on the icon, they are directed to a page that displays the information that was provided on the online form (Figure 2).



Connecticut NOFA Local Farm and Food Guide

Figure 1. CT Grown Map of farm locations. <https://guide.ctnofa.org/>



Creating an Organic CT since 1982

Norwalk, CT Farm & Food Guide

SEARCH

Copp's Island Oysters by Norm Bloom and Son, LLC

Copp's Island Oysters by Norm Bloom and Son, LLC
7 Edgewater Place
Norwalk, CT 06885

203-866-7546

<http://www.coppsislandoysters.com/>

Shellfish.

Seafood

Open for Business: Yes

Online Store: ✓

Call for Pickup: ✗

SNAP: ✗

EBT: ✗

Benefit Doubling: ✗

Please consider supporting Connecticut NOFA and our efforts to bring local food to Norwalk, CT.

Support CT NOFA

To list your farm or join CT NOFA

Contact Us

< Fairfield County CT

- Bethel
- Byram
- Cannondale
- Easton
- Fairfield
- Georgetown

Figure 2. CT Grown Map Producer Page

Connecticut Sea Grant Aquaculture Producers Page

Once a location has been registered with DoAG, and reviewed for licensure by shellf, the producer will be connected to Connecticut Sea Grant for posting on a Connecticut aquaculture-specific page on the Connecticut Sea Grant Aquaculture Website <http://aquaculture.uconn.edu/aquaculturesales>.

Each producer will work directly with Connecticut Sea Grant Extension staff on the information that they would like to include on the Connecticut Sea Grant page. DoAG will notify Connecticut Sea Grant as new direct sales locations come online and will connect each producer to the appropriate Connecticut Sea Grant staff. If there is additional marketing information that a producer would like to be posted, such as a company logo or links to social media, producers will work directly with Connecticut Sea Grant staff on specifics.

Connecticut Sea Grant Extension may also assist growers with training and development opportunities for producers that need additional technical or marketing assistance.

CT Grown Social Media Toolkit Spring 2020

During this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) has compiled tips, content and social media posts for the Agriculture industry to activate during Governor Lamont's "Stay Safe, Stay Home" executive order.

In this toolkit, you'll find:

- Social media tips, including hashtag and emoji use
- Logos, images and other graphics that can be used across digital assets
- Sample social media posts and suggested visuals organized by category:
 - General Agriculture
 - Food Agriculture
 - Non-Food Agriculture

The complete CT Grown Media kit can be found at the following link:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Commissioner/Commissioner/Social-Media-Toolkit-COVID>

Online Ordering Platforms

- Barn2Door <https://www.barn2door.com/>
- Cropolis <https://cropolis.co/>
- Farmigo <https://www.farmigo.com/>
- Food4aAll <https://www.food4all.com/sell-food-online-csa-software/>
- Harvie <https://www.harvie.farm/>
- Local Food Marketplace <https://home.localfoodmarketplace.com/>

- Local Line <https://site.localline.ca/>
- Shopify <https://www.shopify.com/>
- Square <https://squareup.com/>

Only those businesses that hold a current Shellstock Shipper I will be added to the CT Grown Map. All applications will be reviewed by DoAG shellfish program staff prior to publishing.

General Handling Guidance for Direct Sales of Shellfish

Under no circumstances are shellstock to be shucked or otherwise offered for sampling under this direct sales guidance. Shucking to serve activities require a ***Temporary Food Service or other permit from the local health department.***

Shellfish that have been shucked and packed by a licensed shellstock shucker-packer may be offered for sale, however containers must remain closed until in the possession of the consumer. Customers should be discouraged from consuming shellfish at the pickup location.

All shellfish must remain in the possession of the shellstock shipper until sold to the public. No shellfish should remain at the offsite location for later distribution or resale to the public.

Documentation and Traceability

- A current copy of the Shellstock Shipper I license must be available during the event.
- The CT Shellstock Shipper License number (CT # SS), Name of Company, and Vehicle License Plate Number must be printed on a sign that is visible to the public at the off-site location for direct sales.
- Accurate documentation and recording of product sold is critical to allow the authority to trace-back shellfish to the source in case of illness. All original shipper tags should be maintained in chronological order for a period of 90 days.
- A direct sales log should be maintained that includes the information recommended in Table 1 below to allow trace-back of product sold to the specific day and location. A template log is also available and will be distributed along with this guidance.
- Relevant HACCP records, harvest and sanitation logs, etc. should continue to be maintained as for wholesale distribution. Indicate “DIRECT SALES” in the harvest log under “Sold-to”.

Table 1. Direct Sales Information

Company Name and Address
CT Shellstock Shipper #
Direct Sales Location Name and Address
Date of Sale
Start time
End Time
Harvest Date
Harvest Location
Quantities and Types of Product Sold
Storage Temperatures*
Employee Names

*Temperatures recorded every two hours at a minimum or in conjunction with the use of a TTRD. Internal temperatures should be recorded when ice is used as the means of temperature control.

Workforce and Work Environment

- Provide guidance and supplies for handwashing/disinfecting.
- Stagger breaks or provide separate space to increase distancing of employees.
- Encourage employees not to handle customers' reusable bags.
- Sanitize all food and packing contact surfaces prior to sales and throughout the day.
- Frequently disinfect all door handles and knobs, credit card machines, shopping baskets, etc. at a regular pre-established time interval.
- Frequently sanitize common employee gathering places – restrooms, break tables, chairs, etc.

Tags/Labeling

- Shellfish must be identified with a shellfish shipping tag that contains the name, address and certificate number of the shellfish shipper. It must also contain the original shipper's certificate number if shellfish were harvested by a dealer other than the one noted above. The date of harvest, shipping date, harvest location, type of shellfish and quantity of shellfish must also be indicated on the tag.
- A bulk tag that meets the NSSP requirements may be used to identify shellfish. A bulk tag must remain with shellfish throughout the event and retained after the sale.

- Shellfish shipping tags must be attached to every shellfish container purchased and remain on that container until it is emptied and then retained for 90 days.
- The date when the last SHELLSTOCK from the container is sold or served shall be recorded on the tag or label.
- If shellfish are broken down into smaller units, the original shellfish tag must remain on bag and when emptied be retained by the shipper for a minimum of 90 days.
- SHELLSTOCK from one tagged or labeled container shall not be COMMINGLED with SHELLSTOCK from another container with different CERTIFICATION NUMBERS; different harvest dates; or different growing areas as identified on the tag or label before being ordered by the CONSUMER.

Temperature Control

- Approved methods of temperature control such as the use of ice and insulated totes that have been evaluated by a DoAG inspector may also be used. These conveyances must meet specific requirements in order to be used for the transport of shellfish and are not added to a license until they have been inspected and certified by DoAG as suitable for temperature-controlled storage of shellfish.
- If using a DoAG-approved conveyance with ice, the shipper should take an internal temperature of the shellfish every two hours and note the adequacy of ice. This information should be documented on the direct sales log.
- All molluscan shellfish shall be received, transported and stored in equipment that maintains an ambient air temperature of 45°F or less. Shellfish must be held under temperature control capable of maintaining of 45°F or less.
- Calibrated thermometers must be provided to periodically check temperatures of the holding equipment. The use of a continuous time temperature recording device (TTRD) is recommended.
- Conveyance temperatures should be monitored and recorded a minimum of every 2 (two) hours while at the offsite location. This information should be recorded on the daily direct sales log.

Shellfish storage

- Shellfish shall be properly stored in manner protected from contamination and adulteration. Shellfish may not be stored in stagnant water, in proximity to raw fish or raw meat or on the ground/floor. When stored on ice, the ice shall be well drained.
- Ice shall be made from potable water that comes from an approved source. Ice shall be used only if it has been manufactured, stored, transported and handled in a sanitary manner.
- Handled scoops and containers shall be used and sanitized prior to use.

- Surfaces used to pack shellfish or used by staff should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis throughout the sales period.
- Containers and packaging used for shellstock must be single-use and clean. Containers must be stored to protect them from contamination.

Handwashing

- A hand wash station with warm running potable water is not required if all shellfish are sold in the shell and sold by the bag or dispensed by using a handled scoop. If a hand-wash station is not provided, an alternate means of handwashing and gloving should be employed.

COVID-Related Guidance for Direct Sales of Shellfish

Shellstock shippers offering shellfish for direct sales are encouraged to follow current COVID-19 guidance provided by DoAG and DPH.

Employee Health (Connecticut Department of Public Health, 2020)

The Department of Public Health provides the following COVID-19 advice:

- Employees should stay home if they are sick and report symptoms to their manager.
- If employees become sick on the job, they should immediately report to their manager and go home.
- Close contacts of workers with COVID-19 symptoms (but not confirmed) should self-monitor for 14 day.
- Employees who test positive for COVID-19 must report their status to their manager and close contacts identified and be told to self-quarantine for 14 days.
- Food workers who are positive for COVID-19 must be excluded until 72 hours after their fever breaks or one week after symptoms began, whichever is longest.
- Food workers considered to be close contacts of a positive coworker must self-quarantine for 14 days.

Employees or other food workers with communicable diseases that can be transmitted through food must be excluded from all food handling activities.

The local director of health must be notified by the vendor if any food workers are or have been ill with vomiting and/or diarrhea or another illness transmissible thorough food.

Establish Social Distancing for Customers and Employees (Connecticut Department of Agriculture, 2020)

- Consider pickup logistics that will maximize social distancing in order to maintain a 6' minimum distance between you and your customer.
- Consider delivery or multiple offsite pickup options.
- Consider the use of on-line ordering or having customers place orders by phone.

Packing to Minimize Contact with the Public

- Pre-packing boxes or bags of shellstock or packing to order prior to pick up is preferred.
- Consider boxing shellstock with a supply of ice for transport by customer.
- Consider drive-through pickup options.
- Consider advising customers to bring their own cooler with ice to hold shellstock. Advise employees to avoid coming into contact with personal coolers, and practice good handwashing and/or glove-changing technique.
- Consider limiting the number of customers picking up at one time by assigning specific pickup windows and staggering pickup times.

Communicating with the Public

- Consider putting up signs and information on websites and social media to explain any changes, delivery options, or extra precautions taken to limit exposure to COVID-19.

Additional COVID-19 Resources

Connecticut Department of Agriculture COVID-19 Resources for Farmers:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Commissioner/Commissioner/COVID-19-Resources-for-Farmers>

Connecticut Department of Agriculture Media Toolkit

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOAG/COVID/CTGrown-Social-Media-Toolkit_Spring2020.pdf?la=en

CT Grown Map:

<https://guide.ctnofa.org/>

Connecticut Sea Grant Aquaculture Resources:

<https://shellfish.uconn.edu/>

Connecticut Sea Grant Aquaculture Sales Page:

<http://aquaculture.uconn.edu/aquaculturesales>

COVID-19 Information from CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center:

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

Latest information about Coronavirus response in Connecticut:

<https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>

Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019:

<https://www.sba.gov/page/guidance-businesses-employers-plan-respond-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

The National Fisheries Institute Information regarding coronavirus and seafood safety:

<https://seafoodsafetycovid19.wordpress.com/>

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<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FederalStateFoodPrograms/UCM505093.pdf>

Company Name :

Address :

CT #:

Temperatures must be recorded at a minimum of every 2 hours or in conjunction with the use of TTRD, internal temperatures shall be recorded when ice is used as the means of temperature control.

Date of Sale	Location	Harvest Date	Harvest Time	Harvest Area	Quantity Shellstock	Type Shellstock (Clams, Oysters)	Employee Names	Type of temperature control Circle One: Refrigeration/Ice Record Temp Every 2 Hours			Initials
								Time/Temp	Time/Temp	Time/Temp	

Haccp Review Signature _____ Date _____

Haccp Review Signature _____ Date _____

Haccp Review Signature _____ Date _____

Haccp Review Signature _____ Date _____