

RI Sales Permitting -- Q and A

September 2012

1) Do I need a permit to sell my farm raised meat?

If you sell to the public: from your farm; at farmers markets; or to restaurants, markets or institutions, you need a permit(s) from the RI Dept. of Health (DoH).

2) Where can I find these permits?

There are links to all applicable permits and forms on our website's [RI Sales Permitting page](http://www.rirla.org/risalespermitting.htm) at <http://www.rirla.org/risalespermitting.htm>

3) Which permit do I need?

You need to determine what you plan to do. Use the following as a guide:

- a. No farmers market or wholesale sales activities are planned for our direct market sales of meats.

Market Cash Register license (on-farm sales) is required.

- b. Our intent is to sell our meat products at Farmers Markets and on-farm

Market Cash Register license (on-farm sales) plus **Retail Food Peddler** license (farmers market) is required.

- c. Our intent is to sell our meat products at Farmers Markets, sell on-farm, and sell wholesale to restaurants, large and small institutions.

Retail Food Peddler license (farmers markets) plus **Farm Warehouse** (wholesalers) license. The **Market Cash Register (1-2 registers)** license is included under the **Farm Warehouse** license at no additional cost, with no additional application for Market Cash Register required.

4) What are the costs for the licenses?

The Market Register license for a Farm Stand is \$120.

The Food Peddler's license for Farmer's Markets is \$100

The Farm Warehouse license for Wholesale sales to restaurants and markets is \$190.

How is the Market Cash Register license included with the Farm Warehouse license? Per DoH, "One license under the same regulation is required for onsite premises which is based on the higher license fee. "

5) Do I need a special place to store my meat?

Yes. The requirements for the storage of your products are found in our [operational plan](http://www.rirla.org/RIRLA_Permits_Operational_Plan.pdf). http://www.rirla.org/RIRLA_Permits_Operational_Plan.pdf Before you can get your license, an on-site inspection will be done by DEM Division of Agriculture. You may contact Dr. Scott Marshall at RI Division of Agriculture to schedule a site visit **or** for assistance with the Department of Health applications(s) or Operational Plan. This planning visit is suggested, but optional. A pre-application visit offers farms the opportunity to go over the plan before the plan is submitted to RIDoH, and can often advise applicants away from making mistakes that RIDoH wouldn't allow to be licensed.

6) What else is required for the Farm Warehouse License?

In addition to the Farm Warehouse application itself, the application notes that it requires :

- a) A current water test if you have a private well.
- b) A copy of your RI Farm Tax Exempt Certificate
- c) A USDA/FSIS meat handler registration number _____, or provide copy and date of application to FSIS (registration number to be forwarded to Department of Health when issued by USDA).

Processing of the permit will be delayed until water test results are received by DoH, however the application may be sent in with the water test pending.). FSIS considers applicants to be in compliance with their registration requirement once the application is submitted (in the mail).

7) Where can I get the water test done for my Farm Warehouse License application? How much does it cost? What are the standards?

- a. A list of certified water testing facilities can be found here:
<http://www.health.ri.gov/find/labs/privatewelltesting/index.php>
- b. The cost seems to range from about \$15 for nitrate test to \$30 for bacteria testing.
- c. The water test must show Nitrates < 10 mg/l and a Bacteria level of 0.

8) What if I do not currently have a RI Tax Exempt Certificate?

Most farmers already have a farm tax exemption certification from the Division of Taxation or are aware of the requirements to obtain the same, however if not, the certificate is issued through the **Field Audit Section of the Division of Taxation, 574-8962**. The certificate can either be Level 1 or 2 to meet the requirements of the DOH Farm Warehouse Meat license.

9) What is the USDA/FSIS Meat Handler Registration Number?

Per the USDA/Food Safety and Inspection Service: “Unless you operate under Federal Inspection, you are required by law to register with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture if you deal in meat or poultry products in or for commerce.” There is no fee for this registration.

10) How do I apply for a RI Sales permit/license?

1. Download and fill out the appropriate applications from the RI Department of Health website. Links to all up-to-date applications are available on the RIRLA Website.
2. Fill out the [Operational Plan](#) document.
3. Review the [RI DoH Permits Requirements](#) document and prepare the on-site location for inspection. http://www.rirla.org/RIDOH_Permits_Requirements.pdf
4. Contact Scott Marshall at RI Division of Agriculture to schedule a site visit **or** for assistance with the Department of Health applications(s) or Operational Plan. This planning visit is suggested, but optional. A pre-application visit offers farms the opportunity to go over the plan before the plan is submitted to RI DoH, and can often advise applicants away from making mistakes that RI DoH wouldn't allow to be licensed.
5. When the Inspector comes to the farm, have the meat storage/sales location ready (including meat in the freezer). If the Inspector gives a provisional approval the farm will be able to make sales according to the license provisionally granted.
6. Send completed packet (Operational Plan, Dept. of Health application and application fee) to:

**RI Dept. of Health
Office of Food Safety, Room 203
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908**

Please note and include any additional items required for the Farm Warehouse License application: Current Water Test, USDA/FSIS Number (or copy of application and date mailed), copy of RI Farm Tax Exempt Certificate.

Have a question that you do not see answered here? Contact Heidi at RIRaised@gmail.com or 401-575-3348. We will get it answered and add the question to this list.