

# Retail Readiness Checklist for Kansas Food Businesses



A Resource made in partnership by K-State Extension - Community Food Systems Team and the Kansas Department of Agriculture.  
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## Acronym Key

Kansas SBDC: Kansas Small Business Development Center  
KDA: Kansas Department of Agriculture  
KVAFL: Kansas Value Added Foods Lab

| Phase                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Requirement                       | Description   | Category                      | Applies to | Where to go   |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|------------|---|
| Business development | <input type="checkbox"/>            | EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) | The ability to exchange orders, invoices, and other documents electronically with retailers using standardized formats. Many mid- to large-scale retailers require EDI to streamline purchasing and inventory systems.                                | Electronic / Financial System | Vendors    | Distributor or retail partner requirements; GS1 US standards; NetWork Kansas advisors                                 |
| Business development | <input type="checkbox"/>            | EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer)   | Receiving payments directly to your bank account rather than by check. Most retailers pay vendors via EFT, so having this set up ensures timely, trackable payments.  | Electronic / Financial System | Vendors    | Your commercial bank; Kansas SBDC (business finance guidance)   |
| Business development | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Liability insurance               | Insurance that protects your business if a product causes harm or injury. Retailers typically require proof of product liability coverage before they will carry your products.   | Insurance                     | Vendors    | Local commercial insurance agents; Kansas SBDC referrals; Food Liability Insurance Program (FLIP) or similar programs |
| Business development | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Business name                     | The official name under which you sell your products. Consistent use across licenses, labels, banking, and marketing ensures legal clarity and brand recognition.   | Legal / Structural            | Vendors    | Kansas Secretary of State Business Center; Kansas SBDC  |
| Business development | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Business registration             | Formal registration of your business with the state (e.g., LLC, sole proprietorship, corporation). Retailers need confirmation that you are a legitimate, authorized business entity.   | Legal / Structural            | Vendors    | Kansas Secretary of State (business filing portal); Kansas SBDC   |
| Business development | <input type="checkbox"/>            | EIN / Tax ID                      | A federal Employer Identification Number issued by the IRS. Retailers use this to set you up as a vendor and for tax reporting purposes.  | Legal / Structural            | Vendors    | IRS EIN application portal; Kansas SBDC; APEX Accelerators  |
| Business development | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Commercial bank account           | A business-only bank account separate from personal finances. Retailers require this for payments and it supports accurate bookkeeping and financial professionalism.   | Legal / Structural            | Vendors    | Local banks or credit unions; NetWork Kansas referral network; Kansas SBDC  |
| Product development  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Develop marketing plan            | A defined strategy for how you position, price, promote, and sell your product. Retail buyers want to see that you understand your target customer and how you will drive sales. Consider sampling, etc. (especially for small independent retailers) | Marketing                     | Vendors    | Kansas SBDC marketing advisors; NetWork Kansas  |

|                       |                          |  |  |                             |          |   |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|----------|---|
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Nutritional facts panel                      | A standardized nutrition label showing calories and nutrients per serving. Most packaged foods sold at retail must include this to comply with FDA labeling regulations. Required for products with over \$50k in sales  | Labeling Compliance         | Products | KVAFL   |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ingredient statement in descending order     | A complete list of ingredients ordered by weight from most to least. This is required by law and helps consumers and retailers assess allergens and product composition.   | Labeling Compliance         | Products | KVAFL   |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Certifications                               | Any relevant verified claims (e.g., organic, gluten-free, kosher, halal, non-GMO). Certifications can expand market access and meet specific retailer or customer requirements.  | Labeling Compliance         | Products | KVAFL; KDA (organic program guidance); From the Land of Kansas trademark program        |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | UPC barcode                                  | A scannable Universal Product Code unique to each product size or variation. Retailers rely on UPCs for checkout, inventory tracking, and sales data.  | Labeling Compliance         | Products | From the Land of Kansas (official barcode provider); GS1 US (official barcode provider) |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Expiration / "best by" dates                 | A clearly marked date indicating product freshness or shelf life. Retailers require this to manage inventory and ensure food safety and quality.   | Labeling Compliance         | Products | KVAFL (shelf-life testing)  |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Food Producers or Food Establishment License | The required state or local license for producing packaged food for sale. Retailers must verify that products come from an inspected and approved facility.  | Legal / Structural          | Vendors  | KDA Food Safety & Lodging Program   |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Product name                                 | The specific name of the item as it appears on packaging and in retailer systems. Clear naming avoids confusion and helps buyers and consumers quickly understand the product.   | Product ID / Classification | Products | Kansas SBDC (marketing guidance); From the Land of Kansas                               |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Product category                             | The retail category your product fits into (e.g., salsa, granola, frozen entrée). Buyers are organized by category, so correct placement is essential for pitching and shelf location.   | Product ID / Classification | Products | KVAFL   |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Product description                          | A concise explanation of what the product is, key attributes, and differentiators. Retailers use this in product databases, online listings, and shelf tags.   | Product ID / Classification | Products | Kansas SBDC (marketing coaching); NetWork Kansas advisors                               |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Product photography                          | High-quality images of the product and packaging. Buyers and marketing teams rely on these for line reviews, websites, and promotional materials.  | Marketing                   | Products | From the Land of Kansas / KDA   |
| Product development   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Graphic design / Branding for product        | The visual identity of your packaging, including logo, colors, typography, and layout. Strong branding communicates professionalism and helps products stand out on shelf.   | Marketing                   | Products | Canva free version or similar design tools  |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Shelf-ready packaging                        | Packaging that protects the product and is ready for direct retail display. Durable, attractive packaging reduces handling for retailers and improves shelf appeal. Cases configured for easy stocking. Producers should consider: how many units per case; how many facings on the shelf? | Packaging                   | Products | Kansas SBDC   |

|                       |                          |                                    |  |                             |          |  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------|--|
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | PLU / SKU                          | Internal retailer codes used to track and manage inventory for each product. You may assign SKUs, but retailers often create their own for ordering and stocking.  | Product ID / Classification | Products | GS1 US (barcode & product ID system); Kansas SBDC (inventory systems coaching)   |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sell size specifications           | The exact size or weight of the unit sold at retail (e.g., 12 oz jar). Buyers need consistent sizing to compare products and set pricing. Case pack, case weight, individual Size, unit of measure   | Product ID / Classification | Products | KVAFL (packaging + shelf life testing)   |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Shipping (per case) info           | Details on how many units are packed per case and case dimensions/weight. This supports retailer logistics, ordering quantities, and freight planning. Gross Weight, Net Weight, Case Length, Case Width, Case Height  | Product ID / Classification | Products | Kansas SBDC (operations/logistics advising); NetWork Kansas mentors  |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sell sheets for each SKU           | A one-page product info sheet with image, description, pricing, pack size, and key attributes. Buyers use sell sheets for evaluation, internal approval, and store communication.  | Sales collateral            | Vendors  | Kansas SBDC (marketing materials); Canva free version or similar design tools  |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Category pitch                     | A tailored explanation of how your product fits and performs within a retailer's category. A strong pitch shows market awareness and why your product will sell in their stores. Why their product fits retailer's assortment, what sets their product apart | Sales collateral            | Vendors  | Kansas SBDC (retail sales coaching); From the Land of Kansas marketing program   |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reliable production capacity       | The ability to consistently produce enough product to meet demand. Retailers need assurance you can keep shelves stocked without interruptions.  | Supply Chain / Fulfillment  | Vendors  | KVAFL (process & production consultation)  |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Defined order minimums, lead times | Clear requirements for smallest order size and time needed to fulfill orders. Buyers rely on this to plan purchasing and inventory cycles.   | Supply Chain / Fulfillment  | Vendors  | Kansas SBDC (business planning); NetWork Kansas advisors   |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Distribution strategy              | How product moves from you to stores (direct delivery, distributor, warehouse). Retailers need to know logistics and who handles ordering and transport. Self-ship vs. third-party distributor, broker   | Supply Chain / Fulfillment  | Vendors  | From the Land of Kansas program (market connections); Kansas SBDC (operations planning); distributor partners or third-party logistics companies |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pallet configuration               | How cases are stacked on a pallet for shipping (cases per layer, layers per pallet). Standardized pallets improve warehouse efficiency and freight compatibility. Pallet TI & HI, Total Cases per pallet   | Supply Chain / Fulfillment  | Products | Kansas SBDC (operations planning); distributor partners or third-party logistics companies   |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Warehouse info                     | Details on where product is stored or shipped from, including distributor warehouses if used. Retailers require this for routing, compliance, and receiving. Temperature Range, COO, Seasonality   | Supply Chain / Fulfillment  | Products | KDA business development resources; NetWork Kansas   |
| Wholesale development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cost information                   | Your wholesale price, suggested retail price, and margin structure. Buyers evaluate profitability and price competitiveness before authorizing a product. MSRP, Regular Wholesale Cost, F.O.B. Cost, Delivered Cost  | Supply Chain / Fulfillment  | Products | Kansas SBDC; NetWork Kansas Impact Investment Center   |

Questions about what to access, and when? Suggestions for what may be missing on this checklist? Contact the K-State Extension Community Food Systems Team at [kansaslocalfoods@ksu.edu](mailto:kansaslocalfoods@ksu.edu)

# Resources for Selling Food Products Wholesale in Kansas

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## Kansas State University

### Community Food Systems Team, Kansas State University Extension

A food business navigator can meet with you to discuss your business goals. You will be introduced to resources to support your business at the time you need them.



### Kansas Value-Added Foods Lab

This facility offers services like product development, technical assistance, and product testing to ensure food businesses' products are safe and up to standard.



### K-State Meat Science Lab

Laboratories housed within the Animal Science & Industry Department provide processors many resources from development to analysis of meat products.



### Direct to Consumer Guide

This publication identifies the regulations you must meet to sell your products direct to consumer and what you need to do if you are going to sell wholesale.



### Food Labeling for Kansas Food Producers

This fact sheet assists food producers in quickly understanding correct food labeling procedures to meet federal guidelines.



## Kansas Department of Agriculture

### Food Safety and Lodging

Promotes public safety by regulating the production and sale of food products in Kansas. This link provides information on licensing requirements, food safety and food processing.



### From the Land of Kansas Program

From the Land of Kansas offers benefits and support in online marketing, e-commerce, discounts for food testing, low cost UPC codes and more. Membership is free.



### Food Labeling Information

Detailed information to explain food label guidance with federal guidelines.



### Incubator Kitchen Resource Guide

Use this guide to locate a KDA-approved shared-use commercial kitchen near you.



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## Kansas Small Business Development Center

Assists with the growth of Kansas small businesses by providing free one-to-one advising services. Become a client at no cost.

