

# Farmers' Market Coordinator Package

This package provides guidance and instructions  
for coordinators of farmers' markets



Northwestern  
Health Unit

[www.nwhu.on.ca](http://www.nwhu.on.ca)

## Dear Farmers' Market Coordinator:

As the coordinator of a market that will sell food products, you are required under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to notify the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) before the start of the market each season.

Once notified, the NWHU will assess all farmers' markets within the region to determine if they are considered exempt from [Ontario Regulation 493/17 - Food Premises](#). Farmers' markets are considered exempt from the regulation if the majority (51%) of vendors at the market are farmers who are primarily selling their own farm products.

### Your obligations as Farmers' Market Coordinator:

1. Complete the [Farmers' Market Coordinator Form](#).
2. Complete the vendor list, including vendors who will not be selling food products. If any food vendor holds a current annual temporary event permit with the NWHU, please include the permit number on the vendor list.
3. Supply all food vendors who have not provided a current annual temporary event permit number with a *Farmers' Market Food Vendor Information Package* and provide instructions for submitting the completed *Farmers' Market Food Vendor Form* to the NWHU at least 10 business days prior to attending the market. The *Farmers' Market Food Vendor Form* is included in the information package.
4. Review all information provided in this package and contact your local public health inspector if you have any questions.
5. Submit completed *Farmers' Market Coordinator Form* and vendor list to [envhealth@nwhu.on.ca](mailto:envhealth@nwhu.on.ca) or by fax to 807-468-3914. Forms may also be dropped off at your local NWHU office.

A public health inspector will count the total number of farmers selling their own farm products and insert the numbers into the following equation:

Total number of farmers selling their own farm products		X 100 =		%
<hr/>				
Total number of vendors (including non-food vendors)				

If the percentage is 51% or higher, the market will be considered an exempt farmers' market. Food vendors at this market will be exempt from the requirements of Ontario Regulation 493/17.

If the percentage is below 51%, the market does not meet the exemption requirements under Ontario Regulation 493/17. This market will be considered a non-exempt farmers' market, and food vendors must meet the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises*.

Your local public health inspector will provide you with further direction after identifying whether the market will be considered a true farmers' market or not.

# FAQ for Farmers' Market Coordinators

## What is the definition of a food vendor at a farmers' market?

"Food vendor" in the context of a farmers' market means the operator of a stall or other food premise that is selling food items at the market. This includes individuals selling prepackaged food items, ready-to-eat food items, fruits and vegetables, etc. Individuals operating food trucks and other mobile food service vehicles or trailers at the market are also considered to be food vendors and must be included in the total.

## What is a Farm Product?

"Farm products" means products that are grown, raised, or produced on a farm and intended for use as food. These include, but are not restricted to: fruits and vegetables, mushrooms, meat and meat products, dairy products, honey products, maple products, fish, grains and seeds, and grain and seed products.

## If the market is not considered an exempt market, what vendors are allowed to sell their food products?

At a non-exempt farmers' market, all food vendors must meet the requirements of the *Ontario Regulation 493/17 - Food Premises*. This means any prepared food that will be sold at the event must be prepared in a kitchen space that is inspected and approved by the local Health Authority.

## If the market is considered to be an exempt market, what vendors are allowed to sell their food products?

At an exempt farmers' market, the only products that are required to come from an inspected facility are products that are federally or provincially inspected, such as meat, milk, and eggs. Home-prepared food items are allowed at exempt farmers' markets; however, a health hazard assessment on the food items will be completed by a public health inspector. It is recommended that vendors selling home-prepared food items stick to low-risk food items.

### Some examples of low-risk food items are:

- fresh fruits and vegetables
- brownies
- bread and buns (with no dairy/cheese filling)
- butter tarts
- cakes (icing sugar only; no whipped cream)
- dry cereal products
- chocolate
- cinnamon buns
- dry noodles
- commercially prepared pickles
- cookies dried fruits
- fruit pies and pastry
- fudge
- hard candy
- honey
- commercially prepared jams and jellies
- muffins
- popcorn
- maple syrup
- toffee

(Source: ASPHIO Common Approaches for Farmers' markets and Special Events, 2012)

A health hazard assessment completed on high-risk items may determine a food item cannot be safely prepared, stored, and transported from a home kitchen. It is recommended that vendors selling home-prepared foods avoid high-risk food items. If a vendor from an exempt market wishes to sell a high-risk home-prepared food item, a food safety plan will need to be submitted to the health unit for review.

### Some examples of high-risk food items are:

- antipasto
- cakes/pastries filled with whipped cream, cheese, or cream
- processed beans, including baked, refried, bean salad
- herb and flavoured oils
- cabbage rolls
- chop suey
- creamed corn dairy products
- food containing eggs as ingredients (custard/salad)
- fresh shell eggs (graded)
- pesto, garlic spreads
- guacamole, salsa, hummus
- juice (fruit and vegetable)
- perogies
- fresh or processed meat, fish

(Source: ASPHIO Common Approaches for Farmers' markets and Special Events, 2012)

## FAQ for Farmers' Market Coordinators (continued)

**What are the options for someone who would like to become a vendor at a non-exempt market but does not have an approved kitchen?**

If the vendor wishes to have a kitchen approved, the vendor should contact the NWHU for a kitchen consultation. This consultation will assist the vendor in determining any work required for the kitchen to meet the standards of the *Food Premises Regulation*.

If the consultation results in the vendor no longer wishing to have the kitchen approved, the vendor may rent an approved kitchen to use for preparing and storing food items. Examples of approved kitchens may be church kitchens or community hall kitchens that are inspected by the local health authority and available to rent.

If the vendor is not able to find an inspected/approved space to prepare food items, they will not be permitted to sell their food items at a non-exempt market.

# Farmers' Market Coordinator Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Market: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Market: \_\_\_\_\_

Days of Operation: ☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Market Opening Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Market Closing Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Hours of Operation: \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to make my event Smoke Free; please provide me with resources and signage.

## Vendor List

[illegible]

Continue on following page if needed.

## Vendor List

[illegible]

Print additional sheets as needed.