

Information for Farmers' Market Managers and Stallholders

Farmers' Markets are markets that are:

- approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, and
- issued a Food Handling **Permit** by Alberta Health Services (AHS).

This document provides information for managers and **stallholders** in farmers' markets.

Markets that have not been approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation are **not** Farmers' Markets. All food vendors at non Farmers' Market events must apply for their own Food Handling Permit as all commercial food establishments must do. Please visit [our website](#) for more information.

Responsibilities of the Market Manager

Farmers' Market Permit

The market manager of a farmers' market must obtain a **farmers' market permit** and is responsible for all food handling that occurs under that permit.

Stallholders are vendors that rent space at a farmers' market and operate under the farmers' market permit.

General Building Requirements

Handwashing and sink requirements for a stallholder that operates under the farmers' market permit are as described on the following charts

- Handwashing and sink requirements are dependent on the type of food operation, the amount of food handling, whether the food served is high-risk, and the number of times per week the stallholder is in operation.
- All hand sinks must be equipped with both soap and paper towel.

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For markets operating three days per week or less with no permanent structures or facilities:

Examples of Operation	Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food pre-portioned offsite and only handled with utensils. • Low risk drinks dispensed from original sealed containers. • Low risk dry foods transferred from original container directly into single use sample cups. No handling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitizer and access to a hand sink. Temporary sink set up is acceptable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low risk food portioned on-site and not described above. • High risk food or drink dispensed from original container. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sink needed in stall. Temporary sink set up is acceptable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk foods reheated and/or portioned on-site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sink needed in stall. Temporary sink set up is acceptable. • Approved sanitizer (Chlorine or QUAT) for surfaces. • Duplicate utensils.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final cooking of high risk foods for sampling purposes only. <p><i>Note: Other than offering samples, cooking on-site requires a separate food handling permit issued to the individual stallholder.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sink needed in stall. Temporary sink set up is acceptable. • Approved sanitizer (Chlorine or QUAT) for surfaces. • Duplicate utensils. • Separate utensils for raw and cooked product. • Access to a two-compartment sink with hot/cold running water.

Temporary handwashing station information is available at [Temporary Handwashing Stations](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eph-temp-handwashing.pdf) (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/eph/wf-eph-temp-handwashing.pdf>).

For markets operating more than three days per week and/or markets operating from permanent structures or facilities:

Examples of Operation	Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food pre-portioned offsite and only handled with utensils • Dispensing low risk drinks from original sealed containers • Transferring low risk dry foods from original container directly into single use sample cups (no handling). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitizer and access to a hand sink equipped with hot/cold running water.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site portioning of low risk food not described above. • Dispensing high risk food or drinks from sealed container. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sink equipped with hot/cold running water in the stall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk foods reheated and/or portioned on-site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sink equipped with hot/cold running water needed in stall. • Approved sanitizer (Chlorine or QUAT) for surfaces. • Duplicate utensils.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final cooking of high risk foods for sampling purposes only. <p><i>Note: Other than offering samples, cooking on-site requires a separate food handling permit issued to the individual stallholder.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-compartment sink with hot/cold running water in the stall. • Hand soap, paper towel, dish soap, and an approved sanitizer (Chlorine or QUAT). • An additional (separate) hand sink may be required. Food handling activities or use of the two-compartment sink might limit the vendor's access for handwashing.

For a stallholder that has been issued their own AHS Food Handling Permit for the market location (that is independent of the farmers' market permit):

- Where plumbing is available, the requirements are equal to those for a permitted permanent commercial food establishment.
- Where plumbing is not available, the requirements are equal to those for a permitted mobile food establishment.

Toilet and hand-washing facilities must be available on-site, or at a nearby location (through an agreement with that business) that the market vendors and patrons have permission to use.

Regular Duties of Market Manager

- Ensure that stallholders comply with the farmers' market guidelines in this document.
- Stallholders' spaces are clean and sanitary.
- Counters and display areas in stallholders' spaces are finished in or covered with a material that is easily cleaned and non-absorbent.
- Stallholders' spaces are cleaned at the end of each business day.
- Ensure the farmers' market building and grounds are kept clean and have an adequate number of garbage containers available.
- Must ensure that adequate clean-up equipment is provided for the use of stallholders.

The following recommendations will help you safely operate your farmers' market.

- Have completed the Farmers' Market Checklist in the [Farmers' Market Information Package](#).
- Have a list of all food vendors at the market, with contact numbers and type of food items being sold.
- Post prominent signage indicating that 'foods are prepared off-site and are not subject to any inspection' at all applicable ready to eat food vendor stalls.

- Review all food preparation procedures with all stallholders operating under the market permit intending to sell high risk food products.

High risk foods include but are not limited to:

- (i) perogies cabbage rolls, sausage rolls, meat pies, pumpkin, meringue or cream pies, cheesecake;
- (ii) bone broth, meats, eggs;
- (iii) milk, milk products, such as cheese, nut alternatives for dairy;
- (iv) sauces, antipasto, low-sugar fruit spreads.

Foods such as antipasto, sauces, jerky, fermented foods, low sugar spreads, or baked goods containing higher risk ingredients should be assumed as being high risk unless the appropriate testing has demonstrated otherwise. Such testing identifies if the food is perishable and includes a combination of pH and/or water activity measurements.

Low risk, foods must have a pH of 4.6 or lower, or a water activity of 0.85 or lower.

Stallholder Requirements

Home-prepared foods may be sold at farmers' markets. The requirements below help ensure high-risk foods and canned goods are safe for customers.

There are foods that a stallholder must not sell, offer for sale, distribute, provide or otherwise make available to the public.

- No uninspected meat
Stallholders cannot sell any meat unless it is confirmed as coming from an approved source. Foods obtained from approved sources may have evidence of inspection, such as stamps, tags, or labels on the meat or purchase receipts.
- No home canned food other than **jam, jelly** and **pickles**.
- No high-risk food sold in sealer jars. Customers may believe the food has been canned. Plastic, styrofoam or paper containers are acceptable.
- No high risk foods unless it is stored, displayed and transported at a temperature of not more than 4°C and not less than 60°C. Samples can be held warmer than 4°C for 2 hours before discarding.

- No home prepared food unless it is;
 - Protected in a manner that is adequate to prevent customer handling and contamination.
 - Labelled, prior to sale, with the following information:
 - A statement that the food is prepared in a home kitchen that is not subject to inspection;
 - A statement that the food is not for resale;
 - The name, business name, and email address or phone number of the individual who prepared the food product;
 - The name of the food product;
 - The date that the food product was prepared,

Note: Labelling does not apply to whole unprocessed horticultural products (fruit and vegetables).

- No unpasteurized milk.

Stallholders cannot sell milk or milk products unless they are from an approved source (i.e. from a licensed dairy manufacturing plant). Unpasteurized milk/milk products prepared at home cannot be sold.

- No foods containing one or more of the foods prohibited listed above as ingredients.
- No whole raw shell poultry eggs unless they are stored at a temperature not exceeding 7 °C.

Stallholders may sell whole, raw, uninspected shell poultry eggs from their farm. The eggs must be clean and free of cracks. Additional requirements are available in the [Purchase and Sale of Eggs and Processed Egg Regulation](#).

Stallholders who handle food must refrain from any conduct that could result in the contamination of food.

- All food required to be frozen must be kept frozen (below -18C) while being stored, transported and displayed.
- Functional thermometers must be available to monitor foods during transport, storage and display.

A stallholder must ensure that food handlers:

- wear clean clothing and footwear,
- exhibit cleanliness and good personal hygiene,
- ensure that food is not contaminated by hair,
- wash hands as often as necessary to prevent the contamination of food or food areas,
- refrain from handling food while ill,
- refrain from smoking in a food area,
- refrain from any other conduct that could result in the contamination of food or a food area, and
- food-grade plastic bags and wrap, paper bags and other disposable containers must be clean and not previously used. Garbage bags cannot be used to wrap food as these bags may contain chemicals that can leach into the food and make people sick.

Stallholders may provide bite-sized samples free of charge.

- Follow approved handwashing requirements (available on pages 2 and 3).
- Discard leftover or contaminated samples.
- Ensure high risk food samples are stored either below 4°C or above 60°C. Samples can be held warmer than 4°C for 2 hour before discarding.
- No stallholder shall cook or reheat food for samples unless cooking equipment is located within the stall and away from customer contact.
- A thermometer is available to ensure foods reach an internal temperature of 74°C or greater.
- An approved sanitizer (e.g. bleach) is available in a spray bottle or other easily used dispensing device. Refer to [How to Mix an Approved Sanitizing Solution](#).

The following are recommendations to safely offer samples at a farmers' market;

- all food handlers take the [AHS Farmers' Market Home Study Course](#),
- pre-portion samples before the farmers' market,
- hand samples to the customer,
- use toothpicks,
- use single use containers,
- do not allow customers to help themselves to samples from open containers (i.e. an open bowl of chips).

Preparing foods, other than samples in the manner described above, is not allowed. Stallholders who want to prepare food on-site at the farmers' market, like perogies or spring rolls, must:

- operate out of a permanent location at the market or from an approved [Mobile Food Vending Units](#) ,
- meet the [Alberta Food Regulation Part 2](#) requirements for commercial food establishments,
- obtain a food handling permit separate from the farmers' market permit.

Stallholders may serve open, unpackaged food from their stalls without a separate food handling permit if the food is:

- properly labelled if prepared in an uninspected kitchen,
- low risk, like cookies or cupcakes,
- high risk and stored at a temperature of not more than 4°C and not less than 60°C,
- precooked at the site of production,
- precooked, ready-to-eat and given to the customer without any of the following activities; no additional mixing, assembly, modifying, or cooking of the precooked foods,
- monitored with a functional thermometer to ensure foods are reheated to at least 74°C and/or held above 60°C when brought on-site to the farmers' market,
- reheated in equipment that is located within the stall and away from customer contact,
- prepared in a stall that an approved sanitizer (e.g. bleach) available. Refer to [How to Mix an Approved Sanitizing Solution](#),
- follow approved handwashing requirements (available on Pages 2 and 3),
- handled on food contact surfaces that are non-absorbent and easy to clean,
- handled in a stall that all food equipment, utensils and food contact surfaces within it is maintained in a sanitary manner, being cleaned and sanitized regularly,
- protected from contamination and customer handling (e.g. provide cover, wrap, or sneeze guards) not including whole fruits and vegetables.

DEFINITIONS

Farmers' Market means a **food establishment** whose proposed operation has been approved by the Minister responsible for Agriculture and Forestry as an approved Farmers' Market Program under the administration of that Minister's Department. Alberta Health Services may issue or renew a farmer's market permit only to a person or group of persons who have this approval.

Farmers' Market Permit means the AHS Food Handling Permit issued to the market **operator**. This is referred to as "farmers' market permit" in the Food Regulation, Part 3 Farmers' Markets.

Food Areas – for *indoor markets*, all retail, service and food preparation areas are considered to be food areas for the purposes of this document. In *outdoor markets*, food areas are defined as those areas in the booth used for preparation, storage and service.

Food Establishment means a place where food is handled and intended for public consumption.

High Risk Food (or Potentially Hazardous) means a food with a pH level or a water activity level, or a combination of pH and water activity levels, that will support the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms or the production of their toxins.

Jams and Jellies means 60% - 65% solids (fruits plus 55% sugar).

Low Risk Food means a food with a pH level or a water activity level, or a combination of pH and water activity levels, that generally, without the need for temperature control, will not support the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms or the production of their toxins.

Operator means the person who manages or directs the handling of food in a food establishment and includes an owner as defined in the Act.

Permit means a food handling permit or a farmers' market permit issued or renewed under Part 1 of the Alberta Food Regulation.

Pickled Products are those processed with salt, sugar and/or vinegar to make shelf stable (PH of <4.6, or Aw <0.85, or Salt >10%). Pickles can include, but are not limited to: cucumbers, green peppers, beets, carrots, horseradish, mushrooms, kimchi, cabbage, eggs, green tomatoes and onions.

Preparing or preparation means any mixing, assembling, modifying, or cooking of foods (low or high risk). Preparation does not include the above activities when they are performed exclusively for the purpose of providing samples as defined in this document.

Sample means a bite size portion of a food offered at no charge for promotional purposes.

Stallholder means a person who rents space at a farmers' market.

Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](#) at ahs.ca/eph.

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Checklist for Farmers' Market Managers

Name: _____ Date: _____

Items to be checked by the Market Manager	Observations/Notes	Corrective Actions, if required
<p>Is the Market Manager on-site while the market is in operation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If not, has the Market Manager appointed someone else to conduct the inspections of the market and the stallholders? 		
<p>Does the Market Manager ensure that the stallholder complies with the Farmers' Market Guidelines in the Information for Farmers' Market Managers and Stallholders document?</p>		
<p>Is all food in this facility from an approved source?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ no unapproved canning - home-canned jams, jellies and pickles only ➤ no uninspected meat - confirm as government inspected ➤ no unpasteurized milk/milk products ➤ no contaminated or unfit foods 		

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Items to be checked by the Market Manager	Observations/Notes	Corrective Actions, if required
<p>Are foods being protected from contamination during transport, storage and display? Inclusive of samples?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ food-grade containers with tight-fitting lids ➤ food packaged in food-grade materials, clean and not previously used ➤ protected from possible customer handling and contamination 		
<p>Are all foods prepared from an uninspected kitchen labelled properly?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ prepared in an uninspected kitchen that is not subject to inspection ➤ not for resale ➤ name ➤ business name ➤ phone number or email ➤ name of the product ➤ food preparation date 		
<p>Are stallholders handling food not working while ill, wearing clean attire and displaying good personal hygiene?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ clean clothing ➤ exhibit cleanliness and good personal hygiene ➤ hands are being washed as often as necessary ➤ hair control ➤ not handling food if ill 		

Items to be checked by the Market Manager	Observations/Notes	Corrective Actions, if required
<p>Are stallholders preparing food without their own valid Food Handling Permit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preparing or preparation means mixing, assembling, modifying, or cooking foods (low or high risk). <p>Note: Other than offering samples, cooking on-site requires a separate food handling permit issued to the individual stall holder.</p>		
<p>Does the stallholder have the appropriate equipment on-site to handle food safely?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ functional thermometer ➤ approved food-grade sanitizer ➤ surface sanitizer test strips ➤ all food equipment located in the stall ➤ meet sink requirements ➤ soap and paper towel 		
<p>Is the stallholder transporting, cooking (samples only), reheating, holding and/or storing perishable food at the appropriate temperatures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ cooking samples >74°C ➤ reheating previously cooked foods >74°C ➤ hot holding >60°C ➤ cold storage <4°C ➤ frozen foods <-18°C ➤ whole shell poultry eggs <7°C ➤ food samples being discarded after 2 hours, if not temperature controlled 		

Items to be checked by the Market Manager	Observations/Notes	Corrective Actions, if required
<p>Is the food facility free from pests or conditions that lead to pest issues?</p>		
<p>Is the farmers' market maintained in a clean and sanitary condition?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ farmers' market common areas clean ➤ adequate refuse containers available throughout the market ➤ washroom availability and supplied with adequate handwash facilities 		
<p>Are stallholder spaces being maintained in sanitary conditions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Garbage bins available ➤ food contact surfaces are smooth, impervious to moisture and easily cleanable ➤ equipment and food contact surfaces are being cleaned and sanitized ➤ duplicate clean utensils available 		

Observations / Notes	Corrective Actions
e.g. Darcy's BBQ – Improper hot holding temperature.	Reheated to 74C.

Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](https://www.ahs.ca/eph) at [ahs.ca/eph](https://www.ahs.ca/eph).

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