

Farmers' Market Food Vendor Information Package

This package provides guidance and instructions to
food vendors participating in farmers' markets



Northwestern
Health Unit

www.nwhu.on.ca

Farmers' Market Food Vendor Information

As a food vendor, you have a legal obligation under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to notify the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) of your intent to sell food items to the public.

To complete this notification process, you will be required to submit the attached *Farmers' Market Food Vendor* form to the NWHU. The farmers' market coordinator will complete a calculation to determine whether the farmers' market will be considered exempt from *Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises*. A public health inspector will confirm this calculation. Whether a market is considered exempt or not may have an impact on the food items you can sell at the farmers' market.

Once your form has been submitted to NWHU, you will receive a call from your local public health inspector to discuss the food items you will be offering for sale.

FAQ for Farmers' Market Food Vendors

How do I know if the farmers' market I'm registering for is considered exempt from *Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises*?

You can ask the farmers' market coordinator whether the farmers' market will be considered exempt from *Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises*.

If the farmers' market is not considered to be exempt from the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 493/17*, what does that mean for me as a food vendor?

At a farmers' market that is not considered to be exempt from the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises*, all food vendors must meet the requirements of the regulation. This means any food that will be sold at the event must be prepared in a kitchen space that is inspected and approved by the NWHU or another health authority. This also means you will be required to obtain a *Temporary Event Food Vendor Permit* and post it on-site at the farmers' market. There are two types of permits:

1. **Single Event Permits** are issued to approved vendors who serve or sell food to the general public. A food vendor permit will be issued to operators of single events or markets if they are in compliance with food regulations. Single event permits will expire as soon as the individual event is over.
2. **Annual Permits** are issued to inspected food premise operators that plan to attend multiple markets or events throughout the calendar year. Annual vendor permits will be issued providing that food items, booth setup, and processes remain the same for each event. Annual event permits will expire at the end of the calendar year.

If you hold an annual permit, notification of your intent to sell food at a specific event or market can be completed through the event/market organizer, who will document your permit number on a list of vendors that will be provided to the NWHU. You will not be required to fill out a *Farmers' Market Food Vendor Form* for each market/event you attend while you hold a current annual permit.

If the farmers' market is considered to be exempt from the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 493/17*, what does this mean for me as a food vendor?

At a farmers' market that is considered exempt from the requirements of *Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises*, the only products that are required to come from an inspected facility are products that are provincially inspected, such as meat, milk and eggs, or certain federally licensed food items that cross provincial borders (please see next question for more information).

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)

I am selling food products brought in from another province, are there additional rules I need to follow?

If you are selling food items you have prepared in another province, you will require a license from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act Regulations*, as of July 15, 2020. A license is not required for producers of fresh fruits or vegetables, as long as those products are not packaged or labelled. Any other food items brought from another province into Ontario must be from a source that has a license under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*. For more information on this license, please contact the CFIA, or visit their website to use the interactive licensing tool.

What is a certified food handler, and when is a certified food handler required to be on-site?

A certified food handler is an individual who has a current food safety certificate from an approved food handler training course. If a food premises is preparing or selling only low-risk or prepackaged food items, then a certified food handler is not required. Food premises preparing or selling items that are not low-risk or prepackaged require at least one certified food handler to be on-site at all times.

What are the rules about selling home-canned food items at farmers' markets?

If you wish to sell home-canned food items at your market booth, please note that only certain products will be permitted for sale at local markets. High-acid or acidified home-canned food items that are prepared in accordance with a scientifically validated recipe may be sold at local markets. Low-acid home-canned food items will not be permitted, due to the high risk of botulism from improper processing.

Vendors preparing high-acid or acidified home-canned food products will be required to submit a satisfactory food safety plan to the NWHU before the home-canned products can be sold. A food safety plan template is available on NWHU's Food Safety webpage; however, other food safety plan formats may also be accepted. Please contact a public health inspector with specific questions you have about selling home-canned food items at a farmers' market.

Farmers' Market Food Vendor Form

Date: _____ Dates Vendor Attending Market: _____

Name of Market: _____

Vendor Business Name: _____

Vendor Contact Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Type of booth: ☐ Temporary Booth ☐ Mobile Preparation Premises/Trailer/Food Truck

I am: ☐ A Farmer selling my own farm products such as fruit, vegetables, honey or maple syrup
☐ A Vendor selling food products that are not my own farm products

Types of Food Offered for Sale: (List all food items.)

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Number of certified food handlers on-site: _____

Where are the food products being prepared? (Check all boxes that apply)

☐ On-site at the farmers' market

☐ At the business address listed above

☐ At another facility. Location: _____

Is this facility an inspected facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No (If Yes, attach most recent inspection report)

Water supply: ☐ Municipal ☐ Non-municipal (attach latest water sample result)

Describe how potentially hazardous food items will be transported:

If the farmers' market does not reach exemption status, indicate how you will proceed:

☐ I intend to meet the requirements of the *Food Premises Regulation* and wish to apply for a *Temporary Event Food Vendor Permit* for this market only.

☐ I intend to meet the requirements of the *Food Premises Regulation* and wish to apply for an annual *Temporary Event Food Vendor Permit*.

☐ I do not wish to apply for a *Temporary Event Food Vendor Permit* and will no longer plan to attend the farmers' market.

If the farmers' market does meet exemption status, do you still wish to apply for an annual *Temporary Event Food Vendor Permit* for use at other markets and events you may apply to this year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please submit this form by email to envhealth@nwhu.on.ca or by fax to 807-468-3914
or submit in person at your local NWHU office.