



BEST PRACTICES FOR FARMERS MARKET OPERATIONS TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Whatever role you serve at your farmers market, we know that not only are you dedicated to ensuring shoppers have access to healthy, locally grown food and other high-quality products—but you’re also deeply committed to the safety of shoppers and the products they purchase. Michigan farmers markets demonstrated this commitment during the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying period of heightened public safety. Many of the practices incorporated during that time are great practices to continue to promote public health and safety into perpetuity.

SANITATION AND CLEANLINESS

- Provide hand washing and sanitizing at entrances and throughout the market. Ensure someone’s job at the market is to make sure stations are stocked with soap, paper towels, waste receptacles, and hand sanitizer.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as point-of-sale devices and tokens.

SAMPLING

- Ensure that product sampling is conducted according to all applicable guidelines and is done in a way that minimizes person-to-person contact to the greatest extent possible.
- MIFMA recommends preparing samples in advance of arriving at the market by prepackaging individual samples into covered containers. At the market, prepackaged individual samples should be spaced out for consumers to pick up in a way that allows the consumer to touch only the sample they will consume.
- Spacing should allow for the vendor and all consumers to maintain social distancing while waiting for, selecting, and consuming the sample, and while disposing of the sample container.
- Dispensing a sample from a large container of product at the market directly into the hand of the consumer and/or transferring a sample from the hand of the vendor to the hand of the consumer is not recommended.

MARKET SETUP

- Consider greater market stall spacing and aisle widths to allow customers and vendors to distance themselves at least 6 feet away from others. This extra space can also make the market more accessible to those using mobility devices or families with strollers.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The State of Michigan no longer mandates that any consumers wear a mask at a farmers market. Mask wearing may still be required by some local authorities and/or the farmers market operating organization, and this requirement should be clearly posted when being implemented. Even when face masks are not required, be respectful of vendors, shoppers, and market staff who choose to wear them.
- Offer alternative ways to participate for cautious customers. These could include having take-home options for market activities like children's crafts or live streaming market entertainers like musicians on social media.
- Farmers market managers should still consult their local health departments and the State of Michigan for information pertinent to their specific community.
- Remember that each individual reacts to health and safety issues in their own way. While some customers may be eager to "return to normal," others remain vigilant in protecting their personal safety and are looking for precautions to be in place in order to feel comfortable in a public setting. As market operators, it's important to acknowledge and respect these varying approaches during the market season in order to be inclusive and welcoming and so that all consumers can be connected to community-driven marketplaces.

