

COVID-19: Frequently-Asked Questions for Farmer's Markets

Issued May 1, 2020

All Iowa businesses have a responsibility to take measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is critical that farmer's markets institute immediate changes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their staff, sellers, and buyers. The [governor's proclamation issued on April 24, 2020](#), allowed farmer's markets to reopen in all 99 counties through April 30, 2020, and the [governor's proclamation issued on April 27, 2020](#), allowed continued operation of farmer's markets until **11:59 p.m. on May 15, 2020**.

FM1: Can farmer's market vendors offer curbside pick-up of produce?

A: Except for wild-harvested mushrooms and sprouts, yes. Whole, uncut, unprocessed produce can be sold to the retail customer with no licensing from DIA. Shipping and delivery is allowed. Vendors of wild-harvested mushrooms or sprouts must be licensed accordingly. (By definition, sprouts are harvested with the seed or root intact.) Sprout producers must be licensed at the production site, and a farmers' market license is required for temperature-controlled foods. Wild-harvested mushroom operators must be trained in species identification and a farmer's market license is required. Restaurants can receive wild-harvested mushrooms, provided the supplier has species identification training. The law does not prohibit shipping or delivery. (5/1/20)

FM2: Can vendors provide unlicensed processed foods that are traditionally exempt from farmer's market licensing (e.g., homemade baked goods, standardized jams, or farm-fresh shell eggs) to be sold at a food stand?

A: Only if a designated representative of the unlicensed food operation is present at the food stand. The person designated to represent the unlicensed food operation must have the ability to control and protect the foods from cross-contamination by any source, and they must be available to answer questions related to food safety, such as allergen content. These foods must be transferred in a face-to-face manner from the operator's residence or booth at a farmer's market, directly to the retail consumer. Shipping or delivery of these foods is not allowed, including in the form of community-supported agriculture (CSA) packages. (5/1/20)

FM3: Can a vendor's food stand be licensed for dispensing temperature-controlled foods?

A: Yes. However, doing so makes the food stand responsible for food safety. 1) There must be a person in charge at all times who demonstrates knowledge and is responsible for ensuring food safety, 2) there needs to be a logbook maintained that identifies the employees (or volunteers) who are working at the food stand, including what hours they worked, 3) someone must be available to answer detailed questions about the food, and 4) there must be protection from cross-contamination from any source. (5/1/20)

FM4: Can vendors sell frozen meats from a cooler, provided by licensed meat vendors who are on site but operating separately from our food stand?

A: No. Temperature-controlled foods must be dispensed from a licensed stand and the meat vendors would need additional licensing for each stand they operate. (5/1/20)

FM5: If our food stand has a farmer’s market license, what limitations apply for distributing temperature-controlled foods to customers in passing cars?

A: Commercially-processed, packaged, labeled, and stored food such as baked goods from a licensed home bakery, meats, cheeses, and ice cream can all be distributed from your licensed food stand. These foods can also be shipped or delivered. Your food stand may also prepare temperature-controlled food onsite for curbside pick-up. Food Code regulations still need to be followed, and all ingredients used in the preparation of food must be from an approved source (i.e., eggs, bread, jam, or other foods and/or condiments served with the meal from a licensed food stand must originate from a commercially-approved facility. Food produced onsite **cannot** be shipped or delivered. (5/1/20)

FM6: Can a licensed food stand receive and redistribute temperature-controlled foods (e.g., burritos) that have been prepared and packaged by another vendor?

A: Yes, but only if the vendor who prepared and packaged the food has an employee or designated representative dispensing those foods from your licensed food stand. Also, the licensed food stand must be equipped with the appropriate equipment needed to ensure food safety. **Note:** These foods cannot be shipped or delivered. (5/1/20)

FM7: Can a licensed food stand buy and resell temperature-controlled foods from another vendor who is onsite, but operating their own licensed stand?

A: No. The vendor preparing these foods must interact directly with the retail consumer. Food stand vendors may not buy and resell those foods, nor are they allowed to ship or deliver temperature-controlled foods they have purchased from another vendor. (5/1/20)

FM8: Is a food stand limited to fewer than 10 people?

A: Yes, no more than 10 people can gather at each food stand. However, vendors can operate other food stands provided there is at least six feet between them. (5/1/20)

FM9: Can vendors offer free samples of food as they normally do at farmer’s markets?

A: Vendors are strongly discouraged from offering free food samples, or serving foods intended for immediate or onsite consumption. Additionally, all food should be packaged as tightly as possible to reduce exposure to the environment and potential contamination. (5/1/20)

FM10: The proclamation allows for only food and farm products to be sold. What are “food and farm” products?

A: “Food” means a raw, cooked, or processed edible substance, ice, beverage, an ingredient used or intended for use or sale in whole or in part for human consumption, or chewing gum. (Iowa Administrative Code 30.2) “Farm products” are those produced from plants or animals on a farm. This would include dairy and dairy products, poultry and poultry products, livestock, fruits, vegetables, flowers, seeds, grasses, trees, fish, honey, and other similar products, or any other plant, animal, or plant or animal product which supplies people with food, feed, fiber, or fur. No other goods or services (e.g., cookware, paintings, sunglasses, haircuts, manicures, etc.) may be sold. (5/1/20)

FM11: Is entertainment allowed if there are fewer than 10 people at our farmers’ market?

A: No. At this time, entertainment and activities (e.g. musical performances, children’s activities, contests, etc.) are prohibited. (5/1/20)

FM12: Can seating be provided at the farmers market if we have fewer than 10 people?

A: No. The market must eliminate all common seating, and vendors are prohibited from having any seating available that allows people to congregate or eat food on the premises. (5/1/20)

FM13: Are pets allowed at farmer's markets?

A: You are strongly encouraged to leave your pets home. (5/1/20)

FM14: Does the six feet or more separation between vendors include food and equipment storage?

A: Yes. (5/1/20)

FM15: What additional measures should the farmer's market organizer or vendors implement to ensure social distancing, proper hygiene, and public health?

A: Organizers and vendors should lead by example. Wear a face mask, wash your hands frequently, designate one person to handle money, do not allow customers to touch or squeeze products before deciding to purchase them. To the extent possible, tightly package your foods to reduce exposure to the environment and potential cross-contamination. Conduct your business as if every customer is infected with a highly-contagious virus, and react accordingly. (5/1/20)

FM16: Is the governor's proclamation order pertaining to farmer's markets limited to certain counties?

A: No. Farmer's markets may be conducted in all 99 counties. (5/1/20)

FM17: Who is responsible for enforcing these guidelines?

A: Managers and organizers of a farmer's market share the responsibility along with each vendor to ensure the public is protected to the extent possible. Everyone, including customers, must do their part by following the public health guidelines that have been set. (5/1/20)