The Food Regulation and Farmers’ Markets in Alberta

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Alberta Health Services, Rocky Mountain House
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Outline

• Definition of a Farmers’ Market
• AHS involvement
• AHS legislation
• Vendor Requirements
  – Permits
  – Food products
  – Handwashing, sink requirements
  – Food Protection
    • Display
    • Packaging
    • Labeling
    • Food Handling
    • Sampling
• Market Manager Requirements
• Conclusion
• Questions
Farmers’ Market Defined

Approved by the Minister of Agriculture as an approved farmer’s market program under the department of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and which has been issued a Farmers’ Market permit by AHS.
Public Health Involvement

- Approvals & Permitting
- Inspections
- Risk Assessment
- Education
- Enforcement
Outbreaks in Canada

• Alberta, 2002, *E. coli* outbreak associated with unpasteurized cheese, 13 people affected, 2 children developed HUS that damaged their kidneys.

• Ontario, 2005, *E. coli* associated with unpasteurized cow’s milk, 4 people affected, 2 hospitalized.
AHS Legislation

Public Health Act Food Regulation (AR 31/2006) Part 3 Farmers’ Markets

a) Section 33 Farmers’ Market Permit
b) Section 34 General Building Requirements
c) Section 35 Regular Duties of Permit Holder
d) Section 36 Stallholder Requirements
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X- No Food Processing in stall</th>
<th>√ - Food Processing in stall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • stall holder can operate under the Farmers’ Market Permit and they can prepare samples on site providing proper equipment is available | • Stall holder will require their own Food Handling Permit  
• i.e. A vendor wanted to sell ice cream, hot dogs, sandwiches or hamburgers etc., must comply with Part 2 of the Food Regulation which deals with commercial food establishments.  

Concessions:  
• Indoors: Must have a permanent location / set up  
• Outdoors: Limited to permitted mobiles and carts |

The operator of a Farmers’ market that has been approved by Alberta Agriculture must apply for a Farmers’ Market Permit through AHS.
Permitting continued

Food Processing/Sampling

• Any mixing, assembling, forming or preparation of food. Includes heating, cooking for service and scooping of ice cream for service (as opposed to heating, cooking or scooping for sampling only).

• Processing does not include serving or portioning of products for sampling purposes.

• Samples are bite-sized portions of foods that are handed out for promotion only at no cost.
Food Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmers’ Market</th>
<th>Concession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low risk prepared foods do not have to come from approved (inspected) facilities.</td>
<td>All foods being sold must come from an approved facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.e. cakes, cookies, jams, pickles, breads etc. can be made in a vendors home which is not an inspected facility.</td>
<td>i.e. selling of cookies, cakes, pickles, ice cream, sandwiches, hot dogs etc., must be made in an approved facility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home-canned products

- Only jams, jellies and pickles can be sold. These products have physical and chemical characteristics which help to inhibit the growth of bacteria which can cause foodborne illness.

- Freezer jams must be kept frozen during transport and storage.

- Standard safe canning methods must be followed i.e. new approved lids (click lids, 2 piece snap lids). Jars must be free of cracks, chips and lids must be new. Cannot use old Cheez Whiz, baby food jars etc.
Home canned goods continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pickled Products</th>
<th>Jams and Jellies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pH &lt;4.6; Aw &lt;0.86; Salt &gt;10%</td>
<td>60%-65% solids (fruits plus 55% sugar)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Common spoilage organisms and their $a_w$ limits for growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microbial Group</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>$a_w$</th>
<th>Products Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal bacteria</td>
<td>Salmonella species</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>Fresh meat, milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clostridium botulinum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal yeast</td>
<td>Torulopsis species</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>Fruit juice concentrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal molds</td>
<td>Aspergillus flavus</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>Jams, Jellies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halophilic bacteria</td>
<td>Wallemia sebi</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xerophilic molds</td>
<td>Aspergillus echinulatas</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>Flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osmophilic yeast</td>
<td>Saccharomyces bisporus</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>Dried fruits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acid rain

Increasing acidity

Neutral

Increasing alkalinity

pH Scale

 Courtesy of Environment Canada (http://www.ec.gc.ca/)
High risk foods:

- a food with a pH or a water activity level, or a combination of both, that will support the growth of pathogenic microorganisms or the production of their toxins
- i.e. cheese, milk, poultry, sauces, antipasto, meats, pyrogies, cabbage rolls, baked goods with cream filling, meringue pies, cheesecake, sausage rolls

Stall holders intending to sell these items MUST discuss with public health inspector first!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No-go Foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raw meats unless stamped, tagged, labelled or confirmed as inspected with a certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No milk or milk products unless: written CFIA approval, AHS zone approval, producers license issued by Alberta Agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home canned foods other than jams, jellies or pickles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishandled or contaminated foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakes, cookies, breads etc made with unapproved eggs or dairy products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs stored at temperature &gt;7°C, broken/cracked shells, soiled eggs, eggs in soiled containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature abused foods (&gt;4°C for cold foods; &lt; 60°C for hot foods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Products made with 1 or more of these prohibited foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home prepared potentially hazardous foods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Requirements

• Area to be clean and sanitary before food preparation begins

• Prevent cross contamination - clean and sanitize surfaces, cutting boards and equipment after contact with raw meat, poultry or fish

• Water samples from wells to be submitted for bacteriological sampling 2 x per year
Sanitizer

Wipe down all food preparation surfaces and equipment before you begin preparing food.

Good overall sanitizer is:

• 100 ppm per million bleach solution
  – mix ½ to 1 tsp bleach in 1 liter of water OR
  – mix 1-2 tbsp bleach into 1 gallon of water

Do not mix bleach solution with detergent!
Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands

- Before ALL food preparation
- After using washroom, smoking, eating, drinking, touching raw meat etc.

1. Use warm water - wet hands
2. Lather with soap and scrub for 20 seconds don’t forget thumbs, tops of hands, under nail
3. Rinse
4. Dry with paper towel
Home Requirements continued

- Temperature control applies to storage, transport and display of perishable foods ≤4°C for cold, >60°C for hot., frozen

- Ensure foods are cooked to an internal temperature of 74°C

- Do not prepare foods if you are ill
Vendor Stalls

- Food display / food preparation surfaces clean, sanitary, smooth, easy to clean
- Garbage receptacles
- Hand sinks and sanitizer if required
- Thermometer to monitor perishable food temperatures
- Contact information available (producer’s name, contact #)
- Potentially hazardous foods have date of preparation
- AHS Farmers’ Market Home Study Course certificate
# Food Protection Stallholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Display</th>
<th>• Foods except whole fruits/vegetables to be protected from contamination and customer handling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Packaging of Food</td>
<td>• Food grade plastic bags/wraps, paper bags to be clean and not previously used. Garbage bags and baby food jars are not allowed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Labelling | • To be done in accordance with Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/retail-food/eng/1299095290409/1299095586147 |
| Food Samples | • Free, bite-size, preferable to pre-portion off site,  
• Protect from contamination and customer handling (use toothpicks, single use containers) covers, sneeze guards  
• Replace high risk samples after 1 hour of display  
• Discard leftover and contaminated samples  
• No cooking of samples unless approval obtained by AHS and cooking equipment located at back of stall, thermometer (hot foods internal temperature of 74°C), sanitizer available, hand-washing sink requirement met |
# Handsink Requirements

## Non-permitted Stall Holder open < 1 day/week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low risk foods, pre-portioned off site, handled with utensils</th>
<th>• Hand sanitizer and <strong>access</strong> to hand sink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low risk samples portioned on site</td>
<td>• Hand sink in booth (temporary ok)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-portioned high risk food samples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High risk food samples and/or heating of foods on site</td>
<td>• Hand sink in booth (temporary ok)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Approved sanitizer (chlorine or quat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Duplicate utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High risk foods cooked from raw on-site for sampling purposes only</td>
<td>• Hank sink in booth (temporary ok)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Approved sanitizer (chlorine or quat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Separate utensils for raw/cooked product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Duplicate utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to 2 compartment utility sink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with hot/cold running water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Temporary Hand Sink

• coffee urn or camp cooler with a spigot, filled with warm water

• container to catch water (vendors must ensure it does not overflow)

• soap and paper towel
Temporary Hand Sink Example

- 20 L Warm water
- SOAP, NOT gel sanitizer
- 20 Litres
## Handsink Requirements

### Non-permitted Stall Holder open > 1 day/week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low risk foods, pre-portioned off site, handled with utensils</th>
<th>• Hand sanitizer and access to hand sink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low risk samples portioned on site</td>
<td>• Hand sink in booth equipped with hot/cold running water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-portioned high risk food samples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High risk food samples and/or heating of foods on site</td>
<td>• Hand sink in booth (temporary ok)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Approved sanitizer (chlorine or quat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Duplicate utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High risk food samples handled (portioned, cooked or reheated) onsite for sampling purposes</td>
<td>• Two compartment sink with hot/cold running water in both, soap, paper towel, dish soap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Approved sanitizer (chlorine or quat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additional (separate) handsink may be required if food handling activities limit the vendors access to the utility sink</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Market Managers

General Requirements:

• Toilet and handwashing facilities available
• Hot/cold potable water
• Garbage must be contained / removed
• Enforce that live animals are not permitted in food areas with the exception of service animals
• Ensure stall holders intending to sell high risk foods review food preparation procedures with AHS prior to selling.
The **permit holder** and **stall vendor** are jointly responsible for safe food!
## Special Markets

### Location Change of Approved Farmers’ Market
- Requires AHS and AARD approval minimum 2 weeks in advance
- Food permit for new location required
- Information of location, list of vendors and products etc.

### Approved Farmers’ Market combined with Special Event with location change
- Same requirements as above
- Farmers’ Market area MUST be clearly separated from other special event using signage otherwise AHS will enforce legislation in which all vendors must produce foods in permitted commercial kitchens

### Special Event combing with an Approved Farmers’ Market
- Special Event held at same time in same location as an existing Farmers’ Market - Same requirements as above
- Farmers’ Market in original location and all vendors are separately permitted then above conditions may not apply and will be dealt with on a case by case basis
Take home points

1. Farmers' Market requirements have been standardized across the province.

2. The presence or absence of food processing determines whether a vendor may operate under a Farmers' Market permit.

3. There are differences in the regulatory requirements for each kind of operation.

4. Know what kinds of foods can be sold. Consult with a PHI if a vendor wants to sell a high risk food.
Contact us!

• Don’t hesitate to contact us! We have important resources and information that can help you!

• Online: http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp go to contact us and click on the map to get the contact number of the office closest to you.
Thank you!

Questions are guaranteed in life; Answers aren't.