
Starting a New Market

As with starting any business venture, starting a new farmers' market in your community requires careful planning. Farmers, consumers, community groups or a combination of groups can initiate it. No matter who initiates it, the development process should follow a set pattern: articulating a vision and goals, gaining community support, and developing and implementing a plan for the market.

A **vision statement** for your business enables the team to focus on the future and enables others to understand where the leadership team sees the market going in the future. Your vision statement really talks about what you hope your market will offer to the community, consumers and the vendors so that all benefit from the market being in the community. Your **goals** can be much more short-term, ie what you hope to accomplish within the next few months or year, which is appropriate when you are starting a new market. Goals can also be longer term and will deal with how you hope to achieve your vision.

Gaining **community support** is critical as the success of your market depends on it. Community support is more than just getting potential customers on side. It may also include convincing other community businesses that a farmers' market can have a positive economic influence on their businesses and is not competition. Surveys show that consumers who shop at a farmers' market also spend money in the local community on groceries they couldn't get at the market, gas, restaurants, etc. Vendors and employees of vendors also spend money in the community. All of these contribute to a positive impact on the community.

As your grandmother may have said, a good marriage is a lot of hard work. This also holds true for a successful farmers' market. Even though articulating your vision and setting your goals are critical when starting a new market, it is also important to review and update every year. Your vision may change over time. New goals should be set as previous goals are accomplished. This will help to ensure your market grows and remains a viable entity in the community.

The steps you need to follow in order to start an Alberta Approved Farmers' Market are covered in the following sections.

Location of Your Farmers' Market

Another critical driver behind a successful farmers' market is a good location. In Alberta, our approved market locations run the gamut of possible locations: indoors, outdoors, in halls, malls, arenas, parking lots, agriplexes, retro-fitted buildings, rec centres, on the street and the list goes on. Some are in permanent facilities that allow the market to operate year round while others only allow for seasonal usage since they are located outside or in a building that has another use in the colder months. Obviously there is no right or wrong answer when it comes to choosing a location. What is important when choosing a site is to look at all possible locations and then outline the positive and negative features of each.

Things to consider when selecting a site:

- ✓ **Size:** How many tables/stalls will the site accommodate? Is there room to increase the existing number of vendors? If your size is limited, is there a way to reconfigure the layout of the stalls to be able to increase the number of vendors?
- ✓ **Centrality:** Is the site being considered central to where your potential customers live, work and shop? If it isn't central, is there public transportation available so that customers who don't drive can still attend the market?
- ✓ **Transportation:** As noted above, some of your customers won't be able to drive so alternatives need to be available to them. For example, the Strathmore Farmers' Market rents a handi-bus each week to transport seniors to the market located at the ag grounds.
- ✓ **Parking:** Is there ample parking – the rule of thumb is 2 – 3 stalls per vendor? Is the parking lot paved, on grass or gravel and what impact will there be when it rains?
- ✓ **Surface cover:** If the market is outside, what is the surface like – paved, gravel, on grass, etc? And what is the impact when it rains?
- ✓ **Water:** Potable water must be available.
- ✓ **Restrooms:** Restrooms for vendors and customers must be available within the area.
- ✓ **Cost of the facility:** Is the facility provided by your sponsor at no cost, is there a weekly/seasonal fee or a long term lease?

Once all the factors are considered and a site is chosen, it is important that customers enjoy a pleasurable shopping experience. Since shopping at farmers' markets is the number one ag tourism attraction in Alberta, this couldn't be more true.

Starting Your Alberta Approved Farmers' Market

There are a number of steps you must take in order to start an Alberta Approved Farmers' Market. The first step is to get "approved".

Becoming an "Approved Market"

Alberta Agriculture and Food (AF) grants "approval" status for farmers' markets in the province.

Markets approved by AF can:

- Apply for a unique health permit from their health authority
- Become an AFMA member market
- Advertise using the Sunnygirl logo and receive other networking, support and educational benefits.

Markets wishing to obtain approval under the program must do the following:

- Complete an AF Approved Farmers' Market application form and be able to demonstrate that the proposed market will meet the guidelines.
- Ensure non-profit status for the market. All approved markets must be operated as a non-profit organization. There are two options available:
 1. Become sponsored by:
 - a) A not-for-profit community group or organization
 - b) A local chamber of commerce
 - c) A municipality
 - d) An agricultural societyor
 2. Incorporate specifically for the purpose of operating an Approved Market under the legislation of either the:
 - a) *Societies Act (Alberta)*
 - b) *Cooperatives Act (Alberta)* as a new generation cooperative
- Markets planning to form their own incorporated society or new generation cooperative must have made application for such incorporation to Alberta Corporate Registries and provide copies of the documents submitted for registration, *before* an application will be considered.

For More Information

See "Alberta Agriculture and Food Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program Guidelines" in the Appendix.

For More Information

See the next topic, "Market Sponsorship."

For More Information

See the next heading, "Starting a Non-Profit Society," and "Starting a New Generation Cooperative."

- Provide a copy of the rules established for the operation of the market to all potential vendors of this market, as well as to the AF Farmers' Market Administrator.
- Make contact with local officers of health to ensure that the requirements of the *Public Health Act* are met regarding the sale of foods at an Approved Market and to ensure that a food establishment permit will be available should AF approve the application.
- Guarantee that the individual whose name is proposed as manager of this market is willing to meet the learning and training requirements of this position and to maintain the documentation required to meet the guidelines on an annual basis.

The AF Farmers' Market Program Administrator will assess applications and a decision will normally be made within four to six weeks to either grant temporary status or deny an application based on program ineligibility. The Administrator will advise the applicant, the sponsor and the local officer of health of this decision in writing.

Markets must apply to the program and be granted temporary status **before** beginning operations. Food establishment permits, under the Alberta *Public Health Act*, are by law, only issued by the local public health inspector to temporary or full status Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets.

New markets granted temporary status will be monitored in the first two years of operation and granted full status in the third season of operation, provided the market has met the Guidelines.

In situations where a market has been given conditional temporary status, this status may remain in effect for a full two to three years to ensure the conditions are fully understood and that the operation of the market does not stray from the conditions of its temporary status.

Alberta Agriculture and Food must be notified of all and any changes in the location, management or sponsorship of an Approved Farmers' Market for the market to retain its approved status.

An Approved Market must operate under the direction of an advisory committee, if sponsored, or a board of directors, if incorporated as a non-profit society or new generation cooperative.

Starting a Non-Profit Society

“Societies are formed when a group of people join to promote their common interests.” – Alberta Government Services

Naming Your Society

Your society’s name must not be the same, or similar to, any other society or corporation’s name. A society name is made up of three parts, or elements, all of which must be present in the name but not in any particular order: distinctive, descriptive and legal.



Example

An example of a society name is “John Smith White Water Rafting Memorial Foundation”.

The “distinctive element” is a unique word or location that makes the society’s name different from others. In our example, “John Smith White Water Rafting Memorial Foundation”, the distinctive element is “John Smith”. This part should set your name apart from other names, making it distinctive and easy to remember.

The “descriptive element” describes what the society is or does. In our example, the descriptive element would be “White Water Rafting Memorial”.

The “legal element” must be one of the following words:

- Society
- Association
- Club
- Fellowship
- Guild
- Foundation
- Institute
- League
- Committee
- Council
- Board
- Centre
- Bureau

In our example, the legal element is “Foundation”.

Once you have selected a name, contact a private search house to conduct a search of your corporate name. The search house will submit a Newly Upgraded Automatic Name Search (NUANS) report to Alberta Corporate Registries. There is a cost to register your new name. It can range between \$40 and \$60.

For More Information

A list of private search houses can be found at www.nuans.com or you can call (780) 427-2311 or toll free 310-0000.

Following name selection, you will need to submit your NUANS report, an application and bylaws to the Corporate Registries office.

Mailing Address:
Alberta Registries
Corporate Registry
Box 1007 Station Main
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4W6

Telephone Number:
(780) 427-2311 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
RITE line within Alberta: 310-0000

Writing Bylaws

Bylaws set out the way the society is organized and the rules surrounding all of its activities.

For More Information

See the topic “Conflict Resolution” and the topic “Vendor Committee” for some ideas on how to handle disagreements.

Occasionally, society members disagree on how to handle internal matters. Neither AF nor Corporate Registry supervise the conduct of societies, nor do they provide a counseling service on matters other than forms and the documents filed with them. Societies must be prepared to resolve their own internal disputes.

A sample copy of society bylaws is included in the Appendix to help guide you while making your own.

To ensure that internal disputes are handled fairly, Corporate Registry recommends including a bylaw outlining an arbitration procedure. Consult the “Vendor Committee” and “Conflict Resolution” sections of this manual for more details.

Your society must send a completed Annual Return to Alberta Corporate Registries every year before the last day of the month following your anniversary month. You must also inform registries of bylaw amendments and address changes. Copies of these forms are included in the appendix of this manual.

For full details of this section online visit,
www.governmentsservices.gov.ab.ca/cr/incorporating_societies.cfm

For a copy of the *Societies Act* and *Regulations* call the Queens’ Printer at (780) 427-4952 or toll free 310-0000 outside Edmonton. They are also available online at: www.qp.gov.ab.ca

Starting a New Generation Cooperative

A cooperative is a legally incorporated business arrangement that provides for the control of the business by its membership. A new generation cooperative (NGC) is a type of cooperative that uses a system of delivery rights and obligations to encourage business loyalty and provide a form of vertical integration. NGC's are particularly suitable to ventures involved in value-added agricultural processing and marketing.

Legislation governing the NGC business model is found in Alberta's *Cooperatives Act*, effective on April 2, 2002. Sections specific to the new generation co-op can be found in Part 18, Division 4, Sections 422 to 429. There are also corresponding Regulations that must be adhered to.

The new generation cooperative business model operating on a reduced profit basis is allowed under the Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Guidelines. This model allows for the accumulation of capital funds for the purpose of large capital expenditures and as such is ideally suited for those markets wanting to own their own permanent facilities.

New generation cooperatives are not for everyone. When compared to traditional business arrangements, NGC's may seem complicated and expensive to set up, manage and maintain. Each market would develop their structure differently depending on the needs of the market, so there is no standard format to follow. It is advisable to contact a lawyer who specializes in cooperatives to assist you in setting up this business model for your market. This person will help you determine if the NGC model meets the needs of your market and will ensure that all aspects of the legislation and corresponding regulations are adhered to during the set-up of the NGC. You will also be advised of any legislative requirements you need to meet on an ongoing basis.

For More Information

Information about cooperatives is available online at:
<http://governmentservices.gov.ab.ca/gs/index.cfm#coops>.

For More Information

The forms you need to register your new generation cooperative are located in the Appendix of this manual or on the web at:

http://governmentservices.gov.ab.ca/consumer/business/lr_forms.cfm#Cooperatives



Market Sponsorship

Before a farmers' market can be approved by Alberta Agriculture and Food, it must have a sponsor or be incorporated as a society or a new generation cooperative.

Sponsorship

One of the following can act as a sponsor:

- a not-for-profit community organization or group
- a local chamber of commerce
- a municipality
- an agricultural society.

Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets often seek the sponsorship of a non-profit organization for assistance with various aspects of running the market such as fund raising, obtaining permits, insurance, prestige and influence in the community.



Example

Chambers of commerce, agricultural societies, churches and senior-citizen organizations are among many groups who sponsor Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets.

In all cases, there should be a mutually beneficial relationship between the market and the sponsor. With the sponsor's assistance, the market has stability and ongoing support. In return, the sponsor is able to increase its visibility in the community and increase revenues through added rents received from the market by utilizing unused space.



From Grace, AFMA Board Member for the Central Alberta Region. "Olds Agricultural Society is very proud to sponsor the Farmers' Market held weekly from May until September. The support from vendors and the enthusiasm from customers culminates in a very successful venture for everyone. Local entrepreneurs display a wide variety of exceptional quality products ranging from baked goods, fresh produce, specialty meats and handicrafts that are very well received by the Market patrons. Olds Agricultural Society expects continued growth and development of the Farmers' Market within the community in the future."



Role of Sponsor

The role of the sponsor may vary slightly from market to market, but generally a sponsor will have the following roles. Use this checklist to evaluate your sponsor's role.



✓ Checklist

Sponsor's Role

- Represented on the advisory committee of the market.
- Provides leadership in creating the vision and ensuring growth of the market.
- Assists in developing market rules, conflict resolution procedures and vendor selection criteria.
- Advise and assist in the selection, remuneration and performance review of the market manager.
- Ensures the approved market meets Alberta Agriculture and Food guidelines.
- Ensures vendors have meaningful input into the operation of the market.
- Ensures accurate vendor lists are kept.
- Ensures bank accounts for the market are appropriately set up and financial records are accurately kept.
- Ensures market adheres to the *Public Health Act* plus any other applicable provincial and federal legislation.
- Makes certain the market and its vendors are either insured or indemnified against liability.
- Confirms that the market administrator submits appropriate paper work to Alberta Agriculture and Food before January 31 of each year.



Lethbridge Sponsor –
Exhibition Park

As a market manager, make sure that you have ongoing contact with your sponsor. Keep the sponsor involved in the market.

For More Information

The forms you need to register your society are located in the Appendix of this manual or on the web at http://governmentservices.gov.ab.ca/ct/forms_societies.cfm

Refer to page 100 – 5 for information about new generation cooperatives.

Incorporation

If you choose the option of incorporating specifically for the purpose of operating an approved market, you will fall under the following pieces of legislation:

- *Societies Act (Alberta)*
- *Cooperatives Act (Alberta)*

If you choose incorporation, your market must operate under a board of directors who understand and support the goals of the program.

You will also need to register your society or new generation cooperative and its bylaws with Alberta Government Services Corporate Registry.

Legislation and Associated Regulations Impacting Farmers' Market Vendors

There are many pieces of legislation, both federal and provincial, which impact how farmers' market vendors do business. The federal *Food and Drugs Act* is the primary legislation affecting all food, drugs and cosmetics sold in Canada (imported or domestic). The Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation is the primary provincial legislation affecting food but there are also other pieces of federal and provincial legislation farmers' market vendors must adhere to. As a manager, it is important that vendors adhere to *all* the legislation that impacts their individual businesses. A listing of the food legislation and associated regulations is below.

For More Information

Federal legislation can be found online at

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/index.html>

Provincial legislation can be found online at

<http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/index.cfm>

FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL
Food and Drugs Act	Public Health Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Regulation
Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations 	Livestock and Livestock Products Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase and Sale of Eggs and Processed Egg Regulation • Honey Grading Regulation
Canada Agricultural Products Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy Products Regulation • Egg Regulations • Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations • Honey Regulations • Maple Products Regulations • Processed Egg Regulations • Livestock and Poultry Carcass Grading Regulations • Processed Products Regulations 	Dairy Industry Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy Industry Regulation
Meat Inspection Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat Inspection Regulations 	Meat Inspection Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat Inspection Regulation
Fish Inspection Act	Livestock Industry Diversification Act

It is a common mistake to believe that only the Alberta *Public Health Act* affects farmers' market vendors since public health inspectors are the most common inspectors seen at farmers' markets. Public health inspectors only enforce the Alberta *Public Health Act* while AF Regulatory Services inspectors enforce the other provincial legislation noted above. Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) inspectors enforce the federal legislation. See the Key Contacts in the Appendix for contact information.

Food Regulations

(Adapted from “Farm Direct Sales: Know the Regulations” by AF)

Alberta Approved Farmers’ Markets provide a unique market opportunity. They are a place to sell home-grown produce, processed food (restrictions do apply) and handcrafted products directly to consumers. Farmers’ markets often serve as business incubators or test markets for start-up processors. Food vendors selling at Alberta Approved Farmers’ Markets have unique status under the *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation. However, food products sold at all other venues, such as public markets, flea markets and farm stores are subject to different rules. Vendors should contact their public health inspector for local standards.

Role of Regional Health Authority

Regional health authorities can establish additional standards to those set out in the *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation listed in this section. For example, a number of regional health authorities now require foods defined as high risk to be prepared in permitted facilities, even when sold at an Alberta Approved Farmers’ Market. Check with your regional health authority for local standards. Expect to meet requirements for:

- Safe handling of perishable foods
- Selling high risk foods
- Home canned foods
- Protection of foods
- Storage and sanitation
- Transportation
- Food handler hygiene
- Food samples.

There are other provisions for meat and milk:

- No person shall sell or offer for sale uninspected meat and poultry.
- No person shall sell or offer for sale unpasteurized milk or milk products.

No food products, including those sold at Alberta Approved Farmers’ Markets, are exempt from the federal *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* and regulations.



Medicine Hat Samples

For More Information

See the list of local health authority contacts, and the publication, “Farm Direct Sales: Know the Regulations” included in the Appendix.

Role of People Involved in the Market

Generally there are responsibilities of all people involved in the market. Below are examples of where some of these responsibilities lie.

Responsibilities of Market People

Sponsor	Ensure health permit is obtained. Ensure manager is enforcing safe food practices.
Manager	Ensure market facilities are acceptable. Ensure all vendors adhere to legislation and safe food practices.
Vendors	Ensure products are produced, transported, displayed and sampled safely. Ensure necessary storage and preparation instructions are given to the consumer.

For More Information

See the Appendix for full food safety checklists for managers and vendors.

The following are the sections of the Alberta *Public Health Act* Food Regulation pertaining to farmers' markets.

Part 3

Farmers' Markets

Farmers' market permit

33 The operator of a farmers' market must apply for a farmers' market permit in accordance with Part 1 of this Regulation.

General building requirements

34 Except where the *Alberta Building Code* provides otherwise, a farmers' market permit holder must ensure

- (a) *that the farmers' market is supplied with hot and cold running water that is safe for human consumption and available in quantities sufficient to meet the needs of the farmers' market, and*
- (b) *that toilet and handwashing facilities of a design and in a number sufficient to meet the needs of the farmers' market are provided*
 - (i) *at the location of the farmers' market, or*
 - (ii) *at a nearby location through agreement with another person.*

Regular duties of permit holder

- 35 (1) *A farmers' market permit holder must ensure that*
- (a) stallholders' spaces are clean and sanitary,*
 - (b) counters and display areas in stallholders' spaces are finished in or covered with a material that is easily cleaned,*
 - (c) stallholders' spaces are cleaned at the end of each business day,*
 - (d) there are sufficient refuse containers to service the customers visiting the farmers' market, and*
 - (e) there is sufficient removal of refuse at the end of each business day.*
- (2) *A farmers' market permit holder must ensure that adequate clean-up equipment is provided for the use of stallholders.*

Stallholder requirements

- 36 (1) *A stallholder must not sell, offer for sale, distribute, provide or otherwise make available to the public*
- (a) uninspected meat,*
 - (b) home-canned food other than jam, jelly and pickles,*
 - (c) any food unless it is stored, displayed and transported in accordance with section 25,*
 - (d) home-prepared food unless it is protected in a manner adequate to prevent customer handling and contamination,*
 - (e) unpasteurized milk, or*
 - (f) foods containing one or more of the foods prohibited in clauses (a) to (e) as ingredients.*
- (2) *A stallholder must not sell, offer for sale, distribute, provide or otherwise make available to the public whole raw shell poultry eggs unless they are stored at a temperature not exceeding 7°C.*

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- (3) *A stallholder must ensure that food handlers*
- (a) *wear clean clothing and footwear,*
 - (b) *exhibit cleanliness and good personal hygiene,*
 - (c) *ensure that food is not contaminated by hair,*
 - (d) *wash hands as often as necessary to prevent the contamination of food or food areas,*
 - (e) *refrain from smoking in a food area,*
 - (f) *refrain from any other conduct that could result in the contamination of food or a food area, and*
 - (g) *do not handle food if prohibited from working by or under the Communicable Diseases Regulation (AR 238/85).*
- (4) *The farmers' market permit holder must ensure that stallholders comply with this section.*

Section 25 referred to above is as follows:

Storage, display and transportation

- 25(1) *All high-risk food must be stored, displayed and transported at a temperature of*
- (a) *not more than 4°C or such higher temperature, or*
 - (b) *not less than 60°C or such lower temperature*

as an executive officer stipulates under subsection (4).

- (2) *All food that needs to be kept frozen in order to maintain its fitness for human consumption must be and remain frozen while being stored, displayed, packaged or transported.*
- (3) *Subsection (1) does not apply to whole raw shell eggs, which must be stored, displayed, packaged or transported at a temperature not exceeding 7°C or such other temperature as an executive officer stipulates under subsection (4).*
- (4) *An executive officer may authorize alternative temperatures for the purposes of subsections (1) and (3), with associated conditions, if that officer is satisfied that those temperatures, along with those conditions, pose no risk that the food will become unfit for human consumption.*

Federal Legislation (Acts and Regulations)

Food and Drugs Act (FDA)

The *Food and Drugs Act* and Regulations is the primary legislation that applies to *all food* sold in Canada and sets out minimum health and safety requirements. The Act prohibits the labelling, packaging, treating, processing, selling or advertising of any food in a manner that would mislead or deceive consumers. It prohibits health claims that might suggest that a food is a treatment, preventative or cure for specified diseases or health conditions. The Act prescribes the labeling of all prepackaged foods, including requirements for ingredients, durable life dates, nutrient content claims, mandatory nutrients declarations and foods for special dietary needs.

For More Information

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/F-27/59736.html>

Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act

All foods packaged for consumer use must comply with basic food labeling requirements set out in the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* and Regulations. Labelling requirements include:

- Common name of the food
- List of ingredients and components in descending order of amount
- Name and address of the responsible party
- A net quantity declaration in metric
- Best before date when required
- Storage instructions (if required)
- Bilingual language, unless specifically exempt.

The label format and its location on the product must comply with the legislation.

For More Information

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-38/C.R.C.-c.417/index.html>

The 2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising at:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/bureau/labeti/guide/guidee.shtml>

Insurance

Insurance is a very important issue for farmers' markets in Alberta. All approved farmers' markets, regardless of size, must obtain liability insurance. Failure to obtain insurance will lead to the **market approval status being revoked**. Insurance is a cost of doing business in today's marketplace. You may need to source new ways of paying for this added cost, but it will be less than the cost of defending a lawsuit due to an unfortunate accident. Should an accident happen, the whole program could be at risk. Minimize risks, keep your premises safe and know your obligations.

For More Information

See the topic, "Starting Your Alberta Approved Farmers' Market" for details on the approval process.

The Need For Insurance

Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets are public places where consumers and vendors come to buy and sell goods. Liability issues resulting in lawsuits are becoming more common. Consumers are aware that if they suffer an injury while at a market, or from a product they purchased at the market, they may have the right to sue the vendor, the market and even the manager in order to gain compensation. Encourage your vendors to carry their own liability insurance policies as well and obtain certificates of insurance or a copy of the letter showing their participation in the Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA) policy.

Group Policy Coverage

The Cooperators, RBC Agencies in Leduc has a group insurance plan for AFMA member markets and vendors. This group policy covers the named organization and its employees from legal liability exposure with commercial general liability and tenants legal liability insurance.

First check with your sponsor who may be able to have the farmers' market endorsed on the sponsor's policy; this may be considerably cheaper. Obtain a certificate of insurance verifying your inclusion on the policy.

Insurance protects vendors if there is a lawsuit.

For More Information

See “More on Insurance” in the Appendix.

Vendor Insurance Coverage

As vendors are not covered under the market’s group policy, it is strongly recommended that vendors carry their own liability insurance. Vendors should call their insurance agents to find out what level of coverage is right for them.

Vendors are at risk of being sued at anytime by anyone for any reason. A lawsuit can be extremely costly to defend and can leave the vendors bankrupt if they are not insured.

Vendors at an Alberta Approved Farmers’ Market can also take advantage of the group policy noted on the previous page if they are AFMA members.

The Cooperators, RBC Agencies also has a group health insurance package available for AFMA vendor members and their families.



From Sonia, former Manager of the Millarville Market.

“All types of vendors need to realize the importance of insurance. For example, someone can buy a beaded macramé hanging from a crafter; after taking it home a child accidentally pulls a bead off the end and chokes. We are concerned that the vendor may be held liable. It is cheaper to be insured than it is to be sued.”

Food Safety

Consumers expect their food to be safe – always – regardless of where they buy their food. Purchasing from a farmers’ market is no exception. Over the past decade, Canadians have become increasingly worried about food safety. Surveys indicate that Albertans are confident in the products they purchase from farmers’ markets. But this confidence is fragile. A major food safety incident could reduce this level of confidence and support.

As a manager of an Alberta Approved Farmers’ Market, it is your responsibility to ensure the market is a safe place for food to be sold. Safe food handling practices by employees and vendors will help ensure that your market does not contribute to the contamination of food. As you walk through the farmers’ market, check that all vendors are doing their part to ensure the safety of the food they sell.

It’s important to build a good working relationship with the inspector who will be inspecting and approving your facilities and products. Not only do inspectors enforce critical legislation, they can also direct you to other contacts and resources.

Alberta Agriculture and Food developed a series of food safety checklists for market managers and vendors to be used at the beginning of the market season and every week during the market season. The manager’s market start-up checklists are intended for use at the beginning of the market season to ensure specific areas are addressed and to ensure there has been no deterioration of the facility during the off-season. The manager’s weekly checklist ensures the manager is addressing food safety issues at the market throughout the season. Similar checklists are also available for vendors.

Alberta Agriculture and Food, in partnership with the Alberta Farmers’ Market Association, developed a comprehensive food safety home study manual. *Marketing Food Safely, Farm Direct Advantage* is a distance learning tool that farmers’ market managers and vendors can use to develop a food safety plan for their market and individual businesses. This manual is available for sale through AFMA.

For More Information

See the Appendix for food safety checklists for managers and vendors.

For further information or additional copies, contact the Farmers’ Market Program Administrator at (780) 427-4514.

For More Information

To order a copy of *Marketing Food Safely, Farm Direct Advantage*, contact AFMA at (780) 644-5377.