

# **Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets**

## **Program Guidelines**

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## 1) Overview of the Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program

The Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program (the Program) creates an operational framework that provides direction and guidance to approved farmers' markets in Alberta. The Program requirements ensure that Alberta approved farmers' markets are meeting minimum operational requirements. Individual markets are encouraged to set standards over and above the minimums by striving to incorporate industry best practices and in keeping with their established values.

The Program is administered by dedicated staff within the Local/Domestic Market Expansion Branch of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

## 2) Definitions

In this Guideline,

- i) "AF" means Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry responsible for administering the approved farmers' market program and enforcing legislation under its jurisdiction;
- ii) "AFFPA" means the Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association, a membership-driven non-profit organization representing the interests of farm direct market growers;
- iii) "AFMA" means the Alberta Farmers' Market Association, a membership-driven, non-profit organization representing the interests of member markets, vendors, sponsors and other supportive organizations through advocacy, education, promotion and innovation;
- iv) "AHS" means Alberta Health Services, the provincial health authority responsible for health service delivery, including the enforcement of the Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation;
- v) "AH" means Alberta Health, the Ministry responsible for setting health policy, including the development of the Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation;
- vi) "Alberta approved farmers' market" means
  - (1) a food establishment whose proposed operation has been approved by the Minister responsible for agriculture as an approved farmers' market under the administration of that Minister's department and;
  - (2) a niche marketing channel that creates the opportunity for customers to buy Alberta grown food, crafts and homemade goods from the Alberta producer, crafter or entrepreneur. The resulting communication and sharing of information creates trust and builds a sense of community. The market is designed to become a destination and attraction which builds goodwill, sharing and community support reminiscent of the 'town square' of previous generations;

- vii) “best practice” means the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people;
- viii) “CFIA” means the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the federal agency mandated to safeguard Canada’s food supply and the plants and animals upon which safe and high-quality food depends;
- ix) “farmers’ market” means an Alberta approved farmers’ market;
- x) “farmers’ market sponsor” means a non-profit community organization that operates a farmers’ market as a sub-committee of the organization;
- xi) “guidelines” means these policies and protocols, as issued, changed or updated from time to time by AF, under which the approved farmers’ markets operate;
- xii) “local” means products made, baked, grown and sold in Alberta by Alberta producers;
- xiii) “market rules” means the rules as developed by farmers’ market management which describes the operational policies and procedures of the farmers’ market;
- xiv) “niche marketing channel” means a focused, targetable marketing channel, whose products are non-commodity and of which local foods and farmers’ markets are a component;
- xv) “producer” means an entrepreneur who makes, bakes, or grows the products he/she sells;
- xvi) “program” means the Alberta Approved Farmers’ Market Program;
- xvii) “public market” means a farmers’ market operating within Alberta that is not approved;
- xviii) “reduced profit”, with reference to entities incorporated specifically for the purpose of operating an Approved Market, means a corporation which either does not charge vendors more fees, rents, levies or other payments than are necessary to pay the corporation’s expenses, or a corporation which returns any excess fees, rents, levies and payments to full time vendors (less reasonable reserves for present and future operating and capital requirements), each year based on a formula which reimburses each full time vendor for their portion of the excess based on the amount they have each paid;
- xix) “regulation” means a legal restriction put into law by a government authority;
- xx) “Sunnygirl” means the official mark of the Program owned by the Province.

### 3) History and Current State

#### 1. History – 1970s

The Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program began in 1974 as a result of requests from individuals interested in starting farmers' markets. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) organized the Program to ensure minimum guidelines would be followed across the province by those markets choosing to be a part of the Program.

The Sunnygirl logo was developed by AF as the official logo of farmers' markets recognized under the Program.

Alberta Health gave recognition in the Alberta *Public Health Act* Food Regulation to those markets approved by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry or his/her designate, allowing food destined for sale at the farmers' market to be produced in home kitchens.

Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Transportation worked together to develop the Sunnygirl logo highway sign. This road sign is used to identify only those towns with approved farmers' markets.

The Program began with four markets following the "Make It, Bake It, Grow It" philosophy.

#### 2. Current State

There are currently over 125 approved farmers' markets in Alberta.

AF conducted a study in 2012 to assess the value of the alternative agricultural markets in Alberta and to identify opportunities for growth. Since 2004 the average spending per visit to a farmers' market has increased from \$35 to \$55, a 57 percent increase well in excess of inflation. Approximately 72% of Alberta households shop at farmers' markets with annual spending at farmers' markets totaling \$671 per household. Currently, farmers' markets in Alberta have an estimated \$724 million in annual sales, more than tripling in value since 2004.

The Guidelines were reviewed in 2008/09. The process behind the Guideline review consisted of two phases: Phase I consisted of a series of six focus groups held across Alberta with a broad cross-section of stakeholders representing vendors, market managers, sponsors, AFMA, AFFPA, AF, AH and AHS. All stakeholders viewed the future of approved farmers' markets very positively and many predicted growth in the industry in both the number and size of markets. In Phase II, an Advisory Committee consisting of industry, association and government representatives met to consider the feedback from the focus groups. Recommendations were made to the Minister, Agriculture and Forestry regarding the Program, the Guidelines and the Alberta Farmers' Market Association. These Guidelines are a result of that review.

## **4) Approved Farmers' Market Advisory Panel**

### **1. Terms of Reference**

#### **i) Purpose**

It was recommended within the Guideline review that an Advisory Panel be convened by the Minister, Agriculture and Forestry or his designate to provide input to the AF Farmers' Market Specialist. This ongoing forum for input builds a common understanding of the issues faced, allowing for more pro-active solutions, resulting in better understanding of and commitment to the Program by all stakeholders.

#### **ii) Panel Composition**

Membership on the Advisory Panel consists of: AF Farmers' Market Specialist (chair), one representative from AH and two representatives from industry - one from AFMA and one additional representative from industry.

#### **iii) Authority and Accountability**

The Advisory Panel can recommend changes to the Program requirements and best practices.

AF retains final decision making authority on all market approvals and the Program guidelines.

## **5) Roles of Specific Stakeholders**

### **1. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry**

- i) **Farmers' Market Specialist:** Responsible for the overall administration of the Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program on behalf of the Minister, Agriculture and Forestry. This includes, but is not limited to, leading the Farmers' Market Advisory Panel, inspecting markets, liaising with market sponsors, managers, vendors and customers by providing these stakeholders with information regarding the Program, liaising with other government departments in regards to legislation and regulations affecting farmers' markets and their vendors, developing resource material for markets and vendors, and sitting as an ex officio board member of AFMA.

Website: [www.sunnygirl.ca](http://www.sunnygirl.ca)

- ii) **Food Safety and Technology Sector:** Responsible for inspecting and verifying the safe production of meat and meat products at provincially licensed meat facilities, as well as ensuring compliance to assigned legislation. The sector, made up of staff in the Food Safety and Animal Welfare Division and the Animal Health and Assurance Division, is responsible for the administration of 14 statutes and 30 regulations, maintaining and enhancing public

confidence by ensuring consistency and co-ordination through investigation and enforcement activities as required.

Website: [www.agriculture.alberta.ca](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca)

## **2. Alberta Farmers' Market Association**

The Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA) fosters partnerships to stimulate farmers' market initiatives; works collaboratively to assess, develop and implement policies and guidelines that will strengthen the quality of farmers' markets in Alberta; and provides support to our member markets, vendors, managers, boards and sponsors through advocacy, education, promotion and innovation. AFMA works in conjunction with the Farmers' Market Specialist to develop and deliver programming to farmers' market stakeholders and participates on the Approved Farmers' Market Advisory Panel.

Website: [www.albertamarkets.com](http://www.albertamarkets.com)

## **3. Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association**

The Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association (AFFPA) is a voluntary membership, non-profit organization supporting the production of farm direct market vegetable crops, berry and fruit crops, bedding plants, perennials, herbs, flowers, meats, poultry, eggs and other specialty items in Alberta. AFFPA's mission is to support and grow a profitable and sustainable local farm direct marketing industry. Programming specific to farmers' market vendors is delivered in conjunction with the Farmers' Market Specialist and/or AFMA.

Website: [www.albertafarmfresh.com](http://www.albertafarmfresh.com)

## **4. Alberta Health**

Alberta Health (AH) is responsible for setting health policy, including the development of the Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation. One AH representative participates on the Approved Farmers' Market Advisory Panel and works closely with the Farmers' Market Specialist to develop industry-specific food safety training programs.

Website: [www.health.alberta.ca](http://www.health.alberta.ca)

## **5. Alberta Health Services**

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is the provincial health authority responsible for health service delivery, including the enforcement of the Alberta *Public Health Act* and Food Regulation. Representatives work closely with AH and the Farmers' Market Specialist to develop and deliver industry-specific food safety training programs.

Website: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp>

## 6. Canadian Food Inspection Agency

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is the federal agency mandated to safeguard Canada's food supply and the plants and animals upon which safe and high-quality food depends. The CFIA is responsible for the administration and enforcement of 15 Acts and their related regulations.

Website: [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)

## 7. Farmers' Market Sponsor

Market sponsors are not-for-profit community organizations committed to the development and long term success of an approved farmers' market in their community. The farmers' market is a **committee** of the sponsoring organization. All activities and financial transactions must be reported in the sponsor's books according to the legislation that applies to the sponsor. Sponsors are **actively** involved in providing direction to the overall operation of the market. This includes but is not limited to:

- providing a board member to be the liaison between the farmers' market advisory committee and the sponsor's board of directors;
- overseeing the operation of the approved farmers' market;
- helping establish the rules and processes of the approved farmers' market, ensuring vendors have meaningful input into the formulation of the operating rules and processes;
- the recruitment, selection, performance review and discipline of the market manager;
- determining and/or advising on the remuneration of the market manager;
- encouraging and financially supporting yearly educational opportunities for the market manager so as to further his/her professional development;
- encouraging vendor participation on the market executive;
- ensuring records required by the Program to keep the market in good standing are maintained and submitted;
- ensuring accurate financial records are maintained in accordance with the sponsor's required financial reporting;
- ensuring the approved farmers' market adheres to all legislation and regulations and;
- ensuring the approved farmers' market is either insured or indemnified against liability.

**The sponsor is ultimately responsible and accountable for the activities of the approved farmers' market.**

## 6) Legislation/Regulations

It is the **vendor's responsibility** to ensure their products, practices and facilities meet legislative requirements. As acts and regulations are subject to change and

interpretation, it is recommended that vendors consult with provincial and federal enforcement agencies on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance.

It is the **manager's responsibility** to have a general understanding of the legislation, to request proof of compliance whenever necessary and to refuse vendors the right to sell their products if they do not comply with legislation. Under Part 3 Section 36(4) of the Food Regulation the farmers' market permit holder, i.e. market manager, is **required** to ensure the stallholders are in compliance with Sections 36(1), 36(2) and 36(3). Failure to do so could result in loss of the farmers' market permit for the market and/or fines.

Federal legislation and associated regulations can be found through the federal Department of Justice. Available online at: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/index.html> .

Provincial legislation and associated regulations can be found through Alberta Queen's Printer. Available online at: <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/index.cfm>.

## 7) New Approved Farmers' Market Applications

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

1. Complete an AF Approved Farmers' Market application form and demonstrate that the proposed market will meet the Guidelines as defined. Available online at [www.sunnygirl.ca](http://www.sunnygirl.ca) or by calling the Farmers' Market Specialist at 780-853-8223 (310-0000 for toll free access).
2. Provide proof of liability insurance for the market. In sponsored markets, the market may be covered under the sponsor's insurance or a separate policy may be required.
3. Provide a copy of the rules established for the operation of the market.
4. Contact the local public health inspector to discuss the proposed market.

Approved farmers' markets must operate on a non-profit basis. To achieve this, they may be **sponsored** by:

1. a registered not-for-profit community group or organization
2. a registered Chamber of Commerce
3. a municipality
4. an agricultural society formed under the *Agricultural Societies Act* (Alberta)

OR

**incorporated** specifically for the purpose of operating an approved market under the legislation of the:

1. *Societies Act* (Alberta)
2. *Cooperatives Act* (Alberta) as a new generation cooperative operating on a Reduced Profit basis.

Applications will be assessed by the Farmers' Market Specialist.

**A decision will be made within 2 – 4 weeks to grant or deny an application based on Program eligibility.**

The Farmers’ Market Specialist will advise the applicant, the sponsor and the local public health inspector of the decision in writing. All new markets will be granted conditional approval for the first two market seasons. Failure to meet/maintain the requirements will result in immediate loss of approval status.

Any and all other conditions stated in the approval letter must be met **before** the market opens for business.

**8) Requirements for Farmers’ Market Operations**

Some operational practices are critical to the success of each market and to maintain the integrity of approved farmers’ markets throughout the province.

**Markets must comply with these requirements in order to receive and retain approval status.**

*Failure to attain and retain any of these requirements will result in the market losing its approval status immediately along with all the benefits that approval status brings.*

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Annual Paperwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All annual paperwork <b>must</b> be received by AF no later than <b>January 15</b>.</li><li>• Information on the forms <b>must</b> be verified and signed off by the sponsor (in a sponsored market) or the board president (if incorporated). Validated complaints of falsifying information will result in immediate loss of approval status.</li><li>• All forms are in a fillable pdf format. Notification will be sent out in the Fall via email with paper copies being sent to managers who do not have email access. Forms can be accessed online at <a href="http://www.sunnygirl.ca">www.sunnygirl.ca</a>.</li></ul>
Conditional Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All NEW markets will be granted conditional approval for the first two market seasons. Failure to maintain/meet any of the requirements of approval will result in immediate loss of approval status.</li><li>• Following the annual calculation on the vendor paperwork, any markets that do not meet the 80/20 requirement and/or the minimum of 10 vendor requirement will be granted conditional approval.</li><li>• Approval status <b>will be revoked</b> for any markets that have been conditional for two years without improvement.</li></ul>
Date, Time & Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Markets must operate for a minimum of 2 consecutive hours per day and for at least 10 market days per season.</li><li>• Market approval is granted to a market based on specific dates and time of operation as well as location.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approval must be granted by AF in order to make changes to date, time or location.</b> A minimum of 2 weeks' notice is required for change approval.</li> <li>• Depending upon the changes, a new Farmers' Market Permit may need to be issued by Alberta Health Services.</li> </ul>
Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta approved farmers' markets are venues where discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Validated complaints will result in the immediate loss of market approval status.</li> </ul>
Farmers' Market Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing a Farmers' Market Permit from AHS is a condition of approval.</li> <li>• Continued approval status is dependent upon maintaining a valid Farmers' Market Permit. If the Permit is revoked by AHS for any reason, approval status is immediately revoked until such time as the conditions stipulated by AHS are met and the Permit is reissued.</li> <li>• If approved status is revoked by AF for any reason, AHS is notified and the Farmers' Market Permit will be revoked.</li> </ul>
Food Safety Training – Market Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AF requires that market managers <i>who have not already completed an approved Alberta food sanitation and hygiene training program</i> <b>must</b> complete the Farmers' Market Home Study Course on food safety available through AHS in order to retain the Farmers' Market Permit issued by AHS. <b>COMPULSORY within one year of becoming a manager for new managers.</b></li> <li>• <b>Proof of course completion must be displayed at the market and a copy of the certificate must be sent to the Farmers' Market Specialist.</b></li> </ul>
Food Safety Training - Vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AF requires that vendors selling food and/or agricultural products <i>who have not already completed an approved Alberta food sanitation and hygiene training program or who are not required to complete the food safety training described under Section 31 of the Food Regulation</i> <b>must</b> complete the Farmers' Market Home Study Course on food safety available through AHS. <b>COMPULSORY within one year of becoming a new vendor.</b></li> <li>• <b>Proof of course completion must be displayed at the market and a copy of the certificate must be kept with the manager.</b></li> </ul>
Food Safety Certificates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market managers must ensure all food and agricultural vendors are displaying their food safety certificates during the market.</li> </ul>
Governance and Market Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An approved market must operate under the direction of an <b>advisory committee, if sponsored, or a board of directors, if specifically incorporated</b>, who understand and support the goals of the Program.</li> <li>• Membership on the advisory committee or the board of directors shall be defined within the rules of the sponsored farmers' market or applicable corporate documents.</li> <li>• Non-profit markets established under the <i>Societies Act</i> must develop by-laws to govern the operation of the market. (sample by-laws available from Service Alberta – Corporate Registries)</li> </ul>
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets must secure market liability insurance and provide a certificate of insurance to the Farmers' Market Specialist annually.</li> <li>• Insurance carrier must be advised of any date, time or location changes.</li> </ul>

Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market managers, vendors, sponsors and other stakeholders must be fully aware of and compliant with all municipal, provincial and federal by-laws, legislation and regulations.</li> <li>Under Part 3 Section 36(4) of the Food Regulation the farmers' market permit holder, i.e. market manager, is required to ensure the stallholders are in compliance with Sections 36(1), 36(2) and 36(3). Failure to do so could result in loss of the farmers' market permit for the market and/or fines.</li> </ul>
Manager Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market managers must complete Market Manager Training Level 1 within <b>1 year</b> of becoming a manager.</li> </ul>
Market Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AF must be notified immediately of any changes to date, time or location of the market.</li> <li><b>Special markets</b> operating outside the normal market operating dates, hours or location <b>may be allowed with permission</b>. Requests must be submitted to the Farmers' Market Specialist <b>at least two weeks</b> before the special market.</li> <li>Depending upon the changes, a new Farmers' Market Permit may need to be issued by Alberta Health Services.</li> </ul>
Market Operational Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Markets have the authority and responsibility to make operational decisions at the local market level so as to balance vendor needs with customer demands, while ensuring compliance with these Guidelines.</li> </ul>
Market Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market rules must be submitted to AF for review upon request.</li> </ul>
Vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved farmers' markets must operate with a minimum of 10 vendors averaged throughout the course of the market season.</li> <li>Markets operating with an average of less than 10 vendors per market season will be granted conditional approval.</li> <li><b>Approval status will be revoked for any markets that have been conditional for two years without improvement.</b></li> </ul>
What May/May Not Be Sold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Markets must maintain an annual average vendor split of 80/20 where 80% of the <b>vendors</b> are Albertans selling Alberta products which they, an immediate family member, a staff member or a member of a producer-owned cooperative or their staff have made, baked or grown. The remaining 20% of the vendors can be made up of out-of-province vendors, resellers or vendors selling commercially available products.</li> <li>Markets operating outside the 80/20 requirement will be granted conditional approval.</li> <li><b>Approval status will be revoked for any markets that have been conditional for two years without improvement.</b></li> <li>Discouraged products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of country products;</li> <li>Franchises, distributorships and home-based businesses which vend products not made, baked or grown in Alberta.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Prohibited vendor products (products not allowed at <b>ANY</b> time): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used, antique or flea market items</li> <li>Live animals, whether for sale or customer interaction</li> <li>Uninspected meat or meat products for human <b>AND/OR</b> animal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consumption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Raw milk or raw milk products for human <b>AND/OR</b> animal consumption with the exception of cheese made from unpasteurized milk that meets federal standards</li> <li>○ Hatching eggs</li> <li>○ E-cigarettes or vapor cigarettes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Who May Sell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Preference must be granted to Alberta producers who make, bake, or grow their products.</b> Validated complaints will result in immediate loss of approval status.</li> <li>● Non-Alberta producers who make, bake or grow their products as well as those who offer resale items may supplement the market mix with those products not available in Alberta. These vendors fall into the 20% category. Markets may choose to limit or prohibit out-of-province products.</li> <li>● Vendors reselling products that directly compete with products sold by Alberta producers are only allowed if the Alberta producers cannot meet customer demand.</li> <li>● Out-of-province products must be clearly labelled as to their province/country of origin.</li> </ul>

## 9) Best Practices for Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets

Best practices by definition are *the most efficient and effective way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people.* (Wikipedia) They are courses of action that a market should **strive** to achieve in order to be more successful and sustainable and may not be fully attainable immediately. Markets may strive to exceed these best practices and are encouraged to do so.

This list of best practices was compiled from operational best practices already in place in Alberta as well as from other jurisdictions across North America. As new best practices are identified, the list will be updated.

### 1. Best Practices for Farmers' Market Operations

Best Practice	Description
Business Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Markets that develop strategic business plans including budgets and human resource requirements, and review them on an annual basis are more successful at achieving their goals. (business plan template available online at <a href="http://www.sunnygirl.ca">www.sunnygirl.ca</a> )</li> </ul>
Education: Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Successful markets are actively involved in educating their customers on product availability and seasonality.</li> </ul>
Education: Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Boards of directors that take board governance training exercise more authority, control and direction over the farmers' market on behalf of the membership.</li> <li>● Board governance training should be taken by the whole board every time a board member changes.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board governance resources are available at: <a href="http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/hst13487">http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/hst13487</a></li> </ul>
Education: Food Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful market managers understand and are able to enforce food safety requirements and best practices at the market as well as coach vendors on food safety protocols.</li> <li>Successful market managers and vendors continuously update their food safety knowledge.</li> <li>Sponsors and boards/advisory committees receive annual food safety updates.</li> <li>A Public Health Inspector is invited to at least one meeting per year to update and discuss public health, food safety and legislation issues.</li> </ul>
Education: Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market managers who participate in training to improve their skills are better able to meet the demands of the position and further the aims of the market.</li> <li>An annual market manager training plan should be developed with the market manager and the Board President/Committee Chairperson.</li> <li>Training is encouraged and financially supported by the market board or market advisory committee, if the market is sponsored.</li> </ul>
Education: Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vendors who are encouraged to upgrade their skills and gain new skills in production, marketing and business techniques are more business-focused and successful.</li> </ul>
Food Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Markets strive to have all food vendors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) successfully complete all required food safety training required for commercial food establishments and,</li> <li>b) produce their food products in commercial, permitted facilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Greening the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a growing demand for environmentally sustainable practices. Markets that incorporate some of these best practices into their everyday operations are viewed as better corporate citizens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage customers to bring their own shopping bags</li> <li>Encourage the use of cloth bags or develop your own market cloth bag</li> <li>Encourage customers to car pool to the market or have bike racks available for customers who choose to cycle to market</li> <li>Recycle whenever possible and have readily accessible recycle bins clearly labelled throughout the market</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Governance and Market Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful markets are managed by a dedicated manager. (sample job description available online at <a href="http://www.sunnygirl.ca">www.sunnygirl.ca</a> )</li> <li><b>A sponsored market is a sub-committee of the sponsoring organization and is governed by an advisory committee.</b> A liaison from the sponsoring board of directors sits on the market advisory committee to maintain the link between the entities.</li> <li>Non-profit society markets are governed by a board of directors that is elected by the vendors at the annual general meeting.</li> <li>By-laws are reviewed at least bi-annually and updated as needed.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market boards take advantage of board governance training in order to work more effectively together to improve the market.</li> </ul>
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets secure market liability insurance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ \$5 million liability recommended by the Government of Alberta Risk Management and Insurance.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Individual vendors secure sufficient liability insurance as the market insurance does not cover them.</li> </ul>
Market Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets in a similar geographic area are more successful when they work collaboratively to resolve common issues and to provide a more complete shopping experience for their customers.</li> </ul>
Market Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets establish a bank account requiring two signatures for all transactions.</li> <li>• In sponsored markets where a separate account is set up for the market, the sponsor is always one of the signatories on the bank account. Sponsors need to be aware of their obligations in this area according to the legislation that governs their organization as some legislation may require that only board executive have signing authority. All market expenses require an invoice/receipt and are paid by cheque.</li> <li>• All market income is acknowledged with a formal receipt to the payee.</li> <li>• A market budget is developed and reviewed annually.</li> <li>• Financial records are maintained for all market revenue and expenses.</li> <li>• Financial records are audited annually.</li> </ul>
Market Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful markets develop value statements to outline what the market, the vending community and the customers value in the market. This guides them in their decision making and maintains the integrity of the market.</li> </ul>
Market Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concrete, enforceable market rules address common issues and controversies that arise in the day-to-day activities of farmers' markets. (sample market rules available online at <a href="http://www.sunnygirl.ca">www.sunnygirl.ca</a>) Using these Guidelines as a framework, market rules are developed by the market board or advisory committee, approved by the vendors and enforced by the market manager.</li> <li>• Market rules are reviewed annually and updated as needed.</li> <li>• Market rules are distributed to all returning vendors prior to the market season and to all new vendors prior to selling at the market.</li> <li>• Market rules do not violate any portion of these Guidelines or legislation.</li> </ul>
Meetings: Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the market is a non-profit society, an annual general meeting (AGM) must be held within a specified time following the fiscal year end. The timeframe is laid out in the bylaws.</li> <li>• Robert's Rules of Order can be used to guide the meeting. They provide common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language.</li> </ul>

Meetings: Board/Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The market board or advisory committee should meet periodically throughout the year to resolve any issues and to set future direction for the market.</li> <li>• Robert's Rules of Order can be used to guide the meeting.</li> </ul>
Meetings: Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one vendor meeting should be held per year.</li> <li>• Robert's Rules of Order can be used to guide the meeting.</li> <li>• A Public Health Inspector should be invited to one meeting per year to update and discuss public health, food safety and legislation issues.</li> </ul>
Promotion & Advertising Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful markets develop and implement an annual promotion and advertising plan that identifies the target market, how consumer awareness will be built, and the mechanisms used to achieve this.</li> </ul>
Signage: Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets clearly display signage identifying market hours and location.</li> <li>• The Sunnygirl logo, available for use by all approved markets, is a symbol differentiating approved markets from non-approved, public markets. Markets using the Sunnygirl logo in all signage will help build customer awareness of their market as part of the approved program.</li> </ul>
Signage: Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All vendors display all product names and prices, ensuring that all products meet minimum labelling requirements as laid out in legislation.</li> </ul>
Signage: Vendor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All vendors display signs or banners identifying their farm/business name and location.</li> </ul>
Vendor Mix & Vendor Numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumers visit markets primarily to purchase food products. A suggested vendor mix is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 30% - Agricultural products</li> <li>○ 25% - Non-agricultural food products/value-added products</li> <li>○ 25% - Craft and artisan products &amp; other non-food homemade and handcrafted products</li> <li>○ 20% - Other</li> </ul> </li> <li>• These percentages will change according to the season and the products available.</li> <li>• Markets determine their optimal number of vendors in order to ensure product supply meets customer demand and in keeping with the 80/20 rule.</li> <li>• Successful markets make vendor mix decisions based on their value statement.</li> </ul>
Vendor Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection decisions are made by a committee made up of vendors and the manager.</li> <li>• Prospective and returning vendors complete an application form.</li> <li>• Application forms collect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contact information</li> <li>○ Description of products being offered for sale</li> <li>○ Proof of liability insurance</li> <li>○ sample application available online at <a href="http://www.sunnygirl.ca">www.sunnygirl.ca</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation accompanying the application explains the decision making process and authority for accepting new vendors, decision making criteria and contact information.</li> <li>• Successful markets develop a system of vendor inspection and certification.</li> </ul>
What May/May Not Be Sold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets with a vendor split of 80/20 or better at every market where 80% of the <b>vendors</b> sell Alberta products which they, an immediate family member, a staff member or a member of a producer-owned cooperative or their staff have made, baked or grown are differentiated from public markets outside the approved farmers' market system.</li> </ul>

## 2. Best Practices for Starting a New Market

Best Practice	Description
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed new markets operating in the same community or in close proximity to an existing approved market(s), should discuss their plans with the existing market(s) to see if there is a way the markets can work together to better serve the community.</li> </ul>
Visioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New markets that take the time to bring together all the community stakeholders to determine the vision of the market in the community are viewed more positively as adding to the community and are more sustainable in the long term. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bring together a team of advisors/partners to assess the feasibility of starting a market in your community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess the need and potential support for the market in the community</li> <li>▪ Potential site analysis</li> <li>▪ Potential customer base and target clientele</li> <li>▪ Assess potential revenue and costs for the market; sources of funding;</li> <li>▪ Assess potential vendor profitability</li> <li>▪ Vendor recruitment → products wanted, where to find vendors, optimal vendor mix, etc.</li> <li>▪ Determine optimum organizational structure considering all options – non-profit, sponsored, new generation cooperative, for-profit, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Governance and Market Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Board of Directors/Advisory Committee is formed to develop many of the following items and to oversee the operations of the market and ensure it is operating in such a way as to achieve the vision of the market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Define market goals that will act as guideposts, keeping the market on the right path and which help to assess your progress</li> <li>○ Market mission statement formed reflecting the market's goals</li> <li>○ Develop a strategic plan that includes budgets and human resource needs which is reviewed and updated annually (sample strategic planning workbook available online at</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p><a href="http://www.sunnygirl.ca">www.sunnygirl.ca</a> )</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ By-laws written to govern how the organization will operate (sample by-laws available from Service Alberta - Corporate Registries)</li> <li>○ Develop a manager's job description (sample job description available online at <a href="http://www.sunnygirl.ca">www.sunnygirl.ca</a> ), determine remuneration and recruit a manager</li> </ul>
Record Keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop record keeping systems so activities can be tracked and evaluated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop annual financial budgeting process and financial record keeping system</li> <li>○ Develop vendor record keeping system for current, past and potential vendors</li> <li>○ Develop vendor application form (sample application form available online at <a href="http://www.sunnygirl.ca">www.sunnygirl.ca</a> )</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Develop a record keeping system for important correspondence, forms and conversations</li> <li>● Sponsored markets should be following the record keeping requirements of the sponsor</li> </ul>
Vendor Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actively recruit vendors to round out the market mix and to keep up with changing customer demands. Need to have a core of dedicated producers who have products that will develop a loyal customer following. Agricultural and food products are the primary reason consumers shop at farmers' markets.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Refer to: Best Practices for Farmers' Market Operations once the new market is operational.</i></li> </ul>	

## 10) Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Who may start an Alberta approved farmers' market?

Approved farmers' markets must operate on a non-profit basis. To achieve this, they may be **sponsored** by:

1. a registered not-for-profit community group or organization
2. a registered Chamber of Commerce
3. a municipality
4. an agricultural society formed under the *Agricultural Societies Act* (Alberta)

OR

**incorporated** specifically for the purpose of operating an approved market under the legislation of the:

1. *Societies Act* (Alberta)
2. *Cooperatives Act* (Alberta) as a new generation cooperative operating on a Reduced Profit basis.

2. How do I apply to have my market become an Alberta approved farmers' market?

An application must be completed in full and submitted to the Farmers' Market Specialist along with any accompanying documentation. The Program application is available online at [www.sunnygirl.ca](http://www.sunnygirl.ca). All applications will be reviewed by the Farmers' Market Specialist with a written decision being made within 2 - 4 weeks of submission.

3. What is the difference between a board of directors and an advisory committee?

When it comes to farmers' markets, these two terms are often used interchangeably but they really are two different things.

**Board of Directors:** When a farmers' market is organized as a non-profit society, it must be governed by a board of directors that is made up of a group of people chosen to govern the affairs of the farmers' market. Members of the board can be elected from the vendor ranks as well as include members from the business community outside the market. Outside membership adds a different perspective to the board, encourages collaboration with the business community and brings different skill sets to the board that may help to further the aims of the market. A non-profit society board of directors has annual reporting requirements to the Registrar of Corporations in order to retain their non-profit status.

**Advisory Committee:** When a farmers' market is sponsored by a non-profit community organization, the market is a sub-committee of the larger organization and is governed according to the by-laws of the parent organization. Quite often membership on the advisory committee is determined by an election during a vendor meeting and looks very much like a board of directors as described above with the potential for outside involvement on the Committee. The main difference is the connection back to the sponsoring organization's board of directors: one of the members of the advisory committee should be a board member of the sponsoring organization and the advisory committee should report to the sponsor's board of directors at least annually. The sponsoring organization is ultimately responsible for the activities of the farmers' market.

For additional information, see the Roles and Responsibilities of Boards, Sponsors and Advisory Committee document online at [www.sunnygirl.ca](http://www.sunnygirl.ca).

4. What is the minimum number of vendors my market needs in order to be an approved market?

Approved farmers' markets must operate with a minimum of 10 vendors, averaged over the course of the market season. Keep in mind that a critical mass of vendors selling a full range of Alberta made, baked and grown products is needed in order to attract a supportive customer base.

5. What is a reseller?

A reseller is a company or individual who purchases goods or services with the intention of reselling them at a profit.

6. I have a vendor who sells his own product but now he wants to supplement his product offering with product he has purchased. Would he fall into the 80% or the 20%?

It is important that you look at the primary business of the vendor when assessing your 80/20 mix. If you have a bison vendor for example who wants to supplement his product offering with some spices that complement his product, it is likely he is primarily selling the bison and so would fall into the 80%. If you have a baker who also sells Tupperware, the distinction may be less clear and it might be better to split the vendor 50/50 between the Food and Other categories.

The annual paperwork allows you to clearly identify all the products a vendor is selling.

If you are unsure about what category your vendors fall into, contact the Farmers' Market Specialist at 780-853-8223 (toll free: 310-0000).

7. I have a vendor who is cooperatively marketing with another Alberta producer. Do they fall into the 80% or the 20%?

Cooperative marketing arrangements fall into the 80% when all the parties are Alberta residents supplying Alberta product which they, an immediate family member or a staff member have made, baked or grown. It is important that the actual vendor(s) are able to adequately represent all the members and answer any customer questions regarding production or processing as they arise at the market.

8. Is the actual producer required to be at the market on market day?

The 80/20 rule does allow for a staff member or immediate family member to represent the actual producer, crafter or entrepreneur. It is important that anyone selling at the farmers' market is able to answer customer questions regarding production or processing of the product and that they are empowered to make decisions regarding complaints.

It is the decision of each farmers' market board/committee to decide on how this sort of arrangement will be managed.

9. What is meant by a "storefront" and can I allow vendors who own storefronts?

A "storefront" is any retail operation outside of the farmers' market. It can include retail space in town as well as an on-farm store. Vendors with storefronts who make, bake or grow their products can be allowed into the farmers' market. We have many vendors who have on-farm stores who are still making, baking or growing all their products. Retail operations that resell others' products are discouraged from being a vendor at an approved farmers' market.

10. Can I allow a vendor who sells collectible coins, books, videos, stamps?

These items are allowed ONLY if they are new items. Used items or items previously owned by another individual are not allowed for sale or trade in an approved farmers' market at any time.

**11. Can I allow a vendor who sells antique furniture or antique/estate jewelry?**

Antiques of any kind are considered used items and are not allowed for sale or trade in an approved farmers' market.

**12. Can I allow a vendor to sell products made from re-purposed materials?**

If the product has been re-purposed or made into a new product, it is allowed in the market. For example, many craft vendors will use old barn board to make picture frames or other craft items. The resulting product is a value-added product.

**13. How do I classify concession vendors?**

Concession vendors can be classified as a Food vendor or as an Other vendor depending on what they are selling. It is important to look at how much value has been added to the final product. If the vendor is taking basic ingredients and adding value to them either by cooking or by assembling as in the case of sandwiches so that the final product is significantly different from the ingredients, he/she falls into the Food category. If the vendor is basically reheating foods that have been purchased elsewhere, i.e. hot dog vendor purchasing wieners, smokies and buns from a store, he/she falls into the Other category.

**14. Can I allow a vendor to bring in baby chicks to show their customers?**

No, a farmers' market is not an appropriate venue for live animals, whether for sale or for customer interaction. Animals can pose a health risk when the handlers do not properly wash their hands prior to touching or consuming food.

**15. What information must appear on a food label and where do I direct my vendors who have questions about their labels?**

The information which must appear on a food label is:

- Common name of the product
- Net quantity
- Dealer identity and principal place of business
- List of ingredients in descending order of proportion
- Durable life date if product has shelf life of 90 days or less
- Allergen labelling
- Nutrition labelling - unless exempt
- Bilingual labelling – unless exempt

Refer to the *Industry Labelling Tool* available online at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca>. Click on Food in the top bar to get a drop-down menu; select Labelling and then select Food Labelling for Industry.

Labelling questions should be directed to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of the information that appears on their labels.

Edmonton office: 780-395-6700; Calgary office: 403-299-7680.

**16. We have a market rule regarding labelling but I still have a vendor who brings food products without labels. Do I, as the market manager, have the right to stop him from selling?**

The market manager has the responsibility to refuse vendors the right to sell their products if they don't properly label their food products. You are not, however, responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information on the label.

Allowing a vendor to continue to sell their products when they are clearly in contravention of legislation places the market and all the vendors at risk in the event that a customer is injured or becomes sick.

**17. What information must appear on a textile (clothing) label?**

Textile labels must contain fibre content and dealer identity information. Labels are required on all clothing as per the *Textile Labelling Act* and the Textile Labelling and Advertising Regulations. This is federal legislation enforced by the Competition Bureau of Canada. For more information, refer to the Guide to the Textile Labelling and Advertising Regulations. Available online at:

<http://www.cb-bc.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/01249.html>

There are also a number of online tools available at: <http://www.cb-bc.gc.ca>. Search under TOOLS in the centre section.

**18. I have new food vendors come every year and I want to make sure they know and understand all the health rules. What do I do?**

You have three options available to you:

1. Request that any new food vendors contact the public health inspector directly so that they may discuss how the product is processed/made, how the product is packaged, stored and transported to market, any sampling requirements, any licensing requirements, etc.
2. Request that a health inspector attend a vendor meeting before the market opens every year. New vendors will be given all the required information and returning vendors will receive an update on the requirements of the *Public Health Act* Food Regulation. This is a best practice and recommended for all markets.

3. Discuss with the new vendors what their products are and based upon information given to you by the public health inspector, discuss the health requirements for your market. If at any time you are unsure of the rules for a particular food product, contact your public health inspector or have the vendor contact him/her directly.

Keep in mind there are a number of resources available to you and your vendors with regards to food safety.

- Farmers' Market Home Study course available online at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/3151.asp> . Click on Home Study Course for Farmers' Markets under the Home Study Section.
- Marketing Food Safely: Farm Direct Advantage is a publication available for download at [www.sunnygirl.ca](http://www.sunnygirl.ca) or [www.explorelocal.ca](http://www.explorelocal.ca) .
- There are annual and weekly food safety checklists available for managers and vendors at [www.sunnygirl.ca](http://www.sunnygirl.ca).

You can never be too cautious when it comes to food safety. When in doubt, contact your public health inspector.

#### 19. I thought the 80/20 rule was for the "market" but the market in Small Town says it is for each vendor's table. What is the interpretation on this?

The 80/20 rule states: A minimum of 80% of the vendors must be Albertans selling Alberta product which they, an immediate family member, a staff member or a member of a producer-owned cooperative or their staff have made, baked or grown. The annual calculation is done by looking at the products listed for each vendor. Vendors are not required to have an 80/20 split for their individual tables.

#### 20. We have some vendors who lower their prices to be just below other vendors. What do I do about this?

Price cutting can become a serious issue in a farmers' market. Everyone wants to receive a fair price for their products and conflict often erupts when vendors perceive other vendors are price cutting. This is an internal issue which must be dealt with at the market level. Develop a rule and a process to deal with any undercutting complaints. Be tough on the issue, not on the people.

The New Venture Specialists within AF who can help your vendors work through how to price their products. They can be reached by calling 310-FARM(3276).

There are a number of fact sheets available from AF that deal with pricing. They can be found online at [www.agriculture.alberta.ca](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca).

#### 21. Is it a requirement to hire a manager to run the market?

You are not required to hire a market manager. There are other successful operational models for you to consider. However, your Board of Directors or Advisory Committee must appoint someone to be the main contact/site manager for AF, the public health inspector, potential vendors, customers, etc. In addition, someone from the

Board/Committee must complete all required Market Manager and Food Safety training so that there is someone on site who has completed this training.

## 22. Can my manager be a vendor?

Yes your manager can be a vendor however it is strongly discouraged. Acting in both roles puts the manager in a conflict of interest situation, making it difficult for the manager to execute his/her duties. The manager's primary responsibilities during the market hours are to ensure vendor compliance with legislation and the market rules, handling complaints and ensuring the market is running smoothly. This is difficult to do when also managing his/her stall at the market. There may also be a perception among the vendors of unfairness with enforcing the market rules with themselves, personal stall placement, etc.

## 23. I have been asked to hold a special market during XYZ Event. Is this possible?

Yes, permission can be granted to hold a special market in addition to the markets approved at the beginning of the year. A request must be made to Eileen Kotowich at 780-853-8223 or email: [eileen.kotowich@gov.ab.ca](mailto:eileen.kotowich@gov.ab.ca). AF and AHS have developed protocols for special markets and depending on the type of market, where it is being held, if it is in partnership with another event, etc., different conditions will need to be met.

## 24. Who is Sunnygirl? How do I get a copy of her? Are there any rules for using her?

Sunnygirl is the official mark of the Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Program and is owned by the Government of Alberta. It is available for use by government and any approved farmers' market.

Copies are available by contacting Eileen Kotowich at 780-853-8223 or email: [eileen.kotowich@gov.ab.ca](mailto:eileen.kotowich@gov.ab.ca)

Because Sunnygirl is an official mark, there are some rules for using her:

- The logo exists in black and white or colour. Individual markets or other users of the logo must not alter the colours or type font.
- The logo must not be altered by changing graphics or adding screens.
- The logo must not be combined with other graphics.
- Avoid using the logo on a photographic image.
- Avoid printing the logo in black and white on a dark background.
- Avoid printing the logo in white on a light background.
- Avoid printing the logo on strongly texture backgrounds.