

Farmers' Market Protocol for Special Markets

These protocols will apply to approved farmers' markets that want to move location in order to hold a special market as well as when they want to combine with other special events.

Background

Alberta approved farmers' markets are granted special status under the Alberta Food Regulation. Once approved by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF), farmers' markets are granted a farmers' market permit by Alberta Health Services (AHS) that covers all the food vendors choosing to sell through this venue. It does not apply to concession-type vendors or vendors who are processing food on site as they will continue to be required to hold their own food permits. Alberta approved farmers' markets are the only venues in Alberta where home-produced food can be sold.

Over the years, there have been requests from markets to hold special markets. Often these are simply additional market days at Christmas but they do also include moving into a new venue for the event as well as partnering with other special events. The following rules will apply **effective April 1, 2013**.

1. Approved Farmers' Market Location Change Only

- This special market could apply to a location change **within** the same community OR to a community that does not currently host an Alberta approved farmers' market. Requests for a location change to a community currently hosting an Alberta approved farmers' market will not be granted.
- Both AHS and AF need to give approval.
- A minimum of two weeks' notice is required in order to deal with the logistics.
- The following information must be provided to AF by the market organizer at least two weeks prior to the event:
 - Location including address
 - Dates and times the market will be operating
- AF will provide approval in writing to both the market organizer and the public health inspector responsible for the area. Conditions of approval will be stated in the letter as required.

AF approval is ALWAYS conditional upon AHS approval.

- A food permit is non-transferable; therefore a new food permit is required for a location change, even for a "one off" move.

- The following information must be provided to AHS by the market organizer two weeks prior to the event:
 - Completed food permit application
 - List of confirmed vendors

Food vendors will be limited to those that are part of an existing approved farmers' market somewhere in the province and therefore understand the expectations and requirements for food sales at an approved farmers' market. New food vendors or food vendors who only want to sell at the special event but who do not have a regular affiliation with another approved farmers' market will NOT be allowed.

- Products the vendors are selling
- Any sampling information
- Location details: address, services, facilities, etc.

AHS may need to conduct a site visit prior to the market opening. This will depend on the site, vendors, products etc. AHS will not be required to do approval inspections the day of the market. Once a site is approved, AHS will inform AF farmers' market team.

- The Market Manager MUST be present to ensure conditions are followed and deal with any issues.

2. Approved Farmers' Market Combining with Special Event

- All the requirements noted under point 1 above apply.
- A written explanation as to the rationale for combining with the event and how it fits with the mandate of the market.
- If the market is combining with another special event, **the farmers' market portion of the event must be clearly separated from the other event using signage that says "Alberta Approved Farmers' Market"**. If the areas are not completely separate or distinguishable from each other, then AHS will enforce the standards for Part 4 of the Food Regulation, *Special Events and Temporary Food Establishments*, rather than those for farmers' markets. In this case, all food vendors must be fully compliant with Part 4 and be producing all food products in commercial kitchens and be fully permitted.

3. Special Event Combining with an Approved Farmers' Market

- This occurs when a special event is being held at the same time and in the same location as an existing farmers' market. All the requirements noted in points 1 and 2 above apply INCLUDING the requirement for the farmers' market to be clearly distinguishable and separate from the special event.