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Farmers' Market COVID-19 Guidance

Farmers markets in Wisconsin are considered essential businesses that may remain open because they provide a critical food resource. Markets also provide an essential opportunity for Wisconsin farmers to connect with their communities. The following guidance is intended for farmers markets, vendors, and customers to provide recommendations on how to safely operate and interact.

Minimum Requirements for Operations

Per Emergency Order #28, all farmers markets must take the following actions ([see frequently asked questions](#)):

- Close all seating intended for consuming food.
- Prohibit food samples.
- Self-dispensing unpackaged food areas (including fresh produce) may stay open.
- Areas that require customers to use tongs or scoops are encouraged, but not required, to close; vendors must sanitize the tongs and scoops frequently.
- Follow social distancing requirements between all individuals on the premise to the maximum extent possible.

Additional Best Practices for Operations

The following are best practices intended to minimize the spread of COVID-19 while maintaining an essential food resource for the community. Each market should proactively take action to provide a safe shopping environment, while considering the unique needs of the community. Not all recommendations will be suitable for all markets.

What can the market do?

- Pause or delay opening markets if safety measures cannot be adequately maintained.
- Consider alternative shopping methods, such as:
 - A one-sided drive-through market.
 - Online or phone ordering with market pick up.
 - Appointments for market shopping to minimize crowds.
- Ensure all forms of payment including electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards, tokens, or checks can continue to be used at the market and for any alternative shopping methods.
- Minimize shopper time at the market.
- Prepared foods must be pre-packaged to consume off-site.

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- Don't permit non-food vendors; food plants may be sold (fruits, vegetables, and herbs).
- Don't permit music, tabling, activities, promotions, or pets in order to discourage groups from gathering.
- Provide handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizers for both vendors and customers.
- Post physical distancing messaging and signage.
- Don't permit customer contact with product; only allow vendors to touch product before sale.
- Increase the spacing between vendors to allow customers and vendors to maintain safe distance; spacing of no less than 6 feet is recommended.
- Change market layout to minimize crowding and provide a safe distance; consider placing vendors on one side or having vendors face outward.
- Suspend fines for no-show vendors to help prevent sick vendors from coming to the market out of obligation.
- Communicate with customers and vendors:
 - Let customers know if your market is open, the start date is delayed, or if the market is closed.
 - If your market will remain open, be certain both customers and vendors know what you are doing to protect their safety and what they can do to protect themselves and others while at the market.
 - If your markets will be closed, connect your customers with vendors; customers may be able to pick up products on farm or arrange a local drop-off site for pre-packaged orders.
- Continue to visit the DHS and CDC websites for updated information on COVID-19

What can vendors do?

- Don't come to market while sick or allow sick employees at the market.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Wear a cloth face covering.
- Have only one staff person handling payments; although there is little evidence that money, tokens, or credit cards can transmit COVID-19, having one person take money and talk with customers helps limit the contact of the farm staff to possible transmission.
- Provide single-use bags to customers.
- Sell pre-weighed packaged items to limit food handling and keep customers moving.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces, including tables and tablecloths, before the market.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly.
- Use barrier tables (an extra 3-foot-wide table between the customer and the product) or put a check out table in front of the product; if customers can't see what is being sold use a chalk or dry erase board to list products.
- Only allow staff at the booth to handle products.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water.

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- Use hand sanitizer only on visibly clean hands; hand sanitizer is not effective when hands are visibly dirty.
- Use single-use gloves where needed; if clean, gloves may be worn up to four hours.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from customers and other vendors whenever possible.
- Remind customers to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between each other while waiting their turn and moving about the market.

What can customers do?

- Use alternative shopping methods if available, such as a drive-through market, online ordering with market pick up, or direct sales from the farm.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover any coughs and sneezes with your elbow.
- Wear a cloth face covering.
- Do not bring children with you to the market if you have childcare available.
- Minimize the number of people coming with you to the market; this helps keep crowds smaller.
- Use hand sanitizer or hand-washing stations frequently, if available.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from other customers and vendors whenever possible.
- Come to the market at off-peak hours.