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WVDA Issues Recommendations for Farmers Markets, Encourages Support for Local Foods

Charleston W.Va. -- The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has released guidelines for farmers' markets and on-farm markets during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations are to be used to mitigate the spread of the virus while keeping crucial agriculture-based businesses operating.

"We have received many inquiries from markets regarding how they should operate during this trying time. We are encouraging markets to continue to operate with safeguards in place. Markets should also be actively adapting to the situation by considering deliveries, as well as pick up for customers," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt.

The Department recommends the following:

- Suspension of all sampling at farmers markets.
- Consider delivery or pick up options.
- Consider pre-packaging bags of fruits, vegetables and other items to limit shoppers' handling of food, as well as keeping the flow of customers at a steady pace.
- Consider alternate locations that could allow drive through or pick up.
- Separate vendor stands at least six feet apart, if possible, to limit crowds.
- Consider having a special time set aside for those patrons who may be elderly or immunocompromised.

"Local farm operations are crucial to our complex food supply. With the strains we are already seeing on the supply, folks should be looking more

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towards local options,” Leonhardt said. “At the end of the day, we all need to come together and support one another. That includes our local farmer.”

For the WVDA’s full recommendations, click [here](#)

For questions or concerns, contact Crescent Gallagher at 304-380-3922 or cgallagher@wvda.us or Amie Minor at 304-558-2226 Ext. 4060 or aminor@wvda.us.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

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