



## West Virginia Department of Agriculture

Kent A. Leonhardt, Commissioner  
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### COVID-19 GUIDANCE & FAQ's: Farmers Markets & On-Farm Markets Issue Date: 07/07/2020

**NOTE:** Given the fluidity of the current situation, this and further guidance is subject to change and/or amendments at any time. Readers are advised to check WVDA resources, frequently, for updated guidance

**07/06/20 Update:** The Governor of WV issued Executive Order No. 50-20 requiring all individuals over the age of 9 in WV wear an adequate face covering when in confined, indoor spaces, other than when in one's residence or when not able to adequately social distance from other individuals who do not reside in the same household. <https://governor.wv.gov/Documents/2020%20Executive%20Orders/EO%2050-20.pdf>

Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

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**4/22/20 Update:** The WV DHHR filed emergency rule 64CSR114 on April 16, 2020 with additional restrictions for essential businesses in West Virginia related to social distancing and COVID-19. This rule may affect the way that you are required to operate your farmers market at may be found at: <http://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/readfile.aspx?DocId=53211&Format=PDF>.

Farmers markets and on-farm markets are encouraged to adhere to the following guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Be prepared at the Market before Customers Arrive:**

- 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.
- Consider putting up signs and information on websites and social media to explain any changes, delivery options, or extra precautions taken to limit exposure to COVID-19.
- Instruct customers not to handle food.
- Package cheese and eggs for customers, even if the cheese and eggs are individually packaged. Open egg cartons for customers so they may inspect the eggs.
- Separate vendor stands at least six feet apart, if possible, to limit crowds
- If possible, have a different person handle products and handle money or wash hands/sanitize in between these tasks.
- Remove tablecloths and sanitize tables regularly.

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- Eliminate eating areas and gently direct customers to take prepared foods home to avoid crowds.
- Provide additional handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizer. It is recommended to use disposables towels with soap and water.
- Consider having a special time set aside for those patrons who may be elderly or immunocompromised.
- Consider postponing all gatherings and avoid having patrons gather in one space or area.

### Food Sampling at Farmers Markets:

Food sampling can once again be offered at WV Farmers Markets with the following requirements:

- Food samples are pre-portioned into individual containers by the vendor
- The vendor must wear gloves and a mask when offering samples
- Adequate trash receptacles are provided to dispose of waste
- No “dipping” will be allowed into a single container
- Food samples are shielded from patron traffic

### Have all Staff be Prepared to Direct their Vendors and the Public:

- Reinforce all health and safety precautions to all vendors. It is the duty of the market to help and support the safety and health of all participants.
- Provide guidance for handwashing (liked time intervals) and handling materials.
- Stagger lunch times or provide additional space to increase distancing of employees.
- All sick employees need to stay at home. Employees should not return until they have obtained guidance from a health care official.
- Inform employees where they can find sanitizing materials throughout on-farm contact points.
- Encourage employees to practice social distancing and avoid large gatherings to avoid risks for potential exposure during off hours.
- Encourage employees not to handle customers’ reusable bags and let customers pack their own bags.

### Sanitize contact surfaces:

- Frequently disinfect all door handles and knobs, credit card machines, shopping baskets, etc. at a regular pre-established time interval.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch smartphones and smart devices.
- Frequently sanitize common gathering places – restrooms, etc.

If you are relocating a farmers market temporarily due to COVID-19, the WVDA will not need to issue a new farmers market permit. If your market is permanently relocating, please contact [farmersmarkets@wvda.us](mailto:farmersmarkets@wvda.us).

Currently, there is no evidence of food being associated with the transmission of COVID-19. To prevent a foodborne illness, it is still critical to follow the 4 key steps of food safety- clean, separate, cook, and chill. For more information on food safety and COVID-19, please visit the FDA at <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>.

The FDA has offered Information for consumers when shopping for food during the COVID-19 pandemic. This can be found at <https://www.fda.gov/media/137009/download>

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**Q.** Should we take temperature of employees prior to harvesting or selling to public?

**A.** At this time, you should ensure your employees are feeling well before engaging the public.

**Q.** Should all produce be prepacked prior to market (i.e. no open-air stations)

**A.** This is not required at this time, but farmers markets should encourage patrons not to touch the products unless they are purchasing them.

**Q.** Should we take credit/debit only and avoid cash handling?

**A.** When possible, have a different person handle the money or wash hands and sanitize between tasks. Consider using disposable gloves or hand sanitizer when handling money, if hand washing each time is not an option.

**Q.** Should we have separate market times for high risk only (elderly/sick)?

**A.** We recommend each market make the appropriate accommodations for those who are at most risk for COVID-19.

**Q.** Can I sell meat, poultry and fish at a farmers market?

**A.** For vendors who wish to sell meat, poultry, and fish at farmers markets, the vendor must obtain both a farmers market vendor permit, a meat & poultry distributor's license from the WVDA, as well as a food establishment permit from the county health department in which the product is sold.

The farmers market vendor permit application form may be found at:

<https://agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/regulatoryandenvironmental/Farmers-Markets/Documents/Farmers%20market%20vendor%20permit%20application%20form%202020.pdf>

The meat & poultry distributor's license application form may be found at:

<https://agriculture.wv.gov/forms/formsmeatpoul/Pages/default.aspx>

Local Health Departments:

<https://dhhr.wv.gov/localhealth/pages/map.aspx>

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