

COVID-19 Checklist for Farmers Markets

This is an open-source resource created by Penn State Extension in collaboration with Pasa Sustainable Agriculture, to be used for developing guidelines that can be shared and modified as needed to ensure safe operation of farmers markets that protect both vendors and customers while providing essential food for the communities they serve.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Create a handbook of market procedures and operations so anyone could take over market operations if necessary. Consider having a binder and virtual folder, in an easily accessible platform, which includes all important contacts such as vendors, emergency services, and local officials including the health department.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Create new COVID-19 operating procedures based on PDA guidelines. Include how vendors will be properly spaced, how customers will be held at a safe 6’ distance from each other and from vendors, and how the number of customers shopping in the market at a given time will be controlled.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Create sanitation procedures that will be followed by all market staff and vendors. Include the number and placement of handwashing stations and sanitizers, and the location of restroom facilities. Create sanitation protocols for vendors such as using nonporous tablecloths (or no tablecloths) and how they will be cleaned and sanitized regularly between transactions. Require that vendors wear gloves and change them regularly, especially between handling products and money. Have all products in packages to avoid customers handling products, or ensure that only vendors are handling products. No sampling of products.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Describe payment procedures. Consider which payment methods will be accepted. Do not take cash. Whenever possible, develop methods for pre-ordering and quick pickup at the market. Consider alternatives to, or sanitation practices for, wooden tokens used for SNAP and credit card purchases. Have customers swipe their own cards when making payment. Customers should not use a shared stylus pen or their fingers to provide a signature for purchases—consider alternatives or sanitary measures.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Consider alternative pick up, drive through, or delivery services. Use cones, caution tape, or other barriers to direct customers into a drive-through area to pick up pre-ordered and prepaid items. If implementing a walk-up pick-up system, place barriers to create clear entry and exit points from the pick-up location. Create chalk markers on the ground to indicate 6’ distance where customers will be lining up to enter the pick-up area. Implement a system such as timed entry based on the first letter of your last name to avoid crowding in the pick-up area. Be sure to communicate all pick-up or drive-through instructions clearly to customers in advance and use on-site signage to ensure everyone knows how to keep a safe distance upon arrival.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Develop methods to avoid congregating of customers. Eliminate eating areas, all events and children’s activities, and any areas where people can congregate. Consider creating a designated pathway through the market and using chalk to designate 6’ distances between customers waiting in line.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Communicate market changes to the community. Put up signs and provide information on websites and social media to explain any changes, delivery options, or extra precautions taken to limit exposure to the coronavirus. For example, instruct customers not to handle food. Package cheese and eggs for customers, even if they are individually packaged. Open egg cartons for customers to see the eggs they are getting instead of having them handle multiple cartons.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Consider offering early hour shopping for higher-risk customers. This includes seniors, people with compromised immune systems, and people with underlying health conditions.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Practice good communication and stay connected. As part of a routine, communicate any market updates in response to COVID-19 with your vendors, employees, and customers. Share relevant updates publicly on your website, through social media, or elsewhere as appropriate so that your customers know how to order from you and how to adhere to your safety procedures. Find a way to maintain contact with other farmers in your area, such as through Facebook groups, Google groups, listservs, etc.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Document and practice a strategy for “pre-order, pre-pay, pre-pack; then delivery or grab-and-go”</p>

Further guideline information can be found at <https://extension.psu.edu/minimizing-risks-for-coronavirus-transmission-at-farmers-markets-on-farm-markets-you-pick-operations-and-produce-auctions>

Have other ideas or questions? Contact Hannah Smith-Brubaker at hannah@pasafarming.org with ideas or questions regarding farm businesses, or Brian Moyer at bfm3@psu.edu with ideas or questions regarding farmers markets.