

May 2009

Dear Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Manager and Sponsor:

A new market season is just around the corner. For the many seasonal markets, it is a busy time as you get ready for the market opening. For year round markets, it is looking forward to the spring and summer products that will soon be in the market.

We would like to remind you of a few items as you get ready for spring and summer markets.

www.sunnygirl.ca: In 2007, we added an interactive map of Alberta to our website showing all Alberta approved farmers' markets. When you first go to the site, you will see red colored pins showing where the markets are located. Please check your market to ensure it is placed correctly on the map and that the information about the market is correct. If you see an error, please contact **Delores Serafin**.

Food Permit: Alberta approved farmers' markets are granted special status under the Alberta *Public Health Act* Food Regulation. Each approved market is issued a food permit by the Regional Health Authority. Please check your food permit to ensure it is valid and up-to-date. Contact your Public Health Inspector if you have any questions about your food permit or with regards to any food items being sold at your market.

Managers' Resource Manual: Alberta Agriculture and Food has a comprehensive resource manual for managers. It contains information on all aspects of running a market and should be your best friend in answering questions you may have.

The manual is available online at www.sunnygirl.ca under Publications and Resources.

If you have any questions regarding the content of the manual, please call **Eileen Kotowich**.

Maintaining the Guidelines: If you do not have a copy of the Alberta Approved Farmers' Market Guidelines, please call **Eileen Kotowich**. The guidelines are also available online at www.sunnygirl.ca under *How Do I Start an Alberta Approved Farmers' Market?*

In order to retain your approved status you must have a minimum of 10 vendors at each market. In addition, 80% of your vendors must be Alberta producers that make, bake or grow their own product. Only 20% can be re-sellers which includes any out-of-province vendors (BC fruit, maple syrup etc.), as well as Alberta re-sellers (Watkins, Tupperware, Taber corn sellers who are not producers, etc.). You must run a minimum of 10 markets per season.

Remember that **no used or flea market merchandise** may be sold at an approved farmers' market at any time.

You may recall that a review of the Guidelines was being done. This has been completed and recommendations for changes to the Guidelines have been submitted to Alberta Agriculture and

Rural Development (ARD). All the recommendations are being considered and implementation strategies are being developed for incorporation into the Guidelines.

Eggs: Eggs can be sold at a farmers' market, directly to consumers for their own personal use provided that:

- the eggs are produced on the producer's own farm
- the eggs are clean, have no visible cracks and are not leaking
- the eggs are kept at an ambient temperature of 7^o C or less

Eggs must be packed in clean containers that are **conspicuously labeled with the word "UNINSPECTED" in letters that are at least 2 centimeters high**. If uninspected eggs are being sold in recycled cartons, the grade must be covered up. According to labeling regulations, the name of the grading station on recycled egg cartons should also be covered.

Eggs should not be sitting out on a vendor's table because the ambient air temperature is too warm. One carton can be displayed to attract customers' attention, but the eggs for sale should be held in a cooler that can maintain the cool temperatures. Eggs in an open refrigeration unit can be displayed provided the air temperature around the eggs is less than 7^o C.

Cracked eggs cannot be sold because of food safety concerns. Research has shown that cracked eggs can become contaminated very quickly, especially if laid in dirty egg boxes. Once contaminated, the egg contents can't be sterilized by normal practices such as washing.

Vendors can not sell uninspected and ungraded eggs that were produced on someone else's farm.

Meat: Any meat, such as beef, pork, lamb, bison, poultry and farmed deer and elk being offered for sale in Alberta must be government inspected and approved fit for human consumption. It is within the manager's authority to ask for proof of inspection.

Reseller's Product: If you have Alberta producers that are supplying the market with sufficient product to satisfy consumer demand, **product from other provinces or re-sellers must be taken off the tables**. For example if you have Alberta producers providing the market with sufficient tomatoes to meet customer needs, any BC or re-seller must pull tomatoes from their table. Province/country of origin labelling is **required** for out-of-province and out-of-country products.

Up to 20% of the vendors in a market may sell products which they have not made, baked or grown. However, it is fraudulent for a vendor to claim a product has been made, baked or grown by the vendor when it is in fact a resell item. Managers are within their rights to refuse the vendor the right to sell such items until they are properly labeled.

Taber corn: Taber corn is a very popular item in markets across the province. Many vendors purchase corn from a corn producer in southern Alberta and then resell it at markets around the province. It is within the manager's authority to ask for proof of authenticity for any corn labeled as Taber corn being sold at the market. All vendors should be able to provide the manager with a producer name and contact information for verification purposes.

Product Labeling: All food products sold in a **farmers' market** are subject to the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. All products should be labeled with the following:

- Common name of product
- Quantity

- List of ingredients in descending order
- Durable life date (packaged on date, best before date)
- Storage instructions, if required
- Name and address of person making the product (including postal code)

It is **not sufficient** to simply have the ingredient list available. Ingredients must be part of the product label.

There is no need for nutritional labeling unless a claim is being made.

For questions regarding the labelling of food products, contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Fair Labelling Practices Program at 780-495-7023 (Edmonton) or 403-292-4650 (Calgary).

Cosmetics: Every manufacturer and importer of cosmetics is required to submit a completed Cosmetic Notification form for each cosmetic intended for sale. It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure compliance with all regulations. For any questions regarding cosmetics, contact Health Canada at 780-495-2626.

Textiles: Textile labeling is required on all consumer textile articles as outlined in the *Textile Labelling Act*. Garments sold at farmers' market are not exempt from this legislation. For more information, contact the Competition Bureau at 1-800-348-5358.

Sunnygirl Logo: The Sunnygirl is the trademarked visual identity or logo for Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Approved Farmers' Markets. This logo helps the consumer identify that the market is approved and they are affiliated with a chain of high quality markets offering Alberta-produced products that consumers can trust. If you are an Alberta Approved Farmers' Market, you can use the Sunnygirl logo in your promotions. Contact **Eileen Kotowich** to get a copy of the logo to use in your promotions.

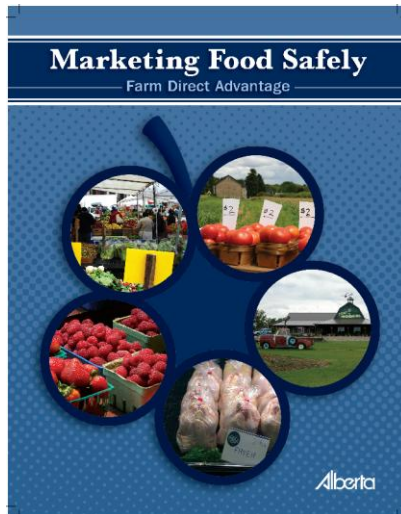


As a user of the logo, there are some basic rules governing its use:

- The logo exists in black and white or colour. Individual markets or other users of the logo must not alter the colours or type font.
- The logo must not be altered by changing graphics or adding screens.
- The logo must not be combined with other graphics.
- Avoid using the logo on a photographic image.
- Avoid printing the logo in black on a black colour.
- Avoid printing the logo in white on a light background.
- Avoid printing the logo on strongly textured backgrounds.

Vendor form: Attached with this letter is a copy of the revised vendor spreadsheet. This form is required to be completed in full in order for you to retain your market approval status. The form has been modified so that all vendors can be put on the one form. If a vendor is selling products that fall into different categories, please identify those different products in the columns listed. This form is also available online at www.sunnygirl.ca and will be sent out again in the fall with the other required paperwork. It is being sent now so that markets can start to fill in the required information now rather than having to transpose it at the end of the year. If you keep your records electronically, a printout will continue to be acceptable as long as all the required information is included.

Food Safety: Ensuring that customers at farmers' markets receive the safest food possible is the responsibility of all of us. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development and the Alberta



Farmers' Market Association partnered to develop a home study resource for food vendors that will help you to ensure food safety best practices are followed in the marketing of your food products. Nelson Boychuk, a Farmers' market vendor has this to say about the resource "*The Food Safety Binder has been, and still remains, both a guide and a resource manual to our beef processing operation. When we were starting out it set the bar for food safety and what was expected of us in delivering a safe food product to our customers. We also found info and suggestions on how to operate in a Farmers Market, taking into consideration,... hand washing, cleanliness & sterilization when sampling, freezer temperature guidelines, & checklists as to what a vender should do to maintain a safe environment for his or her food products. Being new to Farmers Markets and never selling our product before direct to the customer, the "Food Safety Binder"*

gave us a place to start. I do believe this binder is one of the most comprehensive and most valuable tools we have in our beef sales operation. From examples of other vendors in the binder, to actual scientific data, to legal obligations, it covers so many areas. I highly recommend this binder to anyone who handles food products-be it in a Farmers' Market or in your own home."

Please contact Darlene Cavanaugh with the Alberta Farmers' Market Association at (780) 644-5377 for more information on how to purchase this resource.

Please remember that the intent of Alberta Approved Farmers' Markets is to provide Alberta producers with an outlet to sell products directly to the consumer and to provide the consumer with high quality fresh locally produced food and original Alberta crafts. Keep this in mind when selecting vendors and determining your market mix.

Sincerely,

Eileen Kotowich
Farmers' Market Specialist
4701 52 Street, Box 24
Vermilion, AB T9X 1J9
780-853-8223 (toll-free 310-0000)
eileen.kotowich@gov.ab.ca

Delores Serafin
Project Coordinator, Farmers' Market Program
Room 200, 7000 113 Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6
780-427-4611 (toll-free 310-0000)
delores.serafin@gov.ab.ca