



Fairfax County Farmers Markets 2021 Handbook

*Sponsored by
Community Horticulture Office
Green Spring Gardens
Fairfax County Park Authority*

Mission

The mission of the Fairfax County Farmers Markets is to provide residents access to locally grown products and create market opportunities for area farmers and food producers.

Vision

Reconnect people with locally produced food through a fresh, community and fun experience.

Producer Only/Local Requirements

Producer-Only Requirement: The FCFMs are producer-only markets. A producer is defined as a grower, employee, partner or family member who is directly engaged in the growth and production of the produce and/or products sold. Producers may include: agricultural and horticultural producers, home bakers, and small family-owned commercial bakeries. All products sold at the market must be grown or produced by the vendor. Re-selling is prohibited. Produce must be fresh and of the best quality.

Locally-grown: All items sold must be grown or produced by the vendor or his designee on land or in a facility owned or leased by the vendor within 125 miles of Green Spring Gardens (4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, Virginia).

Selection Process

Once it is determined that a vendor meets all of the “producer-only” requirements, final placement is based on several factors.

- Previous vendors in good standing receive preferential consideration for market acceptance.
- Space available for vendors, determined by the space available at each individual market.
- Special consideration is given to farmers that are certified organic or certified natural.
- Vendor’s availability to consistently attend through the end of the individual market season. Past attendance is taken into consideration in the coming year.
- The vendor’s capacity to produce enough products for the entire market season.

FCFM has identified our preferred ratio of products, for the benefit of customers and vendors. Vendors will be accepted to fill a product need for a particular market using the guidelines listed below.

- Fruits and Vegetables: 45 – 55%
- The remaining 45 – 55% will be split among the following vendor types, based on the needs of the market:
 - Baked Goods
 - Meat
 - Dairy
 - Plants and Cut flowers
 - Other (honey, jams, pasta, etc)

We may limit vendor participation to a maximum of five markets to allow entry of new vendors and to support a wider number of vendors.

Vendor Fees

NEW FOR 2021: To apply to the Fairfax County Farmers Market, vendors are charged a \$50 application fee. Vendors will not be considered for selection to the market until this fee is paid. Applications and fees are due by February 5th.

Please review our Vendor Fee Structure found in FarmSpread, the market management software platform used by Fairfax County Farmers Markets. We reserve the right to adjust and modify your requests based on available space. Fees are calculated based on selling space used at market in high season (July/August). Market Space Fees are not refundable after **April 2, 2021**.

You will receive an invoice from Farmspread.com with a breakdown of your market fees. Vendors must pay the balance or their first market payment by mid March. A \$50 fee will be applied to late payments. Call our office at 703-642-0128 to make a credit card payment (Visa, Discover & MasterCard only) or mail a check payable to **Fairfax County Park Authority**. Please make sure to include your business name.

Please mail checks to:

Green Spring Gardens
Attn: Fairfax County Farmers Markets
4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria VA, 22312

A payment plan is available for vendors owing more than \$900.00. You must reference your request for the payment plan on the FarmSpread application. Payments will be due the first week of April, May and June. A \$50 administrative fee will be applied.

Vendors with outstanding balances will not be permitted back into the market until the full balance is paid.

Tent Weights

We require that every tent, canopy and umbrella used at any FCFM be weighted down at all times, at each market. All tents, canopies and umbrellas must be sufficiently and safely secured ***from the moment the stall cover is erected at the start of the Market day to the moment immediately before it is taken down at the end of the Market.*** This mandatory requirement will be enforced to protect our vendors and customers during times of unexpected violent weather.

- Minimum of 20lbs per leg
- Weights must be secured in a manner that does not create its own safety hazard.
- Weights must not cause a tripping hazard
- Weights must be tethered with lines that are clearly visible
- Weights must have soft edges to avoid causing cuts and scrapes
- Weights must be securely attached
- Weights must be sitting on the ground (NOT suspended in the air)
- Weighting the back of the canopy down by tying it to a vehicle is acceptable; however the front legs must still be anchored with weights
- Weighting the canopy down by tying it to display tables is NOT acceptable.
- Vendors are responsible for identifying the appropriate weight required for their specific tent, canopy or umbrella.

If tents, canopies, umbrellas or signs are NOT adequately secured, we will require the Vendor to take them down and sell without them. If these items need to be taken down in the middle of the Market, Vendors are expected to direct customers to a safe place so they will not be injured.

Examples of sufficient and safe weights include:

- Filling an empty paint can with cement and tying this to each corner of the tent with a rope or bungee long enough for the weight to sit on the ground. It is NOT sufficient to place the can on the feet of the tent.
- Filing containers, such as canvas bags or plastic buckets/containers that have a handle through which a rope or bungee can be secured, with sand/cement that can be anchored or secured with a rope or bungee long enough for the weight to sit on the ground. ..
- PVC pipe capped and filled with cement can be secured to the inside of canopy poles as long as it is cannot collide with customers and the base rests on the ground.

Attendance

Each vendor will be **allowed two scheduled absences per market, per season.** Scheduled market absences should be specified by the vendor on their FarmSpread application registration form at the beginning of the season, or announced to the Market Manager at least two weeks in advance.

Vendors must notify the Market Manager in advance of any anticipated absence. Vendors will be given a contact list of Market Managers and the Community Horticulture Office for notification of an absence. Please only contact the Community Horticulture Office regarding absences if unable to reach the Market Manager. Emergency absences will be considered by the Market Manager on a case by case basis. **A vendor with excessive absences may be suspended or expelled from markets** by the Community Horticulture Office. No fees will be refunded.

Basic Conduct at the Market

- The markets will be open for sales to customers only during regularly scheduled market hours. **Customers may begin bagging items 15 minutes prior to the market opening but no sales are allowed until the market open bell is rung.**
- At the close of market, vendors may wait on customers already under their canopy. **Selling after the market is closed will not be tolerated. If a vendor continues to sell after the market closes they will be expelled from all Fairfax County Markets.** No fees will be refunded.
- There is no haggling or bargaining with customers. Vendors may offer a price to a customer, but negotiating any price after the original offer is not an acceptable practice at the Fairfax County Farmers Markets.
- Refrain from profanity or playing music with profanity in the lyrics before, during or after market hours.

- No smoking or vaping while vending at market. Smoke/vape at least 50ft away from market.
- All vendors must be set up at least 15 minutes before opening. Vendors arriving after the market's opening time will be permitted to participate in that day's market only at the discretion of the Market Manager.
- All vendors are expected to remain at the market for the duration of the market times. **Early departure is not usually permitted.** Exceptions may be made for emergencies. The Market Manager must be notified so that they may assure that the departure is made safely. A vendor who disrupts the market by arriving chronically late, or frequently leaving early, after two written warnings, may be expelled by the Community Horticulture Office for the remainder of the season. No fees will be refunded.
- Good customer service requires vendors to treat customers, market managers and other vendors with respect at all times. FCFM will not tolerate poor conduct towards anyone involved with the markets.

Propane Use

Contact the Community Horticulture office if you would like to use propane in your tent. Use of propane IS NOT guaranteed and you may be charged additional fees if you would like to use propane.

Insurance Requirements

A copy of a current liability insurance certificate in the amount of **\$1,000,000 per occurrence** is required by the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), prior to the start of the market for all vendors. This certificate should identify Commercial General Liability insurance coverage to protect the participants. **The following additionally insured language is required by Fairfax County Risk Management. The certificate must have added in order to be accepted:**

Under description of operations (additionally insured):

“The Fairfax County Park Authority and the County of Fairfax, their officers, employees and volunteers are included as an additional insured with respects to the General Liability and Auto Liability Policies as required by written contract. Insurance provided is primary and non-contributory with respect to the general liability, auto and umbrella policies required by written contract. The certificate holder will receive 30 days’ notice of cancelation for any reason except non-payment of premium. Waiver of subrogation applies as per policy language.”

We cannot accept a certificate unless this exact additionally insured line is added. Please present this contract to your insurance agent to ensure they are able to provide the additionally insured coverage.

If vendor agent does not cover both auto and general liability, a separate Certificate of Insurance is required for both with the same additionally insured language.

The certificate holder block must read:

“Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, VA 22312”

Please upload a copy of your Certificate of Liability Insurance with your FarmSpread vendor application. If necessary you can email or fax a copy directly to the Farmers Market Coordinator. Fax (703)653-6605. **All Vendor paperwork must be on file before the first market date or risk being denied a space in the market.** If your policy expires mid-season you must resubmit your insurance information to us with each renewal. **Please contact Randy Jouben at Randy.jouben@fairfaxcounty.gov if you are experiencing difficulty adding the additionally insured line to your certificate.**

Value-Added Requirements

All value-added food vendors must strictly adhere to all regulations pertaining to their specific product that are set forth by VDACS. Value-added products are defined as the processing or modification of a farm product to add value to it. Value-added products are permitted for sale if they have received prior approval from the Community Horticulture Office.

[Click here](#) for more information on VDACS Rules & Regulations for Farmers Markets.

[Click here](#) for the VDACS Food Safety application

Additionally, value-added food vendors must meet the following guidelines:

1. “Baked goods” is defined by the “scratch rule” as a product that has been mixed, baked, finished and packaged for sale. **Using prepared mixes or repackaging of commercially prepared products is prohibited.**
2. Bakers and Value-added Food Vendors **must submit a current copy of their kitchen inspection report from VDACS or an appropriate agency** in their home state with their application. This report must not contain any violations that pertain to kitchen cleanliness or food processing.
3. VDACS does not require a home kitchen inspection for certain baked goods, jams, jellies and candies sold at Farmers Markets provided the Producer labels each product “Not for resale—Processed and Prepared without State Inspection”.

Bakers & Value-added Food Vendors are required to follow the food labeling law as outlined by VDACS.

All individually wrapped baked goods must have the following on the label. Labels may be typed or handwritten in permanent ink or a combination of both.

- Name of the product (i.e. zucchini bread, brownies, etc.);
- List of all ingredients in sequential order from most to least used;
- Your name or name of your business;
- Your address or the address of your business;
- Net weight of the item.

Sampling at the Market

Guidelines for sampling at the farmers markets have been set by the Fairfax County Health Department under the [*Retail Food Establishment Regulations*](#). These guidelines include but are not limited to the following:

1. Food on display must be protected from contamination. Since our markets are open-air markets, the only means to protect food is the use of covers/containers that do not permit contamination by dirt or insects. This includes fruit, bread, cookie and cake samples among others.
2. A maximum of only six (6) products are being sampled at a time. For a single product made with the combination of two or more ingredients (i.e. a dip made by mixing dried herbs with sour cream, olive oil mixed with dried herbs, etc.), each ingredient will count as one product
3. All fruit and vegetables must be washed under running potable water prior to cutting. Washing removes dirt, soil, and any other contaminants.
4. Wash hands prior to handling food products and then frequently throughout the event, especially any time hands are contaminated and between glove uses. After shaking patrons' hands or handling money, hands must be rewashed before handling food products.
5. Read further regulations at [fairfax-sampling-guidelines.pdf \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)

NO "prepared-on-site" foods (hot-dogs, hot sandwiches, etc.) are permitted to be sold at any Fairfax County Farmers Market. Refrigerated or frozen, take home to heat-and-eat foods are permitted as long as VDACS regulations are followed and the items are made "from scratch" by the vendor.

Dairy/Ice Cream Requirements

Milk, Dairy and Cheese: Fresh milk must be from the dairyman's own herd or creamery. Milk or cream used in value-added products must be from the vendor's own dairy or obtained from local sources. Cheese and other dairy products must be made by the vendor. Flavoring agents (fruit, herbs or honey) used in the products should come from local vendors.

Frozen Dairy or Fruit Products: Ice cream must be made by the vendor. A preference is given to the vendor who uses milk or cream from the vendor's own herd or creamery, however, all milk or cream must be from a local source. Flavoring agents (fruit, vegetables or honey) used in the products should come from local sources. Frozen dairy or fruit products should highlight regional produce and seasonal ingredients. Out of region, necessary flavorings (such as vanilla) may be purchased.

Under the Producer-Only Dairy Exemption (Starting in 2016), vendors can apply to resell dairy from other local farmers. Please read the full terms of participation. Vendors interested in reselling dairy must submit an application for approval to the CHO. Vendors must be approved before reselling any local dairy products. Please find the Dairy Exemption regulations and applications in "documents" section of FarmSpread or contact the Farmers Market Coordinator.

Complaint Procedures

Producer-Only Rule Violations

The process for investigating a violation of the Producer-Only/Local Rule is:

- 1) A complaint must be made in writing against a producer regarding the origin of produce or goods and sent to the Community Horticulture Office. The identity of the person making the complaint will be held in confidence.
- 2) In response to a written complaint, the Community Horticulture Office will notify the vendor and Market Manager that an investigation will be conducted.
- 3) After the investigation, the vendor will be informed in writing as to the nature of the complaint, the results of the investigation and any decision.
- 4) The vendor, if found to be selling items in violations of the Producer-Only or Local Rule, will be asked to stop selling those items in the Fairfax County Farmers Markets. If the vendor does not comply with this request, the vendor will be expelled from all Fairfax County Farmers Markets.

- 5) The vendor, if expelled, may file a written appeal for further investigation within 14 days of receipt of the expulsion notice.
- 6) During the appeal process, the vendor may continue in the Market(s) but may not sell the items under investigation. If, after a re-investigation, the vendor is found to be selling items prohibited under the locally grown or produced rules, the vendor will be expelled from all Fairfax County Farmers Markets and may not apply for re-admission to the Markets within two years of the expulsion. No fees will be refunded.

Other Terms of Agreement Violations (late arrivals, violations, etc.)

- 1) Complaints can be made verbally or in writing to the Market Manager or to the Farmers Market Coordinator.
- 2) These complaints may be resolved by agreement of all parties involved or, failing this, by decision of the Community Horticulture Office.
- 3) Violations of rules specified in the Terms of Agreement will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:
 - a. Verbal warning with immediate resolution by the Market Manager.
 - b. Repeated offenses will result in a written warning by the Community Horticulture Office.
 - c. Continued violations will result in expulsion from the market. Fees will not be returned.
- 4) The vendor, if expelled, may file a written appeal for further investigation within 14 days of receipt of the expulsion notice.
- 5) During the appeal process, the vendor may continue in the Market(s). If, after a re-investigation the violations are deemed chronic and excessive, the vendor will be expelled from all Fairfax County Farmers Markets and may not apply for re-admission to the Markets within two years of the expulsion. No fees will be refunded.