



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

COVID-19 FACT SHEET: Guidance for Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets are deemed an essential workplace during COVID-19, important to the local economy by providing fresh and prepared food to residents, along with non-food products. There are **two options for operating in Renfrew County and District:**

1. Curbside Pick-Up
2. Walk-Through

Public Health Inspectors must review and approve the market's plan for operating safely prior to opening, according to the criteria below. The plan will include details on how the market will follow physical distancing, food safety, proper handwashing, and sanitizing protocols. Each vendor must provide public health with information on the types of products, including any processed products, they intend to sell.

General Criteria for farmers' markets to operate in 2020

- Discourage use of cash when possible. Consider working with [Farmers' Markets Ontario](#) as they are exploring an e-commerce platform which is scalable, reasonably priced, and user-friendly. [Open Food Network](#) is one option for food producers to sell online.
- Ensure vendors set up their booths to be well-spaced (minimum of 10 feet apart) in a row, with the following in place:
 - No direct food handling or preparation
 - No sampling of products
 - No selling of beverages such as apple cider by the cup
 - Discourage use of reusable or customer-supplied containers
 - No communal seating i.e., remove or block off picnic tables, benches
- With permission from the vendor, customers can handle products if the customer touches only what they buy, and they should sanitize their hands before touching. Otherwise, vendors should place purchased items on a separate table in front of the vendor stand to hand off to the customer and maintain the 2-metre distance. Products must go in new, single use boxes or bags.

A. If you decide to run a "curbside pick-up" or drive-through market:

- Stagger pick-up times based on a person's last name e.g., people with last names A-E pick up 8:00 – 8:30, and so on.
- Have vendors prepackage and box products in new, single use boxes and bags with the customer name or order numbers. Vendors place items into the passing vehicles through the window.
- Post signage to remind customers to stay in their vehicles when picking up products.
- Place barriers at each end of the market to prevent shoppers from entering the vendor area i.e., no walk-up purchases allowed. Have a table outside the market for walkers to pick up their purchase.

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- o Ensure traffic flows in one direction only to prevent congestion.

B. If you decide to run a “walk-through” market:

- Monitor customer circulation and flow from stand to stand. Use one-way movement to maintain physical distancing and minimize shoppers' time at the market.
- Number vendor stands and use signs, pylons, markers to keep customers moving through the market.

Ensure proper cleaning and disinfection

- All vendors and volunteers must wash hands regularly and thoroughly (minimum 20 seconds) with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer. Handwashing methods include using a jug with a spigot filled with warm water, soap, and paper towels; hand wipes; or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Hands must be free of dirt and grime for sanitizer to be effective.
- Washrooms, if available, need to be properly stocked with water under pressure, liquid hand soap, and paper towels. They must be cleaned at least twice daily, or more if needed.
- Vendor stands should use vinyl or plastic table covers for easy sanitation. All vendors must clean and sanitize frequently touched, market stand surfaces regularly with an approved sanitizing solution, (such as 4 teaspoons of bleach to 1 litre of water mixture).
- Vendor stands must have lined garbage bins with each stand OR bring their own garbage bags and leave with them to dispose of at home.
- Vendors and patrons are encouraged to wear masks.

Vendor contact tracing and communication (for market managers)

- Keep a written list of participating vendors/volunteers for each market day, including name and phone number. Each should complete a [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) prior to participating each market day.
- Have **written confirmation from all vendors** joining the market that they will not handle products or take part in the market if they are sick.
- Post [Farmers' Markets Ontario COVID-19 signage](#) at entrances and throughout the market to remind vendors, customers and volunteers at the market that they can only attend if they are not sick.

For more information: Call Renfrew County and District Health Unit to speak with a Public Health Inspector at 613-732-3629.

Adapted with the permission of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit. May/2020

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