



WEBINAR

Market Day Prep for Farmers Market Success

April 20, 2022

• VIRGINIA • FARMERS • MARKET •

VAFMA

• ASSOCIATION •



 **Virginia Cooperative Extension**
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

 **College of
Agriculture**

**This webinar is part of a Farmers Market Preparedness
Series from Virginia State University and the
Virginia Farmers Market Association**



Today's Speakers

- **Michael Carter, Jr.**, Small Farm Resource Center Coordinator, VSU Small Farm Outreach Program
- **Kim Hutchinson**, PhD, MBA, Executive Director, Virginia Farmers Market Association
- **Dr. Theresa J. Nartea**, State Program Leader, Associate Professor, Extension Specialist-Marketing & Agribusiness, Virginia State University, Virginia Cooperative Extension
- **Lisa Dearden**, Founder & Executive Director, RVAg



Are You Market Ready?

- Legal Considerations
- What to Bring
- Vendor Display
- Liability Story



Recommended: Ask the Experts

- **Business Formation** – speak to an attorney
- **Liability Insurance** – not required by all markets but VAFMA considers this essential – speak to an insurance agent
- **Talk to the market manager before you apply**
 - What are the rules of the market? Will there be a farm/kitchen visit?
 - What fees do they charge? What products do they need?
- **Apply to the market – you can't just show up**
 - Different farmers markets have different vendor applications
 - Share copies of permits, inspection, insurance, and certification as requested



Legal Considerations

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS: Protect yourself and others

Business Formation - sole proprietorship, corporation, or limited liability company:

- **Sole proprietorship:** it is easiest and what you are unless you file to be something else
- Two or more sole proprietors joined together for a purpose is a **partnership**. Generally, all partners are responsible for the acts of the other partners undertaken in the furtherance of the joint venture.
- **Incorporation or LLC** is formed by filing with the Virginia State Corporation Commission.
 - Both of these offer some legal protection if (1) done correctly, and (2) operated separately and apart from the "founders." This usually means a separate Employee Identification Number (EIN), bank accounts, etc.
 - Each corporation or LLC will need to obtain an EIN by completing an SS-4 Form (usually can be done online).

Legal Considerations

Business License

- Regardless of entity type, you may need a business license. Check with your jurisdiction's finance office.

Requirements

- Follow ALL THE RULES for the type of items you plan to sell. See GOING TO MARKET VDACS publication FST-273.pdf (vt.edu)
- Obtain all permits and licenses required by the state and your locality and the market(s)' locality
- Keep all permits and licenses current for the entire market season

MOST IMPORTANT: INSURANCE

- It is there to protect you (regardless of the type of business or entity) AND to protect someone hurt by your negligence or mistake. BOTH deserve to be protected!

Legal Considerations

Sales Tax

- Generally individuals and businesses making sales with, or at, one or more physical locations in Virginia must register to collect sales tax as an in-state dealer.
- Register with the state and determine your tax requirements at <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/>
- Fruits, vegetables, and eggs raised and sold by individuals exclusively through farmers markets and roadside stands are not subject to sales tax, provided the individual's annual income from these sales is \$2,500 or less.

Scales

- If you use a scale, it must be certified by VDACS Office of Weights and Measures



Requirements – Food Safety

- All foods must be made in an inspected kitchen
 - Unless the home kitchen exemption is followed
- Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) inspects homes and community kitchens
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH) permits restaurants and temporary events
- Some products require FDA approval
- Food Safety webinar next week (April 27), we will cover all food safety requirements, including:
 - Labeling requirements
 - Food sampling guidelines
 - Food handling and sanitation guidelines



What to Bring: Important

- Extra help, if you need it
- Leave your pets at home
- Market Managers cell phone number
- Tent to protect you and your products from sun or rain
- A scale for weighing products (if you sell by weight)
- Tent weights!



What to Bring: Tent Weights

Fairfax County Farmers Market Requirements

- Minimum of 25lbs per leg
- Weights must be secured in a manner that does not create a 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 determining if more than 25 lbs per leg is 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 while doing so.

Perform Safety Checks

- **Perform safety and serviceability checks of all equipment and appliances prior to use.** For example, check:
 - Propane tanks for damage and leaks to hoses and tanks
 - Fire extinguishers are available
 - Electrical extension cords are rated for outdoor usage and UL (Underwriters Laboratory) certified and are not damaged.
 - Follow all manufactures requirements for equipment and appliances.
- **Once set up, check:**
 - Walkways are even and clear of obstructions
 - Any cords are clearly marked, secured and out of foot traffic areas
 - Debris is removed from walking surfaces
 - Display tables aren't overloaded; no wobbly tables
 - Tents are securely fastened to prevent from flying away
 - Tarps, tents/canopies, table legs, etc., are properly installed and secured to reduce tripping hazards and risk of collapse

What to Bring: Safety & Sanitation

In addition to what you need for your specific products, food sellers may need:

- Coolers, ice packs, etc
- Hand washing station
- Utensil sanitation system
- Paper towels and soap; hand sanitizer
- Disinfecting wipes
- Gloves
- Sampling tools - cover and cups or toothpicks
- Garbage can and bags

We will cover this next week in the Food Safety webinar.



What to Bring: Transactions

- A cash box or belt for collecting money
- Small bills and coins to make change
- Calculator, receipt pad, pen
- System for recording transactions
- Method to take custom order notes
- Mobile payment system/ card reader
- Smart Phone (to take credit cards and post on social media)
- Charger/battery pack



What to Bring: Display & Marketing

- Banner or sign with the name of your farm or business
- Bungee cords, etc to secure banners and signs
- A sign with product names and prices
- Price signs
- Tables and tablecloths or table drapes
- Virginia Grown signs, bags, etc
- Crates, risers, or racks. Bins, baskets, etc.
- Mailing list sign up sheet or QR code to your mailing list
- Business cards, promotional fliers, recipe cards
- White board or stock paper and pens for new signs
- Clean bags or other containers for customers



What to Bring: Comfort & Convenience

- Small tool kit, scissors, duct tape
- First aid kit
- Rubber mallet for pounding tent stakes or signs into ground if appropriate
- Rain gear
- Clothing layers, coat, hat, fingerless gloves, etc.
- Comfortable shoes – you will be standing for 5+ hours
- Personal care - lip balm, lotion, sunscreen, etc.
- Breath mints, tissues
- Drinking water
- Food ready to eat or plan to buy a meal at market
- Anti-fatigue mats, tall stool if you need support



Interacting with Customers

- Give customers your full attention
- Catch up on your reading at home; stay away from your book, non-essential phone calls, and Internet research on market day.
- Talk with your customers, but be considerate of others who are waiting to buy from you.
- Avoid cigarettes, cigars, and chewing gum while selling.
- Leave your personal problems and your political views out of your sales booth.
- Keep it positive - customers do not need to hear your complaints about the market or other vendors. Bring these up with the market manager after market or on another day.
- Train your sales crew to follow these guidelines, too.



Lisa Dearden
RV Agriculture

Resources

Virginia Farmers Market Association (VAFMA)

<https://vafma.org/>

Farmers market advocacy, trainings, and other resources

Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach

<https://www.ext.vsu.edu/small-farm-resource-center>

Clearinghouse for education, resources and news to serve Virginia's small and beginning farmers

VSU Small Farm Marketing and Business Program

<https://www.ext.vsu.edu/marketing-agribusiness>

Science based educational curriculum and direct technical support

RVAgiculture

<https://rvagriculture.org/>

Manages multiple farmers markets and a year-round online marketplace featuring a diverse line-up of growers and producers.

Resources

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/dairy-farmers-market-vendors.shtml>

- Application for a Home Food Processing Operation
- Application for a Commercial Kitchen Food Processing Operation
- Virginia Food Laws
- Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples at the Market

Virginia Grown

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/index.shtml>

Weights and Measures

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/food-weights-and-measures.shtml>

Virginia Department of Health

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/local-health-districts/>

A recording of this webinar will be available

**Next week's webinar:
Wednesday, April 27th at 6 PM**

Register via VSU or VAFMA websites

Future Topic Requests?

Let us Know!

Email us at info@vafma.org