

Become a Certified Virginia Farmers Market



The Virginia Farmers Market Association has launched the Virginia Certified Farmers Market Program to recognize markets in the state that are meeting and exceeding best practices. This is a way for markets to distinguish themselves to consumers, vendors, and their communities.

When consumers shop a Virginia Certified Farmers Market, they can trust that the market is a safe, welcoming, and transparent source of local food. Not only is certification a message to shoppers that the market is striving to keep them safe, but it also lets vendors know that the market takes promotion and outreach to new shoppers seriously.

Certification comes in 3 levels -- Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Each level is based on a simple point system that covers categories such as food safety, continuing education, and public safety. The more points that a market has the higher the level of certification with gold being at the top.

The standards of the program were developed by an advisory committee made-up of market managers, state agency and university staff. VAFMA will be providing training and resources to assist markets to achieve the standards in each certification area.

The program is open to all Virginia farmers markets. We invite you to find out more by visiting vafma.org today.

| Category | Bronze Standard | Silver Standard | Gold Standard |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Food Safety | Manager has attended a VA food safety training in the past year at which VDACS, VDH, VCE presented | Manager has attended a VA food safety training in the past year at which VDACS, VDH, VCE presented AND Market Manager provides annual training/information to vendors that the vendors sign off on | Manager has attended a VA food safety training in the past year at which VDACS, VDH, VCE presented AND Market Manager provides annual training/information to vendors that the vendors sign off on AND Manager is currently a certified food protection manager (CPFM) |
| Professional Development | Market Manager attended 1 market management focused training | Market Manager attended the last VAFMA conference OR 2 trainings | Market Manager is certified by VAFMA |
| Food Origin | Market has a food origin policy and information posted publicly about food origin policy (website or signage) and vendors sign off on policy yearly | Market has a food origin policy and information posted publicly about food origin policy (website or signage) and vendors sign off on policy yearly AND Market has vendor-level signage about food origin | Market has a food origin policy, the policy is posted publicly (website or signage), vendors sign off on the policy yearly, AND Market inspects vendors annually (does not need to be each vendor is inspected each year; can rotate) |
| Food Access | Market accepts SNAP OR has another incentive program such as funding for coupons for children/seniors OR offers discounts for other needs based reasons OR donates food to an emergency food outlet | Market accepts SNAP and VFM OR Market accepts SNAP and has its own funding for doubling SNAP (not VFM) | Market accepts SNAP, VFM/ own doubling for SNAP AND has another incentive program such as funding for coupons for children/seniors OR offers discounts for other needs based reasons OR participates in local food access coalition/council |
| Equity | Market has an equity statement publicly posted and/or given to vendors as part of annual vendor packet | Market manager has attended a training on equity in the past year from VAFMA, VFM, VCE, FMC or other source | Market provides public information on programming or the market in multiple languages that reflect the surrounding community |

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|------------------------|--|---|--|
| Consumer Education | Market educates consumers on vendor practices, agriculture, cooking or similar topic through newsletters or social media | Market has at-market event(s) each year that provide consumer education on vendor practices, agriculture, cooking, nutrition or similar topic | Market provides consumer education on vendor practices, agriculture, cooking, nutrition or similar topic through innovative tools such as virtual or in person farm tours, signage with QR codes linking to information or other |
| Market Visibility | Market is registered for FM trail or on VAFMA market map | Market invites local elected officials OR local media to one market or market event a year | Market reports market impact to local elected officials/ government each year and shares with VAFMA |
| Marketing and Outreach | Market has updated google, Market Maker, Farm Spread with current information (address, hours, etc) for this market year | Market has updated google, Market Maker, Farm Spread with current information for this market year AND Market has active social media platforms that are updated weekly during market season | Market has updated google, Market Maker, Farm Spread with current information for this market year AND Market has active social media platforms that are updated weekly during market season AND Market works with vendors to do vendor spotlights |
| Public Safety | Market is in compliance with local regulatory and permitting authorities (for example: fire, zoning, EMS, etc.) and meets local regulations AND has a written emergency policy that vendors sign off on , including weather AND has a first aid kit at market | Market is in compliance with local regulatory and permitting authorities (for example: fire, zoning, EMS, etc.) and meets local regulations AND has a written emergency policy that vendors sign off on , including weather AND has a first aid kit at market AND market manager has current training in CPR, de-escalation, CRAVE or ASHER (<i>mass shooter</i>) or other (<i>please list, such as NARCAN</i>) | Market is in compliance with local regulatory and permitting authorities (for example: fire, zoning, EMS, etc.) and meets local regulations AND has a written emergency policy that vendors sign off on , including weather AND has a first aid kit at market AND market requires each vendor holds liability insurance and the market has its own liability insurance |
| | | Market is in compliance with local regulatory and permitting authorities (for example: fire, zoning, EMS, etc.) and meets local regulations AND has a written emergency policy that vendors sign off on , including weather AND has a first aid kit at market AND market has protection for pedestrians from car traffic (signage, barriers, crossing guard or other) | Market is in compliance with local regulatory and permitting authorities (for example: fire, zoning, EMS, etc.) and meets local regulations AND has a written emergency policy that vendors sign off on , including weather AND has a first aid kit at market AND market has a security guard |
| Data | Market collects number of vendors at the market (total for a market year) and 1 customer count | Market collects number of vendors, 1 customer count, and sales data | Market adds the 12 Vendor Profile Questions to their vendor application and reports aggregate data to VAFMA by November 15, 2024 |
| Innovation (optional) | Write in an innovation your market does that you think deserves to be considered as part of this application | | |