

Voluntary Code of Good Practice for Farmers' Markets 2009-2010

Vision Statement

That every town should have a thriving farmers' market – offering a route to market for local produce and small food producers, attracting consumers and promoting sustainable and diverse food cultures at county and local level. This code of good practice is intended as a basic standard to promote this vision.



Farmers' Markets displaying the flag should have a range of stalls with a variety of produce including fruit and vegetables in season, horticulture, dairy, bakery and meat produce.

Introduction

Mr. Trevor Sargent T.D., Minister of State for Food and Horticulture at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, established an advisory group in 2008, to investigate the possibility of guidelines for farmers' markets, draw up proposals and make recommendations.

The advisory group comprised Ms. Caroline Robinson, Market Stallholder; Ms. Jackie Spillane, CoCo Markets; Ms Stephanie Moe, Bord Bia; Mr. JJ Kavanagh, Irish Farmers Association, Ms Patricia Oliver, An Taisce; Mr. William Coventry, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Ms. Marian Byrne, Head of Food Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Secretariat services were provided by the Food Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. In its consideration of good practice, the group met on six occasions and invited submissions from the public, to which 30 responses were received.

The advisory group recommended a pilot project of a voluntary code of good practice for Farmers' Markets to increase consumer awareness and producer confidence. This code of good practice will be evaluated during the period 2009-2010.

How the Voluntary Code of Good Practice will operate:

- The Code of Good Practice is voluntary and all farmers' markets operating in the State are eligible to apply. A non-refundable application fee of €50 per market will apply.
- The Code of Good Practice is intended only as the minimum eligibility criteria. Market management may apply stricter criteria.
- Following successful application, a certificate will be awarded to markets demonstrating on-going compliance with the criteria listed at page 4 of this booklet. This Certificate may be displayed in a public place at the market location.
- Markets may, following receipt of the certificate, apply for a Flag bearing the logo which is shown on the front cover of this booklet. Applicants will be required to pay 50% of the cost of the flag. An Bord Bia will operate the scheme in 2009 and 2010.
- Applications will be considered by an award committee, whose decision will be final. Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply as soon as they meet the full criteria. Adherence to the code may be checked without prior notification.

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The Market must be managed and overseen by a committee, or in the case of local authority run or private markets, a manager, who will have overall responsibility for ensuring that the criteria for eligibility and code of good practice is complied with on an ongoing basis.

Each market shall have a written policy/charter on the operation of the market. This policy must provide for:

- A substantial proportion, ideally 50%, of the food and horticulture sold at the market should be sourced from local/artisan producers from the county or adjoining counties. The market should endeavour to offer a variety of produce in season.
- Registration with the local EHO (Environmental Health Officer)* and compliance with requirements for food labelling, waste disposal, insurance etc. The committee or manager should provide a course in essential food safety for stallholders or should otherwise direct stallholders to suitable courses.
- The appointment of a market manager (or a nominated stallholder) to be present on the market day in order to oversee efficient set-up and breakdown, to ensure waste is removed and site is left in a reasonable condition and to be the point of contact with members of the public on the day.
- A written selection system for allocation of stalls that is fair and equitable, with a system of redress.
- A transparent system of fees for all stallholders.
- Clear pricing and labelling of origin to be displayed by all stallholders for all products. Organic produce must be verifiable at the point of sale.
- A communal site/stall (when a demand exists) for the sale of local garden/allotment produce and seasonal foods.

A Market should take place in a regular fashion - weekly, fortnightly or monthly, for at least 5 months of the year.

* See *FSAI Guidance Note 16 relating to food stalls*: <http://www.fsai.ie/assets/0/86/204/38b489aa-c7c5-4526-b035-f136860593f4.pdf>

**Application Form for Voluntary Code of Good Practice
for Farmers' Markets 2009-2010**

Name of Market _____

Location _____

Market operates: Weekly
 Fortnightly
 Monthly

Market operated by: Committee
 Local Authority
 Privately run

Please specify:

Day(s) of the week market is in operation: _____

Times market is in operation: _____

Months in which the market is in operation: _____

Committee Chairperson /Local Authority manager/Private operator (tick as applicable)

Name: _____ **Address:** _____

Contact No: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Market Manager appointed by the Committee / Local Authority / Private Market

Name: _____ **Address:** _____

Contact No: _____ **Email Address:** _____

1. Please confirm that the Market Committee or Manager's policy provides that a substantial proportion, ideally 50%, of the food and horticulture sold at the market is sourced from local/artisan producers, i.e. from the county or adjoining counties and that the market offers a variety of produce in season. (Attach policy)

Yes No **Comment** _____

2. Are all (food) stallholders registered with the EHO?
Have (food) stallholders attended a course in food safety?
Are requirements for food labelling, waste disposal, insurance etc complied with?

Yes No **Comment** _____

3. Is the market manager (or a nominated stallholder) present on the market day in order to oversee efficient set-up and breakdown, to ensure waste is removed and site is left in a reasonable condition and to be the point of contact with members of the public on the day?

Yes No **Comment** _____

4. Is there a written selection system for allocation of stalls and a system of redress?

Yes No **Comment** _____

5. Is there a transparent system of fees for all stallholders?

Yes No **Comment** _____

6. Is clear pricing and labelling of origin displayed by all stallholders for all products, and can the authenticity of organic produce be verified at the point of sale?

Yes No **Comment** _____

7. Is a communal site/stall provided for local garden/allotment produce and seasonal foods?

Yes No **Comment** _____

Please ensure that the following are attached with your application:

- Application fee for €50 made payable to An Bord Bia e.g. cheque, postal order
- A copy of the market's policy document
- Two recent photos of the market (from 2009) to demonstrate:
 - a) The variety of stalls at the market and
 - b) The clear pricing and labelling of origin by the stallholder

I agree to have this market checked for adherence to the code without prior notification.

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____

Position held: _____

Contact No: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Please return completed application form including application fee, a copy of the market's policy document and two recent photos of the market to **Code of Good Practice for Farmers' Markets, An Bord Bia, Clanwilliam Court, Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2** before **30 November 2009**

Helpful hints

For Market Organisers

Diversity of products and producers

Customers are attracted to a farmers' market for a diversity of fresh, high quality, locally grown products. They want the widest possible selection of products and diversity within those product lines. They also want to have freedom of choice between producers of the products available. The more choices the market offers its consumers, the more attractive and exciting the market becomes for them.

Quality and freshness

The level of quality and freshness of goods for sale is paramount. Offering products of a high quality will encourage consumers to visit the market on a regular basis. One bad experience may mean a customer never returns again and poor word of mouth can have even more severe implications.

Consistency

It will take some months before your name/product becomes established and it is critical that you stick with your market for at least six months. Regular attendance, even in bad weather, is vital so that you do not disappoint your customers. Any break in a pattern could lose you business.

Regular customers expect to see the same produce at each market. You should also ensure that the same produce, apart from seasonal produce, is consistently available at each market.

Promotion

For a market to be successful an effort must be made to inform customers and potential vendors that a market is or will be in operation. Therefore, promotion of the market is vital, i.e. adverts on local radio and newspapers, flyers etc. If people get a good impression of the market on their first visit they will return become regular customers.

For Stallholders

Product display

It is important to ensure that your stall looks attractive at all times, is properly merchandised and is visually appealing. A few simple choices can make all the difference in how a prospective customer views your stall. Keep the stall well stocked and use contrasting colours to achieve a vibrant presence. Once you have set up your stall, walk around the front and get a customer's view of your presentation.

Price

Your pricing needs to be competitive and you must ensure that all costs are included in your selling price. Failure to work out your price accurately could result in an operating loss that will immediately undermine your business model. Be mindful also that repeat business is generated by good value.

Tasting

It is important to allow as many customers as possible taste your product. It provides an opportunity for customers to stop at your stall without feeling under pressure to buy. This gives you a chance to engage in conversation with them and explain the uniqueness of your product.

Promoting your product

Always have an explanatory leaflet - it can be as simple as a typed sheet. Tell shoppers who you are - make it personal, describing your product, your sourcing and ethics. How and where they can get more. Recipes are indispensable and you should include one or two on your leaflet.

Comment Cards

Customer feedback is critical to your business and comment cards gives you the ability to get the comments and answers you need to build a better business. This feedback can help evaluate where exactly your business may be lacking and on which aspects to work on.

More information for stallholders is available 'Guide to selling through Farmers' Markets Farm Shops and Box Schemes in Ireland' which is available on the Bord Bia website (see link below) or by post on request.

[http://www.bordbia.ie/industryservices/producers/Documents/Guide to selling Through Farmers markets Farm Shops and Box Schemes.pdf](http://www.bordbia.ie/industryservices/producers/Documents/Guide%20to%20selling%20Through%20Farmers%20markets%20Farm%20Shops%20and%20Box%20Schemes.pdf)