

# HANDLING COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR FARMERS' MARKETS

COVID-19 is not a foodborne illness. It is extremely unlikely that someone will catch it through eating. The virus is most likely to cause illness through respiratory transmission, not eating. The routes to be concerned about include being in very close proximity to many people or coming in contact with high touch surfaces.

## BEST PRACTICES

- Sampling should be suspended to minimize touch points.
- Vendors should practice hand hygiene, use gloves when handling money, and handle and package items for customers.
- Limit market volume by promoting pre-ordering, alternate pickup locations, or delivery.
- Limit the number of people at the market at one time or space people out to prevent groups of ten or more.
  - Provide ground markers to help customers maintain six feet of physical distance.

## COMMUNICATION

- **Vendors and customers should not come to market if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or have come in contact with someone who is sick. Anyone displaying symptoms at the farm will be asked to leave.**
- Cloth face coverings should also be encouraged for customer use, based on local guidance.
- Consider communicating this to customers through signs, social media or newsletters
- Proactively reach out to county health departments
- Market managers should communicate proactively about what steps the market is taking to prevent the spread of illness.
- Review CDC guidance about cleaning and disinfection and be ready to communicate if a known COVID-19 patient has been at the market recently.

## CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Markets should consider providing fully stocked handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizer at entrances, exits and restrooms.
  - Vendors should hand-sanitize after every transaction, and should wear gloves.
  - Cloth face coverings should be worn by employees while working.
- Disinfect surfaces like railings, doorknobs, tables, etc on a regular basis
- CDC is recommending use of disinfectants on the EPA list found at: [go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19](http://go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19)
  - Note: this list is based on current data, but compounds have not been validated for inactivation of the virus causing COVID-19
  - Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the concentration is higher for COVID-19 than for everyday sanitation: 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water
- Use non-porous plastic tables that can be easily disinfected if possible.
- Think about touch points throughout the market. Eliminate or disinfect between uses.

## EMPLOYEE HEALTH

- Businesses should follow CDC and FDA guidance for screening employees who have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Pre-screen employees for symptoms or fever before starting work.
- Employees with fever and symptoms should be advised to see a doctor for evaluation and should be deferred to Human Resources for next steps.

