

What are the general regulatory requirements for vendors at farmers' markets?

- ✓ Vendors that are preparing, packaging, or serving food must be licensed as a retail food establishment (chili roasters require a retail food establishment license). A vendor who is otherwise exempt from licensing but who offers samples to consumers is not required to be licensed.
- ✓ Home processed foods, including pies, jams, jellies, pickles, etc., cannot be sold or distributed at farmers' markets.
- ✓ All processed foods must be manufactured in an approved facility. Approved facilities are inspected by the health department for compliance with the Colorado Wholesale Food Regulations Current Good Manufacturing Practice. (6CCR1010-21)
- ✓ Processed foods are foods that undergo slicing, dicing, cutting, chopping, cooking, mixing, grinding, smoking, drying, packaging, canning or other procedures that alter the food from its original state. Mixed greens, honey and salsa are examples of processed foods. Agricultural product sold in its raw harvested state is not considered processed.
- ✓ Low acid canned foods such as vegetables, meat, fish, etc. cannot be sold or distributed unless they were processed at an approved cannery. This is due to the extreme risk of botulism, a potentially fatal illness associated with canned foods.
- ✓ Processed foods must also comply with federal and Colorado labeling regulations.

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Preparing and Offering Food Samples to Consumers

A Guideline for Farmers' Markets



Farmers' markets selling only uncut fresh fruit and vegetables are exempt from licensing requirements of the Retail Food Protection Act. Samples of products may be offered to consumers by vendors that are not licensed as retail food establishments and, therefore are not required to comply with the provisions of the *Retail Food Establishment Rules and Regulations*. Unlicensed vendors should follow these minimum sanitation guidelines to reduce the chance of foodborne illness caused by unsafe food samples.

For more information about licensing and regulatory requirements, please contact your local health department

HANDWASHING:

The person preparing the samples must have handwashing facilities available to clean hands prior to preparing samples as well as anytime when hands will become soiled, to prevent contamination of prepared samples.

Practice good hygiene. Hands must be washed after smoking, eating, drinking, using the restroom, or anytime contamination occurs.

PROPER HANDWASHING: wet hands with clean, warm water; apply soap and work into a lather; rub hands together for 20 seconds; clean under the nails and between fingers; rinse under clean, running water; dry hands with a disposable paper towel.

CUT PRODUCE & OTHER SAMPLES:

Produce used for samples must be washed with cool water. If it is thick-skinned produce, scrub with a clean vegetable brush. This removes nearly all insects, dirt, bacteria and some pesticide residues that can contaminate the interior of the produce once it is cut.

If washed produce is not cut for samples, immediately store it in a clean container to prevent re-soiling of the exterior surface prior to cutting.

Hold all cut samples or samples that have been cooked (e.g. edamame soybeans or other cooked vegetables) on ice or in a cool ice chest at 41°F. If samples are not held cold, they must be disposed of after four hours.

Cut samples must be covered or protected if flies are present, the area is dusty or weather conditions are such that the samples could become contaminated.

KNIVES & UTENSILS:

Use clean and sanitized knives, utensils and cutting boards for cutting produce. Wash with soapy water, rinse with clean water, sanitize (described below) and air dry.

Placing knives, utensils and cutting boards in 75°F water (room temperature) that has one tablespoon of regular (not scented) chlorine bleach per gallon of water, for one minute, will accomplish sanitization.

Cleaned and sanitized knives and cutting boards that are only used for cutting produce need to be re-cleaned and re-sanitized every four hours and whenever contaminated with unwashed hands, dirt, floors, or raw animal products. If facilities are not available for cleaning, bring additional already cleaned and sanitized knives and cutting boards that can be switched for soiled when the four hour time limit has expired or when knives or cutting boards are contaminated (e.g. dropped on the ground) and need replacement.

Keep all cleaned and sanitized knives and cutting boards in a clean, sanitized container during transport and storage.

SERVING SAMPLES:

Use single service items to distribute samples to customers. Examples are paper plates, cups, napkins, plastic utensils or toothpicks. The customer can then dispose of single service items once the product is consumed.

Minimize bare hand contact with cut produce. This can be done by using single service items (as described above). If single service gloves are used, change the gloves often to prevent soiled gloves from cross-contaminating samples. Remember to wash hands between changing gloves.