

The **Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries** has worked on a set of guidelines that we believe will be in the best interest of our markets, their farmers and consumers. These are based on the potential risks associated with COVID-19 and its impact on health and the economic well-being of our farmers.

MARKET OPERATING GUIDELINES DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK:

- Farmers, vendors and market staff should wear food grade gloves, with frequent changes as they become soiled or contaminated.
- Increase the numbers of handwashing stations available within the market, along with signage to encourage customers to frequently wash their hands.
- Encourage farmers to bring handwashing supplies and hand sanitizers for frequent use within their own booth space.
- Limit bare hand contact. No handshaking, no hugs. To the extent possible, limit customer handling of food products.
- Segregate duties behind market tables. Designate one individual to handle money, tokens and coupons, while others handle the products being sold. Again, wear food grade gloves with frequent changes.
- All foods should be pre-packaged to eliminate potential contamination at the market. Examples would be prepackaging breads and baked goods.
- Farmers and vendors who are ill, or showing signs of illness, should stay home. Send a replacement to sell if they are not sick. If anyone within the farm business is confirmed infected with Covid-19, notify the manager and remain home.
- Farmers should be watchful of signs of illness in customers, removing all products they may have touched from their sales tables. Do not remove with bare hands.
- Suspend cooking demonstrations and sampling.
- Institute 6-10 feet of space between vendor booths where possible.
- No dogs are allowed at the farmers' market unless they are service dogs as defined as follows: Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. (emotional support dogs do not qualify).

MARKET CUSTOMER BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK:

We encourage everyone who is healthy and feels safe to visit our farmers' markets in order to procure healthy, local food from area farmers, ranchers and small businesses. But we ask that you follow these strict guidelines:

- Please be patient and follow new market rules during this time.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds upon arrival at the market and frequently as you move throughout the space. We will have an increased number of handwashing stations and hand sanitizer and all vendors are required to display hand sanitizer in each booth.
- Do not congregate between booths or in walkways.
- Maintain at least an arm's length distance between other shoppers and vendors, especially while you are waiting in line.

- Do NOT greet anyone at the market with hugs or handshakes.
- Avoid touching your face.
- No hand-to-hand contact will be allowed between vendors and shoppers. Point to the product that you would like, allow the vendor to bag it and set it down on the table before you pick it up.
- Do not hand vendors payments directly. Place cash and credit cards on the table for vendors to pick up. Use Apple Pay or Venmo when available. If you are able, we encourage you to set up Apple Pay or Venmo on your smartphone before you arrive and use this as a payment method. If you do use this method of payment, please sanitize your phone before you arrive and after you leave the market.
- Anyone who is feeling unwell in any way should stay home.
- Any shopper who is at a higher risk, including individuals who are over 65 and/or with underlying health conditions, should stay home.
- Please refrain from bringing your dogs to the market during this time.

ALTERNATIVE MARKET STRATEGIES:

It may become necessary to consider alternative market strategies should the markets be forced to close temporarily, or the customer base become too limited to sustain farmer income. These systems would be designed to minimize the handling for product, minimize person-to-person contact, while maintaining sales for farmers. Utilize the ideas below and get creative to best serve customers in your area!

- Create a market wide CSA, using your market's vendors to supply product. Allow customers to pay and order via phone, social media or internet. These systems would be designed to minimize the handling for product, minimize person-to-person contact, while maintaining sales for farmers. Allow customers to pick up in open-air, centralized environment. Schedule pick up times if crowd size is a concern.
- Consider creating a "drive-thru" option where customers can pick up pre-selected orders in drive thru fashion at the market or another open-air site.
- Add an online ordering system to your market where all market farmers and vendors can participate. Again, the market would aggregate products and use a central pickup location for customers to receive their products.

BUILD CONSUMER CONFIDENCE:

While it is important to establish guidelines that will strive to keep markets a safe place for our farmers and customers, it is equally important to ease customer concerns and help them feel comfortable coming to a farmers' market amid the corona virus outbreak. Use social media to promote the efforts you are taking to ensure consumer safety. In addition to sharing the sanitation practices you are implementing, consider promoting the benefits of markets and local products during this time.

- Know your farmer – you will see the person(s) who grew or produced your food. You can see they are healthy and feel more comfortable with the foods you are feeding your family.
- Food in a farmers’ market is not part of the supply chain that serves other food venues. The limited chain means fewer people handled the food and reduced the risk of contamination.
- Farmers markets are outdoor events – fresh air is healthy and so is the food at farmers markets
- Maintaining a healthy diet of fresh, locally grown foods can increase your overall health. A healthy body is better able to resist and fight disease.
- Promote the efforts the market is taking to minimize the risk to their customers

The latest recommendations from ADPH may be found at:

[COVID-19-Related Emergency Orders of State Agencies](#) and [ADPH News Releases](#). As this situation evolves, ADPH will provide updates on their COVID-19 web page at:
<http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/2019-coronavirus.html>

Name_____

Date_____