Guidelines for Farmers Marketing Direct to Consumers
Updated June 2020

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry understands that during this Covid-19 pandemic, producers and consumers alike want to know where to access fresh, safe foods. As Maine’s economy reopens during this ongoing civil emergency, farmers’ markets, farm stands, and CSAs continue to play a critical role as direct-to-consumer (DTC) food sources for many Mainers, including those living in rural areas and those using federal food benefits.

At all of these locations, the Department continues to strongly urge taking steps to facilitate social distancing, providing hand sanitizer/washing stations for shoppers and vendors, and prohibiting all food sampling. Resources regarding COVID-19 health information, worker safety, and best practices for safe business operations are available at the websites for the Department, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and the Maine Federation of Farmers’ Markets. Consumers, producers, and vendors all must practice excellent personal hygiene and stay home if unwell. DTC outlets are also encouraged to exercise their best judgment on a case by case basis on whether and when to be open to the public.

Recommended Practices for DTC Sites:

Social Distancing:

- Space vendors/booths as far apart as possible (indoor markets should consider having some vendors outside).
  - Market managers are encouraged to work with landowners (municipalities, etc.) to determine if new locations or expanded DTC footprints are possible to accommodate larger market areas.
- Plan site layout to avoid bottlenecks (such as by keeping entrances to indoor markets clear).
- Limit vendors to those selling food, horticultural products, and soap during the civil emergency.
  - If market managers believe that they have the physical space and capacity to allow additional producers to sell non-essential goods safely, they may do so.
- No musical performances, demonstrations, bistro tables, etc. should be allowed.
- Keep traffic flowing by encouraging quick transactions.
- All vendors and customers are to wear masks/face coverings unless they have an underlying health condition.¹
- Post simple signage reminding customers to:
  - Wear face coverings;
  - Wash hands;

¹ The Governor’s Executive Order 49 FY 19/20 issued April 29, 2020 states that individuals must wear cloth face coverings in public where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Public settings include outdoor spaces such as playgrounds, busy parking lots, and other areas such as lines for take-out service where the public typically gathers in a smaller area. Exceptions include children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or related medical conditions, or who is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. A person who cannot wear a cloth face covering because of a medical condition is not required to produce medical documentation of the condition.
Social Distancing (continued):
- Leave 6’ space between themselves and their nearest neighbor, including when waiting in line;
- Wash all produce before consumption; and
- Remain home if they are sick, even with mild illness
- Establish processes to allow shoppers to order ahead, if possible.
- Do not allow onsite food consumption.
- Maintain SNAP food access if applicable.

Sanitation:
- Offer hand sanitizer and/or handwashing stations for customers and vendors.
- Pre-package foods whenever possible (i.e., “grab and go” bags).
- No samples.
- Ensure that staff handling money, vouchers, and credit cards wear gloves, and consider keeping separate staff for payments and product handling/packaging.
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces regularly.
- Follow established disinfectant protocols (such as these from the National Pesticide Information Center).
- Follow simple CDC rules for washing hands and not touching faces.