

## Guidance for Iowa Farmers Markets During COVID-19

*Issued April 24, 2020*

COVID-19 is currently circulating in Iowa communities. All Iowa businesses have a responsibility to take measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is critical that farmers markets institute immediate changes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their staff, sellers, and buyers. **Farmers markets must ensure the mandatory steps put forth by the Proclamation of Disaster Emergency issued on April 24, 2020, are in place and enforced. This includes the sale of only farm products and food; the prohibition of entertainment, other social activities, and common seating; required six foot minimum vendor spacing and other spacing requirements; and social distancing, hygiene and public health measures. It is critical that market personnel review and enact the requirements in the Governor's proclamation. That proclamation can be found [here](#).**

Additionally, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) strongly recommend that all farmers markets adhere to the following guidance. Critically evaluate each market to determine whether it needs to be held. If a market opening date is prior to May 1st and can be postponed, please consider doing so. Regardless, take the following protective measures for all days the market is open during this declared emergency:

- Post signage at the entrances that prohibits anyone who has had a fever in the last three days, been ill, or is visibly showing signs of illness (i.e., coughing and sneezing) from entering the market.
- Post signage at the market entrances and exits instructing all staff, sellers, and buyers to practice social distancing, cover coughs and sneezes, and wash hands or use hand sanitizer often.
- Vendors should only allow necessary workers in stalls and other sales outlets; individuals not directly involved in sales are prohibited.
- Provide easy-to-access hand-washing or hand-sanitizing stations for vendor and customer use; if applicable, restock restrooms with hand-washing supplies frequently, including soap and paper towels.
- Encourage vendors who prepare foods at home, such as baked goods, to follow food safety practices during preparations and to securely wrap or package foods prior to bringing them to the market.
- Discourage vendors from offering food samples or serving foods that are intended for immediate or on-site consumption.
- Clean vendor surfaces frequently with soap and water. Use disinfectant wipes or other disinfectants. The CDC recommends five tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water. If possible, use easy-to-disinfect non-porous plastic tables.
- Encourage limited product-handling by customers and staff.
- Online ordering should be encouraged where available. Pre-bagged orders should be delivered to consumers in designated market delivery areas. (The exchange of goods must take place at the market during designated market hours. It is the responsibility of the vendor to ensure products are delivered to the consumer in a manner that protects foods from temperature abuse or contamination.)
- Reduce money handling (wear gloves when handling money) and promote touchless pay options.

**All Iowans have a responsibility to mitigate the impact of this public health crisis. If your farmers market cannot abide by these measures, please cancel your market until such time these guidelines can be enacted.**