



Guidance for Farmers Markets Operators to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 Virus

With COVID-19 spreading across the state and nation, Governor Pete Ricketts has issued guidelines to slow the spread of the virus. Under these guidelines, Nebraskans need to implement improved personal health practices to slow the spread of the virus. These practices include keeping at least six feet between each person, coughing and/or sneezing into our elbows, washing our hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds, and refraining from touching our face, nose, and eyes. In addition, public gatherings should be limited to no more than 10 people.

Governor Ricketts has issued a Directed Health Measures (DHM) for all Nebraska counties that further restrict activities. You can read more about those restrictions online at www.governor.nebraska.gov.

For purposes of clarity, farmers markets are not considered public gatherings under the statewide DHM, because of the nature of the business being conducted, as well as the ability of the markets to create appropriate social distancing. It is important for farmers markets to institute changes to slow the spread of COVID-19 amongst their vendors and market patrons.

All farmers market operators should first consult with their local health department to ensure that the market is able to meet all local health department guidelines.

NDA recommends that all farmers market operators also adhere to the following guidance:

- Increase the footprint of the markets to allow shoppers to maintain a healthy physical distance of at least 6 feet between each other.
- Adding chalk/tape lines to keep shoppers at least 6 feet apart. Directional arrows can also be utilized to direct patron flow through the market.
- Assign additional staff on the market grounds to regulate customer flow and ensure physical distancing.
- Allow only producers and their staff to handle products. Customers should shop with their eyes and wait to touch their produce or products until after they have purchased them.
- Separate farm stand spaces with at least 10 feet of distance between the tents, more where possible, to reduce congestion.
- Do not allow the sampling of products at markets, or selling of drinks (like cider, coffee, etc.) by the cup.
- Have producers and staff wear protective gloves.
- Ensure that farm stands are using vinyl or plastic table covers for easy sanitizing.
- Encourage producers to sanitize their stands regularly, primarily by wiping down tables, terminals, cash boxes, etc.
- Remind farmers about proper food handling.
- Make sure that producers and staff stay home if they are sick.
- Provide additional hand sanitizers at market stations.

- Discourage the use of reusable bags at this time.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently recommends that people should wear cloth face masks when out in public. (Don't wear N95 respirator masks or surgical masks as those should be reserved for health care workers who are facing a shortage of protective equipment.)
- Producers should consider using a credit-card reader when possible, to avoid the exchange of cash.
- Remind customers about proper food safety guidelines that recommend washing all produce thoroughly with water before using it. Do not wash fruits and vegetables with anything but water. The chemicals on wipes and chlorine solutions especially can be dangerous if ingested.

NDA recommends all farmers market patrons adhere to the following guidelines:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently recommends that people should wear cloth face masks when out in public. (Don't wear N95 respirator masks or surgical masks as those should be reserved for health care workers who are facing a shortage of protective equipment.)
- According to the CDC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the COVID-19 virus doesn't appear to be transmitted through food or food packaging. To be vigilant, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water, and don't eat your food with your hands.
- When you shop at a farmers market, go by yourself. Keep your distance between customers, in line, etc.
- Shop with your eyes. Don't touch everything. Just touch what you plan to purchase.
- Bring a list of items you would like to purchase so you can get in, quickly get what you need, and get out again.
- Do not use reusable grocery bags.