

Providing Safe Food Samples at Michigan Farmers Markets



Sampling products at a farmers market can be an excellent way to increase sales by initiating interactions with shoppers passing by, attracting them to your booth, and introducing them to new and unique products. Ensuring the safety of the samples you provide is paramount for the wellbeing of customers and the protection of your business.

All vendors sampling any products must:

- Cover samples** to protect them from exposure to customers, insects, and other environmental/weather conditions. The booth where samples are distributed must be covered by overhead protection **and** the samples themselves should be pre-packaged or covered.
- Have a hand-washing station** easily accessible to any employees/volunteers interacting with the samples. **Hands must be washed** before putting on gloves and in-between tasks. Direct hand contact with samples should be avoided, but doing so does not remove the requirement of a hand-washing station.
- Exclude employees/volunteers who have been ill** in the past 24 hours from interacting with the samples.
- Maintain proper temperature control** for heated samples and samples requiring refrigeration:
 - Hold **hot** items at **135°F** or higher.
 - Hold **cold** items at **41°F** or below. Ice used for cooling must be drained frequently to avoid soaking the product. Reusable ice packs should be clean in appearance and by touch.
 - Have a thermometer on-hand to monitor holding temperatures
- Use single service products to distribute** samples to customers such as toothpicks, sampling cups, or disposable utensils. Provide customers with a trash bin at your booth for disposing of these items.
- If **utensils** are needed to serve or prepare samples at the market, either **bring multiple sets** (at least one for every 4 hours of sampling) **or have a three basin warewashing station** available. Use clean utensils to cut product and store soiled utensils in a covered container and take them with you when you leave the market.
- If preparing samples in a booth located on dirt, gravel or another surface that can produce dust or mud, **cover the floor of the booth** with a temporary floor such as a tarp or washable mat.

The best practice is to prepare and package all samples in an approved facility and bring samples to the market in individually sized and packaged servings, maintaining proper temperature control when applicable. If you cannot prepare samples in advance due to quality control or other factors, cleanliness of on-site preparation space and utensils is especially important.

Fresh Fruit & Vegetables	Meat, Poultry, or Fish	Processed & Cottage Foods
Rinse all fruit and vegetables thoroughly with clean water before sampling	All product must come from inspected approved sources and should arrive at the market in pre-formed patties or pre-cut portions.	Packaged items may be opened one package at a time and sampled with single service products.
Melons and tomatoes must be stored at 41°F or below once cut	Cooked items must be held at 135°F or higher.	

Complete guidelines from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are available at www.michigan.gov/farmersmarkets. Updated December 2018.

For more information, visit www.mifma.org/foodsafety.

