

Checklist of Best Practices for Sampling at Farmers' Markets

We have laid the Best Practices out in chronological order: sampling event preparation, sampling deliver, and follow-up after the sampling event. We hope this helps you to think through preparing yourself and your products for sampling events.

Sampling Event Preparation

- I present a professional and clean appearance of myself and my products
- I have access to signage to indicate that I am providing samples today
- I understand that signs can help draw people to my booth, improve product presentation, and can help build my product's identity
- I have food allergy warning signs, if applicable
- I understand the typical sampling packaging for my product(s) and have obtained all necessary materials
- I will prepare enough samples for approximately every person who stops by my booth on a regular market day
- I have presented my products in a way that I hope provides customers with easy access to samples
- I will have products available to sell on days I provide samples, and will showcase them on my table
- I have enough help (employees, volunteers, etc.) to provide samples during a busy market day
- I have taken the opportunity to define terms like "certified," "sustainable," and other phrases mean when I use those terms
- I have developed storage guidelines for my products available for customers that may be new or unfamiliar to handling my farm's products
- I have educational materials (recipe cards, nutrition information) available to my customers
- I have acquired the proper utensils, materials and equipment to provide my customers with a safe sampling experience
- I have the proper hand washing station set-up and the wash-rinse-sanitize station set-up
- If selling meat, dairy, or processed products, I understand my legal regulations for sampling and labeling those products
- I am prepared to keep my sample products cold or hot
- I will store all of my food products at least 6" off of the ground
- I will try putting the product I'm sampling on sale during the time we are sampling
- I have thought about offering coupons, gift cards, or special offers during sampling events
- As a market vendor, I have the necessary product liability insurance coverage for my farm

Sampling Delivery

- I understand that growing relationships with my customers is just as critical as producing quality products
- I am prepared to engage customers by offering samples to each of them
- I am making the effort to connect personally with my customers to improve the conversation and the business relationship
- I provide nutritional information, a list of ingredients, and health information when sampling
- I have prepared recipe cards or idea lists for customers to learn how to use my products
- I have simple, clear printed materials (like a brochure or website) that provide information about my product and how it is produced
- I will discuss the benefits of my product's quality, freshness, or locally-grown attributes

Follow-up After the Sampling Event

- I have access to email, websites, social networking sites, and other communication channels to discuss products and availability
- I have thought about opportunities to create an event around sampling at different venues
- I have thought about working with other market vendors to do a pooled sampling event
- I have considered having a chef do a cooking demonstration using my products



To access our *Best Practices for Sampling at Farmers Markets: A Practical Guide for Farmers Market Vendors* publication online, please visit this link: <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/cmspubsclass/files/extensionpubs/2012-19.pdf>

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