



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM

The purpose of these guidelines is to highlight important food safety practices to take under consideration when vending at a farmers market. It also includes information on the various licensing requirements that may or may not be needed.

Licensure

There is a pretty good chance that if you are selling food at a RI farmers market you will need a license. However, exceptions do exist.

A license is NOT needed when selling

- Whole (UNCUT) Produce
- Honey

Farm Home Manufacturer License

Allows farmers to manufacture certain agricultural-based products in their residential farm home kitchen, for retail sale at farmers' markets and farm stands, only, in accordance with the requirements of the Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Food Protection. This license is limited to the production of non-potentially hazardous foods that do not require refrigeration, as outlined below. NO ACIDIFIED OR LOW-ACID HOME CANNED PRODUCTS are allowed (this includes pickled foods, salsa, tomato sauce, soups and peppers, string beans, etc.).

- Candies and fudges
- Double crust fruit pies (made with RI grown fruit)

- Dried herbs and spices
- Jams, jellies and preserves (prepared using RI grown fruit and vegetables)
- Maple syrup (from sap of trees on the farm or of trees within a 20-mile radius of the farm)
- Vinegars (prepared using RI grown herbs)
- Yeast Breads

The RI Farm Home Food Manufacture rules and license application can be found at:

[www.health.ri.gov/applications/
FoodFarmHomeManufacturer.pdf](http://www.health.ri.gov/applications/FoodFarmHomeManufacturer.pdf)

Retail Food Peddler's License

Allows for food products (sold or given as free samples) from a licensed retail or wholesale facility and foodservice operation for direct sale/service to the consumer at another site (e.g. farmer's market).

- ◆ Farmers selling only produce and/or honey do not need this licensure.
- ◆ Farmers with a Farm Home Manufacturer License do not need this licensure, but limited types of products can be produced.
- ◆ Fresh fish (cut or whole) CANNOT be sold

off the boat. It must first go to a licensed food processor following seafood regulations. The seller must have a Retail Food Peddlers license to sell fish at a farmers market.

- ◆ Food processors, food service operations and farmers giving out cut samples need a Retail Food Peddlers license to sell or provide free food samples to the public at a farmers market.
- ◆ Everyone cooking food on site for consumption needs a Retail Food Peddlers license (except those with a Food Service Mobile License).

Food Processor or a Food Service License

Allows individuals to process or prepare food products at their licensed processing or food service operation. In order to sell these products at a RI farmer's market, a Retail Food Peddler's License must be obtained in addition to the Food Processing or Food Service license.

Dealer's License (for Shellfish Business)

- ◆ Required for sale of shellfish as wholesale
- ◆ A dealer would also need a Retail Food Peddlers License to sell shellfish at a farmers market.
- ◆ Shellfish harvester tags must be kept on file per regulatory requirements

Selling Shellfish without a Dealer's License

- ◆ A Food Processing or a Food Service li-

cense is required

- ◆ A Retail Food Peddlers license is required
- ◆ **Shellfish harvester tags must be kept on file for 90 days from the sale of the fish.**

Farm Warehouse License (for Meat Products)

Allows farmers to take their animals to a USDA slaughterhouse and then to a licensed meat packing plant, where it must be packaged and frozen. A farmer would also need a Retail Food Peddlers License to sell frozen meat at a farmer's market.

Food Service Mobile License

Allows for the sale of food by food truck operators.

For more information about Rhode Island Department of Health licensing, please visit:

www.health.ri.gov/licensing/food/#processor

Foods Cooked on Site for Consumption

Everyone that is cooking at the farmers' market needs a Retail Peddlers License, a handwashing station and "3 bay sink" set up to wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils. A 3-bay sink is not necessary if you use single-use (i.e. plastic) knives that are thrown out often. No bare-hand-contact with ready-to-eat (RTE) foods, such as sandwiches. Utensils, napkins or single-use, latex-free gloves must be used to handle RTE food.



- ◆ In addition to a Retail Food Peddlers li-
cense, a Food Processing or a Food Ser-
vice license is required.

- ◆ If you have a Retail Food Peddlers license, but no other licensure, then Department of Health will oversee and further restrictions could be enforced.

Food Sampling

Giving out food samples at farmers market is a great way for customers to try new things. If not done properly, it can also be a source of a potential outbreak. The following provides best practices when giving out samples of food at farmers markets in Rhode Island.

Samples from Farmers Selling Produce

- Uncut Produce: Best practice is to serve samples individually in a single-serving container or by using toothpicks i.e. cherry tomatoes. No license needed.
- Cut Produce: Cut fruit and vegetable samples **MUST** be prepared at farmers' market. A Retail Food Peddlers license is required. Samples must be prepared at farmers market using single-use gloves, a 3-bay sink (*set up to wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils*) and a handwashing station OR instead of a 3-bay sink use single-use gloves and disposable knives that are thrown out often.
- **Best practice** is to cut samples as needed otherwise samples require temperature control for safety. These samples should be kept on ice in a cooler and taken out as needed.. Use a thermometer to determine that the temperature inside the cooler is at or below 41⁰F
- Discard samples that have sat at ambient

temperature after 4 hours (or after 2 hours during the warm summer months).

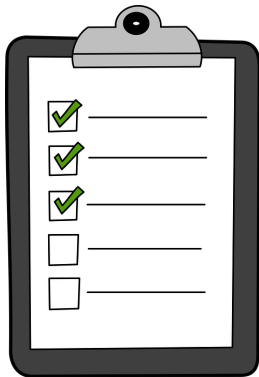
Samples of Products from other Vendors (sold or provided as free samples).

Best practice is to prepare individual samples in the on-farm residential kitchen (per Farm Home Food Manufacturer License) or licensed commercial kitchen, prior to arriving at the market. Serve the samples individually in a single-serving container or by using toothpicks.

- Samples prepared at farmers market must use single-use gloves, a 3-bay sink (*set up to wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils*) and a handwashing station OR instead of a 3-bay sink use single-use gloves and disposable knives that are thrown out often.
- Plastic knives should be thrown out at least every 4 hours, however, during the warm summer months, the knives should be replaced every 2 hours.
- Some foods require temperature control for safety. Cold foods must be held at or below 41°F. Examples include cheese and cut fruit. These samples should be kept on ice in a cooler. Use a thermometer to determine that the temperature in the cooler is at or below 41°F.
- Samples can be taken out of cold storage as needed or prepared as needed.
- Discard samples that have sat at ambient temperature after 4 hours (or after 2 hours during the warm summer months).
- Individual labels for each sample is not necessary, but you need to have properly label packages of your product on display with the samples so your customers can review the ingredient list. Key allergens must be included.

Farmers' Market

Best Practices



Vendors should practice good personal hygiene.

This includes:

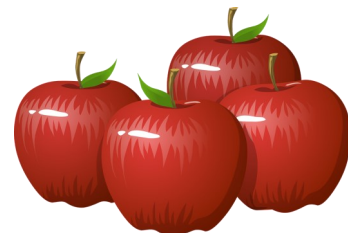
- having a clean body, hair, and clothes. Open sores should be covered and vendors should be free from any signs of illness.
- not smoking or eating while selling and/or handling food.
- using covered beverage containers (e.g. water bottles, cups with lids, etc.).

Vendors should practice food safety.

This includes:

- temperature control (i.e. potentially hazardous foods) for storing, transporting, and displaying food products that require temperature control for safety.
- ⇒ for example, eggs must be held at 41°F or below. They can be stored in a cooler with ice. Use a thermometer to determine that the temperature is at or below 41°F.

- separating raw food from ready-to-eat products to prevent cross contamination (e.g. raw meat, poultry, seafood, and/or eggs from produce).
- separating foods with key allergens and preventing cross contact between foods.
⇒ common allergens are peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, eggs, milk, wheat, soy.
- keeping all foods off the ground/floor during storage and display. All produce and foods should be kept at approximately 6 inches off the ground to prevent contamination.
- using containers that are easy to clean and sanitize between uses-plastic crates are best. Single-use cardboard boxes, plastic clamshells or mesh bags is a good alternative to wooden containers.
- using new bags of food-grade material to give purchased food to customers. Make sure bags are protected from pests and other sources of contamination.
⇒ The vendor has no responsibility for the cleanliness of a reusable bag that a customer brings.
- taking measures to prevent contamination of food products during transportation. Vehicles should be clean. Take measures to wrap, cover or otherwise protect food during transportation. Vehicles used to transport animals, compost or chemicals should not be used to transport food.



Handwashing and Single-Use Gloves



- Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds and dry with a paper towel.
- Hands should be washed before handling any type of food, after using the bathroom, after eating/drinking, anytime hands become contaminated, and between tasks. Prevent re-contaminating hands after washing. One way to do this is to use a paper towel to turn off the water and open any doors when leaving a bathroom.
- Hand sanitizers are NOT a replacement for handwashing.
- Cover wounds with band aids and/or non-latex gloves.
- No bare-hand-contact with ready-to-eat (RTE) food, such as sandwiches. Utensils, napkins or single-use gloves must be used to handle RTE food. This does not include uncut produce, such as apples and zucchini.
- Single-use gloves must be latex free in Rhode Island. Hands must be washed prior to putting gloves on and gloves

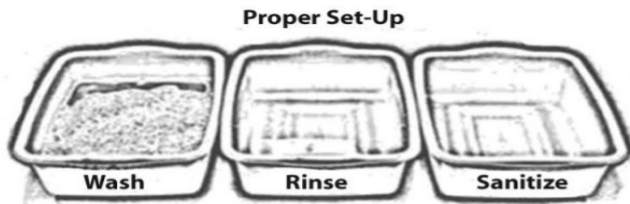
must be changed anytime handwashing is necessary.

A handwashing station set-up includes a container with a continuous flow spigot filled with potable/drinkable water, a bin to collect wash water, soap, disposable paper towels and a garbage can .

Proper Handwashing Station



3-Bay Sink Setup to Wash, Rinse and Sanitize



- Potable water must be used to wash, rinse and sanitize.
- Cleaning compounds and sanitizing agents should be safe and appropriate for food contact surfaces. They must be unscented.
- Commercial germicidal bleach contains 8.25% sodium hypochlorite. Chlorine bleach comes in several concentrations, so read the label.
- To prepare a 100 ppm solution of bleach (containing 8.25% sodium hypochlorite):
 - ⇒ 1 teaspoon bleach per gallon water
 - ⇒ ¼ teaspoon bleach per quart water
- Use chlorine sanitizer test strips to confirm the correct concentration is prepared. Monitor sanitizer concentration over time and with use.



To wash, rinse and sanitize:

1. First, remove soil and food debris from item(s) to be cleaned and sanitized.
2. Wash item(s) in soapy water. Rinse the item(s) in clean, potable water.
3. Immerse item(s) in bleach sanitizer for 1-2 minutes.
4. Finally, air dry items when possible or dry with paper towel or clean cloth and prevent recontamination.

For more information visit the URI Food Safety Education's website, web.uri.edu/foodsafety, where you can watch food safety presentations for farmers' market vendors and/or managers. Handouts such as;

“Decision Making Tools: What License do I Need at a RI Farmers' Market?”

and

“A Food Safety Assessment Tool for RI Farmers' Market Managers”

are also available.

You can also email the food safety team at urifoodsafety@etal.uri.edu for assistance.

URI is an **equal opportunity** employer committed to the principles of affirmative action.