



Food Safety

Food Safety for Farmers Market Vendors Series¹

Selling Prepared Foods and Baked Goods

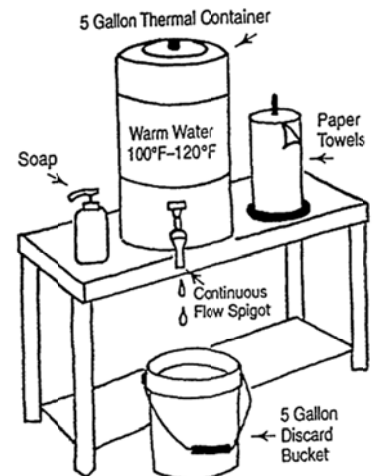
UVM Extension Fact Sheet- September 2011

Farmers Markets are an important part of Vermont’s culture and economy. To protect this valuable outlet for Vermont’s local products, it is essential that the food sold at Farmers Markets is produced and processed according to the VT Department of Health and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture rules, regulations and guidelines. Not only will this produce products that are as safe as possible, it will also assure your customers that your business, as well as the entire farmers market, has product quality and safety in mind.

*****Note that all practices below which are REQUIRED by state regulations are listed in bold and italics. All other practices listed are strongly recommended for food safety.***

Preparing and selling ready-to-eat foods

- ***To prepare (including any altering or heating of the food on-site) foods at the market to sell, you must obtain a temporary food stand license from the VT Department of Health². This applies to ALL sizes of operations.***
 - o ***This license requires a hand-washing station (such as the one pictured above), including warm water, wastewater holding container, soap, and paper towels in their stand.***³
 - Note that WARM water is important to help remove any protein or fat residue from your hands.
- ***Vendors must wash their hands frequently***, particularly after handling any raw product, before serving any product, after using the toilet, and before beginning food preparation.
- ***Vendors that prepare ready-to-eat food at home and bring it to the market packaged and ready for sale (with no altering or re-heating on site) require a home caterer license (or commercial caterer, as appropriate)***⁴



¹ Other sheets in this series include: General Food Safety Practices, Providing Samples, Selling Fresh Produce; and Selling Fresh and Frozen Meat, Eggs and Dairy

² Contact the VT Dept of Health Food and Lodging Program at 802-863-7221. Detailed listing of the Temporary Food Stand Requirements is available from: <http://nofavt.org/sites/default/files/Food%20Vending%20Requirements.pdf>

³ See http://pubstorage.sdstate.edu/AgBio_Publications/articles/ExEx14083.pdf (South Dakota State Cooperative Extension) for examples of other low cost hand washing setups. See the following for an example of a product that can heat and dispense water for hand washing: http://www.coleman.com/coleman/ColemanCom/detail.asp?CategoryID=2200&product_id=2000007107#

⁴ A Classification of Food Establishment Licenses and requirements for each is available in: http://www.healthvermont.gov/regs/03food_estab.pdf

- ***If selling cold or hot foods, adequate refrigeration and/or hot-holding units must be utilized.***
- ***Cook foods to the proper temperature during preparation***⁵
- ***Serve hot foods immediately or hot hold foods at the proper temperature. Use a food thermometer probe to check temperatures.*** Such a thermometer can be purchased for < \$10 in most supermarkets and hardware stores.
 - ***Hot foods must be held at 135 °F or above***
 - ***Reheat foods that have been cooled to at least 165 °F before serving or hot holding at 135 °F or above.***
 - ***Cold foods that are potentially hazardous, such as potato salads or dairy products, must be held at 41 °F or below***
- ***Use gloves, deli tissue, spatulas or other dispensing equipment to handle food, rather than your bare hands.***
- ***Flies and other insects must not be allowed to contact food.*** Therefore, vendors should keep food covered.
- For the safety of consumers with food allergens, it is a good practice to post a list of all ingredients and clearly identify any of the common allergens in your products- including milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soy.

Selling baked goods (breads, cakes, cookies, pies, etc.)



- Ensure that the goods are adequately covered to prevent insects, stray hands, or other potential sources of contamination from contacting the products.
- ***Label all packaged goods according to the state requirements for food labeling. These requirements include***⁶:
 1. The name of the product
 2. Name and address of the person that made and is selling the product
 3. Quantity of the product; and
 4. The product ingredients. This is particularly important for customers that have food allergies.
- ***A home bakery license from the VT Department of Health is required for individuals baking at home with home equipment and gross sales over \$6,500/year***⁷. A commercial bakery license (small or large) is required for all larger bakery operations.

Selling jams, jellies, and canned foods

- These products may be processed safely in a home kitchen; however, processors should ensure that they use USDA-recommended recipes⁸ and follow good sanitary procedures to ensure the safety of these products.
 - Canned goods with high acid or sugar content (such as pickled products, tomato products, jams and jellies) can be safely preserved in a boiling water bath. Low acid canned goods such as vegetables (without vinegar) MUST be properly processed in a pressure cooker to prevent *C. botulinum*.
- ***Products must be labeled according to state requirements for food labeling*** (see list in baked goods section above)
- ***Food processors that sell more than \$10,000 of food products/year, or sell to other licensed establishments, are required to have a Food Processors License from the VT State Department of Health***⁹.

⁵ Meats, poultry and egg dishes must be cooked to higher temperatures, depending on the type of product, but must be held for serving at 135F or above. See <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html> for safe minimum cooking temperatures.

⁶ All individually wrapped and packaged products must be properly labeled under both Federal and State regulations. For specific questions, contact the Vermont Agency of Agriculture (Henry Marckres at 802-828-3458 or henry.marckres@state.vt.us)

⁷ Application and information available from: http://www.healthvermont.gov/enviro/food_lodge/food_lodge_guide.aspx

⁸ Botulism in home canned goods is a major concern. Safe recipes and research-based preservation safety information from USDA are available from the National Center for Home Food Preservation: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>

⁹ Application and information available from: http://www.healthvermont.gov/enviro/food_lodge/food_lodge_guide.aspx

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Other useful resources:

- Complete List of State of Vermont Regulations for Selling at Farmers Markets
<http://nofavt.org/sites/default/files/Regulations%20for%20FM%20Vendors.pdf>
- Food Safety at Farmers Markets and Agritourism Venues (University of California Small Farm Center)
http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/farmers_market/food_safety.pdf
- General Farmers Market information (University of Vermont Extension)
<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/community/?Page=development.html>
- Video on food safety at farmers markets: <http://www.ksfarmersmarkets.org/resources/food-safety-at-the-market-video-resources?v=producers>
- VT Farmers Market Association: <http://www.vtfma.org/>
- NOFA Farmers Market information: <http://nofavt.org/market-organic-food/farmers-markets>

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