



2022 Farmers' Market Vendor Handbook

Overview

Welcome

Since 1999, Countryside has connected people, food, and land throughout Northeast Ohio. Our programs re-establish farms in Cuyahoga Valley National Park, operate farmers' markets in the greater Akron area, and educate citizens about the importance of local food and farming. We also help up-and-coming farmers, and connect local growers to chefs and consumers.

As a partner of Cuyahoga Valley National Park, we assist in managing the Countryside Initiative program, with farms located within the boundaries of our National Park. These farms are committed to sustainable agriculture and work hard with their park partners to be good land stewards. Together, the farms and Countryside bring over 100,000 visitors to the valley each year and have an economic impact of millions of dollars.

As an outgrowth of the Countryside Initiative program, we began managing farmers' markets in 2004. Currently, we manage a summer market and a winter market in the Cuyahoga Valley.

For details on any of our programs, visit our website: countrysidefoodandfarms.org.

Countryside Farmers' Market Purpose

The purposes of the Countryside Farmers' Markets are three-fold:

- Provide a venue where local farmers, producers, artisans, and artists can sell their high-quality products directly to the consumer.

- Connect consumers with a wide array of locally grown and produced foods and goods in a setting that allows them to interact directly with the grower or producer, thereby re-connecting them directly to the source of their food.
- Create a space that allows for community interaction and enjoyment, informal public education and civic engagement.

Countryside Policy & Procedure Right to Revision

This Countryside Farmers' Market Vendor Handbook Overview provides applicants with the general policies, procedures and guidelines for our markets prior to submitting an application. Once accepted, the complete Vendor Handbook will be provided to you with additional details on the topics provided herein as well as market day arrival/departure details, food safety information, and other important information. Please do not submit your application until you have read this overview in its entirety.

Countryside reserves the right to amend, in whole or in part, the vendor handbook and its contained policies and procedures at any time and for any reason. Countryside will provide vendors with a copy of any revisions in a timely manner to be agreed to by all parties. Signed acknowledgment of any changes is required for continued participation in the market.

2022 COVID Response

Due to the COVID pandemic and the modifications required to operate a safe market, a detailed plan for operations will be released prior to the start of the Howe Meadow and Old Trail School Winter seasons. Vendors accepted to these markets will have the opportunity to review operations and requirements; signed agreement to these policies and procedures will be required for continued participation in the markets. Countryside is a partner of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and operates its markets on federal lands. Therefore we follow federal guidelines regarding pandemic operations and best practices.

As part of the COVID response, CFM adopted the use of Local Food Marketplace, an online sales platform. Policies and procedures related to LFM can be found in the Attachments section of the Accepted Vendors Handbook.

2022 Market Dates

- Countryside Farmers' Market at Howe Meadow • 4040 Riverview Road, Peninsula • Saturdays, 9am-12pm • May to October
- Countryside Old Trail School Winter Farmers' Market • 2315 Ira Road, Bath • Saturdays, 9am-12pm • weekly in November & December || bi-weekly January to April

Allowable Vendors & Product Categories

Vendors

The following list comprises the categories of vendors we accept as part of our farmers' markets. We consider our markets incubators for small businesses and, therefore, do not consider corporately owned businesses or franchises to be a fit for our markets.

- Farmers are persons actively involved and invested in the planting, growing and harvesting of agricultural products on owned, rented, leased or share-cropped land.
- Producers are persons actively involved and invested in the growing, raising, harvesting, fishing, wild-crafting or producing of the product sold at the market. A producer may sell fish and seafood products, wild-crafted/foraged products.
- Processors are persons actively involved in the processing of products sold at the market. A processor may sell processed farm foods, value-added processed foods, and on-premise prepared foods.
- Artists are persons actively involved in the creation of unique, hand-crafted products not meant for consumption.
- Cooperatives are formal groups of growers, producers or artists and shall be considered based on space availability, market needs, and product offerings.
- Non-Profit Booths Educational, community service, and non-profit organizations are eligible to participate in the market, subject to review and approval by Market Managers – provided space is available. Such organizations will be allowed participation based on an application process specific to the non-profit space. No political campaigning or religious organizations may participate. To receive an application for a non-profit booth, please contact the farmers' market manager: Rachel Kent at rkent@countrysidefoodandfarms.org.

Products

All products must be grown, raised, produced, caught or gathered by the vendor in Ohio, and must be pre-approved before being sold at the market. Products from neighboring states may be permitted at the

discretion of the market management on a case by case basis. The categories and definitions of products to be sold at the market are:

- **Farm Products** are those items grown or raised by the farmer upon land that they control through ownership, lease, rental or other legal agreement. These products are fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, honey, eggs, herbs, meat and dairy products.
- **Processed Farm Products** are farm products made from raw ingredients, a majority of which are grown and produced by the farmer. These products include all farm products that must in some way be processed including cheeses, dairy, meats, viticulture, dried fruits and vegetables, juices, jam or other processed agricultural and livestock food products. Some processed farm products are not processed by the farmer but are processed products which the vendor made from raw ingredients purchased from a local farmer which have been cooked, canned, dried, baked, preserved, or otherwise significantly treated. Those are referred to as value-added products. Thus, CFM recognizes the distinction between processed farm products made by the farmer and those value added products that are purchased and then processed.
- **Fish and Seafood Products** are raised or caught by the producer in Ohio waters.
- **Nursery Products** are grown or raised by the farmer upon land that s/he controls through ownership, lease, rental, or other legal agreement. Nursery products are fresh cut or potted flowers, bedding plants, seeds, perennials, annuals, trees, or shrubs that are propagated from seed, cuttings, bulbs, plugs or plant divisions.
- **Wild-crafted/Foraged Products** are wild berries, ramps, fiddlehead ferns and other such edibles gathered from public or private land by the vendor. It is currently illegal to sell wild foraged mushrooms in Ohio.
- **Processed Food Products** are: Processed Farm Products, Value-Added Foods, and On-Premise Prepared Food.
- **Value-Added Foods** are processed products which the vendor made from raw ingredients which have been cooked, canned, dried, baked, preserved, including artisan baked goods, spreads, and condiments.
- **On-Premise Prepared Foods** are freshly made foods available for sale and immediate consumption on site.
- **Processed Non-Food Agricultural Products** are agricultural by-products which the vendor has grown/produced that are not edible, have been altered from their raw state, and are handcrafted or processed by the vendor. These items may include milk-based soaps, beeswax candles, pelts, and fiber.
- **Art/Craft Products** are non-food products which have been made, produced or built by the vendor locally.
- **Other Products** may be allowed at the market at the discretion of Countryside.

Vendors **MUST** have pre-approval from the Market Manager before selling ANY product. If vendors wish to add to their original list, they must submit additions to the Market Manager in writing for approval a minimum of one week before they wish to sell the product(s).

Unallowable Products

1. Second hand (flea-market type products) will not be permitted.
2. Livestock or dairy products containing growth hormones, such as rBGH, may not be sold at the market.

Application Process

General

Applications will be available online. If you are unable to complete the application online, please contact the Market Manager for a paper copy.

Please read this handbook carefully to ensure your products qualify and you can abide by the rules and regulations of the market.

Summer Market

Applications for vendors for outdoor seasonal markets are accepted during an annual period starting in January. The application will be available on Countryside's website.

1. Applications will open for returning vendors in January. Returning vendors will have a priority application period of two weeks.
2. New vendor applications will open two weeks after returning vendors are able to apply.
3. Vendors are required to submit a complete list of all products they wish to sell with their application.
 - a. For farmers this includes listing specific varieties of your products.
 - b. For processed and prepared food vendors this includes specific flavors and a list of ingredients and where they are sourced.
4. Review of applications and consideration for vendor acceptance is conducted by the Countryside Local Food Programs Advisory Committee (LFAC).
 - a. The Committee is composed of Countryside staff and board members, farmers' market vendors, volunteers and shoppers.
 - b. Countryside weights the collective recommendations of the LFAC to make its final decision to accept or decline an applicant.
5. Vendors will be notified of decisions in February/March.
6. Farmers must arrange a time for the market management to conduct a farm visit prior to the market's opening. Refusal to allow a farm visit will result in an automatic denial of the application.
7. Producers, Processors, and Artists will be contacted upon receipt of their application with details on how to proceed.

8. Vendors will be required to submit all necessary licenses, proof of insurance and membership fees no later than mid-April. The Market Manager will give a specific date.
 - a. Accepted vendors will not be permitted to set up at the market until all required paperwork is complete. No documents or fees will be accepted at the first market.
 - b. An additional \$10 will be charged for each week these documents and fees are late past the due date. The Market Manager will communicate due dates to vendors.
9. Inquiries regarding produce needs and space availability should be directed to Rachel Kent, Farmers' Market Manager, at rkent@countrysidefoodandfarms.org.
10. Once all available market spaces have been taken, all other applicants will be placed on a waiting list, and will be contacted as spaces become available, and may re-apply for the market the following year.
11. Applications once the market season begins are by invitation only.

Winter Market

1. Applications for vendors for the winter market are accepted during an annual application period starting in September. Additional information, including timeline, will be available in August.
2. Vendors participating in outdoor seasonal markets will be given priority. External vendors will be considered based on product offerings, attendance availability, and space availability.
3. Acceptances are on a per market basis; once an application has been submitted and accepted, additional market dates will likely not be available. A Wait List will be generated from those vendors not accepted based on space availability. If space becomes available, vendors on the waitlist will be notified as soon as possible.
4. Acceptance of new vendors for the winter market does not guarantee acceptance for any other Countryside Farmers' Markets.
5. Inquiries regarding produce needs and space availability should be directed to Rachel Kent, Farmers' Market Manager, at rkent@countrysidefoodandfarms.org.

Criteria for Selection

General Acceptance Qualifications

Countryside is dedicated to creating a diverse market with only the highest quality products. Approval to participate in Countryside Farmers' Markets will not exceed one market season. Although we reserve unconditional discretion to accept or refuse anyone as a Countryside Farmers' Market vendor, we consider many factors when evaluating applications to sell at our markets. Outlined below are the general guidelines used when evaluating all potential vendors. Further criteria are used for specific categories of vendors, which are described in further detail following the general list.

Agriculture Criteria

1. Priority is given to those regional farmers and producers who bring products to market that are 100% grown and harvested on farmland that they own and/or operate.
2. Preference will be given to the most local producer when a space becomes available at the market, without compromising quality.
3. Farmers have priority over processed or on-premise prepared foods.
4. Producers who use environmentally responsible growing practices and animal husbandry will be given priority.

Product Quality and Presentation

1. Consistently high product quality: fresh, flavorful and ripe
2. Clean and attractive displays

Conduct and Compliance

1. History of compliance with market rules and federal, state and local regulations
2. Foster a connection between the producer and the consumer
3. Vendor conduct toward customers, fellow vendors, market staff and volunteers
4. Timely submission of application, licenses, and other market correspondence

Diversity and Balance of Products

1. Unique, unusual or unrepresented products
2. Duplicate products may be denied entry if it impacts the balance of supply and demand.

Food Safety

1. Adheres to the highest standards in safe food production and handling practices

Market Needs/Space availability

1. Admission to CFM is subject to market product balance and space availability

Seniority

1. Number of years vendor has sold at CFM
2. Number of CFM in which vendor participates
3. Attendance record

Producers and Processors Criteria

For the purposes of these guidelines, processed foods are defined as value-added farm foods, non-farm processed foods, and on-premise prepared foods.

Ingredient Sourcing (in order of priority and without compromising quality standards) some portion of the processed food ingredient list must be sourced locally and/or directly from their producers

1. Grown by processor
2. Sourced from CFM vendors
3. Sourced locally and directly

Production

1. Priority will be given to products processed by the vendor over products produced by a second party or co-packer

Artisan Quality

1. Flavor
2. Smell
3. Texture
4. Unique and handmade of the highest quality

Labeling/Packaging

1. Legal requirements (weight, ingredients, etc.)
2. Low environmental impact
3. Aesthetics

Vendors of Processed Farm Products, Value-Added Products, and On-Premise Prepared Food

Products: Priority will be given to vendors who use products from participating farms, process the product themselves, and who highlight regional produce and seasonal ingredients.

Vendors of Processed Non-Food Agricultural Products

1. Products must be handcrafted or processed by the vendor.
2. Priority will be given to wool/yarn vendors that do the spinning themselves, preferably from their own animals.
3. Pelts must be from the vendor’s own animals.

Artist Criteria

In addition to the factors and criteria under General Acceptance, artwork must be submitted for product jury. The market will allow not more than 10% of spaces to be taken by artists.

Fee Structure and Remittance Process

Fee Structure

All fees are used to support the development, management, operation, and promotion of the Countryside Farmers’ Markets.

Please note, Countryside is evaluating its 2022 fee structure. The fees noted below are subject to change. Ample notice will be provided prior to the market vendor acceptance dates.

Market	Membership Fees (remitted upon acceptance to market)	Daily Market Fees* (submitted each market day in which a vendor participates)
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Howe Meadow Market	\$165 for returning vendors; \$175 for new vendors	\$20 minimum per 10x10 space or 6% of sales, whichever is greater
Online sales via Countryside LFM Curbside (TBD for 2022 Howe Meadow season)	N/A	Monthly platform fee: \$20 At market: 6% of sales for onsite vendors or 9% of sales for online only vendors

*Minimum fees, particularly at the November-April markets, are determined based on vendor participation and cost of location and associated needs.

Returned Check Policy: Checks returned for non-sufficient funds (NSF) will be charged a \$25 fee. Vendors will not be permitted to attend the market until the matter is resolved.

Unpaid Fees: Vendors with unpaid fees due at the end of the season will not be allowed to return the following year.

Electronic Payment

Countryside pays all vendors via ACH direct deposit. We will not mail checks to vendors.

1. Each vendor must complete the online ACH Authorization form provided via email. Vendors may also send Countryside staff a voided check prior to the first market. This will be used to process all payments due to the vendor. This must be completed before the vendors first market attendance.
2. Reimbursements owed to vendors will be processed and deposited by the Friday immediately following the market. The minimum balance for reimbursement is \$25. Anything less will accrue until \$25 is reached or until the end of the season.
3. Any billing discrepancies or questions must be communicated to the Countryside Office Manager (admin@countrysidefoodandfarms.org) within one month to resolve undue charges.

Market Fees

Weekly and annual fees owed to Countryside will be billed to the vendors via Quickbooks and can be paid either:

- Online via bank transfer
- Card
- Check mailed to the office
- Given to market staff on site

Weekly fees owed will accrue and be billed to the vendor on a bimonthly basis.

Post-Market Token Reimbursement Process

- Market staff/volunteers will distribute pouches approximately 15 minutes prior to the close of each market. This will contain a Sales Reporting form to be completed and returned in the pouch. All tokens and vouchers being submitted for reimbursement should also be placed in the pouch.
- Token and voucher reimbursement value will be verified post-market by market staff. Vendors must wait while tokens are being counted by market staff.
- Vendors should continue to sell products until the market has officially ended. Vendors are to return the pouch to the CFM Information Booth no later than 30 minutes after the close of the market.

Other Important Information

Countryside works to enhance local food access to all community members. To assist in this mission, our farmers' markets offer and accept four different tokens and two coupons: credit card tokens, SNAP/EBT tokens, Produce Perks (a SNAP nutrition incentive), Carrot Cash (a WIC nutrition incentive), WIC Vouchers, and Senior Farmers' Markets Nutrition Program Vouchers. More details about these programs and tokens will be provided in the Accepted Vendor handbook.

All vendors are responsible for knowing and obtaining all relevant licenses, certificates and insurance. Countryside must have copies of all documentation before a vendor will be allowed to sell at the market. More details regarding these can be found in the Accepted Vendor Handbook.

Countryside has a grievance procedure policy and is outlined in the Accepted Vendor Handbook.