

METHOW VALLEY FARMERS MARKET

POLICY HANDBOOK

2012

The purpose of the Methow Valley Farmers Market is to promote and encourage the development of local small-scale agriculture, food processing, and artisan crafts by providing and administering a seasonal marketplace for the products of these activities. The market plays a key role in advancing local food security and enhancing community health.

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Section 1: Product Guidelines

Vendors will sell only those products allowed by Market policies. Products not covered under these policies may be allowed only following Board approval. Any vendor wishing to sell a product not allowed by these guidelines may apply to the Board of Directors to request an exception. (See the section of the Membership Application for "Requests for Exceptions").

Section 2: Membership

2.1 Guiding Principles

The Methow Valley Farmers Market is directly reflective of the independent spirit, diversity, and creativity of Okanogan County. The Market Board has compiled some guiding principles to help maintain a consistent and high standard for the future of the Market.

The following are principles the Board considers when reviewing vendor applications each year: a vendor will be committed to employing extraordinary and innovative practices that benefit his/her employees, our community, our customers and our environment; the items produced will be marketed in an environmentally and socially responsible manner; and the business practices of the applicant will foster community self-reliance by using local labor, and locally available materials as much as possible.

2.2 Application Approval Criteria

Every vendor must fill out a vendor application, be approved by the Board, and pay their yearly application processing fee IN ADVANCE of selling at Market. If a vendor arrives without having submitted an application and/or paid their application processing fee, they WILL NOT be allowed to set up a booth until these requirements are met. They will be given an application to fill out, but will not be allowed to enter the Market area and set up until the application has been completed and approved. Approval received at the Market is probationary, good only for that week. The vendor may NOT participate in any following Market unless and until they have received advice of Board approval of their application.

The following criteria are used to determine whether or not a vendor application will be approved:

1. Applicant must reside in Okanogan County for a period of 6 months per year minimum. (Farmers from Bridgeport may be included on an exception basis.)
2. Applicant has no outstanding/delinquent fees from the previous season.
3. Applicant' products must meet HOMEGROWN/HANDMADE criteria per applicable vendor type description.
4. In previous season(s), applicant has abided by the rules and policies of the MVFM Association.
5. It is recognized that there are legitimate exceptions to acceptance policies as stated, and the Market desires to be inclusive rather than exclusive in approach. Applicants are encouraged. All exceptions will be considered by the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis. Exception acceptance will be on an annual basis.
6. Food processors are expected to meet all Local, County, State, and Federal regulations before selling products at Market.
7. All vendors are expected to have appropriate business licenses.
8. Farm products being sold as organically grown should be in compliance with USDA regulations. (See Addendum for standards.)

2.3 Vendor Types

Vendor members must be local farmers, handcrafters, and food processors. Vendor members in good standing, those who have paid current year's dues and reside in Okanogan County (and Bridgeport farmers), and attended no less than 5 Markets during the previous year, have voting rights, with one vote per application.

Membership is limited to individuals or households. Applicants in partnerships, associations, and businesses with established storefronts, etc., must apply to and receive specific approval from the Board before acceptance to sell at the Farmers Market.

All one-time vendors must become Market members by filling out an application and paying the full application processing fee. Stall fees for one-time vendors are the same as those for regular vendors, including reduced rates for seniors and children or half stalls.

2.3.1 Farmers

Farmer members are persons who raise produce (vegetables, fruits, herbs, flowers, or nursery crops) from seed or plants, and care for, cultivate, and harvest the crops offered for sale at the Farmers' Market. Farmer Members are not to sell anything produced by another farmer, individual or household without approved permission from the Board. Nursery plants sold must have been in the care and possession of the vendor for at least 60 days prior to selling. Also in this category are beekeepers, egg farmers, livestock and poultry farmers and farmers who process their own raw materials into "value-added" items. **Produce being sold as organic should meet the USDA definition of organic.** Please see addendum for the requirements. Farmer vendors must make at least 80% of their annual gross Farmers' Market revenue from the products they raise, (as opposed to crafts they may make), to qualify for the Farmer category of membership. Farmers with seasonal products, who are also crafters, will be assigned to the farmer category only when their product is in season and it is their primary item at the Market. All craft items must fully meet the criteria for crafted items.

2.3.2 Crafters

Crafters are persons who craft with their own hands the products they offer for sale at the Farmers' Market. To qualify as a crafter, a majority of the tools and equipment used must require skills and personal handling by the crafter. Work should be handmade with appropriate tools, showing imagination, skill, and the mark of the craftsperson's individuality. Any items made from kits, commercially available plans or transfers, and items that are or appear to be mechanically mass-produced are not allowed. The Market Master, Market Aide, and Board of Directors reserve the right to disqualify craft items from being offered for sale at the MV Farmers' Market based on these standards.

2.3.3 Service Providers

These vendors offer special services to customers (i.e., knife sharpening, face painting, etc.). Service providers may only sell items if they comply with the standards set for crafters, farmers or food providers. Service providers seeking exceptions must request approval through the application process or through a written request made to the Board.

2.3.4 Food Vendors and Processors

Food vendors and Processors are persons offering food products that they have processed themselves into the product being offered for sale at the Market. These products may be "ready-to-eat", pre-packaged, or a combination of both. A food processor should meet all Local, County, State, and Federal regulations before selling their products at Market. All permits and licenses required should be obtained and viewable at the Market booth. (See section "Health Practices" for licensing and permitting requirements.) It is the vendor's responsibility to be familiar with Local, County, State, and Federal health regulations regarding their products, and to be in compliance with those regulations. The Okanogan County Health Inspector makes routine visits to the MVFM. The Market Master, Aide and Board of Directors reserve the right to request the inspection of food items and or vendors by the Health Inspector.

2.3.5 Importers/Resellers

Only four (4) vendors, who have been grandfathered into the Market, may apply for membership. Their continued participation in the Market as resellers is based upon their compliance with the following guidelines. NO ADDITIONAL importer/reseller vendors will be allowed.

Importers/Resellers **must** at each Market display a sign at least 8x10 in size that gives the following information:

- Place of origin where products were obtained.
- How and by whom the products were made.

Pricing is expected to be consistent with comparable locally-made products.

2.3.6 Entertainers

Entertainers must coordinate with the Market Master for scheduling times and performance locations within the market.

2.3.7 Art, Non-Profit, and Civic Groups

"Community Groups" are allowed stall space at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors. Application to the Board should be made two weeks in advance of the requested Market Day because the Group must present an approved application to the Market Master on their first day. A special application must be submitted with an explanation of the activities they plan at the booth and the purpose of the organization.

In order to be accepted, the application must show that one of the following is true:

1. The purpose of the Community Group is consistent with the purpose of the MVFM, as described in the MVFM mission statement on the handbook's cover.
2. The requested stall will serve the community.
3. The requested stall will enhance the MVFM in some way.

Any activity that might compete with vendors will not be allowed. Political advocacy, proselytizing, and promotion of an ideology are not compatible with the purpose of the Market. Vendors have priority over Community Groups for stall space. There is no application fee for Community Groups but the appropriate stall

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fee applies. Approved Community Groups are non-voting, associate members. The Board of Directors may revoke an approved Community Group application at any time at its sole discretion.

2.3.8 Guest Vendors

The Board of Directors will consider out-of-area vendor applications on an exception basis. All out of area vendor application must receive Board review and approval and have the associated application processing fee paid prior to a guest vendor arriving at the Market. Approved guest vendors may sell fruits, vegetables, processed food, and artisan crafts that are not available locally. Board approval will include specific itemization of the products that may be sold. Guest vendors are prohibited from augmenting their sales with products that are available from other vendors who meet the Market's residency requirements. Failure to follow this policy will result in permanent expulsion from the Market. The Board has the authority to limit the number of guest vendors for any given Market; all guest vendors must receive approval for specific, scheduled Market days. Any given guest vendor will be limited to two Markets in any given year.

2.3.9 Others

It is recognized that there are vendors who do not fit into any outlined category (e.g., wild crafters). The Board of Directors will consider these on a case-by-case basis.

2.4 Agents

An agent may sell a vendor member's product or produce provided that the vendor member himself/herself sells at Market 3 out of 4 days of each month of attendance. One vendor may not sell for another vendor member except in the case of an emergency, or short breaks during the day.

Section 3: Stall Information

3.1 Stall Assignment

- All assigned spaces will be awarded/mapped prior to the opening day of Market each year in April.
- All vendors requesting an assigned stall space must submit their completed application and annual membership fees to the Board post marked by **April 1st, 2011**.
- The Board will do a layout of general market areas for vendors based on history of use.
- The Market Master and Board will make initial stall assignments, on which all future stall assignments will be based, in accordance with seniority, history of use, and general area.
- Seniority points will be awarded for each market attended.
- Non-farmer vendors with at least 19 market days the previous year are eligible for an assigned space.
- Farmer vendors with at least 10 market days the previous year are eligible for an assigned space.
- First year vendors **will not** get assigned stalls. The Market Master will place them each week based on general category and space availability.
- **Vendors without assigned stalls must get a weekly assignment, given on a first-come, first-served basis, by the Market Master. Vendors should arrive at 7 o'clock and park in the alley across from the Commons to wait for their stall assignment.**
- Daily cut-off time for vendors with assigned stalls to arrive to secure their stalls will be **7:30 a.m.**
- All vendors with assigned stalls are asked to notify Market Master Willie Getz, 996-2747, no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday if they will not be at that week's market, so the space can be re-assigned.
- Vendors who wish to change stall assignments may indicate such on their annual application. When a space becomes available, the vendor next in line on the seniority list will have the "right of first refusal".

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- Vendors may take a one-season sabbatical without losing seniority points. They will not gain seniority points for that year. Upon returning, they will be issued a new stall assignment based on history of use and their standing on the seniority list.
- **The Board reserves the right to consider unique situations and requirements regarding stall assignments on a case-by-case basis.**

3.2 Stall Fees

The Board of Directors, prior to each Market season, establishes the stall fee. The stall fee for each Market during the 2012 season is \$8.00. In certain cases, such as a ½ stall space, seniors 66 or older, or child, the stall fee may be reduced to \$4.00. The Market Master will collect fees at each Market. Upon payment, the vendor will sign the Market roll sheet with the **vendor name** on their Market Vendor Application (**not** their business name). The stall fee for one-time vendors is the same as for regular members, with reduced rates for seniors and children. There is a NSF fee of \$10 for all returned checks.

3.3 Stall Size

Stall size is 10 feet of frontage. Each vendor is allowed one space only. The table and setout display must all be behind the marked Fire Lane. **No vehicles are allowed along the strip between the parking lot and Highway 20. Vendors are not allowed to park in this space. Vendors are not allowed to stop, unload or park along Highway 20.** Those vendors who do not have vehicle parking are encouraged to park on Glover Street or further away to encourage customer use of prime parking spots.

3.4 Stall Maintenance

Vendors must remove from the grounds of the Community Center all produce scraps, garbage, cigarette butts, etc. at the end of each Market day, leaving the stall and surrounding grounds clean.

Section 4: Health Practices

All vendors of prepared or processed foods are expected to be conversant with and meet local, county, state, and federal regulations applicable to their products. Any applicable permits and licenses are expected to be displayed at vendors' booths each week. Vendors may go to <http://okanogancounty.org> or call (509)422-7155 for information.

Any vendor found using unsafe food handling techniques or selling unsafe products will be suspended from selling at the Market until satisfactory clearance has been obtained from Okanogan County Public Health.

Section 5: Animal Products

Any animal products sold at the Farmers' Market must meet all Local, County, State, and Federal guidelines. Vendors lacking licenses or permits will not be allowed to sell at Market.

Section 6: Livestock/Pets

The sale of or give-away of livestock or pets will be contained in areas designated by the Market Master. Animals must be confined. Any waste produced must be removed from the grounds of the Community Center at the responsibility of the owner. Area must be left fully cleaned.

Section 7: Quality and Customer Protection

The Farmers Market strives to provide a marketplace where fresh, wholesome, quality produce and handcrafted items are sold. All vendors are encouraged to maintain high standards of production. Vendors are responsible for appropriately labeling their products as to quality (e.g., fruit seconds).

If any customer is dissatisfied with an exchange at the Farmers Market, and is unable to satisfactorily resolve the problem with the specific vendor, the customer may submit a "Grievance Form" in writing to a Board member, Market Master or Market Aide. Ultimately, all transactions are the responsibility of the customer and vendor.

Section 8: Pricing

Pricing of goods at the Market is the responsibility of the individual vendor. "Dumping" is strongly discouraged. "Dumping" is the act of lowering prices to the point that no one else can sell similar goods competitively. There will be no space made available to those who wish to give away produce or other food at the Market. If you have food to give away, the Market Master and Market Aide can recommend places in the community where you may do so.

Section 9: Dogs/Pets

Vendors are strongly discouraged from bringing dogs/pets to the market (leash or no leash) with the exception of aid dogs and contained pets for sale or give-away. If brought, vendors must keep their dogs/pets out of sight of the general public (customers). Owners of nuisance animals will be asked to remove their dog/pet from the market immediately.

The Board asks that vendors refrain from encouraging local dogs in the market by not petting or feeding them.

Section 10: Behavior

All vendors/members of the Farmers' Market will behave in a professional manner that fosters a sense of Market community and camaraderie, a spirit of cooperative involvement, and promotes the Market as a whole to the community it serves.

Section 11: Grievance Procedures

Should a vendor member, Market staff person, or a Board member of the MVFM feel his/her rights have been violated, or feel that another vendor, Market staff person, or Board member has acted outside the authority of his/her position, or in any way which has harmed the Farmers' Market as a whole, the appeal or complaint must be in writing, utilizing a grievance form available from the Market Master. The form will also be available on the web site being designed.

- Provide a clear and specific description of the problem.
- Provide the name(s) of the person(s) involved, and the name of the person bringing the appeal or complaint.
- State the incident date(s).
- Identify witness (es), and provide written witness statements, if possible.
- Provide a description of the ways in which the aggrieved person has attempted to resolve the problem (if applicable).
- Describe the action the aggrieved person would like to see taken (if applicable).
- Provide copies of the written appeal/complaint to the Board of Directors and to all persons involved in the matter.

Section 12: Suspension or Termination

The Market Master and/or Board of Directors are empowered to expel members who do not abide by the rules of the Market as defined in this Policy Handbook. The decision to expel a member may be reversed by a majority vote at any Board meeting. Failure to pay membership will result in termination of membership for that year.

Section 13: Alcohol, Drugs, and Firearms

No alcohol, drugs or firearms are permitted with the exception of firearms carried by law enforcement officers. Illegal activities are prohibited and will be reported to the proper authorities.

Section 14: Market Enforcement

At the Market site, the Market Master, Market Aide, or Board member may determine if any vendor is failing to adhere to the Market policies set forth herein:

- First offense – Verbal warning
- Second offense – Written warning. May include expulsion from Market.
- Third Offense - Expulsion.

Appeals may be handled as directed under “Grievance Procedures” section. The Market management reserves the right to visit any vendor, farmer or crafter, on the vendor’s production site for inspection to ensure that the vendor is adhering to Market policies, including demonstration of production methods by the vendor, if deemed appropriate.

Section 15: Discrimination

Members of the Farmers Market, the Market staff, Board members, and other persons participating in the Market functions, whether dealing with customers of the Market or other Market vendors, shall not discriminate against any individual in regard to the selling of products, hiring, promotion, discipline or other matters because of age, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or the presence of any physical, mental or sensory disability.

Section 16: Miscellaneous Information

16.1 Length of Membership:

Membership is for the calendar year: January through December and should be renewed annually **prior to** attending Market this season.

16.2 Vendor Membership Applications

All vendors must fill out a yearly application. This application will be reviewed and accepted or rejected by the Board of Directors. The membership dues **MUST** be submitted with the application. If the application is rejected, the funds will be returned to the applicant with reasons for rejection.

16.3 Membership Dues

Annual application processing fees shall be as determined by the Board of Directors. The processing fee for the year 2012 (for all categories) is \$12.00. Dues are payable at the time the application is submitted. Upon payment and acceptance of Membership by the Board, applicants are considered to be "members in good standing", and are encouraged to attend General Memberships and/or Board meetings. There is an NSF fee of \$10.00 for all returned checks.

16.4 Voting Rights

Vendor members in good standing who have attended no less than five (5) Markets during the previous year, have voting privileges, one vote per member application.

16.5 General Membership Meetings

General membership meetings will be held on the 2nd Saturday of July and September each year. Membership meetings will be held directly after Market on the Market grounds. This is vendors' opportunity to bring concerns directly before the Board. When possible, please mail written proposals or comments to the Board (PO Box 1085, Twisp, WA 98856) at least seven (7) days prior to a meeting.

16.6 Board Meetings

Board meetings will be held as needed, usually after the close of Market on a Saturday.

Section 17: Addendum

USDA National Organic Program “organic” standards

For crop farms:

- **3 years** with no application of prohibited materials (no synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, or GMOs) prior to harvest of the first organic crop.
- Implementation of an **Organic System Plan**, with proactive fertility systems, conservation measures, environmentally sound manure, weed, disease, and pest management practices, and soil building crop rotation practices.
- Use of natural inputs and/or approved synthetic substances on the National List.
- No use of prohibited substances.
- No use of genetically engineered organisms, (GMOs) defined in the rule as “excluded methods”.
- No sewage sludge or irradiation.
- Use of organic seeds, when commercially available.
- Use of organic seedlings for annual crops.
- Restrictions on use of raw manure and compost.
- Maintenance of buffer zones, depending on risk of contamination.
- No residues of prohibited substances exceeding 5% of the EPA tolerance.