

Product Guidelines



To permit fair and equal opportunity for all sellers and to ensure quality products for buyers, the following basic rules of operation must be followed. They may be revised and updated as needed. We want to work with you and welcome your concerns and ideas at any time.

Packaged Foods-Baked Goods, Jams, Pickles

1. Pre-wrapped foods displayed for sale must be adequately protected at all times to prevent adulteration of the product.

2. Kitchen Inspection & Water Sample: For all processed food items, seller must provide properly labeled products and proof of kitchen inspection, including water sample report from your home. The Food and Drug Protection Division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture handles the inspections. Contact Ed Lukeman at (919) 733-7366 for an inspection of your kitchen. Water samples can be tested at Jefferson Water Services. Contact Tim Church at (336) 246-2165.

A copy of your kitchen inspection and annual water test must be kept on file with your Producer Certification with the Ashe Farmer's Market.

3. Food items must be labeled prior to sale with at least the following information:

- A. Common or usual name of the product*
- B. Net contents, i.e. net weight in ounces or pounds and ounces if the product is solid or semisolid; net contents in fluid ounces if the product is liquid*
- C. List of ingredients in the product by decreasing order of predominance by weight of each ingredient*
- D. Name and address including zip code of person responsible for the product*
- E. Dry ingredient products, i.e. rubs, marinades, cake mixes, etc. cannot be sold unless processed in an approved kitchen (NCDA—Food & Drug Protection Division) as this is considered a processed food item*
- F. Fresh or dried herbs (packaged separately) can be sold without an approved kitchen inspection if packaged in food grade containers*

4. Foods requiring refrigerator, i.e. cheese cakes, shall be stored at a temperature of 45 degrees F or below. Frozen foods shall be maintained frozen. Good rule of thumb is if the grocery store refrigerates that product—we should too.

5. Bread: According to NCDA regulations, the following apply if you plan to bring hot fresh bread to the market:

- A. Bread must be prepackaged in a bag made for food storage/packaging to sell at the market*
- B. And of course, all of the inspected kitchen and water testing regulations apply to bread as a processed food.*

6. Molasses & Honey: All molasses and honey fall under the labeling required but are not subject to kitchen and water requirements unless value added, i.e. butter, syrup, etc.

7. Acidified or pickled products: (i.e. salsa, pickles, relishes, beans, corn) may only be sold by sellers who have successfully completed a course on the proper acidification of foods provided by North Carolina State University or whose product has been prepared in a commercial kitchen supervised by a person who has completed the course.

8. Jams & Jellies :The sale of food products with a high osmotic pressure (high sugar content) such as jams, jellies and preserves are permitted. All jams, jellies, and preserves are to be processed in boiling water bath according to current USDA guidelines to ensure safety. Contact Ashe County Extension Center at (336) 846-5850 for this information.

9. Packaged food products may not contain meat or cheese either cooked or raw unless prepared under the supervision of a USDA Inspector per USDA regulations.

10. Recalling of Products: It is recommended that the producer provide a way to recall his/her products from buyers should the need arise. Some examples:

A. Number each container to indicate the batch (corresponds with number/record you keep at home).

B. Asking people to sign a log when they purchase the item(s) (you could ask customers to do this and have a drawing once a week and give away a free product).

11. Food cannot be prepared on-site at the Farmers Market.

Should questions or particular problems arise concerning processing or labeling, contact the Food and Drug Protection Division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture (919) 733-7366 or the Ashe County Center of North Carolina Cooperative Extension (336) 846-5850

Meat

1. The Market Manager and a member of the Board of Directors reserve the right to make an on farm inspection of any vendor selling meat.

2. All vendors selling meat at the Market must retain a copy of their USDA Meat Handler's license and provide a copy to the Market Manager.

3. Meat should be kept in coolers or freezers while at the Market.

A. Coolers or freezers must be clean, undamaged, undented and free of rust.

B. Freezers/refrigerators should be less than 40 inches tall.

4. Meat which is frozen when picked up from the processor must remain frozen.

5. Meat may be sold fresh (not frozen) only if picked up fresh from the processor within a 72 hour period. Vendor must provide Market Manager with a dated slaughter receipt to prove when meat was processed.

6. All meat sold must be processed, packaged and labeled according to USDA guidelines.

7. Purchase of Animals for Slaughter

A. Meat from animals purchased at livestock sales may not be sold at the Market

B. Animals (with the exception of poultry and rabbits) purchased for slaughter should be on the vendor's farm for at least 3 months prior to butchering the animal and sale of the meat at the Market. Poultry and rabbits should be on the vendor's farm at least 6 weeks prior to slaughter.

C. Producer should keep records of livestock purchased and processed. The Market Manager and Board of Directors reserves the right to ask for proof of purchase/breeding of animals for meat sold at the Market.

8. Meat may not be marketed as "humanely raised", "free range", "pasture raised", "naturally raised" or "grass fed" if the animals are confined in a feed lot or building.

FISH

1. Fresh fish may be sold at the Market provided the fish are caught and cleaned within twelve hours of being sold.
2. Fish must be farm raised-wild caught fish are not allowed.
3. Fish must be on ice and water/liquid must be able to drain away from fish from harvest to time of sale.

EGGS

1. Eggs must be kept under refrigeration at or below 45 degrees while at the Market.
2. Eggs should be in clean, undamaged and properly labeled cartons.
3. Labeling:
 - A. Eggs must be labeled with the producer's name, address and phone number*
 - B. Eggs should be labeled as "mixed", "ungraded", "fertile" (if fertile) and with the quantity.*
 - C. Eggs may not be labeled as "free range", "cage free", "humanely raised", "pastured poultry", "all natural" or "naturally raised" if the animals are confined to a building and/or dirt lot.*

DAIRY-Milk and Cheese

1. Dairy products may not be sold at the Market unless the vendor/producer is a certified, Grade A dairy under compliance with USDA regulations.
2. The Market Manager should have a copy of the producer's certification on file.
3. Dairy products should be sold in appropriate, clean, food grade containers.
4. Labeling:
 - A. All products should be labeled in accordance with USDA guidelines.*
5. Dairy products should be kept refrigerated while at the Market.
 - A. Coolers and/or refrigerators should be clean, undamaged, undented and free of rust.*
 - B. Freezers/refrigerators should be less than 40 inches tall.*