



Oregon Farmers Market SAFE SAMPLING GUIDELINES

Updated 6/3/2020

Markets and vendors must follow food safety practices when sampling food products to the public. However, neither the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), nor county health departments, require farmers markets or their vendors to get a license or permit to prepare or give out samples. Samples must be prepared in a licensed processing establishment. Food Handler Cards from the county are not required for the sole purpose of sampling.

Sampling means distributing small portions to individuals. A sample means no more than a three ounce portion of a food or beverage. A “sample” DOES NOT include: a meal, an individual hot dish, a whole sandwich, or a whole portion of any food product.

Before using this document: See the [OFMA COVID-19 resources page](#) to determine where your market and county are with regard to pandemic-related reopening guidelines.

Frequently asked questions:

Q: May I prepare samples in advance of the market?

A: It varies depending on the type of licenses a vendor does/doesn't have:

- If you have one of the following licenses, you **may** prepare your samples in advance, at your approved home/facilities, **or** at the market:
 - Domestic Kitchen Food Processor

- Domestic Bakery
- Food Processor Licenses
- Bakery License (commercial)
- Non-alcoholic Beverage License
- Dairy Products

Note: Foods requiring refrigeration must be maintained at proper temperatures at all times. Measures must be taken to protect all foods from post-advance-preparation contamination during storage & transportation. Any advanced “sample” home preparation must be conducted in accordance with the Domestic Processor/Bakery requirements (i.e. processed during periods of no other activity occurring in the kitchen and between domestic meal preparation).

- **If you are unlicensed and operate under the Farm Direct exemptions, or if you have a Prepackaged meat license, you **may not** prepare samples in advance** of the market in your home/facilities. You must prepare your samples at the market.

**These allowances only pertain to businesses licensed by ODA and does not apply to businesses licensed by the local public health departments. If your business is licensed by your local public health department, please contact them for guidance.*

Q: What kind of handwashing set-up do I need in order to offer samples?

A: Any vendor (licensed or unlicensed), or food/product demonstrator, who engages in the sampling of produce or any food product at a farmers market is required to have and use a suitable handwashing station in the booth where sampling is taking place (i.e. for the vendor to use).

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A suitable hand washing station will:

- Provide a minimum water-holding capacity of five gallons in an enclosed container;
- Utilize a spigot that can be opened to provide a constant flow of water;
- Provide soap. Gel sanitizer may be used **in addition** to hand washing, but not in place of it;

¹ (Photo courtesy of Hollywood Farmers Market)



- Provide paper towels;
 - Maintain a wastewater collection container with a minimum capacity equal to or greater than the freshwater container's capacity;
 - Provide a receptacle for used paper towels;
 - Maintain hand washing equipment in a clean and sanitary manner (rinsing with 50 ppm chlorine/water is suggested); and
 - Use only potable (ie, drinkable) water for hand washing, free of fecal coliform bacteria.
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Q. What kind of container can I use?

A. It depends on whether **you are required to have a lid or not**. Here are some resources:

Put your dip, jelly, nut butter, etc. into a plastic squirt bottle like a [ketchup bottle](#). They come in all sizes.

If your product is thick, just cut the top down to make a bigger opening. You can keep the bottle in a tub of ice water if necessary. You squirt a dab on a cracker in a cup (If lids aren't necessary, I prefer the paper soufflé cups [such as these](#) over plastic portion cups:), or you can squirt it into an empty cup and hand it to your customers.

Q. Can I take prepared samples home and return to market with them the next week?

A. While there is not a rule against this practice, it is **strongly advised** that you do not carryover samples from market-to-market.