



Farmer's market operators should consult their local health departments for up to date details in their community. Read the updates and recommendations available on their website and sign up for any alerts being offered by local or county-level health officials. The CDC has issued interim guidance for large public gatherings with useful steps. Highlights include:

1. **Establish relationships with key community partners** and stakeholders such as local health departments and collaborate with them on broader planning efforts.
2. **Promote the daily practice of everyday preventive actions.** Use health messages and materials developed by credible public health sources such as your local public health department or CDC to encourage your event staff and participants to practice good personal health habits.
3. **Provide prevention supplies at your events.** Plan to have extra supplies on hand for event staff and participants, including sinks with soap, hand sanitizers, tissues.
4. **Discourage people who are sick from attending events.**
5. **Identify actions to take if you need to postpone or cancel.**

Market Operations

Market leaders and stakeholders should discuss options like the ones below to mitigate exposure and outbreak risks. It might not be necessary for your market to take all of these steps immediately, but you should be determining at what point your market will begin to implement operational changes.

1. Consider limiting demos and samples to decrease opportunities for cross contamination
2. Reducing or suspending penalties for last minute vendor cancellations
3. Invite local health departments to attend market days for educational opportunities.
4. Follow simple CDC rules for washing hands and not touching faces. Add additional hand washing facilities for vendors and customers. Have signs posted as a reminder.
5. Change policy on selection of fresh foods: have the vendor select the items with sanitary gloves and bag them for the customer. No longer allow customers to touch items they are not purchasing
6. For markets that are required to close, consider temporarily redesigning market locations to allow for pre-ordered items to be picked up at the usual market times or other alternative distribution methods.

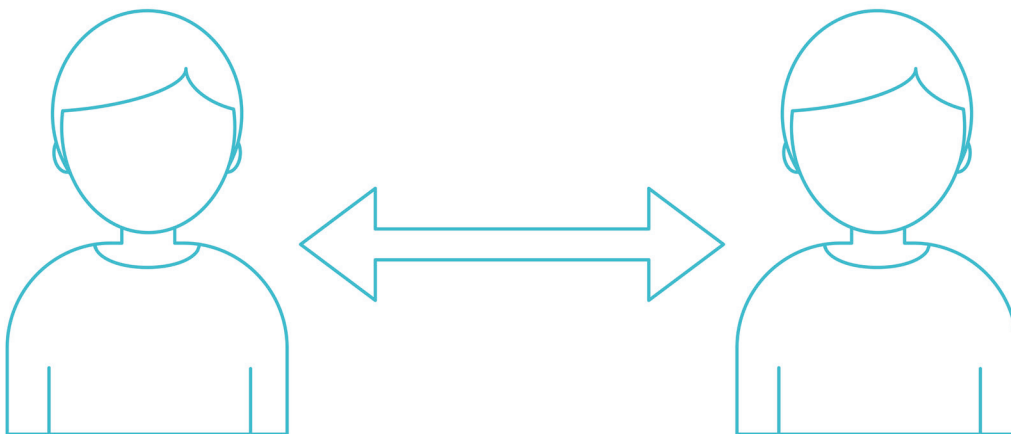
Communicate with public

Farmers' market operators and supporters should make the case for markets to remain open wherever possible. Farmers markets are essential to the livelihood of farmers and food access, not just a social gathering. While markets may need to close in extreme circumstances such closures could be disastrous for both farmers and the shoppers who rely on the market.

1. Provide customers with relevant, up-to-date information without alarming them unduly.
2. Emphasize that protecting public health is paramount to your market and describe any changes to market procedures to prevent the spread of infection. Stringent cleaning and disinfecting procedures around the market and food safety protocols can help decrease opportunities for viral transmission. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food and food packaging. Before preparing or eating food it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds for general food safety.
3. Some public officials are recommending people have supplies on hand in the event that they become sick or quarantines are put in effect. For customers who feel the need to stock up on food products, encourage them to do so at the farmers market. Emphasize items that store well and prepared meals that can be frozen.
4. If markets do need to close, ensure that customers and vendors know that the market will be closed as early and through as many channels as possible.

Communicate with vendors

1. Remind vendors of sanitary methods for handling money and food, and sampling.
2. Communicate about changes to market procedures. Consider setting up a phone or text tree to get information out as quickly as possible to all vendors.
3. Plan with vendors how the market will determine if it is appropriate to close and any alternative sales method that may be available. Share planned closure communication strategy and channels in advance.
4. Prepare vendors for the possibility of smaller crowds at market.



Information Sources include: Polk County Health Department and the Missouri Department of Agriculture

For more information: www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus

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