

Farmers' Markets Frequently Asked Questions



If you are operating a farmer's market, you are required to notify Durham Region Health Department (DRHD). Farmers' markets coordinators must submit a [coordinator application](#) at least 45 days prior to operation and all food vendors must submit a [food vendor application](#) at least 30 days prior to operation.

Farmers' markets with 51 per cent or more of vendors operating stalls that are producers of farm products intended to be used as food are exempt from the [Ontario Food Premises Regulation 493/17](#) (FPR) but must comply with the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#) (HPPA). Farmers' markets with 50 per cent or less of vendors operating stalls that are producers of farm products intended to be used as food are **not exempt** from the FPR. All vendors including non-food vendors will be considered part of the overall farmers' markets.

This document is intended to provide clarity around farmers' markets public health requirements in Durham Region.

What is Durham Region Health Department's role at farmers' markets?

The Health Department:

- Annually assesses all the farmers' markets within the Region for food safety concerns.
- Consults and educates farmers' markets coordinators and food vendors on food safety questions or concerns.
- Reviews and approves food vendor applications.
- Will inspect all food vendors at farmers' markets for health hazards as per the HPPA. Health hazards include but are not limited to food from an unapproved source, improper storage of potentially hazardous food (e.g. storing potentially hazardous food between 4°C and 60°C), food prepared with unsafe water, food prepared at an uninspected facility, preparing foods on-site without hand washing sinks, etc.
- Will resolve all health hazards identified at farmers' markets.

What is considered a farm product intended to be used as food?

According to the [Ontario Food Premises Reference Document, 2019](#), **farm products** means products that are grown, raised or produced on a farm and intended for use as food and include, without being restricted to, fruits and vegetables, mushrooms, meat and meat products, dairy products, honey products, maple products,

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fish, grains and seeds and grain and seed products.

What is the farmers' market coordinator's responsibility?

The farmers' market coordinator must:

- Submit a [coordinator application](#) to DRHD at least 45 days prior to operation.
- Maintain and provide DRHD a list of all participating vendors (food vendors AND non-food vendors).
- Ensure all food vendors complete a [food vendor application](#) and submit it to DRHD at least 30 days prior to operation.
- Undergo an assessment by a Public Health Inspector to determine if the market is exempt from the FPR.
- Ensure that products and practices meet legislative requirements.

Do I need to submit a food vendor application for my participation at each farmers' market in Durham Region?

No, food vendors can submit one food vendor application if they are participating in multiple farmers' markets in Durham Region within the same fiscal year as long as the food products remain the same. Food vendors must list other markets they will be participating in on the DRHD [food vendor application](#).

Do I need to submit a food vendor application form when selling only non-food items?

No, non-food vendors are not required to submit a food vendor application. However, market coordinators must provide a list of all vendors to DRHD prior to operation. All vendors can be listed on the DRHD coordinator application form.

What foods cannot be sold at a farmer's market?

- Ungraded eggs
- Meat products that are not provincially or federally inspected
- Unpasteurized milk
- Any foods prepared from an uninspected facility, including home-canned products

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- Any other foods that are considered a health hazard by DRHD

Do I need to prepare and process food at an inspected kitchen?

Yes, all processed or prepared food products must be made at an inspected kitchen. Processed/prepared foods include but are not limited to baked goods, jams, sauces, soups, etc.

Home kitchens can be inspected within Durham Region. For additional information, please review DRHD's [Home Based Food Premises](#) document and our [food safety webpage](#).

Alternatively, food vendors can rent and then prepare foods at an inspected kitchen. DRHD will verify that an inspected kitchen is being used.

Are there any requirements when preparing home-canned foods?

Yes, there are requirements when preparing home-canned foods. There have been many outbreaks of botulism associated with improper home-canned food products, especially low-acid foods like vegetables and meats. Please review DRHD's [Home Canning](#) document for further requirements.

Additional References and Resources

[Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act](#)

[Ontario Food Premises 493/17 Regulation](#)

[Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Food Premises Reference Document, 2019](#)

[Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Operational Approaches for Food Safety Guideline Document, 2019](#)

[Public Health Ontario's Home Canning Guidance](#)



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