



WIREGRASS FARMERS MARKET VENDOR GUIDELINES - SPRING 2021

Please read regulations before completing your application to sell – submission of application is your acknowledgment that you are willing to abide by all Market Guidelines below.

- The Wiregrass Farmers Market is an open-air, community-based market, open to vendors growing or making all or most of their own products. **The market will open *TENTATIVELY* on April 10- July 31, 2021 for a Spring Market. The market will be CLOSED APRIL 17 and MAY 15 due to Second Harvest.**
- Market Location: Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, 1392 Whiddon Mill Rd., Tifton, Georgia, 31793. Market is held under the pole barn adjacent to the Country Store.
- NEW! In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 all vendors **MUST WEAR A MASK**, maintain social distance of 6ft and sanitize as appropriate. Please limit the amount of handled products when possible.
- Booth Fees: All booth fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.
 - ❖ **Farm/Food Vendors:** \$30 per month, for all markets in that month or \$105 for the Spring season.
 - ❖ **Non-Food Vendors** (craft, plants, soil amendments): \$10 per market.
 - ❖ **Charitable/non-profit groups:** \$0/market. Non-profit groups (recognized as such by the IRS) may sell approved items to raise funds for a local cause. A letter of verification from the organization's leader must be submitted with the application and clear signage of non-profit status must be displayed on the table at market. Only one non-profit vendor will be accepted per market.
- For those not paying for full season in advance, to ensure your spot and help us plan, please send in your application and fee by the 20th of the month previous to the month in which you desire to sell. Please make checks out to WFM and mail to: Wiregrass Farmers Market, Attn. Market Management, PO Box 444, Tifton, Georgia, 31793.
- **The Market Management Committee (the "Committee") will contact you within a timely manner of receipt of your application to let you know whether you are approved for the month's markets. If you are not approved, your application and check will be returned to you.** For Farm/food vendors: you must pay the full \$30 fee regardless of when in the month you apply and regardless of how many markets you plan to attend that month.
- **All products must be approved by the Committee.** Space is limited and all participants are carefully selected. Vendors consistently not complying with the guidelines will be given a written warning from the Market Management Committee or its designee, and upon the 3rd warning that vendor will receive a letter telling him/her not to return to the market for the rest of the season.
- Cooperatives of vendors consisting of multiple local growers/producers selling similar goods or produce made or grown by the members of the cooperative are permitted to sell at a single table, provided that guidelines above for permitted products are followed by the cooperative as if the cooperative were considered a single vendor.
- **Permitted products:** At least 75% of total *produce* sold must be homegrown, and the vendor or members of his/her family who are selling the produce must have participated in the production of the items for sale

and must be able to answer questions about production and content. Processed items and crafts should all be handcrafted by the vendor from all-natural products. Resale (up to 25%) is permitted for produce only. Bulk grains, beans, or herbs may not be re-packaged and sold. **Permitted products are as follows:**

- ❖ **Fresh produce:** Must be either homegrown or grown in the South. All produce sellers must be willing to submit to a farm inspection at the request of the Market Management Committee. If you are selling produce which you assert is grown by you on local land owned by other parties, you must furnish copies of written leases signed by all parties involved identifying the following: what percentage interest each party has in the crop; who owns the land; the county, Land Lot and District it is located; and the phone numbers for all parties. If you are growing on lands of others, all parties to the lease must be willing to submit to a monthly farm inspection so the market can verify that you are actually producing the crop where you say you are. If you cannot show the Market Management Committee (or its designee) that you are growing the crops you sold on the Saturday previous to your farm inspection and/or according to the copy of any leases you furnished, then you will receive a letter notifying you that you may not sell at WFM for the rest of the season. This is a serious issue and three strikes are not necessary for this rule to be in effect. **To repeat, if you bring produce to the market stating it is grown by you and that fact can't be substantiated by a farm inspection and/or copies of leases you provided, then you will receive a letter notifying you that you will not be allowed to sell at WFM for the remainder of the season. Please note that you are agreeing to this when you sign and submit your application.**

You cannot label produce as “organic” unless you have USDA certification or show that you qualify under USDA exemptions; however, you can use other words/phrases to describe your product. Produce vendors must complete and display a standard price sheet (provided at each market) indicating the price and origin of each item, which should be specific as to whose farm it was grown on or from whom it was purchased (maximum 25% of total goods), i.e., Cordele, Atlanta Farmers Market, etc. The committee reserves the right to request removal of low-quality produce from a vendor's table. **Again, the committee may request a farm visit to verify farm practices and produce being sold by each vendor. Failure to submit to an inspection will result in your being removed from the market for the remainder of the season.**

- ❖ **Plants:** Ornamentals, vegetables, fruits, herbs, and trees. **75%** Must be cultivated by vendor; **25%** resale allowed.
- ❖ **Homemade from-scratch baked goods:** No mixes. All packaged food products must be **INDIVIDUALLY** labeled to indicate all ingredients, as well as the name, address, and phone number of provider. Local products should be used and featured whenever possible. **Generic labels for multiple items with varying ingredients are not acceptable.**
- ❖ **Home-canned jellies and jams:** these should be processed using the highest current safety standards, using a water bath or pressure canning process for the appropriate length of time, in properly sanitized and sealed jars. All canned products must be **INDIVIDUALLY** labeled to indicate ingredients, as well as the name, address, and phone of producer.
- ❖ **Locally-produced honey and syrup** (labeled as above).
- ❖ **Locally/regionally roasted coffee.**
- ❖ **Locally-grown nuts:** Boiled peanuts or roasted pecans may be sold in bags but must be locally grown and processed on vendor's farm.
- ❖ **Herbal health remedies/teas/vinegars:** must be clearly labeled with all ingredients
- ❖ **Locally produced cookbooks supporting community groups.**
- ❖ **Traditional crafts produced by local artisans using natural/agricultural products** (example, pottery, soap, baskets, woodworking, knitting, quilting, and natural jewelry): **No crafts made from synthetics**

such as acrylic, synthetic fragrances, and plastics.

- **The following items may not be sold unless vendor has the proper license from the State of Georgia and follows all state regulations for safe storage and labeling:** Eggs; meat; dairy products; low-acid/acidified canned goods (i.e. pickles, salsa, vegetables); processed/prepared foods (except items in above permitted list); live animals.
- **All items must comply with the USDA Guidelines attached.**
- If selling a dairy product for “pet consumption,” do not distribute information promoting use of product for human consumption.
- **Per GMA policy, absolutely no smoking, tobacco products, or pets on site.**
- Alcohol is prohibited except at approved functions.
- No soliciting for political or religious purposes.
- No loud music unless part of market performance.
- **(PENDING COVID RESTRICTIONS)** Samples may be offered (if not highly perishable), but must be kept covered at all times and vendor must control access to samples. Samples should be offered without touching food unless you are wearing clean, food quality gloves. Do not handle money with food gloves on or you defeat the purpose. Samples left on trays for customer to pick up must be individually presented (wrapped or in muffin cup). Vendor may also use tongs to present a sample to the customer. For items that require refrigeration (baked goods containing perishable products, like cream cheese, custards, etc), items should be maintained at 40 degrees F or lower until time of purchase.
- **ALL VENDORS: Please wash or sanitize hands frequently, especially after handling money, eating food, or using a phone!**
- **Booth set-up: Participants must have their space set up and ready for the public by 8:45. If you have not arrived by 9:00, you will forfeit your table for that market day and the Market Management Committee, or its designee, may at his/her discretion allow another vendor to use that table space. Vendors arriving after 8:45 must park in the approved area away from the market and carry their items to their table. No vehicles will be allowed by the pole barn after 8:45. For safety reasons and to provide a high-quality experience for our customers, no vehicles are allowed in the market area until the official close of the market at Noon.**
- Vendors must supply their own change and bags. Vendors will be assigned tables each week by the market manager, depending on the number of approved vendors, you may be asked to furnish your own table/tent/chairs. Selling from vehicles is not permitted (except for pre-approved refrigeration vehicles). Vehicles may be used to transport items to the table, but the vehicle must be moved to an approved area by 8:45am.
- Produce vendors receive priority for tables under the pole barn. **Processed foods and craft vendors may need to provide a pop-up tent, table, and chair.** If a seasonal vendor is absent for more than 5 consecutive markets, s/he forfeits the secured table under the barn for the remainder of the season. The vendor may return to sell but will be assigned whatever space is currently available.
- **All new product types brought to market by a vendor must be approved in advance by the Market Management Committee.**
- All vendors are expected to set up on time and stay for the full duration of the market (until 12 noon) unless sold out of all products.
- We will ask each vendor for estimated gross sales at the end of each market. The information will be kept confidential and listed according to category, not vendor. This will help the market make sound decisions for growth and assist in grant applications. We will ask you at each market for your estimated food and non-food sales. **The Market pays no sales tax on behalf of vendors and is not responsible for the payment of any federal or state sales tax that you may owe.**

USDA GUIDELINES FOR FOOD PRODUCTS SOLD AT EVENTS SPONSORED BY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Georgia Department of Agriculture has always strived for an inspection program that would both protect the consuming public and not be overly restrictive to food producers and small merchants. With to the increase in popularity of events such as Arts & Craft Shows, Local Farmers Markets, and Festivals where processed food is being sold; the Department of Agriculture has issued the following guidelines:

EXEMPTION FROM THE GA FOOD ACT

Food products will be considered exempt from the inspection and licensing required by the GA Food Act, unless the sales of such items are prohibited by other **State Laws** or by the **FDA's Federal Code of Regulations** (CFR's). To qualify for the exemption, the products must be sold directly to the consumer, and occurs at an event that:

1. Is sponsored by a political subdivision of this state or by an organization exempt from taxes under paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Code Section 48-7-25 or under Section 501(d) or paragraphs (1) through (8) or paragraph (10) of Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, as that is defined in Code Section 48-1-2;
2. Lasts 120 hours or less; and
3. When sponsored by such an organization, is authorized to be conducted *pursuant to a permit* issued by the municipality or county in which it is conducted.

WHAT PRODUCTS CAN BE SOLD?

Products exempt from the Georgia Food Act, which are not governed by additional State or Federal laws and regulations. For example:

Jams Jellies Cakes Cookies

Breads Pies Honey

Fresh Produce (*If "Organic," there must be an Organic Certificate Available*)

WHAT PRODUCTS CANNOT BE SOLD?

Products that are governed by specific State or Federal laws and regulations. For example:

Meat Products – Governed by Georgia Meat Compliance Laws

Eggs – Governed by the Georgia Egg Law

Dairy Products – Governed by the Georgia Dairy Law

Organic Products – From Growers or Processors without an Organic Certification

Low Acid/Acidified Foods (Canned Vegetables, Pickles, Salsa, etc) – Unless the Processor is licensed (met all the requirements) and has completed Better Process Control School.

LABELING

All processed products **should** be labeled with:

1. The **COMMON NAME** of the food.
2. The **NAME/ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER** of person who made the item.
3. A list of **INGREDIENTS** with the common name of each ingredient.

PRODUCTS MADE OUTSIDE OF GEORGIA

All vendors that process their food outside of Georgia must have a certificate, license, or documentation indicating they are permitted by their respective Regulatory Agency governing food sales; and that their firm is in compliance.

For assistance or questions concerning Food Sales Exemptions or instructions on how to obtain a Food Sales Establishment License, please contact the Georgia Department of Agriculture – Consumer Protection Division at 404-656-3627.

For information on the *Georgia Grown Program* (including becoming a *Georgia Grown Market*, *Georgia Grown Certification*, and a *Georgia Grown Market Weblink* for your market featured on the Department’s website), please contact (404) 463-6851.

For information or questions concerning Organic Registration and/or Certification, please contact the Georgia Department of Agriculture – Plant Industry Division (404) 656-1264.

The website for the Georgia Department of Agriculture is www.agr.georgia.gov

(This document is intended to be a “Guideline” which describes in simple terms a number of basic requirements which must be met before food sales)