



Guidelines for Farmers Marketing Direct to Consumers Updated March 26, 2020

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry understands that during this Covid-19 pandemic, producers and consumers alike want to know where to access fresh, safe foods. On March 24, 2020 Governor Mills issued a [proclamation](#) regarding businesses that provide essential services including agriculture and grocer[ies] during this time. Essential services include farmers' markets, farm stands and CSAs. These are direct-to-consumer (DTC) outlets that are critical food sources for many Mainers, including those living in rural areas and those using federal food benefits.

At all of these locations, the Department strongly urges taking steps to facilitate social distancing, providing hand sanitizer/washing stations for shoppers and vendors, and cease all food sampling. In this rapidly evolving situation, everyone should stay alert for emerging guidance from the [Maine CDC](#). The Department's [website](#) is also a resource. We caution everyone involved to practice excellent personal hygiene and to stay home if unwell. DTC outlets are also encouraged to exercise their best judgment on a case by case basis on whether and when to be open to the public.

Recommended Practices for DTC Sites:

Social Distancing:

- Space vendors/booths as far apart as possible (indoor markets should consider having some vendors outside)
- Plan site layout to avoid bottlenecks (such as by keeping entrances to indoor markets clear)
- Limit vendors to those selling food, horticultural products, and soap during the civil emergency
- No musical performances, demonstrations, bistro tables, etc.
- Keep traffic flowing by encouraging quick transactions
- Post simple signage reminding customers to:
 - Wash all produce before consumption
 - Handwashing Reminder
 - Asking customers to remain home if they are sick, even with mild illness.
 - Leave 6' space between themselves and their nearest neighbor, including when waiting in line
- Establish processes to allow shoppers to order ahead, if possible.
- Do not allow onsite food consumption
- Maintain SNAP food access if applicable

Sanitation:

- Offer hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations for customers and vendors
- Pre-package foods whenever possible ("grab and go" bags)
- No samples
- Ensure that staff handling money, vouchers, and credit cards wear gloves, and consider keeping separate staff for payments and product handling/packaging.
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces regularly.
- Follow established disinfectant protocols (such as [these](#) from the National Pesticide Information Center)
- [Follow simple CDC rules for washing hands](#) and not touching faces.