



## Vendor Handbook

This Vendor Handbook is meant to act as an extensive guide and reference to all parts of Mill City Farmers Market, and is updated annually. Please take the time to read it thoroughly and reach out with questions or comments.

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## **The Mill City Farmers Market is located on Dakota Land.**

We are grateful to have our market at this beautiful space with views of the Misi-ziibi, the Ojibwe name for the Great River, or Wakpá Thánka in Dakota. Owamni Omni (St. Anthony Falls) is located just blocks away from the market and has long been a culturally significant place for the Dakota people. You can learn more about the historic and modern importance of this land with the interactive [Bdote Memory Map](#), [Native Land Map](#) and Native Governance Center's [Dakota Land Map](#).

We respectfully acknowledge and give thanks to Indigenous people who live here, stewarding this land for generations. We also acknowledge the historical and ongoing legacy of colonialism here, including the cession of this land by the Dakota to the U.S. through the coercive '[1851 Treaty with the Sioux](#).' As a result of this treaty, the federal government imposed genocidal policies and forced removal against Indigenous people as a way to acquire land, which was often used for exploitive agricultural purposes.

Acknowledging the history of this land is a point of reflection for us all as we work towards dismantling colonial practices. We hope these acknowledgments inspire you to stand with us in solidarity of Native nations and support the work of Indigenous-led organizations in our community and food system. Local organizations we follow include:

- [Four Sisters Farmers Market](#)
- [North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems \(NĀTIFS\)](#)

## **About Mill City Farmers Market**

### **Overview:**

Since 2006, Mill City Farmers Market has been a trusted source for local, sustainable groceries in Minneapolis. Attracting more than 160,000 visitors annually, we combine a vibrant, experiential marketplace with community connections for the benefit of producers, eaters, and environmental stewardship. As a nonprofit organization, Mill City Farmers Market is governed by a board of directors and benefits the community through farmer and maker grants, education, [food access](#) initiatives, and partnerships to advance a local, sustainable food system. We hope to inspire and nurture a healthy community by building a local, sustainable and organic food economy in a vibrant experiential marketplace.

### **Our Values:**

- Inclusion: We support access to healthy food for all residents of our community.
- Stewardship: We sustain farmers that cultivate the health of land, animals and people.
- Integrity: We ensure the quality of sourcing, production and growing practices of our vendors.
- Learning: We provide experiential opportunities that educate people about the quality, sourcing and true value of food.
- Leadership: We strive to be a leader, innovator and public force for a healthy planet.
- Partnership: We believe authentic, collaborative relationships are essential to achieving our vision.
- Community: We promote a thriving and inclusive gathering place that bridges our agricultural heritage in a National Historic Landmark.
- Culture: We value local entrepreneurs and artisans and the ways in which they enrich our community.

## **2026 Market Overview**

### **Saturday Outdoor Market 2026:**

#### When:

- Saturdays, May 2 – October 31, 2026 (27 Saturdays in the 2026 season)

#### Time:

- May – September: 8am - 1pm
- October: 9am - 1pm

#### Location:

- Between the Guthrie Theater and the Mill City Museum on the Chicago Mall, in the Mill City Museum Train Shed, and the extended sidewalk along the American Academy of Neurology.

### **Winter Market 2026 - 2027:**

#### When:

- November – April: Select Saturdays, dates TBD, typically 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays
- 9am -1pm

#### Location:

- Inside the Mill City Museum common area. No museum admission is required for MCFM vendors or customers.

#### Please Note:

The schedule of days and hours of operation are subject to revision by MCFM management. MCFM vendors must complete an additional application for winter markets, but no additional application fee is necessary.

## **Sustainability Statement**

As part of the annual application process, all vendors participating in Mill City Farmers Market (MCFM) are expected to read and agree to the following Sustainability Statement.

### **Local Growers and Producers:**

MCFM supports locally grown and produced food; food that is fresh, reflects the seasonality of our region, and that builds and strengthens our local economy. In selecting vendors, MCFM gives priority to regional farmers and producers within 250 miles of Minneapolis who bring products to market that are 100% grown and harvested, or foraged, by the farmer/producer on land they operate. This includes land they rent, own, grow on in a community/collective based structure, or forage on. Re-sale of agricultural products the vendor did not grow is prohibited.

Farmers who are a part of a growing collective are eligible to apply.

### **Local Makers:**

Businesses selling value-added foods, baked goods, CPGs, or prepared food must use a *minimum* of 25% local agricultural products in their ingredients, preferably using local ingredients sourced directly from Mill City Farmers Market (MCFM) agricultural vendors. The percentage will be derived by volume of total ingredients incorporated into products sold at MCFM. See the Local Sourcing Standard for further details.

### **Sustainability:**

MCFM vendors are selected based on their fit with our mission and commitment to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable practices. MCFM supports growers and vendors committed to sustainable, regenerative practices and land stewardship as outlined below, including but not limited to USDA Certified Organic and Certified Naturally Grown growers. We recognize the barriers to certification, and do not require formal certification, but rather a commitment to regenerative agricultural practices that support the whole ecosystem.

### **Vendor Commitment:**

Each vendor at MCFM is committed to a holistic approach to sustainability that includes:

- Building and maintaining **healthy soils** by applying farming practices that include crop rotation, compost, cover crops, green manures and reducing tillage
- Serving the health of soil, people and the ecosystem by rejecting the use of non-organic pesticides and fertilizers, and following OMRI listed products if needed.
- Rejecting the use of **GMOs**, genetically modified seeds, and genetically modified livestock feed

- Treating **livestock humanely** by providing pasture for ruminants, access to outdoors and fresh air for all livestock, banning cruel alterations and not using **hormones, GMOs, or antibiotics in feed**
- Conserving natural resources by **reducing erosion** and **pollution of air, soil and water** through regenerative farming practices
- Practicing **responsible post-harvest handling, and Good Agricultural Practices** for all food products to ensure safe products
- Guaranteeing **honorable workplace practices**, including fair and reasonable compensation for employees and a safe, respectful work environment. This includes meeting [minimum wage requirements](#) and sick and save leave while operating at MCFM which is located within Minneapolis. For 2026 this requires all employees be paid \$16.37/hour minimum while working the market.
- Producing non-edible products using local and sustainable sourcing as appropriate for the product, who follow the local sourcing standard.
- Providing clear, written information about production methods and product ingredients to the market and any customer who requests it, and providing clear pricing for all products.
- Commitment to **zero waste** through waste reduction practices in the production process, reusing materials where possible, and using BPI compostables for any ready to eat products at the market, as well as whenever available for pre-packaged products. Reducing and eliminating single use plastics in all packaging.

### **Market Commitment:**

MCFM strives for organizational sustainable practices including maintaining financial stability as well as the integrity and diversity of our vendor/product selection. We examine our waste management practices to reduce our environmental impact. Furthermore, we work in the community to strengthen agricultural infrastructures that enable small farms to thrive and work to develop ways to make local healthy food available to more of our community.

MCFM and our vendors are committed to educating our customers about regenerative, local agriculture as well as encouraging and empowering them to participate actively in their food choices.

## **MCFM Local Sourcing Requirement**

Businesses selling value-added foods, baked goods, CPGs, or prepared food must use a *minimum* of 25% local agricultural products in their ingredients, preferably using local ingredients sourced directly from Mill City Farmers Market (MCFM) agricultural vendors. The percentage will be derived by volume of total ingredients incorporated into products sold at MCFM.

MCFM defines “local” as grown within a 250-mile radius of MCFM or your business location. Local is NOT defined as purchasing from a local purveyor - for example purchasing onions from Co-Op Partners or flour from Gold Medal. Rather, it is defined as purchasing from local farmers and producers, whenever available. If it can be sourced from local farms, are you?

### **Benefits:**

1. All vendors make a defined collective commitment to supporting local farmers, agriculture, and the local food economy.
2. Sourcing expectations are defined, thus making it easier to communicate and promote to our customers.
3. This standard sets Mill City Farmers Market apart from other markets in the Twin Cities, further solidifying its identity as a trusted source for local, sustainably produced products.
4. Builds connections and relationships between farmers and food producers, creating a shorter, more reliable food chain.

**Exceptions:** Certified Organic businesses that cannot source ingredients organically AND locally may be exempt on a case-by-case basis, but local will be given preference.

The intent of the local sourcing requirement for vendors is to further support our local agricultural system, keeping the money in our food shed, and keeping the ingredients traceable and regenerative. If you are committed to sourcing locally, but need assistance reaching 25%, please reach out to our staff for recommendations! Our goal is always to uplift businesses’ who share this value, rather than to have this be a barrier to entry.

## Connecting with local farmers and agricultural producers:

- Start early! Give yourself lots of time to research and connect with farmers you are interested in sourcing from.
- Visit our year-round market, as well as those across the twin cities, or markets local to your area! Connecting with vendors in person will be the fastest way to meet them! Ask if they grow what you are looking for and if they would sell wholesale in the quantity and frequency you would need.
  - Know how much you need of ingredients and the frequency
  - Wholesale pricing may be different than their market pricing.
- Search the [Mill City Farmers Market vendor profile pages](#) to learn more about each vendor and find links to their websites.
- Search the [Manage my Market directory for Mill City Farmers Markets](#) vendor products. Note that this only includes approved vendors for the current season – i.e. only winter market vendors are searchable November-April. Reach out to the farm for the most up to date product information. Also note that it is product specific to how the vendors added products, so if you are looking for tomatoes, you may also have to search “heirloom tomatoes” and “cherry tomatoes” in addition to just “tomatoes”
- Check out [The Good Acre food hub Wholesale shop](#) to find everything from local produce, honey, grains, proteins and more
- Search the [Minnesota Grown Product Directory](#)
- Search the [Artisan Grain Collaborative](#)

### Other Considerations:

- How are you going to promote your collaborations with local farmers? Local sourcing can tell a story of the relationship between your business and the farmers, and can increase the quality of the product you are making. Many customers are looking for these connections and to support local food and farms!
- Consider how sourcing from farmers changes your costs, and how you want to assess pricing.



## **Vendor Product Review Process**

### **How New Products Are Evaluated:**

All applications will be reviewed by market management for minimum requirements. Following a staff review, applications will be brought to the Vendor Product Review Committee, and reviewed based on the criteria below. No unsolicited samples will be accepted. However, market management may request samples for the Vendor Product Review Committee

All processors (makers or prepared food vendors holding a Cottage Food or Minneapolis Seasonal Food Permit) must submit an annual [Ingredient Sourcing Form](#) linked on our website and under the documents section of the application.

Please refer to MCFM's expectations of the Local Ingredient Sourcing standard requirement and Sustainability Statement. Vendors must adhere to these requirements to be eligible, if support is needed in local sourcing, please contact market management.

### **The following criteria will be considered in the review process:**

Current vendor assortment and product needs will be considered when judging new products and vendors.

General requirements:

- Products must demonstrate MCFM's producer-to-consumer values, meeting the Sustainability Statement and Local Sourcing requirement, and reflect seasonality of the region.
- Products must be locally produced (within 250 miles of MCFM) and meet the sustainability statement and 25% local sourcing requirement.
- We are a producer-only\*\* market and everything that you sell must be grown or made by you and your employees. Buying produce or products from another farmer, wholesaler, store, or other food operation and reselling those products is not permitted at the market.
- Preference is given to artisan quality products, defined as: unique & handmade products of high quality.
- Product packaging will be evaluated on product presentation, low environmental impact, and adherence to any legal labeling requirements (weight, ingredient, allergen listings, etc.).
- Preference given to local farmers who sell value-added products over Food Purveyors offering similar products

- **All ready to eat food sold or sampled must be served in reusables or compostable packaging** that is [BPI certified](#) for industrial composting facilities
  - For take home and grocery foods, preference will be given to vendors using compostable and reusable packaging first, then recyclables. Single use plastic should be avoided whenever possible for all product types.
- Preference is given to products that use local fresh produce, whole grains, and animal products, and minimize the use of highly processed ingredients. No product containing artificial ingredients or flavors, dyes, or GMO ingredients may be sold at MCFM.
- Only small and moderate sized farms and businesses will be considered. Large enterprises are not eligible for the market.
- Product quality is expected to remain **consistent** at every market. MCFM Management and the Vendor Product Review will review this on a regular basis after a product is admitted to the market.
- Sometimes, a product and a vendor is a great fit for the market, but the market is currently at capacity in a product category and we are unable to accept a new vendor in that category. We encourage you to apply again in future years!
  - MCFM does not offer exclusive rights to one specific vendor to sell any specific product. MCFM customers generally benefit from having a choice. However, if MCFM believes the number of vendors offering the same/similar products is excessive, duplications may be denied entry.

**\*\* A Legacy Vendor is a vendor who has played an important role in the founding and growth of the Market, but may not adhere to some policies, standards, or expectations that have developed throughout the Market's growth. MCFM acknowledges these vendors' commitment to Mill City Farmers Market and their part in developing and nurturing our vendor and customer communities. These are the only cases where products may not meet our local sourcing, or on rare occasions, may not be producer made. This does not change that all new vendors must meet all requirements be accepted.**

#### **We DO NOT accept the following items at our Markets:**

1. Reselling of any products that have been purchased from a distributor, third-party, importer, or other farmer (who are not a part of a growing collaborative model with the farmer)
2. Personal care services and/or products such as chiropractic and massage services
3. Nationally distributed packaged foods through a large 3<sup>rd</sup> party distributor
4. Businesses that operate under a franchise agreement

## **New Product Approval Process: for current vendors**

- All current vendors hoping to add a new product to their product offering must notify market management, and provide samples to upon request, at two weeks prior to the desired sale date for approval. Market Management, along with the Vendor Product Review Committee, will review the new products and respond to the request in a timely manner.
- Market Management and the Vendor Product Review Committee will periodically review existing products sold by current vendors to ensure consistent quality, address customer comments, and ensure staff familiarity with all products sold at MCFM.

## **Production Standards:**

- Please see sections on "Vendor Business Types and Licensing," "Vendor Product Review Process," and "Vendor Checklist for specific information.
- Product quality and on-farm practices must be guaranteed by individual vendors and will be continuously reviewed by Market Management.
- Farmers should follow Good Agricultural Practices
- Cottage food makers must follow all cottage food requirements for PH, moisture levels, approved recipes, and labeling
- All non-cottage food makers should hold a Minneapolis Seasonal Food Permit, and have a State of Minnesota issued Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certificate, have NSF equipment and mechanical refrigeration – not holding any TCS foods on ice. A handwashing station is also required if preparing on site or sampling.
- MCFM reserves the right to inspect any vendor's greenhouses, gardens, farms, fields, kitchens, or other places of production to verify the production, practices, ingredients, etc. Vendors refusing to allow a site visit will not be permitted to sell at the market.
- We encourage you to post any certifications you have. If any of your signage states that your products are organic you are **required** to post your USDA organic certification.

## **Licensing, Permits, Insurance**

### Overview:

- Vendors are responsible for proper City of Minneapolis licenses, as outlined in "Vendor Business Types and Licensing" section below.

- All vendors must prove proper and current permits, ST19 and Certificate of liability insurance to Market Management prior to market opening in May, or forfeit their market dates until they are submitted.
- Permits must be prominently displayed in the booth area at all times.
- Vendors participating in Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and EBT (SNAP) Token Program must display required signage in their booth at all times.
- Vendors operating under the Cottage Food Producer Registration must display required signage in their booth at all times and products must be labeled in accordance with state law.
- **You will NOT be allowed to vend without proper licensing.**

### **Legalities and Insurance:**

All vendors are required to submit a ST-19 tax form, certificate of liability insurance, and proof of licensure along with their application and fees.

#### **ST-19:**

- If you do not sell taxable items, complete the form and simply check the box stating that your items are nontaxable.
- Prepared foods served hot and/or intended for on-site consumption are taxable and you will be required to complete the form and provide a Minnesota tax ID number.

### **Insurance:**

All vendors must carry personal liability insurance with a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence, and must list MCFM as an additional insured. All vendors must submit a copy of their certificate of liability insurance before attending the market. MCFM is not liable for loss or damage incurred by vendors. Please check out the insurance options through the Minnesota Farmers Market Association for affordable options for all vendors: <https://www.mfma.org/page-18192>

**\*\*You will not be permitted to set up at the market if we do not have copies of permits, required licenses, tax**

## Licenses Required By the City of Minneapolis:

Vendor Business Type	License Requirement			
	EXEMPT		NON-EXEMPT	
	No City License Required	Cottage Food Registration Required (MDA)	Seasonal Food Permit (City of MPLS Dept of Health)	No City License Required
<b>Farmer/Rancher</b>				
Produce only:	<b>X</b>			
Rancher*(#4 below):			<b>X</b>	
<b>Processor/Prepared food (edible)</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Processor (edible) qualifying as a cottage food vendor (see #5 below)</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Wild Mushroom Harvester*</b>	<b>X</b> If harvested on land that <b>IS</b> owned and leased by the harvester		<b>X</b> If harvested on land that <b>IS NOT</b> owned or leased by the harvester	
<b>Importer or Product Representative (edible)</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Importer or Product Representative (non-edible)</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>Artist/Crafter &amp; Processor</b>				<b>X</b>

\*See vendor type definitions and additional requirements on Pages 16-20

The chart above is meant to be a guide. Please confirm with the City of Minneapolis **and** Mill City Farmers Market to ensure you are licensed correctly to sell at a farmers market in Minneapolis. The right application can be picked up at the MDR counter at 250 South 4th Street – Room 300, Minneapolis, MN 55415. Or, call the General Licensing number to obtain a copy: 612.673.2080. Please direct questions regarding farmers market permits and licensing to **Mai Yang**, City of Minneapolis – Environmental Health – Food, Lodging and Pools Dept. (e) [mai.yang1@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:mai.yang1@minneapolismn.gov), (p) 612.503.2787

## City of Minneapolis Farmers Market Licensing Guidelines:

1. All new and returning vendors selling exempt farm products do not need to be registered with the city.
2. Anyone who is selling or handling foods for immediate consumption must have a **City of Minneapolis Seasonal Food Permit**. At Mill City Farmers Market, this would include anyone reheating and serving foods prepared onsite or at a commercial establishment.
3. Anyone selling processed meat or dairy (jerky, smoked products, cheese, yogurt, etc.) must have a **City of Minneapolis Seasonal Food Permit**.
4. Vendors selling eggs, meat, poultry, fish and/or dairy products that were raised on vendor property, processed in a USDA or equally qualifying facility, and have **no added ingredients**, even salt, are exempt from permits and licensing and do not need to fill out any city registration. If adding ingredients to these products, refer to guideline 3.
5. Certain processed/canned foods may be sold without a license if the annual gross sales volume of the product is no greater than **\$78,000**. Changes as of August 2021 to the [Cottage Food Law can be found here](#). You must register as a **Cottage Food Vendor** with the State of MN – MN Department of Agriculture. You can prepare and sell only NON-"time/temperature control for safety" (TCS) food (such as baked goods, certain jams and jellies) and/or home canned pickles, vegetables, or fruits with a pH of 4.6 or lower. Also, you are required to take an approved food safety course, and training is required every three years thereafter. Please see their website for more info:  
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/cottage-food-producer-registration>  
**\*\*Please note:** This is not a complete compliance list. Further guidelines and regulations regarding licensing and health department and food safety requirements are included with your licensing information from the City of Minneapolis.\*\* and you must adhere to any MDA requirements you may hold .

## **Vendor Business Types**

Use this section to guide your understanding of the Mill City Farmers Market (MCFM) vendor types and standards. Additionally, use this information to inform you of licensing & compliance needs regarding the City of Minneapolis Farmers Market Licensing in the above section.

General requirements:

- Products must demonstrate MCFM's producer-to-consumer values, meeting the Sustainability Statement and Local Sourcing requirement, and reflect seasonality of the region.
- Vendors are not allowed to operate under a franchise agreement.
- MCFM does not offer exclusive rights to one specific vendor to sell any specific product. MCFM customers generally benefit from having a choice. However, if MCFM believes the number of vendors offering the same/similar products is excessive, duplications may be denied entry.
- Buying produce from another farmer, wholesaler, store, or other food operation and reselling those products is not permitted at the market.
- In addition to the specific business guidelines below, it is expected that all vendors read and agree to the Sustainability Statement.

### **Product Requirements for Specific Business Types:**

#### **Farmer/Rancher/Producer:**

A person actively involved and invested in the planting, growing, and harvesting of agricultural products on owned, rented/leased, or collaboratively/collectively maintained, land.

- In selecting vendors, MCFM gives priority to regional farmers and producers within 250 miles of Minneapolis who bring product to market that is 100% grown, harvested, or foraged, by the farmer/producer on land they operate. This includes land they rent, own, grow on in a community/collective based structure, or forage on.
- Producers are USDA Organic Certified or Certified Naturally grown, or are practitioners of environmentally sustainable growing, breeding, raising and harvesting methods following the sustainability statement.
- Products grown or processed using genetically modified seeds or ingredients are not allowed at MCFM.
- Livestock or dairy products that contain growth hormones, such as rBGH are not allowed at MCFM.

- Producers must provide clear, written information about production methods, which can be available upon consumer request.

### **Wild Harvester:**

A person who sells wild-crafted or foraged products such as mushrooms and wild berries gathered by the vendor.

- Wild Mushroom Harvesters shall have successfully completed a wild mushroom identification training program provided by an accredited college or university or state mycological society and submitted to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to register as a certified Wild Harvester.
- If the vendor is harvesting Wild Mushrooms from their own land, they do NOT need a City of Minneapolis Seasonal Food Permit. They DO need to be registered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as a Wild Mushroom Harvester.
- Vendors wishing to sell wild mushrooms at MCFM must:
  - List each type of mushroom by common and scientific name on their application.
  - List training and experience in mushroom collection.
  - Provide copies of the public lands collection permits or private approval, if applicable.
  - Provide proof of registration with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture
  - Signage at market must accurately identify all mushrooms and whether the product is wild-crafted or cultivated.
  - Prominently display signage at their booth that includes the statement: “Wild mushrooms are not an inspected product and are harvested from a non-inspected site.”

Please see this MN Department of Agriculture Handout about Wild Mushroom Harvesting requirements:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/docs/fs/wildmushfs.pdf>

### **Processor (Prepared Food, Value-Added Food-including cottage food)**

A person actively involved and invested in the processing of products sold at MCFM. A processor may sell processed farm foods, value-added processed foods, and onsite prepared foods. These could be produced under the cottage food registration or a Minneapolis Seasonal Food permit – depending on operation requirements

#### **Food Prepared on-site (hot and ready to eat)**

- If the vendors booth display and sales are at least 80% hot ready to eat food and drinks
- Non snap eligible foods (prepared coffee, pizza, etc.)

#### **Food prepared off site (prepackaged) (Makers)**

- If food is prepared in a Licensed Commercial Kitchen or a Cottage Food home kitchen and packaged for take home.
- SNAP eligible foods



- Businesses with value-added foods and baked goods use a *minimum* of 25% local products in their ingredients, preferably using local ingredients sourced directly from MCFM agricultural vendors. Percentage derived by volume of total ingredients purchased for products sold at MCFM. Local means direct from producer, and not from local store or food purveyor such as TC Coop partners or Restaurant depot.
- Vendors must source ingredients from producers who are certified organic or practice environmentally sustainable growing, breeding, raising and harvesting methods.
- Packaging/serving materials must be compostable and/or recyclable per the Zero Waste requirements.
- A detailed explanation of any part of the processing not done by the vendor, including appropriate documentation of any second-party processor or co-packer must be provided. Approval of products that are processed by a second party or a co-packer will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Artist/Crafter & Processor of Non-Edible Products:**

A Artist designation is a person who designs and creates handmade work. The artist/craftsperson and/or their employees must make all products. The Art Market Review Committee will review all artist applications. The artist designation includes artwork and craftwork in categories such as textiles, jewelry, glass, ceramics, woodworking, candles, incense, and mixed mediums. Vendors in the artist distinction should have at least 75% of their booth set up as primarily art. Exemptions may be made for farmers who sell agricultural items that are in these categories.

Processor/maker for Non-Edible Products: A person actively involved and invested in the processing of products sold at the MCFM. An example of what a processor of non-edible products may sell is books, and body care: soaps, lotions/body oils.

- Items must be locally made and designed by the business owner and/or their employees.
- Materials are made with either recycled and/or organic materials, as much as possible.
- Fibers/Materials are sourced from local farms, especially from within MCFM when available.
- Vendors are required to specify the sources of the components of any non-edible products.
- Artisans may not sell work produced with commercial kits, models, prefabricated forms, or other commercial methods.

#### **Importer**

Importer: Allowed rarely and under unique circumstances. Must still adhere to MCFM's sustainability statement and be unavailable locally. Priority is given to makers who meet the Local Sourcing Standard. These particular products are limited, must complement MCFM's mission and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Examples of this are items such as coffee or tea, which cannot be grown in the upper Midwest, but are a staple for many

- This type of vendor sells particular products that cannot be grown, raised, produced, processed or gathered in Minnesota or the 250 mile radius, but still has a personal tie to how these products are produced, such as they are being imported from their family farm.

- For Importers: Products sold are unavailable locally, vendor has direct ties to the production of the product, such as from family farm.
- For Product Representatives: Products sold are available locally, but not currently being sold at MCFM. Vendor has direct ties to the production /design of the product.
- Importers and Product Representatives must have a direct relationship with producers. Proof of the relationship must be turned in to Market Management. Examples include family coffee farm in which you and your family grow, import, and processes and the agricultural products.
- Vendor has detailed knowledge of growing, raising, producing, processing or gathering methods of products.

#### Product Representative:

Product Representative: A person who does not grow, raise, produce, process or gather the product themselves. This type of vendor sells particular products not otherwise available at the market, but available in the region. These particular products are legacy vendors only, limited, must complement MCFM's mission, and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. **No new product representatives will be accepted.**

#### Legacy Vendors:

MCFM recognizes the importance of Legacy Vendors at the market. A Legacy Vendor is a vendor who has played an important role in the founding and growth of the Market, but may not adhere to some policies, standards, or expectations that have developed throughout the Market's growth. MCFM acknowledges these vendors' commitment to Mill City Farmers Market and their part in developing and nurturing our vendor and customer communities. These are the only cases where product representatives re-selling a product may be permitted.

## **Outdoor Market Payment Structure**

All vendors must pay an annual application fee of \$50. A vendor's check is not cashed until accepted into the market.

See below for each vendor type

### **Exempt: Farmers, Cottage Food Producers**

Booth size	Daily rate	Full season (27 weeks)	Full season + Pay in FULL by APRIL 15 <sup>th</sup> for 10% discount
Single (10ft)	\$35	\$945	\$850.50
Extended indoor (15-18ft)	\$55	\$1,485	\$1,336.50
Double (20ft)	\$70	\$1,890	\$1,701

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**Non-Exempt A:** Food prepared off site that requires a Minneapolis Seasonal Food Permit: CPG, bakeries, products of the farm holding a MPLS seasonal food permit if more than 50% of farm sales

Booth size	Daily rate	Full season (27 weeks)	Full season + Pay in FULL by APRIL 15 <sup>th</sup> for 10% discount
Single (10ft)	\$40	\$1,080	\$972
Extended indoor (15-18ft)	\$60	\$1,615	\$1,453.50
Double (20ft)	\$80	\$2,150	\$1,935

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**Non-exempt B:** On site Prepared Food; hot/ready to eat, not EBT eligible, holding a MPLS seasonal food permit (if 50% or more of your sales come from prepared food)  
Non-edible products (body care, books, farm fibers)

Booth size	Daily rate	Full season (27 weeks)	Full season + Pay in FULL by APRIL 15 <sup>th</sup> for 10% discount
Single (10ft)	\$45	\$1,215	\$1,093.50

<b>Extended indoor (15-18ft)</b>	\$70	\$1,890	\$1,701
<b>Double (20ft)</b>	\$90	\$2,430	\$2,187

**Artists:** Artisan products including textiles, candles, essential oils, ceramics, woodworking, jewelry, and more as the primary product line

<b>Booth Size</b>	<b>Daily Rate</b>
<b>Single (10ft)</b>	\$50

<b>Other Fees</b>	
<b>On-site Vehicle or oversized parking</b>	\$8/day
<b>Corner Booth</b>	\$10/day
<b>Electricity: 1 outlet</b>	\$5/day
<b>Electricity: 2-4 outlets</b>	\$10/day
<b>Electricity: 5+ outlets</b>	\$15/day
<b>Backstock storage per single booth</b>	\$5/day

### **Payment Policy and Options:**

- All invoices are due by **August 15th 2026**.
- **Late fees will begin at \$25 a month on September 1st 2026.**
- Invoices paid in full by April 15 are eligible to receive a 10% discount.
  - post-dated checks paid monthly are not eligible for the 10% discount. Ask our bookkeeper to have the discount removed for final total if you intend to pay monthly.
- Invoices paid by card will have a 3% processing fee added
- Invoices paid by ACH will have a 1% processing fee added
- Payment options for invoices do not include tokens or re-endorsed token reimbursement checks.
- 

<b>Option 1</b>	Pay 100% of total season fees by April 15th <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% discount (\$50 application fee not included)</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Option 2</b></p>	<p>Make monthly payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove the 10% discount and write 4 postdated checks for ¼ total season fees, all checks due 4/15</li> <li>• Dated April 15, May 15, June 15, July 15</li> <li>• Not eligible for discount, verify invoice amount with bookkeeper</li> <li>• Checks will be cashed on Friday following the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.</li> <li>• Alternatively, pay online in 25% installments, or bring cash to the market in April, May, June, July. Communicate with Sarah if you intend to pay this way to confirm payment amounts</li> <li>• <b>Must be paid in full by August 15th</b></li> </ul>
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### **Payment Options:**

- All checks should be made payable to: **Mill City Farmers Market**
  - **Please mail payments:**

Mill City Farmers Market  
704 South 2nd Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

- Cash or card payments can be made at the market.
- Card or ACH transfers can be made online by requesting the payment link from the bookkeeper after they send your invoice. email: [bookkeeper@millcityfarmersmarket.org](mailto:bookkeeper@millcityfarmersmarket.org)

Please contact our Finance Manager, Kristen Truchinski, with questions about invoices at [bookkeeper@millcityfarmersmarket.org](mailto:bookkeeper@millcityfarmersmarket.org).

### **Late Fees:**

- **\$25 per month** will be charged **monthly** for overdue balances beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Penalty Fees and Policies:**

#### Late Arrival/Set-up Fee:

A \$25 fee will be assessed to vendors who do not have their booths completely set up at the start of the market. MCFM reserves the right to increase penalty fees with repeat offenses.

#### Early Departure Fee:

A \$25 fee will be assessed to vendors who tear down and leave their booth before 1:00pm. MCFM reserves the right to increase penalty fees with repeat offenses.

#### Parking at the Meters Fee:

A \$25 fee will be assessed if Market Management finds any vendor parking at a meter. Parking is limited in the area, and customers have priority.

#### Failure to bring proper equipment will result in additional fees.

(Tent = \$10/day, Weights = \$10/day, Table = \$5/day)

We cannot guarantee rentals will be available.

#### "No Call No Show:"

A \$25 fee will be assessed for vendors who don't show up for a scheduled market day and don't contact the Market Manager by 7am on Saturday morning. Stall fees are also forfeited.

#### Returned Check Fee:

Vendors whose checks for invoice payments are returned due to insufficient funds will be charged a \$25 fee and incur any late payment fees if applicable until payment is resolved.

#### Returned Token Checks:

1 re-issue of token reimbursement checks per year due to failure to update address, ACH, or forgetting to deposit. After that there is a 5% fee deducted from the total check amount for re-issuing

## **Winter Market Payment Structure**

This market is only open to current MCFM vendors due to limited space. Exceptions may be made, at MCFM management discretion.

### **Non-Artist Fee Schedule (Farmer, Producer, Processor, Etc):**

Booth Size	Daily Rate	
	*Exempt	**Non-Exempt
Single Booth 6ft	\$30	\$35
Double Booth or Corner Booth	\$60	\$70

**\*Exempt:** Farmers, Cottage Food Producers

**\*\*Non-Exempt:** City of Minneapolis Seasonal Food Permit holders, processor, non-edible products, excluding art

Other Fees	
Oversized parking	\$8/day
Electricity: 1 outlet	\$5/day
Electricity: 2-4 outlets	\$10/day

### **Artist Fee Schedule:**

Booth size	Fee
Single only	\$45/day

Full Payment for all vendors is due in November before the first market. **Late fees for winter market will begin January 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Refer to the winter market application for specific date.

## **MCFM Rules of Operation**

### **Individual Booth Guidelines:**

- Vendors are responsible for providing all tents, tables, tablecloths, chairs, scales, signs, containers, shopping bags, etc. that are needed to operate their business.
- **All vendors are required to bring a canopy or tent and weights.** Health code requires prepared food vendors to have overhead cover at all times. The only exception being if the vendor is placed in the covered train shed, see weekly map for placement.
- The Market site can be very windy. Tents **must be** firmly anchored from set-up to take down by **25+ pounds of weight attached to each tent leg AT ALL TIMES. If you fail to bring a full set of weights you will be charged a \$10 fee to rent them.**
- Site displays, canopies, signage, etc. may not infringe upon walkways or neighboring booths. We are located in a historic train shed and many of the spaces are unconventional and not uniform. Please be respectful of your neighbors' space and collaboratively work with them during set up, as needed, to ensure everyone's booth is visible and accessible.
- All back stock and cardboard boxes must be stored under the tables or stacked neatly out of the way. **Also, all food items must be 6" off the ground at all times, per health code requirements.**
- Vendors are required to maintain a clean and tidy booth display at all times. See the section on "Farmers Market Marketing 101" for more detail.
- All vendors must post clear, visible signs with their business name and location. See the "Vendor Checklist" for more details on page 29.
- All product pricing must be visibly displayed and easy to read for each product so that it is readable for all customers.
- All vendors are required to follow zero waste requirements, including all prepared food and food samples must be served in BPI compostable or reusable packaging. Further outlined below in the zero waste section
- Vendors must follow set up and tare down rules under Outdoor Market Operations section.

### **Booth Management:**

- Vendor booths must be staffed by Owner/Operator, someone with a direct connection to the farm/business or an employee knowledgeable about products and production practices.



- No one under the age of 16 can sell or maintain a booth space without an adult present.
- For safety, we recommend cash boxes and other valuables be stored securely and supervised.

### **Booth Assignments:**

- The Manager will send a Vendor Update email on the Wednesday or Thursday before every market. This email contains your booth assignment and other pertinent information regarding the market. All vendors are required to read this email to stay up to date, even if you are not attending market that week.
- While we understand the importance of consistency, your stall location is not guaranteed. Changes in stall assignments may occur due to site needs, see weekly map published by EOD Wednesday. Booth locations are subject to change, and the MOD will inform you of any changes made after the weekly map is published Wednesday.
- Vendors may not sublet their booth to any other vendors. Vendors subletting or 'partnering' without MCFM approval are subject to suspension or termination from the market.

### **Shared Booth Space & Partnerships**

Partnered businesses are permitted to share market space and resources in some **pre-approved** cases. These special cases could include:

- A new or small-scale business who could not fill a full booth
- Value-added food vendors who are primarily using the agricultural vendor's products
- A farm collective

Each shared booth member is required to have their own liability insurance and licensing, submit a separate application, pay a separate application fee and pay booth fees (rates to be decided by MCFM staff).

To be considered, interested vendors should submit a written request to MCFM management. Parameters to be decided upon by partnered businesses in conjunction with MCFM staff.

## **Zero Waste Requirements**

### **Compostable Packaging and serve wear:**

In 2009, MCFM became the first Zero Waste Farmers Market in Minnesota! By composting and recycling market waste, MCFM diverts nearly 4,000lb of waste from the landfill annually, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.

Mill City Farmers Market **requires** all ready to eat food sold or sampled on site to be served in compostable packaging. As a vendor, you'll show customers how you're part of the solution for zero waste by creating great food and a way for them to minimize waste. For take home and pre-packaged foods, we also highly recommend using BPI compostables whenever available, and reducing and eliminating single use plastics in all packaging when alternates exist.

**By July 2026**, we are requiring that all vendors selling flower arrangements use recyclable paper or compostable materials for wrapping bouquets, or forgo wrapping altogether, over plastic wrapping.

Any bio-based plastic products purchased (clear compostable clear cups for cold drinks or compostable utensils) need to be certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI). This certification ensures products have been scientifically tested and are *fully* compostable - not all products currently being marketed as "green" are actually compostable. Look for the **BPI logo** (shown here) or visit [www.bpiworld.org](http://www.bpiworld.org) for a complete list of certified products. Email market management if you need assistance or have any questions.



Paper cups, paper boats, soy-based wax paper\*, plain wood toothpicks (no plastic frills), and other items made from natural materials may also be used.

\*Many wax coated paper products are made with a combination of wax and plastic. Refer to the BPI website to ensure your containers are compostable.

**MNimize** has a **rebate** and many **resources** for making the switch to compostables or reusables. If you need additional help sourcing BPI certified serve wear, you may contact market management for assistance.

### **Attendance and Cancellation Policy:**

Vendor commitment to scheduled dates is important to the vitality of the market as a whole. We curate and accept vendors based on requested dates in their application, in order to provide the fullest assortment possible. The market relies on the commitment made by vendors and consistent attendance in order to build and maintain a customer base and provide a reliable shopping experience.

- During the application process, please do not apply for dates you are not able to attend. **After invoicing goes out, no refunds will be provided for cancellations.** Farmers are still eligible for the credit policy, described below.
- If you need to cancel a date, please do so with as much advanced notice as possible, a minimum of two weeks preferred, to remain in good standing. This gives management the ability to notify those on the waitlist of availability. Rescheduling is possible only when availability permits.
- If an emergency or illness happens the morning of the market, please contact the Manager on Duty as soon as possible. See “no call no show” under vendor fees section for no communication of absence.

We understand that extenuating circumstances, emergencies and illness happen. Please contact market management asap if you are in this circumstance. Please stay home if you are sick and will work to reschedule.

### **Produce & Flower Farmer Credit Policy**

Mill City Farmers Market recognizes that produce and flower farmers will sometimes have to cancel market due to seasonal variables out of their control. With this in mind, MCFM will credit vendor booth fees for produce and flower farmers who notify the Program Manager of their absence by the end of the day on Tuesday prior to the Saturday Market. This deadline allows the Program Manager to find a vendor replacement, and factor this change into making the weekly map. The credit will be issued for the following season.

- Credits will reflect the amount of money originally paid for the booth fee – for example, if the vendor received a 10% discount for paying by April 15, their credits will be for \$31.50 rather than \$35 to reflect the 10% discount.
- Credits can only be used for future seasons. MCFM will not reimburse payment if a vendor does not return the following year.
- This does not apply to artists.

Food makers, meat and cheese farmers or prepared food vendors are eligible for 1 credit per season only due to supply chain issues or expected circumstances prohibiting them from having enough product to vend, such as shortages in an ingredient

### **Health and Site Cleanliness Rules:**

- Vendors are responsible for complying with Health Department Guidelines and license requirements. Vendors with Minneapolis Seasonal Food Permits **must use mechanical refrigeration** or proper heating for all TCS foods See licensing page. 29
- All vendors serving prepared food and samples are required to provide a **hand wash station** in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Health Department. Market Management reserves the right to ask vendors to stop sampling if they do not have a proper handwashing.
- Vendors must remove all trash and debris from their sites. MCFM will have a few brooms and dustpans available or vendors may choose to bring their own.
- All waste (compost, recycling, and/or trash) **MUST** be deposited in the proper waste receptacle in the alley of the market site at the end of the day. Vendors are responsible for bringing their own trash, recycling and compost bags. Please only use grey dumpsters labeled MCFM.
- All food must be stored/displayed at least 6" off the ground and all containers used to store and display produce must be sanitized regularly. All spray bottles used for produce must be cleaned regularly and cannot have been used to store chemicals.
- All vendors must wear clean clothing and footwear at all times.

### **Inclement and Severe Weather Protocols:**

Vendors are responsible for reading and understanding "Inclement and Severe Weather Protocols" as outlined in the Vendor Handbook and adhering to the requirements. Page 43-45

Mill City Farmers Market is a rain or shine market as we have access to the covered train shed and museum. Cancellations due to rain will not be refunded. See detailed policy for details.

### **Alternative Currency Guidelines:**

The Mill City Farmers Market uses five different types of currency in addition to cash and credit. These include \$5 credit card tokens, \$1 EBT tokens, \$1 Market bucks, MCFM Bucks and \$2 PoP tokens. All vendors must accept \$5 tokens. All eligible vendors must accept EBT, Market Bucks, and MCFM bucks. All vendors selling produce must accept \$2 POP tokens. All vendors must sign the "Vendor Agreement for EBT Token Program" to participate, to acknowledge they are aware of which currencies they must accept. Please see the expanded "Alternative Currencies" section on page 41-42 for more details on the program.

### **Sampling Guidelines:**

MCFM receives an annual inspection by the Health Department and expects vendors to comply with all guidelines, see "Sampling Safety" under the vendor checklist for details on page 29. Sampling is permitted so long as the vendor is following regulations. [See the updated state law here.](#)

## **Vendor Meetings and Survey:**

Attendance of our annual spring all vendor meeting is highly encouraged. The meeting provides an important mechanism for building community, receiving important market updates & seasonal information and providing vendor feedback and input to market staff.

Attendance to our New Vendor Meeting for first year MCFM vendors is **mandatory**, and is generally offered in a hybrid format, although in person is encouraged. This includes a tutorial on all things MCFM with a site tour so you know what to do on your first day!

Participation in the Fall Vendor Survey is **required**. The information gleaned from this survey helps with the evaluation of MCFM marketing and programming and is used in future planning

## **Conduct Expectations:**

Mill City Farmers Market honors and respects everyone's background and identity, please do not make assumptions about anyone's pronouns, immigration status, or cultural or racial identity. If you are unsure of someone's pronoun's, please use gender neutral pronouns' like they/them, or ask them in a polite way.

Mill City Farmers Market does not tolerate any form of violence, harassment, or discrimination and all vendors and staff have the right to a safe work environment where they are treated with dignity and respect. Violence, harassment, or discrimination include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or physical violence of any kind, including threats of violence and vulgar language
- Unwanted sexual attention, including comments on body image
- Nonconsensual and unwanted touch
- Discriminatory comments or jokes, microaggressions especially racist, sexist or relating to age
- Bullying and intimidation

A safe and inclusive space is of the utmost importance. Verbal or physical violence, discrimination, and sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated by MCFM. Anyone participating in an act of violence, harassment or discrimination may be removed from the premises immediately. Suspension or termination may ensue in addition to criminal charges.

## **Enforcement and Disputes:**

- Market Management has ultimate onsite authority and enforces all rules of the market.
- Market Management may take any action deemed appropriate if a vendor does not follow the rules. Market Manager may issue a verbal or written warning, suspension or termination.
- Market Management reserves the right to request any vendor to immediately remove any merchandise deemed unacceptable.
- If vendors have a formal dispute or complaint, it may be submitted to Market Management and/or the Board of Directors in writing. The Board of Directors will address all formal complaints.
- Failure by vendors to comply with market rules will be addressed by Market Management with the support of the Board of Directors. In the event of irreconcilable disputes, this process may result in vendor removal from the market.

## Outdoor Market Operation

### Set-up/Take-Down:

- Vendors will be assigned an arrival time between 5:30am and 7:15am (6:30am and 8:15 in October). If permitted to drive onsite, vendors have **twenty minutes** to unload and drive off site. After unloading your vehicle, please park it off MCFM property before you begin setting up your booth space.
- **All vendors must be on site by 7:15am (8:15am in October)** or their booth space will be forfeited.
- If you are running late for any reason, please **call or text** the Manager on Duty (MOD) **via cell phone. Market management does not read emails on Saturday morning.**
- The MCFM office line will not be answered during market hours. Failure to contact MOD will result in a forfeit of booth space.
- **All vendors must have their booths completely set up no later than 8am (9am in October) and must stay fully set up until 1pm.** Failure to do so will result in a \$25 fee.
- In the case that a vendor sells their entire product, booth disassembly is **not** permitted until MCFM closes at 1pm.
- Vendors are encouraged to haul products to and from their booths whenever possible in lieu of driving on site.
- Vendors will be assigned a departure time between 1:30pm and 2:30pm. At end of the market day you must pack up all belongings before your vehicle is brought on site. Vendors have **fifteen minutes** to load and drive off site. These are the **ONLY** times that vehicles are allowed on market site (except for those with vehicle-permitted booths).
- All booths must be emptied of tables, signage, trash, etc. **no later than 2:30pm.**

### Traffic:

- A 5 mph maximum speed limit is enforced on the market site.
- Vehicles are only allowed to be on site during their assigned arrival and departure times.
- Vehicles must be unloaded and off market site **BY** 7:15am and will not be allowed back on site until **AFTER** 1:30pm, during assigned departure times.
- Vendors may unload/load from metered parking spots, but must not park at any metered parking spots during market hours. MCFM would like to reserve these parking spots for

customers. Vendors should park at either of the ramps on 2nd Street, or at an oversized vehicle lot with permission from Market Management. There will be a \$25 fine assessed if vendors are found to be parked at a meter during the market.

- Vendors located on the Guthrie Theater side of the market must respect Guthrie Theater property boundaries. Vendors may not drive on Guthrie Theater property.

### **Animal Policy:**

Vendors are not allowed to have pets in their booths, per Heath Department regulations. No live animals may be sold or given away at the market. Visitors dogs are allowed at the managers discretion on the Chicago mall and AAN sidewalks only.

## **Market Site Information and Guidelines**

### **ATMs:**

The closest ATMs to the market are located inside the Mill City Museum and the Guthrie Theater, when open. The ATMs are both located near their respective gift shops. Customers can also go to the info booth to swipe their credit/debit card in exchange for tokens to use at all market booths. The MCFM token program has a 3% credit card fee. The fee at other locations ranges from \$2.50 - \$3.

### **Drinking Fountain:**

The closest drinking fountain is located inside the Mill City Museum near the train car and the restrooms. There is also potable water available in the kitchen area of the market.

### **Info Booth:**

The info booth is located under the green canopy that reads “Mill City Farmers Market – Info Booth.” You can send customers here if they have any questions, need EBT or market tokens, want seasonal recipes, etc. This is also where all vendors should reimburse their EBT and market tokens.

### **Parking:**

Vendors are not allowed to park at the meters except during load in/out times. There is a \$25 fine if we find a vendors car at a meter midmarket. These spaces are meant for customers only. There are several nearby parking lots/ramps available for vendor use. The ramps across from the Mill City Museum and the Guthrie Theater are \$8, cash or credit, for a 12-hour period. A permit from MCFM is required to park in the MCFM vendor parking lot for oversized vehicles

### **Restrooms:**

The closest restrooms are inside the Mill City Museum near the train car. Restroom areas are to be used for sanitary purposes only and may not be used for washing produce, preparing foods, dumping water, etc. Vendors may get water from hose in train shed



**Music:**

During the market music may not be played at any booth or in the general market area, except with prior permission from Market Management in order to maintain easy hearing between vendors and customers.

**Other:**

- MCFM prohibits solicitation and political activities during market hours in the market.
- Non-profit and community groups may present educational materials or information about their organizations, missions, etc. with prior approval from Market Management.
- No water (bottled or cups) may be sold by vendors. There is free water available at the market.
- Mill City Farmers Market is smoke-free. Tobacco products are prohibited on all market sites, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes and chewing tobacco. Market staff can direct users to locations where tobacco use is permitted. CBD and TCH products must follow state laws.

## **Minneapolis Guidelines for Food Safety Standards:**

Vendors, Event Sponsors, and Market Management are responsible for implementing Food Safety Standards.

- 1.** All vendors must complete the Self Inspection on the Seasonal Food Permit prior to opening on the first day of an event.
- 2.** Provide electricity needs for cooking and lighting. NOTE: LP bottled gas (propane) greater than 20 pounds requires a permit from the Minneapolis Fire Department. Gas host must be constructed of rigid copper, black iron, or galvanized pipe. Provide a fire extinguisher. The Permit is found at: [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/regservices/fire/regservices\\_fis](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/regservices/fire/regservices_fis) (click on Special Event/Operational Permit Application).
- 3.** Provide a tent or canopy for the food stand. If at an event where the tent/canopy is on a grass or dirt surface, you **MUST** provide flooring (mats, plywood, etc.) for the booth. Exception: all foods and beverages are packaged and remain unopened when served.
- 4.** Store all foods, beverages, ice, utensils, and paper products at least 6 inches above the ground or floor. **Label chemicals** and store soap, sanitizer, insect sprays, and chemicals away from food and food related items.
- 5.** Prepare all food in a licensed commercial kitchen or onsite. Home prepared foods are allowed **ONLY** for vendors listed in MN Statute 28A.15 (Cottage Food Vendors).
- 6.** Transport all food products in insulated covered (picnic) chests in clean vehicles.
- 7.** Use **MECHANICAL REFRIGERATION** to keep Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods cold. *Seasonal Food Permit holders must always use mechanical refrigeration.*
- 8.** Always keep TCS foods, such as meats, fish, poultry, cooked rice, and salads at **41°F or colder or 135°F or hotter**. Provide a metal-stem thermometer.
- 9.** **Reheat** food quickly to **165°F** and **hold at 135°F or higher**. Outdoor use of “Sterno” and chafing dishes is **prohibited**.
- 10.** Prepare and serve all foods out of reach of the customers. Self-service is prohibited unless proper utensils are provided such as individual soufflé cups for dips, toothpicks for individual food samples, tongs for serving chips, paper plates for bread samples, etc.
- 11.** Wear clean clothing and practice good personal hygiene. NO smoking is allowed in the food booth. NO eating or drinking (from open containers) at the food service/display counters.

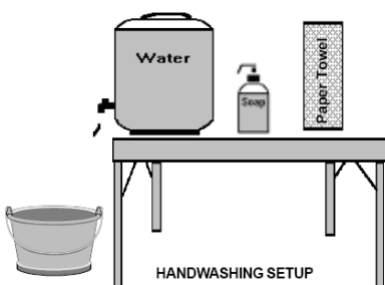
**12. HAND WASHING:** WASH HANDS FREQUENTLY AND PRIOR TO HANDLING FOOD. Hand washing equipment **MUST** be located within 10 feet of the food stand.

- Provide soap, running water, paper towels, and catch bucket.
- Hands **MUST** be washed with running water and soap.

**13.** A hand washing device supplied with a minimum of 5 gallons running water from an insulated container (Fig. A & B) with a spigot which can be turned on to allow potable, clean, warm water (temperature between 70°F and 110°F) to flow over one's hands into a waste receiving bucket of equal or larger volume. Gravity fed devices must have a minimum of 2 inches water above the spigot.



(Figure A)



(Figure B)

**14. DISHWASHING:** Utensils/dishes cannot be used for more than 4 hours without replacing item or properly washing it.

**Option 1:** Bring extra utensils and equipment and don't re-use a dirty item.

**Option 2:** Provide three labeled buckets big enough to accommodate the largest utensil – when required. (See Fig. C)

- Wash bucket: dish soap and water
- Rinse bucket: clean water
- Sanitizer bucket: bleach or Quat and water (follow the directions on sanitizer bottle)
- Provide **test strips** to monitor sanitizer concentration

(50 – 200 PPM for Chlorine;  
200 – 400 PM for Quaternary)

(Figure C)



**15.** Failure to comply with the above guidelines can result in a (1) citation (2) closure of food booth or (3) denial of future permit

## **MCFM Vendor Market Checklist**

Please use this checklist as a reminder of some of the rules and policies of the market. This is to help ensure compliance, not all rules are outlined here, but have been mentioned above and still apply.

### **General**

- ☐ All weights are 25 pounds and attached to the canopy. Vendors should not attach their weights to other vendor's booths.
- ☐ Booth's name is clearly, and visibly, on display using proper signage.
- ☐ Products are clearly labeled with signs or price tags.
- ☐ All food is properly labeled according to Minneapolis Health Department standards.
- ☐ Cottage food and Seasonal Food Permits are prominently displayed

### **Food Safety**

- ☐ Food is stored and displayed 6" off the ground or are in closed containers.
- ☐ All non-produce items are properly packaged or behind a sneezeguard
- ☐ **"Time/temperature control for safety" (TCS) food is stored and displayed in a mechanical refrigerator** with the temperature at or below 41°F.
- ☐ Have a calibrated thermometer that can be used to demonstrate temperature
- ☐ Hand washing station set up, if sampling is taking place.
- ☐ If there is no 3 bin wash system, booth should have extra utensils to use if one should become soiled, and/or changed out after 4 hours of use.

**Sampling Safety-** Hand washing station must be set up within 10 feet of the business and actively used – **there should be water in the catch bucket as evidence it is being used.**

- ☐ Produce must be washed and clean before it can be sampled.
- ☐ Utensils and surfaces that are being used to cut on must be clean before use.
- ☐ Samples are covered and protected from potential contaminants when not being actively sampled.
- ☐ Sampling designed so customer is only touching their own sample. Customers should not have contact with other samples or sampling supplies to prevent contamination.
- ☐ Samples intended for refrigeration are prepared in small batches to prevent the sample from getting to temperatures hazardous to consumption.
- ☐ Samples are prepared with assurance no cross-contamination occurred.

### **Other Information**

- ☐ Organic certification is clearly posted, if vendor is certified organic.
- ☐ When using electricity, cords are covered and out of the way, for public safety.

## **Vendor Compliance and Enforcement**

Vendors share responsibility for keeping MCFM viable, ensuring public safety and maintaining the integrity of the Market. By following the rules described in the "Rules of Operation" and the "Vendor Checklist", vendors will remain a **“Vendor in Good Standing”** and help create a safe, fun and profitable market environment. Violation of the rules will put the vendor “out of compliance” and result in a range of consequences. MCFM staff is committed to working cooperatively with vendors to communicate and resolve non-compliance issues. This section covers the range of consequences of becoming out of compliance with MCFM rules, both on-site during market days (“At-market”) and off-site (“Non-market”).

### **A few “At-market” examples of non-compliance include:**

- Late arrival and not being set up by market opening
- Selling a product that does not meet MCFM's standards for quality
- Parking at a meter during market hours
- Unsafe product storage and handling
- Unsafe or unsatisfactory stall maintenance, e.g. lack of or improper tent weights
- Multiple customer complaints

### **A few “Non-market” examples of non-compliance include:**

- Failing to provide MCFM with timely copies of mandatory licenses, permits and insurance policies
- Failing to pay appropriate stall fees or late payments
- Failing to pay fines imposed due to non-compliance

### **How MCFM monitors for compliance**

- MCFM monitors market activity to ensure that vendors are complying with the rules.
- MCFM also keeps records of “non-market” violations (customer complaints, late payment of fees, etc.) that may put a vendor out of compliance.
- MCFM utilizes the rules and policies started in this handbook as a tool to regulate at-market compliance.

### **How MCFM enforces the rules**

- All rules of the market are enforced by Manager on Duty or Executive Director, who has ultimate on-site authority. Complaints or problems should be directed to the Market Manager in a timely manner.
- Market Management will regularly evaluate vendors using the on-site vendor compliance checklist. MCFM will contact the business owner to address the non-complying behavior and corresponding consequence.
- MCFM reserves the right to visit and inspect the farm or business of any vendor and to request any documents verifying business, gross receipts for percentage fee vendors or employee status.
- Customer complaints will be forwarded to vendors and kept on file. Complaints may result in disciplinary action including removal from the market.
- If a vendor does not abide by any of the rules of MCFM or comply with federal, state, and local regulations applicable to market participation, the Market Management or designee may take any action deemed appropriate, including assessing fines or barring the vendor from selling at the market for that day and any future market days.
- MCFM reserves the right to make exception to these rules and enforcement policies at its discretion.

### **Consequences of failing to remedy non-compliance**

Disciplinary action may take the form of a verbal warning or a written notice of non-compliance that may include a fine, probation or suspension. Multiple fines can lead to probation. Probation puts a vendor on notice that any further violations will lead to suspension. Suspension and eviction from the market may be the result of multiple fines and numerous occasions of suspension. The application of fines, probation and suspension can occur simultaneously while the vendor works to cure a specific or combination of non-compliance actions.

### **How vendors should remedy a notice of non-compliance**

The vendor must correct the verbal warning or notice of non-compliance immediately or by the following week, whichever MCFM determines to be appropriate. If the situation has not been remedied by the following week, the following disciplinary actions may be taken:

- Vendor may be issued a fine.
- Vendor may lose reserved space privilege.
- Vendor may be suspended from the market for a week and forfeit their stall fee.

### **Three examples of enforcement actions**

**1. Non-compliance:** Vendor fails to attend scheduled market date without communicating with market management.

#### **Consequence:**

1st Offense: Booth Fees forfeited plus \$25 fine.

2nd Offense: Next market date suspension plus booth fees forfeited.

3rd Offense: Season Suspension plus stall fees forfeited.

**2. Non-compliance:** A vendor that includes products in their stall not listed on the original MCFM application.

#### **Consequence:**

1st offense: Noncompliant product pulled.

2nd offense: 1-week suspension plus stall fees forfeited.

3rd offense: Season suspension plus stall fees forfeited.

**3. Non-compliance:** Physical violence.

#### **Consequence:** Immediate suspension.

**NOTE:** The list is intended to provide vendors with representative examples of non-compliance and resulting consequences. MCFM management always has discretion in evaluating specific incidences of noncompliance and in applying consequences it deems appropriate.

## Alternative Currencies

The Mill City Farmers Market uses several types of tokens as alternative currency. These currencies allow vendors to operate without accepting credit cards at their stands, to provide food access to customers with SNAP benefits and to increase sales for our vendors. All vendors eligible to accept EBT and Market bucks are required to. See below for eligible items. All vendors must accept \$5 tokens.



### EBT/SNAP Program:

EBT/SNAP tokens are only available in \$1 increments. These tokens are **green** and you **are not** allowed to give change for them. There are very specific guidelines for the items customers may purchase with these tokens. **Please see the list below.**

### Market and MCFM Bucks Program:

Market Bucks and MCFM Bucks come in paper cards. They should be treated the same as **EBT/SNAP tokens**. They are only available in **\$1 increments**. You **are not** allowed to give change for EBT tokens, Market and MCFM Bucks' There are also very specific guidelines for the items that customers may purchase with these tokens. **Please see the list below.**

### Households **Can** Use EBT/SNAP Benefits to Buy:

- Breads (wrapped, labeled, and intended for home consumption)
- Dairy products
- Fruits and vegetables
- Jams and sauces
- Maple and honey products
- Meats, fish, and poultry
- Seeds and plants that produce food for the household to eat

### Households **Cannot** Use EBT/SNAP Benefits to Buy:

- Any nonfood items:
  - Food that will be eaten on-site (prepared foods, pastries etc.)
  - Household supplies
  - Medicines and vitamins
  - Pet foods
  - Soaps, paper products

### Specialty Items:

Pumpkins are edible and eligible for purchase with SNAP benefits. However, non-edible gourds and pumpkins used solely for ornamental purposes are not eligible items. Gift baskets containing food and non-food items **are not** eligible for purchase with SNAP benefits when the value of the non-food items exceeds 50 percent of the purchase price.

### **Credit and Debit Cards Tokens:**

Credit/Debit card tokens are available in \$5 increments. These tokens are **gray** and you **are** allowed to give cash change. The tokens can be used to purchase any item at the market. A \$2 convenience fee is charged for each transaction.



### **PoP! Tokens:**

Power of Produce or PoP! is a program designed to empower kids to make healthy food choices and introduce them to where their food comes from. Children from 5-12 can come to the PoP! booth each week at the market and try the fruit/veggie being sampled to get a \$2 token. This token may be spent on any fruit, veggie or food-bearing plant at the market. These tokens are **red** and you **are NOT** allowed to give change.



**\*\*\*Reimbursements will NOT be given to vendors who mistakenly accept these tokens. Always inspect tokens carefully when they are handed to you.**

### **Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and WIC Vouchers:**

FMNP and WIC vouchers are federally funded supplemental nutrition programs for pregnant and breastfeeding women, and children up to 5 years old. This alternative currency is available in check or voucher form. Vendors must register with the state to accept either of these vouchers and, if accepted, will go through a thorough training process every few years. Please let Market Management know if you are interested in accepting these forms of currency or have any questions on it.

### **Vendor Reimbursement Process:**

You may submit tokens to the info booth staff at the beginning or end of the day. Tokens may only be submitted once a day. Reimbursement checks or ACH deposits are written every week. Mill City Farmers Market asks vendors submit tokens as often as possible in order to help us keep tokens in circulation.

Please direct any questions about the Alternative Currency Program to:

- **Sarah Holle:** sarah@millcityfarmersmarket.org



## Outdoor Market

### Inclement and Severe Weather Protocols

### We are a rain or shine market, but see below for action plans for severe weather

#### Inclement Weather:

##### **Rain (hard, steady, predicted for full day):**

- Plan B may be called in this instance. We will email a previously selected group of vendors to move into the rail corridor by 7am. Vendors with products that could be harmed by rain or wind take priority. Market Staff will put out proper signage and share the change on social media to inform customers that Plan B is in effect.
- Cooking demo cancelled (decision made by 9:00am).
- Music cancelled or relocated (decision made by 9:00am).
- Electrical cords should be covered and out of puddles. If cords are wet, they should not be touched or moved.
- Tent walls recommended

##### **Strong Winds:**

- At the discretion of Manager on Duty (MOD), tents may be collapsed and stored under tables or in vehicles. Market Staff will assist with this process.
- Food prep tents must be kept up while the market is still open per health department requirements. Vendor could be relocated if possible. Staff should assist with this process.
- Plan B may be called in this instance. We will email a previously selected group of vendors to move into the rail corridor. Vendors with products that could be harmed by rain or wind take priority. Market Staff will put out proper signage and share the change on social media to inform customers that Plan B is in effect.

#### Severe Weather:

MCFM will monitor weather with a trusted weather app or weather radio

**In the event of a thunderstorm or tornado WATCH**, the following steps must be taken:

- Vendors **must** have tarps on hand and equipment to secure them from the wind. Vendors should use tarps to cover merchandise, equipment & electrical cords that may get damaged from rain.

**In the event of a thunderstorm WARNING**, MOD will issue an official warning after which the following steps must be taken:

- MOD will consult with ED & Staff. MOD will make a decision on how to proceed.

- MOD will notify Vendor Committee members, on site, of the plan.
- Market Staff and Vendor Committee members will quickly notify all vendors and customers of the warning and explain how to proceed.
- Electrical cords should be covered and out of puddles. If cords are wet, they should not be touched or moved.
- Booths and products should be condensed and secured
- Vendors, guests, musicians, etc. pack up money, nothing else, and move to the train shed to wait out the storm.
- MOD will advise vendors with potential hardship from rain if they should pack up **before** thunder / lightning approach.
- MOD and Market Staff will monitor storm - When it's safe, market resumes and vendors that packed up will set back up again, if possible.

**In the event of a severe thunderstorm or tornado WARNING**, MOD will issue an official warning after which the following steps must be taken:

- MOD will consult with ED, & Staff. MOD will make a decision on how to proceed.
- MOD will notify designated vendors on site of the plan to help notify other vendors
- Market Staff will sound an air horn to alert customers to stop shopping and take cover.
- Vendors, guests, musicians, etc. pack up money, **nothing else**, and move to the Mill City Museum through the train shed or the front entrance.
- Once inside, if there is threat of tornado, the Mill City Museum, Market Staff and Vendor Committee members will direct customers, vendors, etc. to the tornado shelter. The tornado shelter is on the first floor, in the gallery--near the back by the restrooms.
- Market Staff and vendors should encourage customers to follow them into the museum instead of going to their vehicles if tornado sirens are going off.
- Vendors, customers, Market Staff, etc. may not bring food or beverage into the museum. However, customers may bring market bags with their purchases inside.

If an early morning storm is moving through during set up, MOD may consult with the ED to determine a plan of action. Options include a delayed start where Market Staff and vendors wait out the storm in the museum., or Plan B\*

#### **Air Quality:**

Poor air quality due to pollutants and primarily wildfire smoke will be monitored closely, and can change quickly. A decision will go out by 7am if a plan B will be called for smoke. Vendors must let the MOD know by 7am if they are choosing a credit and not coming on a smoke day.

Air Quality Value	AQI Color	Level of Concern	How to Respond

Over 200	Purple and above	Very unhealthy/hazardous	Move inside the museum (plan B). Provide N95 masks for staff and volunteers outside during load in and out. All programming canceled minus greens for good. Hazard pay. Credits and cancellations offered to vendors freely.
151 to 200	Red	Unhealthy	Encourage and provide N95 masks for staff and volunteers, and vendors who are outside. Cancel community ed programs (chef demo, pop, yoga, storytime). Credits and cancellations offered to vendors freely. Option to haul out early, or pack up and go inside if/when affected by smoke.
101 to 150	Orange	Unhealthy for sensitive groups	Operate normally. Offer N95 masks to anyone who wants one, take breaks as needed.
51 to 100	Yellow	Moderate	Air quality is acceptable
0 to 50	Green	Good	Air quality is satisfactory

## **Educational Programs and Activities at**

### **Mill City Farmers Market**

Mill City Farmers Market strives to be an educational marketplace for our customers, while also driving sales for our vendors. Listed below are the important programs and initiatives Market Management supports to create a vibrant food economy for our market customers and vendors.

#### **Mill City Cooks:**

Mill City Cooks are our cooking classes hosted by Market Chefs Jenny Breen, Beth Jones and Nettie Colón. These Market Chefs, along with occasional guest chefs, create and demonstrate simple recipes with ingredients from vendors at the market. The goal of this program is to show customers how simple it is to shop the Market for healthy, weekly meals.

Recipes from this program continue to be our most popular website, email newsletter and social media content. If you would like to collaborate with the Market Chefs to highlight a recipe featuring your produce or products, let us know. This is a great way to become more involved with the market AND highlight your business!

**Market Chefs** Lead cooking classes at market. Our primary chefs are Jenny Breen, Nettie Colón, and Beth Jones, with guest chefs each season

#### **Power of Produce (PoP!):**

The Power of Produce (PoP) Club is a nationally recognized kids' program that started at the [Oregon City Farmers Market](#) in 2011 to empower kids to make healthy food choices. Kids ages 3-12 can sample a seasonal fruit or vegetable (bought from a Market farmer) at the information booth. In exchange for trying the weekly vegetable, children receive a \$2 PoP token that they may spend on any fruit, vegetable or food-bearing plant at the Market. The goal of Power of Produce is to develop the next generation of healthy eaters and to offer a fun, family activity at the market.

#### **Food Donation:**

Since 2010 Mill City Farmers Market has been donating produce to the Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood, and in 2014 forged a partnership with [Campus Kitchen at Augsburg College to expand the program](#). In 2025 MCFM Vendors collectively donated over 17,700 lbs. for the season from participating MCFM farmers. Augsburg College volunteers collect unsold produce from farmers at the end of the day, and the excess produce is distributed in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, primarily to seniors in low-income housing. Beginning in 2018, MCFM began monetarily compensating farmers for their donations at a wholesale price of \$1 with the help of our program sponsor, Delta Dental of Minnesota. MCFM works to purchase produce specifically requested from the community to be donated to Cedar-

Riverside, Minneapolis Central Kitchen, and other community food programs. Since then, prices to farmers have only increased!

### **Community Booths:**

We offer community booth spaces to different non-profits or small businesses. We partner with organizations that support the Market's mission and vision to educate our customers and promote a healthy lifestyle and community engagement. Partner organizations are generally involved in local and sustainable food, or health and wellness organizations.

### **Music:**

Live scheduled music was suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and will not be a part of our market this season as we focus welcoming a diverse array of buskers to play right outside the market.

### **Market Yoga**

As part of the Market's mission to grow community, we've partnered with local neighborhood yoga & movement studios to offer free outdoor classes. 60-minute classes are held at 8:30am and 10am every market May-September on the lawn overlooking the Mighty Mississippi and Stone Arch Bridge.

### **Bike Benefits**

Mill City Farmers Market supports sustainable forms of transportation to the market. In 2025, we launched our Bike Benefits program. During designated summer market months (tba) and as funding lasts, bikers can show their helmet (or a picture of their helmet locked to their bike!) to staff at the Info Booth to get a punch on their punch card & receive a market token. Customers who bike 9 times by the end of the outdoor market season are entered to win tokens.

### **Volunteers:**

We love our volunteers! While the majority of the market team (such as our managers and Info Booth staff) are paid employees, volunteers make our chef demos and Zero Waste composting and recycling program possible. On Saturdays you can find our volunteers chopping veggies at chef demos and or at our Zero Waste stations in green vests, assisting visitors, record keeping and emptying bins. Please make sure to thank them if you get a chance!

## **Board of Directors, Staff, Committees**

### **• MCFM Board of Directors**

- **Dy Drake**, Director of Organizational Effectiveness, Medica
- **Jill Holter**, Former Marketing Director at The Wedge and Linden Hills Co-ops
- **Brenda Langton**, Founder of Mill City Farmers Market; former restaurateur at Cafe Brenda & Spoonriver; & food educator
- **Kelly McManus**, Owner and Creative Director at McManus Creative; former vendor, Dumpling & Strand
- **David Stevens**, Site Manager, Mill City Museum
- **Rhys Williams**, Community Member, Farmer; former Executive Director of The Good Acre
- **Beau Thomas, Vendor, Pure Ginger For You**; Architectural Designer
- **Ivette Jelves, Vendor, Atacama Catering**
- **Nettie Colón**, Chef & Owner at Red Hen Gastrolab; MCFM Market Chef
- **Joe Dicker**, Attorney
- **Jenny Heck**, Program Administrator at MDA; Former MCFM Market Manager
- **Emily Paul**, Vice President, Food Works Group
- **Ariel Pressman**, Principal Consultant, Whole Farm Consulting; former owner of Seed to Seed Farm
- **George Jonas**, Chief IP Counsel at Resideo
- **Jason Lueders**, President, Farm Credit Leasing, CoBank

### **Vendor Advisory Committee**

MCFM's Vendor Advisory Committee serves as an advisory group and a point of contact for other vendors to reach out to with questions and issues. The committee is meant to be reflective of the types of vendors selling at MCFM with 6 seats, each representing different types of market vendors.

*Facilitates communication between the vendors, staff, and the board members as representatives of the vendors.*

**If you are interested in joining this committee, please reach out to market management!**

### **Art and Food Application Review Committees**

These committees help review and evaluate applications for new products and new vendors and rotate committee members. They are made up of leaders in the field with a variety of backgrounds.

## **MCFM Marketing Initiatives**

Mill City Farmers Market actively promotes its market and vendors through many channels. We have a full-time Communications Manager who creates an annual marketing strategy and manages our website, social media and various other digital and print approaches, detailed below.

### **Website ([millcityfarmersmarket.org](http://millcityfarmersmarket.org))**

MCFM's website garners close to 270,000 unique visitors per year (40% of which are visiting for the first time). The website includes visitor information, vendor profiles, recipes, program information and a blog that features vendor stories with monthly articles.

### **Email newsletters**

MCFM sends weekly email newsletters, promoting upcoming markets, other market news and recipes. As of December 2025, we have 10K contacts with an average 48% open rate. (industry averages: 23% ag/food service, 25% non-profit, 18% retail).

### **Social Media**

MCFM has built a strong online community and drives market traffic through social media. We have over 17K followers on Facebook (organic reach between 10% and 30%). We also create Facebook events for the markets. Our Instagram account is rapidly growing; as of December 2025, we have 21.8K followers on Instagram (organic reach between 10% and 30%) Our Instagram handle is @millcityfarmersmarket.

### **Print, Digital and Earned Media**

MCFM writes and distributes press releases for major events such as opening day, National Farmers Market Week, winter markets, etc. We are typically featured in local TV and print news, including the Star Tribune, Mill City Times, WCCO, KSTP-Fox 9 and Kare11. We advertise MCFM market days on 9 local event calendar listings including Meet Minneapolis, KSTP Channel 5, Family Fun Twin Cities, Twin Cities Gateway and more. Additionally, we have partnered with other farmers markets throughout the city through the Farmers Markets of MPLS collaborative to gain media coverage.

### **Old School: Fliers, Coupons and Personal Connections**

As a supporter of so many small businesses, MCFM understands and values the importance of personal marketing connections. We distribute fliers to neighboring business and residences, print and digital coupons, direct mailings to new neighbors, content to condo concierge/community engagement staff and other creative approaches to promote the market at a personal level.

**For marketing questions or suggestions, please contact:** Maya O'Brien McLeod, Communication Manager at [maya@millcityfarmersmarket.org](mailto:maya@millcityfarmersmarket.org)

## **Farmers Market Marketing 101**

Mill City Farmers Market is committed to the success of its vendors. Compiled below are tips for designing a booth that represents your product well, increases your sales and is comfortable for you and your customers to move around through.

We review vendor booths throughout the market season and offer suggestions to improve the look and feel of your booth space and ensure compliance with market and health department standards. Want more feedback? Ask market staff or other market vendors for feedback and suggestions!

### **Know your customers! Why do people shop at MCFM?**

#### **1. Quality**

***Quality is your most important competitive advantage!***

- Product is harvested at the peak of perfection
- Best available ingredients are selected for taste and sustainability
- Product is clean and beautifully displayed

#### **2. Uniqueness, personal interaction**

***Consider what sets you apart from other vendors and producers, and then share that with your customers!***

- What do you love about your products?
- What do you grow/make best and love the most?
- How do *you* use your products?
- Do you have products that no one else has?
- What special knowledge can your customers get from you and you only?

#### **3. Sourcing and Local Foods**

***Customers shop at MCFM to support local food and businesses AND because they trust and value the market's sustainability standards!***

- Growing practices, product sourcing
- Healthy local food products

### **Presentation: How to create an enticing booth**

Effective booth display will increase sales! Consider these tips while designing your booth:



- Take advantage of all your space. If you have a lot of product, consider a U or L shaped display in your booth that encourages customers to enter the space to peruse. This setup gives you more surface area to display your products and more face time with a customer.
- Use height, width and depth to maximize space. Try using a rack or shelf to display products.
- Clearly label your products **and their prices**.
- Don't have a fancy table for display? No problem! Cover it up with an easy-to-clean oilcloth or a cotton tablecloth to elevate the look of your booth.
- Use baskets to display items. They are easy to restock and make product look abundant. Try hiding icepacks under produce to keep vegetables looking fresh and crisp throughout the day.
- Consider the wind! MCFM is in an extremely windy location. Make sure your booth display is anchored and safe for you and customers if a mighty gust blows in.
- Be sure to have a clear and relatively large sign displaying your business name so customers will be able to easily identify and find you. Hang the sign on your tent or the train shed wall as a backdrop to your booth, or brand your popup tent.
- MCFM encourage farmers and makers to display their growing/processing location.

## **At Market Tips**

### ***Staffing the Booth***

- Right size the amount of staff for your booth. If you are a maker selling canned goods for example, one person may be enough, whereas if you are preparing food, at least one person to handle money and one to cook may be needed.
- Never leave your booth unattended.
- Always face the customers, even when chatting with your business partners. Stand up when possible. Look up and be cheerful. If you aren't a "people person," consider having another person from your business staff your market stall.

### ***Shade and Coolers***

- Pay attention to where the sun is going to be and arrange your stall accordingly.
- If you don't have enough shade for everything, put the most sensitive products in the shadiest spots
- Put out small quantities of any products which will wilt. Keep the rest in coolers with ice.
- Have side panels for your canopy for rainy or windy days. But beware tent walls can act like sails. So, watch the wind.

### ***How much product should you bring?***

- Only experience can answer this question—You never want to sell out! (You also don't want to have a lot of unsold product left over at the end of the day)
- Full, abundant tables are the most attractive to customers.
- Keep records of what you take to the market and what is left at the end.

### ***Pricing & Communicating Prices***

- Have an easy to find and read price list or price tag for every product, and make sure the tag stays with the product
- Don't put items with different prices in the same basket—it's confusing.

- People will rarely ask for the price. If they can't tell immediately what the price is, they are unlikely to buy the product.

### **How to determine what price to charge customers?**

- Feel confident that your product is the best available and you can charge accordingly.
- Don't devalue your hard work: you need to cover your expenses, pay yourself, and make a profit
- Pay a visit to the grocery store and see what they are charging for similar products
- Find out what other vendors are charging. Don't undercut them.
- Avoid lowering prices at the end of the market (you will teach customers bad habits).
- It can be a good strategy to offer a bargain (or a bonus product) for a large purchase.

### ***Handling the Money***

- Bring adequate change – usually at least \$100 – in fives, ones, and coins. Mill City Farmers Market cannot give out change to vendors.
- Consider pricing in nothing smaller than quarters.
- Consider pricing items per unit (per bunch or per pint), to make it easier for shoppers to determine prices. This is especially helpful for market shoppers who may be shopping with tokens.

### ***Sampling-when permitted***

- Sampling is a great way to engage your customers and is part of the fun of dynamic market experience.
- It is essential that you follow the City of Minneapolis Health Department guidelines for safe sampling.
- Use your handwashing station frequently to keep your hands clean, and don't be the one to handle the money if you are offering samples. Make sure to bring your own trashcan with a compostable bag if your sampling will be generating waste (ie toothpicks).

### ***Educating Customers***

- If you have unusual products, be prepared to explain what they are and how to use them. Recipe cards are a great idea, or a website with recipes and links to more information.
- Be ready to describe your farming practices. If you are not Certified Organic or Certified Naturally Grown, explain to customers that your growing practices fit MCFM's Sustainability Statement, and what that means.
- Be ready with an answer if a customer asks why your prices are higher than the grocery store.
- Communicate with the Market chefs if you have a product you would like to have highlighted in the cooking demos.
- Be prepared to explain the qualities of different varieties. If a customer asks which is the best, encourage them to try them all so they can decide which they like best!

Information used with permission from Hollywood Farmers Market; *Tips for First Time Vendors*:  
<http://hollywoodfarmersmarket.org/vendors/become-a-vendor/tips-for-first-time-vendors/>