

Countryside Farmers' Markets

Purposes, Policies & Procedures

2007

Welcome to the Countryside Farmers' Markets

Countryside Farmers Markets (CFM) are unique producer's only farmers' markets. CFM will provide local/regional farmers, specialty food producers, and artisans with a convenient and practical venue for selling products directly to customers – thereby greatly increasing the producers' potential for profitability and long-term economic viability.

CFM will provide the residents of nearby communities with a venue for purchasing fresh, local, good-tasting, organically/naturally grown food, as well as a source of quality artisanal products. CFM intends to reconnect consumers directly to those who grow and process their food and products.

CFM intends to become an important venue for “informal civic education”. The markets will continuously strive to reconnect suburban “citizen-eaters” with real farmers (and other artisans) in a mutually enjoyable and beneficial setting. CFM will strive to build public understanding that personal food choices and habits – conscious or unconscious – play a profound roll in where and how food is produced.

Our first market opened in Peninsula in 2004 as a joint venture with Heritage Farms (HF). The CFM in downtown Akron was launched in 2005 and operated for two years in collaboration with the City of Akron, University Park Alliance, and *Akron Beacon Journal*. To better serve the interests of CFM's growers and vendors, the decision was made to relocate the Akron CFM in 2007 to Stan Hywet Halls and Gardens.

Market Sponsors

The Countryside Conservancy (CC) is the primary sponsor of CFM, the formal and legal owner of the market name, and responsible for establishing and administering the markets' general operating policies, regulations, and guidelines (including recruitment and management of vendors). CC is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation located at 2179 Everett Road, in Peninsula, Ohio.

Heritage Farms (HF) is a co-sponsor of CFM in Peninsula. HF is a privately held family farm business in continuous operation since 1848, now specializing in Christmas trees, pumpkins, and daylilies. HF is located at 6050 Riverview Road, in Peninsula, Ohio.

Stan Hywet Halls and Gardens (SHHG) is a co-sponsor of the CFM in Akron. SHHG, located in Akron, Ohio, is the former home of F.A. Seiberling, the founder of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, and his family. Completed in 1915, it is one of the most important remaining examples of an American Country Estate built by the wealth created during the Industrial Age at the turn of the twentieth century, when the emergence of modern America made Akron the “Rubber Capital of the World.” Open from April through December, Stan Hywet includes a 65-room Manor House and more than 70 acres of artfully landscaped grounds. It is Akron's only National Historic Landmark and is accredited by the American Association of Museums.

A number of additional agencies and organizations have contributed to the development of CFM including Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) and the Ohio and Erie Canal Association (OECA).

Market Members & Friends

Individuals and businesses which sell at CFM will be commonly referred to as vendors and/or producers. They will also be referred to as *Market Members*. The term member is intended to suggest a specific kind of relationship and commitment to CFM, as well as CFM's strong commitment to its producer-vendors.

Memberships are considered to be annual (seasonal) and involve a nominal fee. Markets members are invited to attend pre-season and post-season vendor potlucks, and are encouraged to submit farm/business information (namely website links) to be listed on CC's website.

The term *Market Friends* will be used to designate individuals and organizations which support CFM through tax deductible financial gifts and donations as well as volunteering.

Location, Hours of Operation

In 2007, CFM at Heritage Farms in Peninsula will be held at Heritage Farms (6050 Riverview Rd Peninsula, OH) from 9am to noon every Saturday starting June 2nd and will run through October 7th.

CFM at Stan Hywet will be held at Stan Hywet Halls & Gardens (714 N. Portage Path, Akron) from 3:30 to 7:00pm every Thursday starting July 12 and will run until September 27th.

In addition, a CFM holiday market will be scheduled at Heritage Farms in November.

CFM are *seasonal* markets whose regular dates and hours of operation are evaluated and established annually; short term changes or adjustments to those regular dates and hours will be made if circumstances arise that such change will better serve the needs of both vendors and customers.

General Policies & Practices

CFM will operate as, what is generally termed, a *producers only* market (with certain limited, intentional, and purposeful exceptions). Market vendors are the growers and/or producers of the products which they sell. Wholesale purchase of items for resale at CFM is not permitted. Second hand (flea market type) artisanal items are not permitted. *All* products sold at CFM must be reviewed and approved by market managers prior to their introduction to the market by vendor-members.

CFM reserves the right to prohibit any product deemed inappropriate for sale at the market. Moreover, CFM reserves the right to visit and inspect any member's farm or production facility to insure compliance with CFM guidelines. Advanced notice of visits will be given if possible, and inspection will be conducted only with market members present. Any dispute concerning products to be sold at CFM may be appealed in person or in writing to the market managers. Such appeals will be reviewed *as appropriate* by CC's executive director and/or board.

CFM will generally give preference for vendor space in the market to the *most local* of potential vendors. However, to provide adequate quality and diversity of product, CFM will consider all interested growers and producers. CFM will recruit more distant growers-producers for products which should be in the market place, but are not available nearby. Moreover, CFM reserves the right to gather produce on consignment for the market if necessary to assure sufficient quantity and diversity for the market to succeed.

CFM will generally give preference for vendor space in the market to those farmers whose production practices are judged to be *most sustainable*. The term sustainable, like the term local, is both complex and relative. Still, sustainability is a core value for CC, and central to its purpose. Hence, in evaluating potential vendors for CFM, judgments will be made regarding the sustainability of each vendor's production practices. Such judgments, of course, must then be balanced against other desirability factors such as localness and product quantity, quality, and diversity. Real life is never simple. Our approach to judging a vendor's use of sustainable production practices will be guided by principles which were developed by CC for CVNP's Countryside Initiative (available on CC's website - www.cvcountryside.org).

CFM will approve certain limited and controlled consignment arrangements to achieve certain purposes including (1) providing product diversity for the market, or (2) demonstrating a production and marketing opportunity for local growers-vendors. All consignment products sold in the market must be produced by market members subject to all other rules of the market. All consignment arrangements must be pre-approved. Consignment products can not be paid for in advance by a market vendor: CFM views prepayment (even on a small-scale) as wholesaling,

easily abused, and contrary to CFM's intent to reestablish direct relationships between those who grow food and those who eat it.

All products labeled organic must be certified by an accredited organization according to the rules of the National Organic Program. Written declaration of organic status – i.e., advertising products as organic – must be accompanied by written evidence of organic certification. Growers who display written advertisements of “organic” products without certification will be asked to remove such displays.

Approved Products

1. Vegetables, flowers, herbs, and sprouts grown by members from seeds, sets, or seedlings.
2. Fruits, berries, and nuts from trees, bushes, or vines owned/managed by members.
3. Vegetable or berry plants grown by members from seeds, seedlings, cuttings, or division bulbs (ornamental garden center type nursery stock may not be sold).
4. Cider and juices made from fruits or vegetables grown by members. Cider and juice products may be prepared in facilities not owned by members.
5. Dried fruit, jellies, jams, and preserves made from fruits or vegetables grown by members.
6. Wine made by members from their own grapes (or other fruits). Vendors of wine must have all applicable liquor licenses in plain view in their market space.
7. Maple syrup prepared by members.
8. Sorghum molasses pressed by the members.
9. Honey produced by bees owned by members.
10. Fresh eggs laid by poultry owned by members.
11. Dairy products made from milk from cows, goats, or sheep owned by members.
12. Poultry and meat products from animals owned by members. Poultry and meat products may be slaughtered, smoked, or otherwise prepared off-farm so long as the product is made from the member's own poultry and/or meat.
13. Fresh baked goods made by members.
14. Grains, cereal, pasta, flour and other grain products produced by members.
15. Fresh roasted coffee (ground, whole bean, or fresh-brewed) roasted by the producer.
16. Products such as wool, yarn, soap, wreaths, ristras, herbal salves, ointments, tinctures, and tonics made by members from their own plants and animals.
17. Artisanal (handcrafted) items produced by members; priority will be given to products derived from local-regional natural resources.
18. Other products of merit approved by CFM managers.

All items mentioned above must be sold under license and in accordance with all local, state, and federal laws, rules, and regulations regarding the production, handling, and selling of the items. *Members must submit photocopies of all inspection forms, licenses, and other necessary documents with their yearly membership application.* Members are responsible for obtaining their own licenses and may not sell items at CFM until hard copies of all applicable licenses are provided to market managers. If members have questions as to the process of obtaining such licenses, they should call or e-mail the market managers. Market managers will do their best to answer questions regarding product licensing.

Because CFM is registered as a farmers' market with the Ohio Department of Agriculture, members selling only the items listed below are exempt from being licensed as a retail food establishment:

- Fresh, unprocessed fruits or vegetables;
- Maple syrup, sorghum molasses, or honey;
- Prepackaged food that is not potentially hazardous

Products must be labeled, when required, in accordance with Ohio Department of Agriculture guidelines. Representatives of the Ohio Department of Agriculture will visit the market, so it is critical that members keep on hand copies of their papers during the market, or risk being closed down.

Producers of artisanal items will be included in the market as space permits. To ensure proper balance in the market, spaces selling art-craft products will typically comprise 10-20% of the market. To ensure quality control, all artisanal products to be sold at the market must be approved by the market manager.

Market Site Details

- Each vendor space is 10'x10'. Vendors' displays and tables must stay within this space. At CFM Peninsula approximately half of all vendor spaces have adjoining 10'x 20' areas to park a pick-up, van, or trailer. Vendor spaces with adjoining parking will be allocated as fairly as possible. At CFM Akron, vendors may have to unload at their assigned space and park in the adjoining lot.
- Vendors must provide and set-up their own 10'x10' tent to cover their display. The intent of this requirement is to provide protection for products from the weather, to clearly define each vendor's space, and to give the market a neat, clean, and uniform appearance – all to the vendors' and the market's benefit.

“Pop-up” tents are preferred (they are simple, fast, and stable). We also recommend the color of the tent to be white since it will brighten your sales space. Good pop-up tents are available for a reasonable price at many stores (about \$180). CFM will rent a few tents on a temporary and/or emergency basis if necessary (\$20/week).
- Vendors must provide their own tables and equipment necessary for displays. CFM can rent a couple of tables on a temporary and/or emergency basis if necessary (\$10/week).
- Vendors are responsible for the transportation and storage of their equipment.
- Vendors may not spill into another space without the permission of neighboring vendors and the market manager.
- Space assignments will be made on a first-come-first-serve basis, in such manner as market managers believe will best serve the general needs of all vendors. Regularly attending members will generally be allowed the same space from week to week, but may be asked to move to accommodate the needs of the market as a whole.
- Yearly space reservations are available for vendors who agree to attend 75% or more of the weekly markets. *If members with space reservations cannot attend a market, they should notify market managers at least 48 hours in advance, except in the case of emergencies. If no notice is given, the \$15 minimum weekly space fee (see Market Fees below) must be paid before the vendor may resume market attendance.* Exceptions to this rule are illness, accidents, family emergencies, and other incidents considered legitimate by market managers.
- Vendors must arrive and set up no less than 30 minutes or more than 90 minutes prior to the opening of the market. Vendors should clean up and leave promptly after the end of the market. Vendors should not tear down tables and displays until the end of the market. Vendors may not move their vehicles in or out of the market area during the hours of operation.
- Once your vehicle is parked, the motor must be turned off during market operation.
- Vendors are responsible for maintaining the appearance and cleanliness of their own spaces, tables, and displays. They are also responsible for cleaning up their space before leaving.
- Vendors should have their prices displayed.
- Each producer shall display a sign which states the producer's name and farm/business location.
- Vendors selling products by the pound must use a certified scale. If vendors are not at the market on a day scale certifying authorities are available, then the vendors are responsible for obtaining their own scale certification.

- Vendors should dress and act in a professional manner at all times during the market. There will be NO smoking by vendors in any stall space.
- CFM reserves the right to require vendors to change their space or display to assure safety and compliance with market rules.

Market Fees

All market fees will be used to support the development, operation and promotion of CFM. Although establishment of CFM will be greatly subsidized by market sponsors, CFM must become largely self-supporting within three to four years. Market fees will be used to support the market managers' salaries, operating supplies, public information/media program, paid advertising, and other customary business expenses.

- An annual CFM membership fee of \$35 for one market and \$50 for both markets will be due upon filing an application for membership and space reservation. A check payable to the Countryside Conservancy should be included with the application. It will be returned if you are not accepted into the market.
- In addition to the membership fee, CFM's weekly vendor space fee shall be 6% of daily sales, with a minimum fee due of \$15 per market *per space*. Vendors' calculation and payment of their sales fee will be paid by check at the close of each market day and shall be done on the honor system.

Note: Establishing a fee structure for a new farmers' market always illicitly enthusiastic discussion from interested parties! Dozens of fee structures are used across the country (see *The New Farmers' Market*, pp.122-24 for a succinct and thoughtful discussion). The key issues generally involve fairness to both small and large vendors, confidentiality of vendors' sales information, and the need for market managers to know precisely how the market is performing financially. CFM's fee structure attempts to balance the needs of all stakeholders as fairly as possible – and, hopefully, move the market operation toward financial solvency and minimal sponsor subsidy.

- Participation in the market is available to growers and producers who have a limited amount of product but would like to participate on an occasional basis. Occasional participants will be required to pay the yearly membership fee as well as the weekly vendor fees.
- Vendors are responsible for paying their weekly market fees to the market management before leaving the market area at the end of the market day. Until weekly fees are received by the market manager, vendors' reservations for the next week's market will not be kept.
- All vendors are responsible for paying all applicable local, state, and federal taxes and fees.
- Educational, community service, and non-profit organizations are eligible to participate in the market, subject to review and approval by market managers – provided space is available. Such organizations will be allowed participation without fees two times per season. Organizations will be required to pay CFM's annual membership fee if participating more than two weeks during the season, and the weekly sales fee will be applied and charged if products are sold.

Applications are due by April 20th. CFM will generally give preference for vendor space in the market to vendors who participated last season. Market selections for new applicants will be made within two weeks of the application deadline. Applications will continue to be accepted throughout the market season, and new vendors will be selected depending on the availability of space and/or demand for specific products.

Market Related Questions and Information

Questions related to operation of CFM, or to participation as a vendor-member should be directed to Market Manager, Kari Moore at 330-657-2178.