



# Food Safety Guidelines for Farmer's Markets and Cottage Food Operations

## These guidelines are for Farmer's Markets and Cottage Food Operations which are permitted by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD)

Ingredients for food prepared must be purchased from an **approved source** such as a grocery store, or home grown by the vendor. Store ingredients away from chemicals such as cleaners and pesticides.

**Time/temperature Control for Safety Foods (TCS)** - previously referred to as "potentially hazardous foods" require special care in storing, cooking, refrigerating, and reheating. These are foods that consist, in whole or part of: milk, milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, cooked rice, processed or cooked beans, vinegar/oil with garlic, or similar products. This would not apply to a fully cooked, dry product such as in cakes, breads, or fully dried pastas. TCS foods cannot be sold by a farmers' market vendor or a Cottage Food Operator.

**Protect** food from potential contamination at all times, including during transporting or while being stored, prepared, displayed or dispensed. Food prep surfaces must be made of smooth, easily cleanable material and be sanitized before use. Potential contamination includes dust, insects, rodents, unclean equipment, utensils and hands. Practice "no bare hand contact" of ready to eat food. Use fresh, disposable gloves or similar.

**Wash hands** with soap for 20 seconds and dry with a paper towel before handling and serving food, especially after using the toilet or handling pets or chemicals. A hand wash station is required for onsite sample prep at farmers' markets. This includes a container of warm water with a hands-free valve, liquid soap, dispensed paper towels, and a vessel to collect wastewater. Do not dispose of wastewater in the street or storm drain, only in a sanitary sewer.

**Keep kitchen area clean and work surfaces sanitized.** A sanitizer solution can be made by using regular Chlorine bleach (**NO** "scented" or "splashless" bleach) and water. One teaspoon of bleach per gallon of room temperature water. Prepared fresh as needed. **No pets** are allowed in the kitchen during preparation or at a market booth.

**Clean clothing and effective hair restraints** (hair nets or other hair restraints) should be worn while preparing the food. Long hair must be tied up. Always maintain good personal hygiene.

**Do not eat or smoke** while preparing food, or at your booth. If you have a drink, use a cup with a lid, a straw, and a handle to minimize hand to mouth contact.

Do not prepare or sell food **when you are sick** with a fever, coughing, sneezing, vomiting, or diarrhea. Food preparers must be symptom free at least 48 hours after having vomiting or diarrhea before preparing food.

Keep food separated from non-food items such as chemicals during preparation, storage, transportation and display. Dogs and other pets must not come in contact with food or booth with food for sale.

**Package and label all food** for sale before it is sold or transported to the market site. Label must truthfully identify the type and amount of food along with the vendor's name and the complete street address of the vendor, Cottage Food Operator, or market. Weights and Measures 402-471-3422.

**Prepared food must be safe at room temperature (non-TCS) and must be made by the person selling the product.**

## FOOD PRODUCTS

**Produce:** Cultivated produce may be sold without a permit or placard. No wild harvested produce or Fungi unless vendor approved by LLCHD.

**Eggs:** Fresh eggs must be from your own flock, candled, graded, properly labeled and kept refrigerated at 45° F. or less. If reusing egg cartons, all names, dates, US inspection label must be removed. You must have an egg# from NDA.

**Baked goods:** Fruit pies, cookies, muffins, breads, cakes, brownies, traditional lemon bars and similar products can be sold. Cheesecakes, cream pies (those containing egg or dairy products, including pumpkin, pecan, custard, lemon meringue...etc) may **not** be sold. Low sugar or no sugar pies are **not** permitted.

**Home Canned Products:** Home canned products cannot be sold or used in the preparation of food for sale unless your product is approved by the food processing authority (UNL) and permitted by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA). The only exception is (jams and jellies made with Pectin not gelatin) apple butter, chutneys, and syrups made with sugar. **No** low sugar/sugar free products or low acid fruit/vegetable butters/spreads are allowed. Pepper, tomato jellies etc... must be clear without chunks and seeds.

**Noodles:** Can be sold if they are fully dried. Egg noodles should have a consumer advisory posted.

**Honey:** Can be sold but must be from your own hives. Honey cannot be sold to retail markets or restaurants unless licensed as a processor by NDA. Flavored honey may be sold if honey has come from an approved source.

**Herb Vinegars, Oils, Mustards, Salsa, or Dressing:** Cannot be sold unless approved by the food processing authority (UNL) and permitted by NDA.

**Meat:** Including dried and or cured cannot be sold unless slaughtered and packaged in a USDA inspected facility and permitted as an Itinerant food establishment.

**Raw Milk:** Cannot be sold by a Cottage Food Operation or at a farmer's market in Nebraska.

**Advertising:** Including "Facebook" or other online based advertising is not permitted unless you are a licensed Cottage Food Operation.

**Drinks:** Drinks must be non TCS, made with water from an approved source and prepared ahead of market by person selling product. You must have a state temporary permit and Lincoln placard to prepare and sell drinks. No "sun teas" allowed.

For questions contact the LLCHD Food Safety Program Office: 3131 O Street (402) 441-6280.