

FOOD SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR FARMERS' MARKET TRADERS



How this Leaflet will help you

This leaflet will explain how to meet the food safety laws that apply to you while trading at a farmers' market. It covers the basic areas that apply to typical farmers' market stalls that prepare, handle or sell (including giving free samples) food or drink, whether open or wrapped. To make it readable and straightforward to understand, it is not a detailed guide - but you should find information here about how to obtain further advice on some of the more complicated food safety issues.

Farmers' markets are the subject of routine checking by food safety officers from your local Environmental Health and Trading Standards Department, who may visit you on the day a market is held. In addition, the farm or other premises from which you operate may also be subject to inspection.



THE RULES OF HYGIENE CONTROLLING HAZARDS

The law requires you to identify possible hazards to food safety, know which of these is actually important for the type of food that you prepare or sell and to provide suitable controls to stop problems occurring. While this can be complicated for some businesses, simple measures are all that is required for most traders at a farmers' market. The most important of these are described below.

i. **Transportation**

- Food transported to a market must be wrapped, covered or placed in suitable containers to prevent contamination. Vehicles and containers must be kept clean and in good repair and the food should be kept separate from other items. For example, if you transport dogs, game birds or containers of diesel in the back of your vehicle you must avoid tainting or directly contaminating fruit, vegetables and other food.
- Simple cardboard boxes and paper-lined crates are fine for most agricultural produce but you will need higher-grade materials, such as metal or plastic crates, that can be easily cleaned for bakery products and meats.
- Some foods must be kept cold (below 8°C) to prevent the growth of dangerous bacteria. These include soft or semi-hard cheeses, most other dairy products, cooked meat and vegetable products, most smoked or cured meat, and fish and shellfish. Insulated containers with icepacks and a thermometer are usually sufficient and the temperature must be checked from time to time (and preferably written down in a log book). Larger volume traders should consider using refrigerated vehicles.

ii. **Preparation**

- The surface that you lay out or prepare food on must be smooth and impervious so that it can be thoroughly cleaned. If you are using wooden tables, you must provide plastic sheeting or other suitable covering material.

- You will need to wash and dry your hands from time to time and if facilities are not provided on site, you must bring your own. **For stallholders selling open foods, such as meats, or high risk unwrapped foods such as cooked meats, dairy products and seafood, there must be handwashing facilities at the stall.**
- These should include a supply of hot water, towels, bowl and soap. For hot water, insulated flasks should be sufficient in most cases.
- If you are using knives or other serving implements you will need washing facilities for these, which must not be the same as those used for handwashing – separate bowls or sinks must be used.
- Clean protective overclothing must be worn whilst handling unwrapped food.
- **Allergen contamination-** During preparation you must look critically at your controls because of the risk that any food you produce for sale could have cross contact allergen contamination. Clean hands and overclothing and use of clean and segregated utensils, equipment and surfaces are important.

ii. Display and service

- To avoid possible contamination, food must not be placed directly onto the floor. It is best to keep all unwrapped food off the ground by at least 45cm.
- Make sure that high risk and low risk foods are well separated - for example; keep raw foods away from cooked foods. High-risk foods should be protected from the public touching, coughing or sneezing in the display area. This could be achieved by sneeze guards or covering foods.
- Check the temperature of chilled foods from time to time and preferably keep a record of this in a logbook. Make sure you know the correct temperature for the food that you are selling and decide what you will do if the food is not at this temperature.
- Regularly wipe down surfaces with a clean (preferably disposable) cloth using a food safe cleaner and disinfectant (e.g. Dettol spray).
- If the market does not have refuse services, make sure you have sacks or containers for waste food and water. Waste food must be disposed of correctly for example; waste food containing animal proteins (or meat) must not be used as pig feed.

iii Cooking

- Raw ingredients and cooked food must be adequately separated from each other to avoid cross contamination. You must also wash your hands after

handling raw meats and before touching other foods or equipment. Food must be thoroughly cooked to 75°C or above. A food probe thermometer with food-safe disinfectant wipes should be used to confirm this.

iv. **Training**

- Market traders do not have to attend a formal food hygiene course **but** you must have an understanding of the basic principles that apply to the safe handling and preparation of food.
- If you are manufacturing or preparing high risk food you will need to be trained to a level appropriate to your business. This means completing training to a level equivalent to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's (CIEH) Level 2 Award in Food Safety and Catering.
- Food hygiene training is strongly recommended for **anyone** involved in the running of a food business. Your local market may require evidence of training. For advice contact your local Environmental Health Department.

v. **Basic hygiene measures**

All food handlers should follow these rules:

- Keep yourself clean and wear clean protective clothing.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before handling food, after using the toilet, handling raw food or waste and after every break.
- If you have a skin, nose or throat problem or an infected wound, do not handle unwrapped food.
- If you have a stomach upset, do not handle food for at least 48hrs after you are free of symptoms.
- Ensure that cuts, spots or sores are covered with a brightly coloured waterproof plaster.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink where open food is handled (and wash your hands before restarting work).
- Clean as you go - keep all equipment and surfaces clean and disinfected.
- Avoid unnecessary handling of food – use bags, tongs, etc instead.

vi. **Food safety management systems**

All food businesses must prepare documentation which explains what food safety hazards are relevant to their operation and how these will be controlled and monitored. The type of system you adopt will depend on your business.

A very low risk business such as a stall selling vegetables would need to follow good hygiene practice whereas a food manufacturer would need a fully documented

HACCP. A caterer or a stall holder selling home made meat pies is somewhere in between. The Food Standards Agency has produced packs for caterers and retailers entitled Safer Food Better Business. If you require advice on the type of system to adopt contact your Environmental Health Service.

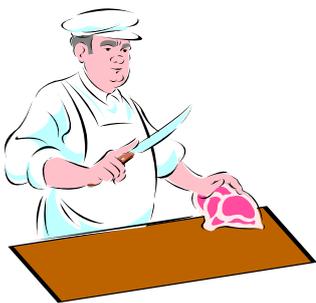


DO I NEED TO BE REGISTERED?

All businesses that prepare, handle or sell food or drink need to register as a food business.

To register, contact your local authority for a form which you fill in and return. There is no fee and no 'food test' to pass. For market stalls, you do not need to register each market site, only the premises where you normally keep the stall and its materials and/or food overnight.

For businesses within Dover District a [food registration form](#) can be completed online.



SELLING YOUR FARM-PRODUCED MEAT

There are a number of rules and regulations for the sale of meat and meat products, with different ones depending on the type of customer you sell to and the status of the premises where the meat has been cut or stored. If you would like further information about producing and selling farm products, please contact your local Environment Health Service and Trading Standards Service.

Meat sales directly from the farm

- Farmers are permitted to cut and prepare meat on their farm premises after return from the slaughterhouse (subject to meeting hygiene requirements) and

sell that meat to the “final consumer” at the farm gate or at markets. There is no legal restriction as to the amount of meat that may be sold in this way. Such sales can include those via the telephone, mail order and Internet.

- The term ‘final consumer’ means individual members of the public ie anyone who is going to buy meat and use it themselves. It does not include premises that are buying it and selling it on. If you are selling to retailers or caterers contact your Environmental Health Department for further guidance
- Weights and measures legislation applies to the sale of fresh, chilled, frozen, salted, cooked or processed meat (beef, lamb, pork) and to uncooked poultry. In general, meat and poultry must be sold by the kilogram. Prepacked items must be marked with the net weight of the product in metric units. Non-prepacked items, including products cut or selected from a larger bulk item as requested by the customer, must also be sold by weight. The customer must be informed of the weight before paying for and receiving the goods. In the case of customer requests for trimmed or boned meat and for dressed poultry the customer should be advised whether the weight to be charged for will be before or after the product is prepared for them.



MANUFACTURING FOOD AT HOME FOR SALE FROM YOUR MARKET STALL

i. Low risk items such as cakes and jams

Jams and non-dairy cakes are generally safe to produce from home. However, some products need more care, for example pickles, chutneys, pesto and flavoured oils. If the recipe or the processing is inadequate, dangerous bacteria or toxins can grow.

It is also critical that customers receive information regarding storage and shelf life. The safest way to determine the shelf life of these products is to have them tested in a laboratory. Contact Trading Standards to discuss food labeling requirements.

ii. High risk items such as meat, dairy and fish products

These foods are higher risk because they support the growth of harmful bacteria and are often sold ready to eat without further cooking. If you intend to make such products (which include hams, pates, ice cream, cheeses, yoghurts and prepared foods such as meat pies, lasagna, shepherds pies etc), you must contact your local Environmental Health department and Trading Standards department for advice before you start.

iii Giving away free samples

Giving samples away is a good way to introduce customers to your products. Samples given away free of charge, are seen as a legal sale, and their production and handling is still subject to legal control.

Protect food from contamination. Provide cocktail sticks or tongs for hygienic service. Only keep small quantities of foods that need to be kept cold out on display, and top up from a cool box. The law permits a maximum of four hours out of chilled temperature control but it is good practice to dispose of un-chilled high-risk food after one hour.

If you give away samples of **hot** food, only keep small quantities out on display. The law permits a maximum of two hours below 63°C but it is good practice to dispose of unheated food after one hour.

You may find your local market has its own conditions about food samples and they may not be permitted. This is at the discretion of the market organizer rather than any national legal requirement.



LABELLING, WEIGHTS AND INGREDIENTS

The general requirements are set out below. If you require any further information, please contact Trading Standards for further advice.

i. Weights and Measures

Most loose foods such as fruit and vegetables must be sold by net weight, using approved metric weighing equipment. If food is pre-packed, the metric weight must be marked on the pack, but you can also give an additional imperial weight declaration provided it is less prominent than the metric one. You should be aware, that you are not permitted to use household scales to determine the net weight. You must use scales which have been 'stamped' as fit for use for trade and which are suitable for your purposes. If you are not sure if the scales you are using are suitable, Trading Standards will be able to advise you. There are also strict controls on the type of equipment you can use to weigh your products, whether this is sale to the consumer, or pre-packing the products before sale.

Batches of pre-packed foods made up in the same pre-determined quantity are caught by the 'average' weights and measures system of packing, which allows a small variation in the actual packed weight from the declared weight; however if you ensure that your packages always contain at least the declared net weight then you will always meet the 'average system' requirements. If you require further guidance on the 'average system' please contact trading standards.

Declaration of net weight

This is required to be given on the packaging in 'grams' or 'kilograms' or with the permitted abbreviations 'g' or 'kg'. Please note, no other abbreviations are permitted. The marking must be easy to understand, clearly legible and indelible, and easily visible to an intending purchaser under normal conditions of purchase. It must also be in the same field of vision as the name of the food. In addition the minimum height of the figures to be used in the declaration are as follows:

Weight	Minimum height of figures
0 – 50 g	2 mm
> 50 g – 200 g	3 mm
> 200 g – 1 kg	4 mm
> 1kg	6 mm

ii. Labelling

Food labelling can be very specific but as a general rule, the following advice applies:

Labelling requirements for products sold loose or you have packed yourself

If you sell products which are loose or which you have pre-packed yourself and are trading from a stall under your own name, the 'pre-packed for direct sale' provisions apply. These exempt you from the full food labelling requirements but will require

Name of the food

The name of the food must be sufficiently precise to inform the purchaser of the true nature of the food and to enable it to be distinguished from products with which it could be confused and if necessary include a description of its use. The name of the food must also be accompanied by an indication of its physical treatment, such as 'pasteurized' or 'previously frozen'.

Some products such as melons and potatoes must be labelled with their variety.

Allergenic ingredients

Recent changes to the law mean that you **MUST** now declare the presence of any allergenic ingredients in the food i.e. the presence of the following (and products thereof):

- Cereals containing gluten (i.e. wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt, kamut)
- Crustaceans (e.g. prawns, crabs, lobster, crayfish)
- Eggs
- Fish
- Soybeans
- Milk
- Nuts, namely almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecan nuts, brazil nuts, pistachio nuts, macadamia or Queensland nuts
- Celery (including celeriac)
- Mustard
- Sesame seeds
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites (> 10mg/kg or 10mg/litre)
- Lupin (including lupin seeds and flour)
- Molluscs (e.g. mussels, oysters, snails and squid)

Quantitative Ingredients Declaration

If you sell any meat products, you will be required to indicate the percentage of meat ingredients in the product. This should be calculated based on the weight of the finished product. For uncooked products such as sausages this will be as per the recipe. For cooked products such as hams, any cooking losses will be taken into account. It is no longer correct to declare a 'minimum meat content'. This may be an opportunity to exploit any superior meat content of your product over those that are available in the high street.

Claims

There are other strict requirements in relation to claims you can make about the products or any of the ingredients. Should you wish to use any of the following

terms, such as organic, fresh, natural, authentic, traditional, pure and other similar claims, you should contact Trading Standards for advice on using these claims.

Full Labelling requirements

If you sell pre-packed products which you have not manufactured and packed yourself, you will need to comply with the full labelling requirements. These are briefly outlined below.

- **Name of the food**

This is the same as for pre-packed for direct sale above. The name of the food used must be sufficiently precise to inform the purchaser of the true nature of the food and to enable it to be distinguished from products with which it could be confused and if necessary include a description of its use. The name of the food must be given in the same field of vision as the net quantity e.g. on the same side of the packaging.

- **Ingredients List**

The ingredients in a product are required to be listed in descending order of weight, as determined as at the time of use in preparation of the food. This includes the declaration of ingredients in compound ingredients.

- **Quantitative Ingredients Declarations (QUID)**

There is a requirement to give an indication of the percentage of an ingredient in the product (as determined at the 'mixing bowl' stage) if it is:

- Featured in the name of the food (and governs consumer choice when considering whether to purchase the product)
- Emphasised on the labelling in pictures, words or graphics

You are exempt from giving a QUID for any products, which are used in quantities in less than 2% *and* are used as a flavouring.

You will always need to QUID the meat in a meat product.

- **Country of Origin**

A statement about the country of origin should be indicated on the label if a consumer could be misled as to the true origin of the food. This will apply to Italian Sauces manufactured in the UK.

- **Specified Allergenic Ingredients**

Your products will need to be labelled with any allergens they contain if this is not indicated in the name of the food. It is important also to consider the allergens in compound foods used in your products, and also where the name of the ingredient doesn't identify that it contains an allergen e.g. cheese contains milk, or celery in seasoning mixes. The allergenic ingredient must be declared in the list of ingredients using a typeset that clearly distinguishes it from the rest of the list of ingredients e.g. different font, style or background colour. More information on allergy labelling can be found <http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide>

- **Appropriate durability Indication**

Depending on the nature of your products this may be a best before date or a use by date. The format of the date will depend upon the shelf life of the product. Best Before dates are mainly for foods whose quality decreases over a medium to long shelf life, such as cakes and biscuits. Use By dates are for foods which deteriorate rapidly and may end up posing a risk to health, such as chilled meat products.

- **Any storage conditions**

- **Instructions for use**

It is best practice to give cooking instructions to enable customers to make proper use of the product. These need not be complex, nor need they cover all cooking alternatives.

- **Name and address**

Products should be labelled with a name and address of the food business operator responsible for the food information in the labelling. The address needs to be a physical address within the EU where the business can be contacted by mail. You cannot just use an e-mail address or phone number.

- **Other declarations**

There are also specific requirements for indicating genetically modified and irradiated ingredients.

- **Net Quantity**

The net quantity of the food must be given and labelled in the same field of vision as the name of the food e.g. on the same side of the packaging.

iii. Traceability

You are required to demonstrate who has supplied product to you, including ingredients. If you supply to other food businesses, you must be able to show what product you have supplied and the customer details.

iv. Prices

In general all foods must have their price displayed and include VAT where applicable.

The price must be displayed on or near the product, be unambiguous and easily read by customers without them having to ask for assistance.

For most non-prepacked items or for products where the customer requests a particular quantity, the unit price per kilogram must be indicated on or near the goods, or on a price list. You may also display a price per pound but this must not be more prominent than the metric kilogram price. For more expensive products you may also assist customers with an additional price per 100 grams where this might give a more meaningful indication of the price the customer will have to pay.

v. Business Names

It is a legal requirement to clearly display to customers, the full business name and address of the owners of the stall.



ANIMAL ATTRACTIONS AT FARMERS MARKETS

Some farmers' markets use animals as an additional attraction to the produce stalls. However, because of the risks of cross contamination with food and the welfare and disease risks in relation to animals, animal attractions are not encouraged by Environmental Health or Trading Standards.

In addition, germs such as *E.coli* O157 (which 20 years ago was virtually unheard of in this country), can cause serious illness that can be fatal in young children or cause life-long disability through kidney failure. As a result, you need to be very careful about managing any animals that you have on show.

Most local authority Environmental Health Departments will be able to you advice on the risks associated with animal handling at farmers' markets but some of the key elements are listed here:

- If you choose to use animals as an attraction, first make sure you have the necessary movement permits. Contact your relevant Trading Standards Service for information.
- You should assume that all cattle, sheep and goats are infected with *E.Coli* O157 bacteria, even if the animals look clean and healthy. It can also be found in a range of other animals, including pigs and horses.
- Make sure your animals are transported separately from your foodstuffs. The holding pen at the market must be well separated from your food stall and the animals should not have to be led to the pen past or close to other food stalls.
- Petting or feeding of animals is discouraged due to the risk of infection. However, where this is necessary a competent person must supervise the activity and you should have handwashing facilities present, including soap and towels. Food handlers should thoroughly clean and disinfect their hands after contact with any animal and before food, or anything that might come into contact with food, is handled.

- If visitors bring picnics or eat any of the food that they have bought at the market, this should not be allowed to take place close to animals. Nor should any animals be fed human food – there are strict controls about what some animals may be fed, especially pigs. You could be liable for incorrect feeding even if an animal was fed by a member of the public.
- Ensure children are supervised by adults at all times and that children do not put fingers in their mouth or kiss the animals.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Remember that it is in your best interests, and those of your customers, that you are well informed and prepared before you attend a farmers market. The purpose of this guidance is to help you to prepare before you attend, so that it will be an enjoyable and safe experience for you and your customers. However, this leaflet cannot cover all aspects of the law or circumstances that may arise. You are therefore welcome to contact your local Environmental Health or Trading Standards Service for more specific advice should you wish to do so. If we cannot answer your query, we will do our best to point you in the right direction. Please see the contacts given below.

Dover District Council Environmental Health: envhealth@dover.gov.uk

Kent Trading Standards: www.kent.gov.uk/business/trading-standards

Useful contacts:

National Farmers' Market & Retail Association (FARMA)
<http://www.farma.org.uk/>

National Farmers Union
www.nfu.org.uk

The Food Standards Agency:
www.food.gov.uk

The Country Land and Business Association
www.cla.org.uk