



Vendor Handbook





Copyright Statement

Although we have had the aid of provincial and municipal organisations and the graciously given time from community members in creating our Market, we are a totally unique, *registered not-for-profit business*.

As such, any information—materials such as this handbook, application form, website information, social media posts, or other materials that are published by Avon Community Farmers' Market—are *Proprietary property* and cannot be reproduced or copied by individuals or organisations outside of the ACFM board of directors or staff, as guided by Canadian Copyright Laws.

Welcome

Welcome to the Avon Community Farmers' Market.

The Market brings people together. It helps build community and makes a statement about how we should live and interact. Without you—our farmers, prepared food and artisan vendors—we would not be able to build this community farmers' market.

This handbook builds on existing policies and procedures that have been created and used successfully at other farmers' markets. It is designed to be a comprehensive resource for market vendors and staff. It includes logistical details like dates and fees, but also provides new tools to help build strong vendor relations and create a positive and profitable market environment.

We hope that you will find this handbook helpful. If you have any questions, or suggestions for the handbook, please feel free to share them with our Market Manager.

Thank you for being a part of the growing success of the Avon Community Farmers' Market.

Any [regulations](#) or procedures regarding health and safety will be addressed before our first market day. Before opening day, the Market Manager will provide up-to-date information on health and safety regulations to vendors via email.

1. Vision & Values

The Avon Community Farmers' Market is a not-for-profit organisation, established to create a community gathering place where farmers and artisans can provide high quality, locally produced food, products and services for our community. The Avon Community Farmers' Market encourages healthy living, inclusive community connections and improves opportunities for all individuals in our community by promoting local economic development as well as social and community building.

Our market recognises a gap in diversity and we are committed to cultivating a culture of inclusion and connectedness through our vendor and community contacts. We are striving to connect with BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+ individuals and are actively looking-out for applications from vendors in these communities.

We would like to acknowledge that we are living and conducting business in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. General Market Information

Our current farmers' market pays respect to the previous market operated by vendors in Windsor and the surrounding area. We are grateful to those vendors who have shared their experiences and wisdom with us as we grow the new market.

The Avon Community Farmers' Market (ACFM) group was formed in November 2017. It is a collaborative group of community members and food producers from West Hants Regional Municipality.

In late 2017, a research survey was conducted within the community of West Hants Regional Municipality that gathered a response from over 650 individuals. This survey identified community support for a farmers' market that offers access to local food on a regular basis, support for local food growers and artisans, a location to socialise and to offer community connection as well as attract tourists.

A Board of Directors was created in April 2018. This board currently (as of February 2023) consists of seven members.

The Avon Community Farmers' Market operates from June to October each year. The market was and will continue to be located at Victoria Park in Windsor, Nova Scotia. This is an in-kind agreement with the West Hants Regional Municipality. We also hold a Holiday Market each year.

The Avon Community Farmers' Market serves the West Hants Regional Municipality. This market will reach citizens of all ages in the community. It provides a gathering place to promote local economic development and social and community building. It will provide activities for children as well as a location for the ageing population to gather and purchase locally sourced food.

Roles & Responsibilities

Market Manager

The Market Manager is responsible for:

- managing the operation of Market days
- recruiting and scheduling vendors
- fostering vendor relationships
- coordinating public relations
- assisting with financial and budget matters
- monitoring the quality and appropriateness of products sold
- administering and advising on rules and policies
- serving as the Market's public and corporate representative, and
- liaising with the Avon Community Farmers' Market Board on a regular basis.

The Market Manager works on a part time basis.

Market Manager Profile

Karen Cooper – originally from Ellershouse, Karen returned to Hants County in 2017 after working and travelling in Canada and abroad. She has worked in Human Resources, Project Administration and Accounting roles in a diverse range of industries.

Market Assistant

Since 2020, the market has been able to fund a part-time Market Assistant through the Canada Summer Jobs Program. The position allows a young person from the community to develop managerial and non-profit experience, and having an assistant has helped our market immensely. This position is dependent on funding, and we will continue to apply each season.

Volunteers

Avon Community Farmers' Market is supported by a dedicated group of volunteers. Volunteers assist with a range of activities such as serving on the board of directors, assisting on market days and with special projects.

Vendors

Vendors are at the heart of the Avon Community Farmers' Market and come from throughout Hants and Kings counties with a few from the Halifax Regional Municipality as well. At many markets vendors organise themselves, set policies, hire staff, undertake marketing and promotions, and jointly rent a large space. At the Avon Community Farmers' Market, vendors rent individual spaces, and are free to focus on their products, sales and personal marketing and displays, while the volunteer board members of the ACFM and the Market Manager take care of the detailed aspects of market operation.

There are four types of vendors at the Market:

Seasonal Vendors are expected to commit to all Sunday markets during the regular market season. In exchange for this commitment, Seasonal Vendors:

- guaranteed a weekly space
- given special consideration when assigning spaces
- given the first option to apply to attend the holiday Markets

Occasional Vendors participate in the market on a week-to-week basis. The Market Manager maintains a list of interested Occasional Vendors and may contact vendors as space permits.

Youth Entrepreneur (YE) Vendors are between the ages of 12 and 18 years old and the primary owner/creator of their product.

- YE may book up to three times per regular market season
- All regular vendor policies are in effect
- The primary focus will be non-food items. The Board will review applications on a case-by-case basis.

Community Tables are offered to non-profit and community groups each week (one per market) to promote their group. Any sales of tickets or items must be approved by the Market Manager in advance. There is no cost for this space.

Vendor Review and Selection

For the 2023 season the process for vendor selection will be as follows:

1. Vendors complete the online application (PDF applications will be available if needed)
2. Applications will be reviewed by Board Members
3. Options for the Board will be:
 - Accept
 - Reject
 - Request further information
4. The Market Manager will convey the decision to the vendor within ten (10) business days of the application.

Dates and Times Location

The Avon Community Farmers' Market operates from Victoria Park, 78 Thomas Street, Windsor, NS.

The park is covered under the Windsor Mesh Internet Network; this is an unsecured network. It is not recommended that the network be used when processing payments.

Sunday Markets

The Sunday Farmers' Market operates from 10am to 2pm. The 2023 Market opens in late May and ends in late October. Dates are determined each year.

Holiday Market(s)

The Annual Holiday Market is held on the last Sunday in November. In 2021, the Holiday Market was extended to two 'regular, cold-season' markets, which occurred on November 21st and November 28, 2021. In 2022, we held the Holiday Market at the West Hants Sports Complex. We will discuss further possibilities for a winter/Holiday market in 2023. This event will have its own application form.

3. Vendor Application

Sunday Markets

All vendors applying for a Market space must:

1. Submit a completed application form annually.
2. Agree to pay fees as outlined in this handbook.
3. Meet all the criteria for vendors, and accept the policies outlined in this handbook and on the application form.
4. Acknowledge that vendor acceptance is non-transferable. Any change in ownership of a business will result in termination of the vendor acceptance and necessitate the filing of a new application.

Note: Food vendors must read and sign the Food Vending Checklist to indicate their agreement to adhere to all requirements, terms and conditions contained therein. Food vendors are required to submit a copy of their Food Safety Handlers certificate with their application. If a permit is required, a copy must be forwarded to the Market Manager before the vendor attends their first market.

Holiday Market(s)

There will be a separate application form for the Holiday Market. It will be available later in the market season.

To receive preferential treatment (reduced fee and priority placement), all current market vendors will be invited to apply before the applications are opened to non-market vendors.

The Holiday Market application will cover the policies regarding cancellation and payments for that market.

Please note that if space permits, the Holiday market is open to a wider range of vendors, with approval from the Market Board.

Criteria for Vendor Selection

The Avon Community Farmers' Market is committed to creating a diverse and vibrant marketplace with the highest quality, locally produced products available. ACFM has a Developed Vendor Criteria, and reserves the discretion to accept or refuse any application and vendor at any time. All vendors are required to apply annually. The Market Manager is responsible for the review of new and current vendor applications. All vendors are presented to the Board for final approval.

Basic Vendor Criteria

1. Each vendor at the Avon Community Farmers' Market must be a primary or secondary producer.
2. 100% of all products sold by non-food vendors (artisans, crafters, etc.) must be of their own production. If the vendor has an item they wish to sell that is not their creation, they may submit a request to the Market Manager. It would be limited to 15% of their selling space.
3. A minimum of eighty five percent (85%) of product sold by food producers at the Market on market days must be of the Vendor's own production and the remaining fifteen percent (15%) must also abide by our product guidelines per market during the market season. Noncompliance will be addressed by the Manager.
4. There must be an available spot in the appropriate producer category.

The determining factor in placing a vendor in a primary or secondary category is the source of the vendor's raw materials.

Primary Producer: a producer that grows or harvests raw materials for direct sale or manufacture into secondary products.

Secondary Producer: a producer that purchases raw materials for local manufacture into secondary products.

As a Farmers' Market, the Avon Community Farmers' Market strives to have 60% of its vendorship comprised of primary producers.

General Considerations

In addition to the basic criteria, approval / refusal of a vendor application may also be determined in accordance with the following general considerations:

Product Quality and Presentation

- Consistently high product quality: fresh, flavourful, and ripe
- Clean and attractive displays
- Courteous, strong customer service, and knowledgeable staff
- Foster a connection between the producer and the consumer

Conduct and Compliance

- Compliance with all market rules, policies and procedures
- Compliance with all federal, provincial, and local laws and regulations pertaining in any manner whatsoever to the vendor's business
- Positive vendor conduct toward customers, fellow vendors, Market staff, and volunteers
- Timely submission of application, licences, permits, and other market correspondence
- Billing and payment history
- Attendance record

Product Balancing

- Products that are unique or unusual
- Products not already represented in the market
- Product not readily available through national distribution channels

Food Safety and Production

- Adherence to the highest standards of animal husbandry, safe food production and handling.
- As a minimum, complies with the requirements set forth by the NS Environmental Health and Food Safety Division Food Safety Guidelines for Public Markets
- Promptly takes required corrective actions in the event that a Government Inspector notifies the vendor, his employees or representatives that such corrective action is required regarding the production, labelling, handling, storage, distribution or sale of their product.
- Adherence to all applicable laws and regulations pertaining in any manner to the production, labelling, handling, storage, distribution and sale of the vendor's products (e.g. The Animal Protection Act of Nova Scotia for those vendors producing and selling products such as eggs, cheese, beef, pork, lamb etc.)

Space Availability

- Admission to Avon Community Farmers' Market is subject to space availability

Agriculture

- Priority is given to those regional farmers and producers who bring products to market that are 100% grown and harvested on farmland that they own and/or operate.
- Preference will be given to the most local producer when a space becomes available at the market, without compromising quality or diversity.
- Farmers have priority over processed and on-premise prepared foods.
- Farmers producing and selling meat, dairy, poultry etc. products must practice responsible animal husbandry.
- Farmers who use environmentally responsible growing, breeding, raising, and harvesting methods will also have priority.

Prepared Foods

- Products available locally should be sourced locally and directly from their producers where possible.
- Priority will be given to products processed by the vendor over products by a second party or co-packer.

Product Guidelines

The Avon Community Farmers' Market focuses on locally produced agriculture and crafts. Other products or services that may fit in the market environment are assessed on an individual basis. Goods purchased for resale that are not made by hand locally, prepared locally or grown locally may not be sold.

***Each vendor is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and licences for their products and for ensuring that these permits and licences remain current at all times. If at any time a vendor's licence and/or permit is revoked for any reason whatsoever, they are required to immediately notify the Market Manager.**

If at any time a vendor, their employees or representatives is notified by a Government Inspector that they must take corrective action to address any deficiencies regarding production, labelling, handling, storage, distribution and sale of the vendor's products, the vendor must notify the Market Manager and provide the Market Manager with a copy of the Inspector's report, if one has been issued. The vendor must take prompt corrective action to address the deficiency identified by the Inspector.

Produce

The Avon Community Farmers' Market supports farm-fresh, locally grown products and is not an outlet for wholesale produce. Produce should be insect free, fresh and have no residue that cannot be removed by normal washing. Only the highest quality produce will be allowed for sale at the market. The Market Manager has the right to request any vendor to remove any merchandise deemed, in the sole discretion of the Market Manager, to be unacceptable to the market.

Meat – Claim of Ownership

Beef – minimum of 12 months on the individual's farm, preferably the animal should be born on the individual's farm. This ensures that the vendor knows what the animal's health history is and is imperative for selling the product as from the vendor's farm.

Grass-fed Beef – the animal needs to be born on the individual's farm and reside there until butchering.

Lamb – minimum three months on the individual's farm, preferably the animal should be born on the individual's farm. This is imperative if the lamb is to be sold as from the vendor's farm.

Grass-fed Lamb – the animal needs to be born on the individual's farm and reside there until butchering.

Pork – minimum four months on the individual's farm, preferably the animal should be born on the individual's farm. This is imperative if the pork is to be sold as from the vendor's farm.

Other Production

Up to 15% of a food producer's products may be of someone else's production on market days, under these conditions:

- It must be an agricultural or food product grown or produced in Nova Scotia
- It must be specifically approved by the Market Manager to ensure that the product fills a gap in the offerings being made at the market
- **Vendors will be required to display signage each market day indicating the source/origin of each product not of their own production.**

Product Labelling

All labelling must comply with the standards set out in the *NS Environmental Health & Food Safety Division's Food Safety Guidelines for Public Markets* as well as any other labelling requirements necessary for the vendor's product.

Organic Labelling

For a product to be labelled or represented as organic it must be certified organic per the *Organic Grade Regulations* in the *Agriculture and Marketing Act*.

Landscape Plants, Live or Cut Plants

Plants must be propagated in soil by the vendor from seed, cuttings, bulbs, or plant divisions. The vendor must have grown all products for sale.

Food Items and Prepared Foods

Prepared items must be produced by the vendor from basic ingredients. The Market may, at its discretion, limit the number and product mix of food vendors. Ingredients should be sourced locally and from the market wherever possible.

Arts and Crafts

The Market welcomes a limited number of local artisans whose products reflect unique methods, and/or local heritage.

Onsite Inspection

The Avon Community Farmers' Market reserves the right to do farm or site inspections of any product and/or process for the purposes of verification and to ensure that products sold at the market comply with market policies and requirements. Onsite inspections will be performed by the Market Manager and vendors will receive 48 hours notice.

Space Assignment

Spaces are assigned with consideration to the length of time at the market, continuity, product presentation, and the best interest of the entire market. Seasonal Vendors are given primary consideration in assigning spaces. Vendors may request assignment to a particular space at the time of application. A space is identified as approximately 10x10 feet.

Transfers of Space Assignments

- Vendors may not sublet space to others.
- Reservation of spaces establishes neither right to nor guarantee of space rental in subsequent years.
- If a vendor sells his or her business, he or she may not transfer his or her market space to the new owner. The new owner must submit an application for approval – acceptance is not guaranteed.
- Change in space assignment for vendors may occur at the Market Manager's discretion. Notice will be given.

Spaces for Seasonal Vendors are typically kept in the same location all year; however, changes may be required in mid-season to balance product distribution, improve traffic flow, or to meet individual vendor needs. The Market Manager maintains the discretion to change spaces as required.

Vendor Meeting & Surveys

Vendor meetings are held annually before the first market and after the final market. Although attendance at these meetings is voluntary, attendance is appreciated as this meeting provides a good opportunity for the Market Manager to discuss the previous season, upcoming season, and any opportunities or issues. It also provides a forum for vendors to express concerns or share success stories.

The Market Manager also distributes an annual survey electronically at the end of the year to all vendors to get feedback on the previous season. There may be interim surveys as well.

Fees

All fees are subject to consideration and change annually by the Board of the Avon Community Farmers' Market. All efforts will be made not to change fees during the market season, except as a result of changes in government taxes, fees, Municipal fees, dues, etc.

Fees for the 2023 season have been set as follows:

- \$30.00 per day for a single space (May to October) for seasonal vendors.
- \$30 per day for occasional vendors.
- \$15.00 per day for a single space for a Youth Entrepreneur.
- Community tables are not charged a fee.
- Prices for Special space requests are assessed by the Market Manager on a case-by-case basis.

Payment Methods – All Vendors

All vendors must pay for their booth on the market day they attend. Failure to do so will affect future attendance with possible termination of the vendors' participation at the market. This will be assessed by the Market Manager and the Board of ACFM.

Payment can be by cash or cheque, given to the Market Manager. All cheques should be made out to the Avon Community Farmers' Market. We will now accept payment by Email Transfer on and by 2pm on market day.

A \$25 fee will be charged for any cheques returned due to insufficient funds. If one (1) cheque is returned due to insufficient funds, the vendor may be asked to pay their vendor fees in cash for the remainder of the season.

4. Vendor Guidelines and Regulations

The following regulations and guidelines are established to create clear expectations, address potential issues or concerns, protect the best interests and reputation of the Market and to make the Market a safe and enjoyable place for vendors, staff, volunteers, and patrons.

The Market Manager, consulting with and having the approval of the Board, may make modifications and additions as required. The Market Manager shall deal with any items not specifically covered by these rules on market days, at their discretion.

Vendor Requirements

- Vendors must bring an adequate supply of their primary product(s) to every market
- Vendors must adhere to the highest ethical and legal standards of quality, service and business practices.
- Subletting of space(s) is not permitted.
- Vendors must honour all Avon Community Farmers' Market promotions including Market Money
- Vendors must not practice distress pricing.
- **Smoking is not permitted** in Victoria Park. As per municipality bylaws, smoking is prohibited on public property – please review the WHRM Smoking Bylaw for full details.
- All food vendors must comply with the requirements set by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and the Nova Scotia Environment's Environmental Health and Food Safety Division.

- All food vendors producing and selling products such as eggs, cheese, beef, pork, lamb etc. must adhere to all applicable laws and regulations pertaining in any manner to the production, labelling, handling, storage, distribution and sale of the vendor's products (e.g. The Animal Protection Act of Nova Scotia).
- If at any time a vendor is notified by a Government Inspector that they must take corrective action to address any deficiencies regarding production, labelling, handling, storage, distribution and sale of the vendor's products, the vendor must notify the Market Manager and provide the Market Manager with a copy of the Inspector's report, if one has been issued. The vendor must take prompt corrective action to address the deficiency identified by the Inspector.
- **Vendors must obtain all necessary licences, permits, inspections and certificates** for the sale of their product(s). If, at any time, any of the vendor's licences, permits, inspections and certificates fail to remain current, lapse or are revoked the vendor must immediately notify the Market Manager. This includes any vendor selling and/or providing samples of alcohol.
- Compliance with both Provincial and Federal Sales Tax Regulations is the responsibility of the individual vendor.
- No pets will be allowed in a food vendor's selling area. The only exception being disability/service guide dogs.
- Vendors must monitor and supervise their children at all times during the market day. Young children should not be allowed to wander the grounds and adjacent properties without a parent or guardian with them. The market can take no responsibility for their safety or whereabouts, or for any damages they may incur.
- **All vendors, and their staff, are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, safe, courteous, co-operative and harmonious manner with customers, Market staff, other vendors and government inspectors.**
- All vendor concerns should be brought to the attention of the Market Manager. **Any complaints should follow the complaint procedure outlined in this handbook.**
 - Vendors are required to immediately notify the Market Manager if they, their business or any of their employees or representatives are subject to any federal, provincial, and/or municipal statutory or regulatory investigations, actions, and/or charges that are connected in any way with their business and/or product for sale. Failure to do so may result in termination of the vendor's participation at the market.

Attendance Regulations

1. Late Arrival

- a. All vendors are required to be on site and set up by 9:45am for when the market opens. Any vendor not able to arrive on time on a given market day must notify the Market Manager and indicate what time they will be arriving. This will allow the Market Manager to place a sign at the vendor's space indicating the expected time of arrival.

- b. Failure to communicate with the Market Manager and continued lateness may result in vendors' participation at the market being terminated.
- c. If unable to notify the Market Manager or arrive on market day, vendors shall communicate as soon as they are able the reason for their absence. Emergencies and unforeseen events happen, and this will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis.

2. Cancellation

Vendors with space reservations are responsible for being in that space for the duration of the time they reserved. Vendors who are not able to attend a pre-reserved market date are required to call or email the Market Manager with at least 72 hours notice.

- a. Vendors who need to cancel their space for Sunday market should notify the market manager in writing by Thursday the week beforehand. No fee will be incurred.
- b. **Late cancellation**—later than Thursday at 10pm—will result in a full table fee charge.

3. No-Shows

- a. It is unacceptable for vendors to not show up for a planned market day. Vendors must cancel, or notify the market manager even if it is late in the week.
- b. No-shows will be charged their weekly table fee, and without communication from the vendor to the market manager, their further attendance will be discussed with the board.

**ACFM wants to ensure the integrity and professionalism of our market.
Please respect our schedule, and the space we wish to offer local
vendors and entrepreneurs.**

Display Regulations

1. Each vendor should display their name or the name of their farm or business. Vendors are encouraged to personalise their spaces with stories and pictures, and to share their farming/artisan background with customers.
2. Vendors are required to display prices for their products by way of a general price list or individually priced items.

3. Vendors are required to display signage each market day indicating the source/origin of each product that is not of their own production, of which they are allowed up to 15%.
4. Product labelling must comply with the standards set out in the *NS Environmental Health and Food Safety Division's Food Safety Guidelines for Public Markets*.
5. Organic labelling must be for certified organic products only and follow the *Organic Grade Regulations* in the *Agriculture and Marketing Act*. The certification sign from the applicable agency must be prominently displayed.
6. For uncertified claims, written and verbal declarations regarding pesticide or chemical use which cannot be certified such as unsprayed, no spray, and pesticide-free will need a written statement, submitted with the vendor application, attesting how these procedures are followed.
Vendors are required to produce the written statement about production methods for any consumer who requests it and should have copies of the statement available in their space.
7. Vendors must not misrepresent their products or product processes (where and how they were grown, harvested, prepared or created).
8. At this time, vendors are responsible for bringing their own tables, booths, tents, and umbrellas. Please understand that this is a volunteer driven market and resources are limited at this time.
9. Vendors must take up only the 10x10 space allocated to them, and not allow displays to block paths, aisles or doorways. Tents and canopies must be secured twice (tent legs and guidelines with pegs or weights)– please ensure that ties are weighted down sufficiently.
10. Cooperation between vendors is encouraged.
11. All spaces must be neat, tidy and safe for customers. Vendors agree to be clean, tidy and properly attired.
12. Vendors selling meat, fish or dairy products that are, per applicable Food Safety Guidelines, required to be kept cool or frozen must provide adequate means of refrigeration/cooling for their product. (e.g. ice, cooler, etc.)
13. Hygiene and safety in the preparation of foods, together with any required business registrations, food permits and product liability insurance are the responsibility of the vendor.

14. All food vendors will comply with the *NS Environmental Health and Food Safety Division's Food Safety Guidelines for Public Markets*
15. Tables shall not be dismantled before 2pm, the end time of the market.
16. Vendors are responsible for clearing their space at the end of the Market day and taking any substantial volume of garbage home. General garbage containers are intended for the use of customers.
17. Electrical Equipment: there are limited outlets at the bandstand. If you require electricity, this needs to be communicated with the Market Manager before market day. No vendor's electrical equipment is to be plugged in without communication with the Market Manager.
18. No Styrofoam containers are permitted for product dispensing. The Market encourages vendors to minimise use of plastic and use recyclable and/or bio-degradable packaging. We encourage vendors to check out Farmers Markets of Nova Scotia for further information on sustainable packaging.

Vendor Property

Each vendor is responsible for moving their property for market setup. Vendors are encouraged to help each other and watch their belongings if the vendor needs to step away or park their car.

Set-up & Take-down

Vendors are expected to be on site no later than 9:30 am, and ready to sell by 9:45 am. You may arrive as early as 8:00 am to set up. If you have not arrived by 9:30 am, you are required to call the Market Manager.

When unloading, please ensure you do not impede other vendors from accessing the property. After unloading, please move vehicles to the designated vendor parking

spaces (see *Parking* below). As a request from WHRM, there shall be no vehicles on the grass.

Vehicles should not be left idling.

Vendors are not permitted to bring their vehicles back on the property prior to the market closing at 2pm.

All vendors must vacate the site by 3pm.

Vendors are required to remove all their signage, equipment, waste, etc. unless prior arrangement has been made with the Market Manager.

Weather: the market will always be held outside. The Market Manager will attempt to warn vendors of adverse weather on market day. If the forecast is calling for extraordinary weather conditions, the board will make the decision to cancel the market. The Market Manager will notify vendors of cancellation via email. The Market Manager may also do this via phone calls or texts if time permits. If the market is cancelled by the Board of Directors, there will be no vendor fees and attendance continuity will not be affected.

Vendor Courtesy/Conduct

The Market is a community event where many diverse people are gathered to shop and sell. Vendors and their representatives are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, safe, courteous and harmonious manner with customers, Market volunteers and with each other.

Zero-Tolerance Policy

Any language or behaviour by a vendor or any of their employees or representatives that, in the opinion of the Market Manager, jeopardises the normal operations of the Market or adversely affects the Market's reputation are grounds for termination of the vendor's participation in the Market. Accordingly, vendors or any of their employees or representatives must not threaten or use abusive or disrespectful language with customers, staff, government inspectors, community representatives or each other.

Vendors must consider the comfort of other vendors and the public, and appropriately limit aggressive selling techniques such as hawking, or calling attention to products in a loud, repetitive public manner. When aisles are particularly crowded, standing in the aisles while providing samples to customers should be avoided.

Vendors must not publicly disparage other vendors, products, or markets. All vendors must respect each other's space and products during Market hours. Complaints received by the Market Manager will be shared with the Board of Directors and forwarded to the vendor concerned.

Vendor Concern Procedures

Grievance Procedures

1. Complaints or problems should be directed to the Market Manager in a timely manner that is not disruptive to the market.
2. Vendors who have concerns regarding other vendor compliance, market staff, safety, or policies are encouraged to complete a concern form (see Appendix D). Forms are available in the appendix.
3. The Market Manager reviews each concern form with the Board President or Vice-President. The concerned vendor will receive a written response within two weeks. The Board will also be consulted, if appropriate – all efforts will be made to ensure vendor confidentiality.
4. A vendor may appeal any decision of the Market Manager concerning violation of these rules or a concern form brought forth by a fellow vendor within 30 days. An appeal must be presented in writing to the Avon Community Farmers' Market President. A decision by the Board President, after informing the Avon Community Farmers' Market Board, shall be issued within 30 days of receipt and constitute a final and binding decision of any appeal.

Product Challenge

1. Product challenges may be made for misrepresentation of products by a vendor. Vendors can submit a written product challenge form when they believe another vendor is misrepresenting his/her product (see product challenge form in Appendix E).
2. A product challenge must be signed by the person bringing the challenge and preferably be supported by physical and verbal evidence of the offence. The product challenge must be made on the day of, or within the week, the violation is observed. Challenges alleging wrongdoings on past occasions will not be accepted.
3. There is a \$20 filing fee, which can be shared by a group of vendors. This fee is returned to the challenger if the claim is verified.
4. The vendor receiving the product challenge must respond to the challenge in writing. Failure to admit or deny a challenge may result in a determination that the challenge is valid.

5. The Market Manager will conduct a site visit in a timely manner to make a determination on the product challenge. If the Market Manager deems it necessary, a third-party inspector will be employed to assist with a site visit.
6. Product challenge forms are available in the appendix. Because of their sensitive nature, they must be returned directly to the Market Manager
7. If the vendor is found in violation, the vendor may be suspended, or removed from the market at the discretion of the board in consultation with the Market Manager.

Dispute Resolution (Appendix F)

If a conflict or dispute arises between a vendor/vendors/customers or staff a dispute resolution form may be filled out. The dispute form will provide an avenue for any concern not covered in the above processes, or to more fully address any situation. Please see the Dispute Resolution protocol below in Appendix F.

Vendor Compliance

The Market Manager or their designee has ultimate on-site responsibility and authority to ensure compliance with all market rules, guidelines, policies, regulations, etc. Any vendor complaints or problems or concerns should be directed to the Market Manager in a timely manner.

The Market Manager will attempt to resolve any vendor complaints, concerns or problems brought to their attention. At the Market Manager's discretion, a member or members of the Board of Directors of the Avon Community Farmers' Market and a member of the Board of Directors will meet with the vendor or vendors involved and try to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved, then all parties involved in the issue will present their case to the Board and the Board shall render a final and binding decision for resolution.

If a vendor is found in violation of or continually disregards any of the requirements and policies and procedures set out in this handbook they will be immediately suspended from the market by the Market Manager. Their continued participation in the Avon Community Farmers' Market will be reviewed by the Market Manager and the Board of the Avon Community Farmers' Market and could result in full termination. Suspension will continue until the review process is complete.

All necessary permits and licences must be obtained before the start of the season and shared with the Market Manager. Failure to do so, or if the necessary permits and licences are revoked by the licensing department, will result in the vendor being suspended from the Avon Community Farmers' Market until all necessary permits and licences are granted or full termination if the Market Manager is informed by the licensing department that the necessary permits and licences will not be granted.

Any vendor, upon being investigated or charged due to their business dealings where it is connected to the products they sell at the Avon Community Farmers' Market must report it forthwith and their contract to continue to sell at the Avon Community Farmers' Market will be immediately suspended and will only be reinstated if/when it is determined that the issue has been rectified through the court or they have complied with any terms and conditions imposed through the courts or any other governing body to the satisfaction of the Avon Community Farmers' Market Board of Directors.

To help ensure public safety, protect the best interests and reputation of the market and to promote a positive market environment, if a vendor or their employees or representatives do not abide by the rules, regulations, guidelines, requirements etc. of the Avon Community Farmers' Market, and /or fails to comply with applicable federal, provincial or municipal statutory and / or regulatory requirements applicable to their business and/or market participation,

the Market Manager or designee may take any action deemed appropriate, including suspending the vendor from selling at the market for that day and any future market days. Full termination of the vendor's participation in the market will be reviewed and determined by the Board of the Avon Community Farmers' Market in consultation with the Market Manager.

Equipment and Supplies

Tables

Vendors are responsible for bringing their own tables. Chairs are discouraged, unless special circumstances apply, to encourage engagement between the vendor and patrons.

Electricity

All electrical equipment (except solar/battery powered lights) must be pre-approved by the Market Manager to ensure that adequate electrical outlets are available. The Avon Community Farmers' Market cannot guarantee electricity to its vendors.

Canopies

Every market day, no matter the weather, all canopies, umbrellas, or other booth covers are required to have ties, weights or pegs on all legs sufficient to keep the covering in place during windy conditions. Failure to have proper weights means that vendor's tents and umbrellas cannot be set up on market day.

Washrooms

There are public washrooms in the Community Centre, upstairs and downstairs. Both are wheelchair accessible (through the Visitor Information Centre).

Waste Management

Vendors are responsible for keeping their space clean during the Market and for complete clean up of their space at the close of the Market. **This includes taking with you any trash or garbage that is generated in or around your table and sweeping up any product debris left on the ground.** Vendors are not permitted to dispose of produce waste, overripe or leftover produce, or boxes in any on-site garbage cans or dumpsters.

Parking

Parking spaces nearest the park on Stannus and Thomas streets are for customers only. This will give customers the best parking space available. Once unloaded, vendors are required to park in the old barn and pool parking lots. Vendors that require parking on the property due to health reasons should notify the Market Manager.

The Market Manager will update vendors when there is an event in the area that may impact parking availability.

Vendors will provide their licence plate numbers on their application form so that their vehicles can be identified by the Market Manager and staff. Repeated parking violations by vendors will be addressed by the Market Manager.

Health & Safety

Our market will follow any guidelines set out for Public Markets that are published by Nova Scotia Health Authority and Public Health Board.

Hand-wash Stations

A single, simple hand-wash pump may be made available to all vendors if needed. Food vendors are required to ensure they meet all food permit requirements including hand wash stations. There is washroom availability in the Community Centre.

It is the responsibility of the user of the hand-wash station to ensure that it is cleaned after each usage.

Pets

As our market is located outside and in a public park, it is expected that some customers will bring their pets. If customers do choose to bring a pet, we will ask them to abide by these rules to make a pet's visit to the market a good experience for everyone. These will be shared on social media throughout the season:

1. Pets are not permitted inside the Community Centre.
2. Pets must be kept on a short leash.
3. Pets must be under control and by the owner's side at all times.
4. Pets must be kept away from produce, plants, and other food products.
5. Pets must be friendly with other animals and children to earn the right to be at the market.
6. Be considerate—not everyone loves pets and some customers are allergic to animals.
7. Do not forget to clean up after your pet!

Should a vendor see a violation of any of these rules, notify the Market Manager who will address the concern with the pet owner.

Equipment Safety

Vendor vehicles, tables and overhead shades must be maintained and used in a safe manner. Table legs must be firmly locked into place. Tables must have smooth edges and remain stable when loaded with produce. Tent poles, canopy legs, boxes, umbrella stands must not obstruct foot traffic flow and care must be taken when setting up or taking down displays. All tents and umbrellas must be weighted and properly tied down.

Smoking

The West Hants Regional Municipality has a no-smoking policy in public spaces, this includes the park and the sidewalks around it.

Disclaimer

Although the market does carry liability insurance, the market does not assume responsibility for loss or damage to the vendor area, product, vehicle and any other property of the market vendor, their employees or representatives. The vendor accepts all reasonable risks associated with the use of the market space and will exercise sound loss prevention measures at all times.

The vendor shall not make a claim or take any legal action against the Avon Community Farmers' Market or its representatives for any loss, damage or injury caused to the vendor, agents and/or property, including vehicles.

6. Appendix

A. Booth Layout Map (approximate only)

B. Market Tips

C. Important Contacts

D. Vendor Concern Form

E. Product Challenge Form

F. Dispute Resolution Process.

APPENDIX A – approximate only



APPENDIX B

Market Tips: Merchandising 101: Sell Smart and Increase Profits

1. Build customer loyalty. Create an identity for yourself. For example, make your farm name and location clear to customers. Provide a description of your farm including location, acres, history, crops, and growing methods. Try displaying this information on a poster and include pictures of your farm. Or have a flyer AND a business card to distribute to customers. Take advantage of the opportunity to educate shoppers about how things are grown.
2. Train employees! Make sure they are knowledgeable about your product and your farm. Continuity of salespeople builds relationships with repeat customers.
3. Provide samples. Let your customers taste the difference! Sampling can increase sales up to 30%. Ask customers: "Have you ever tried this variety?" Make sure you follow the minimum guidelines for food safety detailed in this packet. Keep a separate box with your sampling tools, e.g. toothpicks, serving platter, napkins.
4. Supply recipes and information. Find recipes that are simple and contain a few ingredients that can be found at your stand or other parts of the farmers' market.
5. Start an email list. Let your loyal customers sign up for a mailing list so you can inform them about special opportunities, your ripening schedule, other markets, and locations they can find you or your product.
6. Use your personality and expertise as a merchandising tool to build and strengthen your customer base.
7. Practice good "boothmanship." Smile and engage customers. Remember that customers are drawn to enthusiasm, but repelled by aggression.
8. Consider the Market as a venue to network, expose your product, and gain FUTURE sales.
9. If you have a website, be sure to include the address on all your promotional products, labels, etc.
10. Bring everything you need.

APPENDIX C**Avon Community Farmers' Market
Important Contacts**

Position	Name	Telephone	Email
Market Manager	Karen Cooper	902-579-7652	acfm.market.manager@gmail.com
Board Executive	Jamie Cornetta Monique Wood Jackie Davis Jenn Meyers Dianne Levy Nicole Barrett Lyn Cleveland		board.of.directors.acfm@gmail.com
ACFM Music Contact	Market Manager		ACFMMusic@gmail.com
Food Safety Specialist (Hants & Kings County)	Sheldon Stone	902 679-6012	Sheldon.Stone@novascotia.ca

APPENDIX D

Vendor Concern Form

Vendors who have concerns about market operations, vendor policies, or other vendors' compliance with market rules, should submit this Concern Form. The Avon Community Farmers' Market will not reveal the inquiring vendor's name to anyone. Please submit this form directly to market management on the market day or within a week of the market during which the alleged violation occurred.

Current Date: _____ Your Vendor Business Name: _____

Your Contact Information (name, phone number, email or mailing address):

Your Concern. (If applicable, please use your Vendor Handbook to reference the rule or policy with which you have a concern. If this is a complaint regarding a Vendor, specify the Vendor's name.)

Market date and approximate time at which the violation occurred (if any):

Signature Date

<p>For Market Use Only:</p> <p>Date Rec'd _____</p> <p>By _____</p> <p>Fee Rec'd _____</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
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APPENDIX E

Product Challenge Form

Vendors can submit this challenge form when they believe another Vendor is misrepresenting their product. There is a \$20 filing fee (which can be shared by a group of Vendors). This fee is returned to the challenger(s) if the claim is verified. Please submit this form directly to market management on the market day or within a week of the market during which the alleged violation occurred. The Avon Community Farmers' Market will not reveal the challenger(s)' identities to anyone.

Name of the vendor about whose product you are challenging:

Specific product(s) that you are challenging:

Market date and approximate time at which the product is being sold:

Please state the specifics of the violation. Provide any evidence that supports your challenge.

Your name, business name, addresses and phone number.

Signature _____ Date _____

For Market Use Only:

Notes:

Date Rec'd _____

By _____
Fee Rec'd _____

APPENDIX F Dispute Resolution Protocol

[ACFM Dispute Resolution Protocol](#) (2021-2023)

As our Market grows we will be formalising processes to ensure we can continue to serve our community successfully and meet our goals.

The Board of Directors has developed the Dispute Resolution Protocol to address disputes or conflicts that could occur between vendors, customers and/or market staff.



Avon Community Farmers' Market: Dispute Resolution Protocol

INTRODUCTION: The Avon Community Farmers' Market (ACFM) is a not-for-profit community market and as such it is expected that the Board, vendors and customers will act in the best interests of the overall market and the community it serves. However in the event that a dispute or conflict arises, whether between vendors (B), between a vendor and a customer (C) or between a vendor and market staff (A), the outline below are protocols that should be followed.

- A. If there is a dispute or conflict between a vendor and market staff, it must be realised that market staff are employed by the ACFM Board of Directors. As such, market staff must be respected and the issue be brought immediately to the attention of a Board member. That Board member will collect the information and make notes of the issues and bring it to the attention of the Board committee. The committee will, within as short a period of time as possible, investigate the nature of the dispute, talk to the vendor concerned and the market staff. Once properly investigated the Board committee will decide on the appropriate outcome. NOTE: Abuse, physical or verbal, of market staff will not be tolerated. Any vendor guilty of such behaviour will be asked to leave the market as a vendor.

- B. If there is a dispute or conflict between vendors this must be brought to the market manager's attention as soon as possible. The manager will make notes of the nature of the dispute. If the market manager is unable to resolve this dispute, she/he will refer the matter to the Board, including any notes of the nature of the dispute. The Board committee will then investigate and attempt to resolve the matter in the manner which best serves the interest of the market, the vendors and the community.

- C. If any disagreement arises between a vendor (or vendors) and a customer(s), the market manager should be made aware of the nature of the dispute as soon as possible. Again if the manager is unable to resolve the matter the Board will be informed and investigate the matter as appropriate, in a timely manner. In this instance it is hoped that the best interests of the community and the market will prevail.

To contact Board Members directly, please email
board.of.directors.acfm@gmail.com .

Market staff do not have access to this email.