

Hawai'i Farmers Market and Agritourism Venues



**Best Food Business and
Food Handling Practices
for Farmers and Vendors**

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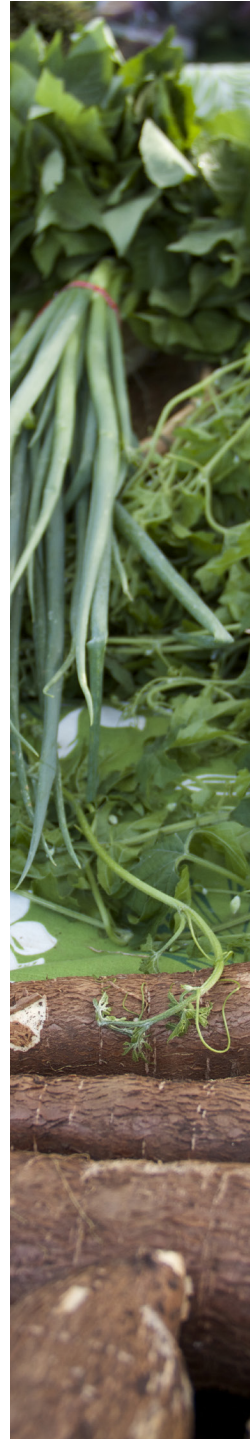
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Introduction

No one can have an “ag-less” day—we all need food, fiber, and other products and services that only agriculture provides. The growing desire to buy agricultural products closer to home has created unprecedented opportunities for the agricultural entrepreneur who can meet buyer needs and expectations. Two places this happens is at farmers markets and agritourism businesses. In Hawai‘i we have more than 90 farmers markets and more than 100 agritourism ventures. These businesses help themselves when they provide good products and services that clients are willing to pay for. These products range from aquacultured seafood and grass-fed beef to crisp and flavorful fruits and vegetables and dinners in a farmer’s field—a calabash of good things.

We crafted this best practices guide to help the new agricultural entrepreneur get up to speed as fast as possible and to help the established vendor get a business tune-up. We think every reader will get something of value by reading this book. We provide practical business, marketing, and food safety guidance for creating and sustaining good agriculture venues. With the help of some of Hawai‘i’s leading farmer’s market managers and other advisors, we have developed this simple and rugged best practices manual so that every agriculture business can get a little bit better.

To your business’s success!



Do you have the potential to be a successful farmers market or agritourism vendor?

- I am knowledgeable about farming and like to share my knowledge.
- I enjoy talking with strangers.
- I like sharing information about my products.
- I am committed to producing high-quality products.
- I am a team player who can follow rules.
- I can take direction or feedback from others when necessary.
- I know about post-harvest handling.
- I have time to farm AND sell at a farmers market or agritourism venue.
- I arrive on time every market day.
- I am willing to travel to sell at markets.
- I enjoy packing, transporting, and setting up my products for sale.
- I am willing and able to be away from the farm to sell at markets.
- I am a good “fit” for the farmers markets where I want to sell.
- I am confident that direct marketing at farmers markets will provide revenues.
- I have a plan for who will staff my farmers market booth or farm stand.
- I am committed to being a successful farmers market vendor.



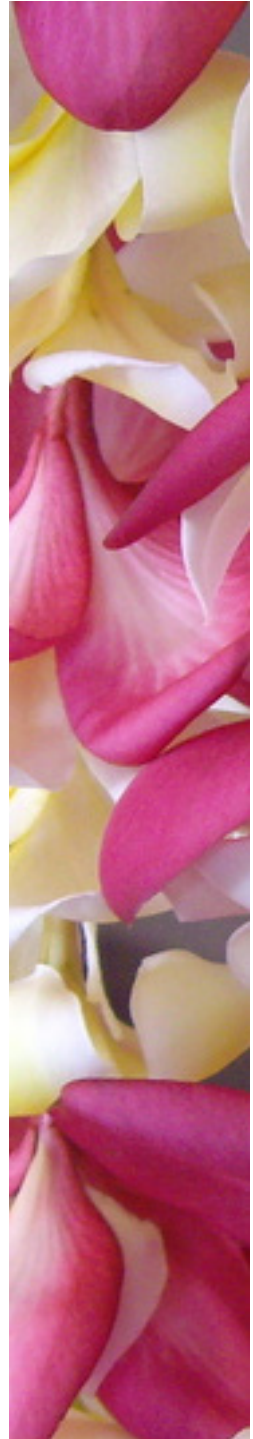
If you agree with most of the statements on page 2, then you are ready to be a farmers market or agritourism vendor! For any statements you did not check, consider how those statements might affect your enthusiasm and commitment to being a farmers market or agritourism vendor and how you will address those issues.*



THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. **PEOPLE:** Are you a “people person”? Do you like to interact with customers?
2. **TIME:** Can you (or an employee) be away from your farm and at the farmers market for half a day?
3. **COSTS:** Think about other costs like fuel, packaging, fees and insurance.
4. **INNOVATION:** Are you open to trying new things? Selling at a farmers market often means developing new products.

* Used with permission from Randii MacNear and Shelly G. Keller, *New Farmers Guide: Cultivating Success at Farmers Markets*, Davis, CA, Davis Farmers Market, 2012, page 23.



Preparing to sell at a farmers market

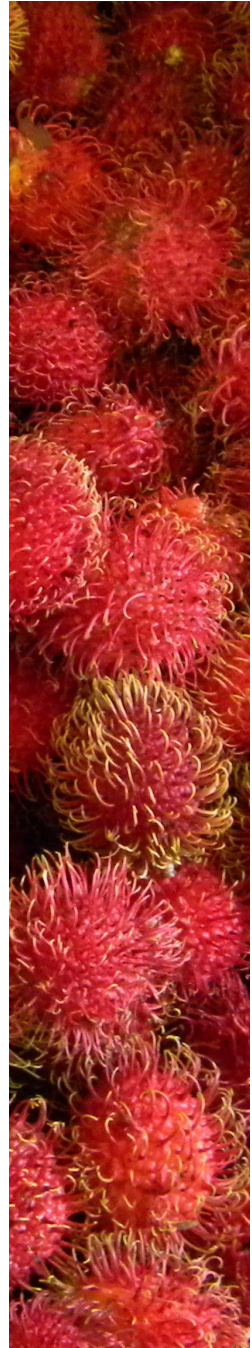
Every market has a different personality. Some offer local produce, imported items, fast food, and live music, while others are more like a country roadside stand where the farmer comes in from the field with freshly picked food. The type of customers, and how much money they are willing to spend, also make markets different. Visit several markets before you choose one to join.

Consider:

- ***What products will you sell, and is there a market for your products?*** Set yourself apart from your neighbor by growing a wide variety of products or making value-added products that are unique. Establishing what differentiates your product from the competition is critical to your success in the marketplace.
- ***What products are you allowed to sell?*** Some farmers markets allow vendors to resell a certain amount of produce that they have not grown themselves or a product that was made with materials not grown on their farm, while other markets require the vendor to grow all the produce or materials that will go into the product.
- ***What kind of market do you want to sell at?*** Some markets are food-focused markets only and do not offer vendor booth space for crafts, artwork, or lotion or soap-type items. Evaluate the market to learn if your needs can be met.
- ***What is the cost of entering and staying at a farmers market?*** You may be charged a one-time entry fee, an annual fee, a percentage of gross sales, and/or a weekly market participation fee. Some markets charge more than others depending on whether they are public or privately run entities.



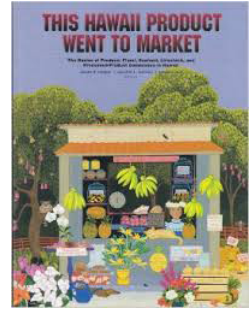
- ***Where is your farmers market located?*** Map your prospective market to find out the distance you will need to travel on a weekly basis. Also think about how far shoppers will have to drive.
- ***What kinds of shoppers will you sell to?*** Learn about your customers and then learn about their food interests. This will provide you with the basis for developing an evolving product mix that would attract shoppers.
- ***What are the rules for the market?*** As a vendor, you are responsible for informing yourself and your staff about and following all applicable market rules and regulations pertaining to your business category, as well as regulations and policies set by local and state agencies. By following the rules, you help keep the farmers market a safe, compliant, and legal venue.
- ***What are the hours of the market?*** You need to know when the market is busiest/ slowest, what time the vendors need to show up/break down, and if the market is affected by the weather (e.g., open regardless of rain).
- ***What is your goal for being a vendor at a farmers market?*** Is it to make a lot of profit (profits = revenue – costs)? Or maybe you're looking for a test site for product trials or a place to make new business relationships?
- ***Who manages the farmers market?*** Get to know the farmers market manager. Be able to take direction and accept the authority of the market manager as the representative of the market. As such, the manager serves you and all the other farmers market vendors by representing you to the public and handling set-up, operational support, and promotional efforts, among other duties.



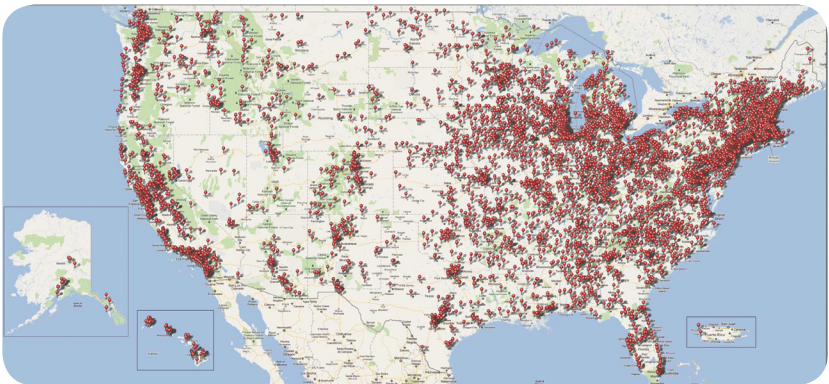
- ***How much money and time can you invest in your products and in selling at a farmers market before you really need to make “enough” profit?*** Give yourself a “learning” period. It will take time and money to grow your business, so it may be important to have another source of income when you first get started.
- ***Do you need to have liability insurance?*** Vendors may need to carry *general* liability insurance. Some markets set a minimum coverage standard that applies to everyone, while others require each vendor to determine the level and amount of coverage appropriate to their farm or business. Vendors may also need *product* liability insurance to help protect them should a food they produce for sale harm consumers.
- ***Do you have a GE tax license?*** As a vendor, you are required by law to have a GE tax license and a business name at the very least. You are also required to pay the State Excise Tax on all sales. You should have a copy of your license posted at your booth.
- ***Do you need a certified kitchen to prepare your product?*** If a food can be potentially hazardous (see pp. 28-29), you must produce your food in a Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH)-approved facility. It could be a restaurant that rents or leases you space, a church with a commercial kitchen, or a rental facility that has been permitted by the DOH.
- ***Do you need a Temporary Food Establishment Permit for your sales location?*** Depending on your business type and the period of time allowed for you to be selling your processed product, you may also need a DOH-issued temporary food establishment permit (TFEP).



- ***Do you have a business plan?*** Yes, you should have one! It is your plan for success. Refer to *This Hawaii Product Went To Market*, a practical book for those in the produce, floral, seafood, livestock and processed-product industries in Hawai'i and elsewhere. There is a useful chapter on "Preparing Your Business Plan."
- ***Do you understand the zoning and other requirements for operating an agritourism business (farm stand, farm store) on your property?*** Each county has its own rules regarding zoning, signage, buildings, Federal ADA compliance (Americans with Disabilities Act), etc., for agritourism. Find out what your county's rules are by going to your county planning department. Do this before you even think about setting up a stand.



Cover of *This Hawaii Product Went to Market* http://www2.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/forsale/thp_order.pdf



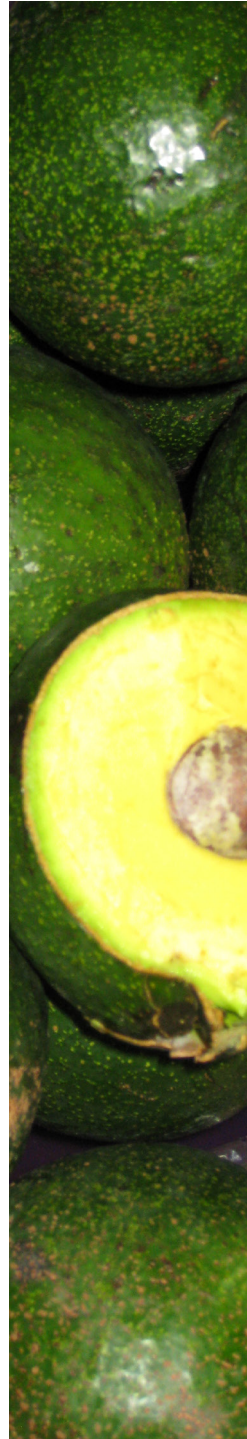
USDA map of U.S. farmers markets

Source: <http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/googleMapFull.aspx>

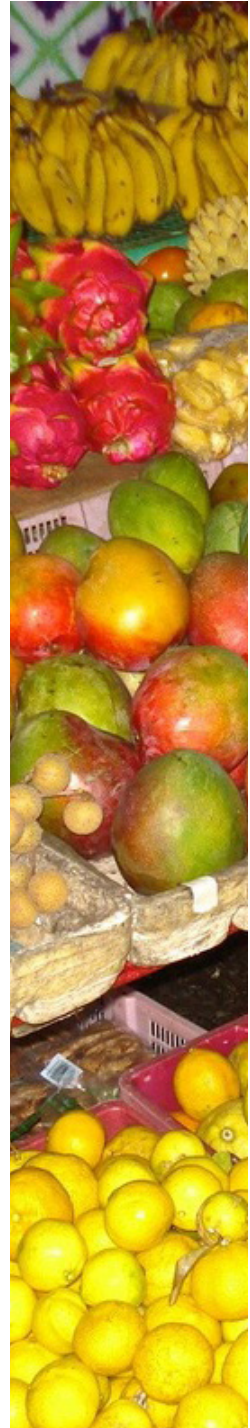
Qualities of a good farmers market

What kind of market do you want to sell at? You need to make sure that your needs, the market's needs, and the shoppers' needs are all in alignment—or things won't work out well. There has to be some sort of balance. Look at this list of market characteristics and use it to get to “know your market.”

- Who owns and/or runs the market? Are they aligned with your business values?
- Is it a good location, accessible and visible?
- Is it a well-established market with a history and consistent presence?
- Does it have solid management that makes new vendors feel welcome?
- Does it have a committed and dedicated customer base?
- Does the market advertise? How do they encourage shoppers to visit the market? Do they do online marketing using websites and Facebook and other social media?
- Does it have a good selection of products and types of vendors that attract customers?
- Does it have good relations among vendors, strong cooperation and healthy competition?
- Does it have on-site prepared foods that attract customers and increase the amount of time shoppers spend at the market?
- Is it a place where vendors have reasonable prices that attract (local) shoppers on a consistent and long-term basis?
- Is the market a nurturing space for new farmers and food businesses, immigrants, and fledgling entrepreneurs by making the vendor booth cost reasonable?



- Is the market welcoming, making it easy for customers to navigate and find your booth?
- Does the market act as a “hub” to support other businesses in the neighborhood?
- Does the market feature and/or make an effort to feature cross-cultural foods, ideas, and stories?
- Does the market have clear goals, rules, and policies documented and implemented that maintain the health, safety, and self-sufficiency of the market and its vendors and shoppers?
- Does the market have a schedule for vendors to be able to arrive and set up before they allow shoppers into the market in order to prevent safety issues involving vendors’ vehicles and gathering customers (e.g., 45 minutes before the market opens)?
- Does the market guarantee you vendor booth space week after week or does the manager assign the space on a first-come, first-served basis?



Equipment, supplies and other costs

There are costs associated with selling at a farmers market. Below is a list of items you should consider investing in. This list is also handy for thinking about what to pack on market day:

- Apron. This keeps your clothes clean and can be used to hold cash. Also, you can put your farm logo on it, and that helps shoppers remember you week to week.
- Bags. Avoid putting customer food purchases in used grocery store bags (unless customers bring their own), as this poses a food safety risk. Many farmers market shoppers are getting into the habit of bringing their own reusable bags. Make sure you know if providing plastic bags to shoppers is allowed at your market.
- Baskets and containers for display. Using leftover produce boxes is unprofessional, and they don't hold up well in damp conditions. Invest in display baskets, as they give your farm a professional look and last longer than a used cardboard box.
- Battery-operated fans for insect control. These can help keep flying pests away, especially if you sell foods that attract insects.
- Booth banner to advertise your business.
- Calculator for doing the math right.
- Calibrated scales. Vendors should have a Hawai'i Department of Agriculture-licensed scale. It should also be checked for calibration annually.
- Cash register, credit card capability—watch this equipment carefully.



Got apron?



Got baskets?



Got calibrated scale?

- Clothespins to hold price signs in the produce baskets and containers.
- Commercial canopy/tent. It is critical that you have a good-quality canopy to protect you, your products, and your shoppers from the weather. Select a canopy that can be set up and taken down frequently, has well-sewn seams for waterproofing, and can take rough handling.
- Container to store soiled items (e.g., cutting boards, knives, and utensils for *permitted* food vendors).
- Copies of general or product liability insurance, GE Tax license, and other required documents.
- Cutting boards, knives, and utensils, if necessary. These are only allowed for *permitted* food vendors.
- Disposable gloves are required for food prepared on site. If you have a bandage to cover an injury, you must wear gloves.
- Employees. Hire good people and train them well. Every individual who works at your booth or farm stand should be well-informed, pleasant, and customer-oriented.
- Fire extinguisher (for food processors).
- “Food-grade” containers, display, and packaging supplies for food handling and distribution.
- Folding chairs or stools.
- Hand wipes (disposable) and/or liquid sanitizer.
- Hand truck for ease of set-up and break-down.



Got tent?



Got gloves?



Got extinguisher?

- Index cards or other display materials for providing pricing information.
- Paper towels for spills and clean-up.
- Pens, pencils, chalk, permanent markers, or erasable pens.
- Personal items (water, first aid kit, extra clothes to prepare for weather changes).
- Pictures of your farm and employees (customers like to know where their food comes from).
- Protective covering for food-preparation areas.
- Receipt book to document your market sales, how much business you did on market day.
- Receipts to prove that you bought produce from an authorized vendor and for traceability and GE Tax Identification number, available or on display. Inform customers that they can get a receipt by placing a sign on your cash register: "If you would like a receipt, please ask."
- Sneeze guard, container with hinged lid, netting cover, or some other suitable cover for food.
- Small brush and dustpan to keep your booth tidy.
- Stakes to tie down or weights to weigh down canopy/tent.
- Tablecloths. Be sure the covering can be easily cleaned. A plastic covering is more easily cleaned throughout the day if you are selling fresh produce, while a fabric covering can be washed before each use.
- Tables that are easy to carry and to set up and take down yet are sturdy and able to hold all your products without sagging.



Got receipts?



Got food covers?



Got weights?

- ❑ Tape. Either adhesive, duct, electrical, or masking tape is useful for sealing, binding, or attaching items together.
- ❑ Temporary Food Establishment Permit (TFEP) issued by the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH).
- ❑ Trash cans, leakproof and with covers, to reduce pests, odors, and spills. All waste generated by the vendor and from sampling preparation and sampling in general should be removed from the market and disposed of by the vendor.
- ❑ Wash station for cleaning and sanitizing equipment and utensils. This is required by the DOH for vendors with TFEP. (See **Proper hand- and equipment-washing station** on page 33).
- ❑ Refer to the Supplies & Tools page on the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources Good Agricultural Practices Coaching website <<http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/ctahr/farmfoodsafety/tools-pubs/>> for a list of sites with supplies useful for farmers market and agritourism vendors.



Got rubbish bags/cans?



Got supplies?



Providing an awesome product

No display, merchandising techniques, or customer service can make up for not having quality product to begin with. Your products must be high quality . . . period. Consider the following when getting your product ready to go to market:

- Offer only items you are proud of. Product should be top quality; anything less should be marked as such and not given prime display space.
- Products should be fresh (and perhaps on ice as required). That's one of the key reasons people shop at a farmers market and at farm stands.
- Offer something special, something featured every week. Create an expectation for customers that draws them back to see what's fresh, what's new, or what's featured seasonally.
- Generally, uncut produce should be thoroughly rinsed, in potable water, before it's sold at market. Clean produce looks more appetizing and will often command a higher price.
- All products should be displayed up off the ground—no matter what they are. Nothing is appealing on the ground even if it was grown in soil.
- Intersperse popular items with less popular products to encourage customers to try something new. Have different recipes for how to cook an unfamiliar product.
- Display similar products together; i.e., root crops together, varieties of peppers together, etc.



High-quality produce



Keep product off ground.



Display similar products together.

- Add value to your products. It can be as simple as drying gourds and making birdhouses of them, making chips from your bananas, or making jams and jellies from your produce. Value-added products often command a higher profit margin.
- As your business begins to grow, find out what motivates your regular customers and why new customers come to you. Focus on that and improve upon it.
- Clearly label all products. Consider labeling foods in languages commonly spoken at your farmers market. This will help you communicate with customers. (See **How to package and label your product**, page 19).



Add value to your products.



Learn what motivates returning customers.



Label foods in different languages.

Pricing your product

One of the most common questions asked by farmers market vendors is “What should I charge for my products?” Many farmers are afraid to price their products for what they are worth. Consider the following:

- Price what the market will bear, *not what you would be willing to pay*. Most customers would be willing to pay far more than what you would for the same product.
- Make sure what you charge covers all of the costs put into producing and transporting the goods to market.
- Proper pricing is done by knowing what your product is selling for at other local retail outlets and as a result of an accurate cost of production.
- Knowing what a product is selling for at local grocery stores allows you to have an idea of what your product could sell for at the farmers market.
- Calculating the profitability of a day selling at a farmers market provides you with essential information. On page 17 is a simple method to calculate your costs and revenues when putting together a budget for selling at farmers markets.
- Once you have an idea of the value of your product and at least a rough idea of how much your product costs to produce, you are ready to set your price for profit.
- Every product needs a price sign. Customers do not like to ask for prices and will often walk on by without asking or buying if no prices are posted.
- From large display boards to small index cards, prices can be posted in many ways.



Find out what shoppers would be willing to pay.



Learn what your product is selling for elsewhere.



Use various-sized price displays.

Just be sure the writing is legible, large enough, and located where it can be easily read. Be sure the writing doesn't get smudged through the course of the day.

- Don't forget cash—especially singles and quarters—for making change.



Have singles and coins to make change.

Daily cost to operate a market booth

Cost item	Your Cost	Example
The value of your time (e.g., \$18.50/hr) and cost of employee time (\$10.10/hr) from leaving farm to returning.		\$250
The farmgate value (or cost) of produce you will sell at market.*		\$1,100
Cost of other foods/products you will resell at the market in your booth.*		
Transportation cost to and from market (e.g., \$0.55/mi).		\$11
Market space rental (daily).		\$10
Amount charged by the market as percent of gross sales (if applicable).		\$183
Some amount attributed to the costs of tent, tables, chairs, and other durable supplies (so they can be replaced later).		\$5
Some amount attributed to the cost of disposable display/sales supplies.		\$8
Other costs		
Total cost of one day at farmers market		\$1,567
Daily sales revenues		\$1,830
Net profit (above your hourly "wage") for a day at the farmers market (Revenues – Costs)		\$263

*For simplicity, this cost does not account for the value of leftover unusable or leftover resalable product.

Selling by weight, count, or volume

Vendors may sell by volume (bag, basket, or piece), by count, or by weight. Be aware that if weighing scales are used, they must be licensed by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (DOA). Consider the following methods of selling:

- Direct sale by weight (e.g., Beets: 50¢/lb) is when the weight of the product is determined at the time of the sale. For example, when a customer tells the seller he wants “two pounds of those beets,” the vendor places beets on the scale until it reads two pounds.
- By weight in prepackaged form (e.g., 2-pound package) is when you weigh and package the product with a quantity statement on the package before the time of sale).
- By count (e.g., Tomatoes: 6 for \$1; Mangoes: \$3 each) is selling something by the unit—pretty simple to understand.
- By volume (e.g., Strawberries: \$2 per quart) is when you use standard-size containers, such as pint, quart, etc. Overfill containers slightly to allow for some settling that can occur in transit.
- Unless you have a calibrated scale licensed by DOA and can prove the weight on items in direct sales, it is easier to have items packaged and sold by count.
- If you sell by weight, make a display of a stated amount of that product to assist customers (e.g., bag up a pound of green beans priced at \$2/lb to show people).
- Consider price point—it's easier to price at \$5 or \$10 rather than at \$4.50 or \$9.99, for example, so that you don't have to deal with change.



Direct sale by weight



Sale by volume



Sale by count

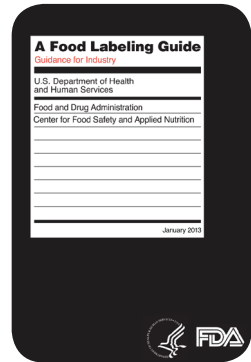
Packaging and labeling your product

Packaging your products is a good way to protect them from mishandling and from being exposed to potential contamination. Packaging may also be required of some products if federal, state, or county regulations must be adhered to during production and/or packaging based on the product and handling procedures.

- How you package and label tells customers who you are. Attractive packaging helps market products.
- Spend a little extra to have a package and/or label made with your farm's logo, address, and website.
- Commercially produced prepackaged food products should have a label with the product name in English; net quantity of contents; name of business, street address, city, state, zip code; and the country of origin. A list of ingredients given in descending order by weight or volume and known allergens in the product are also required.
- Design your label, following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's document *Guidance for Industry: A Food Labeling Guide*, and then set up a meeting with the Food and Drug Branch of the Hawai'i Department of Health to have them review the label so that you can refine it before it's printed.
- Include a label either on the product or on your booth table indicating the non-potentially hazardous foods (such as baked goods, jams, jellies, preserves) with the product name in English; net quantity of contents; name of business, street address, city, state, zip code; and the country of origin, list of ingredients, and allergens.



Attractive packaging



FDA document <www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/UCM265446.pdf>



Label your product

Creating displays that sell

As a market vendor, you are competing for the same customer's attention with sellers of similar products. So how do you set yourself apart from your neighbor and maximize your sales? Consider the following:

- An eye-catching display is a magnet to draw in shoppers. Effective displays yield increased sales. Getting shoppers to buy is a lot easier once you have them at your booth.
- Arrange and/or stack your product in a safe and attractive manner. Abundance sells. Tilt the containers. Have produce artfully “spill over” from nice containers. Get produce out of tubs and boxes and onto bi-level displays.
- Set up and maximize your display using racks that allow shoppers to reach into a display without knocking something over. Make sure to anchor the display well, especially if you are outside where the wind may be a problem.
- Arrange product(s) in varying heights to make use of limited space and draw the eye upwards and to the center of your booth.
- Make a focal point to draw people in. Use product props like farm equipment (an old wheelbarrow), a large bouquet of flowers, unusual signage, or pictures of your farm.
- Think in terms of colors, shapes, and textures. Color coordinate your display or mix it up. A colorful set-up is eye-catching and draws attention to your booth.
- Keep things fresh and well organized both in your displays and behind your booth. While abundance is important, you want to avoid creating a space that is cluttered and overcrowded and could cause an accident or a safety hazard.



Build colorful, multi-level displays.



Maximize displays using racks.



Color and abundance sell.

- Regularly inspect your product to make sure it is clean, neatly arranged, and not damaged. Hours of being displayed may take a toll on your produce or your value-added product, so make sure to freshen up your display throughout the day.
- Keep it clean: tablecloths, reusable boxes, crates, tubs, and bins should be washed frequently and inspected for signs of contamination and damage.
- Continuously restock and neatly condense the display as you begin to sell out. If you notice that you are selling out within the first couple of hours of opening, it's a good reminder to bring more product for the following week.
- Have samples of what you are selling on display for customers to see. This is especially important if the inside of a product is not known by shoppers. These are for display only and not for tasting (a Hawai'i Department of Health Temporary Food Establishment Permit is required for sampling).
- If you have products that cannot be displayed easily, such as fresh fish (that needs to be kept on ice), be creative about your display to draw customer's attention—use pictures for products that can't be easily displayed.
- All food items should be placed 6 inches off the ground, including whole fruits and vegetables.



Restock and condense your produce.



Use pictures for products that can't be easily displayed.



Keep produce at least 6 inches off the ground.

Branding your farm and/or your products

Branding your business is how you will reflect the personality of your farm and/or your products to your customers. You should clearly identify what your business personality is, from your perspective, as well as your customer's perception. Once you have the elements of your brand identified, then you are able to build your brand, integrate your brand into your marketing materials and successfully promote your products. And remember: be consistent, be credible, be compelling, be creative.



Use your logo effectively.

- Identify the qualities of your farm and/or products that will help you to create a brand. Create your brand around the unique attributes of your business.
- People remember logos. What would make a visual symbol of your business? Your logo is a distinct mark that identifies your business.
- Be consistent with your identity.
- Make it visible and make it simple—pull people to your booth. Tell shoppers where *you* come from on your promotional items. This includes on your banners, handouts, point of purchase display, business cards, flyers, recipes, product labels, etc.
- Make a photo album of your farm; bring your farm to the farmers market.
- Have your farm/business name and logo printed on aprons, hats, and t-shirts for you and your staff to wear. These products might also add to your sales—ask your manager if you can sell these.
- Booth signage and promotional information need to be seen by customers as they walk by your table. Banners should be up high, and large enough to be read from a distance.



Brand all your products.



Booth signage easily visible

- Product signage is critical. Clearly label all products with at least the name of the product and the price per unit, whether that is per bunch, per bag, by weight, or by item. It should be legible from 3 to 5 feet away.
- Use signage as your silent salesperson. Include information that goes beyond pricing.
- Promote, promote, promote. Obtain customer contact information for follow-up sales, to take special orders, to promote special events, and for the distribution of a catalog or newsletter.
- Use social media—Twitter, Facebook, etc.—and websites to build new and stronger relationships with customers.
- Get comfortable interacting with the press, TV, radio, or newspaper and tell them your story.
- When customers remember you and know your name and your products, you have built customer loyalty. Customers will be more inclined to talk about you and your products, helping you to reach even more customers.
- Cross-market the locations where your products are sold. Tell shoppers how to get to the restaurants or other markets where your products are sold.
- When you have a strong brand identity, you are distinct from your competitors. Help keep it that way by registering for a trademark of your logo, slogan, and/or trade name so that no one else can use it.



Product branding on packaging



Build customer loyalty.



Use social media to advertise online.

Building relationships with customers

Markets enable vendors to develop loyalty with customers and customers to develop loyalty with vendors. People will respond to you being genuine: it needs to come “from the heart.” You and your staff should know and practice best practices. Consider the following:

- Greet every customer as they enter your booth. Make eye contact, offer a handshake. Learn “hello” and “thank you” in multiple languages.
- Get to know your customers. Don’t be embarrassed to ask names week after week. Learn their names and their kids’ names, and as they approach, call them by name. It makes them feel a part of your family and they develop a loyalty to you.
- Be tactful regarding customer comments about your prices and products. If you get a complaint comparing your price with a competitor’s, respond politely, “Thank you for the feedback.”
- Don’t take it personally if customers buy from someone else. It takes time to establish and develop a reputation and a customer base.
- Answer questions truthfully about your farming practices. Stating you are “certified organic” means you follow the rules of the National Organic Program (NOP). “Certified organic” is a marketing signal to consumers backed by federal law and enforced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Educate your customers about your products, how the food is grown, and how to store and prepare the foods they are purchasing. Encouraging their connection to agriculture fosters their continued support of the industry and, consequently, your sales.



Greet your customers with a warm smile.



Treat customers like family.



Educate customers about your products.

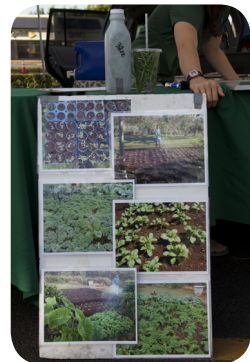
- Tell your story; take pride in your history and struggles. Honor your hard work and desire to support yourself and your family.
- Invite your customers to come back. “I’ll see you next week” makes them feel they are appreciated and makes them more frequent shoppers.
- Learn your customers’ shopping habits and cater to them. Ask them questions. “Did you enjoy the _____ you bought from me last week?”, “Are you looking for anything else today?” Notice what’s already in their shopping bags—what might you have to complement their purchases.
- Be consistent with your attendance at the market, rain or shine. Your customers are depending on you.
- When you are not busy with customers, get busy with your display. Sellers who are standing around or sitting on the tailgate, texting or talking on their phones, are not inviting to customers, and they will walk on.
- When you’re busy with customers, take a moment to acknowledge those waiting. “I’ll be right with you,” may mean the difference between them waiting a few minutes or walking to the next booth.
- Are you and your clothes clean and neat, your hair clean and combed or tied back? Be neat and clean, even if you were in the field harvesting just an hour ago.
- Train your staff on all these practices. Every individual who works at your booth or farm stand should be well-informed, pleasant, and customer-oriented.



Be present and charming throughout the day.



Be neat and wear clean clothes.



Share photos of your farm.

Customers have the right to expect that the food you sell is safe and wholesome

The safety of food starts on the farm and continues all the way to the consumer's cutting board. As a vendor nearer to the farm end of the chain, it is important that you are buying from farms that use Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Handling Practices (GHPs) and who follow federal rules on pesticide handling and application.

- Currently, there are no federal, state, county, or association standard best practices for farmers markets in Hawai'i. Thus, at the moment, an *uncut* raw agricultural product (called "RAC") sold in farmers markets has no regulatory oversight.
- "Foods," however, are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration's Food Code and Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) Title 11, Chapter 50 Food Safety Code.
- In Hawai'i, the Department of Health (DOH) Sanitation Branch issues food establishment permits for those individuals or groups that have a permanent, mobile, or temporary establishment and who want to sell "food."
- The DOH Sanitation Branch is also the agency most likely enforcing food safety rules at your market, so each farmer/vendor should talk to their local DOH about the rules for the specific products that he or she plans to sell. This is the best way to avoid violations and ensure that food sold at the market is safe.
- For more information, visit the DOH Sanitation Branch site at <http://health.hawaii.gov/san/food-information/>



You do NOT NEED a temporary food establishment permit (TFEP) for these items:

- Whole *uncut* fruits and vegetables, such as bananas, pineapples, cabbage, tomatoes, melons, onions, and raw mixed and micro greens (uncut) intended to be washed by the consumer prior to consumption.
- Commercially prepackaged non-potentially hazardous foods (non-PHF) and beverages (without ice).
- Hand-pounded poi that complies with HAR 11-50-3 (c)(5).
- Commercially prepackaged ice cream and frozen yogurt novelties.
- Hot beverages (without ice) such as coffee, cocoa, or hot tea.
- Doughnuts, pastries (cupcakes, bagels, cookies), and candy prepared in a home kitchen—so long as they are NOT potentially hazardous foods (non-PHF), meaning they don't require time and temperature controls because they are not capable of supporting the growth of pathogenic microorganisms.
- Popcorn seasoned with salt, buttered, or sugared (kettle corn).
- Dry beans or grains that are not ready to eat; coffee beans, tea leaves, or herbs for tea that must be cooked before consumption; or ingredients such as spices or dry soup mixes that are portioned on-site but not blended.
- Food containers should be properly labeled with an ingredient list to warn people about any major food allergens (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts [almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc.], fish, shellfish [crab, lobster, shrimp, etc.], soy, wheat) included in the food.



Whole produce is exempt from TFEP.



Hand-pounded poi is exempt from TFEP under specific conditions.

6%	onions, tamarinds, salt, garlic, cloves, chili peppers, natural flavorings, shallots, paprika, turmeric, corn starch, tricalcium phosphate, macadamia nuts, lehua honey, Hamakua Pioppini Mushroom Powder.
4%	
Vitamin C 2%	
on 15%	
of on a 2,000 calorie or lower depending	

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Contains: Wheat, eggs, milk, and manufactured in a facility that uses peanuts and other tree nuts.

Properly label with known food allergens.

- Vendors selling non-PHF should still use clean and sanitary containers to store the food.
- Be aware that many farmers markets are requiring non-PHF to be prepared in a Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH)-approved facility and will request to see proof.

You NEED a temporary food establishment permit (TFEP) if you intend to sell potentially hazardous food.

- Farmers/vendors must receive a temporary food establishment permit from the DOH before selling potentially hazardous foods (PHF).
- A potentially hazardous food, according to federal and state regulations, is one that requires time and temperature controls because it is capable of supporting the growth of pathogenic microorganisms.
- Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, cooked vegetables, dairy products, mushrooms, raw seed sprouts, cut melons, cut leafy greens, cut tomatoes, untreated garlic-in-oil mixtures, and baked goods that are subject to spoilage (such as custards or cream-filled pastries or other baked goods that must be refrigerated) are examples of potentially hazardous foods.
- Potentially hazardous foods must be prepared in approved kitchens. Certification is conducted by the DOH.
- If vendors are unsure about whether their product is potentially hazardous, they should contact the DOH Sanitation Branch. They should also contact the DOH in order to apply for a permit to sell these foods.



Use clean and sanitary containers to store food.

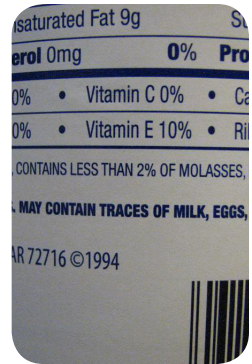


Eggs require vendor to have a TFEP.



Fish require time and temperature controls.

- Vendors who sell potentially hazardous foods should put their products inside a clean and sanitary container.
- Food containers should be properly labeled with an ingredient list to warn people about any major food allergens (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts [almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc.], fish [bass, cod, flounder, etc.], shellfish [crab, lobster, shrimp, etc.], soy, wheat) included in the food.



Properly label with known food allergens.

Selling raw vegetables and fruits

Farmers/vendors do not need a permit in order to sell whole, *uncut* raw fruits and vegetables, though all fruits and vegetables should be rinsed in potable water, dried, and kept away from contaminants while being transported, unloading, displayed, and sold at the market.



Sliced fruits must be prepared in an approved facility.

Selling sliced or chopped vegetables and fruits

The DOH treats sliced or altered fruits or vegetables (shelled peas, cut fruits, etc.) as “processed foods” which must be prepared under special guidelines for sanitation and safety and may be required to be prepared in an approved facility. Farmers/vendors selling cut or altered fruits or vegetables should consult their local health inspector.



A DOH-approved facility

Offering food prepared off-site

The DOH approves facilities that meet certain requirements, but home kitchens used for household food preparation cannot be approved. Also, “potentially hazardous foods” (which include meat, poultry, and dairy products) must be processed in approved facilities, and a permit is required for their sale. Follow these required practices to avoid contamination:

- Wash hands often with soap and water when handling food.
- Do not allow persons with sores, or who are ill, to handle food.
- Use clean dishes and utensils for food preparation.
- Clean and sanitize work surfaces that food may come in contact with.
- Shorten time between preparation and the sale of the item by preparing small batches.
- Store food in new food-grade containers or packaging materials.
- Keep potentially hazardous and perishable foods at safe temperatures.
- Keep garbage containers covered and avoid accumulation of waste and debris.
- Keep raw foods separated from prepared foods.
- Label all food in packaged form with common name of food, ingredients, net weight, name and address of manufacturer or distributor, and any other required information.
- Monitor all foods to prevent food tampering.



Use clean dishes and utensils to prepare and sell food.



Label all processed foods according to FDA guidelines.

Offering food samples at the farmers market

Samples of products may be offered to consumers by vendors after consultation with the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH), Sanitation Branch.

- Cutting of fruits and vegetables at farmers markets to give as samples is not allowed. Sample preparation needs to be done in an DOH-approved facility.



Vendors selling brewed coffee must have a TFEF.

- If you are selling coffee for shoppers to drink while at the farmers market, you must have a temporary food establishment permit, and you must use disposable cups, single-service creamers, and potable water.
- Maintain temperature control on items needing refrigeration after opening. Store at 41°F or below.
- Maintain temperature control on items needing to be kept hot. Use an authorized food warmer, held at 135°F or above.
- Have a metal-stem thermometer available if hot or cold samples are provided.
- Utensils such as tongs, ladles, or gloves must be used. Avoid bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods such as garnishes, vegetables, bread, pastries, or other items that do not have a cook step prior to serving.
- Avoid bare-hand contact by consumers with ready-to-eat food. Use single-use items such as toothpicks, wax paper, paper sampling cups, or disposable utensils to distribute samples to customers.
- Supply a rubbish can for customers to dispose of single-service items once they have sampled the product.
- Open canned items (e.g., jelly, salsa, dips, etc.) one jar at a time and supply with a disposable utensil for customers to use.
- Store all food at least 6 inches off the floor or ground.
- Bring several clean, sanitized knives and cutting boards in clean, closed containers or food storage bags. Use clean equipment to cut product, taking care to store in-use items so they are protected from contamination.



Maintain proper temperature control.



Provide toothpicks for customers to sample products.



Provide clean single-service items to eat with.

- Replace soiled knives, cutting boards, etc., with clean items every two hours. Use single-service items whenever possible.
- Take soiled items away at the end of the day.
- Should on-site utensil and equipment washing be necessary because you have a temporary food establishment permit, set up and operate a proper washing station. (See page 33).
- Utensils and hand-washing water should be disposed of in a facility connected to the public sewer system or taken home with you for proper disposal. This means waste water should not be dumped on the ground, grass, or pavement or down the storm drains.
- Protect the food from customer handling, coughing, sneezing, or other contamination by wrapping or using sneeze guards or other effective barriers.
- When transporting prepared samples, protect from contamination and maintain temperature control of potentially hazardous foods.



Take soiled items with you at the end of the day

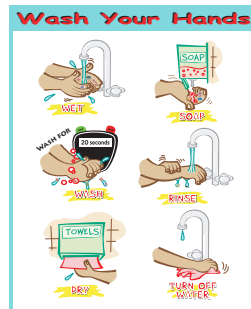


Protect food from possible contamination.

Proper hand-washing

Wash hands with soap and water prior to preparing samples as well as after smoking, eating, drinking, or using the toilet, or whenever hands become soiled, to prevent contamination of prepared samples.

1. Wet hands with clean, warm water;
2. Apply soap and work into a lather;
3. Rub hands together for 20 seconds;
4. Clean under the nails and between fingers;
5. Rinse under clean, running water; and
6. Dry hands with a disposable paper towel.



<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW/GermCity>

Follow good hand-washing practices.

Proper hand- and equipment-washing station

Vendors who prepare samples or sell non-packaged food must have portable hand-wash facilities at their booth. Minimum requirements include the following:

- Container with an adequate supply of potable water, which flows freely from a tap or spigot. The spigot must be a type that will stay in an open position without being held so that both hands can be washed at once.
- Catch bucket for the water
- Pump soap
- Individual disposable towels
- Trash can



Tips on how to apply for a temporary food establishment permit (TFEP) from the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH)

A TFEP allows you to hold a temporary food sale for a **limited period of time** (20 times within three months). The following information is needed for completing the application process:

- Provide a diagram of where you are preparing your food and of your market booth.
- Provide your step-by-step procedure for processing and/or handling food items.
- Include all food items being sold or distributed at the market.
- Include information about your wash station at the farmers market.
- Know where the restroom is located at the farmers market.
- Provide a copy of the DOH certificate of the approved facility where you are preparing your food.
- Be able to show the agreement between you and the approved facility where you are preparing your food if you are renting a facility.
- Be able to explain receiving, cold storage, hot storage, thermal storage, transportation, reheating, and display of your food and where food will be distributed including warmers, burners, washing facilities, etc.
- Be aware of the new DOH Food Code that was signed into law and is now in effect as of February 24, 2014.
- TFEP applications are found at <http://health.hawaii.gov/san/permit-applications/temporary-food-establishment-permit-applications/>



Hawai'i Department of Health locations and contact information

Sanitation Branch
591 Ala Moana Boulevard
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-586-8000
Fax: 808-586-8040

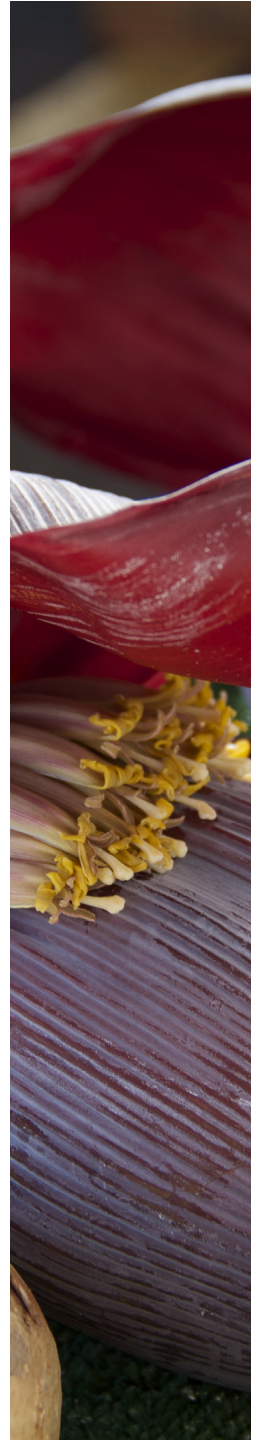
Hawai'i District Health Office/Hilo
1582 Kamehameha Avenue
Hilo, HI 96720
Phone: 808-933-0917
Fax: 808-933-0400

Sanitation Unit/Kona (Office)
Keakealani Building
79-1020 Haukapila Street, Room 115
Kona, HI 96750
Phone: 808-322-1507
Fax: 808-322-1511

Maui District Health Office
54 High Street, Room 300
Wailuku, HI 96793
Phone: 808-984-8230
Fax: 808-984-8237

Kauai District Health Office
3040 Umi Street
Lihue, HI 96766
Phone: 808-241-3323
Fax: 808-241-3566

Kona Health Center (Mailing)
Sanitation Unit
79-1015 Haukapila Street
Kealahou, HI 96750
Phone: 808-322-1507
Fax: 808-322-1511





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