Farmers Market Guidance during COVID-19 Pandemic

**Essential Services**

Farmers markets are included in the Governor’s “list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” to help state, local, tribal, and industry partners as they work to protect communities while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security.”

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**Sector Profile**

The Food and Agricultural (FA) Sector is composed of complex production, processing, and delivery systems and has the capacity to feed people and animals both within and beyond the boundaries of the United States. Beyond domestic food production, the FA Sector also imports many ingredients and finished products, leading to a complex web of growers, processors, suppliers, transporters, distributors, and consumers. This sector is critical to maintaining and securing our food supply.

**Essential Workforce**

- Workers supporting groceries, pharmacies, and other retail that sells food and beverage products, including but not limited to Grocery stores, Corner stores and convenience stores, including liquor stores that sell food, Farmers' markets, Food banks, Farm and produce stands, Supermarkets, Similar food retail establishments, Big box stores that sell groceries and essentials.

Open Farmers Markets

The WSFMA is committed to allowing safe, permitted farmers markets to operate provided they abide by the most up-to-date guidance, directives, and procedures issued by the CDC, Washington State Executive, Department of Health and local jurisdictions. We respect the right of a farmer market to close temporarily or permanently should it determine that this is the best course of action for its community.

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Why Keep Farmers Markets Open

Farmers Markets Are Safe: Our primary concern is the health and safety of our farmers and producers, market shoppers, market staff, and the host community. Farmers markets are taking serious safety precautions, including:
- revising market operations;
- reducing the number of vendors and changing the market layout;
- expecting shoppers and vendors to abide by public health directives and new market rules; and
- making a cultural shift from being highly social to proactively limiting time at the market and maintaining physical distances.

Farmers Markets Are Essential: Our farmers markets are important and necessary food outlets for community members from all economic backgrounds to purchase healthy, fresh, nutritious food. In some neighborhoods, farmers markets are one of the few sources of fresh produce.

Farmers Markets Allow You to Shop Direct: Shopping at our markets means that you can purchase fresh, nutritious food from as close to the source as possible, from the farmers you know and trust.

Farmers Markets Support Washington State: Farmers markets are essential to the livelihood of farmers and food producers. Shopping at farmers markets means you are supporting your local economy, which is especially critical in this time of uncertainty.