

Depending on the composition of their market, some **farmers' market food vendors** are exempted from Ontario Regulation 493/17: Food Premises.

However, they are still subject to other provincial health laws, including:

- **It is against the law to sell: uninspected meats, unpasteurized milk, or ungraded eggs**
- **All water used for food preparation and processing, including water from private wells, must be potable**

As per the Health Protection and Promotion Act (the Act),

- **Each vendor must inform Public Health prior to opening for business**
- **Public health staff will continue to inspect exempted vendors to ensure no health hazards exist (under Section 13 of the Act)**

Furthermore, exempted farmers' market food vendors must continue to ensure that the food is manufactured, processed, prepared, stored, handled, displayed, distributed, transported, sold or offered for sale in a manner that ensures the product is not a health hazard.

Following the best practice tips listed below will help ensure the safety of food products sold at exempted farmers' markets:

Temperature Control

- Hazardous foods (i.e. support the growth of disease-causing organisms or their toxins) are to be transported, stored and maintained at safe temperatures. Cold foods are to be kept at 4°C (40°F) or colder and hot foods at 60°C (140°F) or hotter.
- Freezer units are to be maintained such that all food is kept frozen.
- Use accurate indicating thermometers to monitor food storage temperatures.

Preparation and Handling

- Raw and ready to eat foods are to be kept separate to prevent cross-contamination.
- Hazardous food should not be kept in the "Danger Zone" (i.e. 4°C (40°F) to 60°C (140°F)) for more than 2 hours.
- Avoid direct contact with food by using tongs & ladles. Provide a sufficient number of clean, back-up utensils stored in a sanitary manner.
- All foods are to be stored in clean, washable containers with tight fitting lids to protect from insects, dust and chemicals.

Cooking/Reheating

- Use a probe thermometer to check internal temperatures of cooked food.

Food Type	Minimum Internal Cooking / Re-heating Temperatures
Whole poultry	82°C/180°F for a minimum of 15 seconds (cooking) 74°C/165°F for a minimum of 15 seconds (reheating)
Other poultry portions/ food mixtures	74°C / 165°F for a minimum of 15 seconds
Pork and ground meat	71°C / 160°F for a minimum of 15 seconds
Fish	70°C / 158°F for a minimum of 15 seconds

Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Hands are to be washed before commencing work, after handling raw or hazardous product, after using the toilet, smoking, handling garbage or cash, and as often as necessary.
- The hand wash basin (i.e. as a minimum: a container with a valve that turns on and off, filled with warm, potable water that drains into a pail, the contents of which are disposed of in a toilet/sink) is to be conveniently located with soap and single service towel dispensers.
- All food handlers are to wear clean outer garments, ensure hair does not contaminate food, and not use tobacco while handling food.
- Counters and food contact surfaces are to be kept clean with soap and potable water then sanitized with either chlorine, quaternary ammonia, iodine or a product approved by Health Canada. To prepare a chlorine sanitizer: add 2 mL of bleach to 1 L of water.
- Leak-proof containers with tight-fitting lids sufficient for storing all garbage and waste in a sanitary manner are to be provided and emptied as needed.

For more information contact:

Hastings Prince Edward Public Health – Healthy Environments
179 North Park Street, Belleville, ON K8P 4P1
T: 613-966-5500 or 1-800-267-2803 ext. 677
F: 613-968-1461 TTY: 711 or 1-800-267-6511

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