

Guidance for Farmers' Markets During Re-Opening

The state's framework to resume business operations — “Ad Astra: A Plan to Re-Open Kansas” — was established via Executive Order No. 20-29 issued by Governor Laura Kelly on April 30, 2020. Under Phase One of the framework, most businesses were allowed to resume operations beginning on Monday, May 4, under certain conditions.

It is important to note that local governments retain the authority to impose additional restrictions, and any specific guidelines not outlined by the Governor's re-opening framework are the jurisdiction of each local government. However, the new Executive Order states that while local governments may implement more restrictive orders or provisions, they must continue to allow the performance of essential functions identified in the Kansas Essential Functions Framework (KEFF).

The Kansas Department of Agriculture recognizes the critical role that farmers' markets, along with community supported agriculture (CSAs) and farm stands, play in our communities, offering consumers a way to buy local, seasonal food directly from a producer. As an essential function, and part of the critical infrastructure of this state, your contribution to the state and local community is critical. **We strongly encourage you to exercise ongoing safety measures** to ensure that your employees remain healthy and you can continue to function, and also to assure your customers and community that you provide a safe, reliable environment.

How does the Re-Opening Plan apply to farmers' markets?

- Farmers' markets work to supply food products and services, thereby they have qualified as essential activities under the Keeping Essential Functions Framework 400 and for the most part have continued to function throughout the statewide Stay Home order. Many markets had limited their activities to only the essential functions as defined by KEFF; they can now resume their other functions which did not qualify for KEFF exemptions (such as non-food vendors), unless prohibited by local orders.
- Local orders or provisions regarding businesses, mass gatherings or stay-at-home requirements may affect or regulate essential functions only so long as they **do not significantly disrupt performance of the essential function**. The KEFF functions listed in Executive Order 20-16 are the essential functions local governments must continue to allow.
- If your region is still functioning under a stay-at-home order, market managers should carefully scrutinize their vendors and activities and limit them to those which are essential to the food supply chain.

What should farmers' markets be doing during the Re-Opening Plan?

- Managers of farmers' markets should — to the extent possible without significant disruption to essential functions — continue to implement operational changes to protect their vendors and customers.
- The following best practices have been developed to ensure continuity of operations while also safeguarding the health of vendors and their families.
- Central to the efforts to protect public health within your organization are these principles:
 - Maintain at least six feet of distance between individuals, be they customers or employees, as much as possible.
 - Follow fundamental cleaning and public health practices detailed on [covid.ks.gov](https://www.covid.ks.gov).
 - Avoid instances in which large groups are in one location and unable to maintain a distance of six feet with only infrequent or incidental moments of closer proximity. This includes limiting areas and instances in which physical distancing is not maintained, such as in entrances, lobbies, break rooms, etc. Group size is limited to 10 in Phase One, 30 in Phase Two, and 90 in Phase Three; even essential businesses should aim for these maximum group sizes.
- Samples and self-service of food: Sampling is still allowed, but markets have the option to suspend it to minimize touch points. Because the Governor's plan does not explicitly allow or disallow self-service of unpackaged food, permission to provide samples is determined by local governments.

Best Practices

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), transmission of COVID-19 appears to be by close contact and not by food. However, these best practices will protect your employees, vendors and customers and are recommended during the Re-Opening Plan. In communities with continued stay-at-home orders or other additional restrictions, operations should implement these practices to comply with local orders.

Communication

- Vendors and customers should not come to market if they show symptoms of COVID-19 or have come in contact with someone who shows symptoms. Those showing symptoms at the farmers market should be asked to leave.
- Vendors and customers should be encouraged to wear cloth face coverings.
- Consider communicating these precautions to customers with signs, social media posts or newsletters.
- Market managers should communicate proactively about what steps the market is taking to prevent the spread of illness.

Distancing

- Managers should evaluate their operations to identify and implement operational changes that increase separation and recognize social distancing guidelines, keeping individuals at least six feet apart as much as possible.
- Spread out vendor booths to provide enough distance between them to maintain social distancing.
- Place visible ground markers to help customers maintain six feet of physical distance.

- Consider how the market can limit touch points between individuals (door handles, touch pads, etc.) and/or increase cleaning of these points.
- As much as possible, postpone or restructure activities which would involve significant interaction of people.
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- Limit market volume by promoting preordering, alternate pickup locations, curbside service, drive-through service, delivery, or extended/altered operational hours.
- Limit the number of people gathered in common spaces at one time and space out customers to prevent groups of 10 or more during Phase One and 30 or more during Phase Two.

Cleaning and Hygiene

At this time, food or food packaging have not been identified as likely sources of COVID-19 infection. However, food establishments play an important role in keeping employees and customers safe from infection by following personal and environmental hygiene practices. We recommend following the CDC and Kansas Department of Health and Environment guidance to:

- Ensure employees stay home if they are feeling sick (fever, coughing and/or shortness of breath), if they have a sick family member in their home, or if they have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Vendors and customers should wear cloth face coverings.
- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Consider providing handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizer at market entrances, exits, and restrooms. If soap and water are not readily available, provide customers and employees with alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Vendors should sanitize their hands after each transaction and could also wear gloves, especially when handling cash or tokens. Use electronic payment if possible.
- Vendors should handle and package items for customers; customers should avoid touching product until they have purchased it.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces between uses and throughout the day, such as ordering screens, door handles, tables, or handrails. The CDC's guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
 - Note that bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the required concentration is higher for COVID-19 than for everyday sanitation: five tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water.
- If possible, use non-porous plastic tables that can be easily disinfected.

For current information about Kansas' response to COVID-19, go to the Kansas COVID-19 Resource Center at www.covid.ks.gov.