

Farmers' market protocol for special markets

As agreed to by Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation (AGI) and Alberta Health Services (AHS), these protocols apply to approved farmers' markets requesting a location change in order to hold a special market or when combining with other special events.

Background

Markets are a big part of many of our rural communities and are seen as a valuable addition to many community events. Markets often request to hold special markets or markets in addition to their regularly scheduled days.

Alberta approved farmers' markets are the only venues in Alberta where both low and high-risk home-produced foods can be sold. This is described in Part 3 – Farmers' Markets – of the Alberta Food Regulation.

Once approved by AGI, farmers' markets work with AHS to meet their requirements for issuance of a food permit. This umbrella permit applies to all the food vendors choosing to sell through the market. It does not apply to concession/ready-to-eat vendors who process food on site as those businesses fall under Part 2 of the Food Regulation.

The following rules are **effective April 1, 2022**.

Approved farmers' market location change only

- Both AGI and AHS approve a location change.
- A minimum of two weeks' notice is required in order to ensure all the logistics are handled.
- The following information must be provided to AGI by the market organizer at least two weeks prior to the event:
 - Location including address
 - Dates and times the market will be operating
- AGI will provide approval in writing to both the market organizer and the public health inspector responsible for the area. Conditions of approval will be stated in the letter as required. AGI approval is ALWAYS conditional upon AHS approval.

- Food vendors selling at special markets are limited to:
 - those who currently sell at an existing approved farmers' market in the province;
 - those who produce their food products in an AHS permitted kitchen and meet all the requirements of Part 2 of the Food Regulation for Commercial Food Establishments; and
 - new food vendors who produce low risk foods in their uninspected home kitchens and who have completed a minimum of the Alberta Food Safety Basics for Farmers' Markets course.
- A food permit is location-specific and non-transferable. Upon receiving approval of a market location change, AHS will decide if a new permit will be issued or if only a record of the change will be kept on file.
- The following information must be provided to AHS by the market organizer two weeks prior to the event:
 - Completed food permit application, if applicable
 - List of confirmed food vendors
 - Food products the vendors are selling
 - Any sampling information
 - Location details: address, services, facilities, etc.
- AHS may need to conduct a site visit prior to the market opening. This will depend on the site, vendors, products etc. AHS will not be required to complete approval inspections on the day of the market.
- The Market Manager **MUST** be present at the event to ensure conditions are followed and that all stallholders are abiding by the stallholder guidelines as noted in the AHS document: [Information for Farmers' Market Managers and Stallholders](#).

Approved farmers' market partnering with a special event

- In this situation, the farmers' market is moving to the site of the special event.

- All the requirements noted under point 1 above apply.
- If the market is combining with another special event, **the farmers' market portion of the event must be clearly separated from the other event using signage that says "Alberta Approved Farmers' Market"**. If the areas are not completely separate or distinguishable from each other, AHS will enforce the standards for Part 4 – Special Events - of the Food Regulation rather than those for farmers' markets. This may impact which vendors can attend or are allowed to stay for the event.

Special Event partnering with an approved farmers' market

- In this situation, the special event is being held at the same time and in the same location as an existing farmers' market.
- All the requirements noted above apply **INCLUDING** the requirement for the farmers' market to be clearly distinguished and separate from the special event.