

SOUTH COUNTY GROWERS' ASSOCIATION RICHMOND FARMERS' MARKET POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Mission

The mission of the South County Growers' Association is to support Rhode Island sustainable producers, to educate the public about the benefits of buying locally grown food directly from farmers and about the importance of conservation of open space and farmland, and to connect farmers and agricultural artisans to the local community.

Vendor Eligibility

Farmers, food producers, and agricultural artisans are eligible for acceptance to the Richmond Farmers' Market by submitting the completed market application, fees, and copies of required documents as indicated in this document and the market application. The Membership Committee will review applications giving priority to Rhode Island applicants and to those that fill a current market need. When the Market cannot fill a category from within Rhode Island, applicants from Massachusetts and Connecticut will be considered.

There are two types of vendor membership in the South County Growers' Association: Producer Membership and Trial Membership. A Producer Member pays yearly dues, is a voting member and is entitled to a standard vending space at the Market. A Non-voting Trial Member pays no yearly dues, is a non-voting member, and is assessed a per-market fee for a standard vending space.

Vendors must produce all or most of what they sell, depending on which category they fall into.

A. Vendors of plants, produce, meat, eggs, fish, honey, cheese, jam, pickles, etc. may only sell what they grow or make themselves.

B. Food Purveyors, selling items such as kettle corn and baked goods, must make at least 80% of what they sell. Bottled or canned beverages may be resold by vendors whose primary product is prepared foods. Other items must be individually approved for resale.

C. Vendors of fiber and fiber products must make at least 80% of what they sell. All items sold must be of the same fiber type and quality as what the vendor produces.

Vending Space and Fees

Vendors are entitled to use an assigned space on each market day and will receive a site map at the start of the season. Expansion of site space is determined on a seniority basis.

Vendors must phone the President in advance of any market which is to be unattended to allow for the space to be filled in by others, thus eliminating gaps in the market set up.

Space is reserved through rental payments as set by the Board of Directors. Rental payments will approximate the actual cost of the vending space to the Association. The market site may require members to park separately from their vending space. There will be a three foot non-usable buffer space between members, space permitting.

All members are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the area assigned to them at the market. Upon leaving the market all litter and waste material such as rinds, paper, plastic, flower stems, etc. are to be taken away by the vendor.

Permits and Licenses

All licenses, sales permits and sales tax requirements for the sale of any item shall be the responsibility of the member. Each member is responsible for meeting all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and regulations.

Retail Sales Permit

All members who sell non-edible items must obtain a retail sales permit from the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, Department of Administration, 1 Capitol Hill, Ste. 4, Providence, Rhode Island, 02908. Sales tax must be collected and reported for all non-edible items sold. (Edible flowers and vegetable and herb plants are non taxable.) All members selling non-edible items must submit a copy of their current retail sales permit each year.

Nursery Certificate/Licenses

All members selling nursery products must submit a copy of their nursery inspection certificate and nursery worker's license along with their membership application. Upon expiration, a copy of the new nursery permit is to be provided to the Association.

R. I. Department of Health Certificates

Members whose products are defined under RI State Law section 21-27-6.1 relating to farm home food manufacture must submit to the Association copies of their current certificate of registration and affidavit of compliance as required by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

Members whose products are defined under section 21-27-1 relating to a food business, food service or mobile food service unit, etc. must submit a copy of their food service certification to the Association.

Certified Organic Farm Designation

Only members who have a Rhode Island Organic Farm Designation Certificate issued by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Dept. of Agriculture and Resource Marketing will be permitted to sell items so stated. A copy of this certificate is to be submitted to the Association.

Other Permits and Licenses

The common industry-wide practice of purchasing young flower or vegetable plant plugs to be replanted and grown by the member for resale is permitted. The member's purchase invoice with verifiable delivery date of not less than thirty days before sale at the market must be made available as part of the inspection process.

Members shall provide the Association with copies of any other permits and licenses not mentioned which would be required under Federal, State or Local law for their produce or products

Scale Certifications

All members selling any item by weight or prepackaged weight must have their certified scale present at the market. All scales must have a seal certification issued by the Rhode Island Division of Weights and Measures displayed on the face of the scale.

Inspections

The Board of Directors of the Association shall visit and inspect all members' farms or locations in regard to the products sold at the farmers market. Members will be given a minimum of three days notice of the inspection. This is to validate that members are actually growing what they are selling, or making their own products as required by market rules. Non-compliance or delayed inspection will be cause for dismissal from the market.

Insurance

The Association will carry premises/site liability insurance for our market location. Each member is individually responsible to carry their own produce/product insurance, since the Association does not insure them for this type of coverage. It is strongly recommended that vendor members carry product liability insurance.

Customer Relations

Member sales shall be conducted in an orderly business manner. No shouting, hawking, or other objectionable means of soliciting shall be tolerated. Members shall exhibit courtesy and cooperation to customers and to other members selling at the market in order to promote the orderly marketing of Rhode Island independent farm, agricultural, and horticultural products and to create a demand for such products.

Market Pricing

The price of all goods must be clearly and plainly displayed to the customer.

Market Location

The Association may actively operate one or more Farmers' Markets at different locations and at various times of the week.

Market Table

The Richmond Farmers' Market runs a market table to supply important products current vendors do not supply that patrons have come to expect to be available at a farmers' market. For example, if no current vendors grow sweet corn, the market may purchase it from a local grower and resell it at the market table. All proceeds benefit the South County Growers' Association.

Product Categories

New vendors will be considered based on the needs of the Richmond Farmers' Market in the following product categories:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Vegetable, Fruit & Herb Seedlings/Transplants
- Herbs
- Cut Flowers
- Nursery Stock
- Hanging Baskets
- Annual & Perennial Flowers
- Cheese Products
- Honey Products
- Maple Syrup
- Baked Goods
- Meat
- Eggs & Poultry
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Fiber
- Specialty Items

Committees

The South County Growers' Association is a non-profit volunteer organization. Participation of the Membership is vital to the ongoing success of the Association and the Richmond Farmers' Market. Voting Members are required to participate in at least one committee.

Membership – Conducts new member recruitment, reviews membership applications, and maintains a current member directory.

Site – Secures market location each year, creates site map of vendors, and responsible for market signs, tent(s), and table(s).

Marketing – Coordinates advertising and press coverage, maintains email list of patrons and interested persons, sends in-season weekly emails to this list, oversees website and other digital content, and maintains various market literature at the market table.

Education – Coordinates education and demonstration programs at the market and in the community, such as: the winter seminar and/or movie; special guests at market that educate patrons about agriculture, the environment, conservation, etc.; related literature to be made available at the market table.