

ASHE COUNTY FARMERS MARKET POLICIES & PROCEDURES

(Updated November 1, 2011)

1. MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS

The Ashe County Farmers' Market, Inc. membership is made up of three categories: Grower/Producer Vendors, Food Vendors, and Handmade Arts & Crafts Vendors. All members must reside in Ashe County. Membership is available to all adults who meet vendor product qualifications. There is no limit on the number of members.

Misleading or dishonest practices are not permitted. Complaints to the Market Manager or President submitted in writing will be investigated and appropriate action taken. Membership can be terminated by majority vote of the corporation's members for good cause and after giving the affected member an opportunity to be heard.

2. VENDOR AND PRODUCT REGISTRATION

No products can be sold at an Ashe County Farmers' Market event except by a member whose vendor registration application lists those products, and the application has been accepted by the Market Manager or ACFM President. Application for registration includes completing a Producer Certification Form, and must be accompanied by payment of annual dues and applicable space reservation fees. Producer Certification Forms are available at www.ashefarmersmarket.com and at market events.

3. DUES AND FEES

Dues are set for each calendar year by the ACFM board of directors. (For 2009 the amount is \$25.00.) Membership dues must be paid in advance of any market sales, and are not prorated.

The fee per calendar year for each ten foot wide assigned space, including adjacent parking for one vehicle, is \$175.00 for an Enclosed or Sheltered space and \$100.00 for an Open space, which entitles the member to its use at all Saturday and Special market events. A fee of \$5.00 will be charged to every vendor who participates in a Wednesday market event.

A member who has no assigned space, for a \$5.00 fee may purchase one day's use of a space from the Market Manager when a member who has that space does not claim it by the time deadline for that day's event. (The Market Manager has the discretion to allow a member to extend arrival time for good cause.)

Sharing the cost and use of a single space is limited to two members. Uniform signs for vendors are encouraged but not required. The cost of signage will be no more than the actual unit cost to ACFM. No other charges or assessments will be made to ACFM members.

4. CRAFT VENDORS

Handmade arts and crafts will be admitted as market products only after a registration process which includes a review and approval by a Jury of all product types and if approved is limited to that market season and the following three (3) seasons at which time the product will need to be rejuried before it can be sold at the Market. The Market season will be from March through March of each year. The Ashe County Farmers Market (ACFM) board of directors will appoint each Jury member from outside of the Market membership. **Each item must be handmade by the member in Ashe County.** Items are judged on the basis of craftsmanship, artistic merit, aesthetic value and market appeal. Commercial kit assemblies are not acceptable, and manufactured component parts are allowed only to the extent necessary for structural integrity.

Note:

- 1. Member – meaning paid member of the Ashe County Farmers Market.**
- 2. ACFM – meaning Ashe County Farmers Market**
- 3. Kit – A “kit” is a mass produced group of materials sold for assembly by members of the general public.**

These rules apply to product types:

Flower Arrangements must be only fresh or dried flowers grown in Ashe County. Silk or plastic flowers are not acceptable.

Clothing, hats, footwear, rugs, blankets, quilts, towels and any other fabric/textile made items and their accessories must be made by the member. Belts must be handmade and/or hand tooled, except for their attached buckles. Buckles cannot be sold separate unless handmade by the vendor. Machine embossing or embroidery is not acceptable.

Jewelry must utilize handcrafted components as primary features. Unaltered commercially available stones, beads and clasps may be used if significant skilled workmanship is necessary to produce the piece.

Clocks must use cases handmade by the member. Commercially produced components are acceptable if not viewed as primary features.

Photography, drawing or paintings must be originally produced by the member. Copies of this art may be sold, including reproductions on paper. Commercially produced frames are acceptable if not viewed as primary feature. Handmade frames produced in Ashe County by the vendor or another vendor in the Market are also acceptable.

Pottery must be produced by the member, and must be identified safe for food storage or preparation (coffee mugs, casserole dishes or other items for baking). Commercial molds, kits or ceramics are not accepted.

Musical recordings must be from performances by the member or a group that includes the member.

Written works by the member are acceptable if illustrations or other features are not viewed as primary features.

Soaps, lotions and candles must be formulated by the member, and labeled with major ingredients. Commercially produced containers must not be viewed as the primary feature.

Woodcrafts are based on artistic appeal and structural integrity. All crafts must be the vendors original design and/or there interpretation. No commercial kits, patterns (hobby house/magazines, etc.) or stencils are allowed. Commercial products such as hinges, latches, hooks, nails, wire, etc. are acceptable if not viewed as primary features.

5. Vendor Spaces

Permanent vendor spaces are available in four classifications: Enclosed(covered spaces with pull-down doors), Sheltered(covered spaces with open sides), Grass (behind Sheltered and Enclosed spaces) and Open(gravel spaces adjacent to Sheltered and Enclosed spaces). Each classification has assigned areas for product display and parking. These spaces are designated for vendors by the Board of Directors with preference given to vendors who wish to retain spaces paid for during the previous market season. Fees for assigned spaces must be paid no later than the end of the Market Expo or the vendor may lose the right to that assigned space at the discretion of the Board. If necessary, a special meeting of the Board of Directors will be called in order to complete the assignment of spaces in the allotted time.

Permanent spaces that become available during or after the current market season will be offered to vendors by the Board of Directors prior to Opening Day of the following market season. The Market Manager will communicate the list of available spaces to all members no later than 3 days following the Market Expo. This communication will be in the form of an email and/or telephone call to ensure all members have been contacted in a timely manner. Any vendor interested in an available space(s) must complete a Request for Assigned Space Form within 5 days of notification and return it to the Market Manager or a Board member. Once all Request for Assigned Space Forms have been received, the Board will assign spaces based on vendor seniority as documented by the ACFM Longevity List. Seniority is defined as the number of continuous, uninterrupted years a vendor has paid for a permanent space. In cases where more than one vendor has equal seniority, a lottery among those vendors will be held by the Board of Directors in order to determine which vendor will be assigned that space. All space assignments must be completed and fees paid in full prior to Opening Day of the market.

In the event that a lottery needs to be conducted by the Board of Directors to award vacant vendor spaces, the lottery will be conducted as follows. The name of each vendor that qualifies to fill a vacant space will be written on a slip of paper and placed into a "hat" and shaken. One name will be drawn and the winner will be awarded the vacant space. The lottery will be conducted at the earliest possible Board meeting and the results will be recorded in the minutes. The vendors competing for the vacant space will be invited to witness the lottery.

Sharing of a permanent vendor space shall be limited to two vendors. If the two vendors are of equal seniority and one vendor leaves, the space will be retained by the remaining vendor. However, if the two vendors are not of equal seniority and the vendor with the higher seniority leaves, the space will be considered vacant and will be assigned based on established policy.

Any two vendors with permanent spaces may swap those spaces contingent upon written notification signed by both parties and presented in person by both parties to the Board of Directors.

Each space must be cleaned at the end of each market day by the vendor (or their designee) assigned to that space.

6. PARKING & SET-UP

Hours for regular season events (Saturdays and Wednesdays) are from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Vendors with assigned spaces are to arrive between 6:30 and 7:30. A member with an assigned parking space who does not arrive by 7:30 and who has not received approval from the market manager for late arrival will forfeit use of that parking space for that day. The market manager will assign vacant spaces, beginning at 7:30 a.m., on a first come-first served basis to other members.

Setting up for sales is to be completed by 8 a.m. when the market opens to the public. To prevent the disruptions caused by people coming into the market area while members are setting up, the rule that no sales can be made by vendors until 8 a.m. is strictly enforced.

7. SAMPLES

Offering samples to the public of farm produce is encouraged. It is permitted if the vendor complies with these rules:

- (1) Samples must be prepared using sanitary methods, including washing of whole produce before cutting into samples while using clean cutting utensils and cutting surfaces and wearing clean plastic gloves when cutting.
- (2) Convenience items such as toothpicks and napkins must be supplied as needed.
- (3) Samples must be kept in clean and covered containers.
- (4) Appropriate waste disposal containers must be provided.
- (5) Samples must be free, and not associated with any appeal for contributions or donations.
- (6) Meat samples must have been prepared in an inspected kitchen. Cheese samples must be from a USDA certified cheese producer.

8. EVENT RULES

Public support is essential to the success of the Farmers' Market, and each vendor represents the group. Respect for others includes appropriate dress and avoiding controversial messages, such as political statements on merchandise, displays or T-shirts.

Complaints from vendors or the public are to be presented immediately to the Market Manager, who will handle them in accord with policies set by the ACFM board of directors.

Accidental injuries are to be reported immediately to the Market Manager, or in the absence of the Market Manager to the ACFM President, or in the absence of both to any elected officer. Written reports are required, as some must be reported to the ACFM insurance carrier.

Only "service animals" (usually dogs) used by persons with handicaps have the right to be on the market grounds. A person claiming to have a service animal qualifies for these rights upon the

showing of a tag, issued by the Department of Health and Human Services stamped "NORTH CAROLINA SERVICE ANIMAL PERMANENT REGISTRATION" with a registration number - or upon a showing that the animal is being trained or has been trained as a service animal. An animal in training to become a service animal may be taken into a public place for the purpose of training when the animal is accompanied by a person who is training the service animal and the animal wears a collar and leash, harness, or cape that identifies the animal as a service animal in training.

Consumption of alcoholic beverages at market events is strictly prohibited.

There will be no communications or agreements among members to raise, lower or fix prices for items sold at the market.

9. LIABILITY

The Ashe County Farmers' Market is a nonprofit corporation, with limited financial resources. It has purchased a comprehensive general liability policy to protect everyone who participates in market events against accidental injuries. The policy does not cover product liability, and each food vendor is advised to purchase insurance to cover that risk.