Information for Starting a New Farmers Market in Maryland

<u>A farmers' market is defined as</u> - a public space where fresh food from a defined local area are sold by the people who have grown, gathered, raised or caught them.

To provide you with as much information as possible to get your farmers market started, I have included the following information for you. Please read this 14 page packet thoroughly, and make use of the links and other resources available here before calling or emailing with further questions. Should you need further assistance, or are ready to submit your market proposal for listing consideration, please see the contact information on the last page of this packet.

Thank you for your interest in helping the people of Maryland buy and eat local!

Best Regards, Shelby Watson Hampton Agricultural Marketing Specialist Maryland Department of Agriculture

Starting a New Farmers Market:

Most important considerations:

- What is the purpose of the farmers' market? Does it fill a need in the community?
- Is there an established market nearby the new market location? Check <u>www.marylandsbest.net</u> to see what markets are already in the area.
- Is there enough demand in the neighborhood to sustain a(nother) farmers' market?
- Will someone be dedicated to continuing, managing, and growing the market after it has been started?

Further considerations:

Marketing and Operational Plan

- a. What type of legal entity will the market be? A nonprofit, part of a sponsoring agency, none of the above?
 - i. Will the market need a bank account?
- b. Who will sponsor the market?
 - i. Is there a local nonprofit that might be interested?
 - ii. Are there community organizations whose mission would dovetail with hosting a farmers' market?
- c. Who will organize the market?
 - i. The market should have one main point of contact to coordinate with state, county, and local agencies.

- d. Who will recruit the farmers?
 - i. For farmer listings, check the Maryland's Best program site: <u>www.marylandsbest.net</u> which lists farmers and markets so that whoever is recruiting vendors can see what vendors are already selling in the area of the new market and might want to add markets to their schedule.
- e. What is the proposed day of operation? Hours? Season?
 - i. Is this most convenient for those who will be shopping at market?
 - ii. Is there a local senior center or WIC clinic that might be issuing Farmers' Market Nutrition Program checks to be used at market at certain times?
- f. Who will make the rules? Will the market be producer only*?
 - i. How will the rules be enforced?
 - ii. Will there be a vendor agreement?
- g. Will there be a Market Master dealing with issues that arise on market day?
 - i. Who will be responsible for placing traffic cones around the perimeter of the market? Handling trash? Putting up, taking down, and storing signs, banners or tents and tables?
 - ii. Will the Market Master be paid? A volunteer? A vendor? Consider the issues associated with the arrangement chosen.
- h. Who will market the Market?
 - i. How will the market attract customers?
- i. Who will handle publicity?
- j. Who will bear the cost of advertising?
- k. Who will handle the finances for the market? (Insurance costs, bank account, shared costs of advertising, financial management, etc.)
- II. Demographics
 - a. Where will the customers come from?
 - b. Are there office buildings or other employment clusters close to the site? How many, number of workers, distance?
 - c. How many daily customers per vendor are you anticipating?
 - i. Will these customers provide enough sales for vendors to want to participate week after week?
 - d. Are there any significant cultural or ethnic factors that should be considered?
 - e. What type of vendor mix do you plan to have?
 - i. Does this match what your customers want to buy at market?
 - f. Will any of your customers be eligible for federal nutrition program benefits? Will they want to be able to use these benefits at market?**
- III. Proposed Location
 - a. Is the market site visible from well traveled roads and streets?
 - b. Is the site served by public transportation?
 - i. Does public transportation run when the market is open?
 - c. Who owns the property on which the market would be located?
 - i. Is a lease or rental agreement needed?
 - ii. Will there be rent to pay for the site?
 - d. Will the location be available for the foreseeable future?

- e. Is a Farmers' Market an acceptable use for the property under county zoning laws?
- f. Are any permits or licenses required?
 - i. For the market and/or the vendors?
 - ii. See <u>www.blis.state.md.us</u> and the forthcoming MDA document on
 - regulations, as well as contact county governments and health departments.)
- g. If the market is located in a commercial area (Main Street, Shopping Center), will it be welcomed by existing businesses or seen as competition?
 - i. Is parking available?
- h. Are there other Farmers' Markets nearby?
 - i. Within a 5-mile radius?
 - ii. Check <u>www.marylandsbest.net</u> to see what markets already exist.
- i. Are there other outlets for produce and the other products you plan to offer in the area?
 - i. Roadside/farm stands?
 - ii. Grocery stores?
- j. Are there local senior centers or WIC (Women, Infants & Children) clinics that might be issuing Farmers' Market Nutrition Program checks nearby?
 - i. Find a list of Maryland senior centers here: http://www.mdoa.state.md.us/seniorcenterslist.htm
 - ii. Find a list of WIC county points of contact here: http://fha.maryland.gov/wic/wic_apply.cfm
- k. Can a sign(s) be legally set up at the market location? Just for market day or for the entire season?
- 1. Will the market have dedicated free parking for customers?
 - i. If so, how many spaces?
 - ii. Is this enough for your estimated number of customers during the market hours?
- m. Will vendors and/or customers have access to restrooms close by?
- n. Can vehicular traffic in the actual market area be securely controlled during market hours?
- o. Does the site offer weather protection (under cover, shade trees, buildings to cut wind)?

* *Producer Only*: Vendors only sell agricultural or food items that they themselves have grown or produced. Purchased products such as wholesale or re-sale may not be sold. ** See the MDA resource "Federal Nutrition Programs at Maryland Farmers' Markets"

Other sources of information:

County and regional Agricultural Marketing Professionals County Extension educators County departments of economic development, health, and planning and zoning

On-line references for more information about starting a farmers' market:

www.blis.state.md.us (information on permits and licenses) http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3022129 http://www.wallacecenter.org/our-work/current-initiatives/national-farmers-market-network http://www.farmersmarketcoalition.org/resources/ http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY639 www.newfarm.org/features/2006/0206/frmmrkt/king.shtml www.wvu.edu/~agexten/farmman2/manageres.htm

<u>Criteria to be an Approved Maryland Department of Agriculture FMNP</u> <u>Farmers Market & Appear in the Farmers Market Directory</u>

- 1. The purpose of the market must be to provide fruits, vegetables and herbs to the community.
- 2. The market must be operating in accordance with stated rules and all vendors must be in compliance with all relevant federal, state and local regulations.
- 3. Market must have <u>at least</u> three regular vendors, 2 of which are farmers who must be selling edible agricultural products (fruits & vegetables, meats, eggs, dairy, etc) and <u>at least one</u> of which is authorized to accept FMNP/SFMNP/FVC checks.
- 4. The market must have stated hours of operation for a minimum of three hours a day, at least one day a week during July-October.
- 5. The market must be in the second year of operation at an established location. (An exception may be made to this rule by the Maryland Department of Agriculture under special circumstances.)
- 6. Markets where crafts and other items are sold can be eligible to be included in the farmers' market directory as long as <u>the percentage of farmers to non-farmers is at least 20% of the markets total vendors.</u>

PROCESS

- 1. Obtain and read this document "So You Want to Start a Farmers Market" from the Maryland Department of Agriculture.
- Complete the "Maryland Farmer's Market Proposal" document and submit it attention to: Shelby Watson Hampton Marketing Department Maryland Department of Agriculture 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway Annapolis, Maryland 21401 Via the mail, or through email at – Shelby.Watson@Maryland.Gov
- 3. Receive confirmation that the proposal has been evaluated and the market is approved for the first year posting of its location on the Maryland's Best Website as a Farmers Market. Any vendor at the market that has become FMNP/SFMNP/FVC certified, may post the signs and accept the FMNP/SFMNP/FVC checks at this time. The market manager creates their market listing for the Maryland's Best Website.
- 4. **If the market** remains in existence and retains <u>at least 3</u> regular vendors, 2 of which must be selling edible agricultural products (Fruits & vegetables, meats, eggs, dairy, etc), and

<u>at least one</u> of which is authorized to accept FMNP/SFMNP/FVC checks, throughout the <u>duration of its first market season</u>, in the second season it will be eligible to be an **Approved Maryland Farmers' Market** and be in the printed and online versions of the **Maryland Farmers Market Directory**. (An exception may be made to this rule by the Maryland Department of Agriculture under special circumstances.)

5. Every year thereafter that the market remains in existence and continues operating in accordance with the above criteria, the market manager will be asked to update their Maryland Farmers' Market Directory listing with any changes in dates, times, vendors and locations, prior to the Market Season.

Farmers Market Proposal Information

To be completed and turned in to the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

Market Name:

Year Market was Established:

Market Manager:

Market Manager Email:

Market Manager Phone:

Location & Address:

Market Website:

Market Email:

Days & Hours Open:

Farmers/Vendors (Please indicate if the farmer is FMNP/SFMNP/FVC authorized):

Market Details & Description:

Market Mission Statement:

Any other pertinent information:

Example of a Farmers Market Vendor Letter

Sample letter you could use as a template to send to vendors you would like to participate in your market.

Hello,

We're contacting you about a new and exciting opportunity here at Montpelier Farms. Starting this summer, and running through the fall, we will be hosting the Montpelier Farmers Market! We're looking for Vendors of all types. We hope to provide the local community with a fresh array of produce, meats, cheeses, eggs, dairy, wine, fun local crafts and more.

Located directly on Route 301 North between Bowie and Upper Marlboro, we see **55,000 cars pass by our farm daily!** We are also only 20 minutes from both DC and Annapolis, so we hope to get some good crowds. We'll be advertising for the Markets with signage directly on the road front, and through our Facebook, Twitter, and website pages, as well as with some local print publications!

In the summer, The Farmers Market and Farm Play Park will operate during the months of **May**, **June**, **July and August**, and will be held **Every Saturday of each month** starting on May 3rd. Hours of operation will be from 9:00am-1:00pm. There is a fee of \$10.00 per vendor per market.

We want to provide a fresh, casual and fun Farmers Market experience for both our Vendors and our Customers. We hope you'll be interested in joining us as a Vendor for our Farmers Market Season! Please take a moment to look over the attached materials with more information concerning the Markets. Don't hesitate to call or email us with any questions or concerns.

We look forward to working with you!

Best Regards

Example of Farmers Market Vendor Info & Rules

Sample you could use as a template to send to vendors you would like to participate in your market.

I. <u>Eligibility Requirements</u>

- a. The Montpelier Farmers Market is a **local only market**. Meaning that any fruits, vegetables, plants, herbs, flowers, baked goods, prepared beverages, jellies, jams, honey, prepared foods, handicrafts and/or other products sold at the Montpelier Farmers Market must be grown, produced, or made in the state of Maryland.
- b. <u>All Vendors must carry insurance for general liability and property damage, as well as product liability coverage, in an amount not less than \$500,000.</u> The policy shall name Montpelier Farmers Market (Montpelier Farms, LLC) and other entities, if determined to be necessary, as added insured's, and shall maintain all other coverage as required by law. A copy of the Certificate of Insurance must be provided with the Application to the Montpelier Farmers Market. If insurance expires mid market season, the farmer or producer must provide Montpelier Farmers Market with a copy of the renewed insurance policy at the time of the policy expiration. If you are a Meat Processor, all the farmers/growers for whom you process foods that will be sold at Montpelier Farmers Market must carry insurance for general liability and product liability of not less than \$500,000. If you as the Meat Processor are providing insurance coverage for these farmers/growers, a copy of the policy naming those farmers/growers must be provided with your application as proof of insurance coverage.
- c. The Montpelier Market will be set up to take EBT/SNAP, WIC Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Coupons and WIC Fruit and Vegetable Checks (FVC). Please see the attached document "Federal Nutrition Program Explanations" for further information. <u>It is not required for all individual Vendors to accept these programs</u>, however those wishing to do so will want to read the attached information for clarification on how the programs will work.

II. <u>General Rules</u>

- a. **Definition of a Vendor:** A person who has completed an application, agreed to the market guidelines and been accepted for participation in the Montpelier Market.
- b. Permitted Items for Sale: Vendors may only sell items listed in their vendor application. Additional items may be added during the season with prior permission from the Market Manager. A no-cost permit via Maryland Department of Agriculture is required to sell eggs. See <u>http://www.mda.state.md.us/feed-food_safety-</u> grading/food_qual_assur/egg_qual_assur/index.php
- c. Adhering to Market hours. Vendors may not sell before or after the Market hours, <u>without exception</u>. As market hours are 9:00am-1:00pm, vendors are asked not to arrive for set-up before 8:00am. Vendors are expected to begin setting up by 8:00am and be gone from the market site by 2:00pm.
- d. **Clear signage.** Vendors shall post clear, legible, and visible signs with the following information:
 - 1. Farm or business name & location
 - 2. Product names & prices

e. Maintaining Market Eligibility:

 Comply with sanitary rules and regulations – All vendors must comply with rules and regulations of the Prince Georges County Health Department. Vendors shall apply directly to the Prince Georges County Health Department's Division of Licensure and Regulatory Services for any necessary temporary permit.

<u>http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov</u> Vendors shall be responsible for submitting a copy of the appropriate permit to the Board with their market application. Vendors required to have licenses are expected to post them on market days.

2. Regular Participation in Market – The Montpelier Farmers Market will be in operation May 3rd – August, every Saturday of the month and Every Saturday in September-November 1st. The Market hours of operation will be from 9:00am-3:00pm. Vendors will have an hour before and an hour after the posted hours of operation to set-up and take down their booths. Please contact the Market Manager if you are a regular vendor and are not able to attend market on any given day. We will be advertising on-line for the coming Market weekend for the

vendors that will be participating. We want our customers to know which vendors will be at the Market each weekend. **Notice of whether or not you will be participating is required by Tuesday for the coming Saturday's Market.** Vendors are also encouraged to let the Market Manager know about any new products or information regarding their products they would like advertised. Repeated absences without notice may result in suspension or expulsion from the Farmers Market. Vendors may participate on an occasional basis with advance permission from the Market Manager.

- 3. If a Vendor is interested in participating in the September-November Markets (which is during our busiest season, as it is held during our Annual Fall Festival. On an <u>average Saturday in September we can have</u> <u>500-1,000 people visit the farm</u>. On an average <u>Saturday in October we</u> <u>can have 2,000-4,000 people visit the farm</u>.) They **must participate in at** <u>least 3 of the Markets during the Summer Months of June, July, and</u> August. We do want to provide a schedule to our customers in the beginning of the market season regarding which vendors will be participating on which Saturday's. When filling out the attached Vendor Application, please indicate which Saturday's you are planning to attend.
- Vendors must come with appropriate equipment Vendors are responsible for providing tables and weights with which to secure their shade structures and/or shelters.
- 5. Wine Vendors need to send in their signed permits to the State Comptroller's Office 20 days before Market.
- 6. The Market Manager will Assign Spaces upon Arrival of the Vendors on each Market Day. Vendors need to provide their own tables/tents/shade structures. Space inside the main barn is limited and not guaranteed. Vendors are not guaranteed the same exact space for every Market (due to the possibility that the number of vendors selling weekly may fluctuate.) however; we will try to be as consistent as possible.

- 7. Pay weekly Vendor fees. Vendors are responsible for paying the Market Fee of \$10 per vendor per Market at the beginning of Market Operation Hours. Payment shall be made to the Market Manager. Receipts can be provided upon request.
- Clean up Vendors shall be responsible for post-market clean-up of their space. The space should be left as it was found with neither litter nor organic trash left behind.
- Display Appropriate Conduct No radios permitted during market hours. Treat other market Vendors, customers and Market staff with respect.

10. NO SMOKING IN THE FARMERS MARKET AREA.

f. The Manager's decision on these rules and all other matters concerning the Market is final.

g. III. <u>Violations</u>

- a. Any complaints against a Vendor are the responsibility of the Market staff and Board of Directors, and will be investigated.
- b. The Board of Directors and Market Manager reserve the right to cancel the approval of any vendor's application at any time if and when the Board of Directors finds said vendor in violation of any of the aforementioned guidelines and eligibility requirements.

IV. Hold Harmless Clause and Insurance

a. All authorized vendors participating in the Farmers Market shall be individually and severally responsible to Montpelier Farms, LLC for any loss, personal injury, deaths, and/or any other damage that may occur as a result of the vendors' negligence or that of cost, damages and other expenses, including attorney's fees, suffered or incurred by Montpelier Farms, LLC by reason of the vendor's negligence or that of its servants, agents and employees; provided that the vendors shall not be responsible nor required to indemnify the Montpelier Farms, LLC for negligence of the Montpelier Farms, LLC, its servants, agents or employees. No insurance is provided by Montpelier Farms LLC, Farmers Market to participants of the market. All producers shall be required to carry

liability insurance in an amount of no less then \$500,000 and attach a certificate of insurance along with the market application.

V. <u>Modifications</u>

a. The Board of Directors reserves the right to revise the guidelines at any time as deemed appropriate. Vendors will be notified, in writing, of any changes to the guidelines.

<u>Please also see the following PDF documents on the MDA Farmers Market</u> website page

- <u>"Local" Rules</u>
- <u>Processing & Selling Value Added Product</u>

Links that will be helpful to you are:

- Maryland Department of Agriculture Website Farmers Market Page: http://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Pages/farmers_market_dir.aspx
- Maryland's Best <u>http://marylandsbest.net/</u>
- Maryland Farmers Market Association Starting a Market Page: http://www.marylandfma.org/resources/starting-a-market-in-md-101/
- University of Maryland Extension Each county has an Extension Office that can assist you with some questions regarding the county you are interested in opening a farmer's market in. Use this link to get to the UMD Extension Page, and on the bottom left hand side you will see links to the specific counties: https://extension.umd.edu/
- Another resource is your local County Office of Economic Development; most counties have Agricultural Marketing Professionals that can assist you. <u>https://www.google.com/#q=md+county+offices+of+economic+development</u>+

If you are ready to start your Farmers' Market, and/or become a certified Maryland Farmers' Market, please submit your Farmers' Market Proposal Document via email to Shelby Watson at <u>Shelby.Watson@Maryland.Gov</u>. Your information will be evaluated and a site visit may be scheduled.

Thank you for your interest in helping the people of Maryland buy and eat local!

Best Regards,

Shelby Watson Hampton Agricultural Marketing Specialist Maryland Department of Agriculture 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway Annapolis, MD 21401

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