



AFMA FACT SHEET

Updated 27 October 2021

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS FOR MARKET MANAGERS

With ongoing concern about Covid-19 (Coronavirus) and the Government mandated comprehensive measures to address the risks of the pandemic, AFMA would like to draw your attention to some key best practice principles for ensuring health and safety at your farmers' market – even where limits are gradually being relaxed.

Farmers' markets are essential sources of fresh healthy food. Under the current prevailing Federal and State Government advice farmers' markets continue to be classified as **essential food supply** as distinct from **public gatherings or events** and may continue to trade mindful of all public health recommendations.

The government announcements can be updated frequently, but it is important to note the implementation of prevailing public health regulations is being left to the jurisdiction of state governments, their health officers and the police.

The respective state recovery provisions **do not in any way change the essence of the current recommendations** pertaining to farmers' markets. Please check your state health department COVID-19 websites for the latest information.

Best advice suggests farmers' market shopping should still be conducted with due care and market managers must ensure social distancing of 1.5m between shoppers outdoors. Internal space density recommendations vary from 1 person per 2sqm to 4sqm depending on whether the space is indoors or outdoors. In some states masks are required in all indoor spaces and are recommended for outdoors also, with some exceptions (physical exercise and medical exceptions).

AFMA recommends adherence to these numbers for all farmers' markets. Shopper flow should be managed to meet the required safe health procedures at markets. **'Shop and Go'** is also recommended. Buy what you need and then head home. Tap and Go **cashless** purchasing is also recommended. A reduced shopping duration, typically less than 30 minutes outdoors, also serves to reduce risk.

It is important to be aware of all the possible preventative actions that can help minimize the spread of Covid in farmers' markets. The measures suggested are basic and sensible. Remember shopping in the fresh air for farm-grown food is one sensible way of staying healthy!

AFMA wishes to convey to market managers, stallholders and shoppers the need to consider the health of your fellow market-goers.

Transmission via airborne transmission and human contact is the most common route of infection, just as for colds and flu. Anti-bacterial handwash, and hand washing with soap (for 20 seconds or more) is effective and needs to be practised more regularly than usual, whether you are a stallholder or shopper. Wash hands before heading to the market, sanitize at stalls, and wash hands at home.

The following recommended actions have been updated in accordance with continuously revised government public health advice.

RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONARY ACTIONS

- Markets are required to provide handwashing facilities. In addition, it is recommended that anti-bacterial handwash be supplied at focal locations in the market – the entry points, all stalls, information desk etc. Market managers should request **every** stallholder provide hand sanitizer on their stall.
- **Masks are to be worn indoors and are advocated in most instances outdoors** by stallholders and shoppers. Protective masks should be offered to anyone not wearing a mask. Masks also to be on hand at the first aid station for any market participant observed to have viral symptoms (coughing etc)
- Covid-Safe **QR registration** systems are recommended for use at all markets and stallholders and shoppers are requested to register on arrival on the market site.
- Stallholders exhibiting symptoms prior any market day should not attend the market until the symptoms dissipate and the affected person follows self-isolation or medical advice.
- Covid-19 symptoms include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath. Covid-19 most often begins with a temperature of 37.3 degrees centigrade (99 F) or more and is contagious from the first sign of illness.
- If you are concerned about your health or that of other stallholders or shoppers please contact the market manager, your GP or the Government's **24-hour *healthdirect* advice line 1800 022 222.**
- If you have any reason to believe that a stallholder or a visitor to the site may be exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, or may have returned from overseas countries, please immediately ask that person to withdraw to a location away from interaction with others, and immediately inform the market manager who may request that person leave the market site.
- Updates: www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert or contact the respective state health authorities.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

The government has announced and confirmed that food markets ie farmers' markets **are considered essential services**, as are public transport, supermarkets, medical facilities etc and are permitted to trade mindful of all public safety provisions.

VACCINATION

Australia is reaching impressive levels of double vaccination. The target is 80% and that's not far off. Each state has different requirements and may request that vaccination ID be managed in different settings. Market managers should check their state system so they can advise stallholders and shoppers. It is expected these platforms will integrate with the QR Code system.

Market managers can decide whether they require evidence of double vaccination according to prevailing state requirements. Essential food services (ie food only markets) **DO NOT** require double-vax check in which is in lie with supermarkets. Markets that are selling goods other than food are not classified 'Critical retail' and fall under 'Retail' when vaccination validation can be requested by operators.

MARKET NUMBERS

Governments review social distancing and site maximum attendances. It is to be noted that these requirements vary from state to state and week-to-week depending on circumstances and respective public health proclamations. However, it is recommended that the following procedures be adopted.

1 One person to do the household shop, and for neighbours or friends in need.

2 Markets to **operate QR code entry**, queued access and manage total site numbers (stallholders and shoppers)

Some markets may need to move stallholders from indoor locations outside and this is recommended where sites offer such flexibility.

Markets should be mindful of social distancing at all times. **Queue management** is highly recommended.

Managers are requested to introduce **site access checks** to manage total shopper, stallholder and staff within the market perimeter, there are a couple of suggested methods.

- Clicker Count

Count numbers onto/ off site and monitor access points to control total number within the recommended limits. Ensure any queued shoppers maintain the safe 1.5m distance.

- Timed Shopping

Another option may deploy colour-coded timed wristbands, allowing maximum 30 minutes site access for shopping. This can assist spread any shopper peaks. These would need to be distributed from monitored entry/ exit points.

SITE PLAN

Market managers are requested to review their site plan, and if necessary **allow more space** between stalls to facilitate social distancing. Install social distancing markers across the market site and at stalls.

SIGNAGE

Install site signage to inform / encourage shoppers of the need to adopt new procedures for Covid Safe trading.

FOOD SAMPLING / TASTINGS

All stallholders are requested to **cease tastings and open food sampling**.

PRODUCE SELECTION

Shoppers should not be permitted to touch produce or self-select. Remove all baskets, bowls for self-select unwrapped produce shopping. Install signage to explain new shopping procedures. **Pre-bagged produce** is recommended, ideally in paper bags or cartons. This will help speed up the customer shopping intervals.

SHOP n GO/ TAP n GO

Speedy cashless food shopping is encouraged!

SNEEZE GUARDS

Market managers are requested to oversee the compliant installation of sneeze guards at all stalls requiring this protection.

COFFEE CUPS

Market managers are to request that all beverage vendors provide disposable paper (recyclable) cups to mitigate risks. Market coffee stalls supplying 'market day mugs' and onsite wash facilities should cease this practice.

ATM & CASH PAYMENTS

Please encourage use of **tap-and-go payments** wherever possible. If mobile ATMs are on site, please ensure sanitary cleaning undertaken/ wipes available. Cash transactions at stalls can be refined so that customers deposit cash into a cash box with change offered by the stallholder from a separate till. Single stallholder suggested to manage cash.

STALL TRESTLES

Encourage stallholders to replace fabric trestle cloths (hessian etc) with plastic cloths or **surfaces that can be sanitised**.

COMMUNITY SEATING

Market managers are recommended to **remove all community-use tables** and chairs for the time being. This is to assist recommended social distancing.

SAFE DISTANCE

Shoppers are requested to keep a **safe distance (1.5m) when queuing** to purchase food. Stalls should be set up according to the same distancing provisions.

WASTE

Waste management routinely requires the responsible disposal of all food and packaging waste. Market managers should ensure these practices are followed and that waste is not left un-binned on the market site.

TOILETS + CLEANING

Please request that host venues or market staff undertake rigorous cleaning of on-site toilets and any other shared facilities (storage areas etc)

VOLUNTEERS

Many markets have teams of loyal volunteers for site management. Please ensure they are briefed on all new measures at your market. Please supply them with disposable gloves and masks and encourage vaccination.

NON-FOOD STALLS

The government provisions to allow the continued trading of farmers' markets is based solely on the **essential status of food provision**. If your market has stalls selling non-food items these stallholders should be asked to temporarily stop trading at the market to ensure its essential or 'critical retail' status is maintained. Non-compliance risks closure of the market.

Stalls selling food plants, food seeds and food propagation materials, or small livestock (eg hens) are currently permitted.

ALTERNATIVE FOOD DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

Some farmers' markets have developed **local produce box schemes/ home delivery** or shop online/ collect schemes or mini-market pop-ups collaborating with local farmers to provide fresh food, especially to needy members of their community. More information will be provided on these initiatives when available via the AFMA Facebook page.

UPDATES

The circumstances and public health guidance surrounding safe health practice in relation to Covid-19 are changing frequently. **AFMA is monitoring available public information and will post significant developments of the AFMA Facebook page** in the first instance. Please like and check posts regularly.

We ask all market managers, stallholders and shoppers to act responsibly to minimise risks in these challenging times. We need to support our farmers and artisan food producers many of whose livelihoods depend on their weekly trading at farmers' markets.

Sell and shop local, sell and shop seasonal and healthy food, sell and shop in the fresh air and – shop with you own trolley!

www.facebook.com/farmersmarketsaustralia

AUSTRALIAN FARMERS' MARKETS ASSOCIATION

October 2021

www.farmersmarkets.org.au