



## AFMA FACT SHEET

Updated 7 January 2022

### COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS FOR MARKET MANAGEMENT

#### Keep your market as safe as possible!

With continual concern about Covid-19 and the confusion surrounding the Federal and State Government measures intended to address the risks of the pandemic, AFMA would like to draw and reinforce your attention to some **key best practice principles** for ensuring health and safety at your farmers' market – especially now that prior public health provisions and limits are at this point being relaxed.

Farmers' markets are deemed by governments as essential services and source of fresh healthy food. Under 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 compliant with all public health recommendations.

Government announcements are being updated frequently, but it is important to note the implementation of public health regulations is the jurisdiction of state governments, their health officers and the police.

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

**To minimise risk AFMA recommends that all market managers observe the original public health safety requirements: MASKS ON. SOCIAL DISTANCING. QR CODE USE. VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SHOPPERS & STALLHOLDERS, SANITISER STATIONS. FOOD SHOP FOCUSED MARKET VISIT.**

AFMA recommends the following:

- Farmers' market shopping should still be conducted with all due care and market managers should ensure social distancing of 1.5m between shoppers outdoors.
- Internal space density recommendations continue to vary depending on whether the space is indoors or outdoors. In some states masks are required in all indoor spaces and are recommended for outdoors unless there is a valid medical exemption.

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 above measures are basic and sensible. Remember shopping in the fresh air for farm-grown food is one very 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.

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 revised government public health advice. It is recommended you check your state's requirements as these may differ.

#### RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONARY ACTIONS

- Markets are routinely 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 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.
- Markets can request optional evidence of stallholder and shopper vaccination status. If requesting proof of vaccinations, procedures need to be instituted to manage this. Monitored queues and number caps are recommended.

- Stallholders exhibiting symptoms prior any market day should not attend the market until the symptoms dissipate and the affected person follows self-isolation, RAT testing 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 (or prior).
- 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, 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](http://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 has achieved an impressive level of double vaccination. 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.

Market managers can decide whether they require evidence of double vaccination according to state requirements. Essential food services (ie food only markets) DO NOT currently require double-vax check-in, which is in line with supermarkets. Markets that are selling goods other than food are not classified 'Critical retail' and fall under 'Retail' and retail / shop public health provisions.

#### MARKET NUMBERS

Governments review social distancing and site maximum attendances, however these requirements may vary from state to state 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 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.

#### POSITIVE CASE REPORTING

If market management is advised of positive cases by health authorities it is requested they communicate this information to the market community (stallholders and shoppers) via email and/or social media to help prevent further spread.

#### SITE PLAN

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

#### COFFEE CUPS

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

#### SAFE DISTANCE

Shoppers are 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

Host venues or market staff are to 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 and 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 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](https://www.facebook.com/farmersmarketsaustralia)**

**AUSTRALIAN FARMERS' MARKETS ASSOCIATION**

January 2022

**[www.farmersmarkets.org.au](http://www.farmersmarkets.org.au)**