

# VENDORS' HANDBOOK OUTDOOR FARMERS' MARKET

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COVENT GARDEN MARKET CORPORATION  
2025 MARKET SEASON

REVISED VERSION: OCTOBER 2024



# OUTDOOR FARMERS' MARKET

## VENDOR HANDBOOK

### RULES AND REGULATIONS - 2025

#### 1. Farmers' Market Definition

The Covent Garden Farmers' Market is a true Farmers' Market, as determined by the definition outlined in the Ontario Food Premises Regulation (O. Reg. 493/17). In order to maintain the exemptions provided by this classification, our Market abides by certain rules.

A Food Premises is responsible for following food safety requirements to reduce the risk of foodborne illness, as outlined in the Ontario Food Premises Regulation (O. Reg. 493/17). However, "Farmers' Markets Food Vendors" who meet the definition in the Ontario Food Premises Regulation (O. Reg. 493/17) are exempt from the regulation, but must still meet any requirements outlined in the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

The definition of a "Farmers' Market Food Vendor" is as follows:

"Farmers' Market Food Vendor" means the operator of a stall or other food premise that is located at a central location at which a group of persons who operate stalls or other food premises meets to sell or offer for sale to consumers products that include, without being restricted to, farm products, baked goods and preserved foods, and at which the majority of the persons operating the stalls or other food premises are producers of farm products who are primarily selling or offering for sale their own products. (O. Reg. 493/17)

The definition of a "Farm Product" is as follows:

"Farm Products" means products that are grown, raised or produced on a farm and intended for use as food and include, without being restricted to, fruits and vegetables, mushrooms, meat and meat products, dairy products, honey products, maple products, fish, grains and seeds and grain and seed products. (O. Reg. 493/17)

Therefore, colloquially speaking, if a Farmers' Market has at least 51% of its vendors as farmers, its non-farmer producers of food items are exempt from the Ontario Food Premises Regulation (O. Reg. 493/17), but must still comply with the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

#### 2. Location

The Covent Garden Outdoor Farmers' Market is located at 130 King Street, London, Ontario, on the Market Rotary Square at the corner of King and Talbot Street.

#### 3. Weather

It is at the **discretion of the Farmers' Market Manager to close the market early, cancel the market, take down canopies or not set them up at all due to severe weather**, including but not limited to high winds, driving rain, extreme amounts of snow.

#### 4. Hours

In the year 2025, the Covent Garden Market will be open as follows.

Winter Season:

- Saturdays, February 1<sup>st</sup> through to April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The Farmers' Market will be located Indoors, upstairs on the Mezzanine, and will be open on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Summer Season:

- Saturdays, April 19<sup>th</sup> through to October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The Farmers' Market will be located Outdoors on the Market Rotary Square and will be open on Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Please note: should any construction take place, the Farmers' Market will be relocated for the time being to Market Lane.

Extended Season:

- Saturdays, November 1<sup>st</sup> through to December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The Farmers' Market will be located Outdoors on the Market Rotary Square, and will be open on Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM (December 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM)

Vendors must arrive in time to ensure that their stall is open for business promptly at opening hours and must **remain open until 1:00 PM Saturdays**.

#### 5. Application and Selection Process

- We strive to be a local market. We are 100% producer based and all your product must be produced by the applicant; only applicants offering goods for sale **which they have produced themselves** will be considered. As a local market we do not accept vendors further than 250km away. We believe this encompasses important regions of Ontario and allows us to have a variety of fruits, vegetables, and artisanal product.
- Absolutely no resellers or peddlers will be allowed in the Market. However, a producer that has been a vendor at the Market since before 2012 may sell additional produce grown by a relative, a neighbour farmer, and/or a member of an approved association (such as the London Area Organic Farmers' Association,) if it is within a 150km radius of The Covent Garden Market. The additional produce will be **limited to 25% and maximum four different items** of the vendor's product line. **This additional produce must be labeled with signs that state who and where the product is from.**
- Absolutely no terminal purchases will be allowed, including the Elmira Produce Auction. Market Management will visit farms and businesses of vendors when required.
- Signs that claim an unregulated method of production are **not allowed**; this includes spray-free, pesticide-free, herbicide-free, chemical-free. Regulated terms include Biodynamic, Certified Naturally Grown, Certified Organic, Local Food Plus and MyPick.
- All vendors that sell a prepared food (baking, preserves, etc.) must provide a current Safe Food Handler Certificate to have their application considered.
- Up to 3 full-time indoor vendors can be accepted each weekend as long as they fall under the required expectations of the Farmers Market (Grow it, Raise It, Bake it, Make it)
- All menu items must be approved by the Farmers Market Manager.
- If there is a violation of these rules the vendor that is in violation may be required to leave the market and may not be permitted to return.

All vendors must have an application form on file with the Farmers' Market Manager to be considered for space rental. Deadlines for applications are as follows:

**Jan 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025:** Applications for the Indoor Winter 2025 Season must be at the Covent Garden Market

**Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025:** Applications for the Outdoor Summer 2024 Season must be at the Covent Garden Market

A limited number of Market tables, benches, canopies are available for seasonal stall rentals.

All products being sold in the Market must comply with applicable Provincial and Federal regulations regarding labeling, measures, safety, etc. **Compliance with these regulations is the responsibility of the individual vendor.**

- Producers shall sell at the Market only high-quality, wholesome products.
- Live animals cannot be sold at the market.
- Poultry may not be sold at market, unless part of the artisanal chicken program.
- Eggs may only be sold at market if they are graded and kept in a cooler.
- \*Foraged wild mushrooms are allowed at this time, with producer adhering to attached guidelines.

In the year 2025, the Farmers' Market Manager or their designate shall allocate vendor spaces that include an appropriate product mix, and will be at the discretion of the Farmers' Market Manager. Farmers' Market Management reserves the right to reassign stall locations based on the expected increase in vendors in the year 2025, to achieve the most appropriate vendor mix and vendor locations.

It is up to the Farmers' Market Manager's discretion which applications will be accepted and which applications will be denied.

## 6. Fee Schedule

Any fees collected by the Market are for the purpose of promoting and operating the Farmers' Market. Fees are accepted as cash, cheque, or e-transfer. E-transfers can be made to [adominski@coventmarket.com](mailto:adominski@coventmarket.com)

All cheques are to be made payable to Covent Garden Market Corporation. N.S.F. cheques will be charged an administration fee of **\$50.00**.

Parking for Farmers' Market vendors will be included in the stall rental fee and is available below the public square. For vehicles exceeding 7 ft. in height, an alternative parking arrangement will be made.

The following fees apply to the **Winter Indoor Season**, operating from February 1<sup>st</sup> through until April 12<sup>th</sup> and apply to a 10ft x 10ft stall space: 1 stall = 10ft x 10ft canopy + 1 8ft picnic table + 1-2 benches. If you need additional tables, the fee is \$5.00 per table upon request, only if they are available.

- **Saturday \$21.75/day + HST (\$3.25) = \$25.00.** Payment due no later than Thursdays at 10am.
- **Note: No Seasonal Discount available.**

The following fees apply to the **Summer Season**, operating from Easter Weekend through October, and apply to a 10ft x 10ft stall space: **1 Canopy, 1 8ft picnic table and 1-2 benches.**

- **One Stall Space: \$39.15/day + HST (\$5.85) = \$45.00.**  
Payment due no later than Thursdays at 10am.
- **Two Stall Spaces: \$59.16 / day + HST (\$8.84) = \$68.00.**  
Payment due no later than Thursdays at 10am.
- **Seasonal Saturdays (28 Saturdays; April 19<sup>th</sup> to October 25<sup>th</sup>)**
  - **\$622.48 + HST (\$93.02) = \$715.50.** Full season members may make their payment in three postdated cheques (April 19th, June 14th, September 6th) to be provided at time of application acceptance or by e-transfer on or (April 19th, June 14th, September 6th). Payable in three installments of \$238.50. This is a discounted rate (you save \$634.50), so there is no further reduction to stall fees that will be considered.
  - **Two Stall Spaces: \$940.64 + HST (\$140.56) = \$1081.20.** Full season members may make their payment in three postdated cheques (April 19th, June 14th, September 6th) to be provided at time of application acceptance or by e-transfer on or (April 19th, June 14th, September 6th). Payable in three installments of \$360.40. This is a discounted rate (you save \$958.80), so there is no further reduction to stall fees that will be considered.

\*If you choose to pay by the week, the seasonal rate does not apply.

\*If you need additional tables and/or canopies there is an additional fee of \$5.00 per table/canopy upon request, only if they are available.

The following fees apply to the **Extended Season**, operating from November through December, and apply to a 10ft x 10ft stall space: **1 Canopy, 1 8ft picnic table and 1-2 benches.** If you need additional tables and/or canopies there is an additional fee of \$5.00 per table upon request, only if they are available.

- **Saturday \$26.10/day + HST (\$3.90) = \$30.00.**
- **No Seasonal Discount available.**

These fees are for stall rentals during the 2024 Farmers' Market season, and there is to be no carry over to fees incurred for programs with the Covent Garden Market Corporation. All payments are non-refundable.

## 7. Vendor Requirements

All vendors must comply with the following regulations to operate at the Covent Garden Farmers' Market. Non-compliance with these regulations may result in the vendor being required to leave the market and they may not be permitted to return.

- A vendor must be familiar with the Rules and Regulations of the Covent Garden Farmers' Market and must comply fully with them.

- Vendors will post their names, farm location, and products prominently in their stall. Vendors are encouraged to personalize their stalls with stories and pictures, and to share their farming background with customers.
- Vendors agree to make their stall and products as attractive and pleasing to the eye as they can. Market Management reserves the right to request a vendor's display be changed.
- Vendors must agree to bring an adequate supply of their primary product that will allow them to operate for the full duration of market.
- Vendors will adhere to the highest standards of quality, service, and business.
- Vendor set up **must be completed by 8AM Saturdays.**
- **No vehicles are allowed on the market square after 7:30am.**
- Subletting and sharing of stalls is not permitted.
- Vendors shall honour all Covent Garden Outdoor Farmers' Market promotions, e.g. basket of the season, cooking demonstrations and sampling programs.
- Vendors agree not to practice distress pricing.
- Vendors shall maintain their stalls in a neat, clean, and orderly fashion. Vendors must keep their own refuse in a suitable container at their stall and remove the refuse when they leave. General garbage containers are for the use of customers only. **Please sweep your stand before leaving.**
- Smoking is not permitted in the building nor at any vendor's stall, or anywhere on the market square.
- All vendors must comply with the requirements set by Canadian Food Inspection Agency and local Health Units (labeling produce by type, quantity and price, cooling, sanitation, etc.)
- Vendors are responsible to obtain all necessary licenses, permits, inspections and certificates for the sale of their product.
- Compliance with both Provincial and Federal Sales Tax Regulations is the responsibility of the individual vendor.
- Any producer being represented as organic must be "certified organic" or "in transition". The certification sign should be prominently displayed.
- Vendors may not distribute, display, or verbally present materials that are political, religious, and/or socially controversial in nature.
- Dogs are allowed in the **Outdoor** farmers' market area during farmers' market hours. Please see full dog policy.
- Vendors must not make disparaging comments about the market to customers.
- Vendors must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Vendors who prepare food at Market must have access to handwashing facilities. Vendors are required to bring their own handwashing station.

## 8. Covent Garden Market Dog Policy

Dogs are now permitted within the **Outdoor** Farmers' Market space at the Covent Garden Market, if they are leashed and under your control, well behaved, picked-up after and kept out of the flow of traffic when not actively moving through the Market.

Dogs and owners are expected to abide by the following provisions to maintain the welcome of furry friends. Owners are socially, legally, and financially responsible and liable for their pet's behavior always. These rules pertain to both vendors and customers. Vendors have the added responsibility of ensuring overall Market safety and customer comfort when bringing their pets to Market.

- Dogs must be on a short leash.
  - Please ensure that leashes do not get tangled in tablecloths, displays, or tent legs, and do not become a tripping hazard.

- Pets must be always under control and by the owner's side.
  - Keep pets away from produce, plants, and other food products, and out of stall areas.
  - One adult should control no more than one dog, unless both dogs are small enough to be carried by that adult at the same time.
- Not all dogs are appropriate for the market setting. Large crowds, accessible food, small children, and other dogs can challenge your dog's attention and behavior.
  - If your dog is not comfortable in these conditions, has ANY reactive tendencies, or is prone to barking, please leave them at home.
  - The market is not an appropriate place to train your dog to handle these conditions.
- Everyone has a right to feel safe and comfortable.
  - Please keep your dog from approaching strangers. Not all customers or vendors are comfortable around dogs.
- Allow plenty of space to accommodate those with visual, auditory or mobility impairments who may be navigating the Market with a walker, wheelchair or other assistance, and be considerate of children who could be smaller than your dog or easily injured, and elderly patrons who could easily trip over a dog or their leash.
- You are responsible for your dog's business.
  - Please make sure your dog does their business before entering the market area.
  - If your dog's business compromises the product or equipment of a vendor, you are responsible for making financial reparations as the vendor deems appropriate.

If your dog is easily frightened, barks excessively, jumps on people or is stressed by noise, traffic, strangers, children, or other animals, we recommend that you bring your friend to visit the market square at another, quieter time of the day.

Covent Garden Market staff will ask your dog to leave if they are not abiding by these rules. Multiple violations throughout the season will result in the return of a no-dog policy. Service dogs are always allowed.

## 9. Cancellation Policy

Farmers' markets are a unique way of shopping for many people. It is a chance for customers to meet the producers behind the products and feel good about where their purchases are coming from. We strive to create an excellent customer experience so that we stand out against traditional grocery outlets.

Our market is only open 1 day a week, limiting customers' chances to access our product and reducing the convenience factor that is found at conventional grocery stores. To compensate for this, we aim to ensure good communication via newsletters and social media about which products will be available each week so shoppers can plan their trip accordingly.

Lack of consistency and reliability of these resources' damages customer relationships and ultimately the market customer base.

We understand that being small independent business owners, things come up that are out of your control, and many do not have the staff to assist you. However, we do ask that you respect our cancellation policy as follows for the overall health of the market.

**If we receive a notice of cancellation less than 24 hours in advance more than 3 times a season, you will be removed from our regular weekly vendor list. Serious emergencies will be exempt from this policy.**

## 10. Harvest Bucks, Gift Certificates, Downtown Dollars, Construction Dollars

Our market accepts a variety of certificates that have monetary value and can be used by customers to purchase items at the Farmers' Market. Vendors must accept these certificates if they are applicable to them, for redemption from the Market Manager. These certificates are not to be re-used by vendors.

### 1. Harvest Bucks

Harvest Bucks are the main certificate we see at our market. They involve the distribution of vegetable and fruit vouchers redeemable at various London Farmers' Markets. Harvest Bucks vouchers are valued at \$5 each and expire at the end of each calendar year. They are intended to be distributed as part of a community program that includes food and healthy eating.

The primary goals of the Harvest Bucks program are to:

- Increase access to and consumption of vegetables and fruit
- Increase the comprehensiveness of local community programming through reducing barriers to participants' vegetable and fruit access
- Increase awareness, knowledge, and comfort/familiarity with local farmers' markets

Who can accept Harvest Bucks?

Harvest Bucks can only be applied to the sale of fresh fruits, vegetables and eggs, **therefore only a vendor that sells fresh fruit, vegetables or eggs is included in this program.**

How are Harvest Bucks redeemed?

All vendors that sell fresh fruit and vegetables are part of the program and must accept the Harvest Bucks. No change is given for the bucks, so if a customer spends \$8 on fruit and vegetables and gives you \$10 in Harvest Bucks, they do not get any cash change. Please encourage the customer to get the full value from the bucks. Give the redeemed Harvest Bucks to the market manager at the end of the market day, and the market manager will give you cash for the bucks. Note: Harvest Bucks do expire each year. Please check the date before redeeming Harvest Bucks.

This is an important program for our market. Over \$20,000 of Harvest Bucks are redeemed each year at our market – inside and out.

For more info: [www.healthunit.com/harvest-bucks](http://www.healthunit.com/harvest-bucks)

### 2. Downtown Dollars

To be a part of the Downtown Dollar Program, Vendors and/or businesses must sign up for the Downtown Dollars program. Afterwards, customers will be notified that their Downtown Dollars can be used at your business.

For more info: <https://www.downtownlondon.ca/explore-downtown/downtown-dollar-gift-cards/>

### 3. Covent Garden Market Gift Certificates and Construction Dollars

These certificates can be used by customers to purchase any product from any vendor at the market, and vendors must accept these certificates. Covent Garden Market Gift Certificates do not expire, but Construction Dollars do expire. Please check the date before redeeming.



How to redeem?

Change **IS** given for Covent Garden Market Gift Certificates, so if a customer spends \$12 and gives you \$20 in certificates, they get \$8 in change. Please encourage the customer to get the full value from the certificates before giving change.

Change **IS NOT** given for Construction Dollars, so if a customer spends \$5 and gives you \$6 in certificates, they do not get any change. Please encourage the customer to get the full value from the certificates.

## **11. Foraged Mushrooms – Policy and Guide for Vendors**

We recognize that having foraged mushrooms at our farmers' market is a very positive thing. In general, commonly picked and sold wild mushrooms in Canada are very safe. However, with the increasing popularity of foraged mushrooms being sold at our farmers' market, it is necessary to have guidelines in place to ensure minimum risk to the customer.

All vendors that are selling foraged mushrooms must:

- Show proof of liability insurance to market management.
- List the types of mushrooms that will be sold on market application.
- Provide full information and a picture of the mushroom from a trusted source, for the customer.
- Post a sign that advises the customer that consumption of these wild mushrooms is at their own risk.
- Consumers should be told to never store mushrooms in plastic: Fresh mushrooms can contain spores of Clostridium botulinum bacteria. In the absence of oxygen, as when packaged with a hermetic seal or in a non-oxygen permeable film, Clostridium botulinum can grow and produce toxin before visible signs of spoilage appear. Clostridium botulinum is the bacterium responsible for botulism, a life-threatening illness in humans.
- Consumers should be told they should always thoroughly wash and cook wild mushrooms prior to eating.

## **12. Acknowledgments**

These are the rules and regulations established for the Covent Garden Farmers' Market in 2025. There may need to be modifications of these rules and regulations at any time.

The Farmers' Market Manager shall deal with any items of business not specifically covered by these rules, at their discretion.



 A promotional graphic for the Outdoor Farmers' Market. The background is a collage of fresh produce like tomatoes, lettuce, and corn. The text is centered in a white box:
 

# OUTDOOR FARMERS' MARKET

Every Saturday  
8am to 1pm

At the Covent Garden Market  
outside on the Rotary Square

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Buy your fresh, local food directly  
from your growers and producers  
to taste the Market experience!

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Live Music



