

Market Rules

The Market Rules are laid down by Thames Valley Farmers' Market Co-operative Ltd (referred to as TVFMC) from time to time and all members, including associate members of TVFMC are bound by them. Reference in these rules to committee members and/or directors means the people elected by TVFMC to run the organisation on their behalf. The rules are subject to change as agreed by the members at general meetings.

AIMS OF TVFMC FARMERS' MARKETS

- To enable farmers and other local producers of food to sell their produce direct to the public.
- As far as possible, to encourage food production that is best for human and environmental health and animal welfare, i.e. without the use of unnecessary additives, pesticides, or artificial fertilisers and, wherever possible, the avoidance of GM components in animal feed or ingredients of processed products.
- To give consumers the opportunity to buy high quality, locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables and locally reared meat as well as processed foods.
- To inform the public on the wider environmental issues and reasons to support the local economy.

A farmers' market is a careful balance of four categories within the confines of the market place:

1. Staple produce to include meat – beef, lamb, pork, poultry, vegetables, bread and dairy products;
2. Secondary lines – jams and preserves, pies and baked goods, prepared foods, juices, wine and beer.
3. Seasonal products: soft and hard fruit, plants;
4. Organic and conventional producers.

When looking at the mix of producers it is TVFMC's policy to provide a balance of product and choice for consumers. Competition is healthy and essential to a vibrant market. The main criterion is to ensure that quality produce most local to the market is wherever possible given preference (see the producer policy in Rule 2 and Duplication of Produce policy in Rule 8 of the Market Rules below).

RULES

Guiding Principles

1. The markets operated by TVFMC are only for producers of their own produce who are actively involved in the production process of the goods for sale. All produce must be grown, reared, caught, brewed, pickled, baked, smoked or processed by the producer.
2. Each market is only for local producers, defined as those producing within a 30 miles radius of that market. However, 'guest producers' (anyone who is outside the 30 mile radius) may be allowed to attend if there is no suitable local producer. If there is competition for space, preference will normally be given to local rather than guest producers, although factors such as reliability and past support for the market may also be taken into account.

3. Stalls must be staffed by the producer, family member or someone who is directly involved in growing, raising or producing the goods on sale, or those with a good working knowledge of the production process.
4. The markets are managed by managers appointed by TVFMC who report directly to the management of TVFMC and effectively act as the representative of the management at the markets. The market manager is the first point of contact for producers for all issues concerning the market.

Speciality Traders (local producers with non-local produce)

5. Speciality Traders *may* be allowed to join TVFMC if they meet the following criteria:
 - They are actively involved in the production process of the goods they wish to sell.
 - They sell only their own products.
 - Their production operation is local to TVFMC markets (i.e. based within 30 miles of any market they wish to trade at).
 - Their products are principally made from ingredients that cannot be sourced locally (for example, bananas, coffee or olives) and for this reason they are not required to use a minimum of 25% locally produced ingredients.
 - They use local ingredients where available.
 - They meet all other requirements that apply to TVFMC members (for example, insurance, accreditation, food hygiene, etc.).

The committee will only approve applications from producers who would qualify as a Speciality Trader if they:

- Fit the ethos of TVFMC
- Will add value, and be an asset to our markets.
- Will not encroach on current members' produce.

Speciality Traders' stalls will be clearly marked so that customers understand that they are local producers using non-local ingredients and why they have been chosen to join TVFMC.

Seasonal producers

6. Seasonal producers must advise the market manager of their attendance/return to market two months prior to their attendance.

Probation

7. Producers are subject to a three-month probationary trial when first attending a market.

Duplication of Produce

8. Duplication of Produce

Producers will be given two months' notice by the market manager if a new producer selling a similar line of produce is to attend a market. If a producer continually runs out of produce, the market manager will advise the producer if an additional supplier is to be sourced.

Producers must give a minimum of one month's notice to the market manager and membership secretary if they plan to bring on any new products or wish to bring additional lines. A significant increase in product range may require that an additional accreditation visit be arranged. The member will be charged the current accreditation fee for such visits.

Stall Fees

9. The stall fee is set on a standard frontage of 12' or 3.6m. An increase of stall frontage will incur extra cost to the producer (please refer to market stall requirements). All stall fees are to be paid promptly on request to the market manager and one-month in advance where required. The manager must issue the producer with a TVFMC receipt. Stall fees are set yearly by the members of TVFMC.

Stall sharing

10. Stall sharing is permitted at TVFMC managed markets at the discretion of the committee and market manager. Producers must complete an application form and submit this to the committee for approval. Only on the committee's written acceptance can stall sharing take place in line with the stall sharing rules.

Producer Conduct

11. The conduct of TVFMC members should be of the highest standard at all times, whether attending a TVFMC managed market or one that is independently run. At TVFMC managed markets producers and/or their staff are required:
 - a) To turn up on time;
 - b) To be well presented and wear clean clothing;
 - c) To be polite and courteous to other producers, the market manager, customers and the general public;
 - d) To be in attendance on their stall throughout the duration of the market;
 - e) To stay at the market during the published opening times, and in the event of selling out of produce early must not attempt to dismantle their stall, remove banners or otherwise show signs of packing up until the end of the market;
 - f) To remove vans and cars from the market area and park them in the identified parking area for the market, unless they have the express permission of the market manager to leave vehicles on site;
 - g) Not to tout or hustle for trade – this is not permitted at any market;
 - h) To adhere to the no-smoking policy: it is prohibited to smoke at any stall;
 - i) To display at all times their TVFMC Accreditation certificate, and any other relevant certificates they may hold. Insurance details and current Basic Food Hygiene Certificates must also be available for verification at all times. (see Rule 12 below).
[NB: Insurance is also separately mentioned in Rule 15 below.]

Market Managers will issue verbal warnings to any producer in breach of these rules. Further breaches may preclude attendance at TVFMC managed markets.

Secondary producers

12. No bought-in produce or otherwise acquired products may be resold without further processing. Processed goods must contain at least 25% of local ingredients. This also applies to craft stalls. Labour cannot be counted as the local content contribution. All secondary meat producer members of TVFMC must source 100% of their meat from primary producers local to their establishment. Marmalade can only be sold as long as it is part of a range of jams and preserves, which meets the local content rule. These percentages will be reviewed on an annual basis and amended by the members of TVFMV.

TVFMC will ask secondary producers to produce supplier invoices at any time to ensure continued compliance with TVFMC's minimum percentage rule for secondary producers.

Identification of Producer

13. Producers must also display a banner or large sign identifying their business name, own name if different and telephone number. Goods must be clearly priced and information must be available to customers about the producer's business and production methods. The information must also include the trading address of the business.

Applying for a stall

14. Any member wish to trade at a market they do not already attend should inform the relevant market manager and the TVFM office by email or in writing. The office will be responsible for maintaining a register for each market of members who have expressed an interest in trading there. Allocation of stalls will be informed by the following guidelines which are given in order of importance:
 - The need to ensure that we maximise the appeal of each market to customers in that area by providing the optimal mix of produce.
 - Local producers will be given priority over guest producers.
 - Where two local producers offer the same type of product, preference will normally be given to whoever has been on the register longest.

Compliance with Legal and Statutory Regulations

15. All producers must comply with current Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Health & Safety requirements and agree to comply with any:
 - Recommendations made by Environmental Health officers as to food processing, storage, handling and display;
 - Recommendations made by Trading Standards with regard to weights and measures, packaging and labelling. TVFM encourages Producers to display where goods are sourced to meet the trading standards principle that all produce on sale must be traceable.

Each member must produce and regularly review an individual risk assessment.

Where appropriate, producers of alcohol must possess a valid occasional off-licence. The copy of the licence must be available for inspection at the market.

Breaches of these legal and statutory requirements may preclude attendance at TVFMC managed markets.

Food Hygiene & Health & Safety:
Please refer to Appendix A

Insurance

16. Producers will maintain current Products/Public Liability insurance. A copy of the current insurance document must be brought along to each market to produce to the market manager if requested.

Accreditation of Producers

17. All producers, including guest producers, agree to assist an inspection visit by a TVFMC appointed representative to ensure compliance with these rules. Accreditation visits will take place on a three-yearly basis and subject to the prevailing fee for accreditation.

Complaints

18. If a producer has any complaint, they must:
 - a) In the first instance discuss this with the market manager. All market coordinators are required to provide a written report on each market. Producers should ask for any complaint to be noted in the market manager's market report. The management of the co-operative reviews all reports at monthly committee meetings.
 - b) Outside of market trading, if they wish to approach either the administration or directors of the co-operative, they can ask for their complaint to be considered at the next monthly committee meeting. The committee will respond in writing.
19. If any member is in breach of the rules, the following process will be enacted:
 - a) A single verbal warning will be issued either by the market manager or a committee member present at the market. This will be documented in the market manager's market report.
 - b) A second breach will result in a written warning from the committee.
 - c) A third breach will result in expulsion from all TVFMC managed markets, and the option to enact Rule 10 of the co-operative rules.
 - d) Contravention of legal requirements will result in automatic expulsion from the market.

Grievance Procedure

20. Any producer who feels he/she has been dealt with in an inappropriate manner, by a market manager, any official body (Trading Standards, Environmental Health), a customer or a member of the general public, must lodge a written statement to the market manager within five working days of the event. The committee will decide what action is to be taken and a written statement will be issued.

Appeals Procedure

- 1) There is no recourse to appeal with regard to Rule (a) and (b) decisions are final.
 - 2) At an appeal hearing the appellant may be accompanied by a colleague.
 - 3) The decision reached will be recorded in writing and a copy given to the appellant.
 - 4) Appeal decisions are final. There is no recourse to a higher level.
21. Market Rules will be reviewed annually, any amendments ratified at TVFMC members' meetings.

APPENDIX A

Food Hygiene and Health & Safety

Anyone handling food must have a copy of his or her current Basic Food Hygiene Certificate at each market. Anyone handling unwrapped foods must wear clean protective over clothing, such as aprons, coats or jackets. It is recommended that some form of head covering be worn, with long hair tied back. Staff who handle or prepare foods should not travel to the market in their protective clothing. They should remove their protective clothing if they leave the stall/vehicle.

Producers must ensure the correct temperature control in accordance with Environmental Health guidelines throughout the market, as well as travelling to and from the market. This applies to products on display as well as those stored in vehicles.

Sneeze guards must be used where Environmental Health guidelines require this i.e. unwrapped foods.

Producers must bring suitable bags or bins and a brush for the collection of food waste and other rubbish. Waste must not be allowed to attract pests. Rubbish and any food debris must be removed at the end of the market or placed in bins provided. Serious breaches of hygiene rules may preclude attendance at TCFMC managed markets.

Safety

Any producer cooking at markets must ensure that they do not endanger any member of the public. They must site any apparatus well away from the front or edge of their stall and should have a safety barrier placed at least 50cm from the appliance, provide warning signs and comply with any request from the market manager to ensure the safety of the public.

All producers using gas-burning appliances must have on site a fire blanket and an appropriate fire extinguisher.

All gas pipes should be of the approved type, i.e. orange, date stamped and not older than 5 years. Although it is not obligatory, it is good working practice to have correctly attached fittings – i.e. crimped end terminations.

Ground Covering

Approved ground covering must be in place during the preparation and cooking or demonstration of food.

All portable electric appliances must have an accredited test certificate available for inspection by managers at any given market.

All display tables must be of sound and stable construction (not boards balanced on top of boxes), as must all stall coverings – gazebos especially – and such coverings must be firmly secured.