



Colorado Farmers'
Market Association

Farmers Market Vendor Guide for Preparing and Offering Food Samples



How to clean and sanitize equipment, surfaces...and your hands!

- **Practice good hygiene.** Hands must be properly washed when selling products at the Farmer's Market and when preparing and distributing samples. Hands must be washed after smoking, eating, drinking, using the restroom, or anytime contamination occurs.
- **Proper handwashing:** Wet hands with clean, warm water. Apply soap and work into a lather. Rub hands together for 20 seconds; clean under the nails and between fingers. Rinse under clean, running water. Dry hands with disposable paper towel.
- **Use clean and sanitized dishes,** knives, utensils and cutting boards for cutting and displaying produce. Wash with soapy water, rinse with clean water, sanitize and air dry.
- **To sanitize dishes,** knives, utensils and cutting boards: place the items in 75° F water (slightly cool to the touch) that has one tablespoon of regular, not scented chlorine bleach per gallon of water, for one minute, then allow to air dry.
- **When you're on the move,** consider constructing the portable system illustrated below.

Sampling produce:

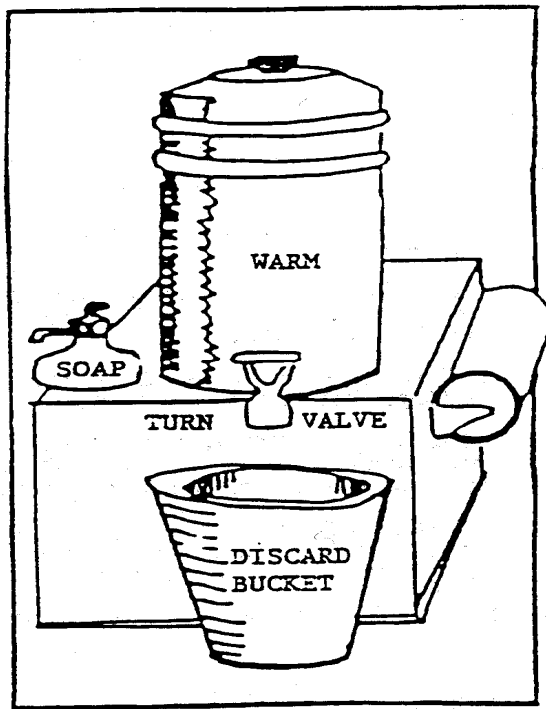
- **Produce used for samples must be washed with cool water.** If it is thick-skinned produce, scrub with a clean vegetable brush. This removes nearly all insects, dirt, bacteria and some pesticide residues that can contaminate the interior of the produce once it is cut.
- **If washed produce is not cut for samples,** immediately store it in a clean container to prevent re-soiling of the exterior surface prior to cutting.
- **Cut samples must be covered** or protected if flies are present, the area is dusty, or weather conditions are such that the samples could become contaminated.
- **Minimize bare hand contact with cut produce.** This can be done by using single service items (as described below). If single service gloves are used, change the gloves often to prevent soiled gloves from cross-contaminating samples. Remember to wash hands between changing gloves.
- **Use single service items** to distribute samples to customers. Examples are paper plates, cups, napkins, plastic utensils or toothpicks. The customer can then dispose of single service items once the product is consumed.

More Tips for Staying Trouble Free

- **Storing food safely, easily.** Store all food in food-grade containers or packing materials. Garbage bags are not food-grade – they're treated with mold-inhibiting

chemicals. And don't reuse old bread sacks or grocery bags: These may have been contaminated by the food already stored in them.

- **Ensure that transportation vehicles are clean & sanitary.** Dirty vehicles can contaminate produce with harmful microbes.
- **Keep garbage containers covered**, and empty them often. It is recommended that each vendor supplying samples provide a small garbage can for used sampling containers or utensils.
- **Prevent creature contact** – don't let rodents, insects, birds, etc., get at your food. Netted table tents keep flies and bugs off; they're lightweight and come off easily when you need to serve or sell your product.
- **Keep raw and prepared foods separate.**
- **Ice should be made from potable water only.** Ice that has kept food cold should not be served for human consumption. Whenever possible, use cold packs to keep food cold – they're more economical, and your food won't get soggy. You can make your own cold packs from watertight containers.
- **Store chemicals**, including cleaning solutions, away from food.



Temporary Handwashing Station

Warm water (100 °F – 120 °F) can be held in a 5-gallon insulated container with a spigot that allows continuous flow.

A bucket can be used to collect dirty water.

Liquid soap and paper towels should be provided and a trash receptacle for discarded paper towels.

(adapted from *Growing for Market*, Lawrence, Kansas)

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References for further information:

- 1) Food Safety Begins on the Farm: A Grower's Guide, Anusuya Rangarajan, Elizabeth A. Bihn, Robert B. Gravani, Donna L. Scott, and Marvin P. Pitts, 2000.
- 2) Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, U.S. FDA, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), Oct. 1998 <http://www.fda.gov/>

