



Farmers on the Square, Carlisle, PA **Operating Guidelines (updated 9/2025)**

"Farmers on the Square (FOTS) strives to be a vibrant, welcoming marketplace in which a diverse community of producers and consumers celebrate superb, nutritious, and diverse agricultural products. FOTS supports local farmers and food security by making quality regional products directly accessible to community members, regardless of income, in a vibrant, producer-only farmer's market. FOTS seeks to educate the community on the economic, environmental, health, and community benefits of supporting local food and sustainable agriculture."

Our vision is that local farmers are supported by providing community members with equitable access to quality and nutritious regional products in a vibrant producers only farmers market.

1. **Participation: Producer-only vendors**, who actually grow, harvest, raise, or otherwise create all products that they intend to sell are eligible vendors for Farmers on the Square (FOTS). Preference will be given to vendors who engage in sustainable/chemical free practices vs. conventional practices. Participating farms and businesses must be located within a 50 mile radius of Carlisle. All products sold at the market must be either food themselves or directly connected to agricultural activities. Additionally, vendors must meet the following criteria to qualify for participation at FOTS:
 - a. **Bakers & Secondary producers** of preserved or prepared foods must make all products from scratch and use local ingredients as much as possible. Preference is given to applying vendors who prioritize local/sustainable sourcing and use a maximum of locally-sourced ingredients. However, the market recognizes that certain culturally relevant foods for our surrounding community cannot have their ingredients grown locally, and is not opposed to vendors creating such foods provided they still make every reasonable effort to source local ingredients when available.
 - b. **Value added products:** A locally-produced item which has been altered by the producer to increase its economic potential, while maintaining its original character, is a value-added product. Non-food value-added products will be admitted only at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
 - a. **Value Added Packaging:** Vendors are permitted to use packaging materials (e.g., insulated and uninsulated tote bags, baskets, vases) to contain previously approved sale items. Such packing materials can enhance the appearance and increase the value of previously approved sale items as well as promote the vendor's brand. The materials, however, may not be sold separately and must be approved by the FOTS Board prior to use.
 - c. **Resale Items** are permitted on a case by case basis as it benefits the market as a whole, and must strictly adhere to the following requirements:
 - a. Producer of resale item must be located within 50 miles of the vendor's farm, for a total radius not to exceed 100 miles from FOTS.
 - b. No more than two additional farms can be represented per stand.
 - c. Requests must be submitted on the original application and be approved by the Board.
 - d. All resold items must be accompanied by signage at the Market indicating the product's origin.
 - e. Total volume of resale items may never exceed 25% of a vendor's stand.
 - d. **Cooperative stands** may be organized by 2 or 3 farms. These stands must offer 100% vendor produced products and may not buy in any other product for resale. Applications and market signage must reflect the cooperative nature and name of the business. Each participating farm must carry liability insurance as stated in item 5. Additionally, cooperative stands must function at market as one entity and operate under one name.

- e. Health Emergency Guidelines:** All vendors are required to comply with the guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health as it relates to emergent health crises such as Covid-19. These regulations will be communicated to vendors by the Market Manager (MM) as they are announced and may include requirements such as wearing masks whenever on market grounds, separating stands by at least 6 feet, and minimizing contact with customers during transactions. Please refer to the respective websites for a complete list of guidelines.
2. **Market Operation:** Market will be held Wednesdays 3-7pm, rain or shine, April 1st-October 15th and 3-6pm October 16th-March 31st. The Winter Market Season is held from January to April while the Regular Season runs from May through December. The market is only closed in cases of extreme dangerous weather, which will be communicated on multiple channels as early as possible, and from December 24th to January 1st. Market will be held in front of the First Presbyterian Church located at 2A North Hanover Street in Carlisle and on adjacent corners.
3. **Commitment & Attendance:** Vendors are expected to fulfill the commitment they make at the beginning of the market season. Empty stands adversely affect the entire market.
- If a vendor is unable to attend a market, they are required to contact the MM, giving as much advance notice as possible. In the event of absence, the MM has the right to adjust vendor placement as appropriate. At the latest, the MM should be notified by 3pm on the Tuesday before the market (24 hours notice); any later notice will be considered an infraction of these Guidelines.
 - Habitual tardiness or absences are grounds for expulsion from the market; vendors must have a minimum of 80% attendance for their market season.
 - Vendors are expected to be set up and be ready to sell at the sound of the market bell at 3pm. In the case of emergencies that require the vendor's immediate departure, the vendor must still notify the MM of the reason and confirm their permission to leave before doing so.
 - Early sales are prohibited.
 - Vendors must stay until the close of the market.
4. **Levels of Participation & Fees:** Vendors may participate at any of three levels:
- Full season: all of a season's scheduled market days, approx. 34 weeks in the Regular Season or 17 weeks in the Winter Season
 - Half season: approx. 17 weeks in the Regular Season or 9 weeks in the Regular Season, either consecutive (typically the first half of the season or the second half) or alternating weeks throughout the regular season
 - Occasional: any number of particular market days
- Current fees are listed on that year's application form. Please note that fees reflect a 10x10ft tent space. Full and Half Season Vendors have the option to choose a larger tent space at a greater cost and are subject to availability. Occasional Vendors do not have the option and are only given permission to use a 10X10ft tent space as market space is limited. Larger spaces up to a maximum of a 10'x20' footprint must be requested on the season's Application Form and cost double the amount of a 10'x10' space, even if the maximum footprint is not fully utilized. This includes any vendors operating from the inside of trucks or trailers. Payment must be made in full by the end of the first month of a season, and good faith deposits and penalties for late fees may be evaluated and ordered by the Board Treasurer when they feel they are necessary. Fees are non-refundable.
5. **Insurance:** Vendors must submit proof of liability insurance prior to their first market day, listing the following 2 parties as additionally insured:
- Farmers on the Square, 2A North Hanover St., Carlisle, PA 17013
 - First Presbyterian Church of Carlisle, 2A North Hanover St., Carlisle, PA 17013
- Minimum insurance is 1M per incident, 2M aggregate.

6. **Hold Harmless Clause:** All authorized vendors participating in FOTS shall be individually and severally responsible to FOTS for any loss, personal injury, deaths, and/or any other damage that may occur as a result of the vendors' negligence or that of its servants, agents, and employees, and all vendors hereby agree to indemnify and save FOTS harmless from any loss, cost, damages, and other expenses, including attorneys' fees, suffered or incurred by FOTS by reason of the vendors' negligence or that of its servants, agents and employees; provided that the vendors shall not be responsible nor required to indemnify FOTS for negligence of FOTS, its servants, agents and employees.
7. **Safety:** For the safety of all, canopies must be weighted and secured with minimum **25 pound weights per leg**. Tent legs may be tied down to other objects in lieu of single-purpose weights **only** if these objects are permanently affixed to the ground or sidewalk, such as a lamppole or fencepost. Tent stakes are also acceptable. However, **each** tent leg still needs to be secured with either a weight or an anchor, regardless of the method(s) used. In the event of severe weather, canopies should be lowered for additional security. Vendors must keep aisles and walkways clear: signs (but not products) may be placed just outside of a vendor's allotted footprint, but there must be a minimum of 4 feet of navigable sidewalk width in front of the entire length of each vendor's stand in order to ensure accessibility for all customers, and allowing 6 or more feet is encouraged wherever possible.
8. **Unloading:** Vendors must unload as quickly as possible to the sidewalk only (15 minute limit) and immediately move their car/truck from the Dickinson Avenue alleyway, High Street, or Hanover Street. Vendors may not begin setting up their stand until their vehicle is unloaded and parked. Vendors who have multiple tents and will need more than 15 minutes to set up should arrive at least 1 hour and 45 minutes before the start of market. Should you need more than 15 minutes to unload this must be discussed with the MM and approved by the MM or Board of Directors. Vendors are asked to indicate their preferred unloading time on their application but FOTS has the right to decide the vendor's window of time for unloading if necessary. Vendors must comply with all requests by the MM during pre-market unloading and post-market packing and loading and cannot create unsafe conditions or obstruct the flow of traffic on the High Street or Hanover Street, which are state routes.
9. **Regulatory compliance:** Each vendor is responsible for complying with all applicable state and local regulations including weights and measures, sales tax collection, organic or other certification, and health and labeling laws. Meat must be processed by USDA standards and dairy by PDA standards. Bakers and secondary processors must follow PDA regulations. Vendors should provide a PDA or USDA license or registration to be kept on file. If you have questions, please contact the Food Sanitarian for the Bureau of Food Safety and Laboratory Services, 717-346-3223.
10. **Signage:** Vendors must clearly display the name and location of their business or farm and prices for all products being sold.
11. **Sales reporting:** Sales and attendance data are valuable to the market in many ways. We can identify spending trends, apply for grants, choose appropriate events, solicit new vendors, etc. with this useful information. Vendors must submit monthly sales data the first Wednesday of the month to the MM. All sales data collected will be anonymized so that no one except the MM knows who submitted what.
12. **Coupon Programs Participation** All eligible vendors must participate in our coupon programs, including Fresh Match and EBT coupons for all SNAP-eligible items and Debit coupons for all market items other than alcohol.. Reimbursements are made on a monthly basis. Refer to the MM for more information on this program.
 - a. In accordance with the policies of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB), no form of delayed payment, including any and all market coupon programs, may be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.
 - b. Vendors eligible to accept EBT vouchers must complete and record annual training as

required by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service in order to maintain the market's eligibility to accept SNAP. The MM will provide training and documentation materials, and vendors are responsible for ensuring that all employees at their stand understand what they can and cannot accept for each specific item they offer.

13. **Church Bathroom:** The First Presbyterian Church has kindly offered vendors access to their bathroom located on the ground floor during market hours. This privilege is reserved for market vendors and volunteers ONLY. The MM has a key to the bathroom at the Market Information Tent.
14. **Cleanliness:** Vendors must use common cleanliness practices such as general sanitation, clean personal appearance, hand washing, covering samples, providing trash receptacles for samples, and generally keeping stands neat and tidy during market. All waste and garbage must be removed at the end of the market day.
15. **Behavior:** FOTS is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for vendors and shoppers alike, and we expect vendors to share this commitment. Members of the market community are encouraged to resolve their differences peacefully through submitting market-related concerns or grievances in writing to the FOTS Board of Directors.
 - a. Inconsiderate, threatening, or aggressive behavior of any kind – including verbal and/or physical abuse of fellow vendors, market staff and volunteers, market board members, or shoppers – will not be tolerated. This includes posts made to social media sites. The first instance of such behavior will result in immediate suspension from the market for a period of two weeks. A vendor suspended in this way will be allowed to send their product and stand to market in care of a representative, provided the stand is in full compliance with the operating guidelines. Upon return from suspension, any further instance of inappropriate or aggressive behavior will result in the vendor and stand being banned from FOTS permanently; reapplication from such a vendor will not be considered. Aggressive or inappropriate behavior is defined by the FOTS Board of Directors as shouting obscenities, making offensive comments to others, or any other form of verbal abuse or negative outbursts. Inappropriate behavior also includes physical violence such as pushing others, throwing objects or any other physical actions that compromise the market's safety.
 - b. If at any time a vendor, board member or customer of FOTS feels unsafe as the result of a vendor's behavior, the board officers reserve the right to take proactive measures to resolve this issue in a manner that preserves the integrity of the market and ensures a safe environment for customers and vendors alike.
 - c. The decision to suspend and/or ban a vendor from FOTS will be made through the careful consideration of FOTS board members. Communication of market suspension and/or ban will be relayed to the vendor in question by either the board president or vice president.
 - d. Instances of harassment, threatening behavior, or otherwise inappropriate behavior by customers, volunteers, or passers-by at the market should be reported to the MM immediately. While the market's options for recourse are limited due to the market being held in a public space, all possible legal measures will be taken to restore a safe and welcoming environment for all attendees as quickly as possible. If a vendor responds to any such behavior independently and without first contacting the MM, it is understood that their actions are not representative of or endorsed by FOTS, however this should not be understood as discouraging vendors from taking appropriate, immediate action when necessary to ensure the safety of themselves and their employees.
16. **Compliance with Market Rules:** These market guidelines have been set in place to maintain a safe and positive atmosphere at FOTS and promote sustainable prosperity for the entire market community. Failure to comply with the rules listed in the market's Operating Guidelines compromises the integrity of our market and will result in disciplinary action. In the event that market rules are violated, the FOTS Board of Directors will take the following measures to address

and resolve the issue at hand:

- a. First infraction will result in a verbal warning. If the vendor is not available for an in-person verbal warning, this initial warning may still be communicated by email.
- b. Second infraction will result in a written notice.
- c. Repeated breach of the rules will result in disciplinary action by the board. Third offenses of minor infractions carry a \$50 fine. Third offenses of a major infraction, or repeated offenses, are grounds for permanent removal from the market.

The Board reserves the right to not follow these measures sequentially, depending on the severity of the offense. All of these steps will be documented by the MM and shared with the Board Vendor Relations, Retention, & Recruitment Committee and may affect the vendor's eligibility to participate in future market seasons.

17. Application process & approval: New and returning vendors must apply to the market and be approved by the board. Approval is based on space availability and demand for the products being offered.

- a. New vendors must submit their application at least 3 weeks prior to the date they would like to start attending the market to allow time for Board review & approval. Applications may be closed to any new vendors at the discretion of the Board at any given time.
- b. Given compliance with all market rules of the previous year, returning vendors are automatically approved for the next market season at the same frequency of attendance, but still must resubmit their application and accompanying documents. Vendors will be approved at the frequency that they were attending market the previous year (i.e. Full season vendors will be accepted back as full season vendors and half season vendors will be accepted as half season vendors.) This does **not** include Occasional Vendors. Occasional Vendor approval will be at the discretion of the FOTS Board. The market distinguishes between the Regular Season market and the Winter Market. Acceptance into the Winter Season Market does not guarantee acceptance into the regular season market and vice versa. For example: Given the challenges of producing local products and attending markets in the winter, the board may decide to accept a vendor into the winter market based on the needs of the winter market with the understanding that this does not guarantee acceptance into the regular season. Returning vendors are asked to give notification of intent for the following year on the last day of the regular market season.
- c. FOTS strives to maintain a healthy balance between market offerings in order to offer a diverse source of many relevant foods and agricultural items so that customers can support local producers and use local products in their own lives as much as possible. The FOTS Board uses the following metric to guide them in accepting new vendors. The metric takes into consideration product hierarchy and the maximum percentages desired per product. These considerations are used in conjunction with each other and the Board's best judgment to determine which eligible applicant vendors are to be accepted to FOTS. Maximum percentages do not, and were not intended to, add up to 100%. Percentages are calculated on 10ths of vendor stands (i.e. a vendor may be .5 vegetable, .2 fruit, and .3 prepared foods).

Hierarchy and maximum percentages are as follows:

Vegetables	30%
Fruit	25%
Meat	20%
Dairy	20%
Baked Goods	15%
Prepared Foods	15%
Value-Added	10%
Flowers	10%

18. Electrical Access: There is a limited amount of electricity available for vendors to use at Farmers on the Square. To guarantee access to an electrical connection at market, vendors must indicate this

need on their application plus list the appliances and wattage (or amperage) rating for each appliance. If electrical access is required, vendors will need to pay 10% of their vendor fees as an additional fee. This guarantees access to ONE circuit, with additional access allowed only if it is available after allotting for other vendors, with precedence for each additional circuit determined as below. If an additional circuit is not available, vendors will need to supply their own source of power via a generator, battery pack, or other portable energy source. We ask that vendors consider our open-air market environment and choose low-volume and low- emission sources if possible. If there is still more demand from vendors for electrical access than the market can supply, priority will be given to the vendor who has been using electricity at FOTS for the longest preceding period.

19. **Nondiscrimination Policy:** FOTS is committed to fostering a welcoming environment for all people regardless of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, disability, or any other protected/marginalized characteristic. Vendor applicants will not be accepted or rejected on the basis of any of the listed characteristics. Vendor applicants are accepted or rejected only on the basis of product need or other factors related strictly to the successful function of the farmers market. Information regarding any/all protected characteristics indicated or otherwise listed on Market's vendor application will not influence whether or not the applicant is accepted to participate at the farmers market and will be used only for reporting demographic information to relevant stakeholders, grantors, etc.
20. **Site Visits:** All vendors shall allow FOTS to inspect their farm and/or production facilities and review all production-related records, as deemed necessary in the sole judgment of the Board of Directors. A vendor's submission of an application constitutes the vendor's consent to an inspection and agreement to cooperate with all such inspections by the FOTS inspection team.
21. **Volunteering & donations:** From time to time, vendors may be asked to participate in group volunteer efforts to benefit our venue, First Presbyterian Church, or the FOTS market as a whole. Vendors may also be asked to give merchandise donations to market entertainers or volunteers. While none of these are mandatory, they contribute to the overall success of FOTS and vendor participation is greatly appreciated.
22. **Artisan Markets:** FOTS occasionally holds Artisan Markets to highlight producers of high-quality non-agricultural products and expand the market audience. Vendors eligible Artisan markets are those who make value-added products from any type of material, although locally sourced materials are still preferred. Vendors who would otherwise be eligible for our Regular Season markets (ie, producers of food or of non-food agricultural products) may not participate in Artisan Markets, UNLESS their products are in an entirely distinct category from any items available for sale in the ongoing Regular Season. Other than this variance in participation eligibility, Artisan Market vendors are bound by the same rules in this document with the same status as Occasional Vendors.
23. The FOTS Board of Directors reserves the right to update these Guidelines at any time. By signing the Guidelines Vendors understand and agree that the most recent version of the guidelines posted to the FOTS website supersedes any previous version. Vendors are bound to the most updated version of the Guidelines that have been approved by the Board of Directors.

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