

Starting a Farmers' Market



Would workers enjoy shopping for local produce on their lunch break? Having a farmers' market near your work will bring more healthy choices to your workers. It's easier than you think to get one started!

STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Enlist the help of your Wellness Committee. Read through this tool to see if starting a farmers' market is a viable option.
2. Use this guide to open and promote the farmers' market.
3. Let workers know about the program. Educate them on the benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables.
4. Routinely evaluate your program. Update as needed.

CERTIFIED FARMERS' MARKET VS. FARM STAND

A certified farmers' market is different than a farm stand. Farm stands are required to operate on or near the farm where the produce was grown. Certified farmers' markets are less regulated in proximity, and are certified by and operating in a location approved by the county agricultural commissioner. Both are required to meet certain health and safety standards, but are exempt from some other requirements such as grade, size and packaging. For more information, visit the California Department of Food and Agriculture at www.cdfa.ca.gov.

TOOL TIPS

Before You Get Started

Thinking about setting up a farmers' market? Here are a few things to consider before you get started:

- Find out if there are already farmers' markets nearby at www.cafarmersmarkets.com. If they already exist near your site, you might not choose to start your own. You could promote the existing markets to your staff instead.

If you believe you'd like to open a farmers' market:

- Opening a market takes time and effort. Share the work! Consider partnering with other businesses in your area.
- Think about where you'd like the market to be. At your site? At a community park? Make sure there's enough space for:
 - farmers to park their trucks to drop off their loads.
 - each farmer to set up a 10' x 10' booth.
 - patrons to safely and easily walk around.
- A small farmers' market with about five vendors needs about 300 regular customers to be successful. Make sure you have enough customers to support it.

- There are certain features a market site must have. They are:
 - electricity and water to meet local codes and laws.
 - restrooms within 200 feet. These should meet the codes for health and for disabled persons.
 - storage for market supplies.
 - parking, if you are expecting people to drive in.
 - enough trash cans.
 - appropriate zoning. Check with the appropriate authorities to make sure a farmers' market would be legal at the site.

IN AGRICULTURE:

- Allow employees to take home food from the farm; provide recipes for preparing meals using the produce and offer culturally appropriate dishes using the produce at farm meetings or picnics.
- Host a farmstand with other local growers in the area to offer produce at discounted prices.
- Provide fruits and vegetables offered at the farm as snacks.
- Provide access to an employee refrigerator or cooler for employees to store fruits and vegetables provided.

Getting Ready to Open the Farmers' Market

Once you have decided to start a farmers' market, here's what to do:

- Put together a team to work on this project. This might be the Wellness Committee.
- Read below about two different approaches. One is the farmers' market association approach. The other is to work with local farmers directly.
 - **Farmers' Market Association.** Go to www.cafarmersmarkets.com to find out if you have a farmers' market manager in your area. If you do, let them know you want to start a market at your site. The manager can help work out the details. He or she can get the permits needed and work with the farmers. Your role at the worksite will be to provide space and promote the market.
 - **Work with farmers directly.** You could also contact one or more farms. They may be able to take care of many of the details, including insurance. You will provide the space, promote the event, and work with the farm on the rest of the details. To find a list of farms near you, go to www.guide.buylocalca.org, or contact your local Farm Bureau.
- Most farmers' markets run from early May to late October. They are typically open one day each week for about four hours. Decide when you'd like to be open for business.
- Decide how many farmers you'd like to participate. Make sure you have enough customers to support the size.

- Do you want to include hot food vendors? Or sell flowers? Perhaps you'd like to have entertainment. Make these arrangements. If you are working with a farmers' market manager, he can help with these details.
- List the rules. Here are the rules from Davis Farmers' Market for you to review: www.davisfarmersmarket.org/info/DFM_Rules.pdf. Your farmers' market manager may draft the rules for you.
- Make sure your market accepts CalFresh (formerly food stamps)! This can be done using tokens or through receipts and an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system. For more information, visit www.ecologycenter.org/ebt/. Or visit us at www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/WorksiteFitBusinessKit.aspx.
- Make sure you've completed all of the necessary permits and licenses before the grand opening.

Promoting the Farmers' Market

Once your farmers' market is ready to go, you'll need to promote it. Here are some tips:

- Get the information to your workers. Make a big deal out of opening day. Let them know the regular hours of operation. Use email, flyers, and posters. Get people talking.
- Distribute reusable bags to your workers with the market's days and hours listed.
- Send weekly reminders.
- Set up fun activities like food demonstrations. Provide taste testing. Give workers the opportunity to taste different kinds of foods. For taste testing ideas, check out www.HarvestOfTheMonth.com
- Share recipes. Ask employees to submit their favorite recipes using foods from the market. Put them together and share them. Or list one each month in a newsletter.



GO FURTHER

- Organizing a farmers' market is a lot of work. Find employees who love the program and enlist their help.
- Keep things fresh. Hold regular contests and events to keep people engaged.

If there are farmers' markets nearby:

- Provide a list to your workers. Include addresses, days and hours.
- Organize a group to walk to the markets during the lunch hour.

Onsite Garden

Maybe a farmers' market is not right for your site. But perhaps you have space for a garden instead. A garden can encourage physical activity and healthy eating, while making your campus more beautiful. It can also support relaxation and teamwork among co-workers. Here are some tips for starting an employee garden:

- Find out if workers want to start a garden.
- Talk to an expert to find out if your space will work.

- Provide space and supplies to get started. Provide 2-3 hours a week for one or more workers to maintain the garden.
- Start small. Leave room for growth, but keep things simple at first.
- Choose someone to coordinate the efforts.
- Set up a way to distribute the fruits and vegetables.
- Make a plan for how and when staff will work in the garden.
- Be realistic. It may take a year or more to get going.
- Think about how the garden will be good for morale.
- Hold a harvest party!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit our website at
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/WorksiteProgram.aspx for:

- sample rules.
- more information.

