

The Belgrade Lakes Farmers' Market

Guidelines¹ April 2011

PURPOSE

The Belgrade Lakes Farmers' Market exists to provide a place for local farmers, growers and farm-based crafters to sell their agricultural products, building our community through joining consumers and local producers. The Market consists of local small growers of vegetables, fruits, flowers, meats, and other agricultural products; local producers of "added value" items such as cheeses, baked goods, pickles, preserves, etc.; local people involved in harvesting, processing and distributing wild food products; and local craftspeople utilizing locally grown materials.

ORGANIZATION

- The operations of the Belgrade Lakes Farmers' Market ("Market") are directed by a volunteer Steering Committee composed of community representatives, farm-based producers, and the site landowners (see list on p. 4) . Producers who wish to join the steering committee are welcome to do so.
- Vendors are invited to sell at the Market by the steering committee and approved by the membership at its winter meeting. Additional vendors may be invited by the Steering Committee after the winter meeting if space allows. In selecting vendors, we consider both the balance of products offered and the role of the Market in supporting local (Maine) agriculture. We endeavor to strike a balance between healthy competition (avoiding monopolies) and not having too many vendors of any one product for our customer base.
- Preference will be given to producers from the Belgrade Lakes region (Belgrade and its immediately adjacent towns).
- New vendors will be provisional for their first season, and the continuing vendors will decide at the next winter meeting whether to bring a provisional vendor in as a permanent market member.
- Decisions for the season will be made by the membership at the winter meeting(s), and as necessary afterwards either by the Steering Committee, or at a special meeting of the members. Winter-meeting decisions are made primarily by consensus²; where needed for clarification, a vote may be taken.
- It is recognized that although members sell as individuals, the Market is a cohesive unit, the success of which depends on the cooperation and joint effort of all of the vendors.

PRODUCTS

- All products (vegetables, seedlings, plants, herbs, preserves, maple syrup, fresh cut and dried flowers, meats, poultry, seafood, dairy products, herbal products, yarn, crafts, and

¹ These guidelines were drafted based on those available through the Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets website (<http://www.snakeroot.net/mffm/index.html>); we are grateful for the models that are already in place.

² Reaching consensus does not assume that everyone must be in complete agreement (a highly unlikely situation in a group of involved and creative individuals). Consensus is a democratic process of decision-making in which all contributions are valued and participation is encouraged. Decisions are adopted when all participants consent to the result of discussion about a proposal. People who do not agree with a proposal are responsible for expressing their concerns. When concerns remain after discussion, individuals can agree to disagree by acknowledging that they have unresolved concerns, but consent to moving forward regardless.

other products) sold at the Belgrade Lakes Farmers' Market must be grown, raised, harvested from nature, or made by the vendor, with one exception: vendors may arrange in advance to sell specific locally made or locally grown products as long as these products do not exceed 25% of the vendor's display (see Standards, p.4).

- Vendors are asked to honor the spirit of the Market as oriented toward homegrown and home-processed food, not crafts. However, yarn, dried flowers, and other non-food farm products may be permissible if raised or wild-gathered by the vendor. The Steering Committee will decide the eligibility of non-food products on a case-by-case basis.

LOCATION, HOURS AND ATTENDANCE

- For the first part of the 2011 season, the Sunday market will be held in the parking lot owned by the Village Inn in Belgrade Lakes village; once the Maine Lakes Resource Center opens in July, the market will relocate there and the Thursday market will begin. Market hours are Sundays from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and Thursday 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. The 2011 season will start on June 12th and run through mid-September (exact date to be determined as September unfolds). [Special days, for example the village's Octoberfest, may have a partial and optional market presence, to be determined.] The Sunday and Thursday markets have somewhat different groups of vendors.
- The Market is held regardless of weather. Regular attendance is good for your business since customers learn to expect you at market. The Market encourages vendors who are willing to commit to participate for the full season (Regular Vendors), with the exception of the first and final Sundays where we expect partial attendance as the season gears up and gears down.
- If you know you are going to be absent, call one of the steering committee before Sunday or Thursday morning. This allows us to accommodate all vendors and allocate our tight spaces at set-up time.
- Vendors who are absent for three or more consecutive market days may lose their space (barring unusual circumstances, which can be discussed with the steering committee).
- Vendors whose sole product is seasonally limited (e.g. raspberries) may be accepted as Seasonal Vendors. Vendors who wish to participate but cannot commit to the season may be accepted as Occasional Vendors if they commit to particular Sundays or Thursdays by June 1 (i.e. in advance of the Market's season opening). Space is tight at our site and so predictability is important to keeping the market operating smoothly.
- At least one member of the Steering Committee will be present to assist with operations on each market day.

VENDOR FEES & INSURANCE

- Fees are collected from vendors to cover the Market's costs: primarily insurance, publicity and communications. For 2011, the fee is \$6/day per vendor, payable to the Market Master each market day. A one-time season fee of \$78 (or 13x the daily fee) may be paid instead, as the vendor chooses.
- The Market will carry a general liability insurance policy. This does not cover liability of individual vendors for their own products.
- Each vendor is liable for the safety of his or her own products and is expected to maintain adequate liability insurance.

MARKET LAYOUT

- The number and size of stalls is determined by the Steering Committee. Basic stall size is 10' of frontage, and that width will be accommodated wherever possible given the limitations of the site. Full-time vendors (those willing to commit to the entire season) will be given an assigned space and be able to retain the same space each week during the season. Spaces will be assigned by the Steering Committee in consultation with the vendors, with consideration given to seniority and regular attendance. Approved seasonal or occasional vendors will be offered the remaining spaces on any particular market day on a first come, first serve basis. Occasionally, due to an exceptionally high attendance by vendors, spaces may be shuffled if needed for the day's entries, and vendors may be asked to squeeze a bit. Your cooperation at such times is appreciated.

OPERATIONS

- Because space is tight at our location, vendors need to park their vehicles, after set-up, up the road at the boat storage area. Please do not park on Main Street (Rt. 27) as we need all the customer parking we can get. Vendors whose vehicle is part of their set-up, approved ahead of time by the steering committee, may keep one vehicle in the market space.
- Vendors are expected to be set up and ready to sell by the 8:00 (Sunday) or 2:00 (Thursday) opening time. Vehicle traffic in the market space after that time interferes with customers and is not fair to the other vendors. If you must arrive late, and your vehicle is not part of your space, you will need to hand-carry your products into the market.
- Vendors are to observe the opening time and not sell prior to that hour. This is to be fair to all vendors.
- Vendors provide their own water for washing.
- Vendors are asked not to have radios or recorded music playing.
- Vendors are expected to stay until market closing time unless they are sold out.
- Vendors need to leave the premises after the market is over to allow others to use the space. Each vendor is responsible for making sure that their space is left as clean as when they arrived. This will mean taking care of your own trash.
- Any concerns, dissatisfactions, misunderstandings, or disputes should immediately be brought to the attention of a member of the Steering Committee; the committee will work as expeditiously as possible with the parties involved to resolve any situation in the best interest of the Market.

COMPLIANCE with STATE and FEDERAL REGULATIONS

- Vendors must meet the state standard for farmer's markets that at least 75% of the vendor's offerings be grown or produced by that vendor. An occasional exception may be allowed if a member is not able to attend a market day, such that another member may fill in and sell the other member's product.
- Vendors are responsible for determining whether they require licenses under Maine law, and for obtaining needed licenses.³ A copy of the current year's license must be provided to the Steering Committee before a vendor is allowed to sell at the Market. State regulations require licenses be displayed while at market.

³ All producers of home-processed items such as honey, maple syrup, jams, jellies, relishes and home-canned or dehydrated goods must be licensed by the Department of Agriculture, as must producers of baked goods, or other prepared foods. Producers of meat, poultry, and dairy products are likewise required to be licensed. A license is not required if only selling fresh, raw, unprocessed fruits, vegetables, and flowers.

- All produce sold by weight must be weighed for the customer at the Market.
- All food products must be displayed at least 6" above the ground surface.
- Sales tax must be collected, as required by Maine law, on non-food products such as crafts. It is the responsibility of each vendor to obtain their own tax numbers and be familiar with which of their items are taxable, and to collect that tax and forward it to the state treasurer.
- Anyone selling their products as "organic" must comply with the National Organic Standards, and if they have gross organic sales in excess of \$5,000 per year are required by law to have USDA-accredited third-party certification. MOFGA produces a useful manual to applying the standards, downloadable at <http://mofgacertification.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/manual2010.pdf>; for information on certification, contact MOFGA Certification Services (<http://mofgacertification.org/>).

STANDARDS

- Vendors must post their name and farm location at their stall each market day.
- Prices for each item shall be displayed. Pricing products far below what it cost to produce them will not be allowed. Competition is fine, but cut-throat pricing can destroy a market. Please take the time to know your production costs and set your prices at a fair market value.
- Any produce or product not grown or produced by the vendor (within the 25% buy-in rule) must be clearly and prominently labeled with the name and location of the local farm from which it originated. Furthermore, if another vendor is selling the same product that they themselves produced, bought-in product will only be sold after the producing vendor is sold out. Vendors are expected to get approval of their plans to sell "bought in" products one week in advance.
- A high standard of product freshness and appearance shall be maintained. Produce should be picked as close to market time as possible and handled to preserve the fresh quality.
- Vendors are to be reasonably neat in appearance, with shirt and shoes required. Courtesy both to customers and to other vendors is expected. The reputation and success of the Market and of your farm depend as much upon how you treat others as what you offer for sale.
- No hawking or calling out to attract buyers to your goods is permitted.
- Vendors are not allowed to smoke, consume alcohol, or have animals on the Market premises.
- Vendors will agree to these guidelines each year by providing a signed copy of the Code of Conduct to the market treasurer before the start of the season.

STEERING COMMITTEE CONTACTS as of APRIL 2011:

Sue Gawler	495-2911 or 242-8288 (cell)	treasurer & webmistress
Loyce Hayslett	495-7058	contact person
Barbara Skapa	293-2866	vendor liaison
Ellen Gawler	495-2928	
Susan Grover	495-3553 (Village Inn)	

General market email address: blfarmersmarket@gmail.com

Market website: www.belgradelakesfarmersmarket.org

**BELGRADE LAKES FARMERS' MARKET
VENDOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. All vendors will conduct themselves respectfully at all times. There will be no tolerance of rude or disrespectful behavior or grudges regarding the public, other vendors or market managers. Inability to do so may result in a request to leave the market.

2. If differences do arise, it is expected that the parties involved will, in a private, and timely manner, discuss and resolve their issues to at least a functioning and cordial level. It is recognized that unresolved issues and negative attitudes affect the well-being of the market as a whole and is counter-productive and down-dragging to its best functioning. Inability to do so may result in a request to leave the market.

3. All vendors will adhere to the rules set out in the market guidelines. Failure to do so may result in a request to leave the market.

4. I agree to this code of conduct:

Signed and dated
