



Sampling Guidelines for Farmers' Markets

Distribution of samples at farmers' markets allows consumers to sample products before purchasing it and allows sellers to introduce new and less common varieties as well as demonstrate the quality, taste and freshness of their products to consumers. Sampling has a positive effect on the sales of products at farmers' markets. In order to provide safe samples to the public, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Sampling of food products must be approved by the Department of Health. The proper permit must be obtained if applicable.
2. Keep samples in clean covered food grade containers. A clear plastic container with a hinged lid or a plate with a clear dome cover would be effective and still allow the customer to see the product.
3. Use tooth picks or disposable utensils to distribute the samples. This is to avoid contact with hands.
4. Waste shall be contained to minimize odor and insect development. Have leakproof garbage receptacles with close-fitting lids at each stall for disposal of pits, peels, food waste, and rubbish.
5. Use clean disposable plastic gloves when cutting food products for samples.
6. Produce intended for sampling shall be washed or cleaned of any soil or other material so as to be wholesome and safe for consumption.
7. Other food products shall be handled as not to become contaminated.
8. Utensils and cutting surfaces shall be washed, rinsed, and sanitized in an approved manner, using a sanitizer approved for use on food contact surfaces.
9. Cutting surfaces shall be smooth, non-absorbent and easily cleanable.
10. Wash water for food and food contact surfaces shall be from an approved source with prior approval obtained from the Department of Health.
11. Wash water and/or wastewater shall be disposed of in a manner acceptable to the Department of Health.
12. Products intended for sampling must be maintained at the proper temperatures.