



## Acorn Farmers' Market & Café - Producer Guidelines 2021

**The mission of the Acorn Farmers' Market & Café is to model a rural, community-driven market that provides access to fresh food and supports the economic viability of area farmers by promoting education, collaboration, and entrepreneurship**

We are a direct to consumer market for local producers (vegetables/fruit, meats, baked goods and dairy as well as food artisans). Acorn's goal is to support agriculture with a priority on the *most local to Acorn first* but will accept products directly from regional producers and distributors based on seasonal availability and demand.

### How to apply to sell your products at Acorn

1. Submit a completed **Producer Application**, which is available at [www.acornfarmersmarketcafe.org](http://www.acornfarmersmarketcafe.org)
2. Provide copies of any required licenses or certificates for your product (e.g. MDA, USDA).
3. Acorn may ask for more information and may visit your farm or business before approving your application.
4. The review / approval process takes up to three weeks to complete.

### General Information

The essential purpose of the Acorn Farmers' Market & Café (Acorn) is to **provide a marketplace to connect producers and consumers of local products**. At no time does Acorn have title to any of the producer's products. The producer's products that go through our marketplace are owned by the producer until they are sold to consumers.

Product Deliveries: Produce deliveries can be made to the store any time the market is open for business. Arrangements can be made for deliveries that need to be made outside of the normal operating hours. When leaving deliveries, please complete an **Incoming Delivery Form**, which lists quantities of items delivered, and have it initialed by Acorn staff. Also note on the form any returns that are being picked up. All produce and goods must be delivered clean (washed), appropriately packed, and ready for sale.

Pricing & Bar Code Labels: **Producers set the prices of their products**. Acorn tracks sales through the use of barcode labels. To ensure that producers are paid for their sales, each item must be properly labeled. The barcoding formats range from minimal detail (just identifying the producer, with a handwritten price on each label) to very detailed (separate barcode numbers for different items with the price per unit or price per weight included). Acorn will enter this information into the point of sale system, and prepare bar codes for each item. Pricing can be changed by producers by informing Acorn (email preferred). Acorn will provide more barcode details to each vendor upon acceptance to the market.

Storage and replenishment: Our goal is to sell a lot for you! **Producers need to provide a sufficient supply to match demand through deliveries at least once per week for perishable items, and as needed for non-perishable items**. The store has limited cooler and dry storage space for producers to store inventory. Acorn staff can restock retail displays using inventory in storage between deliveries. All inventory stored at Acorn must be labeled with bar coded stickers and be ready for sale.

Removal of product from the farm stop and disposal: The goal of Acorn is to maintain fresh, appealing products for the customer. Any unsuitable, spoiled, or damaged product will be immediately removed from the market and disposed of. Producers will be notified if/why this occurred.

Sales: The point of sale system will track sales by product for each producer. Acorn will collect sales tax on taxable items, and remit sales taxes to the State of Michigan. Each producer will be provided with sales data, in order to know what has sold, and to know when to restock.



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Missing products: Acorn works to track and protect all products while they are at the store. However, ultimately products are left in the store at the producer's own risk. Discrepancies in inventory may be taken up with market management and will be handled on a case by case basis.

Customer satisfaction & returns: The goal of Acorn is 100% customer satisfaction. Therefore we will accept all customer returns on food items for refund or replacement. Producers will be notified about customer complaints. In the case of returns, any refunded amounts will be deducted from the producer's future sales.

Producer Payments: **Acorn will pay producers twice per month at a rate of 75% of the sales revenue for products sold.** This percentage was selected to maximize producer payments while also supporting break even operations (rent, payroll, utilities, etc.), and will be reviewed and revised periodically. Unsold products remain the property of the vendor.

Producer Displays: Our goal is to provide you with display units that show off your product and preserve it professionally. Producers can request non-refrigerated space at \$5/month and refrigerated and freezer space at \$10/month in the **Producer Application**. The following display types are available. Specific size of space will vary depending on season and product availability:

1. Non-refrigerated produce
2. Non-refrigerated non-produce
3. Refrigerated produce
4. Refrigerated dairy
5. Freezer

Approval of the retail display unit requests will be based on the capacity available in the market and the optimal mix of products needed to create the best customer experience.

Within the store, the location of displays will be managed based on the season and the types of products available for sale. Producers can work with the market management on the display of their products. Please note that displays are not permanent and may be moved throughout the market as needed.

Producer Signage: Telling each producer's story is important. Customers are seeking direct connections with producers and would like to know how and where their food is produced. These kinds of connections will carry forward and drive customer choice decisions. Acorn will work with producers and use the information provided on the application form to create appropriate signage that helps sell the product and educates the customer about each producer

### **Product Guidelines**

All products must be locally sourced: Acorn's goal is to support agriculture with a priority on the *most local to Acorn first* but will accept product directly from regional producers and distributors based on seasonal availability and demand.

- For value-added or manufactured products, ingredients will be considered local if they are grown or raised in the Great Lakes Region. The majority (by weight) of ingredients in any product must be local.
- If dairy is the primary ingredient (such as ice cream, cheese, cheesecakes), it should be sourced from Great Lakes Region dairies.
- Meat products used as ingredients should be sourced locally and the origin (farm) identified on the producer's application and label.

Produce: Acorn producers must disclose their production practices. For customer information and marketing purposes, please indicate and label the following:

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- **Conventional:** Utilize synthetic herbicides and pesticides as needed, may use GMO seed, may or may not use synthetic fertilizers.
- **Certified Organic:** Certified Organic sellers integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity; they do not use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides except for those approved by the OMRI. Organic sellers are periodically inspected to be sure that they are complying with the organic standards set by USDA. Uncertified sellers may not use the term "organic". For more info visit: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/NOP>
- **All Natural\*:** All Natural sellers integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. All Natural sellers do not use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides except for those approved by the OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute).
  - \*The term "All Natural" is not legally defined but is agreed upon for the products sold at Acorn.
- **Integrated Pest Management:** IPM relies on a combination of common-sense practices to manage pest damage while reducing or eliminating the use of pesticides. IPM sellers may use practices like scouting and beneficial insects although at times the careful use of selective pesticides may be employed to prevent crop loss. For more info visit: <http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/factsheets/ipm.htm>
- **Environmentally Verified:** Environmentally verified sellers are farms which have been verified through the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program, and employ the latest conservation and stewardship practices with the goal of minimal impact on our environment or produce.

Animal Products: including locally raised meat, poultry, dairy (milk, butter, cheese), and eggs may be sold through Acorn. Although Acorn will accept any animal product from local sources, we prefer animal products that are humanely-raised on pasture when seasonally available. Routine use of antibiotics is discouraged. We encourage transparency and labeling of your production practices to allow the customer to make a fully informed decision.

Bakery Products: Bakery producers must include a "baked on date" on all items. Producers are responsible for knowing the shelf life of their products. Producers can either make plans to check and maintain their inventory, or submit a clear weekly schedule to the Store Manager (e.g. deliver Monday am, reduce 10% Wednesday night, pull Thursday night).

Ready to Eat, Artisanal Foods and Other Value-Added Products: Should be "made from scratch" using basic raw materials as ingredients.

Licensing & Certification: All producers must comply with local, state and federal requirements regarding the production, labeling and sale of their products. If you have questions on the appropriate licensing for your products, contact Jae Gerhart, MSU Extension Local Foods Coordinator at [gerhart1@msu.edu](mailto:gerhart1@msu.edu) or 989-430-0926.

**Guideline Review** These guidelines will be reviewed periodically and revised as needed. Acorn reserves the right to make exceptions to these guidelines at its discretion.

Thank you for your interest, and we look forward to working with you!