

## **Food Committee - 4/98**

### **Food Committee Mission Statement of the Ithaca Farmers Market:**

The Food Committee promotes and ensures the quality of food at the Ithaca Farmers Market following both the Farmers Market bylaws and New York State Health codes. We seek potential members who will increase market diversity, and offer products of high and consistent quality, originality and attractiveness. We consider flavor, visual attractiveness of product, display and booth design. We encourage potential vendors to use locally/regionally-produced ingredients that reflect the atmosphere of a Farmers' Market. We also look for vendors who participate hands-on in the production of their product. We encourage the use of the market as a business incubator and strive for diversity in the marketplace. We assist as resource for new and experienced food vendors at the market with help in merchandising and display suggestions. The Food Committee supports special market events and celebrations by helping to provide expertise in organizing the food component of these festivals. We actively seek new avenues to advertise and enhance the businesses of our food vendors and the market as a whole. We are willing to work in conjunction with other committees for a stronger farmers' market.

### **Functions of the Food Committee:**

1. Recommend jurying standards and provide guidelines for prospective food vendors and any current market member wishing to manufacture food.
2. Sample and jury food products from prospective food vendors and make membership decisions. Notify board if recommended for full membership.
3. Sample and jury food products from associate food vendors that are being considered for full membership, making recommendations to the board.
4. Work with the board and the market manager to resolve complaints and disputes in the areas of product line and food safety, or advise appropriate authorities, if necessary.
5. Be an educational resource and means for disseminating information to the vendors, the board, and where appropriate, the public.
6. Act as a resource to study market policy and bylaws concerning food-related issues, and make recommendations to the board.
7. Work with the market manager, helping her/him to be aware of her/his responsibilities on a daily and seasonal basis concerning health regulations.
8. Act as a resource to the market manager in food related issues.
9. Work as committee or with subcommittees on the food component of special market events.
10. Seek creative ways of promoting/advertising food at the Farmers' Market.
11. Tackle issues as given to the committee, by board directive.

## **Committee Membership Requirements:**

Any current Ithaca Farmers' Market vendor with an interest in enhancing the food component of the Farmers' Market, with a vision that can look at the good of the whole Market and an eye to the future is eligible. Committee membership is subject to Boards approval. We hold monthly meetings (the fourth Monday of the month), and those who have attended 3 or the year's meetings since they became a member are eligible to vote in the selection process. These names would then be submitted to the board for board approval. We select chairs or co-chairs ourselves as well as who performs other functions (i.e. note taking, coordinating an event, writing a particular piece of policy).

The committee chair should keep track of the number of hours each meeting takes and make that information available on the work recording envelopes or minutes (as directed by the board). The chair should also be aware of, but not responsible for, recording the hours of other committee members.

The board has asked for a short summary of minutes from our meetings to keep the board informed of what we're working on. We will designate a recorder to keep minutes and submit them to the board for review.

We use a simple majority vote for decisions. At the beginning of each calendar year, the committee designates a quorum necessary for making committee binding decisions and jurying decisions.

The committee may set an upper limit of members to ensure workability of the committee.

### **Flow Chart for Food Applicant Process**

Applicant contacts Market Manager

Market Manager gives Applicant Market Application and Food Committee Application

Applicant returns both applications to Market Manager

Market Manager sends Food Application to Food Committee

Applicant calls Food Committee Chairperson to set up jurying (at least 1 week in advance of meeting)

Applicant delivers samples to Food Committee meeting including:

1. samples
2. ingredients list
3. labels, if applicable
4. self-addressed, stamped envelope for Food Committee response

Food Committee meets to review application and notifies Market Manager and Board of committee recommendation

Market Manager and Board approve or reject recommendations (Applies only to Associate Food Vendors juried for full time Food Vendor)

Approved  
Food Committee sends letter to applicant

Applicant Rejected  
Food Committee sends letter to applicant  
Applicant can make appointment with Food Committee for suggestions for improvement

Accepted Applicant calls Market Manager to schedule start date and discuss space availability

Applicant sends copies of licenses to Food Committee before start date

On start date begin selling product at market  
Market Manager checks appropriate licenses

### **Criteria for Jurying an Associate Vendor**

The jury system is based on 110 points. By adding up the points per vendor, we are able to compute a quantitative placement value. This helps add objectivity to a subjective decision. The points are broken down to represent the following categories:

1. **Food Type** (up to 60 points)  
Food Type is divided into 2 sub-categories
  - a. **Category** (prepared-“ready to eat”, processed, baked)  
The goal is to have a balance of food types offered at the market. For instance, if we have more prepared foods, but are lacking in processed foods, an applicant who has a processed food item will gain more points than a prepared food applicant.
  - b. **Diversity** How unique is the product being offered?  
Applicant’s product is measured against other market offerings. If the food being offered is unique or different than other market foods, it will raise points in a “category” that is already full. The combination of “diversity:” and “category” will help define the placement value of an applicant’s product.
2. **Quality** (up to 26 points)  
Taste, balance of flavors, appearance, and marketability will all be considered during jurying. Associate vendor may be given suggestions for product improvement to help increase score and raise quality of market offerings.
3. **Seniority** (2 points/year, max. points 14)  
The Food Committee wanted to leave room for outstanding and unique foods that would benefit the market whenever it appeared. That is why seniority holds little points in as an overall factor, but can be deciding points in a close race between vendors.
4. **Market Citizenship** (up to 10 points)  
In addition, people who have already participated in the Market can acquire 10 more points here. Factors considered are Market involvement, consistency of attendance, being up-to-date on Market fees and work hours.

## **Criteria for Jurying New Applicants**

The jurying system is based on 100 points. By adding up the points per vendor, we are able to compute a quantitative placement value. This helps add objectivity to a subjective decision. Applicant must gain a total of 65 points to become a Market vendor. The points are broken down to represent the following categories:

1. **Food Type** (up to 62 points)

Food Type is divided into 2 subcategories

a. **Category** (prepared-“ready to eat”, processed, baked)

The goal is to have a balance of food types offered at the market. For instance, if we have more prepared foods, but are lacking in processed foods (e.g., pesto, jams, sauerkraut), an applicant who has a processed food item will gain more points than a prepared food applicant.

b. **Diversity** How unique is the food you’re offering? Each applicant’s product is measured against other Market offerings. If food being offered is unique or different than other Market foods, it will raise points in a “category” that is already full. The combination of “diversity:” and “category” will help define the placement value of an applicant’s product.

2. **Quality** (up to 28 points)

Taste, balance of flavors, appearance, and marketability will all be considered when jurying quality.

Fourteen of these points are needed to become a Market vendor. If points fall below fourteen, applicant will not be accepted.

3. **Professionalism** (-10-+10)

Points may be used for or against an applicant’s score when reviewing applicant’s professional manner.

This criteria would include a courteous and respectful attitude toward all Market members they come in contact with during the jurying procedure, communicating with committee members and the Market manager and keeping appointments. Because the Market is a Cooperative, mutual respect and cooperation among members is essential for Market success; therefore, applicants who seem exceptional in these areas may receive additional points and applicants that display uncooperative, abrasive or hostile attitudes can have points removed from their score. This criterion is meant to remind all applicants that the jurying procedure is the first step in creating a successful Market business and ensuring the success of the Market as a whole.

We would like to remind all potential applicants to submit your best quality products to be juried. For example, don’t bring something burnt or barely cooked. Make sure you have worked your recipe out so that the quality is consistent. When you bring your product to sample, make sure it is presented as closely as you would present it at the Market. If there are any specific points of interest you would like to point out, such as 80% homegrown or all organic, please highlight that for us on your application. The Food Committee is willing to help prospective vendors find their niche. If you do not pass the jurying process, Food Committee Members are willing to suggest ways of improvement upon request.

Please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope along with your food samples to speed up our response.

## **EXAMPLE OF POINT SYSTEM**

**John Hussien**

**Category:** Prepared Foods

Already very full category - not many points

**Diversity:** Middle Eastern Foods

Only Middle Eastern Food currently available at Market - many points 48 pts. (of 60)

**Quality:** Good flavor, spicing good. Not exceptional 23 pts. (of 26)

**Seniority:** 2 years prior selling as Associate food vendor 4 pts. (of 2 )

**Market Citizenship:** Work hours fulfilled to minimum. Fees paid 5 pts. (of 10)

**Total 80 pts. (of 110)**

**\*Recommended for full membership**

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**Food for Life Kraut Co.**

**Category:** Processed Foods

Only 1 processed food vendor at Market, so very desirable vendor

**Diversity:** Unique products, no fresh pickle or kraut. Vendor currently at Market. All vegetables homegrown. Very desirable vendor 60 pts. (of 60)

**Quality:** Excellent quality, crunchy pickles, exceptional flavor, homegrown vegetables, wholesome appearance, good marketability, nice label 26 pts. (of 26)

**Seniority:** New vendor 0 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

**Total 86 pts.**

**\*Recommended for Associate member**

**License and Permits**

All Food Vendors may need to apply for one or more of the following permits. Listed below are the various permits required by the State of New York before products may be sold at the Market. Included are addresses, phone numbers and descriptions of each permit. This will help you to decide which permits apply to your business.

**1. State New York Agricultural and Markets**

This permit applies to all vendors who sell:

- a. Baked goods
- b. All products that are canned, jarred or packaged for retail sale.

To acquire this license call: Jim Coates, phone: 844-4507

He will set up an appointment to have your kitchen inspected and approved. This license is good for two years.

All packaged items require approved labels

Labeling requirements include:

1. Name of commodity
2. Name of manufacture
3. Place of business
4. Ingredient list
5. Net quantity of contents

Labels must be approved by Ag. And Markets  
New York State Dept. of Agriculture and Markets  
Division of Food and Safety Inspection  
1 Winners Circle  
Albany, NY 12235  
Attn: Don Whitehead  
FAX: 518-485-8986

## **2. Tompkins County Health Department**

This license applies to vendors who sell:

- a. All prepared foods (“ready to eat”) i.e. lemonade, hamburgers
- b. All non-packaged foods

Applications may be submitted to:

Environmental Health Department  
401 Harris B. Dates Drive  
Ithaca, NY 14850-1385  
(607) 274-6688

Fee will be based on annual (seasonal) vending for the market season. One time only permits (such as single festival events) are also available. All Health Dept. licensed vendors will be inspected at the beginning of each market season.

## **3. Home Processing**

This license applies to vendors who:

- a. want to prepare non-hazardous foods in their homes. (List of non-hazardous foods provided on sheet labeled “Home Processors” accompanies this pamphlet.)
- b. sell baked goods that comprise less than 50% of business, i.e. an Agriculture vendor selling zucchini muffins from extra zucchini in the garden or to promote sale of zucchini.
- c. Small scale production for Farmers Market sale only

To acquire license call: Jim Coates, phone: 844-4507

Mr. Coates will set up appointment to have home kitchen inspected. A home kitchen is considered one that does not include any commercial equipment. This license is free and subject to a one time only inspection, providing business does not exceed 50% of vendor sales. Jim Coates must be notified of any additional new products.

## **4. Fire Permit**

This applies to all vendors who use a 20# propane tank or larger to fuel their cooking appliances. Permit must be submitted and fee paid before cooking at the market. A list of safety regulations accompanies the permit. Permit application available with this pamphlet. Please submit application to:

Ithaca Fire Department  
310 West Green Street  
Ithaca, NY 14850

This is an annual permit

## **5. New York State Tax and Finances**

Any vendor selling prepared foods must collect sales tax and must therefore have a tax number. This tax certificate must be displayed at your booth.

For tax application call: 1-800-225-5829

If your gross market sales tax is less than \$250 per year, you will need only to pay taxes annually, otherwise tax must be paid quarterly.

Before vendors may start selling at the Ithaca Farmers Market, all appropriate licenses and permits must be on file. Tax certificates and Health Department Permits must be displayed in your booth as per Ithaca Farmers Market Handbook, Rules and Regulations. Please feel free to consult with the Food Committee if there is any confusion regarding which licenses apply to you.

## **Other Rules and Regulations for Your Consideration**

1. The IFM reserves the right to inspect manufacturing facilities to ensure that food is produced within Market guidelines.
2. All applicable NYS Health and Safety Laws must be followed. Failure to do so could result in dismissal from the Market. We encourage vendors to obtain individual liability insurance.
3. Vendor is responsible for maintaining current Health and Fire Permits and displaying them in accordance with NYS law.
4. All applicants under the age of 18 who wish to sell food may have to meet additional state laws.
5. We wish to encourage each business owner to always be present on market days, and we wish to remind vendors that market rules require owners to be present at least 25% of all markets attended.
6. All potential food vendors must apply and complete the food review process before selling at the Market. This includes all potential Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday markets.
7. Existing food vendors who are full members (Associate members are juried again upon consideration for full membership) are exempt from product review, unless they develop a new product outside of their already produced items. New products from existing or new food vendors should not duplicate a featured product of another food vendor.
8. All existing or new agriculture or craft vendors wishing to begin or continue to sell food or drink items, as part of their business must complete the application permit and review process.
9. Each product that is wrapped or packaged must conform to NYS agriculture and Markets packaging standards. Signage must include vendor business name and location. Attractive signage for each product sold is also required and must be in accordance with general market rules.
10. You must be located within a 30 mile radius of the Ithaca Farmers Market in order to vend.
11. No purchasing of other products from outside of your business. Reselling of another's product is not permitted.
12. Please access the combined knowledge of the Food Committee for any concerns or questions regarding setting up as a first time vendor.

13. All food vendors must participate significantly (approximately 50%) in the “hands on” preparation of their food products.