



PACIFIC COAST  
FARMERS' MARKET  
ASSOCIATION

## DEAR DEB - MAY 2023



**Dear Deb:** Who gets to sell at the farmers' market? There are some regulars who are there every week and some who show up only once or twice, then disappear. --Liz S., Alameda

**Answer:** Liz, good questions! A lot of people think that farmers and other vendors just show up at a location and start selling their products, but there is so much more involved in getting a farmers' market up and running. Here is a very simplified version of the steps involved and how it all works.

At the beginning, PCFMA works with sponsors and cities to decide how and when to set up a market in a specific location. Working with these sponsors offers us a chance to create a community feel around each market that we operate while attaining the cooperation of the city itself.

Market attendees and sellers are then assigned to each market. A farmer or non-agricultural vendor (packaged foods, etc) expressing an interest in selling at the market. From there, they fill out an application, pay a fee, and let us know which markets they are interested in attending. PCFMA then decides what each of the markets needs to fill out their attendance, and the farmer/vendor is notified.

Farms and ranches wishing to sell in PCFMA markets must be located within California and be [certified](#) by their local county agricultural commissioner. Farms may only sell certified agricultural products they grow themselves.

Each attendee must follow a set of rules and regulations for participating in farmers' markets, including attendance and stall fees to be paid, assured visibility of permits and certificates stating they grew what is being sold, and that there is no reselling of product. There are also individual market rules like how and where to drop off products, what space

each vendor is allotted, procedures for the handling of produce, and much more.

Many of our farmers and other vendors have been selling with us for many, many years, while others try it for a few weeks and find that selling directly to the consumer just doesn't work for them. Farmers with seasonal fruits and vegetables also leave the markets when their produce is out of season and return when their produce returns the following year. There are also unforeseen circumstances that prohibit the farmer/vendor from attending that week, such as a truck breakdown, a family emergency, or the weather leaving them with little product to sell at the market. So you'll see changes each week as vendors come and go. This is usually a good thing because we want your farmers' markets to be a vibrant places with enthusiastic farmers and vendors who offer amazing products.

Our goal is to provide a healthy, fun environment at the markets. This is accomplished with a lot of behind-the-scenes work to make them the best we can for your shopping ease. Shop your local market and remember that things change with the seasons!

TAGS