

Indy Winter Farmers Market Criteria for Vendor Selection

The Indy Winter Farmers Market is an initiative of Growing Places Indy Inc. Our mission is to empower individuals and communities to Grow Well, Eat Well, Live Well and Be Well. The IWFM provides a venue for directly connecting farmers and producers to the community and visitors, enabling personal relationships in the exchange of vegetables, fruit, meat, baked goods, herbs, natural cleaning products and other locally produced food, garden and household products. The IWFM supports family farms, encourages sustainable farmland preservation and urban agriculture, delivers seasonal and local products to the Indianapolis community, and raises awareness of social and environmental considerations related to food. The IWFM encourages local entrepreneurship, a growing food culture, and educational exchange toward the improvement of quality of life and experience for Indianapolis residents and visitors.

General Acceptance Criteria:

The IWFM is committed to bringing together a diverse range of the highest quality, locally produced food and goods from Indiana's growers and producers. IWFM is also committed to educating patrons and encouraging growers and producers to expect, demand, supply, and support the production of "Good, Clean and Fair Food" in their community.

Toward these goals, the IWFM will use the following general criteria, as well as other factors, in evaluating vendor applications. IWFM reserves unconditional discretion to accept or refuse anyone as an IWFM vendor.

IWFM Vendor Methods of Selection and Expectations:

- IWFM must always consider product balance and space availability when evaluating vendor applications.
- In addition to the guidelines below, priority is given to products that are unique or unusual, and products that are not already represented in the market. Duplicate products may be denied entry, or offered waitlist standing.
- All vendors are expected to provide consistently high product quality, as well as clean, attractive, and informative displays.
- All vendors are expected to present themselves and their products courteously, to offer quality customer service, and to provide honest, transparent and straightforward information for customers and market management about products, farming, production, and processing practices.
- All vendors are expected to help foster the relationship between producers and consumers that creates loyalty and sustainability in local buying practices.
- All vendors are expected to complete anonymous weekly surveys for reporting market sales. This information is crucial to the IWFM's ability to continue to operate and accept EBT sales, as well as to maintain regular market operations.
- All accepted vendors must provide proof of their own liability insurance and any applicable licenses by the first market day, or risk expulsion from the IWFM.

Returning Vendors:

Returning vendors will be prioritized with consideration given to the following:

- History of compliance with IWFM regulations and criteria, as well as adherence to federal, state and local regulations
- Local sourcing of ingredients and products
- Positive conduct toward customers, fellow vendors, market management and volunteers
- Length of time the applicant has been a vendor at the IWFM
- History of timely submissions of application, licenses, billing, surveys, and payments

Growers and Producers of Agricultural and Animal Products:

- Vendors admitted as Growers and Producers of agricultural and animal products may only bring to market and sell products that are grown/raised and harvested on land that they own and operate. Re-selling will not be permitted, without explicit special consent from the IWFM Director.
- Priority will be given to growers and producers who use sustainable, environmentally responsible, and ethical practices for growing, breeding, raising, harvesting, and processing. These practices include but are not limited to: chemical-free growing, production and transport; organic practices; animals fed and cared for according to their natural habits and biology; hormone and antibiotic-free animals and meat; and practices that work toward a sustainable, environmentally responsible, ethically-minded and community-oriented food system.
- Whole food products will have priority over processed or prepared foods.
- IWFM expects growers and producers to adhere to the highest standards in safe food production, handling, sampling and labeling as applicable.

Processed and Prepared Food Vendors:

Producers of value-added farm foods, non-farm processed foods, and hot, edible foods prepared on site are additionally evaluated on factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- Priority is given to producers who are using local sources for available ingredients, either those bought directly from the producers of these ingredients, or grown by the producer. Sourcing from sustainable local producers, including other IWFM vendors is strongly encouraged. IWFM staff is available to assist vendors in finding more local sources for their products.
- Products should reflect and educate customers on seasonal availability.
- Re-selling will not be permitted, without explicit special consent from the IWFM Director. Please contact IWFM management for clarification of these criteria for any product.
- IWFM encourages producers of artisan quality products that are unique, handmade, use traditional skills and production methods, especially those that offer our customers quality experiences of flavor, smell and texture sensations.
- Priority is given to producers offering products other than baked goods, candies, and desserts. Within these categories, priority is given to exceptionally unique or artisan products.
- IWFM expects producers to meet all legal requirements for labeling and packaging, to adhere to all state and county regulations, licensing and fees. IWFM expects producers to adhere to the highest standards in safe food production, handling, sampling and labeling as applicable. Accepted vendors must provide proof of their own liability insurance and any applicable licenses by the first market day, or forfeit participation in the IWFM until such licenses are provided.
- IWFM encourages producers to package and label in such a way as to reduce environmental impact, to minimize waste, and to differentiate from commercial style packaging.

Non-Food Products:

- All non-food products must be applicable as products for daily living, and must provide a more socially and/or environmentally responsible alternative to other available products. IWFM encourages vendors to demonstrate to the greatest extent local sources in as many aspects of their product or production as possible.
- Re-selling will not be permitted, without explicit special consent from the IWFM Director.
- Decorative craft or jewelry products are not accepted to the IWFM.