

2021 Farmer's Market Operators Virtual Meeting

April 1, 2021

AGENDA

1. Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping (Ash Richards, PPR, and Jen Aquilante, Health-CDIP)
2. Review of Farmer's Market Guidelines and Registration Process (Dawn Kiesewetter, Health-EHS)
3. Other tips on operating during COVID/operating in general (Ash)
4. Operator Spotlight: Alex Epstein from Philly Urban Creators
5. Other updates (Jen)
 - a. USDA/PA DHS Grant for free EBT equipment for markets
 - b. Online SNAP purchasing
 - c. Market signage
6. Feedback from operators/Questions
7. Closing/thank you

Meeting Notes and Q/A Responses

1. Review of Farmers' Market registration process, guidelines and new COVID operating plan (Dawn Kiesewetter, Health Dept, Office of Food Protection)
 - a. Considering a certificate to formally document registration approval- something similar to operating eligibility certificate for vendors- still deciding if will have the name of the market and all vendors or just have market; approved vendors would be in the email from Dawn
 - i. Brielle from The Food Trust suggested that it could be easier to just put the name of market since their markets have multiple vendors- harder to continue to update that
 - b. None of the Covid-related guidance has really changed- still no sampling/demos on-site
 - c. Will keep us updated if any changes are anticipated as infections decrease and vaccines increase that would impact guidelines
 - d. COVID operating plan is required this year in addition to the farmers' market registration form; asking this of other food vendors/establishments as well; not meant to be a burden- many are already doing what is asked, just want to know a little more about it;
 - i. Dawn will work with operators, reach out directly if concerns/questions
 - ii. No specific deadline for submitting the plan, if you already submitted your registration Dawn will reach out for the COVID plan
 - iii. If operate multiple markets, only need to submit one plan for all markets if all are operated basically the same; if some markets differ, just note what is different

- e. Prepared food/mobile vendors/food truck guidance- Dawn will vet this internally with her team but the general guidance is these are allowed but should offer to-go option only, no eating on-site within the market; customers should take food and sit somewhere outside the market; typically there would be seating areas at events where eating would be allowed, but don't have that at farmers' markets; general rule of thumb- eating while seated, not while walking around market
 - i. Signage could help with this messaging- Jen and Ash will look into creating some signs for this
 - ii. Dawn will keep us updated if this guidance changes as more things open up and restrictions are lifted
 - f. Guidance about non-food vendors- are permitted but still need to follow COVID protocols- wear masks, maintain 6ft distance, avoid crowding
 - g. Did create signage for masks and other COVID restrictions last year, will re-send to group after the call
 - h. Cost of maintaining COVID protocols at markets- some operators reported losses last year due to increased costs from extra staff time to maintain safety protocols, are there any resources available to help small businesses? there may be some programs via Commerce-- not sure how/if they apply to farmers markets but Dawn will reach out to Commerce to see & pass along to the group
 - i. Dogs on leashes at market- dogs technically not allowed at markets and other dining establishments, unless service dogs; there are concerns with aggressive dogs, dogs biting people, sniffing produce; can be confrontational for market managers to tell customers they can't bring dogs into the market; how to best discourage without causing confrontations??
 - i. Difficult to enforce, can't force people to do it, but operators can choose not to serve people with dogs; same with masks- no mask, no service
 - ii. Each market may choose to handle it differently but all vendors at a market should be doing the same thing
 - iii. Signage could be helpful- point to signs to try to avoid confrontations- Jen and Ash will add to list to create
 - iv. Farmers' markets can also add it to their own promotional materials, websites or social media so customers know in advance
 - v. Reach out to ACCT Philly to see if they have assistance/support/resources they could provide
2. Pro tips/best practices for operating markets during COVID (Ash Richards, PPR)
- a. Crowd control- staggered, use signage, social distance
 - b. Signage- point to signs, multi-lingual signage
 - c. Separate entrance/exit- one directional flow
 - d. Cashier- use touchless methods- apple pay, square; give cashiers time to wash/sanitize hands
 - e. Bagging/shopping- think about how to keep contact low; avoid customers touching produce; select for them
 - f. Make sure to give staff plenty of breaks to wash hands especially those in high contact areas

- g. Know the difference between cleaning and disinfecting
 - h. Hand washing stations/restrooms- locate at beginning of market so don't have to walk through whole market to use
 - i. No cooking demos/sampling allowed
 - j. Pre-ordering/pre-payment- offer these options if possible and also ensure that offer same options for SNAP customers
 - k. Lines- use tape/cones to delineate space; re-design flow to L-shape or single line; no circles or parallel lines
 - l. If suspect someone is sick, pull off to the side, call for help or connect them with family/friend
 - m. Limit number of people allowed in market at a time or at a vendor table at a time
 - n. Consider space available- fit vendors to the space, maintain 6ft distance, may need to prioritize vendors if can't accommodate with space available; if need to prioritize vendors consider fresh produce/seeds/starter, then packaged foods, then wellness products, then non-food products/alcohol/flowers
 - o. Pay it forward- have options for low income residents- food box shares or donations; keep equity in mind, have similar options for SNAP customers, if give out vouchers don't require participation in any activity, just give out
 - p. Offer delivery options- Urban Tree Connection offered this last year- door-to-door food drop-offs- great way to serve the community
3. Urban Creators (Alex Epstein and Tyler Ray- co-founders)
- a. Founded in 2010, Life.Do.Grow Farm in N. Philly at 11th and York St- Community farm and art education space
 - b. Intersection of food, art, education and organizing
 - c. Wanted to be open to changing needs of the community, meet people where are, find a way to support community
 - d. Hartranft neighborhood- 20 min walk to supermarket, more elderly residents without cars; find a way to bring food to them
 - e. Started mobile markets in April 2020- 7 across N. Philly, different locations
 - i. Provided more fresh produce
 - ii. Gave out other items, masks
 - iii. Supplemented with food from SHARE, donations
 - iv. Partnered with catering company to make prepared meals
 - v. Ran for about 6 months
 - f. Back to neighborhood market at farm- community resource, followed COVID protocols- time-scheduled entrance, temperature checks, masks; also held Zumba classes, hosted local entrepreneurs
 - g. Plan to start market up again every Wednesday
 - h. Address land access/ownership- not land secure, they lease their land from the city, in process of applying to Land Bank for land ownership
 - i. Want to engage neighborhood in longer term vision of how to use land and space as evolving asset and resource, build sovereignty
 - j. This was a learning process on all levels, mobile market really allowed them to build relationships throughout the neighborhood

- k. Ash also shared about the Urban Agriculture public meeting # 2- will share links- voices of operators will be important: <https://sites.google.com/interface-studio.com/publicmeeting2/home?authuser=0>
- 4. SNAP updates (Jen Aquilante)
 - a. Free wireless EBT equipment is available through grant with state- call Conduent or reach out to DHS contact Tonya Holloway, EBT Project Officer, toholloway@pa.gov or 717-787-3617
 - b. Online SNAP purchasing for retailers- farmers' Markets are considered retailers but none are doing it yet, will keep tabs and share info as it comes
- 5. Grant opportunities
 - a. The Food Trust- PA Fresh Food Financing Initiative Grant/Loan Application: <http://thefoodtrust.org/pafffi/apply>
 - b. PA Dept of Agriculture Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant <https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Pages/Urban-Agriculture-Infrastructure-Grants.aspx>
 - c. AARP grant <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2021/2021-challenge.html>