

April 10, 2020

****Current Vermont Farmers Market Guidance****

After further consultation with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), farmers markets are still not permitted under the terms of the current Stay Home/Stay Safe executive order. Having said that, the State and many of its wonderful farmers markets have been discussing potential mechanisms for markets to operate during this public health crisis, and we expect to allow some form of a farmers market in the very near future. We very much appreciate everyone's commitment and dedication to our farmers and communities, your passion for maintaining wholesome local food supplies, and your ingenuity and concern for your neighbors.

As we believe you all know, the State is acutely aware that farmers markets are vital to communities throughout Vermont and incredibly important to the viability of our farmers. Without an available cure, maintaining separation is our best strategy to prevent COVID-19 from overwhelming our health workers and health system, and causing even more severe health-related consequences. We all look forward to the moment when farmers markets can bring people together again – and we'll do that as soon as safely possible.

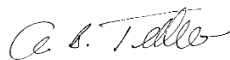
While farmers markets are temporarily closed, farmers can and should continue selling food to consumers. Farms are critically important and agriculture continues. Indeed, farmers' contributions are self-evident in this time of need. Farmers can and should sell food through farm stands (with appropriate social distancing), online food sales, phone orders, curbside pick-up, and delivery. CSAs are also explicitly listed as a critical service and it is important that they continue as mechanisms for connecting consumers with local food. The goal is to maintain local food production and supply while preventing the person-to-person contact that spreads the coronavirus.

We recognize the stark change from normal procedures and the enormous related challenges, but we believe that our citizens, farmers markets, and farmers will work together creatively to facilitate ongoing access to fresh Vermont food.

This is an extraordinarily challenging time and a very fluid situation that is changing daily. The sacrifices necessary to protect our collective health are—at least temporarily—altering the very fabric of our society. We hope—and expect—to return to our farmers markets and their many amazing attributes as soon as possible.

Thank you so much for your important work and for your understanding. Most importantly, be well and be safe.

Sincerely,



Anson Tebbetts
Secretary

