



# 2024 MERCHANT HANDBOOK



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***Our Merchant Handbook is to  
inform market merchants of  
the Ocean Pines  
Farmers & Artisans Market's rules,  
procedures & policies.***

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## **About the Farmers & Artisans Market**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is Worcester County Maryland's largest year-round Farmers & Artisans Market. This community-oriented market is held in White Horse Park on Saturdays under majestic shade trees. Throughout the year, the market is home to hundreds of merchants, artisans and community partners. The established Farmers & Artisans Market attracts a customer following from all over the county and beyond.

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is a place where merchants, artisans and community partners can interact with customers in a colorful, exciting, family-friendly atmosphere that mimics the open-air village markets popular throughout Europe. Live music, and special events are just a part of what takes place weekly at this popular Delmarva MarketPlace

### **Our Mission**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market operates as a market that contributes to the success of local foods, growers, producers, small businesses and artisans. Each market day's goal is to create a vibrant community gathering. The market builds, nourishes and inspires community. As an innovative market, the success for our merchants is our primary objective. Listening to and learning from our merchants and shoppers produces an outstanding Farmers & Artisans Market where merchants prosper and communities thrive.

### **Our Strategy**

It all starts with a strong foundation. The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is a market that invests in its merchants and volunteers. This strong base allows us to lead in the local Farmers & Artisans Market community. We are an organization that attracts shoppers to the marketplace, allowing our merchants to prosper. We are committed to providing business acceleration opportunities such as continually expanding the marketplace with a unique merchant selection, educational opportunities, events and a diversified shopper base.

## MARKET HOURS

### **Saturday Market - Spring & Summer**

Location:

White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway,  
Ocean Pines, MD 21811

Dates: March through September

Hours: 8am to 1pm

### **Saturday Market – Fall & Winter**

Location:

White Horse Park, 239 Ocean Parkway,  
Ocean Pines, MD 21811

Dates: October through February

Hours: 9am to 1pm



## **MERCHANT SELECTION**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is committed to creating a diverse market-place featuring the region's best merchants with the highest quality and locally-produced products when available.

### **Application Considerations**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market will not be bound to apply a particular set of selection criteria in every instance and reserves unconditional discretion to accept or refuse anyone as an Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market merchant.

### **Product Balance**

Priority may be given to unique or unusual products not already represented in the market.

### **Market Needs**

The market seeks merchants with products that complement the market for a well-rounded product balance.

### **Exclusivity**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market reserves the rights to extend exclusive rights to any one merchant to sell any one product. However, if the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market believes the number of merchants offering the same or similar products is excessive, duplicate products may be denied entry.

### **Conduct**

The history of compliance with market rules and state and local regulations is considered along with the market attendance of a returning merchant. The payment history of fees and the adherence to the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market policy prohibiting negative influential views are also reviewed.

### **Product Quality**

Merchants should offer consistently high product quality, including product freshness, selection and appeal. A clean market booth and attractive displays are also crucial.

### **Seniority**

The number of years a merchant has continuously sold at the market with a positive attendance record and the history of compliance with market rules will be considered.

**Requirements**

All prospective merchants must complete and sign an Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market Merchant Application. Merchants must read the entire merchant handbook before the start of their season to ensure a full understanding of the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market policies and updated materials.

**Food Trucks**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market encourages Food Trucks to offer freshly prepared foods and drinks for sale at the Market, subject to applicable health codes and the discretion of the Market management. The seller must abide by the applicable Health Department regulations and must obtain all necessary inspections and permits. As food items are only intended to add interest to the Market, the number of food vendors can be limited according to the discretion and judgment of the Market management.

**Direct Sales Policy**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market does not recognize Direct Sales Companies and their representatives as eligible to participate or sell product at the Ocean Pines market.

Current Direct Sales merchants enrolled in the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market prior to the 2021 policy change will be grandfathered into participation until such a time the merchant withdraws or doesn't complete the yearly renewal process.

**Prospective Merchant Waiting List**

A waiting list of prospective new merchants will be maintained by the Market. This list will be made up of prospective merchants that have applied for participation, but have not been approved because of a product or space conflict or another concern of the market management or Market manager(s). Placement on the prospective merchant list is not a confirmation of approval to vend at the marketplace. An updated application maybe required at a later time.



## **MARKET POLICIES**

As a valued Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market merchant, you and your at-market staff are responsible for reading, understanding and following all applicable market rules, policies and regulations pertaining to your business category. This includes regulations and policies set by applicable local and state agencies. Following the rules helps keep the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market a vibrant and viable community asset with the highest degree of integrity.

Complying with the rules makes you a “merchant in good standing.” Actions and behavior that result in non-compliance with market rules will result in a range of consequences, including warnings, probation and suspension.

### **Right to Amend**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market, its market manager and the Ocean Pines administration reserves the right to amend this Merchant Handbook at anytime without prior notice and without the consent of any person or entity for the purpose to amend, alter, change or repeal the provision within the Merchant Handbook now and hereafter prescribed by law.

### **Market Opening and Closing (Vehicle Gates)**

All merchant vehicle gates to the White Horse Park marketplace are opened at 6:30 a.m. and close at 7:45 a.m., in-season, March through September; and 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m., off-season, October through February.

If the merchant arrives after the gates are closed and locked - we'll see you on the date of your next reservation. We cannot unlock the gates once locked; for the safety of the patrons walking in the market and by the orders of the Ocean Pines Police Department. We ask that you please plan accordingly. Driving around the gate is an offence of market rules, and can result in a fine or expulsion from the market.

All merchants must be in place, set up and ready to sell by 7:45 a.m. in-season / 8:45 a.m. off-season. Merchants must remain set up until the close of market. The merchant vehicle gates re-opens at 1:00 p.m. for the departure of merchants. Please drive carefully through the White Horse Park campus parking lot.

No vehicles are permitted to travel within the market during the hours the market is open. In the event the merchant sells out of product, they must remain set up and in place until the close of market.

If the merchant knows in advance that they will need to leave early, the merchant may ask to be assigned a “visiting merchant location” that is near to the merchant vehicle gate. In the event of a late arrival or an emergency departure, the merchant must contact a member of the market’s management team

## **Merchant Severability Clause**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market reserves the right to prohibit anyone from selling at the Market, or to prohibit any product from being sold there. These determinations will be made based upon market demand, applicable laws and health codes, as well as the rules of the Ocean Pines Farmers Artisans & Farmers Market. Rules and regulations are subject to change for “special event” days and/or at the discretion and judgment of the Market management and/or Market Manager(s).

## **Certifications and Licenses**

Merchant must provide the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market with copies of any certifications and licenses applicable to the sale of their products. Examples are eggs, meat, poultry and seafood seller licenses and/or certifications.

Updated certificates and license(s) must be submitted with the application package each year of participation.

If a certification and or license renews within a market year the merchant is required give the market manager and updated copy of their new license no later than 30 days past the expiration date of the license expiring within the current market year.

## **Compliance and Enforcement**

The market manager and his/her designee may, with or without notice, evaluate merchant booths for the market’s compliance requirements and assess penalties.

## **Honorable Marketing**

Merchants are not permitted to use the following techniques while at the market: hawking, calling attention to products in a loud, repetitive public manner or selling products in an aggressive way.

## **Pricing**

Pricing of goods sold at the market is solely the responsibility of the individual merchant. Fraudulent, dishonest, or collusion to set prices among merchants may be grounds for forfeiture of the right to do business at the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market.

## **Health and Safety Regulations**

It is the responsibility of each merchant to abide by all local, state and federal regulations which govern the sampling, production, labeling, or safety of the product the merchant offers for sale at the market. Failure to comply may result in forfeiture of the merchant's participation at the market. If you have any questions on this matter, please speak with the Market Manager, the Worcester County Health Department, The Maryland State Health Department, The Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Weights and Measures or the appropriate authorities. All processed foods must comply with all applicable local, state and federal health and safety regulations.

## **Attendance**

### **Attendance Sign-in Sheet Requirement**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market tracks merchant attendance with a sign-in sheet.

Each market day, participating merchants enter their name, business name and sign the sheet, as verification of attendance. A missed entry will signal an absence of the merchant from the market day.

The log book with the sign-in sheet will be found on a small table next to the Green Market electrical panel box. In season the log is available from 6:30am to 1:30pm and off-season from 7:30am to 1:30pm.

### **Full-Time Merchant: (Resident Merchant & Peak Season Merchant)**

For Residents Merchants January & February attendance is optional. If you wish to opt out of January & and/or February you must notify the market management team at [OPFAMarketPlace@gmail.com](mailto:OPFAMarketPlace@gmail.com) one week in advance (the Saturday before)

The exceed abused from this do not count against your merchant plan however rates for the market are not adjustable.

Attendance tracking begins with the first scheduled market day in March for Resident Merchants. However for your for January and/or February to not count against the merchant you must notify the market in the time stated above.

Resident Merchants are allowed 10 excused absences from March through December.

Peak Season Merchants are allowed 5 excused absences from May through September.

No merchant may accrue non used absences and move them into the next calendar year.

All Resident & Peak Season Merchants must notify the Market Manager 7 business days in advance of a market day they will miss. Notification must be done by email to [OPFAMarketPlace@gmail.com](mailto:OPFAMarketPlace@gmail.com). The fine for failure to notify the Market Manager of an absence will be charged a fine at the rate of \$25.00.

### **Excessive Absences:**

Resident and Peak Season Merchants with unexcused missed market days will forfeit their rights to their current merchant space and/or could have their market merchant status revoked.

### **Day Merchant Scheduling Process:**

Day Merchants schedule and pre-pay for all participation dates in advance of market days using the current years "Day Merchant Reservation and Payment form".

The scheduling form must be submitted with payment one week (7 Days) prior to the requested participation dates.

Completed forms may be hand delivered to the market manager at the marketplace on Saturday mornings with a check or the market's on-time credit card processing form.

The form can be emailed to [opfamarketplace@gmail.com](mailto:opfamarketplace@gmail.com). Emailed forms must be accompanied with the market's one-time credit card/debit card processing form.

Payment in full must accompany the form for all scheduled dates.

The form must be completed in full, or it will be rejected and returned to the merchant.

A Reservation Confirmation email will be sent to the email address on file when a scheduling request form is received and the reservation(s) have been confirmed by the market.

A Merchant Space Assignment email will be sent by email the week of each individual scheduled market reservation. The notice will include an assigned marketplace section and the space assignment for the merchant, on each individual scheduled market date. This email will be sent no later than 5 pm of the Wednesday of the week of the reservation.

### **Day Merchant Waiting List**

From time-to-time throughout the year, the Market may use a waiting list for select market days, when all current allotted merchant spaces have been filled.

Here's how this waiting list process works:

When twelve (12) merchants have been placed on an select market date waiting list, a new section will be added to the marketplace floor plan with those twelve merchants for that date.

This waiting list process can repeat three times for each date, with an additional section opening with the twelve merchant requirement.

Upon scheduling, merchants will receive an email confirmation of the date(s) that have been requested with the status listed (confirmation or waiting list) for each date requested. The response will come within 48 hours of the merchants emailed request for a marketplace space.

### **Canceling Your Market Reservation(s): All Merchants**

All Merchants must notify the Market Manager 7 days (the Saturday before the scheduled visit) in advance of a market day they will miss. Notification must be done by email to [OPFAMarketPlace@gmail.com](mailto:OPFAMarketPlace@gmail.com). The fine for failure to notify the Market Manager of an absence will be charged a fine at the rate of \$25.00.

### **Weather Cancellation**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is an open-air market and our policy is not to close the market due to weather unless it is determined that it will be unsafe for merchants, volunteers and customers. The market relies on several weather predictors to make the best decision for the safety of the market. The market manager will communicate any market closures to all affected merchants with the most notice possible. Market closings will be posted on the market's website, social media accounts and email blast to all market merchants.

## **Merchant Fees & Quota's for 2024**

New Application Processing Fee: \$25.00

Resident Merchant Package:

January 1 to December 31, 2024 Fee: \$500.00

Peak Season Merchant Package:

May 1 to September 30, 2024 Fee: \$450.00

Post-season buyout: \$150.00

Day Merchant Package:

Daily: \$30.00 Fee quota: \$600.00

## **Receipts for Merchant Payments**

Merchant payments receipts may be picked up from the market between 11:00 am and 12:00 pm. Please see your Market Manager for your receipt.

## **No Refund Policy**

Refunds will not be given to merchants who violate market rules, who are subject to disciplinary action, or who are asked to leave the Market by the Market management and/or Market manager(s).

Refunds are not given to a merchant that withdrawals or cancel(s) their participation at the market.

The \$25.00 application fee is non-refundable.

## **THE MERCHANT**

### **Contact Information**

The market will not release any personal merchant information to the public. If requested, the market will forward the inquiring party's contact information to the market merchant.

### **Customer Service and Courtesy**

While at the market, merchants are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times, behaving courteously toward other market merchants, customers, management and volunteers.

Merchants may not publicly disparage other merchants, volunteers, management, customers, market products or the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market.

### **Protocol for Grievances**

Complaints or problems should be directed to the market manager in a timely manner that is not disruptive to the market. Merchants who have concerns regarding other merchants' compliance, safety or policies should complete a merchant concern form. Forms will be available from the market manager. The market manager will review each concern form and the concerned merchant will receive a specific response within 14 business days.

### **Change or Addition to Product**

To add or change merchandise other than the product(s) approved on the merchant's current application, the merchant must submit to the market manager a Product Change Form. The form must clearly indicate the type of new product(s) the merchant is requesting to add or change at their Ocean Pines Marketplace business.

The Market and/or Market manager(s) will decide if additional products may be sold by a merchant, or if the request will be held on a waiting list, until the additional product is needed in the market.

Submission of the Product Change form is not a guarantee of approval. New product(s) may not be displayed or sold at the marketplace until approval is received in writing from the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market. The review process can take up to 14 business days.



## THE MARKET BOOTH

### **Booth Components**

Merchants supply their own market booth, including tables, tent/canopy/umbrella and coverings. The booth and tables must not be a hazard to the public or other merchants.

All merchants must use a 10x10 tent or canopy. The color of the tent or canopy is optional. Request to use multiple or larger tent or canopy sizes must be presented in writing to the market manager for approval.

A market booth must include a table when merchandise is to be displayed. Merchandise may not be displayed solely on the ground. Large items, such as pumpkins, large art or furniture, can be placed on the ground. No part of a booth set-up may extend into the common customer traffic areas.

### **Weights**

All tents/canopies/umbrellas and other booth coverings are required to have weights (minimum ten pounds) securely attached to each leg. This rule is strictly enforced for every market day, no matter the predicted, perceived or actual weather.

### **Vehicle**

Only one merchant vehicle is permitted to be parked at the merchants assigned location; for the duration of the market day. All additional vehicles belonging to the merchant and their employee or staff must be parked in the designated area for merchant vehicles outside of the marketplace.

If more than one vehicle is used to bring product to the marketplace, the second vehicle must be promptly unloaded at the merchant location, and immediately removed from the marketplace. Unloading vehicles cannot block the market pathways or other merchant spaces. All merchants must be able to travel within the marketplace to access assigned locations, for setup without delay. All non-permitted vehicles must be removed from the marketplace prior to 7:45 a.m.

### **Trailer or Alternate Vehicle Type**

Merchants that use a trailer to transport merchandise and/or set up to the market or another vehicle type as a merchant booth must apply for approval at time of scheduling participation. The marketplace has limited merchant spaces to accommodate these larger vehicle requirements. Onsite requests are not subject to approval. Failure to schedule for a trailer / alternate vehicle space could result in losing the location reservation for the market day. To schedule a trailer/alternate vehicle:

Day Merchants schedule at the time of reservation.

Peak Season Merchants & Resident Merchants must notify the Market Manager 7 days (the Saturday before the scheduled visit) in advance or at the time of submitting a merchant application.

### **Trip Hazards**

Merchants are responsible for ensuring that booth set-up, equipment, electrical cords, back-stock and all products do not pose safety hazards to anyone on premises.

### **Assigned Location**

Resident Merchants & Peak Season Merchants are assigned a location by the market management. Authorization from the market management is required to change a merchant's location. Change in a merchant's assigned market booth space may occur at the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market's discretion.

Day Merchants please see Day Merchant Scheduling Process on Page 12.

### **Booth and Product Identification**

All merchant booths must have professional signage that clearly displays their business name. All signs must be professional in appearance. Signs should be posted by the opening of the market day and remain posted until the market closes.

All descriptions of products must be accurate and truthful. All items for sale must be clearly marked with the retail price. Prices may be posted on the product with an individual sign or posted as a list of prices on a large sign board, flyer/handout or catalog.

## **Trash Disposal**

All trash generated by merchants must be removed at the end of the day. A trash dumpster is located behind the Ocean Pines Community Center for easy disposal. Trash receptacles in the market are for customer use only.

Before leaving the market, all merchants must check their booth spaces ensuring that all litter, produce and other product debris are removed.

## **Electricity**

Electrical service is available at select locations at the Farmers & Artisans Market. Request for electrical service should be made to the Market Manager at the time of application. Access to electricity is not guaranteed and provided at Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market's discretion. Merchants approved to use electrical power are responsible for providing their own outdoor extension cords and mats to cover all portions of the cord.

Merchants may use a generator. The generator should be placed away from the public areas to prevent a noise concern. Mats need to cover all portions of extension cords coming from the generator.

## **Transfer of Market Booth Space**

Merchants may not sublet or loan a market booth space to others. If a merchant sells his or her business, the space does not transfer to the new business owner. The new owner must submit an application for approval. The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market does not guarantee acceptance.

## **Music at Market Booth**

Merchants are permitted to play low-volume "soft" music at their market booth. The music should not interfere with the market or other merchants or offend customers.

## **Merchandising and Product Display**

All tables or display surfaces must be dressed with an attractive, clean covering, such as fabric, tablecloths, or vinyl tablecloths. Commercial work tarps or painting drop cloths are not considered appropriate table coverings.

## **MARKET PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The market has several sources to help promote the market and our merchants, including a website, social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram) and publications. These powerful marketing tools promote our market and merchants by alerting customers about in-season crops, new artisan items, special deals, and by showcasing the farmers, food producers, artisans and small businesses who bring their products to our market.

### **Website**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market's web page at [www.oceanpines.org](http://www.oceanpines.org) garners thousands of visits each month and showcases what's fresh at market, merchant product profiles and event(s) information.

### **Social Media**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is a leader in using social media to build an online community. The market's Facebook, and Instagram feeds reach an audience of market followers from all over Delmarva and beyond. The market's Facebook page received 1<sup>st</sup> place honors in 2015 from the Maryland Parks & Recreation Association. If your business is listed on Facebook or Instagram, please let us know so we can "Like" and follow you.

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market does not accept prewritten material, graphics or share post from "others" to our social media accounts.

The format of what and how the Market post or shares on its social media accounts is at the total discretion of the Market. The Market is the sole operator, and makes no promises or guarantees to what will be shared on its social media accounts.

### **The Market E-News Letter**

The Market E-News Letter circulates monthly to bring updates by email to communicate market news, policy changes and other information relevant to our market community. Merchants are expected to read these communications thoroughly as they contain important and time-sensitive information.

### **Newsletter, Activity Guide and This Week In Ocean Pines Email Blast**

Quarterly, the Ocean Pines Association publishes a community newsletter and an activity guide. The newsletter features articles about the market, including spotlights on events and merchants. The activity guide also shares select events and happenings taking place at the market.

## **Print and Broadcast Media**

The Ocean Pines Association purchases print advertising with local publishers including newspapers, magazines and direct mail services. Commercials are also placed with radio, TV and closed-circuit cable broadcast media.

All of these channels of communication have proven effective in reaching potential customers and can work in concert with your own marketing efforts or provide helpful support while you are building your own web presence. As an Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market merchant, we invite you to take advantage of these tools, though it is up to you to inform us of the news and information you would like us to share with our readers.

### **Social Media Accounts**

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/OceanPinesFarmersArtisansMarketplace](http://www.facebook.com/OceanPinesFarmersArtisansMarketplace)

X (Previously Twitter): @OPfarmersMkt

Website: [www.oceanpines.org](http://www.oceanpines.org)

Instagram: @oceanpinesfarmersmarket

Threads: @oceanpinesfarmersmarket

## **THE FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET**

### **The Market Stage**

Music at the market provides enjoyable entertainment, creates a festive atmosphere and builds community. The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market schedules musical acts and disc jockeys for the market.

If a merchant, artisan or community partner has a concern with the entertainment scheduled by the market, the concern should be addressed to a member of the market management team. Do not approach the entertainment with your concern.

## **Volunteers**

Our volunteer group, *The Friends of the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market*, is a group of very special folks; we appreciate their service and we couldn't operate the market without them. You can't miss them – they will be wearing a blue apron and a giant smile! Volunteers donate their personal time to support our merchants and help the market by staffing the Market Information Booth, supervising kids' activities, organizing market events and assisting with other market tasks. Annually, the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market volunteers contribute over 1,000 hours to the market. You can follow our volunteers at [www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheOceanPinesFarmersMarket](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheOceanPinesFarmersMarket)

## **Pets in the Market**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market is a pet-friendly market. Dogs are to be kept on a short leash and kept under control at the owner's side at all times. Dogs are to be friendly with other dogs and people. A pet owner needs to be considerate of those who do not wish to be in contact with dogs or other animals. Owners must clean up after pets.

## **Buskers**

Buskers are permitted at select Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market locations as space allows. They are asked to check in at the Market Information Booth and adhere to assigned locations within the market footprint.

Electronic amplification is not allowed nor is any disruptive performance that impedes communication between merchants and customers. Merchants are encouraged to communicate with Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market staff if these guidelines are not being followed by an individual busker.

## **PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

Market programs and special events are the vehicles for enhancing the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market's educational experience. The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market believes if the market is to continue to grow and flourish it is critical to educate consumers on the value of supporting regional agriculture, artisans and small businesses. Funding for these activities is raised through sponsors, fundraisers and in-kind donations. In addition, volunteers give countless hours of their time to ensure the success of these events.

### **Community Corner and Non-Profit Organizations**

Community groups, civic and non-profit organizations may apply for booth space. Interested groups will need to fill out our Community Corner application. Applications will be carefully reviewed by Market management to determine if the missions, goals, and objectives of the applicant are consistent with those of the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market.

### **Themed Market Days**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market celebrates seasonal foods with demonstrations, children's activities, recipes and other educational activities at the market. They serve as both promotional and educational opportunities, drawing people to the market to learn firsthand the benefits of supporting regional agriculture and eating local.

### **Holiday Farmers & Artisans Markets**

The market celebrates many of the major holidays throughout the year. A spring Easter Market is followed by busy summer holiday markets that include Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day. As the calendar turns to fall, the market moves ahead to celebrate with a fall Halloween market and Delmarva's largest Thanksgiving Farmers & Artisans Market which welcomes the opening of all the traditional winter holiday markets including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and the New Year. Holiday markets often include special events and activities to promote shopping with our merchants.

## **MARKET CURRENCY**

### **ATM**

An on-site ATM is available in the lobby of the Ocean Pines Association Administration Building, adjacent to White Horse Park.

### **WIC and SNAP**

All Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market merchants selling eligible products are encouraged to participate in the Maryland SNAP and WIC programs. To apply to be eligible to accept checks contact The Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Maryland Department of Agriculture at (410) 841-5776.



## **MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT OF COMPLIANCE RULES**

Merchants share responsibility for keeping the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market viable and ensuring public safety. By following the rules described in the previous sections, merchants will remain a “merchant in good standing” and help create a safe, fun and profitable market environment. Violation of the rules will put the merchant “out of compliance” and result in a range of consequences.

### **Monitoring**

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market frequently monitors market activity to ensure that merchants are complying with the rules. The market also keeps records of violations, including local and state regulations, customer complaints, late payment of fees, etc., that may put a merchant out of compliance. The market utilizes a checklist as a tool to regulate at-market compliance.

### **Enforcement**

All rules of the market are enforced by the market manager or his designee, who has ultimate on-site authority. The market will regularly evaluate merchants using a merchant compliance checklist. The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market will contact the business owner to address the non-complying behavior and corresponding consequence.

Customer complaints will be forwarded to merchants and kept on file. Complaints may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the market.

## **Consequences**

If a merchant does not abide by the rules of the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market or comply with state, and local regulations applicable to market participation, the market manager or designee may take any action deemed appropriate, including barring the merchant from selling at the market for that day and any future market days.

Disciplinary action may take the form of a verbal warning or a written notice of non-compliance that may include probation or suspension. Probation puts a merchant on notice that any further violations will lead to suspension.

The Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market reserves the right to make exception to these rules and enforcement policies at its discretion.

### **First violation**

The first violation is usually a written warning. It is to inform you that your business has broken policy.

### **Additional violations**

If your business breaks the policies again, the consequences become more serious.

2nd violation: 1-week suspension (you're not allowed to sell in the market for 1 week)

3rd violation: 4-week suspension

4th violation: 3-month suspension -(If you're suspended for 3 months or more, you will need to apply again to get permission to sell at the market, all applicable merchant fees will apply with payment in full based on merchant plan selected at the time of reapplying.)

5th violation: 18-month suspension

6th violation: Permanent ban (you can't sell in the market again)

Violations remain active on your records for one year. The Market has a strict no refund policy.

## **Remedy of a Non-Compliance Issue**

The merchant must correct the violation leading to the verbal warning or written notice of non-compliance immediately or by the following week, whichever the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market determines to be appropriate. If the situation has not been remedied by the following week, the merchant may be suspended from the market for a week or season and forfeit their market booth fee.

## **Merchandising 101: Selling Smart and Increasing Profits**

Remember that most market customers are interested in a personal connection with merchant businesses and market staff. Grow your market experience by cultivating a loyal clientele. Cultivate a unique identity for yourself!

The options are endless. Some suggestions:

- Create a banner to clearly display your business name location and logo.
- Wear branded t-shirts or aprons that display your business logo.
- Wear nametags to build a personal bond with shoppers.
- Learn the names of frequent shoppers.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to educate shoppers with a flyer to distribute to customers.
- Most importantly, create an attractive, inviting and accessible booth. This includes a booth free of trip hazards and one with signage that clearly displays prices and product varieties, straight tablecloths, a smiling merchant and beautiful products.

Achieve success by delivering excellent customer service. Turn on the charm! If you are not a “people person,” send someone to market who is. Make sure on-site staff are knowledgeable about your products and your business. Keep in mind that continuity of salespeople builds relationships with repeat customers. Bring top-quality products to get top prices. Again, most market shoppers seek out the Farmers & Artisans Market to find fresh, high-quality products. Invest your time wisely:

- Be prepared and allow enough time for travel, parking your vehicle, booth setup, a bathroom break and any other pre-market necessities.
- Be ready to sell at 7:45am. The majority of your sales may occur within the market’s first couple of hours.
- Bring everything you need. Most market stalls are a 15’ x 15’ bare piece of land.
- Take advantage of social media. More and more shoppers look for information via social media. Depending on your product, availability and interest, consider starting a Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account to share new products, events and other information related to your business.
- Let your customers taste the difference! Sampling can increase sales up to 30%. Ask customers, “Have you ever tried this variety?” Be sure to follow prepackaged, closed container sampling guidelines.
- Offer recipes, serving and storage suggestions. Find recipes that are simple and contain a few ingredients that can be found at your stand or other parts of the market.

- Take advantage of social media. More and more shoppers look for information via social media. Depending on your product, availability and interest, consider starting a Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account to share new products, events and other information related to your business.
- Start an email list. Let your loyal customers sign up for a mailing list so you can inform them about special opportunities, other markets and locations they can find you or your product.

## **A Checklist for a Successful Market Day**

Careful planning for market is essential to your success. Be on time and ready to sell by 7:45am for an 8:00am opening of the Farmers & Artisans Market.

Make a checklist! Here are some examples of items to include:

- Market manager's cell phone number. (David Bean 410-251-6383)
- Canopy/tent/umbrella and 10 pounds of weight minimum for each leg of the canopy
- Booth structure: tables, table covering, racks, shelves and other display infrastructure
- Display containers for your product
- Bags (paper or reusable are best, plastic for meats)
- Cash box and bank. Be prepared to make change for \$20 bills
- Licensed scale (as appropriate for your products)
- Check out items: pencils, pens, calculator, sales record/receipt book, notepad, bags
- Trashcan
- Signage – banner hung at eye level
- Individual product names, prices and how the item is sold (by weight, piece, and quantity)
- Educational flair: handouts with recipes, how-to's, new items
- Information about your business and business cards
- Miscellaneous display items such as baskets, risers, display racks
- Personal comfort items: weather gear, water bottle, a rubber mat on which to stand, heater
- Your customer service personality—a big smile is your best asset

## ON-SITE MERCHANT COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

Merchants are responsible at all times to adhere to the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market's rules and policies. Ongoing inspections will occur to ensure that all merchants are conducting business in a manner that creates a safe and fair environment for shoppers, staff and merchants. The following is a checklist the Ocean Pines Farmers & Artisans Market may utilize to monitor merchant compliance.

### Booth Safety

- A minimum of 10 pound canopy/tent/umbrella weights securely attached to each leg. Weights must not pose a tripping hazard.
- If using electricity, outdoor extension cords are completely covered and set up with regard for public safety.
- Booth is set up with regard for public safety.
- All components of the booth are contained within the boundaries of the booth.
- If booth is generating waste, a trash receptacle must be available for customers to use. Merchants are expected to take this waste with them.

### Health Codes and Regulations

- Food is stored/displayed off the ground (6") or in impervious plastic tubs.
- Non-produce food products are individually wrapped.
- Safe closed-container sampling is practiced with labeling.

### Signage

- If merchant claims products are organic, certification must be posted.
- All packaged food is labeled with name of the product, net weight, ingredients in descending order by weight and name and address of producer.







## **Health Department Regulations**

Applicable to a Maryland/Worcester County Farmers & Artisans Market

According to Maryland's Health Code COMAR 10.15.03.27, the following foods are permitted to be sold at a Farmers & Artisans Market without a Health Department license.

1. Prepackaged, non-potentially hazardous foods. These items include:
  - Whole, unprocessed fruits and vegetables
  - Hot-filled canned acid jellies, jams preserves and butters. Must be labeled in compliance with COMAR 10.15.03.27.
  - Prepackaged, non-potentially hazardous baked goods and candy. Must be labeled in compliance with COMAR 10.15.03.27.
  - Unflavored raw honey
  - Prepackaged non-potentially hazardous food produced by a licensed entity.
  
2. The following potentially hazardous food may be sold with a current DHMH or MDA license:
  - Eggs – Merchants must be currently registered with the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Registration must be displayed during operation.
  - Meats and Poultry – Merchant must have a current On-Farm Home Processing License issued by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. License must be displayed during operation.
  
3. The following items are permitted to be sold, provided the merchant has obtained a Mobile Merchant License for the Health Department.
  - Whole fish and heads-on shrimp.
  - Crabmeat
  - Shell stock (clams, oysters, mussels, etc.)
  - Other potentially hazardous foods as approved by the Worcester County Health Department.
  
4. The following foods and activities are prohibited at a Farmers & Artisans Market:
  - Cut, processed fruits and vegetables
  - Baked goods with custard, cream cheese, meringue toppings, bases or fillings
  - Flavored honey
  - Pickles and relishes
  - Canned items not produced in a licensed processing facility
  - Dispensing open samples of food products and candies
  - Cooking foods
  - Providing food to the public that is cooked during a cooking demonstration
  - Shucking, cutting, slicing, etc. of any food

## Maryland Cottage Industry Labeling Requirements

All prepackaged foods offered for sale at a Farmers & Artisans Market must contain the following information on every prepackaged food item:

The name and address of the cottage food business; \*

- The name of the cottage food product; \*\*
- The ingredients of the cottage food product in descending order of the amount of each ingredient by weight;
- The net weight or net volume of the cottage food product;
- Allergen information as specified by federal labeling requirements;
- Nutritional information as specified by federal labeling requirements, if any nutritional information claim is made and printed in 10 point or larger type in a color that provides a clear contrast to the background of the label: “Made by a cottage food business that is not subject to Maryland’s food safety regulations.”

<p><b>Strawberry Jam</b></p> <p>8oz.</p> <p>Ingredients: strawberries, sugar, pectin</p> <p>Example Farms</p> <p>1234 Farms Road</p> <p>Anywhere, MD 55555</p> <p>Made by a cottage food business that is not subject to Maryland’s food safety regulations</p>
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\* Cottage food business means a business that produces or packages cottage food products in a residential kitchen.

\*\* Cottage food product means a non-potentially hazardous food as specified in COMAR 10.15.03.27 that is offered for sale only at a Farmers & Artisans Market or public event.

## Merchant Notes:

Ocean Pines Association, Inc

Administration Office  
239 Ocean Parkway  
Ocean Pines, MD 21811  
410-641-7717 – Main Number  
410-641-5581 – Fax Number

Monday – Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm

**[www.oceanpines.org](http://www.oceanpines.org)**