



Zero Waste Program Standards - Effective April 1st, 2020

Summary of Standards for all NCGA Members

As NCGA members, we take pride in responsible stewardship of our natural resources. All NCGA farmers' markets are a part of a Zero Waste campaign. All Agricultural and Non-Agricultural NCGA members are required to comply with the following set of Zero Waste standards. These standards were created by NCGA member committees and the board of directors.

Compostable is defined for the NCGA as items that can be composted with services available in Humboldt County. Currently, items labeled as "commercially compostable" will enter our landfill and do not qualify as compostable with NCGA's standards. These standards allow NCGA members to have the maximum amount of control over our waste stream and the environmental impact of our markets. In addition to the standards below, all members must responsibly dispose of "behind the booth" compost, recyclables and trash and must take these items off site with you. Do not dispose of these items in the public cans or buckets at your market. Please also refer to the "2020 Zero Waste Guide" - available on our website or by request, for helpful information and further guidance.

Non Ag Members:

Plastic servingware is not allowed. All food in non-agricultural sections must be served with fiber-based fully compostable containers and utensils (those labeled "commercially compostable" are not allowed unless fiber-based are not available).

<u>Examples of Allowable Items</u>	<u>Examples of Items Not Allowed</u>
<p>Fully compostable fiber-based paper or bamboo products such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paper serving boats (not lined with plastic or wax) ● Fiber-based to-go boxes (not lined with plastic or wax) ● Fiber-based plates (not lined with plastic or wax) ● Wooden or bamboo utensils ● Paper or fiber-based condiment containers ● Paper straws ● Paper bags ● "Plastic" bags that are fully compostable without commercial facilities (may not yet be available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plastic utensils (including "commercially compostable" plant based plastic utensils) ● Plastic cups for cold drinks including "commercially compostable" plastic. Only allowable if alternatives are not yet available (not available as of 1/2020). ● Plastic condiment cups (including "commercially compostable" plastic) ● Plastic straws (including commercially compostable plastic) ● Serving items in tin foil (local facilities do not recycle food-contaminated tin foil) ● Plastic bags (including "commercially compostable") for any items sold - including but not limited to baked goods.

Ag Members:

Paper bags must be used for all "dry produce" (such as fruit, root vegetables, and mushrooms). Plastic bags for wet or leafy produce are acceptable as long as paper bags are also provided and are equally in reach of customers as an option. If using reusable plastic baskets such as are commonly used for berries, customers must be able to return baskets to the same vendor for future reuse and provide signage to customers with that information. If selling eggs, use only paper cartons (plastic and styrofoam cartons are not allowed, even if reused). Reusing paper egg cartons is encouraged when allowable by law. If flower bouquets are wrapped, a paper-based wrap must be used. If available, use an unlined paper or paper lined with a compostable material. Wine tasting cups should be reusable (and washed in a commercial kitchen) or fiber-based and compostable if possible, otherwise the cups must be rated with a recycling number accepted in the city of the market at which you are doing the tasting and you are responsible for collecting, rinsing and recycling these cups.

Exceptions: Please contact NCGA staff if you would like to request a reasonable additional exception.

- Plastic-lined bowls used for hot beverages or soup, or for cold beverages, are allowed. These items must be otherwise fiber-based and lined with commercially compostable materials (even though the plastic will not decompose without industrial facilities and these items will enter the landfill). Alternatives to plastic lined bowls and cups are recommended as they become available and if appropriate.
- Pre-packaged items that require plastic (ex. olives). These plastics must be rated recyclable or commercially compostable.
- When a material is required by a health code.

Customer Interactions: Giving customers incentives for making sustainable choices is encouraged, such as discounts for bringing their own cups or containers. These incentives can help shape customer habits. NCGA will provide all members with optional signage for your booth for this purpose.