



North Coast Growers' Association

Humboldt County Farmers' Markets

www.northcoastgrowersassociation.org

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Press Release - For Immediate Release

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Re: Humboldt County Farmers' Markets continue to operate as critical food access points

Arcata, CA - California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) have published guidelines for the operation of Certified Farmers' Markets during the COVID-19 outbreak, naming farmers' markets as essential food service businesses during this time of need. The North Coast Growers' Association (NCGA) will continue operations of Humboldt County Farmers' Markets following the strict guidelines established by CDFA and CDPH. As the community responds to the current health crisis, maintaining a locally sourced supply of nutritious food is of critical importance.

Open Markets operating and upcoming market openings:

Arcata Plaza - Open. Saturdays 9am-2pm

Miranda - Open. Mondays 2-6pm

Shelter Cove - Open. Tuesdays 11am-3pm

Garberville - Open. Fridays 11am-3pm

Old Town Eureka, Henderson Center Eureka, Fortuna, McKinleyville and Willow Creek are all scheduled to open in June. Full market schedules and up to date information can be found on the NCGA's website at northcoastgrowersassociation.org

The farmers of the North Coast Growers' Association are working hard to continue to bring community members the safest, most nutrient dense food possible. Not only is the food that vendors bring to the farmers' market much less handled than anything found at the grocery store, but farmers have also been developing their own additional purchase and pick-up options to further reduce contact, including setting up online stores, taking pre-orders, offering delivery or curbside pickup, and more. The NCGA Member Directory of Alternative Sales Outlets can be found on the website and is updated regularly.

While many vendors are currently selling out of product at the market or through other outlets, as the season progresses and crops ripen many farmers are anticipating that more produce will become available than is feasible to distribute at market while following social distancing guidelines. To that end, NCGA staff are working to develop a multi-farm CSA-style box program where customers can preorder produce boxes and drive-through to pick them up at the market info booth. NCGA is hoping to launch this program in June once production picks up and more produce becomes available.

While farmers' markets are open, NCGA is asking everyone to help keep the market safe, especially as we enter the busier part of the season. All customers are required to wear masks per Humboldt County requirements. Additionally, customers are asked to follow these guidelines:

- Stay home if sick
- Customers age 65+ or in a another risk group should have someone shop for them whenever possible
- Practice good cough and hand hygiene. Hand washing stations are provided.
- Keep 6 feet distance from others.
- Make a shopping list and complete shopping as quickly as possible
- Customers are not allowed to handle produce/ products before buying. Allow the vendor to bag purchases.
- Take prepared food to-go to comply with social distancing protocol and do not eat on site
- This is not a social hour. Limit interactions with other customers and vendors. When possible please only have one person per household at market to make social distancing easier for others.

Following the CDPH and CDFA guidelines released, the market staff and each market vendor are committed to taking the additional steps necessary to slow the spread of CoronaVirus and Covid-19. A full list of precautions/measures taken by our staff and vendors can be found on the website.

NCGA Staff are:

- Requiring masks at the market (for vendors, customers, and market management staff)
- Increasing signage and other market infrastructure to assist with social distancing, line management, and customer communication, like clearly marking where lines begin and enforcing 6 foot distance between the customers in line.
- Inviting the Arcata Police Department to have a presence on the Plaza as ambassadors of education and to share awareness about the importance of social distancing and not congregating in the open spaces.
- Providing additional hand washing stations, as well as hand sanitizer, at the market.
- Wiping down payment cards and point-of-sale devices regularly and frequently cleaning tables and other high-contact surfaces.
- Practicing good hand hygiene, like wearing gloves when handling food/money, changing gloves or sanitizing/washing hands before touching food, and after touching money, phone or any non-food surface.
- Not allowing customers to enter vendor booths, or to handle or touch any merchandise.
- Encouraging customers to pre-pay for items online or over the phone and only use the market as a pick-up site (see website for a complete list of alternative sales options).
- Asking for exact change when possible. Many vendors accept credit cards, or have added hands-free payment options like Venmo or Paypal. Ask the vendor, or look for signage at the booth that indicates the vendor's hands-free option.
- Requiring food vendors only offer food to-go, not for on-site consumption.
- Communicating with the public. Information for the public is available on our website and social media pages. We encourage you to share those documents and use the same language with customers and the media as questions arise.

Like many locally owned and operated businesses, the NCGA has suffered a significant loss of income from vendor fees that support basic market operations. To help keep the markets running, NCGA is promoting their "Friends of the Farmers' Market" program to rally community support for continued operation of the markets. More information can be found on the website at northcoastgrowersassociation.org, or by contacting staff at info@northcoastgrowersassociation.org or (707) 441-9999.