

CLARK FORK RIVER MARKET

Rules & Regulations



2025



1. Mission Statement:

The Clark Fork River Market was founded on the belief that local agricultural production is important. The Clark Fork River Market seeks the betterment of conditions for agricultural producers by providing a venue for local farmers, ranchers, horticulturists, and dairy producers to retail their products directly to consumers. Through the establishment and maintenance of a festive, vibrant farmers' market, we seek to forge stronger connections between Western Montana's agricultural producers and the local community, with the goal of educating consumers about the important role of agriculture in the local economy and its equally important role in improving the environmental and public health of Western Montana's communities. Our market is strongly committed to connecting local farmers and ranchers to citizens in our community with low incomes, and to educating the general public about the health benefits of fresh farm goods and local foods. By creating and sustaining a popular and convenient venue that provides a direct market and a stronger community profile for agricultural producers, we are helping to sustain family farms and preserve Montana's agricultural heritage.

2. Market Season/Hours of Operation:

The Clark Fork River Market season is every Saturday from May 3rd until October 25th. From May September the market is open 8:00am-1:00pm. In October, the market is open 9:00am-1:00pm

3. Location:

The market is located at 225 Pattee St, on the east side of Higgins Avenue Bridge.

4. Who Can Sell:

The Clark Fork River Market gives opportunities to vendors who produce and source their materials locally from Western Montana. All products at the market must be grown or raised in Montana, west of the Continental Divide, with the exception of prepared foods, baked goods, and coffee.

5. What Can Be Sold:

All items must be grown or gathered by the vendor in Western Montana, with the same exception as above.

A. Raw Agricultural Products: fresh fruits, vegetables, grains, seeds, sprouts, herbs, flowers and cultivated mushrooms.

B. Wild Gathered Produce: such as wild-foraged mushrooms or huckleberries. We urge vendors to always gather wild produce responsibly and sustainably. In order to sell wild gathered mushrooms, you must provide the market with a county permit.

C. Nursery Plants: The vendor must grow the bedding plants, potted plants, trees or shrubs from seed, plug, cuttings, roots, tubers, or bare root. No resale of prefinished plants is allowed.

D. Value Added Agricultural Products: These products are admitted only with Board approval.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- Processed foods that can be sold without a license: preserves, honey and certain baked goods. The term “preserves” include jams, jellies, compotes, fruit butters, and syrups. It does not include, for example, pickles, sauerkraut, vinegars, herb oils, salsa, pesto or freezer jams. Dried fruits, vegetables or herbs that are packaged and labeled are defined as processed and require a license. Therefore, any dried product must be sold in bulk and weighed at the market. Home-baked goods that are not subject to spoilage such as breads, pastries and cookies may be sold without a license. All preserves, honey and baked goods must be labeled with the vendor’s name and address.

- Eggs: Egg vendors are required to abide by all state, local and market guidelines and/or regulations for the sale of eggs. The sale of farm eggs does not require a license; those vendors who are not licensed with the state must display a sign clearly stating “Unprocessed Farm Eggs”. For vendors who have a state license from the Montana Department of Livestock, they must display the license at their stand. All vendors must label their cartons clearly with their name and address. We strongly urge all vendors to candle and grade their eggs and monitor their temperature at 41 degrees or less. We also recommend that vendors include safe handling instructions on all egg cartons: *Safe Handling Instructions: To prevent illness from bacteria keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.*

- Processed foods that require a license: Poultry, meat, dairy products and most processed foods require licenses from either the county and/or the state. Vendors who wish to sell these products must have their animals killed and processed at a MT Dept of Agriculture or USDA licensed and inspected facility. Examples include Ranchlands Packing in Butte and Lolo Lockers in Lolo. Vendors are required to obtain the necessary license(s) and to acquaint themselves with all the pertinent health codes. Licenses must be included with their application to the market. All processed foods must be labeled with the producer’s name, address and safe handling instructions (see below).

- In order to address the realities of ranch economics, an exception to the rule banning resale of products will be granted, on a year to year basis, to small Western Montana meat wholesalers who sell beef, poultry, pork or bison for a rancher or poultry farmer who raises his or her product in Western Montana. The wholesaler must label his or her product with the place of origin: in other words, the meat or poultry sold at the market must be labeled with the name and location of the ranch where the meat/poultry was raised. Signage at the wholesaler’s booth must make it clear that the meat or poultry is from a Western Montana source, and both rancher and wholesaler must sign affidavits attesting to the fact that the meat sold at the market does indeed come from the ranch/farm that is indicated on the labels placed on the meat. Wholesalers must arrange for the ranchers/farmers whose product is sold at their booth to attend at least one Clark Fork River Market per season to be available to the public for questions regarding their ranch/product/relationship with the wholesaler, etc. Please call or email the Executive Director with questions about this exception or to obtain the required affidavit forms at (406) 880-9648 or info@clarkforkmarket.com

- License requirements vary depending upon the product sold. Despite the requirements spelled out above, this process is not as cumbersome as it may seem on first read, nor is it expensive. All vendors intending to sell products that require a license should contact the Missoula County Health Department at (406) 258-4755.

E. Agricultural Crafts: Craft products are admitted only with Board approval. In general, they must be handmade predominantly of material grown or gathered by the vendor in Western Montana, such that the agricultural material is the focus of the craft product. Such items may include, but are not limited to, wool and wool products, soaps, wreaths, dry flower arrangements, pressed flowers, smudge sticks, potpourri and gourd bird houses.

Montana Local Food Choice Act:

The Clark Fork River Market reserves the right to approve vendors who wish to participate under the Montana Local Food Choice Act (MLFCA) on a case-by-case basis. If a vendor is interested in using MLFCA, they must first obtain approval from the Executive Director. Additionally, approved vendors are required to carry liability insurance to cover both themselves and the Clark Fork River Market. A copy of this insurance policy must be provided to the Executive Director prior to the market season start.

6. Attendance:

Vendors are to attend the markets that they have signed up for in their application. Any changes to the schedule from the application must be communicated to market staff no later than 24 hours before the markets they are scheduled to attend.

Cancellation Policy: Vendors are to notify market staff of cancellations to their approved schedule no later than 24 hours before the markets they are scheduled to attend. Failure to do so will result in a violation, exceptions to violations are to be approved by Executive Director:

- First violation: Emailed warning issued to vendor.
- Second violation: Emailed warning issued to vendor.
- Third + violation: \$20 fee for each spot.

7. Rules for Reserved Vendors:

Reserved vendors are vendors who commit to the majority of the market dates for the season. Returning vendors are given first priority in electing for reserved vendor status, remaining reserved spaces are offered to approved new vendors. Reserved vendors are guaranteed the same spot for the season and allocated a small discount for signing up for all markets.

8. Rules for Unreserved Vendors:

Unreserved vendors are those who are interested in being a vendor for a few market dates but do not want to commit to the whole season. Vendors may also be approved for unreserved status if there are no remaining reserved spaces. Unreserved vendors are not guaranteed the same spot for the market dates they attend, and will be notified of their spot assignment by Thursday evenings before the Saturdays they are scheduled to attend.

Those who are interested in showing up day of for availability can come the morning of and contact the Executive Director for day of availability.

9. Rules for Nonprofits:

Organizations may use space at the market for the purpose of community outreach or education, with the approval of the Executive Director. Nonprofit Organizations must be tax exempt, and/or have a 501c status. Nonprofits pay a flat rate of \$15 per market. Nonprofits are permitted to use space at the market no more than once a month, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director.

10. Market Day Arrival/Departure Procedure:

Market Day Arrival:

- o Vendors may drive their vehicles into the market location to unload. **Do not begin to set up** until your vehicle is moved out of the market area. Return after parking to finish setting up.
- o Please **do not** park in the customer parking lot. It is crucial we have enough parking for our customers. If you have accessibility needs requiring you to park closer to your booth, please contact the Executive Director.

- o All vendors must be in their spaces by 7:45 AM, May-September and 8:45 AM in October.

No vendor set up will be allowed after 7:50 AM on Saturday mornings, May-September and 8:50 AM in October. This rule must be enforced due to traffic and safety concerns.

- Vendors are expected to dismantle their tables promptly and speedily after 1 PM and before bringing their vehicles into the market area. An effort should be made to limit the idling of engines. The market area should be cleared by 2:00 PM.

11. Sign Code:

Identification must include the farm or vendor's name. Lettering must be mounted in a prominent location, visible and acceptable by the Executive Director. All licenses and certificates must be displayed in plain view.

12. Organic Claims:

If a grower makes a claim of being organic, they must have at their stand, available for inspection, a copy of their current certificate. Vendors making false claims about their organic status are subject to a \$10,000 dollar fine from the USDA. Click [HERE](#) for USDA Certified Organic Signs. If your products are not Certified Organic, but you use organic practices, please click [HERE](#) for your options on labeling (refer to “What do the four organic labels mean?”).

13. Space Definition:

Spaces are each 6 feet wide and 10 feet deep. You must reserve as much space as you need for your set up to fit within. For example, if your set up includes a 10'x10' tent, you must reserve two spaces.

Weight Requirement: Vendors are required to have weights securely attached to each leg of their pop-up tents. This is to ensure the safety of everyone by preventing tents from shifting and blowing in the varying weather conditions of the outdoor market.

14. Fee Collection:

The Clark Fork River Market determines fees based on the number of booths occupied. Fee due dates are as follows:

- Reserved Vendors must pay their fees in full, or make a payment arrangement with the Executive Director by May 31.
- Unreserved fees for each day are due by the end of each market date attended.

15. Market Fees:

Space Fees

Reserved Vendors may reserve up to four 6-foot wide spaces for the 26 week long market season:

- 6 ft space (1 booth) = \$338.00
- 12 ft space (2 booths) = \$676.00
- 18 ft space (3 booths) = \$1014.00
- 24 ft space (4 booths) = \$1352.00

Unreserved Vendors, per day rate:

- 6 ft space = \$20.00
- 12 ft space = \$40.00
- 18 ft space = \$60.00
- 24 ft space = \$80.00

Nonprofit Vendors may attend up to 1 market/month. Exceptions may be made upon inquiry with the Executive Director. Per day rate:

- Any space = \$15.00

Electricity

Vendors are not permitted to use generators unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director.

110V - Additional \$2 per plug used, per booth space, per market day

220V - Additional \$5 per plug used, per booth space, per market day

16. Nutrition Programs for Customers:

The Clark Fork River Market is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible environment for all customers, including those utilizing nutrition assistance programs. The facilitation of these nutrition programs is made possible by partnerships with Farm Connect Montana and WIC. The following details the nutrition programs that CFRM facilitates, that vendors with eligible goods are permitted to participate in:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds may be redeemed and matched with Double SNAP Dollars (DSD) funds at the market information booth. These funds will be exchanged for tokens to be used for respective SNAP/DSD eligible goods at CFRM vendor booths. CFRM Token Eligibility guide will be provided for all approved vendors that details CFRM token and eligible goods. Tokens can be turned into the market information booth for reimbursement.
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) can be accepted by approved vendors and turned into the market information booth for reimbursement. Only approved SFMNP vendors will be reimbursed for the SFMNP coupons they turn in. For more information about how to become a SFMNP approved vendor, visit [Farm Connect Montana](#).
- WIC coupons may be accepted by approved vendors with the Montana Farm Direct Program. WIC coupons can be deposited directly with approved vendors bank accounts for reimbursement. For more information about how to become a WIC approved vendor, visit [Montana Farm Direct Program](#).

In addition to nutrition programs, CFRM also has “cash” tokens available for purchase at the market information booth. These tokens can be used like cash, for any CFRM vendor goods, and can also be turned into the market information booth for reimbursement.

Clark Fork River Market reimbursements will be issued one week after SNAP/DSD tokens and/or SFMNP coupons are turned in to the market. All reimbursement checks must be deposited by vendors by the end of the market season. If a reimbursement check is lost and requires a rewrite, the requester will be responsible for a void fee, which will be subtracted from the amount of the rewritten check.

17. Music:

Live music is an integral part of the CFRM atmosphere and designated spaces will be provided for performers. Interested musicians must have the Executive Director's approval. The Market pays \$150 per session from 10:00AM to 12:30PM. In addition, bands get tips from market patrons and get public exposure. Electricity is available at the market, but musicians must bring their own sound equipment, please note that we have asked musicians to keep their sound to a reasonable level for all vendors to continue to sell. If you have any concerns about music, please let our staff know immediately so it can be addressed. Additional buskers may be permitted upon market staff approval.

18. Parking:

Market vendors must park outside of the market area in any available public parking spaces. We ask that you provide the closest parking to potential patrons.

19. Miscellaneous:

- **Animals:** Vendors are not allowed to keep dogs or other pets in the market area. Pets of customers are not allowed in the market area unless the animal is a service animal.
- **Space Clean Up:** Vendors are responsible for keeping and leaving their area clean. To reduce litter, please provide a receptacle for trash generated at your stand.
- **Samples:** Vendors providing food samples must use disposable plastic or latex gloves and comply with all Missoula city/county health codes.
- **Market Behavior:** Vendors, market staff, and volunteers are expected to treat one another with consideration and respect. The Executive Director is available to help mediate conflicts, should the need arise.
- **Government Regulations:** Vendors are expected to comply with any government regulations that may be in effect for markets that take place at the market. These include certification of scales, health rules applicable to samples and food display, statements about being organically grown, product labels or required state licenses for processed food.

20. Communication

Clark Fork River Market is committed to maintaining clear and timely communication with all vendors. Email will be the primary method of communicating information to vendors. Vendors are responsible for regularly checking and reading all communications from market staff; the market is not liable for missed information. Email is also the preferred method of communication from vendors to market staff. Contact information is below: info@clarkforkmarket.com 4068809648

21. Disregard of Market Rules:

These regulations are enforced to promote welfare and safety of sellers and shoppers alike. If notified of an infraction by the Executive Director, the vendor must correct it. Disregarding these rules will lead to expulsion from the market.

- A first violation will result in a warning notice being issued.
- A second violation will result in exclusion from the following market.
- A third notice will result in exclusion from the market for the rest of the season.
- Violation notices are cumulative from year to year. A fourth notice will result in permanent exclusion from the market.

Appeals of any Clark Fork River Market violation notice may be made in writing to the Board. The board of directors and staff of the market are happy to discuss with vendors and interested parties any and all of these regulations. Our mission is invested in helping farmers and ranchers of Western Montana increase their profitability by providing a direct market for their products, and to help the community of Missoula have direct access to good, locally produced food in a festive atmosphere. These rules and regulations have been written to serve this mission.

For questions, contact us.

Executive Director, Kaylee Nassiri
(406) 880-9648

kaylee@clarkforkmarket.com

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