

Welcome to RFM.

Dear Stallholder/Trader,

On behalf of us all at RFM I would like to welcome you as a new stallholder to the leading group of Farmers Markets in Australia.

We continue to be proud to be involved in a community business that provides an opportunity for nutritious, low chemical impact and organic produce, grown with care to be sold by the producer. And to provide positive social networks that bring connectedness to each other, our communities and our earth.

Farmers Markets have now been going for over five years and we need to continue to focus on their long term sustainability.

It is therefore our intention to continue to take the markets that we run to a new level of efficiency and professionalism. RFM markets are growing rapidly and we need to ensure that our criteria and point of difference keep our loyal customers returning and continue to encourage a whole new customer base.

We will work closely with you and assist you to grow your business in a more professional and committed way so the RFM markets will become the standard by which successful farmers markets will be judged. Your results will be increased business, sales and success.

Personnel.

RFM recently appointed some dynamic new personnel to assist in achieving these goals:

Firstly we would like to introduce John White, who has taken up the position of General Manager of the business. John through the Rotary Club of Boronia helped establish the Knox Farmers Market over three years ago. He has extensive experience in marketing, sales and retail promotion and his responsibility will be to effectively manage the advertising, promotion and profile of RFM's markets.

We have also appointed a new regional manager, David Allen who will bring new ideas and energy to the markets and be a consistent contact for you at your market.

Communication.

It is vitally important that we have fast and effective two way communication between RFM and your business. Many businesses still do not have an email facility, (and some that do don't access it regularly).

We would encourage you to take advantage of this high speed, effective method of communication. By being 'online' your business will have access to the latest news from RFM and other businesses in the industry. If you are serious about your participation in the markets, we feel this is essential to the growth of your business. If you choose not to use email, we will not be able to contact you with information and market changes etc, so we urge you to get connected.

Attendance.

Non-attendance at a market is a issue we need to address. By not attending or not communicating that you will not be attending a market, you let down the other stallholders, you diminish the market, and you let down your customers and the reputation of the whole market. The damage caused by 'no shows' is immense. A vibrant market is made up of a full market mix. When stallholders fail to turn up they leave gaps in the market that disappoint the patrons who often arrive for that specific product. When they don't see that product they leave disgruntled, often never to return. As your manager we need time to replace products that are not going to be at a market. This is impossible when we get calls on either Friday or Saturday morning informing us that you will not be attending that day or the next day's market.

There will sometimes be a genuine reason for non-attendance but we encourage you to set in place contingencies for such events. You are in effect running a retail shop, so your customers do not understand if you are not open when you say you will be. One missed market can undo months of building your client base. Plan your business and it will work for you.

In future the RFM absenteeism policy will be as follows -

If you are unable to attend a particular market you are obliged to contact RFM by email **no less than 60 hours** (12 noon on the preceding Wednesday) before the start time of the market with your apology. This will allow RFM time to hopefully arrange a replacement. If the above time limit is adhered to there will be no loss of stallholder fee.

If however RFM is contacted with a cancellation less than 60 hours before the market start, you will forfeit your stall fee. You will also be required to pay a **surcharge of 25%** of your fee for the next market to cover administration costs etc in arranging a replacement.

Partnerships.

The markets are a partnership between stallholders and RFM.

We continuously provide promotion of the markets through flyers, media advertising, calendars, and partnerships with volunteer groups and our website. We would encourage you to promote your own business through your own customer list and other promotional materials at other markets you attend. We receive several phone calls a week asking for stallholders contact details. This indicates that a lot of vendors are not actively promoting their business and losing sales between markets. Some stallholders are so efficient in their self-promotion that they have sold a good percentage of their stock before they even get to the market.

At RFM we will be continually looking for more effective ways to increase customer attendance at the markets but we need you to play your part as well. We suggest that by working closely with your customers they will follow you from market to market and guarantee more sales on slow days, We have established a customer email reminder database so that many shoppers at the markets can be informed about news of each market several days beforehand.

Finally we again welcome you as a new RFM stallholder and hope that you will support us in our endeavours to raise the standards of all our markets and make them long term viable opportunities for all of us and to assist you to make your business work better for you. We ask for your co-operation and goodwill to enable this to continue to happen and to work with us to make RFM markets the ones that we are all proud to be involved in.

Please don't hesitate to contact myself or John White on the numbers below with any comments.

RFM office: 03 5664 0096

Peter Arnold; 0439 364 760

John White: 0409 964 232

Kind Regards,

Peter Arnold

For Regional Farmers Markets.

RFM Stallholder Information

Market Guidelines.

- Attendance at an RFM market is at the invitation of RFM only. The number and variety of stalls will naturally fluctuate depending on the season and availability of produce. Every effort will be made to ensure fairness and provide opportunity to regional and small businesses wishing to participate.
- Stallholders agree to abide by the criteria laid down by RFM in relation to the suitability of product sold from each stall.
- The number and variety of stalls (market mix) is the responsibility of RFM entirely. RFM reserves the right to withdraw its' invitation to any stallholder who does not comply with the criteria.
- Stallholders are requested to pay stall fees prior to their first market. Stall fees will then be paid one month in advance at each market. Receipts will be issued on acceptance of application.

Stall fees will be forfeited if a stallholder fails to attend the market or gives less than 60 hours notice from the time of the market of their non-attendance.

They will also be required to pay a surcharge of 25% of the stall fee for the next market to cover administration costs etc in arranging a replacement for the market not attended.

- Information should be readily available to customers at each market about the produce and production methods of your business.
- Every effort must be made to use as little packaging as possible and to use recyclable packaging wherever possible within health department requirements. All disposable cutlery and crockery must be biodegradable.

Stallholder Criteria.

1. Produce sold must be fresh, locally/regionally grown and sold by the stallholder.

OR

2. Produce sold must be fresh, locally/regionally grown and may be sold by another stallholder who acknowledges the origin of the produce, and who understands the process that created that produce. This produce must be sourced from the original grower/producer and not bought from a market or from sources and procedures unknown.

Criteria 1 always take preference over criteria 2. However should there be a shortage of product then criteria 2 will always be welcome at the market. A stallholder under this criterion will be a 'value adder' rather than an original grower but may provide a larger range of product than from a single producer. But the produce must be fresh and supplied direct from the grower.

3. Product must be GM free, grown or produced with as little chemical use as possible. Preference will be given to stallholders on this basis.

4. 'Value added' products, i.e. jams, chutneys, cakes etc must be manufactured in Victoria and must be value added in Victoria i.e. teas, coffee, chocolates.

Market Dates.

The market will be held on the specified Sat/Sun of the month throughout the year **WHATEVER THE WEATHER**. Access to the site will be as directed on the day.

Stall Fees.

Standard stall fees are set for each market. If a larger or shared stall site is required, this should be negotiated with RFM beforehand.

Wet/Hot Weather Contingency.

You will need to provide your own shade or weatherproof covering depending on the season. Unless there is a severe flood you will always have access to the market site and easy egress from the site.

Power.

There are a limited number of powered sites available so please indicate if you wish to have access to power. Let us know exactly what power you will need.

Health and Legal Regulations.

Stallholders need to complete the enclosed forms and return them to (insert name, phone no., title and address of Council) with the appropriate fees. Please note that if you attend another market within the same council's area there is a reduction in the fee as you attend both markets.

Please ensure you have a copy of your FSP and Food Registration with you at all times at the market. Health officers may ask to sight these documents during a market.

Trestle Tables.

Each stallholder will need to provide their own trestle table and other materials etc needed to build product displays to conduct their business.

Scales

RFM suggest that stallholder's price by unit (i.e. bag, bunch, bottle) not by weight if possible. If you are using scales they will need to be tested and certified.

Insurance and Public Liability.

Regional Farmers Markets (RFM) is a registered business ABN 77 898 783 942 and has an agreement with (insert details of market site owner) to conduct a farmers market on this site on (insert date of each market).

Public liability insurance for the market area is covered by RFM.

Stallholders must have their own product insurance, business and/or personal liability insurance.

We look forward to your participation and a great market for everyone involved.

If you have any queries regarding the market or any items above, please do not hesitate to contact Peter Arnold at any of the contacts below.

RFM Stallholder Application

Farmers Market:

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Business Name.....
Address.....
..... P/Code.....
Contact..... Phone.....
Fax..... Mobile.....
Email.....

I will have the following Produce/Products for sale at the first market

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I anticipate changes to the produce/Product from the following markets.

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I will/will not require power. (Only 10 Amp available.)

I enclose cheque/money order for \$xx stall fee payable to:- Regional Farmers Markets. Payment will be returned if application is not accepted.

I have read and agree to abide by the attached guidelines and criteria and will actively support and promote the aims of RFM.

Signature.....Date.....

Office Use Only.

Receipt.....Site.....Category.....D.....
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Please complete these two pages and return with payment to:-

RFM, P.O. Box 165 Meeniyah, Vic 3956.

RFM Stallholder Application

Aims of RFM.

- To provide the freshest, cleanest and largest variety of farm produce to the communities of the region.
- To promote local and Victorian produce.
- To introduce or reconnect growers/producers with the consumer.
- To create a vibrant and social shopping experience.

Once you have read and considered the criteria of RFM please answer the following questions.

1. Describe the nature of your business and why you believe it is suited to a farmers market.

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2. What is the predominant source of your ingredients/produce?

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3. Who would staff your stall each month? What is their role/position within your business?

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4. Describe your food safety practices and outline your ways of maintaining a safe portable food environment.

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Make Every Market A Winner.

Tips to help you grow your sales at every Farmers Market.

So you took the plunge and started direct selling your produce at one or several of the many Regional Farmers Markets (RFM) locations. You may be new to this style of direct selling of your product to the public or you may have been doing it for years.

But are you getting the maximum benefit from every customer that comes to every market you attend? There may be many opportunities you are missing out on to increase your sales. You have usually driven a long way to attend a market, so it is vital that your result is as good as you can possibly make it.

So let's break these opportunities down into bite sized chunks that you can digest and hopefully try them out.

Stall Presentation

Retailing is becoming more competitive every day. Therefore every retailer needs to find a point of difference that the shopper will notice and will make them want to visit you.

In a Farmers Market environment it only takes a few seconds for a potential customer to pass you by. The presentation of your stall is therefore absolutely critical in getting potential customers to stop and investigate your offer. Your product offer may be the best but if your presentation and display is drab and boring they will move on quickly. You must build in the 'WOW' and 'YUM' factor into your presentation so that they will want to regularly visit your stall and spend.

Here's an idea, build a practice stall at home. When you have finished stand back and make an appraisal what the customer will see. Now do you need to update any of the following to make your stall welcoming and exiting?

1. Look at the basic design of your stall. At the moment do you just put up a pergola and put a table at the front? What about locating the main display table further back into the pergola. This would allow you to put a small display on each side of the pergola and allow your customers to come into your stall. Another idea could be to turn the pergola 45 degrees and put two displays on an angle to the customer. In other words give you stall some 'theatre'.

2. Professional signage that can be seen from 30-40 metres away and conveys what you are selling is a must. Signage should appear above the front of your stall and also at the rear of the inside of your stall. Keep it simple, but make it professional.
3. Use an A-frame in front of your stall to promote weekly specials/bonus offers/multiple buys/new products etc. Again make it look professional.
4. Be critical of your product packaging. Will it entice the customer to pick it up and inspect it? Does it ooze quality?
5. Can you improve the way that the product is displayed? Remember you are selling a quality product. A product with great packaging can be a disaster if not displayed well. Don't forget there are some great ways to enhance your display with very little outlay. Don't forget the need for eye-catching product price display cards or boards, which on their own will add to the display.
6. Carry your stall's presentation right through to how you are presented to your customers. Printed aprons, shirts and caps etc add up to a totally professional look.
7. Think about putting up some banners or flags above your stall. This will help not just you being seen at the market in general but being seen by passing traffic etc.

Other Ideas

Remember that Farmers markets are all about

Sight, Sound, Taste and Aroma.

- ✓ Are you making the most out of these senses to sell your product?
- ✓ Do you have tastings of your products?
- ✓ Do you have the opportunity to enhance your stall with product aroma?

- ✓ Do you have the opportunity to play (not too loudly) applicable music or recorded product messages to enhance the ambiance of your stall?
- ✓ Is your transport vehicle professionally signwritten to promote your business?
- ✓ Do you actively promote the other markets you attend by handing out flyers etc?
- ✓ Do you hand out recipes that your products can be used with?
- ✓ Do you promote your business by handing out business cards to let customers know that you can take phone orders etc?
- ✓ Do you get out the front of your stall when possible to help promote your products?

So at the end of the day you must make use of as many opportunities as possible to help grow your business. You have between 4 or 5 hours at each market to convert your product into cash and go home with an empty car or van. Sometimes the weather will not be the best but your customers will come because they want to shop at your stall. Your aim should be to -

Become The Must Visit Stall At Every Farmers Market.

Good Luck.

John White
RFM General Manager.