

# SELLING AT A FARMERS' MARKET

## Introduction

Farmers' markets offer local growers and producers a direct route to sell their own produce to consumers. In Ireland, there are a number of different types of markets available for producers to trade at. The options are:

- municipal market – overseen by town or city councils;
- private market – run by private individuals or companies on privately owned property, usually operated by charging commercial rent to the stall holders;
- traders' market – some towns have

historical trading rights allowing stall holders to sell on certain dates; in some cases there is no charge for trading;

- country market – operated by Irish Countrywomen's Association, providing home-grown and farm-based produce and products;
- co-operatively run/community-based market – run by a group of producers or a community-based organisation, and delivered on a non-profit basis; and,
- event market – held at specific times of the year. Examples include community festivals and agricultural shows.

## Financial aspects

A seller must determine their own approach to pricing. Pricing must cover all production and associated costs, including certification, registration, staff, equipment, raw materials, production, own labour, transport, insurance, promotion, and any other costs involved. It is important to plan finances to manage any potential cash flow gaps. Discuss tax implications with a financial advisor. Making payment by card available will increase cash flow, but research the transaction fees to choose the appropriate option.



*Pricing should cover all costs.*

## Main advantages as a route to market



*In a market setting, instant customer feedback is available.*

- Direct selling helps forge links between local producers and consumers;
- vendors control pricing, which helps increase turnover;
- instant consumer feedback, to inform decision making;
- test new products with low overheads and low risk;
- build brand and customer loyalty; and,
- sustainability – reduce carbon footprint and food miles.

# 01: Selling at a Farmers' Market

## Getting started

### Do your research:

- Visit existing markets and talk to stall holders for research and advice; and,
- use the Bord Bia Market Information Centre for market trend information.

### Operate legally:

- Consult with the local environmental health officer (EHO) through the HSE, regarding food safety requirements; and,
- comply with the regulations in IS 344. 2002, produced by the National Standards Association of Ireland (NSAI).

### Get insured:

- Public liability insurance – in case someone injures themselves interacting with the stall;
- product liability insurance – in case someone claims based on consuming a product; and,
- employer's liability insurance – in case an employee becomes injured while working.

### Find the right market fit:

- Many markets are at capacity, so it may

- be necessary to join a waiting list;
- some markets welcome seasonal sellers;
- there can be different casual trading bye-laws in different municipal areas; and,
- consider location, space available, atmosphere, and restrictions.

### Licence to trade at municipal markets:

- A casual trading licence is a permit allowing the holder to operate a stall selling goods in a designated area at particular times;
- applications may be issued annually, with a specified closing date via the local town or city council; and,
- the need to apply for casual trading licences and the respective cost of these trading licences are variable. Do your research.

### Get equipped:

- Purchase, rent or borrow equipment;
- options for stall set-up are pop-up, gazebo, canopy/umbrella or mobile trailer;
- foods subject to temperature control may require a refrigerator or freezer;

- transportation must prevent contamination, and maintain the integrity of the product or produce; and,
- sanitary equipment, protective clothing and packaging – pre-order 'click and collect' may become part of the new normal.

### Start selling:

- Determine the unique selling point of your product or produce;
- remember that quality, freshness and consistency are most important;
- ensure packaging and presentation authenticates the quality of the produce;
- include eye-catching branding/signage;
- clearly display the selling prices;
- provide tasting opportunities, recipes, and maybe video tutorials;
- make excellent customer service your goal; and,
- be patient, and don't break your pattern of attendance for at least six months to ascertain success or otherwise.

## Top tips when actively trading

- Communicate consistently with consumers describing the product – sourcing, production, ethics, and how and where to get more;
- promote the business, and the market – support with leaflets, social media, and website – create relationships with local press and radio;
- consider marketing surplus produce or products to local supermarkets, shops and restaurants, a box scheme, or even local farm shop or online selling;
- create an operations manual with detailed

- checklists guiding consistent delivery if back-up personnel are required;
- conduct ongoing research – use a 'comment box' to capture feedback and inform decision making;
- consider creative arrangements with other stall holders, such as recommending products from other stalls that complement yours, and vice versa;
- reward loyal customers; and,
- consider the benefits of:
  - local food group membership – regional

- identification, branding, support and advice; and,
- food awards – product notoriety, promotion, credibility, and media following.



Markets also offer a place to sell crafts.

### Further information

For further information please see: [www.teagasc.ie/rural-economy/rural-development/options-programme/](http://www.teagasc.ie/rural-economy/rural-development/options-programme/).

The following resources are also helpful:

- [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie)
- [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie)
- [www.mast.ie](http://www.mast.ie)
- [www.ildn.ie](http://www.ildn.ie)
- [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie)