

5.3 Market Rules

SPADEWORK
BROADCASTING
GERMINATION
MULCHING
STAKING
HARVEST
SUSTAINABILITY
RESOURCES

- > *Setting the tone*
- > *Operational structure*
- > *Membership*
- > *Stallholder responsibilities*
- > *Checklist*

Setting the tone

At the Willunga Farmers Market, the regulations governing the week-to-week running of the market are known as the Market Rules. (NB Not to be confused with the *Rules for Incorporation* – or constitution – that govern the operation of the incorporated body.)

The Market Rules specify what can be sold, who can sell and how the setting up and operation of the market will take place. Think carefully about the Market Rules, as they set the tone of the Market. The Market Rules help to reinforce the farmers' market ethos of regional, authentic, fresh and seasonal by:

- > Specifying what can be sold (eg excluding non-food products, giving priority to organic produce)
- > Defining regional boundaries
- > Specifying who can sell (eg must be producer, their family or employee) and managing the balance between fresh and value-added produce

Operational structure

The Market Rules also provide the operational structure for market day. Market day can be tense with people having to work under pressure. Disputes are common and a clear set of rules helps minimise stress.

The Market Rules should cover such things as:

- > Location & time of the market
- > Membership
- > Stallholders rules & responsibilities (eg stallholder and produce eligibility, insurance, legal requirements, stall assignment etc)
- > Fees (membership, stall/site)
- > Complaint procedures

The market manager is responsible for interpreting and administering the Market Rules.

Market Rules evolve in relation to particular situations and can be amended by committee.

Stallholders' responsibilities

Stallholders must be members of the farmers' market.

It is important that stallholders understand the Market Rules. New stallholders should read the Rules and then sign a copy to indicate that they have read, understood and will abide by the Market Rules. This process should be repeated with any change of Rules.

The Willunga Farmers Market Experience

We needed a set of rules to govern the operation of the Market and we needed a package of information for prospective stallholders.

We found examples of rules and regulations from other farmers' markets on the internet and worked through these point by point to modify them for our situation.

We thought carefully about membership. Willunga Farmers Market Inc started with 5 members, the minimum number necessary to apply for incorporation but we were hoping for broad membership. We decided that there needed to be tangible benefits to encourage customers to become members and determined that the annual fee would entitle members to:

- > 10% discount at all stalls (except the breakfast stall which is a WFM fundraiser)
- > one calico shopping bag (on first joining)
- > regular newsletters & information about events
- > 1 vote at the AGM and the option to nominate for the committee

The Market Rules formed the basis of the information package we put together for prospective stallholders.

Membership

Membership entitles the member to the benefits of the organisation and obliges them to abide by its rules and regulations.

Membership of many farmers' market organisations consists almost entirely of stallholders. In these cases the organisation exists to run the market for the stallholders.

Other farmers' markets, including the Willunga Farmers Market, adopt the view that the market serves its stallholders, its customer base and the wider community. This is reflected in a membership that includes customers and community supporters as well as stallholders. A broad-based membership establishes a strong support base and generates ongoing income for the market. It also ensures that customer members have a stake in the structure and the sustainability of their market and they develop a sense of ownership.

Deciding what sort of members the market will have is a crucial decision that can mean the difference between a membership base of perhaps less than 100 stallholders, or many hundreds if not thousands of community members.

A membership scheme must include benefits, such as discounts at market stalls that will encourage people to shop regularly at the market. Membership fees and benefits should be detailed in the Market Rules.

Think about whether membership is renewed throughout the year or runs from a set date (eg from January 1st). There are administrative considerations to both approaches. If you opt for a set date you may need more than one person to work on this as membership grows.

Checklist

- > Research existing farmers' market rules via the internet
- > Draw up a set of rules to be discussed by the committee
- > Make amendments appropriate to your market's situation
- > Include set of rules with other information for potential stallholders

Websites

For examples of Market Rules go to Google and type in: farmers market rules

Farmers Markets: Rules, regulations and opportunities.
<http://www.law.drake.edu/centers/pdf/farmersMarkets.pdf>

This article examines the rules and regulations of more than 30 Farmers Markets in America with useful comments about what makes good, workable rules.

Appendices:

Appendix C Producers' Package