

5.4 Producers' package

SPADEWORK
BROADCASTING
GERMINATION
MULCHING
STAKING
HARVEST
SUSTAINABILITY
RESOURCES

- > *Introduction*
- > *Food safety*
- > *Labelling*
- > *Seasonal produce audit*
- > *Checklist*

Introduction

You will need to develop a package of information to give to prospective stallholders that will supply data for the market database as well as inform producers about how the market is run and what will be required of them. (See Appendix C *Producers' Package*.)

The package should include:

- > General information about farmers' markets
- > Information about the operation of your farmers' market
- > Information about food safety
- > Information about labelling and weights and measures
- > A membership form
- > A registration form to apply to have a stall at the market
- > A seasonal produce audit to indicate what produce the stallholder hopes to have available and when

Food safety

Both the market and stallholders have legal responsibilities regarding the sale of food to the public.

Local councils are responsible for administering major legislation relating to food safety. Businesses that sell food are required to notify their local council and their health officers inspect premises to ensure that they are clean and appropriate for food production and that food handling procedures are followed. Production of some food deemed high risk (eg dairy food and meat) is overseen and inspected by authorities (eg Dairy Authority).

Local councils have guidelines covering the sale of food at markets. Following are some guidelines from the City of Onkaparinga. Check with your council to determine local requirements.

- > Food needs to be stored either in covered containers or 750mm off the ground,
- > Perishable foods need to be stored below 5°C (with ice bricks or under refrigeration).
- > Each stall with unpacked food needs hand washing facilities – this need only be a bucket of water, changed regularly, with soap and paper towels
- > Utensils need to be washed in container separate from hand-washing facilities.
- > Re-useable cutlery and crockery needs to be washed in a double bowl sink with water at 77°C or above. Otherwise disposable cutlery and crockery should be supplied.

Labelling

Food labelling is an important consideration and potential stallholders need to be made aware of their responsibilities in this area. The rules are complex and individuals should consult the websites listed below for more detailed information. The following points are intended to highlight some areas of interest to people selling at markets.

- > Generally, foods for retail sale must be labelled although there are a number of exceptions allowed including:
 - food packaged in the presence of the customer
 - fresh fruit and vegetables where you can see the quality of the product

The Willunga Farmers Market Experience

We had been maintaining and upgrading the database since our first workshop and we used this to mail out a leaflet advertising an information session to explain the nuts and bolts of what was required of a stallholder.

We also included the Producers' Package that we had developed. We figured that there would be some people who would not be able to come to the information session but who would be interested in having a stall. We therefore posted a copy to all the producers on our database.

Just as well – the turnout to the workshop was dismal! Feeling desperate – one week to go and only 8 potential stalls.

The labelling requirements form part of the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code and specify such things as which foods are exempted, what information must appear on labels (and what must not) and print legibility. The following information must appear:

- > The name of the food
- > Address where the food packed or prepared
- > Name and business address and ABN
- > Any mandatory warnings
- > Ingredient labelling
- > Best Before or Use By date
- > Nutrition information panel
- > Characterising ingredients (eg no less than 50% real juice)
- > Country of origin

Labelling information about weights and measures is governed by the Trade Measurement Act. The websites listed below have information about measuring, equipment and labelling of packaging.

Seasonal produce audit

Building the database of food producers is an ongoing job. At every opportunity you should collect information about who the local producers are and what they are growing, rearing or making.

A seasonal produce calendar is a handy format for collecting this information. (See the example in *Appendix C: Producers' Package*). The information should then be entered into the database.

As the date of the first market draws near you need to check that you have a good range of stalls and the produce audit will help identify any gaps in the market. Ideally, you want a majority of stalls selling fresh produce and 'staple' items:

- > Vegetables
- > Fruit
- > Eggs
- > Dairy – cheese, milk, yoghurt
- > Meat
- > Fish
- > Bread
- > Nuts
- > Edible oils

Checklist

- > Prepare information package for potential stallholders
 - Collect information about existing farmers' markets
 - Prepare information about your market
 - Collect information about food safety, labelling and weights and measures from local council, state & federal government authorities

Prepare membership form

Prepare form for registration to have a stall

- > Develop a produce audit form
- > Collect and enter information about producers into database

Websites:

Labelling

www.dh.sa.gov.au/pchs/Food/food-labelling-guide.pdf

www.foodstandards.gov.au

Appendices:

Appendix C Producers' Package