

## **GUIDELINES FOR SAMPLING AT FARMERS' MARKET EVENTS**

Providing samples at Certified Farmers' Markets allows consumers to try a product before purchasing it. However, unsafe sampling methods can adulterate or contaminate food and can result in food borne illness. The Cal Code Law (CAL CODE) requires that basic sanitation practices be followed when samples are dispersed at farmers' markets. Marin County's Environmental Health Services Department (EHS) interprets the state law as follows to ensure that the public's health is protected. Follow these basic sanitation practices for healthy and legal sampling.

1. Sampling of potentially hazardous foods requires a written procedure be approved by EHS.
2. Produce intended for sampling must be washed in an approved kitchen before the market. Washing is to remove dirt, soil, and any other contaminants. An antiseptic vegetable wash product is strongly recommended.
3. Thoroughly wash hands before the farmers market. Food handling at the farmers market requires a hand washing station.

If money is handled, hands must be rewashed.

4. A 5-7 gallon capacity hand washing station is required. A hand washing station consists of :
  - a container with a hands free dispensing valve
  - a 5 gallon catch basin
  - potable water, preferably at 100 degrees Fahrenheit
  - liquid hand washing soap in pump or squeeze bottle
  - paper towel supply for the entire day.
5. Obtain containers with sneeze and handling protection.
6. Obtain disposable gloves when cutting or handling products. Do not reuse gloves after touching contaminated surfaces, or money.
7. Use tooth picks, wax paper, paper sampling cups, or disposable utensils to distribute samples. The idea is to prevent customers' hands or fingers from touching the samples or contaminating the food.
8. Use only sanitized knives and cutting boards for cutting samples.
9. Use a plastic bag lined waste basket for sampling preparation and distribution waste disposal. Know where toilet and "greywater" dumping facilities are located.





**Required items for proper sampling**

*Bottom left to right:*  
disposal single use utensils, covered sampling container, tongs, knife and cutting board

*Top left to right:*  
Waste basket with liner, disposable latex or plastic gloves



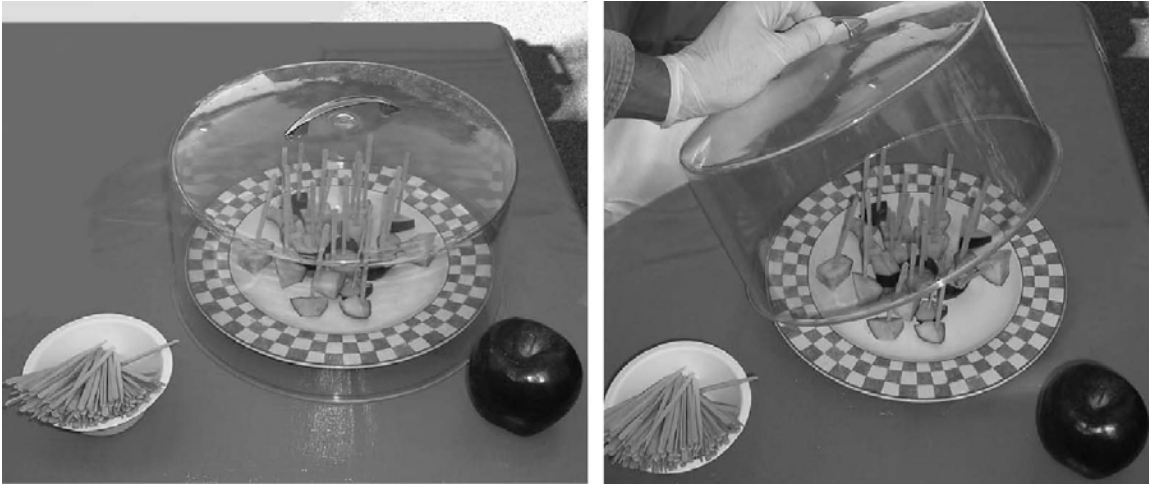
**Examples of Marin County EHS approved sampling methods.**

Provide containers with hinged covers to prevent food contamination.

Use of tongs to give out sample.

This method provides the best way to keep the food samples from being contaminated. Vendor is in complete control of the sampling process. This method is highly recommended.

## Covered Sample Set-up



Here is another example of how to protect your samples. Notice the samples have tooth picks already so customer does not have to touch the sample. Cake cover acts as a sneeze protector.



If you are sampling nuts of any kind, you must use a nut-shaker similar to the ones pictured.

Photographs courtesy of Marin Farmer's Market