

FARMERS' HANDBOOK

2025



Farm Market Fresh

Senior & WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (S/FMNP)

DRAFT



Farm Market Fresh

Senior & WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (S/FMNP)

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DARS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

DIVISION FOR AGING SERVICES

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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This handbook applies to all farmers authorized with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services' (DARS) Division for Aging Services (DAS) to participate in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (S/FMNP) in Virginia, also called *Farm Market Fresh* for older adults and WIC Program.

These procedures should be reviewed carefully before a farmer signs an agreement to participate in the *Farm Market Fresh* for older adults and WIC Program. The authorized farmer must comply with principles and procedures outlined in this handbook to retain authorization.



Virginia's *Farm Market Fresh* for Older Adults and WIC Program

The ***Farm Market Fresh*** for older adults and WIC Program is a federal nutrition program administered by DAS that authorizes farmers to accept Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (S/FMNP) benefits.

Through cooperative agreements, DAS' agricultural partners assist with the farmer application/authorization process and with *Farm Market Fresh* training and monitoring activities. DAS' agricultural partners include: The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), Virginia State University (VSU) and Virginia Farmers' Market Association (VAFMA).

Participating in the program provides farmers with additional sales opportunities and promotes the production of locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables.

Participants shopping with authorized farmers have a variety of produce to choose from, which may help reduce barriers to a healthy diet that many low-income participants experience.

Definitions and Examples

Farmer

To participate, a farmer must meet the following four criteria:

- A person who is authorized under the rules of the ***Farm Market Fresh*** in Virginia and has a signed Farmer Agreement by DAS.
- A resident of Virginia who grows and harvests on land within the Commonwealth of Virginia, fruit, vegetables, and/or cut herbs that are "eligible" foods under the *Farm Market Fresh* program.
- Annually sells at least \$1,000 worth of self-grown fruit, vegetables and/or cut herbs that are "eligible" foods under *Farm Market Fresh*.
- A bona fide producer of the fresh fruit, vegetables and cut herbs offered for sale or exchange for *Farm Market Fresh* benefits.



Eligible Foods

Eligible foods are defined as fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs grown in Virginia under normal growing conditions by an authorized farmer as defined above. Examples include the following:

- Vegetables such as beans, broccoli, cabbage, cucumbers, eggplant, greens, lettuce, peppers, potatoes (white and sweet), edible pumpkins, root vegetables, squash, sweet corn, tomatoes and mushrooms
- Fruit such as apples, berries, melons, nectarines, peaches and pears

- Cut herbs such as basil, dill, parsley, oregano, rosemary, sage and thyme

These examples are not exhaustive. Any fresh or unprocessed fruit, vegetable or cut herb grown in Virginia under normal growing conditions by an authorized *Farm Market Fresh* farmer shall be considered eligible.

Ineligible Foods

Ineligible foods are defined as foods that can not be exchanged for *Farm Market Fresh* benefits under any circumstances. Ineligible foods are not counted towards the farmer's \$1,000 production needed to be considered a farmer under the Virginia *Farm Market Fresh* program.

The following are examples of ineligible foods:

- Honey
- Preserved products such as jam, jelly, apple butter, apple cider, juice, pickles and relishes
- Nuts such as peanuts, walnuts, pecans and products made from nuts
- Citrus fruits such as oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit or tangerines
- Tropical fruits such as bananas, pineapple and mangoes
- Animal products such as meats, poultry, eggs, cheeses, milk, ice cream and dairy products
- Baked goods such as bread, cakes, pies and cookies
- Plants such as flowers, bedding plants and potted herbs
- Produce grown in Virginia, but purchased from a wholesaler, farmers' market, produce auction or grocery store
- Dried herbs or teas
- Produce that might be grown in Virginia but was grown outside Virginia



These examples are not exhaustive. Questions and disputes over foods deemed eligible or ineligible under *Farm Market Fresh* shall be resolved by the *Farm Market Fresh* coordinator, whose decision is final.

Self-Grown Requirement

Farmers shall accept *Farm Market Fresh* benefits only for the eligible foods that they grow.

A farmer shall be the bona fide producer of the fresh fruit, vegetables and cut herbs offered for sale or exchange for *Farm Market Fresh* benefits.

Farmers are not permitted under any circumstances to accept *Farm Market Fresh* benefits for any foods purchased from a wholesaler, farmers' market, produce auction or grocery store.

Exception to the Self-Grown Requirement

It is expected that authorized farmers are exchanging only their self-grown, eligible produce for *Farm Market Fresh* benefits and not accepting *Farm Market Fresh* benefits for produce that they have purchased from others. However, when events beyond human control, such as drought, frost, storms or flooding destroy crops and limit the availability of produce, DAS has the discretion to allow exceptions in order to ensure availability and variety of produce for *Farm Market Fresh* participants.

An exception may be considered by DARS-DAS and its agricultural partners if the farmer experiences a crop failure beyond his or her control. The farmer shall request an exception in writing and provide written documentation of the circumstances leading to the crop failure and the type and quantity of produce lost to the farmer.



If the request for an exception is approved in consultation with the agricultural partners by DAS, a signed addendum to the Farmer Agreement will specify the produce for which the farmer may accept *Farm Market Fresh* benefits that is grown by another Virginia farmer in addition to his or her own produce. Farmers with a signed and approved exception may only purchase and accept *Farm Market Fresh* benefits for produce equal to the type and quantity of the crops they lost.

When a farmer has been granted a signed and approved exception in the Farmer Agreement, the following shall apply:

- If growing circumstances had been normal, the farmer would have met the \$1,000 self-grow and sell requirement.
- The farmer shall provide the name, address and phone number of each Virginia farmer from whom he or she anticipates making produce purchases. Receipts signed by the Virginia farmer(s) from whom purchases are made may also be requested by either VDACS or DAS.
- If a farmer is a vendor at a “grower-only” market, where vendors are required to sell only self-grown products, the farmer must abide by that market’s rules.
- Eligible foods cannot be obtained from a non-farm source and then redeemed for *Farm Market Fresh* benefits. Non-farm source means any place other than the Virginia farm where the fruit and vegetables are grown. Under no circumstances may a farmer purchase products from a wholesaler, farmers’ market, produce auction or grocery store, and accept *Farm Market Fresh* benefits for them.



Application Process

The application process takes place every two years. Farmers desiring to participate in Virginia's Farm Market Fresh program must complete and submit an application and agreement. The online application can be found at www.FarmMarketFresh.org and will include the farmer application and the agreement. If you would like to request a hard-copy application, email sfmnp@dars.virginia.gov or call (804) 774-9067 and a hard-copy application can be sent to you. It is important to apply online, if you can, to streamline your application process and become approved faster.

Contact information for DAS' agricultural partners is found in the appendix of this handbook. The application will be reviewed by DAS' Farm Market Fresh Coordinator and the agricultural partners.

To be an authorized farmer and participate in the Farm Market Fresh program, the applicant must meet the selection criteria and have a fully executed farmer authorization agreement with DAS.

DAS and its agricultural partners establish and periodically review criteria for the selection of farmers who will be authorized to transact and redeem Farm Market Fresh benefits. DAS and its agricultural partners must ensure that an appropriate number of farmers will be authorized. The farmer must comply with the farmer selection criteria throughout the agreement period. DAS and its agricultural partners may reassess the farmer at any time during the agreement period using the selection criteria in effect at the time of reassessment. In consultation with its agricultural partners, DAS will terminate the agreement if the farmer fails to comply with the current farmer selection criteria.

The farmer must submit a completed application for authorization. However, submission of the application is not a guarantee that the farmer will be authorized. Farmers in their second year of the agreement will just need to update their Farmer Profile on the Healthy Together app or web portal.

Selection Criteria

Farmer selection will be based upon consideration of the following criteria:

- The farmer must participate in face-to-face or virtual training with the DAS and its agricultural partners before the first year of participation. The farmer will receive written training materials for self-study in follow-up years.
- Farmers who grow and sell 100 percent of their own produce are given preference in the selection process.



- The farmer must grow and sell at least \$1,000 worth of *Farm Market Fresh* eligible fruit and vegetables.
- Farmers selling fruit, vegetables, and cut herbs that are 100% grown by others shall not be authorized to accept *Farm Market Fresh* benefits.
- Farmers are not allowed to accept and/or redeem benefits for another farmer, except individuals hired by a nonprofit organization to sell produce on behalf of farmers.
- The farmer will agree to sell only the eligible fruit and vegetables described in the Definitions section in exchange for *Farm Market Fresh* benefits.
- The farmer will assure that no conflict of interest exists between the farmer, DAS, the agricultural partners, and the local agency that is distributing benefits to senior or WIC participants.
- The farmer will agree to comply with civil rights assurance and non-discrimination requirements as stated in 7 CFR 249.7 (a): title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Department of Agriculture regulation on nondiscrimination (7 CFR parts 15, 15a, and 15b), and applicable FNS Instructions to ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability, be excluded from participating as a farmer or customer.
- DAS will not authorize any farmer applicant if during the last six years the farmer applicant has been convicted of, or had a civil judgment entered against her/him for, any activity indicating a lack of business integrity. DAS and its agricultural partners determination of lack of business integrity includes but is not limited to: fraud, embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, receiving stolen property, making false claims or obstruction of justice.
- Farmers shall have and maintain a positive compliance history with any and all USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) programs in which they are participating or have participated.
 - Within 60 days of receipt of the application, the farmer will receive an Authorization Agreement or a notice of denial of application from DAS. The notice of denial will state the reason for the denial, whether the applicant may make an appeal and outline the process for making an appeal.
 - If a farmer does not meet the Farmers Market participation requirement, the \$1,000 sell requirement, has crop failure due to events beyond human control, or another



requirement they do not believe they can meet, that farmer can request an eligibility waiver to waive this requirement. An approved waiver is dependent on DAS and regional agriculture representative review of requirement being waived and justification. Not all waiver requests will be approved.

Authorization Agreement

DAS has a two-year (season) agreement directly with farmers. This agreement may be terminated by either party with 15 calendar days advance written notice.

It is a requirement that the farmer must participate in face-to-face or virtual training in the farmers' first year of participation. In 2025 ALL farmers are required to attend the face-to-face or virtual training to learn about the Healthy Together system. After 2025, the first year of participation rule will resume effect. The farmer agrees to be accountable for actions of farmers or employees who are acting on behalf of the farmer and assure that these persons are trained regarding **Farm Market Fresh** rules and procedures.

Farmers will not be granted permission to accept Farm Market Fresh benefits until they receive the current season's Farmer Agreement signed by DAS. Farmer accounts will have the benefit redemption function locked until this happens.

The authorized farmer will receive a sign and eligible food decals from DAS. The sign must be displayed at all authorized points of sale, every time the farmer is selling eligible foods in exchange for Farm Market Fresh benefits.

Farm Market Fresh for Older Adults and WIC Sign

An authorized farmer shall post the **Farm Market Fresh** sign provided by DAS for the current year in a visible location at all times while participating in *Farm Market Fresh*. The signs are color-coded each year, so previous signs are not acceptable. To ensure good visibility, the sign shall be posted at a height of three to five feet from ground level, facing the customer traffic.

Farmers are required by federal regulation to display the sign which lets the participants know without having to ask that the farmer is authorized to accept their *Farm Market Fresh* benefits.



If the sign is lost or severely damaged, the farmer is responsible for notifying DAS so that a replacement sign may be issued.

Farmers are in violation and subject to suspension for the remainder of the season/year if they accept *Farm Market Fresh* benefits without the specific current year's *Farm Market Fresh* for older adults and WIC sign posted.

Benefits

The ***Farm Market Fresh*** for older adults and WIC program issues digital benefits and card benefits. Both benefit types are redeemed by the farmer through the same process.



Farmers can redeem benefits by scanning the QR code on the benefit.

The 2025 *Farm Market Fresh* benefits provided to participants can be kept year-over-year. After the end of the season, the benefit will be deactivated. Participants are encouraged to keep their physical benefit card so when they reapply for the benefit the following year, given they still qualify, the benefit will be reloaded to the same physical/digital card.

The benefit amounts for the participants are different depending on which part of the program they are participating in. Senior *Farm Market Fresh* provides adults 60 and older with a \$50 benefit while WIC Farm Market Fresh provides participating WIC individuals with a \$30 benefit.

For WIC families, only the head of household/parent will have access to the benefits for all qualifying individuals, meaning a family of 3 qualifying individuals may have a benefit balance of up to \$90 on the benefit account.

New Benefit Redemption

In 2025, farmers will be using the Healthy Together mobile or tablet application for the benefit redemption process. Redemptions this year must happen at the point of purchase because you are not allowed to take the benefit from the participant.

To set up your farmer account on Healthy Together, go to FarmMarketFresh.org and fill out the online application. Doing this will automatically create a profile for you and your farm. After you are approved in the healthy together system, you will be notified through text message or email with a link to download the app.

If a farmer requests the hard copy application, they will receive a text message or email when the account is ready to complete set-up along with a link to download the application.

To make a transaction, farmers will click the “Start Transaction” on their home screen of the app and select the market they are selling at that day (selecting the market is only needed for the first transaction that day). Next, the farmer will enter the total amount for the sale, click “Next”, and a camera view will open to capture the participant’s benefit QR Code.



IMPORTANT: Participant will need to enter a PIN after you scan their benefit. Their PIN is automatically set to their **birth year**. Assist participants if they are unsure of their PIN.

After completing the transaction, update the participant, if they are using the physical card, with their remaining balance on their account. After this happens, the transaction is complete.

Markets and Locations with No Internet: The Healthy Together app will still work at completing transactions when offline. Any offline transactions will be processed automatically once you regain internet access. The participant’s app and cards will also work without internet access.

The last day to make Farm Market Fresh transactions is November 30th. All Farmer accounts will be locked from completing transactions after November 30th and will regain access their next authorized season.).

Farmer ID Number (Formerly Stamp ID)

All farmers will receive a 4-digit ID number to link to your Farmer Account on Healthy Together. If you participated in 2023 or 2024, this number will be your former Stamp ID number. When logging in and accessing the account, this number will be needed.

Transaction Policies and Procedures

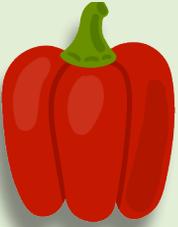
Under no circumstances shall **Farm Market Fresh** benefits be exchanged for cash. No change shall be given, and no credit shall be offered for future transactions.

Participants can spend their benefits down to the penny. If the “Amount of Sale” exceeds the participant’s maximum remaining balance of the benefit,

farmers shall assist the customer in selecting items to remove from the transaction. If desired, the participant may use cash for the “Amount of Sale” that exceeds the available balance of the benefit.

During the transaction, when participants present their items for payment, farmers or their employees shall clearly identify and group separately, eligible foods that will be purchased with Farm Market Fresh benefits from ineligible foods that are not permitted to be paid for with Farm Market Fresh benefits.

Authorized farmers are required to distinguish eligible foods from ineligible foods with signage, such as the decals provided that clearly identify which self-grown, eligible items are available under Farm Market Fresh. Decals will be included in your agreement packet.



Farmers or their employees shall be physically present and operating their own booth/stall/stand. Farmers may NOT accept Farm Market Fresh benefits and/or operate a booth/stall/stand for a farmer not physically present, except individuals employed by the farmer or hired by a nonprofit organization to sell produce at farmers’ markets or roadside stands on behalf of local farmers.

“Honor system” or “self-serve” operations where participants transact their own benefits are not allowed and will result in a violation.

Locations

DAS and its agricultural partners are responsible for monitoring locations where *Farm Market Fresh* benefits are accepted. With limited resources, DAS and its agricultural partners cannot oversee numerous individual locations. Therefore, the locations where farmers are, or are not, allowed to accept the benefits will be limited as described below:

Farmers’ Markets

Definition – for *Farm Market Fresh*, “farmers’ market” means an association of local farmers who assemble at a defined location for the purpose of selling their produce directly to consumers.

It is preferred that farmers accept the benefits at farmers’ markets as one of the goals of the program is to promote farmers’ markets.

A list of participating farmers’ markets is found at <https://vafma.org/find-market>.

Roadside Stands and Farm Stands

The terms “roadside stand” and “farm stand” are used interchangeably and mean the same thing in *Farm Market Fresh*.

Definition – for *Farm Market Fresh* “roadside or farm stand” means a location at which an individual farmer sells his/her produce directly to consumers. This is in contrast to a group or association of farmers selling their produce at a farmers’ market.



The defining feature of a roadside or farm stand is that it is operated by an individual farmer. The definition of a roadside or farm stand does not consider the form or function of the structure of the roadside or farm stand nor does it have to be located at roadside. Some roadside or farm stands are actual stores but may be as simple as a shed or table on the farm. Whatever the structure, the roadside or farm stand should be sturdy and safe for participants to patronize.

The roadside or farm stand must be separate from the farmer’s residence. The farmer is not allowed to require the participant to come into his/her home to purchase produce and redeem the benefits.

There must be someone who is trained to handle *Farm Market Fresh* transactions available at all times during which the roadside or farm stand is open to accept the benefits from participants. Farmers are not allowed to require participants to leave *Farm Market Fresh* benefits unattended. “Honor system” or “self-service” operations are not permitted.

During the application process, additional information on the roadside or farm stand location and physical facility is required by DAS for farmers applying to accept the benefits at their roadside or farm stand locations.

Roadside and farm stand operations are considered priority locations for monitoring.

All new roadside and farmer stands must satisfy three requirements:

1. Must have set hours of operation (set days of the week & hours open to the public).
2. Must be staffed during all operating hours.
3. This location must function in addition to at least one farmers’ market.

Senior Centers, Congregate Meal Sites, WIC Clinics, Senior Housing

Senior centers, congregate meal sites, WIC clinics, senior housing complexes and other organizations that serve older adults and WIC participants may schedule and coordinate a “pop-up” or “mobile” farmers’ market at their location and invite farmers to come. Farmers should not arrive uninvited nor should they exert pressure on organizations to hold these events.

It is strictly the decision of the management of that organization to extend invitations to authorized farmers. Efforts should be made to invite several authorized farmers. However, if only one farmer wishes to attend, it is acceptable to hold the event with only one farmer as long as others were given the opportunity to participate.

Farmers must list and describe on their application, all such senior centers, congregate meal sites, WIC clinics, senior residences and housing complex locations where they will be accepting *Farm Market Fresh* benefits. If a location is added during the marketing season, the farmer must notify the *Farm Market Fresh* Coordinator. If the additional location is approved, an amended Farmer Agreement will be issued that includes the additional location.

Authorized farmers are not allowed to deliver produce door-to-door in exchange for *Farm Market Fresh* benefits.



Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the regular review of authorized farmers to determine adherence to *Farm Market Fresh* policies and procedures and to identify specific areas that are deficient during the review.

Farmers are prioritized for monitoring. Those farmers considered high priority are:

- Farmers accepting a high volume of benefits.
- New farmers in their first or second year of the program.
- Individual farmer operations (regardless of form or function, these are also called roadside stands or farm stands or farm stores).
- Farmers about whom there have been complaints.

The monitor will make an onsite visit at the selling location to ensure as many as possible of the following:

- The *Farm Market Fresh* sign is prominently displayed.
- The farmer accepts *Farm Market Fresh* benefits only for self-grown, eligible fresh fruit and vegetables.

- Ineligible foods are separated and clearly indicated when items are purchased.
- Eligible foods are the same quality and cost as that sold to other customers.
- *Farm Market Fresh* customers are treated with the same respect and courtesy as other customers.
- Proper redemption procedures are followed.
- Sales tax is not charged.
- Farmers encourage participants to purchase up to maximum balance in benefit account. If participants' produce to purchase exceeds available benefits, farmer is encouraged to assist the customer in selecting items to remove from the transaction.
- Farmers do not cash benefits for participants nor do they accept them for or from other farmers, with the exception of individuals employed by a farmer otherwise qualified under these regulations, or individuals hired by a nonprofit organization to sell produce at farmers' markets on behalf of local farmers.
- Non-discrimination guidelines are followed.



A monitor or “secret shopper” may perform a covert purchase with *Farm Market Fresh* benefits to determine where there are potential weaknesses. Covert means the monitor or “secret shopper” may shop at the farmer’s point of sale while pretending to be a participant and may attempt to purchase ineligible foods with *Farm Market Fresh* benefits.

Production monitoring by VDACS marketing specialists or other agency partners may also be conducted at the farm or point of production to verify that eligible foods listed on the farmer’s application are in fact planted and harvested on the farm and that the farmer is growing at least \$1,000 worth of foods eligible under *Farm Market Fresh*.

Any non-compliance with *Farm Market Fresh* regulations will be documented on the monitoring form. Non-compliance issues and violations of *Farm Market Fresh* regulations and the terms and conditions of the Farmer Application and Agreement will result in sanctions.

Violations and Sanctions

A farmer is in violation if he/she fails to comply with *Farm Market Fresh* program rules and the terms and conditions of the Farmer Application and Agreement or fails to respond to requests, implement corrective action, or comply with the terms of directives from DAS.

There will be three types of farmer sanctions:

- **Non-payment** – the farmer is not paid for improperly transacted *Farm Market Fresh* benefits.
- **Suspension** – the farmer is suspended from accepting *Farm Market Fresh* benefits for the remainder of the season/year.
- **Disqualification** – the farmer is suspended from the program for the remainder of the season/year and disqualified from applying for the program in the next season/year.

Violations leading to non-payment of improperly transacted *Farm Market Fresh* benefits:

- Accepting and depositing benefits before receiving the signed Farmer Agreement authorizing participation.
- Incorrect amount transacted between participant and farmer. After non-payment, effort to correct the transaction amount will be attempted.



Violations leading to farmer suspension

The farmer is suspended from program participation for the remainder of the season/year:

First incidence of:

- Acceptance of benefits for anything other than self-grown, eligible foods.
- Failure to meet eligibility requirements including not growing at least \$1,000 worth of eligible fruit and vegetables.
- Charging tax.
- When purchases amount to less than the amount of the benefit transacted, giving change, cash, or credit for future purchases.

Second incidence of:

- Failure to post *Farm Market Fresh* for older adults and WIC sign each market day.
- Acceptance of benefits at unmanned roadside stands.

Violations leading to farmer disqualification

The farmer is suspended from program participation for the remainder of the season/year and disqualified from applying for the program in the next season/year:

Second incidence of:

- Acceptance of benefits for anything other than self-grown, eligible foods.

- Failure to meet eligibility requirements including not growing at least \$1,000 worth of eligible fruit and vegetables.
- Charging tax.
- When purchases amount to less than the amount of the benefit transacted, giving change, cash, or credit for future purchases.

Any incidence of:

- Redeeming benefits for an unauthorized farmer or other person(s) not currently authorized as a farmer in the *Farm Market Fresh* program.
- Not giving equitable treatment to program participants, such as charging higher prices, offering lesser quality produce, or not treating participants with the same courtesy as offered other customers.
- Seeking restitution from participants for benefits not paid.
- Failing to respond to requests, implement corrective actions, or comply with directives from DAS or its agricultural partners in relation to any *Farm Market Fresh* rules.
- Failure to cooperate with DAS or its agricultural partners in monitoring for compliance or farm inspections to verify production.

Notice of Violation and Sanction

Farmers will receive notifications of non-payment of ***Farm Market Fresh*** benefits through the Automated Clearing House (ACH) system. If the farmer believes there has been an error in non-payment, he/she should contact the *Farm Market Fresh* Coordinator for investigation and resolution.

DAS shall notify the farmer in writing of the violation requiring the suspension and the effective date after which benefits will not be accepted.

The suspension shall remain in effect for the remainder of the current market season/year.

DAS shall notify the farmer in writing of the violation requiring the disqualification and the effective date after which benefits will not be accepted. The disqualification shall remain in effect for the remainder of the current market season and the farmer is disqualified from applying for the following season/year.

When the farmer receives a Notice of Suspension or Notice of Disqualification, he/she must immediately stop displaying the Farm Market Fresh for older adults and WIC sign and not accept Farm Market Fresh benefits at any location on and after the date listed in the letter. Any attempt to make a transaction with a participant's benefit at the market will not be possible as farmer's account will be blocked from transacting and accepting payments.

The notice will:

- State the violation or cause for the sanction.
- State the effective date of the sanction.
- State the procedure for the farmer requesting an appeal.
- Be sent via U.S. mail, return receipt requested, to the farmer's mailing address of record.

The farmer who commits fraud or abuse may be prosecuted under applicable federal, state and local laws and may be subject to penalties or fines.

Appeal and Fair Hearing

The farmer may appeal a Denial of Application, Notice of Suspension, or Notice of Disqualification. The farmer may not appeal a termination due to expiration of the agreement. A request for appeal and fair hearing must be in writing, signed by the farmer or authorized agent, and mailed to the **Farm Market Fresh** Coordinator, 1610 Forest Avenue, Suite 100, Henrico, VA 23229.



The request for appeal shall:

- State the issue.
- Contain a summary of the farmer's position on the issue indicating why the sanction should be reversed.
- State the name and address of the farmer requesting the appeal.
- State the name and address of the farmer's representative or attorney, if any.
- The decision will be made by the VDACS and DAS program directors on the basis of the written appeal letter unless the farmer desires a hearing (meeting). If a hearing is requested, the farmer shall state his/her need for an interpreter or other special accommodations, if necessary.

A request for an appeal must be received by DAS within 45 days of the date the farmer received the notice. The farmer must not accept *Farm Market Fresh* benefits while awaiting a decision on the appeal.

If a hearing (meeting) is requested, the *Farm Market Fresh* Coordinator will give the farmer not less than 15 days' notice of the scheduled time and location for the hearing. The farmer will have the opportunity to reschedule the hearing one time upon request, confront and cross-examine adverse witness(es), be represented by a person of the farmer's choosing and at the farmer's expense, and review information on the action prior to the hearing.

The farmer will receive a written decision on the written appeal letter or fair hearing within 60 days from the date DAS receives the appeal request. The decision will be final and may not be contested.

***Farm Market Fresh* Questions, Concerns and Complaints**

DAS provides a statewide toll-free number for participants, farmers, local agency staff and others to call if they have *Farm Market Fresh* questions or concerns. In addition, the *Farm Market Fresh* coordinator's direct phone line and other contact information are provided in the appendix of this handbook.

Complaints regarding any aspects of the *Farm Market Fresh* for older adults and WIC Program will be accepted in writing from participants, farmers, local agency staff and others on the Complaint Form found in the appendix of this handbook.

APPENDIX

How to Submit a Farmers' Application

To apply online or for more information about *Farm Market Fresh*, visit:

www.FarmMarketFresh.org

To request a hard-copy application to be sent to you, email: sfmnp@dars.virginia.gov to request the documents. Completed documents are to be returned to the same email address.

How to Find a Farmers' Market

To find a farmers market in Virginia, visit:

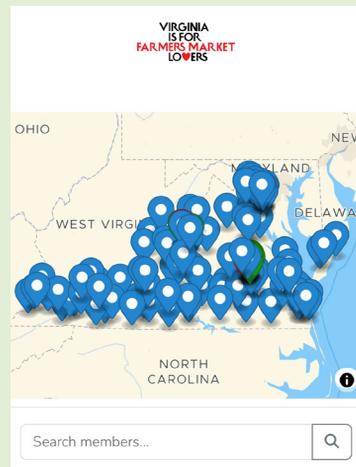
<https://vafma.org/find-market>

OR

Download the Virginia Farmers Market Trail app from the iPhone App Store or Google Play Store.

OR

Scan this QR code with your phone's camera.



Contact Information for Farm Market Fresh Partners

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

Senior and WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
Matthew Wasikiewicz, Farm Market Fresh Coordinator
(804) 774-9067
(800) 552-3402
Fax: (804) 662-9354
matthew.wasikiewicz@dars.virginia.gov

Virginia Farmers Market Association

Kim Hutchinson, PhD, MBA
kim.hutchinson@vafma.org
(804) 405-3288
<https://vafma.org>

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Heather Wheeler
heather.wheeler@vdacs.virginia.gov
(804) 786-5842
www.vdacs.virginia.gov

Virginia Fresh Match

Sam Hedges
(540) 212-9482
sam@virginiafreshmatch.org
www.virginiafreshmatch.org

Virginia Department of Health

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
Megan Nason
(804) 864-7793
megan.nason@vdh.virginia.gov
vdh.virginia.gov/WIC

Farm Market Fresh Participating Agencies

Eligible seniors apply for Farm Market Fresh vouchers online at FarmMarketFresh.org or through their local Area Agency on Aging.

To find the local agencies for Seniors and WIC, visit the Farm Market Fresh website or follow the two QR codes or links below:

AAA/Senior Agencies



www.datawrapper.de/_/yUSOL

WIC Agencies



www.datawrapper.de/_/Gfhlj

Virginia Farm Market Fresh Complaint Form

To: Program Coordinator, Division for Aging Services
1610 Forest Avenue, Suite 100, Henrico, VA 23229
Fax: 804-662-9354, sfmnp@dars.virginia.gov
Only forms with complete information will be addressed.

PERSON FILING COMPLAINT:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

I am (please check box and describe if indicated)

Farmer Senior participant WIC participant AAA Staff at: _____

Market Manager at: _____ WIC staff at: _____

Other: _____

DESCRIPTION OF COMPLAINT:

Date, time, and location of incident: _____

Name or description of person(s) involved: _____

Describe the incident in detail (use back and additional sheets if needed):

State Agency Use Only – Actions Taken:



DARS | VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
DIVISION FOR AGING SERVICES

1610 Forest Ave., Suite 100, Henrico, VA 23229
Toll-Free Phone: (800) 552-3402, Fax: (804) 662-9354
www.vda.virginia.gov

