

HOW TO RECEIVE A KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FARMERS' MARKET SAMPLING CERTIFICATE

There are two categories of samples: those that are cooked or processed, and those that are raw or uncooked products. Depending on the product(s) you offer will determine which sampling certificate you need. Both will require the completion of the KDA Farmers' Market Sampling Application.

STEPS FOR OBTAINING A SAMPLING CERTIFICATE:

If you want to offer samples of your Home-based Processor or Home-based Microprocessor goods, commercially prepared products, and/or cooked samples of your meat, vegetables or fruit:

- Read the chapter on sampling in the 2026-2027 KDA Farmers' Market Manual and Resource Guide. www.kyagr.com click forms, click farmers' markets, click Kentucky Farmers' Market and Resource Guide
- For your convenience, this chapter has been included in this packet.
- Please print and clearly write answers to questions from the material in the chapter on the sampling application.
- Sign and date the application before returning to the KDA office.
- Return the completed application to the address on the form.
- If you have answered all questions correctly, you will be issued a **Cooked or Processed Samples Certificate** for offering cooked samples (*No sampling of raw products is allowed under this certificate*).
 - If applications are incomplete or answers incorrect, you will be contacted via email if provided or by phone.
 - Processing time varies based on many variables, **please do not wait until the last minute to apply.**

If you want to offer samples of raw and uncooked products:

- You must have completed one of the following approved training classes:
 - Producer Best Practices Training (PBPT) class through your local UK Cooperative Extension Office.
 - On the application please list the diploma name and date of class.
 - KDA can verify this in our database if the information has been received from your trainer.
 - PSA - FSMA (Produce Safety Training) Grower Training course
 - Attach a copy of PSA Certificate of Training to your sampling application.
 - KDA does not have access to the PSA training database.
 - Food Handlers Class from Local Health Department
 - Attach a copy of valid Food Handlers card to your sampling application.
 - KDA does not have access to the Health Department training database.
- Read the chapter on sampling in the 2026-2027 KDA Farmers' Market Manual and Resource Guide, www.kyagr.com click forms, click farmers' markets, click Kentucky Farmers' Market and Resource Guide
- For your convenience, this chapter has been included in this packet.
- Answer the questions from the material in the chapter on the sampling application.
- Sign and date the application before returning to the KDA office.
- Return the completed application to the address on the form.

- If you have answered all questions correctly, you will be issued an **All Samples Certificate**. This will allow you to offer samples of cooked, processed, raw and/or uncooked products.
 - If applications are incomplete or answers incorrect, you will be contacted via email if provided or by phone.
 - Processing time varies based on many variables, **please do not wait until the last minute to apply.**

Sampling certificates are only issued to an individual. Only the person listed on the certificate is able to offer samples. This means that family members, employees or volunteers must have their own sampling certificate issued in their name. Sampling may only be conducted at the market(s) listed on the certificate. If you move to a new market, please contact KDA so your sampling certificate can be updated. **Please do not wait until the last minute to update your sampling locations.**

For information or questions, you may contact:

Sharon Spencer, 502-782-4127 or email sharon.spencer@ky.gov

Please mail completed sampling applications to:

Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Attention: Farmers' Market Program - Sampling
111 Corporate Drive
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

NOTE: The vendor retains all liability for the safety of the samples. Both the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the Department for Public Health require vendors to follow the guidance in all instances, but the liability for the safety of the samples remains with the vendor. Markets are advised that they too may accept some added liability if samples are offered during the operation of the market. They should provide for policing the offering of samples under the guidance provided and require such additional practices as may be required by the circumstances to meet basic food safety.

Food Sampling: Guidelines and Procedures

Farmers' markets sell primarily on taste. Allowing a customer to try a new product prior to buying can be a tremendous marketing tool for producers. Care should always be taken to ensure each sample is of the highest quality and will be a positive experience for the consumer.

Adherence to food safety principles is of great importance when offering samples. Foodborne illness resulting from improper sampling methods could create a negative image of the producer or the farmers' market in general.

It's important to note that the vendor offering samples assumes all liability and should look carefully at every step to make sure their samples are as safe as possible.

A sample is defined by the Department for Public Health as a food product promotion where only a bite-sized portion of food is offered free of charge to demonstrate its characteristics. A whole meal, individual hot dish or whole sandwich is not recognized as a sample.

There are two broad categories of samples allowed: those that are cooked or processed, and those that are raw or unprocessed. Therefore, the two sampling certificates that KDA issues are:

1. Cooked and/or Processed Sampling Certificate
2. All-Samples Sampling Certificate.

Cooked or Processed Sampling Certificate

For cooked and/or processed products to be sampled at the farmers market, a producer must have a Cooked or Processed Sampling Certificate. To receive this certificate a producer must:

- Read through the sampling chapters in the Farmers' Market Manual and Resource Guide.
- Complete the KDA Farmers' Market Sampling Application, making sure to answer all the questions, sign and date.
- Submit the completed application to the KDA office.

All-Samples Certificate

For raw or uncooked products to be sampled at the farmers' market, a producer must have an All-Samples Sampling Certificate. To receive this certificate a producer must:

- Have completed one of the following approved training classes listed below. This is due to the added risk of offering samples of raw or uncooked products.
 - Produce Best Practices Training (PBPT) class through your local University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Office. On the application list the name of the individual that completed the training and the date of the class. KDA can verify this in our database.
 - Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) - FSMA Grower Training course and submit copy of PSA Certificate of Training with your sampling application. KDA does not have access to this database.
 - Food Handlers Class from Local Health Department, ServSafe, or online training and submit copy of valid Food Handlers card with your sampling application. KDA does not have access to this information.
- Read through the sampling chapters in the Farmers' Market Manual and Resource Guide.
- Complete the KDA Farmers' Market Sampling Application, making sure to answer all the questions, sign and date.
- Submit the completed application to the KDA office.

Here are a few points about both types of sampling certificates:

- Sampling Certificates are valid for a two-year period; this coincides with the KDA Farmers' Market Manual and Resource Guide. Expiration dates will appear on your sampling certificate.
- The sampling certificate will have an expiration date listed.
- The sampling certificate will only be issued to an individual. This means the person listed on the certificate will be the only person to offer samples. Employees, family members, etc. must complete their own Sampling Application and receive their own certificate if they intend to offer samples at an approved location site.
- While it is encouraged that each person completes one of the approved training classes for the All-Samples Certificate, the approved educational

requirement is not required of individual employees, family members etc. so long as the farm operation has at least one trained individual on record.

- When sending in the Sampling Application for an All-Samples Certificate (raw and uncooked products) you must write the name of the person whose training you will be sampling under and attach appropriate documentation.
- If a producer/vendor moves or expands to another market they MUST contact KDA so the new changes are on file, and a new sampling certificate can be issued. The sampling certificate must have the names of all the markets where samples will be offered.

Note: The vendor retains all liability for the safety of the samples. Both the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the Department for Public Health require vendors to follow the guidance in all instances, but the liability for the safety of the samples remains with the vendor.

Markets are advised that they too may accept some added liability if samples are offered. They should provide for policing the offering of samples under the guidance provided and require such additional practices as may be required by the circumstances to meet basic food safety.

Steps for Safe and Successful Sampling

Preparation of Samples

Some farmers choose to prepare their samples at home where the quality of water, cleanliness of surfaces and equipment and cleanliness of vegetables can be easily controlled. The samples may be washed, cut up and placed in disposable, individual cups with lids. These cups are available at any restaurant supply store or at large outlet stores.

Whether you prepare your samples at the market or at home you must provide equipment and maintain practices that ensure the following during sample preparation:

Potable Water

All water that touches your product or your utensils MUST be potable. If the water is from a well, cistern, or other non-municipal source it must then be tested, and the records retained.

Only documented test results prove the water is potable.

Clean Produce

All raw produce **MUST** be washed thoroughly with running potable water. The water must be running to carry away any dirt or contaminants that may be on the outside of the product. For example, you cannot wash your tomatoes in a bucket of clean water.

Any product with rinds poses a special problem. Cantaloupes and muskmelons need good scrubbing to remove all dirt. This can be done at home to all the produce you plan to use for samples. Make sure the washed produce is then packed in clean bags or containers to keep them clean; and then store them separately from unwashed items until you arrive at the market.

Approved Ingredients

All products used in your samples must come from an approved source. This means all agricultural products that will be served without cooking must have been raised according to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Produce Best Practices Training (PBPT) or Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Training and any value-added product must be commercially produced or produced under the Home-based Processing and/or Micro-processing program.

Clean Hands

You must wash your hands properly and use food grade gloves before touching any part of your samples. Hand sanitizers do not substitute for proper hand washing. Gloves do not substitute for proper hand washing. Always wash your hands before putting on gloves and after taking them off. If gloves become torn, ripped or contaminated they should be changed and never re-use gloves. All gloves used must be food grade gloves.

Though we have all washed our hands since childhood, the proper way for sanitation purposes includes the following:

- Wetting your hands
- Applying liquid soap
- Briskly rubbing your hands together – including fingernails and backs of hands for a minimum of 20 seconds (a long time!)
- Rinsing your hands under free-flowing water
- Drying your hands with a disposable paper towel

When should you wash your hands?

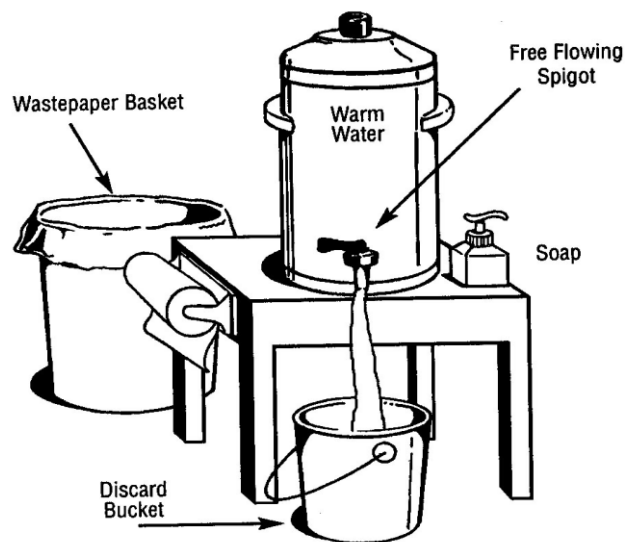
- After using the bathroom
- After handling money, unwashed produce, baskets, and anything not clean and sanitized.
- Any time you leave your stand and return.

A proper hand-washing station includes:

- A container of potable water large enough to supply water for the entire sampling time. This container must have a free-flowing dispensing valve. This is the type of spigot that does not require you to hold open the valve to keep the water flowing.
- The container should be raised off the ground to allow a catch basin under the spigot.
- Paper towels
- Liquid hand-washing soap in a pump or squeeze bottle.

Depending on the market setup, providing hand washing may mean each vendor must have their own station. If vendors feel they can share a station, it must be easily accessible with no physical impediments between the vendor and the station.

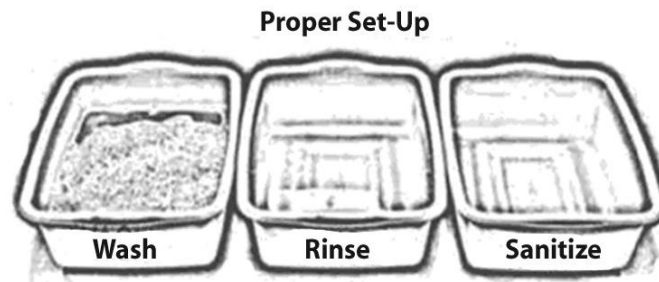
Example of a handwashing station at the Farmers' Market



Clean Utensils

Wash, Rinse, and Sanitize All utensils that touch a sample in any way must be washed in a detergent, rinsed in clean potable water and soaked for 30 seconds in a sanitizing solution. If more than one or two different utensils are

used, a cleaning, rinsing and sanitizing station is required. A simple, but effective sanitizing solution is 50 ppm household bleach/water solution. This is about one capful of bleach to one gallon of water. Sanitizer test strips are needed to check the sanitizer strength. The sanitizing container should be of sufficient size to completely immerse the largest utensil in use.



Proper Temperature

If you bring cold products to the market for sampling, you must maintain them at 41°F or below. That means you should probably ice them above and below. When using ice to maintain proper temperature, you will need to make provisions for melted ice to drain away from the product. A small cooler can provide a great way to keep samples cool. A thermometer is recommended to make sure cold products are being stored at the proper temperatures.

Any product you warm up at the market must be heated and kept above 135°F. You must have a way to maintain this temperature. A quality food thermometer is a good investment. Note the temperature readings in your records in case there is ever any doubt.

For both safety and quality, samples should be monitored to ensure that none remains out for more than 30 minutes. Remember you want your samples to be perfect little bites of your product at its best!

If you are preparing your samples at the market:

- If you are only using a few utensils, you may choose to bring several of the utensils in a zip lock bag marked as "CLEAN" and bring with you another zip lock bag marked "DIRTY". That way if you drop or soil a utensil a clean one is available and the dirty one can be easily distinguished and isolated.
- If you use a knife, then you must also have a proper cutting board. It must be handled like any other utensil – washed, rinsed, sanitized.

- Use only plastic (nonabsorbent) or approved hardwood cutting boards or disposable paper plates for cutting produce for sampling.
- If samples of both meat and vegetables are going to be cooked and offered, there should be 3 separate sets of utensils. The first is for raw meat, the second for cooked meat and the third for vegetables and fruits. These utensil sets must be kept always separate from each other to prevent cross-contamination.
- Allow all cleaned and sanitized utensils to air-dry on a clean non-porous surface or dish rack. Do not dry with a towel.
- The “washing, rinsing and sanitizing station” and the “hand washing station” must be separated from each other and completely set up before preparing any samples.

Delivery of Samples

- You must deliver the samples to the customers in such a way to prevent anyone from touching any other sample. If you have prepared the samples at home, you can place the individual cups on a tray a few at a time. Then, there is no need to worry about any customer touching any samples other than their own.
- You must protect the samples from the elements and insects. Cover your samples with insect proof netting or plastic wrap (or lids if you use the individual cups).
- You must use disposable single use utensils for distribution of samples to customers- toothpicks, cups, etc. Or you can use tongs, if you control them. Customers should never reach in a bowl or plate for a sample.
- You should make available a waste basket lined with a plastic bag for sampling preparation waste and sampling distribution waste disposal. It works best to have two cans – one behind the table for your waste and one out in front for the customers.
- No food products should be stored or placed on the ground. Food should remain at least 6 inches off the ground.

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

2026-2027 FARMERS' MARKET SAMPLING APPLICATION



DATE: _____ COUNTY: _____

NAME: _____

BUSINESS OR FARM NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

WORK/HOME PHONE NUMBER: _____ CELL PHONE: _____

Please check which sampling certificate you are requesting:

Cooked and/or Processed Products – **no additional training required**

Raw and/or Uncooked Products – **Class required** – Complete one of the following:

Produce Best Practices Training (PBPT) Class

Have you received your PBPT Diploma from KDA? Yes No

Name on PBPT Diploma: _____

Completion Date for PBPT training: _____

PSA Grower Training Course

Must attach a copy of PSA Grower Training Certificate

Food Handlers Training Class from Local Health Department

Must attach a copy of valid Food Handlers Card

**If you have not completed one of the classes above and work as an employee or family member of a business or farming operation, you may operate under another member's training certification within that business or farming operation. Please submit their name and required information above.

Please print and write clearly for all answers on this application. Unanswered or wrong answers will cause a delay in processing.

1. All water used to wash utensils or wash raw produce must be of what quality? _____
2. Name two things that should prompt you to wash your hands.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
3. How long should you soak utensils in a sanitizing solution after you wash in detergent and rinse in clean potable water? _____

PLEASE PRINT AND WRITE CLEARLY. ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

4. For the hand-washing station, what type of dispensing valve should the potable water container be equipped with? _____
5. At what temperature should cold foods be stored for sampling? _____
6. At what temperature should warm foods be stored for sampling? _____
7. For the best quality and safety, samples should only remain out for how many minutes? _____
8. Who accepts the responsibility and liability for the safety of the samples being offered? _____
9. All food must be kept at least _____ off the ground. (circle answer)
 - a. 10 inches
 - b. 6 inches
 - c. 12 inches
 - d. doesn't matter
10. Please list examples of product(s) that you will be offering samples of.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
11. For the products listed in question 10, please tell how you will handle your samples so customers do not touch any sample other than the one they will consume?

12. How will you protect your samples from the elements and insects?

13. Bar soap is acceptable to use in a hand-washing station. True False
14. Hand sanitizers and/or wearing gloves substitute for proper hand washing. True False
15. Cleaned and sanitized utensils can be dried with a towel. True False
16. All samples must be prepared at the market. True False
17. When storing cold products in a cooler, you need to make provisions to keep melted ice away from the samples. True False
18. It is acceptable to combine the "washing, rinsing and sanitizing station" with the "hand washing station." True False
19. The KDA Sampling Certificate doesn't need to be posted when sampling. True False
20. A pocketknife can be used to cut samples at the market without any requirements. True False
21. With a KDA sampling certificate, I can sample at any location. True False

PLEASE PRINT AND WRITE CLEARLY. ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

Please list all Farmers' Market(s) that you will be participating in for the 2026 and 2027 market seasons. We need the full name of the market(s) and location(s) as registered with KDA. **Remember, KDA can only issue a sampling certificate for the following three locations: 1) KDA Registered Farmers' Markets, 2) Certified Farm Market with Kentucky Farm Bureau or 3) the individual's on-farm market.**

Please read, check all lines and sign the following statement.

- I have read the appropriate chapters in the 2026-2027 Kentucky Department of Agriculture Farmers' Market Manual and Resource Guide and understand all the sampling requirements.
- I understand that I am responsible for following all accepted food handling practices.
- I understand that my sampling at any time is subject to inspection by the Department for Public Health.
- I understand that my sampling certificate must be posted at my booth when offering samples.
- I understand that I may offer samples only at the locations listed above, if approved by KDA.

Print Full Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

*****TO AVOID DELAY IN PROCESSING, PLEASE ENSURE ALL QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED AND LEGIBLE.*****

- Please remember you are only allowed to offer samples at the approved locations listed on your Sampling Certificate issued by KDA.
- All members of your farming or business operation are required to have a sampling certificate issued in their name if they will be offering samples at your booth.
- Should you change or add a market during the season, please contact KDA so your certificate can be updated and a new one issued.

Please mail completed application to:

Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Attention: Farmers' Market Program - Sampling
111 Corporate Drive
Frankfort, KY 40601

PLEASE PRINT AND WRITE CLEARLY. ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.