City of Ocala

OFFICE OF THE INTERNAL CITY AUDITOR
151 SE Osceola Ave.
Ocala, FL 34471
(352) 629-8580

To: The Honorable Suzy Heinbockel, President of the Council
The Honorable Mary Sue Rich, President Pro Tem
The Honorable Daniel Owen
The Honorable John McLeod
The Honorable Kent Guinn, Mayor
Matthew Brower, City Manager

Date: March 27, 2012

Re: Downtown Business Alliance – Farm Market

As requested by Council, Internal Audit reviewed the agreement between the City and the Downtown Business Alliance, Inc. (DBA) to operate a farm market on the Downtown Square for one year beginning April 23, 2011. Based upon the agreement, Internal Audit reviewed the City's expenditures made on behalf of the Ocala Farm Market, reviewed the financial reports prepared by the Market's CPA, reviewed the Market's web-site and vendor information, observed Market operations, discussed the Ocala Farm Market with downtown merchants and reviewed customer comment cards.

City Council, through Budget Resolution 2011-132 provided start-up funding of $15,000. To date, the City has expended:

Development, pre-event planning, and first 4 weeks of operation	$ 5,000
Development of the Ocala Farm Market web-site	2,000
Common Chef filming showcasing the Ocala Farm Market	1,500
Radio advertisements	3,200
	11,700
Sod replacement on the square (sod cost and labor)	500
In-kind Services (annualized estimate)	3,700
	$ 15,900

The City provides weekly in-kind services for road closures, parking, set-up, clean-up, and tent/trailer storage. Due to the initial location of certain vendors, sections of sod on the Square required replacement in July (paid for by the City) and in September (paid by the Farm Market). Vendors have been relocated to lessen the risk of on-going damage.

Currently, vendors are charged $25 per space, including sales tax. The Farm Market's profit and loss statement compiled by the Market's CPA (see page 4) reports a net loss of $ 10,336. The loss includes $10,253 for equipment purchases, $ 7,000 for non-recurring start-up costs and does not reflect $5,200 expended by the City for advertising and sod replacement. Adjusting for these items and continuation of the City's in-kind services, the Farm Market is on the intended path to become self-sustaining.

Internal Audit recommended that all expenditures made by the City on behalf of the Farm Market be provided to the Market's CPA firm to include in the financial records to properly reflect operating costs.

We ensured specific agreement requirements were being met by attending the market for 5 randomly chosen dates between January and March 2012:

- Operating hours 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. every Saturday. Internal Audit verified that the Square was vacated at 2:30 p.m. as per the agreement.
- Tents do not utilize stakes; weighted down with weight buckets.
- Products conform to those allowed per the agreement with vendor allocation maintained at no more than 30% for arts and crafts. We did not see any prohibited products for sale.
- Market was clean and orderly

As per the Agreement, the DBA hired Brenda Edwards as the Farm Market Manager to supervise all operations of the Market. Although there is an inherent risk with having a single individual responsible for the operations, the Manager has established controls to assure accurate and auditable records. A pre-numbered receipt book is used for all vendor booth rental receipts; vendor agreements are retained for each vendor; vendor listing and vendor site map is retained for each market. A checking account has been established for the Farm Market. The Farm Manager has signature authority on the account along with officers of the DBA. Due to the lack of segregation of duties, Internal Audit recommended the checking account require dual signatures or removal of the Farm Manager from the signature authorization. The bank statements and detailed records are compiled by an independent CPA firm. We reviewed vendor application agreements, vendor lists (including name, product and payment information), location maps, cash reconciliation/deposit forms, and advertising initiatives, including various promotional products, www.ocalafarmmarket.com and www.facebook.com/ocalafarmmarket. (See pages 5 and 6 for Farm Market #49, March 24, 2012 vendor list and location map.)

The DBA does maintain the required insurance coverage as required by the agreement. Internal Audit observed that the certificate provided to the City did not list the correct policy number. Upon notification, the insurance company immediately issued a corrected certificate.

The Market Manager provides information to the vendors regarding the laws and regulations governing the sale of products offered at the Market. Plant vendors are registered with the Department of Agriculture and a copy of their registration is displayed with the products. Food vendors are informed of the Cottage Food Legislation (see pages 7 – 10 for the Florida Division of Food Safety Cottage Food information). As the Market Manager becomes aware of any instances of non-compliance, she addresses the issue with the vendor. Internal Audit recommended revisions to the vendor application/agreement forms. The forms should include the vendor's acceptance of understanding of the vendor's responsibility to comply with the laws and regulations governing the type of product being sold. This would include understanding of the Department of Agriculture plant/soil requirements (for plants), cottage food industry requirements (for food), and sales tax requirements (products subject to sales tax).

During the review, all sales tax returns and taxes due to the State of Florida from the booth rental were submitted as of February 29, 2012 and will be submitted on a quarterly basis going forward.

Internal Audit discussed the impact of the Farm Market with 30 downtown merchants. Overall, merchants are positive, several have experienced increased exposure and some would like to see it expand location and time.

Although some merchants are not aware of a direct impact on their business, they are positive about the Market. One vendor stated that the Market is not conducive to downtown. (See pages 11 -12 for all Merchant comments.)

Internal audit also reviewed over 200 Comment Cards completed by customers over the last two months. Customers expressed positive comments about the Market and Ocala's efforts for downtown activities. (See pages 13 – 15 for a sample of customer comments.)

Based upon our procedures, we conclude that the Downtown Business Alliance has complied with the terms of the agreement with the City. The Farm Market has been well received by downtown businesses and the community. Internal Audit has offered to assist the Farm Market Manager to further develop operational controls as needed.

We appreciate the assistance of Aaron Campo, President, Downtown Business Alliance and Brenda Edwards, Farm Market Manager during the review.

Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards and the Institute of Internal Auditors Standards require that we plan and perform our audits to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. The evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our observations and conclusions.

Jeanne Covington

Jeanne Covington, Internal Auditor

c: Catherine Cameron, Assistant City Manager, Public Services
Kathy Crile, Director, Recreation and Parks, City of Ocala
Aaron Campo, President, Downtown Business Alliance, Inc.
Brenda Edwards, Manager, Ocala Farm Market

3:16 PM
03/23/12
Accrual Basis

DBA Ocala Farm Market
Profit & Loss
April 2011 through February 2012

		Apr '11 - Feb 12
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Rentals		
Booth Rental	46,682.79	
Total Rentals		46,682.79
Total Income		46,682.79
Expense		
Other Costs.		
Sales Tax	2,073.57	
Total Other Costs		2,073.57
Facilities and Equipment		
Repair and Maintenance	1,369.82	
Equipment Purchase	10,252.70	
Event Setup Labor	7,710.84	
Rent, Parking, Utilities	973.76	
Total Facilities and Equipment		20,307.12
Operations		
Advertising		
Advertising Expense	902.03	
Advertising Sponsorship	4,654.02	
Advertising Service	7,891.55	
Total Advertising	13,447.60	
Bank Charges	78.16	
Business License	150.00	
Contract Services		
Accounting Fees	1,500.00	
Farm Market Manager	18,150.00	
Total Contract Services	19,650.00	
Postage, Mailing Service	15.50	
Printing and Copying	240.50	
Supplies	353.56	
Telephone, Telecommunications	533.50	
Total Operations		34,468.82
Total Expense		56,849.51
Net Ordinary Income		-10,166.72
Other Income/Expense		
Other Expense		
Non-Operating Expense		168.92
Total Other Expense		168.92
Net Other Income		-168.92
Net Income		**-10,335.64**

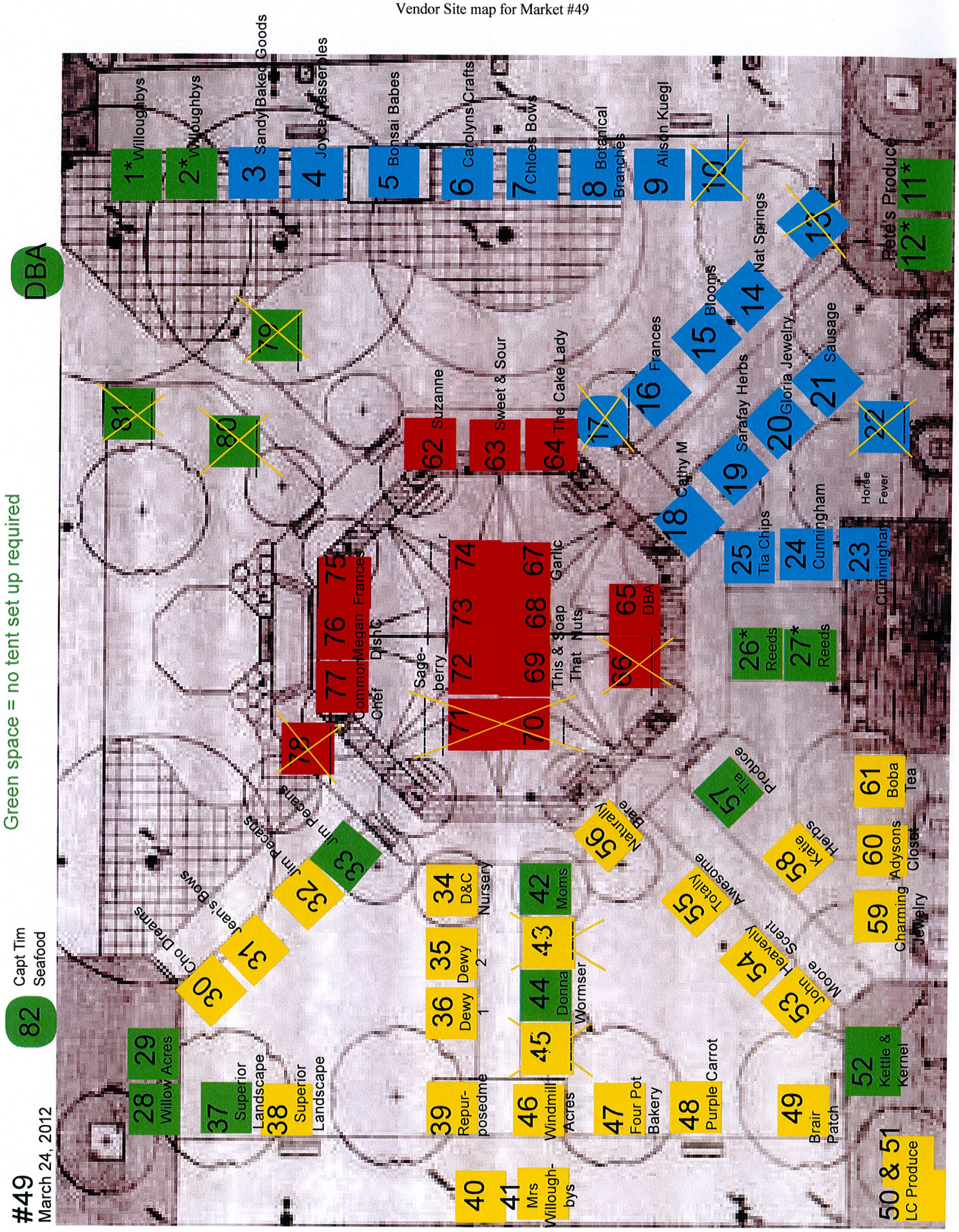
Prepared by Berryhill, Hoffman & Getsee, Certified Public Accountants

Ocala Farm Market Week #49
Saturday, March 24, 2012
Participating Vendors

Space/Vendor	Products for Sale
1. Willoughbys	Produce
2. Willoughbys	Produce Trade Trade
3. Sandy's Baked	Goods Cakes & goodies
4. Joyce Casseroles	Casserole Carriers
5. Bonsai Babes	Bonsai Plants
6. Carolyn's Crafts	Crafts
7. Chloe's Bows	Hair Bows
8. Botanical Branches	Plants
9. Alison Kuegler	Silk Arrangements
10. _____	_____
11. Pete's Produce	Produce
12. Pete's Produce	Produce
13. _____	_____
14. Natural Springs	Dairy & Cheese
15. Blooms	Orchids
16. _____	_____
17. _____	_____
18. Cathy Mosely	Bags & Keychains
19. Sara Fay Farms	Herbs, Jams, Jellies
20. Gloria's Jewelry	Jewelry
21. Carbone Sausage	Italian Sausage/Pasta
22. Darla Scenty	Candles
23. Cunningham Plants	Plants
24. Cunningham Plants	Plants
25. Tia Chips	Plantain Chips
26. Reed Produce	Produce
27. Reed Produce	Produce
28. Willow Acre Farms	Produce
29. Willow Acre Farms	Produce
30. Chocolate Dreams	Brownie Pops
31. Jean's Bows	Hair Bows
32. Jim Thomas	Pecans
33. Jim Thomas	Pecans
34. D&C Nursery	Herbs & Plants
35. Dewy 1	Produce
36. Dewy 2	Produce
37. Superior Landscape	Plants
38. Superior Landscape	Plants
39. Repurposedme	Metal art
40. Mrs. Willoughby	Produce
41. Mrs. Willoughby	Produce

Space/Vendor	Products for Sale
42. Mom's Produce	Fruit
43. _____	_____
44. Donna Wormser	Vegetables / Lettuce
45. _____	_____
46. Windmill Acres	Goat Cheese
47. Flour Pot Bakery	Breads
48. Purple Carrot	Organic Produce
49. Briar Patch Nursery	Plants
50. LC Produce	Produce
51. LC Produce	Produce
52. Kettle & Kernel	Kettle Corn
53. _____	_____
54. Heavenly Scent Soaps	Handmade Soaps
55. Totally Awesome	Massage
56. Naturally Bare Skincare	Spa & Skin products
57. Tia Produce	Eggs / Produce
58. Katie Fisher Herbs	Herb Plants
59. Charming Jewelry	Jewelry
60. Adyson's Closet	Candy Sundaes & Tutus
61. Boba Tea	Boba Tea
62. Suzanne	Baked Goods
63. Sweet & Sour	Italian Licorice
64. The Cake Lady	Cakes
65. DBA Booth	DBA Information
66. _____	_____
67. Strega Nonna	Garlic
68. Healing Journey	Soap Nuts
69. _____	_____
70. This & That	YoYo Toys
71. _____	_____
72. Sageberry Candles	Soy Candles
73. _____	_____
74. _____	_____
75. _____	_____
76. Megan Dish Cloths	Dish Cloths
77. Frances G	Doll Clothes
78. _____	_____
79. _____	_____
80. _____	_____
81. _____	_____
82. Captain Tim's	Seafood

63 Total Vendors: 44 farm/food (70%) and 19 arts/crafts (30%)


#49
March 24, 2012
82
Capt Tim Seafood
Green space = no tent set up required
DBA
1* Willoughbys
2* Willoughbys
3 Sandy Baked Goods
4 Joyce Casseroles
5 Bonsai Babes
6 Carolyns Crafts
7 Chloes Bows
8 Botanical Branches
9 Alison Kuegl
10
11*
12*
Pete's Produce
13
14 Nat Springs
15 Blooms
16 Frances
17
18 Cathy M
19 Sarafay Herbs
20 Gloria Jewelry
21 Sausage
22
23 Cunningham
24 Cunningham
25 Tia Chips
26* Reeds
27* Reeds
28 Willow Acres
29
30 Cho Dreams
31 Jean's Bows
32 Jim Pecans
33 Jim Pecans
34 D&C Nursery
35 Dewy 2
36 Dewy 1
37 Superior Landscape
38 Superior Landscape
39 Repur-posedme
40
41 Mrs Willough-bys
42 Moms
43
44 Donna
45 Wormser
46 Windmill Acres
47 Four Pot Bakery
48 Purple Carrot
49 Brair Patch
50 & 51 LC Produce
52 Kettle & Kernel
53 John Moore
54 Heavenly Scent
55 Totally Awesome
56 Naturally Bare
57 Tea Produce
58 Katie Herbs
59 Charming Jewelry
60 Adysons Closet
61 Boba Tea
62 Suzanne
63 Sweet & Sour
64 The Cake Lady
65 DBA
66
67 Garlic
68 Nuts
69 That
70
71
72 This & Soap
73
74
75 Frances
76 Megan
77 Common Chef
78
Sage-berry
Dishc
r
80
81
Horse Fever
Cunningham

Florida FDACS of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner

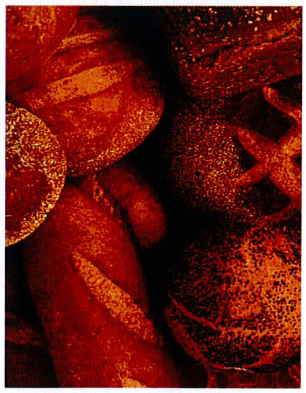
Division of Food Safety

Cottage Food Legislation Signed Into Law

The 2011 Florida Legislature enacted House Bill 7209 allowing individuals to manufacture, sell and store certain types of "cottage food" products in an unlicensed home kitchen.

Cottage food products include such items as breads, cakes, cookies, candies, jams, jellies, and fruit pies.

"Cottage food operations" as they are called require no license or permit from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and are not inspected by any state government entity.



Gross sales for a cottage food operation must not exceed $15,000 annually. Products must be sold directly by the cottage food operator to the consumer. Sales by Internet, mail order, consignment or at wholesale are prohibited.

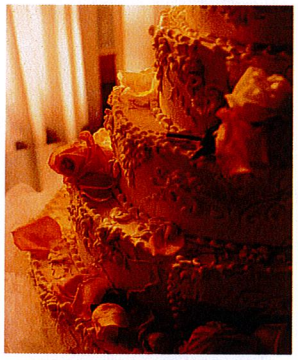
Cottage food products must be labeled in accordance with the requirements as outlined in Section 500.80(5), Florida Statutes, and United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 21, Part 101.

All cottage food products, offered for sale to the general public, must be labeled: "Made in a cottage food operation that is not subject to Florida's food safety regulations."

The FDACS may investigate any complaint received against a cottage food operation.

The Division of Food Safety is pleased to provide cottage food operators with general and specific information contained in this document.

If you are a prospective cottage food operator, please take some time to review this guidance document so that you are better informed about cottage food operation requirements.



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Quick Reference Definitions

Cottage Food Operation means a person who produces or packages cottage food products at his or her residence and sells such products in accordance with Section 500.80, Florida Statutes.

Cottage Food Product means food that is not a potentially hazardous food as defined by FDACS rule which is sold by a cottage food operation in accordance with Section 500.80, Florida Statutes.

Residence is defined to mean a primary residence that is occupied by an individual who operates a cottage food operation and that contains a single kitchen with appliances designed for common residential usage. The residence may only contain one stove or oven, which may be a double oven designed for non-commercial use.

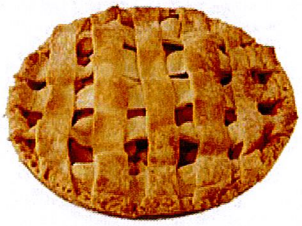
Potentially Hazardous Food means a food that requires time/temperature control for safety (TCS) to limit pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation; An animal food that is raw or heat-treated; a plant food that is heat treated or consists of raw seed sprouts, cut melons, cut leafy greens, cut tomatoes or mixtures of cut tomatoes that are not modified in a way so that they are unable to support pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation, or garlic-in-oil mixtures that are not modified in a way so that they are unable to support pathogenic microorganism growth or toxin formation.

Fresh from Florida

What Types of Cottage Foods Can I Produce?

As a cottage food operator, you are allowed to produce food items which are considered not potentially hazardous.

The table (at right) provides a listing of acceptable cottage food products. Although not all inclusive, it provides for most types of approved cottage food products.



If you have any questions regarding the production of a particular cottage food product please contact the FDACS's Division of Food Safety, Bureau of Food and Meat Inspection at (850) 245-5520.

Loaf breads, rolls, biscuits
Cakes, pastries and cookies
Candies and confections
Honey
Jams, jellies and preserves
Fruit pies and dried fruits
Dry herbs, seasonings and mixtures
Homemade pasta
Cereals, trail mixes and granola
Coated or uncoated nuts
Vinegar and flavored vinegars
Popcorn, popcorn balls

What Cottage Foods Are Not Allowed?

Fresh or dried meat or meat products including jerky
Canned fruits, vegetables, vegetable butters, flavored oils, hummus, garlic dip, salsas etc.
Fish or shellfish products
Canned pickled products such as corn relish, pickles, sauerkraut
Raw seed sprouts
Bakery goods which require any type of refrigeration such as cream, custard or meringue pies and cakes or pastries with cream cheese icings or fillings
Milk and dairy products including hard, soft and cottage cheeses and yogurt
Cut fresh fruits and/or vegetables. Juices made from fresh fruits or vegetables
Ice and/or ice products
Barbeque sauces, ketchups and/or mustards
Foccaccia-style breads with vegetables and/or cheeses

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: **How do I sell my cottage food products?**
Answer: You may sell your cottage food products from your residence directly to the consumer. Sales are also approved at farmer's markets and roadside stands.

Question: **Can I use the internet to sell my cottage food products?**
Answer: No, the law prohibits sales over the internet, by mail order, or at wholesale.

Question: **Am I able to deliver my cottage food products?**
Answer: Yes, you may deliver your cottage food products directly to the consumer or to a specific event venue (wedding, birthday celebration etc.)

Question: **Do I need a permit or license for my cottage food operation?**
Answer: No, you do not need a state permit or license for your cottage food operation. However, you should check with your city or county for any requirements they may have..

Question: **Is there any limit to how much I can earn from my cottage food operation?**
Answer: Yes, cottage food operators are limited to $15,000 in gross sales per year. It is the operator's responsibility to comply with applicable laws, rules and regulations regarding the collection of sales tax

Question: **Can I make pet treats?**
Answer: No, the cottage food law applies to human-grade food only. For more information about pet treat licensing please contact the Feed Inspection Program at (850) 617-7855.

Florida Labeling Requirements

The cottage food law requires specific labeling requirements for the sale of cottage food products.

A cottage food operation may only sell cottage food products which are prepackaged with a label affixed that contains the following information: (printed in English)

- The name and address of the cottage food operation;
- The name of the cottage food product;
- The ingredients of the cottage food product, in descending order of predominance by weight;
- The net weight or net volume of the cottage food product;
- Allergen information as specified by federal labeling requirements;
- If any nutritional claim is made, appropriate nutritional information as specified by federal labeling requirements; and
- The following statement printed in at least 10-point type in a color that provides a clear contrast to the background label: "Made in a cottage food operation that is not subject to Florida's food safety regulations."

A sample is shown below and may assist with developing your cottage food product label.

MADE IN A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO FLORIDA'S FOOD SAFETY REGULATIONS

Chocolate Chip Cookie

Ashley Christopher Bryant
1019 Food Safety Drive
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Ingredients: Enriched flour (Wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine, mononitrate, riboflavin and folic acid), butter (milk, salt), chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, butterfat (milk), Soy lecithin as an emulsifier), walnuts, sugar, eggs, salt, artificial vanilla extract, baking soda.

Contains: wheat, eggs, milk, soy, walnuts

Net Wt. 3 oz

Federal Allergen Labeling Information

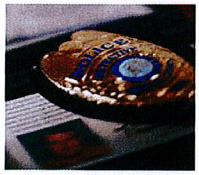
All cottage food products must be labeled in accordance with the United States Code of Federal Regulations Title 21, Part 101. As a cottage food operator, you must identify if any of your ingredients are made from one of the following food groups: eggs, milk, wheat, peanuts, soybeans, fish and tree nuts.

In the sample label (provided at left) possible allergens are identified as "Contains wheat, eggs, milk, soy and walnuts." This labeling allows consumers to avoid food which may be harmful to them.

To obtain additional information you may visit the following website which contains more information regarding federal allergen labeling information:

http://www.fda.gov/Food/LabelingNutrition/FoodAllergensLabeling/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/ucm106187.htm

Cottage Food Inspections Know the Rules...



The FDACS may investigate any complaint received for a cottage food operation.

If your cottage food operation is the subject of a complaint, you must allow a FDACS employee or officer in your cottage food operation to conduct an inspection.

The FDACS employee or officer will inspect your cottage food operation to determine compliance with applicable laws, rules and regulations.

If you refuse to allow a FDACS employee or officer to inspect your cottage food operation, the FDACS may take disciplinary actions which may include a $5,000 fine.

More information is available on page four of this publication.

State Agency Contact

A cottage food operation must comply with all applicable county and municipal laws and ordinances regulating the preparation, processing, storage and sale of cottage food products. Below is a listing for state agency resources who may assist you in answering any questions regarding cottage foods:

FDACS of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Food Safety
(850) 245-5520
http://www.freshfromflorida.com/

Be sure to check with your local municipal, city or county government for additional requirements!

Can I Sell My Cottage Foods to Restaurants?

Cottage food operators are not allowed to sell their cottage food products to local restaurants or grocery stores. These types of sales are considered "wholesale" and are not allowed under the law.

Cottage food operators must sell their cottage food products directly to the consumer.

Documents and Publications

The following websites provide additional information relating to food safety and subsequent requirements as well as the cottage food legislation:

United States Food and Drug Administration
2009 Food Code
http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/FoodCode2009/

Cottage Food House Bill 7209
http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=46868&SessionId=66

Chapter 500, Florida Statutes
http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0500-0599/0500/0500ContentsIndex.html&StatuteYear=2010&Title=%2D%3E2010%2D%3EChapter%20500

Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004
http://www.fda.gov/Food/LabelingNutrition/FoodAllergensLabeling/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/ucm106187.htm

Can I Make Salsas or Barbecue Sauce?

Processing of low-acid foods by retort canning or processing of acidified foods is not allowed by a cottage food operator.

These types of products must be commercially processed to ensure sterility under conditions of non-refrigerated storage and distribution.

Typically, canning or processing acidified foods are done in a state permitted facility.

Merchant Comments

Located on the Square

Although not open when the Market is open, anything that goes on downtown, the better. The Market started off slow but has grown into something quite nice and is a benefit to the downtown area.

Takes away parking - "our employees can't even find a place to park", people only come in to use the bathroom - it is not conducive to our environment and our clientele - Downtown needs to be a cultural center; Farm Market isn't the answer and the downtown area doesn't need that type of activity.

Although business is located on the square, has not seen anyone walk in to storefront during the Farm Market operating hours. Customers have difficulty determining if his location is open, hard to see signage; has started to leave double doors propped open from 9 am to 1 pm. Concerns not with the Market, but rather with the type of signage that can be used for business exposure with Market shoppers.

Loves the Market, definitely increases business, hope they don't take it away, square is the best place to hold it.

Definitely see an increase in activity in the store on Saturday - people come in, look around, get to know that we are here.

One of the many individuals to help get the Farm Market off the ground; and is desperate to keep in the same location with current hours. Has had increased traffic during the week from Farm Market traffic. Also, has seen an increase in customers visiting from surrounding cities - not just Ocala residents due to vendors talking about Ocala at markets in other cities. Addressed concern of those surrounding businesses who state parking is an issue; other activities later in the evenings and on other days throughout the week in the square also require the same streets to be blocked, parking spots utilized and that doesn't seem to be a concern to those businesses.

The Market brings in business, especially now with opening for breakfast at 7 am on Saturday. Farm Market customers come in and eat before going to the Market.

Located within one block

Farm Market definitely brings in new business. Potentially expanding into breakfast cuisine to take advantage of crowds gathering earlier. Prior to the Farm Market, slow start to business, now busier much earlier.

The Market brings people downtown, even if Market goers don't buy that day, they come back, word of mouth - bring others into the store. The Square is the best location. Would like to see the Market extend its time - at least until 2 - would probably be more business for the Market vendors as well - people like to sleep in on Saturday - having it later would mean more customers coming later in the day.

Great exposure. Brings people out. Would like to see Market expand the time.

Farm Market is great; would like to see it extended, 2 p.m. would be optimal. Negatives are vendors offering similar products to our merchandise. Some vendors have same exact merchandise - not homemade merchandise, which was originally a criterion of the Market. Market vendors can undercut the prices due to lower overhead. Merchant was told could not be a vendor at the Market because it was not homemade. Would love to see some type of directory in the square to advertise the downtown businesses - would be willing to pay to have business name displayed.

Definitely noticed increase foot traffic. Saturday is the best day of the week. Does see increase in customers looking that state "will be back," and actually come back. Location and time are optimal. Only noticeable fluctuation in foot traffic is on Gator game days when customers tend to leave quickly.

Has experienced great exposure from increased traffic during Farm Market operating times. Often encourages stylists operating in salon to work on Saturdays to take advantage of increased walk in traffic.

Past few months have been busier on Saturday. There is increased traffic stopping into the store to browse only to return later to make a purchase after shopping at the Market. Women shopping with family usually return later in the week and make purchases; women shopping with other woman tend to return the same day to make purchases. Voiced concerns of Market vendors selling items not handmade, a detail which is clearly stated on the Farm Market website; vendors not charging sales tax; as well as the DBAs "lack of communication of finances" with board members. Very open to ideas to generate more revenue for downtown business. Excited about current constructions projects of "tying in" of the square with Citizens' Circle with the hopes of even more exposure from increased foot traffic.

Business generally appeals to different clientele that predominately shops the Farm Market. Noticeable increase in foot traffic during Farm Market hours.

Merchant Comments (continued)

Located within two blocks

Draws people to the downtown area, Market customers know that the shop exists, especially those that park close by. Wishes the City would put a directory of downtown businesses on the square. When events aren't occurring, people still come to the square but they don't venture away from the square, especially if they are new to the area - don't realize businesses exist.

Increase in traffic is noticeable, however due to most clients pre-booking; impact directly on the business is not reflected. It does give the public and idea of what downtown has to offer and wants to see it continue.

Currently plans to expand hours for lunch on Saturday to accommodate foot traffic from Market. Would like to see Market hours extended later in the afternoon. Hopes the Market doesn't move off the Square.

Parking may be concern for customers, but no negative experiences to speak of. No immediate impact with parking due to business location not being on the Square. Suggested relocation to the empty Lincoln Mercury area for potentially greater impact on businesses farther away from the square.

No direct impact when the Market is open because shop opens later in the day. Does notice foot traffic peering in before opening and returning after shopping at the Farm Market.

Due to location farther from the square, does not have a significant direct impact from individuals visiting the Farm Market; although she and her employees enjoy the shopping themselves. Actually advertised once before with the Farm Market but did not have a return on this advertisement.

Market offers increased recognition of businesses located downtown. Positively brings visibility that other things are going on downtown. Nice that fresh produce is available, increases activity - anything to showcase downtown is a plus - lets everyone know that downtown is alive. Likes the location on the square. Is concerned that Market vendors offer similar products, but without overhead or health and sanitation guideline regulations. Concerns that food vendors are not using gloves and do not have sanitation buckets. Welcomes competition, but it needs to be fair competition. It is not a fair playing field. More importantly, it is the food safety issue. Market management needs to monitor that vendors comply with Cottage Food laws. Other than that, very positive that the Market is here, loves the location, and would like to see it stay.

Due to majority of clientele interested in holistic lifestyle often encourages customers to visit the Farm Market. However, there is not direct significant impact of increased traffic during the Farm Market operating hours.

Been here 14 years - loves the Farm Market - the more that is brought downtown, the better it is for business. Loved it when it was moved during the holidays - Lots of activity, lots of business - wish it could be moved permanently - but understands it would hurt the other vendors around the square. Would like to see the Market be open one more day a week. Definitely makes a difference.

Good for the downtown - anything that provides exposure for downtown businesses can only help us prosper.

Very effective, Farm Market customers increase exposure with increase traffic. Greatest exposure from Farm Market customers parking near salon. No negatives and stated anyone with negative feedback in his opinion is speaking from personal reasons not betterment of the community.

Our Saturday sales are up and down, but definitely more traffic coming into the store to look.

No affect from it being on the Square, hated it when it was moved during the holidays - destroyed business, no parking for customers. Lost probably 30 customers each time. Will fight it if they move it closer to the business permanently.

Located beyond two blocks

Can't say if there is a direct impact on business, but brings people to the square, loves the location - Gives Ocala that "Mayberry feel". Farm Market is an amazing project which is good for local people to sell and to make connections with fellow town's people.

Business has moved from the square over a year ago and began being open on Saturday at that time; no significant increase in foot traffic driven by the Farm Market.

No direct impact on business from Farm Market, but like to shop there.

Sample of Customer Comments

(Extracted from 224 Customer Comment Cards on file with Farm Market Manager)

Excellent, we come every Saturday to purchase our fruits and vegetables. Nice walking around, good relaxing environment.

Great vendors and great location, excellent and enjoyable way to spend a Saturday morning.

Excellent – hope it grows !

One of the best events that the City puts on.

A great asset to the downtown. Look forward to coming every week, although we need better parking!

A great thing to see in our community. Hope it stays part of Ocala.

Look forward to Saturday and the Market!

Love fresh produce. A good addition for Ocala and the downtown merchants.

Best market I have tried. Love it!

Very nice atmosphere. I like coming here.

I enjoy the hometown atmosphere and the sense of community involvement.

Keep the Market – We love it. Ocala needs more events like this.

Keep the Market going and keep up the good work.

Like the variety. Local growers are important.

Nice variety of items offered. Love the organic and locally grown produce.

Very nice open air market. Good fresh veggies.

First time here – new to the area- it's my new "hometown". Look forward to many more visits.

Very nice, clean, good prices, and friendly people.

Good produce selections with lots to choose from; love it being on the square as it brings folks to downtown shops.

I come every Saturday. Keeps money here in Ocala. Love the produce.

I like the vast array of vendors centrally located in Ocala. The location is clean and well maintained.

Fantastic spacing for vendors. Great walkways for customers with lots of interesting folks to meet.

Love the fresh vegetables and other organic/natural foods.

I love coming to the Farm Market every Saturday. It's great for local business and has become a tradition for my family.

Always pleasant, clean and organized. Try to come every Saturday to support our local residents.

Friendly people and good food.

It is great to see community type things that happen on a regular basis.

First visit,- will not be the last. Better than I expected.

Keep up the good work. I love it!

Variety of things to choose, very pleased. Prices are reasonable, friendly atmosphere.

Sample of Customer Comments (continued)

Very nice but need more places to sit down to rest.

It is really a great place to come. Please don't ever stop doing the market!

Very family friendly market.

Everyone was very friendly and helpful, a lot of variety of things.

The market is very enjoyable. We see new vendors today - hope you can keep them and attract more. I have come quite a few times.

Wonderful time, delicious treats. Great way to feel a part of the community

Great – I love having this in Ocala.

Some of the prices are too high.

I love this market. Great veggies. Like the organics. Will be back for more seafood.

Great, fantastic, an ideal location and venture. Perfect for Ocala.

I love coming here every Saturday. Vegetables and fruit are great. Please keep it up.

I appreciate having an outlet to buy local fresh organic and non organic fruits and veggies. I like the community feel of this market. Thank you.

I saw the video on enjoyocala.com and just had to come here. It was exactly what I saw on-line. Bravo.

Love the food and all the vendors. Family experience and good produce. Look forward to coming every week.

Our experience at the farm market was very pleasing. Great variety, friendly vendors. Keep up the good work! Our community needs this!

Overall great experience. Would be nice to see some other vendors added to the mix – Maybe some health care vendors.

It is so refreshing to see the downtown revitalized and all the parking spots filled. Great family activity, wonderful atmosphere & unique products. This is the missing element Ocala has been longing for.

This was our family's first time and we will most definitely be back.

Good to see community supporting local businesses.

Wonderful small town experience

Excellent! Long overdue! Great for Marion County.

Fantastic. The greatest thing that has happened to the Square. A community coming together. A wonderful gathering place and so good for the local economy.

Great opportunity to get out on the Square. You can get some bargains and enjoy the sunshine and fresh air.

I am a constant customer. It has given a new dimension to the community. Very excellent!

Great fresh vegetables. Keep it going. Like that it's on the downtown square.

Very cool. Music is a great touch.

I would like to see more vendors. Everyone was very pleasant and kind.

Love the availability of local fresh grown produce.

I enjoy coming and supporting local growers and merchants.

Sample of Customer Comments (continued)

Nice touch in the downtown. Nice to see local products in one place without having to drive around.

Very nice. Come often and recommend!

Great addition to downtown Ocala. You have come a long way since I lived here back in 1984.

Very well organized and clean. Will definitely recommend it!

We really enjoy coming here and also being able to bring our dogs. There is a nice variety of stands.

Keep this market going. Great attraction for us. We are visiting from the Tampa area.

Outstanding experience. Great for the downtown square. Best thing to happen at the square in a long time.

I love the Farm Market!! Downtown should always have it!

Less booths than normal this time but still excellent. We love supporting local farms and businesses. Great thing to attend each week.

Love that we have a farm market downtown. It is a weekly event for us. Keep it up!

We try to come every weekend and couldn't do without it. Keep up the good work and thanks to all the vendors.

Great market. Hope it continues to grow.

First time – will be back.

Thank you for being here.

I would love to see more. It is so nice to support the local people. The food is cheaper!

Love the market & vendors that are here. Just started coming in October but now come every week. Hope it continues.

So good to find local, fresh produce

I enjoy the market every weekend and buy excellent quality produce. Love the location on the Square.

Always love it – I try to come most every Saturday.

We love coming to the Market. Lots of great stuff and yummy food!

Many organic vendors, great bakery items – Terrific!

Always fabulous…A great addition to the Downtown Square.

Great opportunity to continue to make Ocala a wonderful place to live.

Love all the fresh produce and the fish man. Would like to see even more vendors.

Wide variety of products at farm prices. Come here weekly.

Everyone is so nice, polite, and helpful. There is no pressure to buy. Even if I don't need anything, the market is a wonderful place to meet friends and walk around.

Nice to have in Ocala. Use to go to the Market of Marion. Now we come here.

Great place to shop and I am happy to see the square being used instead of being crowded with homeless people.

First time here. Moving to the area and was really impressed with the selection and friendliness.

Glad Ocala is expanding into events like this.

I love the Ocala Market.