



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**117 Vendors Accepted for 2020 Bloomington Community Farmers' Market;  
Season Launches April 4 With Online Shopping and Drive-Through Pickup**

**Bloomington, Ind.** - With 99 farm vendors and 18 food and beverage artisans accepted for the 2020 season, the Bloomington Community Farmers' Market is poised to launch Saturday, April 4 -- initially with an [online](#) shopping experience that will allow the Market to continue as an essential food source and key component of the local food economy while following health and safety protocols necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All vendors and food and beverage artisans accepted for the 2020 season submitted applications for review and approval by Parks staff, and signed a [2020 Farm Vendor Contract](#), approved by the Board of Park Commissioners January 9. The updated contract requires vendors to abide by new market rules and guidelines, as stated in the [2020 Farm Vendor Handbook](#). All 117 vendors who applied for participation in the 2020 market were sent acceptance letters. Based on their failure last season to comply with certain rules, two of the vendors accepted for the 2020 season received letters reiterating their specific contractual obligations.

Together with the vendor application and contract and the rules for visitors' behavior, the vendor handbook was updated after the 2019 market season with a revised Market mission statement and rules for vendor behavior, including a prohibition of harassment or discrimination, a requirement that all vendors and stand assistants be identified in advance to Market staff, and an expectation that "behavior outside of the Market that relates to the Market...be consistent with the mission and goals of the Market."

Working within the current public health imperative for physical distancing while supporting the essential role the Farmers' Market serves as a food provider in the local economy, staff from the City's departments of Parks and Recreation, Economic and Sustainable Development (ESD), and Information Technology Systems (ITS) have temporarily transformed the physical Market experience to an online shopping experience with a scheduled, drive-through pickup component at Switchyard Park (1601 South Rogers Street). This month, market customers may browse the offerings of 46 farm vendors and food and beverage artisans on the Online Farmers' Market [website](#). Market shoppers may search either by category, or by a particular vendor, to find Market offerings including fresh farm products, herbs, mushrooms, bread and other pre-packaged artisanal foods, bedding plants, flower bouquets, and more.

Shoppers may purchase their preferred products online from any vendor or combination of vendors they choose, and make a single payment for the total purchase online. Customers will be alphabetically assigned a one-hour window between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on the upcoming Saturday for curbside pickup of their purchases in the Switchyard Park Pavilion parking lot. All purchases must be made online by 11:59 p.m. on the Thursday evening before Market day. **No Market products will be available for purchase on site.**

All recommended Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protocols are in place to ensure the safety of Market vendors, staff, volunteers, and shoppers. Customers picking up online orders will remain in their vehicles, while Market staff will deliver Market products, packaged and bagged, directly to the vehicle. Customers will be asked not to leave their vehicle. The Market will operate on the online ordering system as long as public health guidelines recommend physical distancing.

Shoppers who utilize their SNAP (food stamp) benefits to purchase eligible products from participating Market vendors will continue to be able to do so with this system; SNAP users will receive special instructions for completing their SNAP purchases during checkout online. The Farmers' Market continues to double the value of SNAP benefits used at the Market. SNAP users' EBT benefits will be doubled up to \$18.

"The support of our local food systems is crucial," said Marcia Veldman, Farmers' Market Coordinator. "Farmers and the food and beverage artisans are key providers of essential services during this unprecedented time. The City of Bloomington is committed to local food security, to continuing to support access to nutrition for our most vulnerable populations, to strengthening our local food economy, and to providing safe, effective ways of making food available to the local community."

More information about how to shop for fresh, locally produced farm products, and for foods and beverages crafted by local artisans, is available at the [Online Farmers' Market](#) or by sending an email to [onlinefarmersmarket@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:onlinefarmersmarket@bloomington.in.gov).

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