



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 2020

Media Contact: Claudia Murphy, Public Information Officer, Whatcom Unified Command
Phone: (360) 815-2701
E-mail address: WUC_JIC@co.whatcom.wa.us

Bellingham Farmers Market to Open April 11 with Support of Whatcom County Health Department

BELLINGHAM, WA – The Bellingham Farmers Market will be opening for the season on Saturday, April 11th. Farmers Markets are listed as essential businesses, just like grocery stores, under the Governor’s Stay Home, Stay Healthy Order. The Farmers Market is a critical link in our food system and an essential way residents can get groceries and support our local farms.

The Bellingham Farmers Market has worked with the Whatcom County Health Department to create new safety measures similar to grocery stores to help slow the spread of COVID-19. If you have concerns about visiting the Bellingham Farmers Market, you can choose to stay home. You should also [stay home if you are sick](#), or have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath.

Those who choose to visit the Farmers Market should treat it as if they are going to the grocery store:

- Maintain six feet between yourself and others.
- Don’t linger in one area.
- If a vendor has multiple people waiting, visit another vendor while you are waiting for them to assist other customers.
- When possible, have only one household member attend the market to allow for better physical distancing.
- Wear a face covering, such as a cloth mask or a bandana.

Access to the market will be limited to a single entry and exit point, and market staff will be limiting the number of customers into the market to allow for physical distancing practices to be followed.

(More...)





“The Whatcom County Health Department recognizes the need to provide safe, healthy food while maintaining physical distancing.” said Tom Kunesh, WCHD Food Program Supervisor. “The Bellingham Farmers market developed a plan for limited market operation beginning April 11th that the Whatcom County Health Department has reviewed and approved.” In addition to all regularly-required food safety regulations, this new plan includes the following required protocols:

- Customers will not be allowed to handle produce or products before buying. Vendors will bag all purchases and will be washing, sanitizing or changing gloves before touching food, or after handling money, phones or any non-food surface.
- Food sampling will be suspended.
- Non-essential services such as non-food vendors and entertainment will be suspended.
- Additional hand-washing stations will be placed around the market.
- Vendor booths will be spread out to allow for increased physical distancing. Vendor booths will also be roped off to create a space boundary between vendor tables and customers.
- Bellingham Farmers Market staff and vendors are required to wear cloth face coverings. Whatcom County Health Department recommends everyone attending the market to [wear cloth face coverings in public](#).

In these difficult and uncertain times, Whatcom County needs a strong local food system. Revenue from the Farmers Market supports our food producers and ensures our community continues to have the food we need. By supporting local farmers, we are supporting and sustaining our local food system, which is vital to the health of Whatcom County.

In addition to the Farmers Market, there are other ways to support our local food economy. Consider supporting local farmers through a [Community Supported Agriculture \(CSA\) Share](#), or by buying [directly from the farm](#).

Remember, stay home except for essential trips. Essential trips include grocery shopping, medical appointments or picking up medications, and traveling to essential jobs. Together, we can all do our part to slow the spread.



(###)

