



Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Licensure and Regulatory Services
255 Rockville Pike, Suite 100; Rockville, Maryland 20850
240-777-3986 (office) / 240-777-3088 (fax)

Farmers' Market Sampling Guidelines

1. All food preparation must occur on site or from a licensed facility. Private homes are not acceptable except for non-potentially hazardous food items previously approved by the Montgomery County Health Department.
2. All water must come from an approved potable source. Approved sources include bottled water and potable water in a food-grade container or storage tank.
3. Provide a hand washing station consisting of :
 - a) A container of water with a hands free dispensing valve.
 - b) A waste water catch basin.
 - c) Liquid hand washing soap.
 - d) Paper towels.
4. Provide utensil washing station consisting of adequately sized containers: one with soapy water for washing, one with clean water for rinsing, and one with bleach in water for sanitizing (use one tablespoon of bleach for each gallon of water to provide a solution of 50 parts per million (ppm) of residual chlorine (see diagram below).
5. Cutting boards, knives, and other food equipment must be properly cleaned and sanitized prior to operation and routinely as contamination occurs.
6. Fruits and vegetables intended for sampling must be rinsed thoroughly in potable water. Washing is to remove dirt, soil, and any other contaminants. A chlorine solution, or antiseptic vegetable wash, is strongly recommended.
7. All exposed food must be protected from contamination by the use of sneeze guards, containers with lids, restricted opening containers, aluminum foil, or other approved barriers.
8. Minimize bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food by wearing plastic gloves or using clean and sanitized utensils, foil, or wax paper. Hands must be washed prior to using gloves or other means. Change gloves between tasks or when torn or soiled.

9. The use of common containers by the public for the tasting of foods is not permitted. Use tooth picks, wax paper, paper sampling cups, squeeze bottles, or disposable utensils to distribute samples. The idea is to prevent customers' hands or fingers from touching the samples or contaminating the food (see sampling diagrams below).
10. Maintain proper food temperatures for cold food at 41°F; or below and hot food at 135°F; or above.



Items for proper sampling

Bottom left to right:

disposable single use utensils, covered sampling container, tongs, knife and cutting board

Top left to right:

Waste basket with liner, disposable latex or plastic gloves



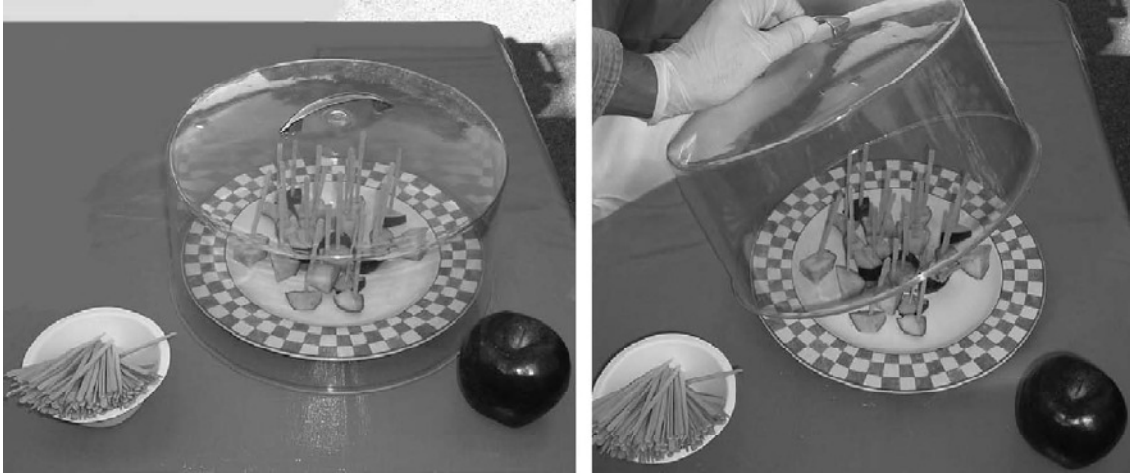
Examples of approved sampling methods.

Provide containers with hinged covers and toothpicks to prevent food contamination.

Use of tongs to give out sample.

Vendor is in complete control of the sampling process.

Covered Sample Set-up



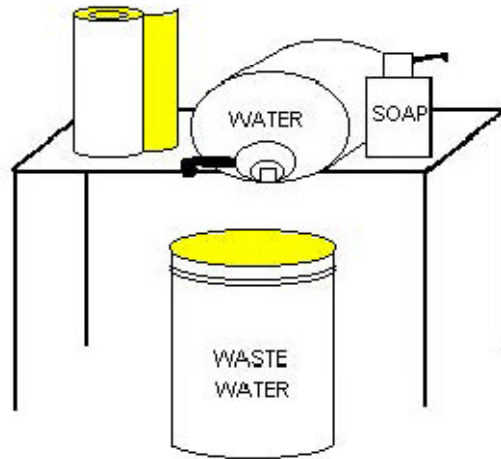
Here is another example of how to protect your samples. Notice the samples have tooth picks already so customer does not have to touch the sample. Cake cover acts as a sneeze protector.



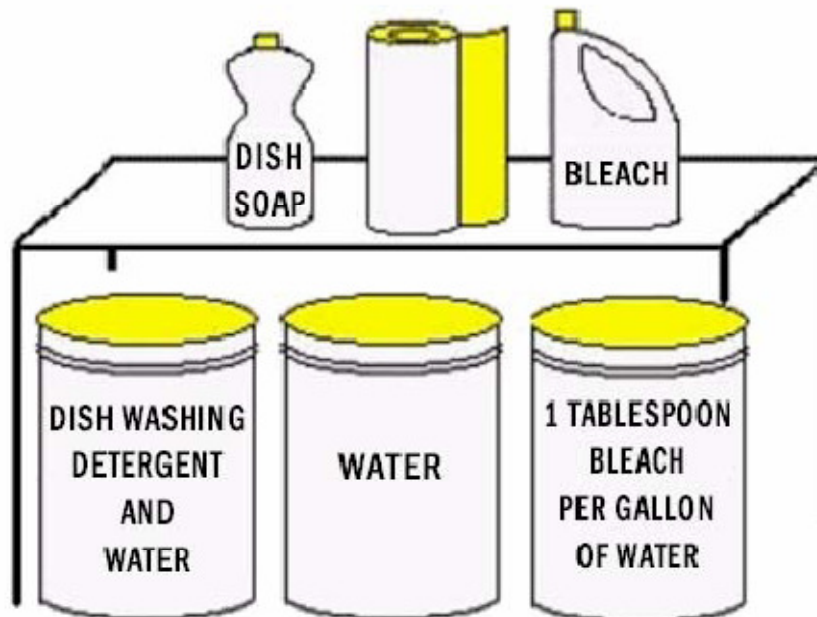
Sampling of nuts using a nut-shaker.

HAND WASHING AND UTENSIL WASHING REQUIREMENTS

Hand-Washing Facilities – Provide a water container with a dispensing valve to leave hands free for washing; a waste-water container; soap dispenser and paper towels for hand washing within the food booth. Hand-washing facilities shall be separate from the utensil washing sink.



Utensil-Washing Facilities – Booths with food preparation require three containers for the cleaning of equipment, utensils and for general cleaning purposes. One shall contain soapy water, one with clear rinse water, and, and the third a bleach/water solution (use 1 tablespoon of household bleach per gallon of water.)



All wastewater must be disposed of in an approved manner.