

TO: Local Health Department Administrators
Local Health Department Environmental Health Directors

FROM: Molly Jo Lamb, Chief
Division of Food, Drugs and Dairies

DATE: February 2, 2016

RE: Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate

Effective July 20, 2015, the Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act was amended to include Food Product Sampling at Farmers Markets and the Illinois Food Service Sanitation Code now includes Subpart N, 750.4300 Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate for Farmers Markets.

The Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate training is now available on I-TRAIN. The training course is free and can be accessed here: <https://i.train.org> Course number 1061218 (*Note: effective upon implementation of the Division’s new technology, this process will change due to incorporation of the training completion, documentation submission and certificate issuance in the new system).*

Any vendor at a farmers market that would like to sample their product (fruits, vegetables, baked goods, meat, etc.) can do so without a separate permit from the local health department, as long as they have a valid Illinois Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate. This certificate can be used throughout the state and is valid for three (3) years from date of issuance.

The certificate looks like this and shall be prominently displayed by the vendor at the point of sale:



The Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate is only issued by the Department once the required documentation has been received:

1. If the sampler possesses a valid Illinois Food Service Sanitation Manager Certification (FSSMC) they must:

- a. Submit a completed Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate application; and
 - b. Copy of valid FSSMC; and
 - c. \$10.00 application fee submitted with required documentation to address provided on application.
2. If the sampler does not possess a valid IL FSSMC, they must:
- a. Submit a completed Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate application; and
 - b. Evidence of successful completion of an ANSI accredited food handler training course; and
 - c. Evidence of successful completion of Department Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler training; and
 - d. \$40.00 application fee submitted with required documentation to address provided on application.

If the sampler shows or posts only a valid IL FSSMC, food handler training certificate or Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler training course completion certificate, they are not in compliance and should not be sampling their product without a permit to do so from the LHD. Only a valid Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate (as shown above) is acceptable for sampling their food product at a farmers market without a permit from the LHD.

Examples of sampling you may see:

- *vendor has sliced tomatoes or melons on site and is offering samples
- *vendor has a grill and has cooked brats or pork chops on site, cut into small pieces and is offering samples
- *vendor has cut a loaf of bread, sliced cake or cupcakes on site and is offering samples

Only samples can be offered with this certificate. So, for example, if the vendor is cooking and sampling pork chops, he/she could not then sell pork chop sandwiches with only the Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate, but would need a temporary permit from the LHD in order to sell pork chop sandwiches.

Please review 750.4300 for certificate suspension or revocation information. We also encourage LHDs to review the free Farmers Market Food Product Sampling Handler Certificate training on I-TRAIN, so you are aware of what the samplers are being instructed to do at their booth(s). There you will also find the two handouts that we require the samplers to access and review.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Any questions from the public should directed to dph.food@illinois.gov