



## Farmers' Market Certification Scheme

**The primary aim of Farmers Markets is to support local farmers and producers, who sell produce they have grown or made to their local community.** Whilst Farmers Markets are in a strong position due to the increasing levels of trust between the consumer and farmers, they are also facing new threats from food markets and food businesses, who are trying to align themselves with the values which farmers can bring to their business.

The Farmers' Market movement started in the UK in the 1990s as a result of poor farm prices, leading to many family farms needing a viable local route to market their produce. Today there are markets across the UK providing thousands of farmers with a real lifeline. With this growth and the acceptance of the public to this new retail experience, many other markets have jumped on the bandwagon. In 2002 'The National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association' (FARMA), launched its FARMA Certification Scheme with the specific aim of providing the public with a clearly understanding of which markets are true Farmers' Markets.

With the vast number of developments over the past 14 years in food retailing, farming and retail markets, FARMA has reviewed the certification scheme in order to ensure it provides the best support and guidance to Farmers' Markets. In reviewing the certification, FARMA has focused on providing the consumer with the confidence to use "real farmers' markets" while also enabling them to be more responsive to local opportunity and challenges. The revised scheme keeps many of the key elements such as independent inspections and mixes them with clear, simple principles combined with independent scrutiny.

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## The 10 Core Principles of a Farmers’ Market

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The Farmers’ Market certification provides market organisers with the licence to state that the markets they operate in are “Real Farmers’ Markets”.

To achieve this status the market organiser or organisations must satisfy FARMA that they aim to fulfil the 10 principles of a Farmers’ Market. These principles are:

- **Audited:** The markets are independently audited to provide customers with confidence that this is a “Real Farmers’ Market”.
- **Champion the Farmers:** Insures that customers get to buy directly from the farmers, growers and producers who grow and produced the products on sale.
- **Insured:** All traders and markets must have suitable Public, Product, and Employment insurance in place to protect their customers.
- **Knowledgeable:** The person selling at a “Real Farmers Market” understands how the product has been produced from seed to plate.
- **Legal:** All traders and markets must follow all relevant EU, UK and local laws and bylaws.
- **Local Businesses:** Markets recruit stall holders from as close to the market as possible.
- **Locally Sourced:** Ingredients sourced by a producer in the production of their goods, are sourced as locally as possible to the market and producer.
- **Produced By The Seller:** That consumers can only buy items produced by the business that is also selling it.
- **Promoted:** The market clearly talks to its customers about the products and farms that make this a “Real Farmers’ Market”.
- **Well Managed:** The market organiser and/or organisation has sound systems and process in place to ensure the above principles are enforced at all times.



## Application Process

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To apply for FARMA Certification the following application process will be followed:

1. Complete the FARMA Certification Application Form online. This form records the details of the market (s) run by that organiser and records how the organiser ensures the core principals are complied with at their market(s).
2. Submit the Certification Application Form with payment to FARMA.
3. On receipt of the application, FARMA will complete an internal review of the application. During this review additional information and questions may be asked by the assessor of the applicant. This report will be presented to the FARMA Farmers' Market Committee.
4. The FARMA Farmers' Market Committee will either approve the application for audit or will reject and ask FARMA to work with the market before the application is progressed.
5. The Auditing body will undertake an audit of the Market Organisation
6. If issues are identified the Market Organisation will have 10 working days to supply a response to the audit issues.
7. The audit report will be reviewed by the FARMA Farmers' Market Committee who will approve or not the application for certification.

In making any decision for approval of an application for certification, the FARMA Farmers' Market Committee will be focusing on the following three questions.

- Does the market organiser provide an accurate portrayal of what systems and processes their market(s) run on
- Are the systems and processes demonstrated consistent with the activities undertaken in managing the markets
- Are the systems robust enough to ensure that the market aims to deliver the Core Principles at all times?

If, at committee stage, the market fails to be approved it will receive a letter setting out which core principles the application failed to protect sufficiently. The letter will also provide guidance on how the issue could be solved. The team at FARMA will work with applicants at this stage to improve the submission.

## Annual Renewal

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Each market organiser will be required to submit an annual update. The annual updates will be reviewed by the FARMA Farmers Market Committee and will be used to adjust the annual risk register for inspections.

## Inspections

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All new applications for certification will be audited before approval is granted.

Initial inspections will be undertaken within 3 month of the application being approved for audit by the FARMA Farmers' Market Committee. This inspection will be undertaken to ensure that the application is true and accurate and that the applicant has and is maintaining these rules.



The inspection will be focused on the management systems and processes used by the market organiser in running their markets. This means that the inspection may not include a visit to the market. It should also be noted that the inspector is not able to provide guidance to the market on how they could improve the market's performance.

Following the initial inspection a minimum of 20% of market organisers or organisations will be inspected annually. These inspections will be based on risk (15% minimum) and random selection (5% minimum). Any market organiser not selected for an inspection will be inspected during its fourth year in the programme.

The inspector will provide a minimum of 2 days notice, but no more than 10 working days' notice. Due to the inspection focusing on the information provided and the evidence behind this, it will not be necessary for the inspector to visit the market (however in a few situations this may be required).

A copy of the inspection report will be sent to the applicant and to FARMA. The applicant will have 10 working days to raise any concerns, disagreements or provide additional information which has been requested.

The report will provide an assessment in each of the 10 Core Principals providing the organiser and FARMA with information in areas where the market is providing best practice, where the organiser needs to make improvements and where the organiser fails to fulfil the Core Principals. The report concludes with assessing the organisers' standing in the Certification Programme. This will be recorded as:

- **Pass:** no action needed and market organiser maintains certification.
- **Minor Action required:** action required and if completed will pass.
- **Major Action Required:** action required and on compilation will be assessed for approval by the FARMA Farmers' Market Committee.
- **Fail:** major breach of the core principles found. The organiser will not be certified by FARMA as a "Real Farmers Market".

If the assessment records a Pass then the Organiser will be notified that they remain in the scheme.

If the assessment records an Action required outcome then the report will set out clearly the areas which need to be improved and provide suggestions on how this can be achieved. Contact details of other organisers who have shown best practice in this area may be provided.

If the assessment records a major action required then the organiser will be contacted to outline the major action required and why this is viewed by FARMA as an issue. The market organiser will be provided with support and advice about how this can be solved. If the market organiser accepts the support and adjusts their system to solve the breach they will be welcomed back to the scheme but classed as high risk. If the organiser fails to accept the support then the market will continue to be outside of FARMA Certification. Where a major action required exists, the market cannot use any of the FARMA Certification branding to promote their market. If the market has incurred costs in relation to marketing materials which carry the logo FARMA cannot be held accountable for the cost of the reprint.

## Certification Cost

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To be approved as a provider of certified markets you have to be a current member of FARMA. Failure to pay membership fees or to renew FARMA membership will see the cancellation of the Certification.

FARMA Annual fees for Certification are:



- Category 1 = 3 markets or below = £150
- Category 2 = 4 to 9 markets = £200
- Category 3 = 10 or more markets = £250

The first year's registration fee is £100, which will be paid in addition to the annual fee.

FARMA is happy to discuss monthly direct debit payment of certification fees.

## Core Principals Explained

FARMA wishes to encourage markets to be run based on local rules which fit with the local needs and systems. However to be certified a market organiser or organisation it is important to show that the markets follow the core principles of a real Farmers' Markets. These Principles have been set out below. Within the application and then during the inspection it is the responsibility of the market organiser to ensure that these principles are upheld.

Through working with market organisers, stall holders and the public FARMA has identified 10 core Principles of a real farmers' market. Each of these Priorities have been set out in detail below.

**Audited: The markets are independently audited to provide customers with confidence that this is a "Real Farmers' Market".**

While market organisers may have a great understanding of the traders on their markets we also find examples of markets which have traders which do not follow these same principles. To ensure that the public have real confidence that a "real Farmers' Market" has been independently audited to show it complies with the 10 core principals.

FARMA appoint an auditing business of reputation to undertake the audit.

**Champion the Farmers: Insure that customers get to buy directly from the farmers, growers and producers who grow and produced the products on sale.**

A customer would assume products sold at a farmers' market would be sold by the farmer (primary producer) and so it must be insured that the products are sold by a primary producer. A consumer at a farmers' market would expect products sold by the farmer to include soft fruit, top fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry and plants. This list is not exclusive and subject to local traditions, production systems or consumer experience.

The market organiser will need to demonstrate that the stalls, which would fall completely or partly into this category of primary producer, are operated by the primary producer of those goods and that the goods that they sell have been farmed by themselves. This could be demonstrated through rules covering site inspections, sight of receipts or other approaches to checking the authenticity of the stalls.

**Insured: All traders and markets must have suitable Public, Product, and Employment insurance in place to protect their customers.**

Markets and stall holders must be ensured to protect the customers who attend the market.

At application stage, details of the market insurance must be presented with the application. A revised copy of this is to be provided at each annual update.

The market organiser or organisation must also demonstrate how they ensure that each stall holder attending the market has suitable insurance in place to cover the risk. In most situations this would include Public, Product, and Employment Insurance.



**Knowledgeable:** That the person selling at a “Real Farmers’ Market” understands how the product has been produced from seed to plate.

Consumers attending the market expect to be able to get accurate advice and clear information on how the product has been produced. The consumer will also expect that in most situations the person selling the goods has had a significant role in the production of those goods.

The application needs to clearly show how the market organiser ensures that the person(s) attending the stall has exceptional knowledge of the production process.

**Legal:** All traders and markets must follow all relevant EU, UK and local laws and bylaws.

Consumers at Farmers’ Markets have the right to be protected by all local, national and international laws. These laws include local bylaws on food trading or market trading. The Market Organiser has to ensure they have systems in place to ensure that the producers at their market are implementing these relevant laws.

At a minimum the organiser must show how they ensure each trader is registered with Trading Standards and Environmental Health. It is important that Market Organisers encourage best practice in areas of hygiene and health and safety.

**Local Businesses:** Markets should source stall holders from as close to the market(s) as possible.

Farmers’ markets are designed to support local economies and communities. They should source all stands from as locally as possible. Consumers expect that the majority of stalls come from within the county which the market is located. Where markets are close to county boundaries or need specific producers then these traders should be sourced from any neighbouring county.

Stalls from further afield can be included but the market must have a clear process to show how these have been sourced and why it is integral to the market that that stall is required. The FARMA Farmers Market Committee will make a subjective assessment based on the application to see if these processes are rigorous enough to enable this core principal to be met.

**Locally Sourced:** Ingredients sourced by a producer in the production of their goods, are sourced as locally as possible to the market and producer.

Consumers believe that farmers markets should be supporting the community and businesses in local to the market.

- 95% primary producers will be sourcing over 90% of their Ingredients from their farm.
- 95% secondary products must source their ingredients from as local to the market and their business as possible.
- Mixed stalls with both primary products and secondary products will comply with both of the above points for the relevant items on their stall.

The market organiser will need to demonstrate how they ensure the ingredients used have been sourced from as local an area as possible and show this is being uniformly policed across Primary and Secondary Producers.

**Produced By the Seller:** That consumer can only buy items produced by the business selling it.

Consumers not only expect that farmers and growers should be supported at markets by selling their own produce, but also expect a range of complimentary food businesses to also be at the market. However the customer also has an expectation that the person who is selling the product has played a



significant role in its production. This means that stall holders who purchase products and goods from businesses for resale would not fit with the customers' perception of what a farmers market represents.

Certified markets have to demonstrate how the market organiser ensures that all producers are selling only the produce they themselves have produced.

**Promoted:** The market clearly talks to its customers about the products and farms that make this a "Real Farmers' Market".

The value of ensuring that the produce its primary producers are selling at farmers' markets is only achieved if the consumer, public and press have been informed of this link. Communication through marketing prior to and on market days should clearly communicate the link between farmers and Farmers' Markets.

Where markets also have non farmers' market activity such as a linked craft market then the application needs to show how the market organiser ensures that the consumer knows that the additional elements are not part of the Farmers' Markets.

**Well Managed:** The market organiser and or organisation has sound systems and process in place to ensure the above principles are enforced at all times.

Well managed markets are consistently the best. Those that demonstrate good communication skills and marketing plans ensure that both the market and producers are able to safely and effectively retail their goods.

At the application stage the market will need to demonstrate that they have suitable systems and processes in place to manage the market. These systems will be scrutinised through the inspection of the market.

## New Farmers Markets

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FARMA supports the setting up of new Farmers' Markets and appreciates the challenge of this task. To support the establishment of new markets FARMA has created a template set of market rules which if followed will ensure that the market complies with the requirements of the certification process.



## Real Farmers' Markets Promotion

All certified farmers' markets will be promoted by FARMA and will receive a level of support enabling them to promote themselves. The key elements of this promotion are:

- Clearly highlighted on the FARMA website as a "Real Farmers' Market". This will include a log on each markets web page and clear information on the members map.
- Opportunity to be included in the FARMA Awards.
- Inclusion in any press releases, press articles social media promotion from FARMA in regards to farmers' markets.
- FARMA will provide you will a JPEG of the new farmers' market logo which you will be licenced to use for the year.
- FARMA will provide each organiser with one 3' by 2' certification board. Additional boards can be purchased from FARMA.



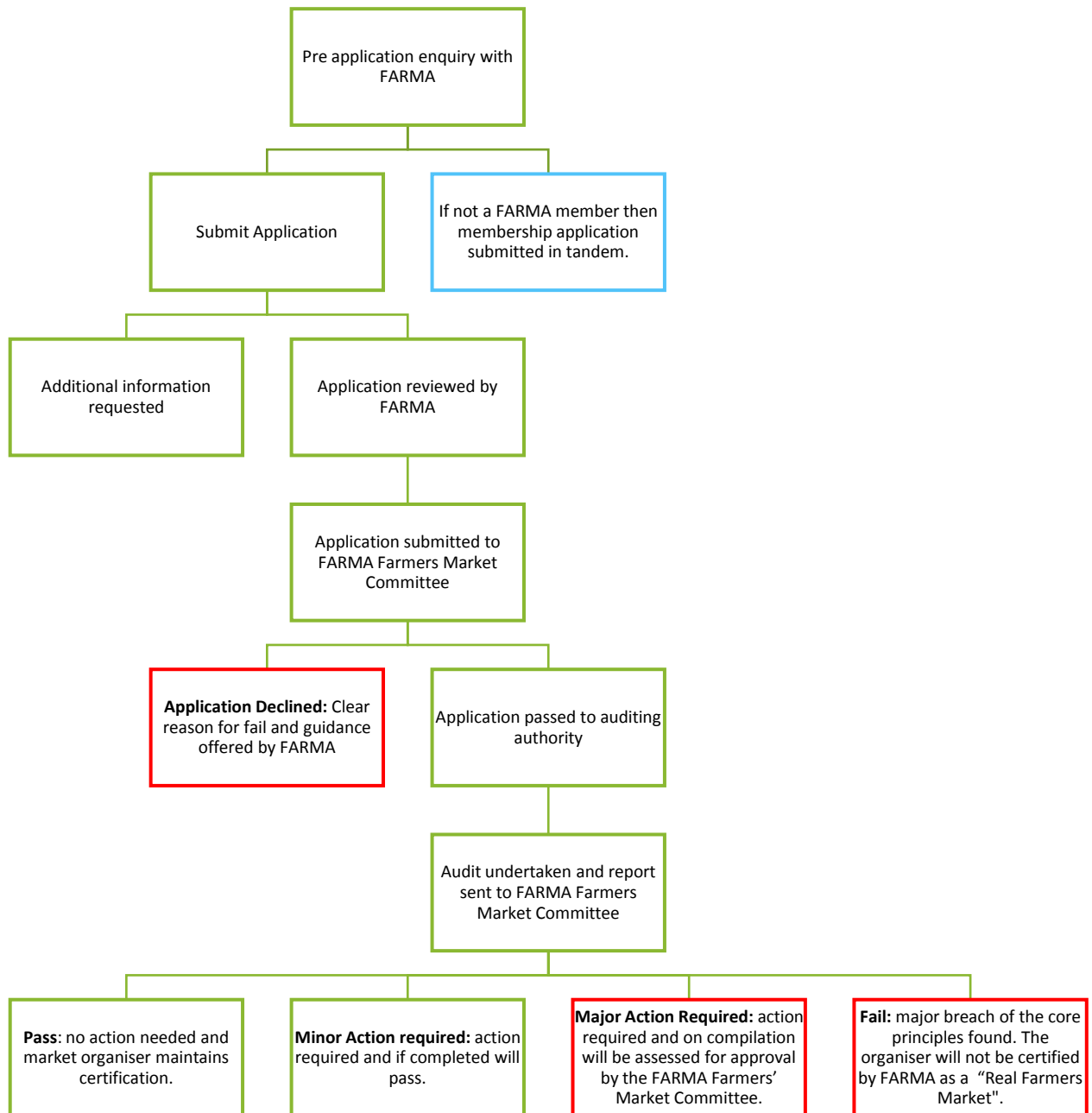
REAL  
FARMERS'  
MARKETS  
CERTIFIED BY FARMA







## Application Process Flow Diagram





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## Commonly Asked Questions

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### **Can I be a member of FARMA but not have my market certified?**

Farmers' markets from across the UK can join FARMA and not apply for certification. However at the application stage for membership the FARMA council will be looking to see if the market is running broadly in line with the 10 core principles of running a farmers' market. As a member of FARMA who is not certified you will not be able to use the branding relating to the certified farmers' market or use the statement or similar statements to indicate that you are an approved or indorsed farmers' market.

If you do not wish to have your market certified but do wish to be a member of FARMA then we welcome your application, however support to you as a member may be limited. These limitations would include not being included in some marketing activities.

### **What happens to my FARMA membership if I fail the certification process?**

FARMA would love to see all its farmers' markets certified, however some of the markets need to make significant changes to the way in which they are run before certification is achieved. FARMA aims to work with these members to support them in their developments before their application for certification is made.

If you apply for certification and your application is declined then your membership to FARMA is not revoked. FARMA will be in dialogue with you over the market and enabling change. If through this process it is agreed by FARMA and the market organiser that the market does not comply with the rules set out in the FARMA constitution for membership then an agreed withdrawal from FARMA will be undertaken.

### **In the past the inspector would always visit the market? Does this still happen?**

The audit can include a visit to the market however as normal practice the audit will be based within the organiser's office. The audit will be focusing on the systems and processes used to run the market.

### **Will audits not visiting markets be as rigors as in the past? How can you tell what is happening at a market if you don't visit the market?**

Markets organisers must have robust systems in place to enable them to achieve the Core Principles of a Farmers' Market. These systems will both have to be well set out in the market rules but also followed. FARMA has taken the view that in most situations auditing the processes which show that a trader is purchasing locally or that the person on the stall is the primary producer is sufficiently rigours in most situations for certification to be approved or note. Early test audits of the process have shown that by adjusting the inspection process in this way we have been able to identify the relevant inspection issues and create a robust approval process for the markets in question.

FARMA however have also kept the option of an on market inspection within the tools available. These will primarily be focused on new markets and high risk organisers.

### **We have traders that sell coffee at our Farmers' Market can we still apply for Certification?**

All traders at the market will need to comply with systems and processes which ensure the market follows the 10 Core Principles. If the coffee producer buys the beans directly from the producer and undertakes substantial processing of the beans before sale then it could be possible for the market to be approved. However if the stall buys the beans from a wholesaler and simply packages them it is unlikely they will fit with the 10 Core Principals.



If these traders are viewed as essential to the market then the market organiser would have to show how the stall was not part of the farmers' market.

**Who will be undertaking the audit?**

FARMA contract this work to a repeatable auditing business. The audits are currently undertaken by NSF International. NSF International Global Food Division is one of the most widely known and respected global food assurance brands. The scheme and auditing processes designed in partnership with NSF.

**Will I know if I am viewed as a high risk market? And if so does this mean that I will always be audited?**

The risk of all markets will be constantly reviewed and adjusted. The risk of the market will be based on issues such as:

- Issues raised at last audit visit
- Complaints or issues raised to FARMA
- Age of the market
- Number of markets being operated by the organiser

Organisers will not be informed if they are viewed as a high risk market organiser as this will reduce the value of any audit undertaken. Organisers will be given between 2 and 10 working days' notice before an audit is undertaken.

**Our customers want fresh fish at the market. Can we include them as a stall?**

If the fish are sold by a trader who fulfils the 10 Core Principles then they will be very welcome at certified markets. However we appreciate that a lot of fish are purchased at the fish markets and then sold by mobile fishmongers at farmers markets. If your market has a fishmonger that sells in this way then they would not be adhering to the principle of no middleman. The market organiser would have to ensure that the customers to the market clearly understand that the stall is not part of the "farmers' Market".

**The old rules used to set a radius of 30 miles from the market for traders, is this still a requirement?**

Market Organisers have the responsibility to set their own rules to ensure that the Core Principle for Local Businesses is followed. Based on the local geography some markets found the 30 miles a challenge, for example those on the coast, the new approach sets out that the stalls should come from as close to the market as possible and that it is the responsibility of the Market Organiser to establish rules which achieve this.

**Our market has more stringent rules than FARMA in relation to some of the Core Principles, will this reduce the likelihood of being audited?**

Through establishing these Core Principles FARMA has established a base level all farmers markets should aim to be better than, if a market has tighter rules which support the market and are valued by the customers to the market then we are in support of them. The audit process will focus on ensuring markets both have the rules and the systems to implement these rules. If your audit shows that your markets have both rules which full fill the Core Priorities and systems to ensure these are followed then your risk level will be reduced and a chance of an audit will reduce. However FARMA will select a minimum of 5% of markets for a random audit each year.

**We are setting up a new market and don't have the funds to start to join the certification scheme, can FARMA help?**



FARMA are very supportive of new markets and would like to help you through the early challenges of starting a market. We also appreciate the challenge of cash flow during the start-up period. Please contact FARMA and we will organise for a monthly direct debit to be set up to support you and your market through the process.

## Definitions

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- **Core Principals:** These are the 10 guiding principles which each market organiser must follow in order to be awarded Certification
- **FARMA Farmers Market Committee:** this is a group formed by FARMA, made up of members. This group report, approve or reject applications for certification. The group also has the responsibility to hold the certification process to account. It reports directly to the FARMA Council
- **Ingredients:** The food items brought together to produce what is being sold on a market stall.
- **Market Organiser or Organisations:** the person or organisation responsible for the Farmers Market operations.
- **Person Attending:** The person manning a stall at a farmers' market.
- **Primary Produce:** The produce being sold by a primary producer. Items which a reasonable person would expect a farmer to be selling at a farmers' market.
- **Primary Producer:** The farmer who has produced the food or product through the action of farming or growing.
- **Secondary Produce:** Produce which is on sale at a farmers' market which has been produced for sale at the farmers' market but does not fall into the category of primary produce.
- **Substantial Processing:** refers to the producer substantially altering a product or group of products to add value to them.

## Top 5 Tips to Certification and Good Market Management

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FARMA have undertaken a number of test audits and based on these we have created a set of 5 top tips which will help you to secure certification.

1. Make sure your market rules have systems in place which ensures all the key principles are met.
2. Make sure your rules are followed, this may sound obvious but many markets have great rules which are quickly forgotten.
3. Keep a record at each market. Have a market log book where all issues, incidents are recorded.
4. Make sure the market manager visits each stall on market day and you record any issues spotted. For example if new products are appearing or they have changed a supplier then record this and check back to the rules.
5. If you record an issue make sure you have a record of how it was dealt with.