

FARM PRACTICES DIRECT FARM MARKETING AND AGRICULTURE TOURISM

Description

Some British Columbia farmers sell the produce they raise directly to consumers. Direct farm marketing operations take many forms. The most common are farmers' markets, farm gate sales and roadside stands. Some operations include a restaurant, winery lounge, bakery, processing plant or other related business on site.

The range of produce that is sold directly to consumers is extensive and includes everything from fruit, vegetables, dairy, meat and poultry products and fish to flowers, ornamental plants, Christmas trees, and assorted processed products and gifts. Direct marketers sometimes use festivals and educational events to attract customers.

Activities and Operations

Farm Festivals

Special festivals attract customers. They provide entertainment and an opportunity for consumers to visit a working farm. The crowds and noise that are associated with festivals and special events should not start before 7:00 a.m. and should stop by 10:00 p.m. Hours of operation are usually regulated by regional bylaws.

If liquor is to be served at a festival or special event, under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, a special occasion permit must be obtained. This permit will specify hours of operation for the event.

Retail Activities

The Agricultural Land Commission's farm retail sales order specifies which retail activities may be carried out on a farm within an agriculture land reserve. Restrictions on retail of products grown off the farm and the size of the on-farm market area that can be used for off farm products are specified.

Most jurisdictions restrict the hours of operation for on-farm markets from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Under the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, farm wineries must obtain a special license if they are going to serve or sell wine to consumers. Hours of operation are specified on the license.

Traffic

Farm markets can cause substantial increases in traffic volumes, especially during the selling season and when special events are held. Farmers are responsible for providing adequate off-road parking for their customers.

See Farm Practice: [Transportation](#)

Related Farm Practices

Other farm practices that pertain to direct farm marketing and agriculture tourism include, but are not limited to, the following:

Lighting

Lighting is used for a variety of purposes including security, work areas and crop production. Lights that distract motorists are forbidden under the *Highway Act*.

Mobile Equipment

During the growing season, equipment and vehicles may be required to operate night and day in order to complete seeding, harvesting, processing and other essential operations.

Organic Production

Organic farmers conduct farm activities in a manner similar to other production methods except that chemical fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, hormones and antibiotics are not used.

Stationary Equipment

Production, storage, processing or marketing may require the use of stationary equipment, which may be operated 24 hours per day.

Legislation

Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C. Acts, regulations and bylaws that regulate or may affect direct farm marketing and agriculture tourism include, but are not limited to, the following:

Federal

Food and Drugs Act – Covers the sale and marketing of food, drugs and cosmetics in Canada

Consumer Packaging and Labeling Act and Regulations – Establishes basic labeling requirements for prepackaged consumer products

Provincial

Agricultural Land Commission Act – Provides the framework for the preservation of farmland

Health Act – Provides the framework that permits monitoring of the health of British Columbians

Highway Act – Governs signage, safe access and sufficient parking

Local Government

Applicable *Noise* and *Zoning Bylaws* where in place.

Publications

Publications that provide information on direct farm marketing and agriculture tourism include, but are not limited to, the following:

Direct Marketing: A Handbook for Producers

On-farm Processing: A Handbook for Producers