



WELCOME  
to  
Country Markets

**A SIMPLE GUIDE  
FOR NEW PRODUCERS**

[www.country-markets.co.uk](http://www.country-markets.co.uk)  
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## **New Producers**

**Welcome to: ..... Country Market**

It is good idea to team up with a Buddy or Mentor who will assist you with your first few weeks as part of the market.

Your Partner or Mentor:

.....

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## WHO ARE COUNTRY MARKETS?

For 100 years, there has been a network of Country Markets across England and Wales. Currently there are nearly 150 outlets.

Producers are members of this co-operative, social enterprise, which is affiliated with Co-operative Societies registered under the Industrial and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

Country Markets are held regularly inside halls or at outdoor venues in many towns, cities, and villages, all aiming to show-case the diversity and deliciousness of local British baked and preserved goods.

All cooks must be registered with their local authorities and hold an **up-to-date level 2 hygiene certificate**. We also sell local fresh eggs, garden-grown fruit, vegetables, plants and quality hand-crafted goods. **The Country Markets logo clearly represents all these categories.**

The many country-wide producers pride themselves on keeping traditional home cooking, home growing and hand-crafted items alive, trying hard to keep abreast of changing tastes and trends.

Each Country Market Society has a legal responsibility to ensure that its markets are run in accordance with statutory requirements.

All Country Markets are run cooperatively, no-one has their own specific table and producers receive payment at the end of every month for the sale of their goods, minus a small commission to cover running costs and insurance. All producers are expected to take their turn in helping with the general running of the markets they attend.

Country Markets also encourage Indirect Sales under the same Brand, as well as in some instances working with Food Hubs. Country Markets has been part of the 'Making Local Food Work' project, which focuses upon promoting community enterprise as a solution to local food needs.

## **New Producer Notes - A short introduction to becoming a Country Markets member.**

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **Who can join?**

Anyone may apply to become a Country Market producer, as long as they are over sixteen years of age and have suitable produce to sell. There is a compulsory requirement to pay a reserved sum of 5p to enable the member a share in the Society.

#### **What can be sold in a Country Market?**

Home produced sweet and savoury baked goods, preserves, honey, eggs, meat, fish, cheese, soups, vegetarian and vegan dishes, gluten free dishes, home grown fruit and vegetables, plants and crafts in accordance with the Country Markets Handbook.

#### **What is The Handbook.**

This gives the guidelines for example regarding quality, labelling, how to calculate selling prices, also Country Markets' policies which every producer needs to adhere to.

It is updated regularly with any new government legislation received via the UK Trading Standards Officers (TSO's) & Environmental Health Officers (EHO's).

A copy can be purchased from the Chesterfield office; however, the latest version is available to download on the **Members' area** of the Country Market's web site. Relevant sections to an individual producer can be printed-off including guidelines on the management of markets and societies.

## PRODUCING FOR YOUR COUNTRY MARKETS

**Opening times will vary, but it is important to arrive in good time** before the start of the Country Market so that your produce can be checked in and displayed before the customers arrive.

**A rota may be used to guarantee there is adequate producers to serve customers. If it is impossible to stay during the markets sessions it is essential that arrangements are made for any unsold goods to be collected at the end of the market session.**

**Begin by bringing a small amount. Guidance will be given by the Market Manager, as even a few items each week are welcomed. New lines can take time to prove popular and it can be disheartening if there is a lot left-over.**

**Everything cooked must be freshly made and must not have been previously frozen in its finished state.** To prepare ahead, the freezer may be used to store uncooked ingredients to save time (e.g. uncooked pastry shells, prepared fruit for pies etc.). Customers expect to be able to freeze some purchased products.

**“Sell the best, eat the rest!”** Send only your best-quality goods to the Country Market. Keep the rest for the family.

### **Hygiene Certificates**

All cooks are required to have a **level two Hygiene Certificate**. The course can be taken online. Hygiene updates are issued three times a year via the Markets Messenger, which all cooks need to retain as proof of their compliance. Copies of all hygiene certificates are retained in a Market Folder by the Market Secretary for inspection by an EHO should they visit the market you are trading in.

### **Registration of Kitchens.**

Under current legislation all food businesses must register their kitchens with the Local Authority. Each cook must register their kitchen as a food business. This does not necessarily trigger an inspection. A local EHO is entitled to inspect your kitchen by appointment only especially if savoury items are being produced.

## **Markets Messenger**

This journal, circulated three times per year, keeps members informed about any changes, hygiene updates, company news and news from around the markets. All Market Managers receive copies for circulation within their markets and copies of updated legislation which they copy and distribute to members. It can also be accessed online on the members' area of the Country Markets web site. A member of the market you are joining will help you with access codes.

## **What happens once I sign up?**

When you join check at what time you are expected to arrive, so that your produce can be checked in and displayed before the customers arrive. Help will be given as to the routine for checking in all the goods according to the time-schedule of the market. Where there are several categories of goods for sale, there may be separate Market Managers, i.e. baking, preserves, produce, plants and crafts. This all depends on the size and scale of the market. A completed invoice needs to be in the producer's box or bag of articles, ready for be marked-off. You will be expected to help clear up at the end of the day, goods should not be removed until after closing time.

A committee runs each market and sends elected Representatives to quarterly Society Management Meetings. It is expected that members will be willing to become involved in the management of their market by sharing committee responsibilities, in order to promote and have a say in their business.

## **How to decide what to produce for market.**

Baked varieties which have been trialled, tested at home and do not necessarily replicate goods already being regularly produced by others. Eventually there may come a point when regular producers need to take a break and at such times offering to make popular lines can be worthwhile for all concerned. A good reputation does take time, patience will be rewarded.

Trends are always emerging, and hand-crafted items can sell well if they are a high quality and show high own-skill input. (see notes regarding this in the craft section of the main handbook).

## Payments to Producers

When 'goods are delivered to market', they should be clearly listed on a triple delivery pad or sheets which will be used to check in the goods and check out any unsold items at the end of market. The Treasurer requires two copies. Retain one copy yourself as your receipt.

Payment is made monthly according to the items listed. One copy is returned with payment as a receipt for your records. If the payment is made via BACS an online receipt can be accessed. This is your proof of the sales and verifies that the payment is correct.

## Pricing

**It is important to make a profit and to avoid undercutting fellow producers.** Also be aware of current prices within your area. The basic formula for baking is to triple the price of your ingredients and triple the cost of packaging to arrive at an acceptable price. For preserves remember the cost of jars, lids and labels. Even if you reuse jars they must be accounted for in the price.

Occasionally, common-sense dictates that just the basic cost of packaging can be factored in to avoid an excessive price, but **Country Markets is a Business** where commission has to be paid on all sales, therefore it is essential that a realistic price be charged.

The cheapest does not always sell better than a more expensive product. All Producers are expected to produce professional (preferably computer-generated labels). The handbook explains labelling in detail and a comprehensive label programme is available.

## Payment

Commission is only paid on any sales made. The rate varies in different markets depending on their overheads. Payment is generally monthly at the beginning of each calendar month.

## Organisation of a Country Market

Each Country Market has an elected committee made up of experienced producers who hold regular meetings to make sure that your Country Market runs smoothly and organises suitable events.

## YOUR COMMITTEE

Chairman .....

Vice Chairman .....

Market Manager .....

Secretary .....

Treasurer .....

**The Market Manager is overall in charge of the running of the market and has the right to refuse any goods which do not come up to the regulated sales standards.**

In addition, there may be additional members elected depending on the size of the market.

e.g. Asst. Market Manager – Fruit, Vegetables, Plants

Asst. Market Manager – Craft

Full details of the structure and organisation of a Country Market is contained in the main Handbook. On acceptance of membership, all members should be in possession of a full handbook either hard copy or electronic access.

### Website Information

[www.country-markets.co.uk](http://www.country-markets.co.uk)

There is a Members Area page which once you join you may login to find copies of all the necessary documents and up to date copies of the

#### **Full Handbook.**

- Management of a Country Market
- Financial organisation of a Country Market
- Food Section Policies and Guidance of a Country Market Society
- Gardening & Craft Section



**Social media** – many Country Markets have set up their own Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts to promote their market. There are also entries in online promotional websites. All promotional sites are the property of the specific Country Market. Care must be taken to ‘post’ suitable entries to promote and support the markets.

### **Outside Catering**

Several Country Markets began outside catering ventures with great success. This has become a valuable asset to help Markets thrive.

They cover a variety of events such as Birthday parties, Anniversaries, Funeral teas, Weddings etc. They offer high quality home cooked produce along the lines of:

Sandwiches, Sausage Rolls, Quiche, Canapes, Cakes  
Available with teas and coffees

Catering manager is .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

(suggestion for contents and costings of afternoon tea packs may be obtained from the members area of the website.)

***See the full handbook for advice on invoicing.***

### **Packaging**

We are making huge efforts to eliminate plastic within markets where possible. However, until such time that we can source alternative materials great care should be taken to use packaging carefully.

Suitable packaging for use at Country Markets is usually available to order on regular Market days.

Often Societies have specific members who retain packaging in bulk for members to order and buy during management meetings.

## Labelling Extract from Food Section of the Handbook

### 3.1.f Labelling Guide for Food - (*see also Dates on Labels and Dietary & Nutritional Labelling*)

All prepared food items sold in Country Markets are covered by the category 'Pre-packed for Direct Sale' and this determines the information given on the label.

Under the *Trades Descriptions Act*, goods must be labelled accurately, e.g. butter icing must be made with butter. Labelled 'Contains: **MILK**' The correct Country Markets Ltd label must be used and must show the following:

- Name of item
- **All** allergens must be included on the label in **red** or **CAPITALS** (UPPER CASE) e.g. **WHEAT, RYE** etc (the word 'gluten' will not suffice);
- **ALMONDS, WALNUTS** (type of nut must be specified not the word nuts).
- Cheese, cream, butter and yoghurt must be listed as - Contains: **MILK**.
- **Do not use the term Dairy.**
- **QUID** (Quantitive Ingredient Declaration) where relevant. Other ingredients **must not** be listed, although promotional information may be included on the label e.g. 'made with best maple syrup'.
- Producer's name or initials or own Market reference, or producer number for traceability and postcode.
- Price in red. The correct monetary units must be stated, e.g. £1.00 or 50p.

No **alteration must** be made. Replace the incorrect label with a correct one.

Labels may be pre-printed, computer generated or handwritten. If handwritten, please print **clearly and neatly in black** following the same format as printed labels. Price in red for clear identification.

Every allergen regardless of quantity must be declared. This includes items such as butter (Contains: **MILK**) used to remove scum in jam; and hidden items such as **FISH** in Worcestershire sauce, or **SOYA** in some chocolate.

Check the composition of items such as margarine and cooking oils for allergens and dried fruit for **SULPHITES**.

The Food Standards Agency requires that the following ingredients are to be listed and a notice displayed at the Market. Producers must be aware that the following ingredients are the correct reference for allergens:

- **CELERY** (leaf, stem, root celeriac, seed)
- Cereals containing gluten: **WHEAT, RYE, BARLEY, OATS, SPELT, KAMUT** and their hybridised strains.
- **CRUSTACEANS** (prawns, crabs, lobster, scampi)
- **EGGS** (all types)
- **FISH**
- **LUPIN**
- **MILK**
- **MOLLUSCS** (mussels, snails, squid, whelks)
- **MUSTARD** (powder, seed or parts of the plant, mustard cress)
- Nuts: **ALMONDS, HAZELNUTS, WALNUTS, CASHEWS, PECANS, BRAZIL NUTS, PISTACHIOS, MACADAMIA NUTS AND QUEENSLAND NUTS**
- **PEANUTS**
- **SESAME** (seeds and their derivatives)
- **SOYA** (products)
- **SULPHUR DIOXIDE (SULPHITES)**

If products containing **SULPHITES** are cooked the label can simply state “May contain **SULPHITES**”.

If the product has not been heated or cooked, then Contains: **SULPHUR DIOXIDE** or **SULPHITES** must be added to the label as an allergen.

Specific allergens must be declared e.g., **ALMONDS** or **HAZELNUTS** not just ‘nuts’ similarly **WHEAT** or **BARLEY**, not just ‘gluten’.

**Since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 it has become law to label food with the following information declared on the label:**

- the name of the food
- a full ingredients list that emphasises allergenic ingredients each time they appear in the list
- in the case of a meat product, a meat content declaration (QUID)

### **Labelling Jams & Preserves**

There are also Trading Standards regulations size for printing the weight of jam, marmalade, preserves and chutneys. i.e., min 4mm high.

**Jam & Similar Products (England) Regulations 2003.**

**The Jam & Similar Products (Wales) Regulations 2018**

**Full ingredient label programme available via Country Markets Ltd.**



## GOODS DELIVERED TO MARKET

Country Market: .....

Name: ..... Date: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

| No Supplied             | Product | No Ret | No Sold | Price Each | Value £ |
|-------------------------|---------|--------|---------|------------|---------|
|                         |         |        |         |            |         |
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| <b>Total Value Sold</b> |         |        |         |            |         |
| <b>Less Comm.....%</b>  |         |        |         |            |         |
| <b>TOTAL TO BE PAID</b> |         |        |         |            |         |



## Code of Ethics

At Country Markets, we are committed to doing the right thing for our colleagues, customers and local communities. This Code outlines the standards of conduct we promote to ensure maintenance of the highest standards of honesty and integrity throughout the organisation.

**Our values:** Our reputation has been built on the quality of our products, the friendly, personal experience of the Markets, and a real sense of community.

We have earned the trust of our customers as a result of our commitment to these values.

All Members of Country Markets have a responsibility to protect that reputation by:

- complying with relevant laws and legislation
- following Country Markets Ltd's policies and procedures
- acting in a professional manner with the highest standards of politeness, honesty and integrity

**Our actions:** Country Markets values the loyalty and confidence of our customers above all else.

We will never compromise the safety of our customers and will always strive to live up to and offer the highest possible standards of quality, value, service and trust.

We will always try to make sure our labelling, advertising and other forms of communication are clear, honest and accurate.

We welcome customer feedback and try wherever possible to act on it to continually improve the service we offer.

We make sure any complaints are handled fairly and professionally within appropriate timescales.

Country Markets Members treat both their customers and their colleagues with dignity and respect, and actively promote an environment that is free from discrimination and where everyone will receive equal treatment.

## Upcoming Country Market Events

| Date | Venue | Market Section |
|------|-------|----------------|
|      |       |                |
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Notes: