

Retail is Detail

In this issue:

* *Marketing Food Safely...* Your Farm Direct Advantage

* Web Links: Some great food safety sites

* Is your Net-Working?

* **Explore Direct** presents...

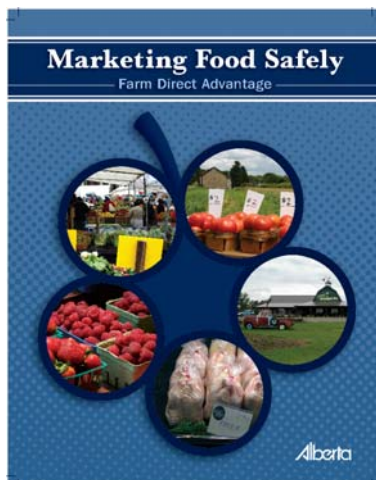
- Canadian Pork School
- Creating Strategic Relationships
- Learn Agri-food Network Meetings
- Country Roads Meeting

Safe Food... Your Farm Direct Advantage . Keeping Sam'n'Ella Out.

Consumers everywhere demand quality and safety in the foods they buy. In fact, confidence in food safety is one of the most important factors for food purchase. Studies show Albertans are especially confident in the safety of food sold at farmers' markets and direct to consumers. They buy direct because they trust that your products are produced, processed and marketed safely.

Food Safety... It's Your Responsibility!

Gail Briggs of Briggswood Country Preserves, Rycroft knows how important food safety is to farm direct marketers. "It's important for me to address food safety because of the health concerns surrounding food issues. My customers want to know they're eating foods that have been prepared in a safe manner, stored safely and presented in a safe situation in the marketplace."



A new publication helps producers keep farm direct marketing a safe, workable and profitable business option. Designed as a workbook and resource manual, *Marketing Food Safely - Farm Direct Advantage*, was produced in partnership with the Alberta Farmers' Market Association and Alberta Agriculture. It's another tool to ensure the continued safety of your products.

"The manual supplies in-depth information on the safe **marketing** of food products," says Betty Vladicka, food safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture and co-author. "Farm direct marketers who complete the 16 chapters will have a better understanding of the factors that contribute to foodborne illness. The manual doesn't discuss good agricultural production practices as they're addressed by the on-farm food safety programs."

Marketing Food Safely presents the prerequisite programs that lay out the universal steps needed to ensure safe handling of food. Information is presented on recommended practices for premises, sanitation, storage, transportation, equipment, personal hygiene, food handling, pest control and recall. The manual includes information on pertinent legislation for all farm direct marketers and specific

regulations for marketers of meat, poultry and dairy products. Other chapters cover why food safety is important, foodborne illness, and bad bugs.

"It's designed so that you can work through the manual at home in your own time," continues Vladicka. "After completing the exercises you will have a food safety plan for your business, Alberta Approved Farmers' Market or on-farm market."

Ann Toderian, a food processor, farm direct marketer and manager of the Rycroft Farmers' Market, knows it's important to maintain the reputation of the farm direct industry. "I think it's important to do everything we can to keep our food and markets up to standard," says Toderian. "That means working closely with all health and food inspectors, keeping up with regulations and all that's involved in handling, transporting and selling food safely."

You can purchase *Marketing Food Safely - Farm Direct Advantage* from the Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA). It's \$50 for AFMA members or \$90 for nonmembers. Order yours today. Call (780) 644-5377 or e-mail director@albertamarkets.com if you did not receive an order form.

Good food is safe food. Remember, food safety is everyone's responsibility. Do your part. Be sure to take the next step and implement your food safety plan.

Web Links

- Capital Health Authority: <http://www.capitalhealth.ca/default.htm>
- Alberta Food Retail and Foodservices Code
<http://www.health.gov.ab.ca/professionals/foodcode.html>
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/toce.shtml>
- Food Safety Division:
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/afs7806?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/afs7806?opendocument)
- Food Safety Info Line: <http://www.foodsafetyline.org/english/index.html>

Is your Net-Working?

Wanted immediately! Farm direct marketers, farmers' market vendors and managers to evaluate the new *Marketing Food Safely* manual. We particularly need market managers and protein (meat, dairy, poultry, etc.) producers to participate. **Act NOW.** Contact Karen Goad today at (780) 538-5629 or email karen.goad@gov.ab.ca. Ask about our introductory offer for approved evaluators.

Vendors wanted for the RCMP Musical Ride and Open Air Market July 29, 2006 in Tumbler Ridge, BC. Alberta producers must be legally able to sell their products in BC to participate in this opportunity. For information and to book space call Crys White at (250) 242 4499 or email cwhite@pris.bc.ca.

Explore Direct presents ...

Canadian Pork School (Pork 101)

Farm direct marketers who want to learn about the value of different cuts and how to create consistent meat products could check out the Canadian Pork School. It goes April 5 - 7 in Olds. Contact Bert Denning at (780) 674-8247 or email bert.denning@gov.ab.ca for program information and to register.

Creating Strategic Relationships

A workshop for organic producers interested in learning how to tell their story and get their business message out. Two locations: April 10 in Lethbridge and April 12 in Grande Prairie. Call Keri Sharpe at (780) 968-6556 or email keri.sharpe@gov.ab.ca for information.

Learn Agri-Food Network

The Learn Agri-Food Network supports agripreneurs sharing information with peers to build businesses of ag or rural based experiences, products and services. The next meetings go Tuesday April 11, 2006 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in three locations: Falher, Rycroft and Triangle (High Prairie). Attend the location most convenient to you. Call Martine Bolinger at (780)538-5633 or email martine.bolinger@gov.ab.ca for

meeting details.

Peace Branch Alberta Farmers' Market Association Regional Meeting

New member benefits and other changes to the insurance program for farmers' markets and vendors will be presented as well as an educational session on merchandizing and table top sales. Come to the Grande Prairie Downtown Farmers' Market on May 2, 2006 to support your farmers' market association and learn! Information and meeting details are available from Ann Toderian in Rycroft at (780) 765-2292 or (780) 978-4328 or Tyla Klassen in Grande Prairie at (780) 814-8224.

Country Roads Meeting... You Are Invited!

Wednesday, April 5th from 1 PM to 3 PM in the Alberta Agriculture Food & Rural Development Conference Room (5712-48th Ave) Camrose. Invited guest speaker will be Wes Johnson with the Regional Cuisine Initiative speaking on the Dine Alberta ...savour regional flavour program. Please come and bring a friend or neighbor. RSVP to Lisa at 780-679-5169 email lisa.sharp@gov.ab.ca or Marian Williams at 780-679-5168 marian.williams@gov.ab.ca

Country Roads is an opportunity to get together and exchange information and questions with other farm direct marketers and ag tourism operators.