

Mill Street Market

Vendor Guidelines & Overview

Thank you for your interest in becoming a producer partner with Mill Street Market Farm Stop & Cafe in Hastings, Michigan. Mill Street Market (MSM) is a community-focused marketplace and food hub that connects local farmers, growers, food producers, makers, and small businesses with customers throughout the region.

Our Model

Our Farm Stop operates primarily on a consignment model. You grow or make the product; Mill Street Market provides the retail space, staffing, merchandising, marketing, checkout, customer service, and payment processing. As a producer, you retain ownership of your products until they are purchased by a customer. Our goal is to build long-term relationships with producers while creating convenient, year-round access to locally grown and locally produced food.

Application & Selection

Mill Street Market accepts a limited number of producers in each product category to maintain a strong, balanced product mix. Producer selection may be based on:

- Current market needs and product variety
- Product quality and consistency
- Geographic proximity to Hastings and the surrounding region
- Seasonal availability and anticipated volume
- Ability to meet applicable food safety, licensing, labeling, and product requirements

Becoming an approved vendor does not require you to have products available immediately. We welcome seasonal growers and producers and encourage you to establish a relationship with MSM before your growing or production season begins.

What Mill Street Market Provides

- **Year-Round Market Access:** MSM provides producers with a professionally staffed retail location where customers can purchase your products without requiring you to be present for each sale.
- **Sales & Customer Service:** MSM handles customer checkout and payment, including: Cash, Credit and debit cards, EBT, and Double Up Food Bucks, when applicable.
- **Producer Payment:** Producers receive 70% of the retail selling price, excluding sales tax. Mill Street Market retains 30% of the sale. Producer payments are made biweekly through direct deposit. MSM handles applicable sales tax collection and remittance.
- **Merchandising & Product Care:** Our staff works to professionally display and merchandise producer products throughout the market. MSM provides appropriate storage based on available market infrastructure, including refrigerated, frozen, and dry storage when applicable. We also want customers to know the people and businesses behind the products they purchase. MSM may highlight farms and producers through signage, displays, marketing, social media, and other storytelling opportunities.
- **Communication:** Our team will work with producers to coordinate product availability, deliveries, seasonal changes, inventory needs, pricing changes, product performance, and opportunities to reduce waste and improve sales.

What We Ask of Our Producer Partners

- **Pricing:** Producers set their own retail prices and retain 70% of the retail selling price. MSM staff may provide pricing guidance based on market conditions, comparable

products, customer response, and product movement. Producers should communicate price changes to MSM before delivering products at a new price.

- **Product Information:** Producers are responsible for providing accurate information about their products, including applicable: product name and description, ingredients, allergens, weight or quantity, pricing, farm or business information, licensing information, and required labels.
- **Product Quality:** Products delivered to Mill Street Market must meet MSM's quality standards and be appropriate for retail sale. MSM may decline products that are damaged, improperly labeled, expired, unsafe, or otherwise unsuitable for sale.
- **Care & Storage Instructions:** Producers should provide MSM with any special instructions regarding the handling, storage, rotation, or display of their products.
- **Communication:** Producer partners are expected to remain reasonably responsive to MSM and communicate changes involving: product availability, seasonal production, pricing, delivery schedules, product information, and licensing or regulatory status.
- **New Products:** If you wish to introduce a new item, please receive approval from our Vendor Coordinator or Market Manager prior to delivery.

Licensing, Food Safety & Compliance

Producers are responsible for complying with applicable local, state, and federal laws governing the products they sell. Food products that require licensing, certification, inspection, or specific labeling must meet those requirements before being offered for sale at MSM. Mill Street Market can help producers identify potential requirements or connect them with appropriate resources, but producers remain responsible for maintaining required licenses and compliance. Body care, household, craft, and other non-food products must also meet applicable safety and labeling requirements.

Taxes & Producer Income

Producers are responsible for reporting their income and paying applicable income taxes. Mill Street Market may issue required tax documents, including Form 1099, when applicable. MSM is responsible for collecting and remitting applicable sales tax on retail transactions processed through the market.

Shelf Fees

To cover the costs of our market infrastructure, we charge a nominal shelf fee. The applicable fee will be deducted from the producer's biweekly payout. MSM may periodically review the shelf-fee structure as market operations develop.

- **Tier One:** If net sales are \$1,000 or more the fee is \$15 per payout period.
- **Tier Two:** If net sales are \$500 to \$999, the fee is \$10 per payout period.
- **Tier Three:** If net sales are less than \$500, the fee is \$5 per payout period.

**When new producers are brought on, they will be given our vendor handbook, which explains how to sell with us, handle inventory, get paid, and stay compliant. All vendors must sign the vendor consignment agreement prior to selling with us.*