

NEWS & INSIGHTS

Growing your sales in a farmers market: How does it work?

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Broccoli. Beans. Brussel sprouts. Beer?

A [2016 rule change](#) to the Pennsylvania Liquor Code allows [breweries, distilleries and wineries based in the state to set up shop at farmers markets](#), and many have taken advantage of this rule as a new revenue stream and attention-grabber.

In central Pennsylvania, the biggest and most popular farmers markets – Lancaster Central Market, Broad Street Market in Harrisburg, Central Market House in York, the West Shore Farmers Market in Lemoyne and Fresh Market in

Hershey, among others – all offer some kind of alcoholic beverage for sale.

But even though the PLCB says you can do that, a brewery can't just grab a pop-up table and a couple of cases of its latest IPA, set up shop at a farmers market and start selling its ales. The PLCB has established a set of rules and a specific farmers market permit that businesses must obtain before getting a vendor stand between Patty's Pickles and Herb's Smoked Meats.

First, there's a cost – because of course there is. The permit costs \$250 annually. And that is an all-market permit, not \$250 for each market you set up a stand at. So whether you have one stand or five, the permit price is the same. That's an important component of this if you have the manpower available to work multiple markets.

The permit allows three types of Pennsylvania, alcohol-based businesses to sell their products at state farmers markets:

Brewery: For malt or brewed beverages by the bottle, growler or package. If you're selling growlers, they must be a minimum of 64 ounces, and no more than 192 ounces in total can be sold in a single transaction. Free samples cannot be more than 4 ounces.

Limited winery: Alcoholic cider, mead or wine, sold by the bottle or case. Free samples cannot be more than 1 ounce.

Limited distillery: Liquor by the bottle or case. Free samples cannot be more than 1.5 ounces.

There is no limit on the number of days the permit can be used, but the stand can only be open when the farmers market is open and for a maximum of 12 hours a day. Also, before starting the stand, you must notify the Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement 14 days in advance of your intentions. One additional note that is sometimes overlooked by licensees – in order to qualify as a "farmers market", the market must have at least two farmers or an association of farmers who are certified by the Department of Agriculture to participate in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program. This is generally not something the PLCB will check before issuing the permit, but Liquor Control Enforcement may issue a citation if you are using a farmers market permit at an unqualified market. You can see which markets satisfy this requirement by visiting <https://www.pameals.pa.gov/public/farmmarketsearch>.

Farmers markets are popular, crowded venues with built-in foot traffic in communities throughout the state. While the logistics may make it difficult to operate in a farmers market that is far from your main location, it's so far proven to be an excellent way (if promoted well) to introduce your beer/wine/liquor to a new audience for a somewhat nominal fee.

If you have any questions about the farmers market permit for your alcohol business, please [contact me](#) or any member of the [Saxton & Stump Liquor Licensing and Alcohol Group](#).

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