

What is “local”?

Local Sourcing for Prepared and Processed Food Vendors

Bellevue Farmers Market is interested in local food businesses that are making unique, high-quality foods that feature seasonal ingredients from local farms. Food vendors should do their own research and make contacts with local farmers to obtain ingredients for their products. Below are some additional tips for meeting local sourcing requirements.

What is “local”?

Our requirement for “local” is that ingredients be Washington State farm grown/produced wherever possible, and particularly from our market farmers whenever possible. Bellevue Farmers Market gives priority to processed/prepared food vendors who purchase at least 15% of their raw ingredients from Washington state farms. Additionally, distinctive or seasonal ingredients (contributing to the primary flavor or name of the product) should be sourced from market farmers. All locally sourced ingredients should be clearly listed in the vendor’s application to sell, and must be communicated truthfully to BFM and to the public thereafter. Vendors must be able to provide copies of their receipts from their farm purchases upon request. It is therefore acceptable that some of your ingredients are simply not grown/made locally, as long as you are sourcing locally for the ones that are. For e.g., if you are making fruit pies, your sugar will not be locally grown/made, but your seasonal fruits and eggs can be obtained from market farmers; butter and flour can also be available from Washington farms, dairies and producers. Some fruits and vegetables are only available from local farms in the summer, so you may be sourcing local in the summer and supplementing with non-WA sources in the winter. Or you might buy in bulk in the summer and freeze or preserve items for later use in the off-season.

How do I connect with local farmers to obtain what I need?

Visit local farmers markets and make connections with farmers face-to-face. Search on local farmers market websites or use local resources like the Tilth Alliance or Puget Sound Food Hub. Many of these farmers have their own websites or Facebook pages so that you can contact them electronically.

How can I best promote my local sourcing? Signage is essential! Have a sign listing your local farm ingredients – update with weekly or seasonal changes. We also suggest that you promote your local ingredients on your website, blog, facebook, etc. Sourcing locally is a great selling point and is attractive to shoppers who are interested in supporting local foods and farms.

