safe plates
BY NC STATE EXTENSION



Safe Plates at Farmers' Markets
Basics of Food Safety

From farm to fork, farmers' market vendors and manager have a shared role and responsibility for establishing and maintaining a good food safety culture at the local farmers' market. This food safety fact sheet covers the importance of knowing what factors contribute to foodborne illness and what foods are regulated. This is a supplemental fact sheet to the Safe Plates at Farmers' Market program with NC State Extension.

Food Safety Culture

Food safety culture is built on shared values that are followed to produce and provide food in a safe manner. As part of a good food safety culture, farmers' market managers and vendors should:

- Know risks associated with the products or meals they are producing
- Understand the importance of managing the risks
- Effectively manage potential risks
- Support evidence-based food handling behaviors

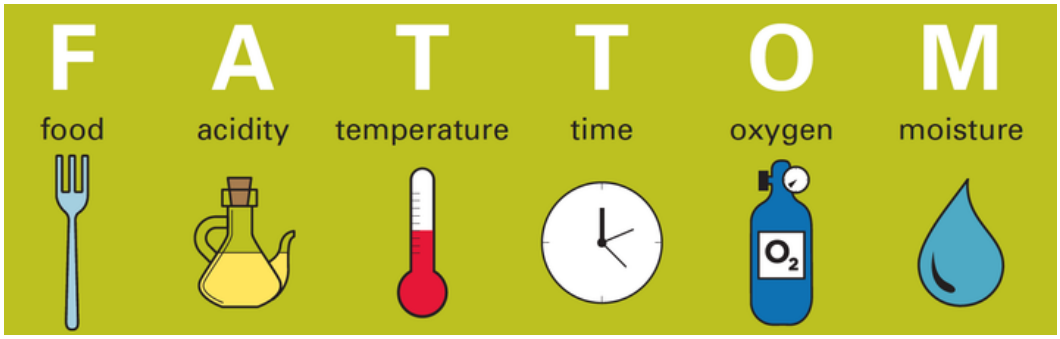
Factors Contributing to Foodborne Illness

- Food purchased from unsafe sources
- Failure to cook food to correct temperature
- Dirty or contaminated utensils and equipment
- Poor personal hygiene



Microorganism Growth and Control

These are the factors that influence microbial growth in food.



Foods Regulated by North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences

- Packaged food other than meat products
- Seafood
- Dairy products, including milk, frozen dessert, cheese and butter
- Eggs
- Raw agricultural commodities
- Meat and meat-containing products through the Meat and Poultry Inspection Service

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For more information contact ncsafeplates@ncsu.edu | Updated 10.20.26