

# Twin Town Gardeners' Market | Consumer Guide

By M. Piper and C. Svingen\*

NDSU

EXTENSION SERVICE  
RICHLAND COUNTY

1. Produce – All uncut/unsliced produce for individual consumer use is acceptable.
2. Bakery – Baked goods can be sold if they do not contain potentially hazardous ingredients like cream. Types of baked goods that may not be sold include kuchen (küchen), cream or meringue pies, or items that need refrigeration.
3. Jams and Jellies – These can be sold as they have less potential for contamination.
4. Pickles – Acceptable if USDA recommendations are followed.
5. Eggs – Subject to some regulation. Eggs for sale must be kept at 41 degrees Fahrenheit.
6. Poultry – Fresh poultry must be kept at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or less and packages must be labeled with producer's name, address, and the statement "Exempt P.L. 90-492"
7. Meat – Products may be sold at farmers markets only if they have the USDA or ND state mark that indicates processing has been done under inspection. It must be kept at 41 degrees Fahrenheit and labeled.
8. Fish – May not be sold.
9. Mushrooms – May not be sold.
10. Honey – Honey can be sold if packaged by weight and labeled properly.

## Remember:

1. No canned meats or vegetables. USDA recommends that low acid items be pressure cooked to eliminate risk of food borne illness.
2. No wild game. All meat products must be produced and packaged under the Federal USDA or a state inspection program.
3. No raw seed sprouts. Alfalfa, mung beans and other varieties of sprouts have a high risk of containing bacteria that is detrimental to health.
4. No raw milk. Raw milk is potentially hazardous if it is not pasteurized.
5. No cut produce samples.

- Edited from Farm to Market: *North Dakota's guide to direct farm marketing*, 2013

## Why go to the gardeners' market?

- Support a strong local economy and help circulate your dollar in the community.
  - Money stays in the community and stimulates other businesses as market shoppers also visit nearby stores.
- Buy portions that match your needs and control the quality you are getting.
- Enjoy a pleasant community experience and interact directly with the growers.
- Learn how to prepare new food and add some flair to your meals.
- Know where your food comes from.
- Get connected with and help protect the environment.
- Find produce to try that is fresh and continue to purchase it at a grocery store when it is not in season locally.
- Buy produce that helps you meet current fruit and vegetable recommendations for good health.
- Get free exercise.



For more information on this and other topics see: [www.ag.ndsu.edu/richlandcountyextension](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/richlandcountyextension)

# Twin Town Gardeners' Market | Consumer Guide

1. Get to know your growers. Ask them if they use pesticides or fertilizers (if any) and the location of their garden. True growers will pride themselves in their gardening.
2. Check for an online presence. Many growers advertise on their own website and you can stay connected throughout the year and find out delivery days.
3. Research what is in season so you know what to expect to see and buy.
4. Arrive early and compare prices and quality of food at the market. Use your senses like feeling and smelling to check for quality.
5. Come prepared. Bring things like cash, reusable bags, water, and paper towels.
  - a. Some only accept cash, some take checks, and some are able to process cards.
  - b. Reusable bags, water, and paper towels are good for storage and to keep produce fresh during transit.
6. Make time. Some gardeners' markets are only open on certain days and certain times.
7. Buyer beware – It is your responsibility as the consumer to inspect the products you are buying and prepare it safely in order to prevent contamination and food borne illness. For more information on preparation of produce, look at this handout: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn608.pdf>
8. Look at the vendor guide to see for yourself if conditions at the market are ideal and ask yourself these questions:
  - a. Do I know what quality looks like? Check what you know at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/standards>
  - b. When was this product picked or harvested?
  - c. Do I always want to buy from the same source?
  - d. How much am I willing to pay for freshly picked produce?
  - e. Will I use this product before it spoils?
  - f. Do I trust the grower that is selling products?
  - g. Have I checked for proper sealing on home canned goods? Learn how at <http://nchfp.uga.edu>
  - h. Do I know the difference between organic and conventional products?

## Know the difference:

To make an informed decision, you must understand the differences between organic and conventional products. Remember: It is up to the consumer to choose what is right for them. Based on personal preference, experience, and research, individuals can make their own informed choices confidently.

### Organic

Apply natural fertilizers, such as manure or compost to feed soil and plants.

Spray pesticides from natural sources; use birds and insects, mating disruption or traps to reduce pests and disease.

Use environmentally-generated plant-killing compounds; rotate crops, till, hand weed or mulch to manage weeds.

### Conventional

Apply chemical fertilizers to promote plant growth.

Spray synthetic insecticides to reduce pests and disease.

Use synthetic herbicides to manage weeds.

## Want to know more?

Check out these additional resources:

USDA | [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

North Dakota Department of Agriculture | <http://www.nd.gov/ndda/>

North Dakota State University Extension Service | <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension>

Centers for Disease Control | [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### Sources:

1. J. Garden-Robinson. 2102. *Food Safety Basics*, NDSU Extension Service.
2. NDSU Extension Service. 2013. *Fight BAC: Safe Handling of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*.
3. Connecticut State Department of Education. 2005. *Food Safety Checklist*. Health and Nutrition Services.
4. M. Barinas, D. Doohan, R. Downer, et. al. 2010. *Food Safety for Fruits and Vegetables*, Ohio State University Extension Service.
5. J.G. Davis and P. Kendall. 2012. *Preventing E.Coli from Garden to Plate*, Colorado State University Extension.

6. The University of North Carolina Greensboro. *Direct Marketing*. Green Leaf.
7. J.A. Harrison, J.W. Gaskin, M.A. Harrison, J. Canner, R. Boyer, and G. Zehnder. 2012. *Farmers markets self-help form*. Enhancing the safety of locally grown produce.
8. The Daily Green. 2013. *6 Steps to mastering the farmers' market*. Hearst Communications, Inc.
9. M. Williams. 2013. *Top 10 reasons to buy food at the farmer's market*. Fox News.
10. Nutrition.gov. 2013. *Farmers Markets: Fresh, Nutritious, Local*.
11. Project for Public Spaces. *Measuring the Impact of Public Markets and Farmers Markets on Local Economies*.