

Northeast Georgia Locally Grown Guidelines for Growers & Contract

Welcome to Northeast Georgia Locally Grown and thanks for producing healthy, sustainable food in our little pocket of the Georgia Mountains. To make things easier we wanted to compile a simple list of guidelines to make sure the Market runs smoothly. Please take a minute to look these over before you sign up as a grower, and then use them as a guide once you're approved as a grower on the site.

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Guidelines for Participation

To ensure that our market truly is trying to build a Local Food System, at this time the Locally Grown Market only allows farms and farm products produced within an 80 mile radius of Clarkesville, Clayton or Gainesville (you can use Google Maps to look yourself up as that's the method we'll use too). All farms and processors selling through the market *must use "sustainable" production practices and local ingredients*. For processed foods that means that significant efforts to obtain ingredients from local sources must be employed, and some ingredients that cannot be found locally may not be allowed. See below for more details on that.

Fruit and Vegetable Production

- **Farms producing fruits and vegetables MUST be Chemical Free** – by requesting to be listed as a grower on Locally Grown you are stating to our customers that you do not use synthetic chemicals of any kind on your farm

including synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and fungicides. We also require that any land that has been treated with chemical pesticides and fertilizers cease use for at least one year before producing products for this market.

- **Organic and other standards** – *Chemical based fertilizers and pesticides are strictly prohibited at all times, no exceptions.* Though Locally Grown doesn't require growers to be certified Organic or Certified Naturally Grown, we still highly encourage growers to be familiar with and follow the same requirements as these programs. For instance many OMRI certified pesticides (which are approved for organic use) are intended as a last resort, not intended for routine application, and certification programs often restrict the use of many OMRI listed products. Other practices required by organic standards are crop rotations, purchase of organic seed, manure applications 120 days prior to crop harvest, and many more. Certification programs can help you make decisions that lead to better farm management, as they require you to develop a plan for all contingencies, and explain why you are doing what. Since this market is essentially co-marketing products from many farms, it is important that we all follow the most stringent practices possible. To insure this we encourage you all to ask questions of your fellow growers, and offer or ask for advice when needed.
- **On-Farm Produced Products** – All products sold on Locally Grown must be produced on the farm which is listing the product. Sales of products grown on another farm other than your own are not allowed. Some Wild harvested products that are found off the farm will be allowed provided they are harvested following all applicable laws. (*Please notify us first, if you're not sure about a certain wild harvested product)

Processed Foods

Because of stringent state laws, processed foods will require all applicable state licenses in order to sell through Locally Grown. If your products require a state license we do require you to send us a copy of your license number and **post this license number on your Grower Description page on the website.** Georgia State law basically states that anything that's edible that isn't sold in the exact same form it was harvested in requires a license. We are continuously learning the subtleties of many of these requirements, and ask that you do likewise, but here's a quick summary of what we do know.

- **Licensed certified kitchen products and Exempt products** - All processed food must be prepared in a properly licensed certified kitchen and products must be properly labeled. These rules are fairly stringent and can be difficult to meet such as having a 3-basin sink, an additional mop sink, and a handwashing sink as well as attending [Better Process Control School](#), and requesting labeling approval for individual products. Certified kitchens are

regulated through the GA Dept. of Agriculture. The Gainesville office number is (770) 535-5955 and they can give you more details on requirements for processed foods.

The only processed foods that can be sold through Locally Grown that do not require production in a licensed kitchen are:

- o Jams
- o Jellies
- o Cakes
- o Cookies
- o Breads
- o Pies
- o Honey

These products are considered exempt when sold at Farmers Markets sponsored by a non-profit (we are a non-profit). These processed foods must still meet the market's ingredient standard described below.

- **Product Labels** – Georgia Department of Agriculture requires all processed goods to have a label with the farm name, a contact phone number or address, and a complete ingredient list. We also require that you post ingredient lists in your item descriptions since customers can't see items until they've arrived for pickup.
- **Ingredients (sourcing local)**- Each year we re-evaluate our standards for what ingredients are allowed in processed foods. The Northeast GA Locally Grown market is vigorously trying to encourage local production of **all** sustainable and organic food products, and as the market develops we may need to be more stringent in how we define this standard.

As a general rule, we require at least the main (highest quantity) ingredients in a processed food to come from your farm. The remaining ingredients can be purchased from other farms in the Locally Grown network. If (and only if) these ingredients are not available locally, you should use the most sustainable ingredients you can find. In other words if you are making fig preserves, they should be figs that you've produced on your own farm. If you add sugar, pectin and lemon juice you'll likely be unable to locate any of these locally. You should then source organic sugar and organic lemons if they are readily available (which they should be).

ALL PROCESSED FOODS must LIST ALL INGREDIENTS describing which one's are grown on-farm or that are organic in the DESCRIPTION for that item on the website and on a label affixed to the product.

As we have seen increasing interest by food processors who are non-growers providing products to the market we are experimenting with the following requirements. Food processors can provide a product such as fig preserves or strawberry preserves provided the main ingredient(s) are grown and purchased from an active grower in the Northeast Georgia Locally Grown Network. The farm providing the ingredients must be listed in the product description, and we require pre-approval for any new processed products using purchased ingredients from other farms. This new procedure should increase the support for sustainable local growers, which is the primary intent of this market.

Breads and specialty baked goods must include one or more ingredient(s), such as eggs, milk, milled grains, vegetables, or fruits sourced from a local producer or active grower in the NE GA Locally Grown Network. We require the use of organic wheat (and local if possible) in artisan made breads. For flavored breads such as a blueberry muffin or pumpkin bread, you must source local and sustainable ingredients rather than conventional products unless it's an ingredient that is not available locally (cranberries are an example). Gluten-free specialty products are not required to be organic at this time, but we request that you source organic or sustainably produced ingredients whenever you can.

We may tweak these standards again in the future so please give us your feedback. We just want everyone to try and source the best ingredients that they can while living up to our local and sustainable goals.

- **Ground Grain** – If you are milling products such as corn, wheat, or rye for sale, the GA dept. of Ag. requires a milled products license to be obtained. We require that you post your milled products license number on your growers page.

Animal Products

- **Eggs** – if you plan to sell eggs through the market you are required to have a state candling license obtained from the GA dept of Ag. There are additional requirements for proper refrigeration during transportation. A state candling license requires attendance at a training program. Other than that these rules are fairly easy to follow. For a schedule of upcoming Candling License classes call the Gainesville Dept. of Agriculture office at (770) 535-5955. If you sell eggs you are required to submit a copy of your state candling license to us (hardcopy or PDF), and list your license number on your grower description page.

In our efforts to differentiate Locally Grown products from conventional products we also require producers to have **layers on pasture**, meaning that

they are moved onto fresh grass routinely. We **REQUIRE** non-GMO grains to be fed to laying hens (and encourage certified chemical free processing or certified Organic when possible). For more information on this you can e-mail us at NGLGmarket@gmail.com. If your product descriptions claim to feed all organic grains to your animals, this feed type must be verifiable during a farm visit. Because of the high price of organic grains and how this affects egg prices in the market, failure to accurately and fairly describe your feed type can result in having your product temporarily or permanently removed from the market.

- **Packaged meats** – Meat processing has a slew of requirements, too numerous to summarize here. Contact the GA Dept. of Ag for information at (770) 535-5955. If you'd like to begin listing meat, please touch base with us prior to posting your items.
- **Beef, lamb, pork products** – These products must come from animals that are entirely “grass fed” in the case of beef and lamb, and wild forage fed with organic or non-gmo grain supplements for pork. Please touch base with us prior to posting your items.
- **Dairy products** – All dairy products must come from animals principally raised on chemical-free pasture. Hormones and antibiotics are not allowed. We do not require that grain supplements be Organic at this time for dairy products, though we highly encourage the incorporation of organic grains when possible (similar to our poultry standard above).

Live Plant and Seed Sales

Live plant and Seed sales also require a license through the Dept of Agriculture. For information on how to obtain these licenses and associated costs call the GA Dept. of Ag for information at (770) 535-5955. We do require you to post your license number for live plant and seeds sales on your grower page.

There may be other state or federally mandated requirements that we aren't currently aware of, so we encourage you to look into the requirements for specific products that you are selling. We do the best we can to be in compliance with all state and federal laws, but we expect growers to do their own research before listing a product. We're trying to head this off at the pass so we don't have to pull an item that has already been posted, though the market managers reserve that right when in their judgment an item does not meet market standards.

Non- food items

Though Locally Grown is focused on the sale of local foods, we do also want to encourage other locally produced goods on a limited basis. All non-food item postings should be discussed with the market managers prior to posting. So far we have allowed the following products:

- Soaps, herbal remedies, salves, lotions, ointments, etc.
- Vermiculture bins
- Shitake Logs
- Spun yarns from animal wool and associated products.
- Various wood products from wood grown on-farm (smoking chips, etc.)

We do not encourage arts and crafts at this time, as the primary intent of the market is to sell local foods and farm products. We have allowed the sale of Christmas Wreaths and other related decorative items. Other categories on the website for non-food items include: Bath & Beauty, Books, Candles, Farm Crafts, Holiday Decorations, Home and Garden supplies, Pet care, Wood. We are interested in discussing any of your product ideas in these categories.

Market Management / Financial Details

All sales in the Locally Grown market are directly between you the producer and the customer. As a result, Locally Grown **does not collect sales tax on purchases**. We are not buying and reselling your products we are simply a distribution system. We in good faith pay you (the grower) what the customer has agreed to purchase in advance of delivery. If there are concerns by the customer re: quality or the accurate description of delivered products we reserve the right to allow customers to decline a product and we will subtract that from your sales. We attempt to forward comments, suggestions and concerns from customers as they arise. We also reserve the right to adjust prices when they are considered to be too high or too low (the most common price change we make is instituting our “quarter increment only” policy – see below). We will try and discuss such changes with you in advance.

The Locally Grown market is sponsored by the Georgia Mountains Farmers Network which is a non-profit corporation of local and sustainable farmers working to collaborate on projects that help increase the impacts of local food (the Soque River Watershed Association is the fiscal sponsor for the GMFN). The market is co-managed by Chuck Mashburn and Andrew Linker, has contracted site managers for each of the three locations, and a contracted accountant. A percentage of all sales (approximately 9%) are retained by the market to pay for transportation, coolers, paper, Internet service, volunteer credits and other costs associated with the market. Another 3% of all sales are paid to license the software that Locally Grown uses as its website interface. Customer membership dues go towards community

outreach, marketing, education, and co-operative projects of the market and growers.

Instructions for Listing Your Products

The following instructions will help to insure that once you are approved as a grower that your farm and products are accurately described and follow some general guidelines to make sure the market functions cleanly and efficiently. Since growers don't get to talk to customers directly through the Locally Grown market, **the details of how you describe your farm and farm products is very critical.** Please follow these guidelines to insure good communication and a loyal following. If we feel that communication and transparency is not being met, we may suspend or discontinue a producer's participation in Northeast Georgia Locally Grown.

Describing Your Farm

- **Location of your Farm** – please describe where your farm is located, and something about the type of farm (either the size, the products grown, length of time growing). We highly encourage you to mention something about your growing practices, especially unique sustainability efforts, the absence of chemicals, and specific crops, techniques or equipment that you like to use. This builds confidence with your consumers. In order to help customers communicate both concerns and praise directly to you, **YOU ARE REQUIRED to list a phone number or e-mail, or both on your farm description page.** This is the only way customers can communicate both their praise or concerns with your products. We may delay your listing of products until this information is posted. If you have any licenses or certifications, please post them on your grower page.

Posting Products

- **Use Photos if you have them** – we highly encourage the use of photographs to convey to your customers exactly what your product is. This will very likely increase your sales of your items, especially if the photos are good. It also imparts exactly what the product is, and increases customer satisfaction when they receive a product they anticipated.
- **Photos must be of the ACTUAL product** – only photos of the actual product you are selling are allowed. If you are selling **lettuce plants**, you must show a picture of the plants, not a photo of the harvested lettuce. This eliminates confusion, as many customers will assume they are purchasing what is in the photo and will not read all of the small details. All photos must be of your actual products, NOT an image found on the web.

- **Adding Products** – Please list products by 6pm Friday. Make sure they are in correct category, and have minimum weight listed. Adding products to the market can be just a bit non-intuitive to the new grower. Instructions for posting new items are described in detail on Your Account page once you are approved as a grower. Read those instructions carefully. Basically you'll go to the market page and pick the category your item fits in from the choices on the left side of the page. For example once you pick VEGETABLES a subcategory list will pop up (on the left column). Then you will pick the subcategory such as SQUASH. If there is no subcategory that includes your item email send us an e-mail describing what subcategory you would like and why. Once you choose your subcategory under VEGETABLES such as SQUASH, look at the top right of the column and you'll see three tiny icons that look like folders. They are very tiny so look hard. The third icon when you roll over it will say "Add a new product in SQUASH". Click that and start describing your item.
- **Only feature four of your items per week** – Please DO feature your items! And use that as a way to let customers know what is in peak season or in abundance-- If it is newly listed, it is already featured as "new this week" at the top of the market page! We encourage you to rotate these featured items often so customers see new ones, and can quickly add your items to their cart.
- **How to List Products (NAMING PROTOCOL required)** – our market lists items alphabetically. In order to keep the scrolling market list organized we require you to use the following **NAMING protocol**.

First put the category name such as :TOMATOES or SQUASH, followed by the particular variety. For instance if you have Dragon's Tongue beans you would name your product – "**Beans – Dragon's Tongue**". That way all the beans in the market will be listed in the same place in the scrolling market list, such as BEANS – Fava, BEANS – French Filet, BEANS – Dragon's Tongue. If you just put "Dragon's Tongue," people may think we are actually selling the tongues of dragons.

As the market has grown we've had increasing problems with items not following these Category naming protocols and this has caused similar products to be listed scattershot throughout the listing.

If the market managers identify a problem with your product naming we will either:

1. Correct the naming to match the naming protocol, if obvious of the intent of what you as the grower were trying to list.
2. Email you asking you to review certain products to follow our naming protocol.

3. If corrections aren't made, or Naming Problems are consistent we may Make Unavailable those products that are wrongly named until the corrections are made.
- **Quarter increments only** - To make checkout at the market easier we don't allow the use of pennies, nickels, or dimes in your item totals. That means that all your products should end in .00, .25, .50, or .75. If you were thinking of charging \$4.10, go ahead and Round Up to \$4.25! This really improves the efficiency of the market.

Packaging Products and Delivery

So you've grown the food, written up an exciting description, posted a photo, set a price, and hooray made a sale. The last two steps are packaging it and delivering.

Labels

All sales through Locally Grown require a label be printed and affixed to the package so that we know who to deliver the product to, and also which market location each item is going. To print your labels go to Your Account on the website and click on "See your Open Orders and Print Labels." If you have sales, you'll see an option to "Print Labels." The instructions are quite clear, but plan ahead and purchase Avery 5160 labels (easily found). Printing and affixing labels as described is a requirement for all products, and once you get the hang of it, it's incredibly easy. (If your labels aren't printing out perfectly on each label, here's a tip – in your PDF printer setting screen set "page scaling" to NONE, and unclick auto-rotate and center. That'll fix it.)

To insure that your customer not only receives your product but also helps market your farm and products to others we have the following advice:

- **Clear packaging promotes your products** – customers do observe other items when they come to pick up orders and if your carrots look terrific, they often ask whose carrots they are and order them the following week. Plastic also prevents your products from absorbing water from the ice bottles in the coolers, and allows customers and volunteers to see the product for more efficient customer checkout.
- **Place labels in the same location on your bags** – this not only helps the market managers find your items quickly and easy, it helps your products to look uniform and organized.
- **Print and stack multiple Labels** (multiple orders of same item) – When someone orders more than one of the same product, and you package them together, please print and place a label for each order in the package. Example- cucumbers x4 -- place *four* labels in a row on the bag.
- **Sort your orders by market location before you deliver** – Very often orders get sent to the wrong location because they weren't properly sorted. We ask you to sort your orders during delivery and if they go to the wrong

spot, we'll have to refund that customer, deduct that amount from your next sales check and give your food away to one of our volunteers.

- **Include nlgmarket@gmail.com in any emails to customers** about their product(s) or order. This email goes to the managers of the three pickups, so you don't have to worry about which location your products are going to. This communication is very important if you ask a customer "This is slightly below our quality standard, but do you still want it?" and they say 'yes'. Or if you emailed them "we are including an extra order of basil with your order from our mistake with your last order." OR "We ran out of what you ordered, will you accept ___ instead?"

Well, that's all we can think of for now! Thanks so much for growing for Locally Grown. We hope you sell a lot of delicious, nutritious and sustainable food. If you have further questions about these guidelines, farm visits or the Locally Grown contract just give us a shout at the following e-mails. We're also happy to give you our cell phone numbers.

To email all market site managers: NGLGmarket@gmail.com

Chuck Mashburn
Chuck.NGLG@gmail.com

Andrew Linker
Andrew.NGLG@gmail.com

Farm Visit by Market Managers

The Locally Grown Market is a tight knit group of growers and customers and to insure that new producers for the market understand the process and the requirements of the market we like to come out and visit any new farms signing up for the market. We also like to learn and exchange ideas on creative farm practices so for us, one of the most exciting things about the market is seeing new farms get involved.

After reading these guidelines, printing out a copy and completing the attached disclosure statement and contract and signing up through the site, we'll try and schedule a farm visit as quickly as possible, usually within one or two weeks.

1. [Create an account](#) like you would as a new customer
2. Once signed in with your account- Click on [OUR GROWERS](#) page
3. Scroll down to very bottom and click - "If you would like to sell through this market, please tell us about yourself and a market manager will contact you."

Farm visits are conducted by Andrew or Chuck depending on your location and our schedules and usually last about an hour, or longer if you have a lot you'd like to show us. Additional visits are on an as-needed basis or upon request/complaint.

NE GA Locally Grown

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT & CONTRACT

Now that you've read the GUIDELINES for GROWERS, if you're confident that your farm and farm products meet all the requirements you're ready to complete this brief disclosure statement and contract.

First and Last Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address (street, city, zip): _____

Number of Years @ this location: _____

Please describe the following Growing Practices

All Types of Soil Amendments used (please include company names): _____

Types of pest control practices used (please include all OMRI approved pesticides used, types of pests and crops applied to):

Types of weed control practices used: _____

Types of tillage, cultivation and bed preparation used (please include cultivation tool types):

Types of Irrigation and water sources used (amount of land irrigated): _____

Types of Mulches, Cover Crops, Rowcovers used: _____

Approximate square footage/ acreage of Farm, size and type of Greenhouse space (if relevant) and Crops Grown:

Please describe seed and live plant sources used: _____

Please describe any other special practices that help to explain your overall farming approach:

THANK YOU FOR DESCRIBING YOUR FARM!

LOCALLY GROWN CONTRACT

This disclosure statement and contract attests that you,

_____ (print first/last name here) have read, understand and agree to follow all the requirements stated in this Guidelines for Growers CONTRACT. By entering into this contract ***you are stating to our customers that you do not use synthetic chemical fertilizers or pesticides in the production of your farm products and that you comply with all other requirements to participate in the Locally Grown market as stated above.*** If you have any further questions about these requirements please contact the market managers prior to signing this agreement.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

You can e-mail a signed copy of this contract to NGLGmarket@gmail.com, mail to PO Box 1423 – Attn Locally Grown, Oakwood, GA 30566, or simply bring to dropoff location on Wednesdays 1:30-2pm.