
Connecticut Department of Agriculture Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

2023-2025 FARMERS' CERTIFICATION HANDBOOK



**For all program participating farmers through
December 31, 2025**



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Development & Resource
Preservation 450 Columbus Blvd, Suite 703,
Hartford, Connecticut 06103 www.CTGrown.gov



Retain for your records and future reference on FMNP rules and regulations through December 2025.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Certified Farmer	A farmer who meets all the qualifications to accept Connecticut S/FMNP electronic benefits and electronic benefit cards, has an approved letter of agreement and an approved crop plan on file with DoAg, farmer portal access to process electronic benefits, and valid Certified Farmer ID Poster.
Certified Farmer ID Poster	The poster provided to certified farmers which must be displayed when selling at farmers' market to make FMNP participants aware the S/FMNP electronic benefits can be redeemed with the certified farmer
Certified Market	<p>C.G.S. § 22-6r (3) "<i>Certified farmers' market</i>" means a farmers' market that is authorized by the commissioner to operate;"</p> <p>To become certified by DoAg, a signed agreement is submitted to DoAg acknowledging a commitment to allowing only Connecticut Grown farm products.</p> <p>Markets must be Certified Connecticut Grown to request mobile hotspots to participate in the Famers Market Nutrition Programs.</p>
Connecticut Grown	<p>C.G.S § 22-38. Advertising of Connecticut-Grown farm products. Advertising of locally-grown farm products. Selling of Connecticut-Grown farm products at farmers' markets. (a) For purposes of this section, "farm products" means products resulting from the practice of agriculture or farming, as defined in section 1-1 and "Connecticut-Grown" means produce and other farm products that have a traceable point of origin within Connecticut.</p> <p>(b) Only farm products grown or produced in Connecticut shall be advertised or sold in Connecticut as "Connecticut-Grown". Farm products grown or produced in Connecticut may be advertised or sold in Connecticut as "Native", "Native-Grown", "Local" or "Locally-Grown". Farm products grown or produced within a ten-mile radius of the point of sale for such farm products may be advertised or sold in Connecticut as "Native", "Native-Grown",</p>

2023-2025

“Local”, or “Locally-Grown”. Any person, firm, partnership or corporation advertising farm products as “Native”, “Native-Grown”, “Local”, “Locally-Grown”, or “Connecticut-Grown” shall be required to furnish written proof within ten days of the sale of such products that such products were grown or produced in Connecticut or within a ten-mile radius of the point of sale, as applicable, if requested to do so by the Commissioner of Agriculture or said commissioner's designee. Any person who violates any provision of this subsection shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars for each product label in violation of this subsection.

(c) In addition to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, any person who sells any farm product as “Connecticut-Grown” at a farmers' market in this state shall offer such product for sale in the immediate proximity of a sign that is: (1) Readily visible to consumers, (2) not less than three inches by five inches in size, and (3) in a form that is substantially as follows: THIS FARM PRODUCT IS CONNECTICUT- GROWN. THIS FARM PRODUCT WAS GROWN OR PRODUCED BY THE FOLLOWING PERSON OR BUSINESS: (INSERT NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON OR BUSINESS).

The lettering on any such sign shall be of a size, font or print that is clearly and easily legible. Such a sign shall accompany each type of farm product that any such person sells as “Connecticut-Grown”. Any person who violates the provisions of this subsection shall receive a warning for the first violation and for any subsequent violation shall be fined one hundred dollars for each violation.

DoAg	Connecticut Department of Agriculture, the state agency administering FMNP.
Exempt Market	A certified farmers' market that allows participating certified farmers to sell Connecticut Grown farm products grown by another Connecticut farmer. The certified farmers' market must have an Exempt Statement on file with DoAg.
Exempt Statement	If a certified farmers' market will allow certified farmers to buy Connecticut Grown farm products from other Connecticut farmers and resell them, the market is required to complete the Exempt Statement at the start of the market season.

While an authorized market may elect to be an exempt market, the majority of eligible products offered for sale by each certified farmer at a FMNP authorized market must be produced by that certified farmer at all times.

Farm

A “farm” or “farming” constitutes the raising or harvesting of any fruit, vegetable, fresh cut herb, or honey on land owned or leased by the applicant and meets the definition of a farm found in C.G.S. § 1-1q

Farm Products C.G.S. § 22-6r(7) *“Any fresh fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, nuts, shell eggs, honey or other bee products, maple syrup or maple sugar, flowers, nursery stock and other horticultural commodities, livestock food products, including meat, milk, cheese and other dairy products, food products of “aquaculture”, as defined in subsection (q) of section 1-1, including fish, oysters, clams, mussels and other molluscan shellfish taken from the waters of the state or tidal wetlands, products from any tree, vine or plant and their flowers, or any of the products listed in this subdivision that has been processed by the participating farmer, including, but not limited to, baked goods made with farm products;”*

Farmer

For the purposes of this certification packet, a person, firm, limited liability company, company/corporation, sole proprietorship, partnership, or other business entity that operates a farm that produces fruits and/or vegetables and/or fresh cut herbs, eggs, and/or honey. The farmer applicant who applies to the Connecticut FMNP must have the legal authority to make decisions for and bind the farm/business entity associated with the farmer applicant.

**Farmers’
Certification
Handbook**

This guidance document which outlines the rules and regulations of FMNP.

FMNP

Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program. This reference is inclusive to both the WIC and Senior programs in Connecticut.

Farmer Portal	Electronic application providing access to the platform used to process transactions of the electronic benefit card.
Jobber	Individuals engaged in the buying and reselling of farm products. They have limited to no production area and grow less than 50% of the items sold by the farm/business entity at an authorized farmers' market. Jobbers are ineligible for FMNP certification.
Producer Only Market	A certified farmers' market that allows participating certified farmer(s) to sell only the products they have grown.

Proxy Form A form an eligible senior would complete which allows someone other than themselves to utilize SFMNP electronic benefits on the senior's behalf at an authorized farmers' market or farm stand. The proxy would utilize the electronic benefits when designated by the program participant. A Proxy Form must be on file with the issuing agency.

S/FMNP Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program/Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. This is used to reference the two types of electronic benefits, the application on a smart device and a physical card associated with FMNP – electronic benefit cards for eligible seniors and the smart device electronic application/electronic benefit card for eligible WIC participants.

SFMNP Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

Senior The term 'Senior' includes individuals at least 60 years of age or older *or* disabled individuals under the age of 60 living in housing facilities occupied primarily by older individuals where congregate nutrition services are provided and have a maximum household income of not more than 185 % of the annual poverty income guidelines. [USDA's federal income guidelines](#)

USDA FNS United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. The federal agency that oversees DoAg's administration of FMNP and SFMNP. They provide funding, determine eligibility requirements and eligible foods for the program. DoAg's

supervising office is the Northeast Regional Office located in Boston, MA

WIC

Women, Infants, and Children. A federal assistance program of USDA FNS for healthcare and nutrition of low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and children under the age of five.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Connecticut Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) consists of two programs: the Women, Infants and Children Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP) and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). Eligible WIC and senior participants are provided electronic benefit cards or an account to access benefits on a mobile device to purchase only fresh, unprocessed Connecticut Grown fruits, vegetables, fresh-cut herbs and eggs (and honey for seniors) at authorized farmers' markets, farm stands, and mobile markets.

The program expands awareness, use of, and sales at farmers' markets. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg) collaborates with the Connecticut Department of Health, 23 local WIC offices, and approximately 200 senior local coordinating agencies.

Connecticut's FMNP is funded through the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for WIC and the State of Connecticut. WIC FMNP was established by Congress in 1992.

Connecticut SFMNP is funded through the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, and the State of Connecticut.



Section I

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February-April

- Recertifications and new farmer trainings take place.

February and March

- Farmers' market information solicited via Cognito Forms – farmers' market agreement, market information sheets, Exempt Statement Form, and vendor/market looking lists are developed and maintained.

March 1- May 1

- Senior FMNP electronic benefit distribution sites can sign up to participate in the upcoming program year.

April 1

- Authorized farmers' market information is sent to S/FMNP electronic benefit Contractor.
- S/FMNP electronic benefit cards arrive at DoAg.
- Certified farmer electronic application access is set up and ID posters are ordered and mailed.

April 30

- Recertification and annual training materials must be submitted by May 31 to DoAg to maintain certification for the coming year.

May

- Initial distribution of S/FMNP electronic benefit cards to distribution locations.
- *Distribution to participants cannot begin until DoAg has formally issued notice to do so.*

June 1

- FMNP officially starts.

August-September

- A second round of electronic benefit card distribution to eligible locations may take place ***if funding and budget permit.***
- All Federal benefit distribution must be complete by September 30.

December 31

- FMNP officially closes. WIC/Senior participants cannot use electronic benefits and certified farmers cannot redeem electronic benefits after this date.

Section II PROGRAM USERS

Connecticut Fruit, Vegetable, Cut Herb, Honey, and Egg Farmers

See more information on page 12 for farmer eligibility.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC authorized users receive one electronic application account or an electronic benefit card, depending on their access to email and a mobile device connected to internet. At the beginning of the season the funds for all eligible participants associated with the authorized user will be distributed to the respective accounts. One account per family, including dependents, will be issued to each family. Example: If a mom is pregnant and has two children under the age of five, the mom will receive benefits for herself and each of her two children as the authorized user.

Seniors

SFMNP is conceptually similar in most respects to WIC FMNP. Seniors in participating municipalities are provided one electronic benefits card for the purchase of only Connecticut Grown unprocessed fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh-cut herbs, honey, and eggs.

Seniors must be 60 years of age or older and have a maximum household income of not more than 185 percent of the annual poverty income guidelines. These seniors are participating in other programs with similar income testing to verify eligibility.

Utilizing state funds, DoAg may also authorize distribution to disabled individuals under the age of 60 living in housing facilities occupied primarily by older individuals where congregate nutrition services are provided. They have a maximum household income of not more than 185% of the annual poverty income guidelines.

The electronic benefit cards are issued to municipal social or elderly service directors, senior centers, subsidized housing resident coordinators, and elderly service nonprofits by DoAg.

Seniors receive one electronic benefit card which is reusable for multiple seasons. Funds will be loaded onto the card at the beginning of each season. In Connecticut, each senior in a household will receive an electronic benefit card. Example: If a couple over the age of 60 requests electronic benefits and the couple meets the income guidelines, two electronic benefit cards will be issued to the household.

Section III

FARMER ELIGIBILITY FOR FMNP CERTIFICATION

Fruit, vegetable, cut herb, egg, and/or honey producers must meet all of the qualifications below to be eligible to accept the S/FMNP electronic benefit cards:

1. Reside within the State of Connecticut.
2. Meet the definition of a farmer.
3. Grow the majority of eligible products they offer for sale at an authorized market. NOTE: If at any time during the certification period, a certified farmer is no longer producing the majority of the products the farm offers for sale at an authorized farmers' market(s), the farm will have their certification revoked. *Jobbers are not eligible for this program.*
4. Participate in/be accepted into one or more authorized farmers' markets.
5. Have the legal authority to act on behalf of the farm/business entity to represent/apply for participation in the FMNP.
6. Verify that he/she has no controlling or membership interest in any farm or business entity that is currently under suspension from participating in Connecticut FMNP or associated with a S/FMNP benefits distribution site.
7. Maintain Triennial certification **and** annual training requirements.
8. Register on the Connecticut elicense website at: [eLicense Online \(ct.gov\)](https://elicense.ct.gov) for the FMNP certification.

Jobbers are not eligible for FMNP certification – farmers must always grow the majority of products the farm offers for sale at an authorized farmers' market.

Section IV

FARMER CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Prior to accepting S/FMNP electronic benefits at an authorized farmers' market, Connecticut fruit, vegetable, eggs, and/or honey farmers must become FMNP certified by DoAg. Certifications lasts for three years. Federal regulations require an annual training as well, which will be done via online learning modules.

In the future, recertification will be required by certified farmers in 2026, 2029, and 2032.

Any farmer accepted and certified mid-certification cycle will be certified for the remainder of the current three-year cycle.

Prior to certification by DoAg, Connecticut fruit, vegetable, egg and/or honey producers must be accepted, but not yet selling, at an authorized farmers' market within the state of Connecticut. DoAg will not certify a farmer who has not been accepted into an authorized market.

First Time Certification Requirements

- An initial on-farm site visit is required. This includes a review of the FMNP Farmers' Certification Handbook (this guidance) and a walk through/tour of all production areas associated with the farm to verify the growing of fruits and/or vegetables, eggs, and/or honey.
- Submitting a Crop Plan and or a Specialty Crop Plan, available at [Farmers Markets \(ct.gov\)](https://www.farmersmarkets.ct.gov) for a complete summary of fruit, vegetable, egg, and/or honey production.
- Set up an eLicense account and register your farm
 - You can register your farm on eLicense by visiting <https://www.elicense.ct.gov/>
 - If you have other licenses via the eLicense system please use the previously set up account and log in
 - Or register for an account if you do not already have one.
 - **For Fruit and Vegetable Growers**, a farm must register for the Department of Agriculture Fruit and Vegetable Grower License in addition to the FMNP Certification
 - **Honey Producers** must have a valid Honey Produces License
 - **Egg Producers** are required to apply for an FMNP Certification.

Recertification Requirements for Previously Certified Farmers

Every three years, previously certified farmers must attend a recertification meeting. At this meeting, farmers who wish to maintain their certification and ability to accept the S/FMNP electronic benefit cards are required to do the following:

- Attend a group meeting to review the Farmers' Certification Handbook and stay for the full duration.
- Submit a crop plan for an understanding of fruit, vegetable, egg and/or honey production.

The signed Letter of Agreement and crop plan are due to DoAg by May 31.

Attending only the recertification meeting will not maintain certification for the next three years. A farmer is not certified until all of the above items have been approved by DoAg.

Annual Requirements to Maintain Farmer Certification

Per USDA regulation 7 CFR Ch 2, Subpart E, subsection d, farmers are expected to participate in a short FMNP annual training in the years between a full recertification. This training will be conducted online via e-learning modules. The online annual training can be found online at [Farmers \(ct.gov\)](https://farmers.ct.gov)

To fulfill the annual training requirement farmers are required to:

- Review the annual training materials, a short version of this guidance, and complete the knowledge test with a passing score.
- Participate in at least one FMNP authorized farmers' market per year.
- If you make changes to your crop plan, a new crop plan(s) must be submitted to DoAg.

DoAg's Requirement to Farmers upon Receipt of Paperwork

Upon receipt of the applicant's paperwork, DoAg shall review and determine approval.

Once approved DoAg will issue:

- FMNP account portal access.
- FMNP certified farmer poster for display at all authorized markets.

Farmer certification in Connecticut FMNP does not guarantee farmer participation in any authorized farmers' market.

Each market is independently run and operated. Farmers must contact the farmers' market's market manager(s) to obtain vendor eligibility requirements, inquire about space availability, and other market rules, expectations, and fees. It is the farmers' responsibility to identify if the market permits buying and reselling of Connecticut Grown farm products.

Section V FMNP RULES AND REGULATIONS

A certified farmer must comply with the program's federal regulations established by the USDA FNS when handling Connecticut S/FMNP electronic benefits/electronic benefit cards and engaging in transactions.

1. Eligible Foods

Only fresh **unprocessed** Connecticut Grown fruits and/or vegetables, eggs and/or fresh cut herbs may be exchanged for Connecticut S/FMNP electronic benefits. Only Senior electronic benefits may be used to purchase honey.

Fruits	Vegetables	Vegetables (con't)	Herbs	Honey*	Eggs
Apples	Artichokes	Mushrooms	Arugula	<i>Only eligible through SFMNP</i>	<i>Only eligible through state funds</i>
Apricots	Asparagus	Mustard	Basil		
Blackberries	Beans	Okra	Chervil		
Blueberries	Beets	Onions	Chives		
Cantaloupe	Bok Choy	Pak Choi	Cilantro		
Cherries	Broccoli	Parsnips	Dill		
Currants	Broccoli Rabe	Peas	Edible flowers		
Gooseberries	Brussels Sprouts	Peppers	Lovage		
Grapes	Cabbage	Potatoes	Marjoram		
Kiwi fruit	Callaloo	Pumpkins	Mint		
Melon	Carrots	Radicchio	Oregano		
Mulberries	Cauliflower	Radishes	Parsley		
Nectarines	Celery	Rhubarb	Rosemary		
Paw Paw	Chicory	Romaine	Sage		
Peaches	Collards	Rutabaga	Savory		
Pears	Cucumbers	Shallots	Sorrel		
Plums	Daikon	Spinach	Tarragon		
Raspberries	Eggplant	Sprouts	Thyme		
Strawberries	Endive	Squash/ Summer			
Watermelon	Escarole	Squash/ Winter			
	Fennel	Sweet Corn			
	Fiddlehead	Sweet Potatoes			
	Garlic	Swiss Chard			
	Horseradish	Tomatillos			
	Artichoke	Tomatoes			
	Kale	Turnip			
	Kohlrabi	Lettuce			
	Leeks				

There are no exceptions.

2. Ineligible Items

Ineligible purchases with Connecticut S/FMNP electronic benefits shall include but not be limited to:

- a. Non-Connecticut Grown fresh fruits, vegetables, fresh cut herbs, eggs, and/or honey
- b. Processed fruit or vegetable products. Examples:
 - Jams/Jellies/Preserves
 - Pickled products
 - Sauces
 - Baked goods with fruits, vegetables, herbs of any kind
 - Juices/ciders
 - Beer/wine/distilled or other fermented products
 - Dried or otherwise processed fruits or vegetables (dried beans, cut/spiralizer squashes, frozen fruit)
- c. Other ineligible items. Examples:
 - Meat and/or meat products
 - Seafood and/or seafood products
 - Milk and/or any dairy products
 - Poultry and/or poultry products
 - Ornamental products – i.e.: carving/mini pumpkins or gourds, etc.
 - Popcorn
 - Baked goods of any kind
 - Nursery/greenhouse/flower/plant items
 - Soaps, lotions, and other bath and beauty products
 - Non-agricultural products (pottery, jewelry, etc.)
- d. Honey for WIC participants

3. Valid Connecticut FMNP WIC/Senior Electronic Benefit Card

Only a valid S/FMNP electronic benefit card or mobile app shall be accepted by a certified farmer for purchase of eligible foods.

4. Authorized Locations

Authorization of a location is on an annual basis and is not guaranteed.

If a certified farmer also has a farm stand at the home farm, they cannot accept S/FMNP electronic benefits at their farm stand. Please contact the Department of Agriculture FMNP for more information on certification of farm stands.

5. Produce Pricing

All eligible products for sale must be clearly priced for all customers to see during posted market hours and follow the signage requirements per C.G.S. § 22-38.

Customers presenting S/FMNP electronic benefits must be charged a price equal to or less than the posted price.

- **S/FMNP electronic benefits accepted only at authorized location(s)**
- **Fair and equal pricing for participants**
- **Display the Certified Farmer ID Poster**
- **If only electronic benefits are used to pay there should be no cash exchanged**

6. Certified Farmer Identification

Certified farmers are required to visibly display the Certified Farmer ID Poster when selling at an authorized farmers' market.

To ensure visibility, the poster should be prominently displayed and posted at eye level.

If the poster is lost or severely damaged it should be reported to DoAg so a replacement can be issued, and a violation isn't cited. Multiple posters can be provided.

7. Payment

Connecticut S/FMNP electronic benefits are to be exchanged for eligible produce, eggs or honey (For seniors ONLY) only, never in whole or in part for cash – this includes giving change.

Exception: If cash is involved in the transition, then change can be given to the

participant. For example, if S/FMNP electronic benefit balance is \$4 and a \$5 bill is presented for \$5 worth of eligible food. \$4 can be given back as change.

8. S/FMNP Electronic Benefit Deposits

A certified farmer will receive an account log in to access the (SoliPortal) back end of the electronic benefit portal. There they can enter their banking information for direct deposit into an account. On a weekly basis the total from that previous week's transactions will be deposited into the provided account.

Deposits will occur weekly (typically on a Thursday) and will end on January 7th annually.

9. Nondiscrimination

Certified farmers participating in the Connecticut FMNP shall not refuse to accept properly presented Connecticut S/FMNP electronic benefits in exchange for eligible Connecticut Grown products.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:

*U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or*

fax:

*(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
email: Program.Intake@usda.gov*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

10. Program Violations

Certified farmers who do not comply with program rules shall receive written notification from DoAg. Failure to adhere to program regulations can result in non-payment and disqualification from participation in the Connecticut FMNP and all authorized farmers' markets. More information regarding program violations can be found on page 27.

Section VI
CONNECTICUT S/FMNP ELECTRONIC BENEFIT CARD/APP



Benefits will be administered through SoliSystems, LLC, via an electronic app or the SoliShopper card.

SoliMarket | Three Main Components:

1 **SoliMarket REGISTER**



For Farmers

SoliMarket Register:
A mobile register application for farm cashiers to make sales of approved farm products to participant shoppers.

2 **SoliMarket SHOPPER**



For Participants

SoliMarket Shopper:
A card or mobile eWallet application to manage benefits and purchase approved farm products.

3 **SoliMarket PORTAL**



For Administration

SoliMarket Portal: A powerful management platform for administrators and program staff to enroll participants, issue benefits, and monitor utilization in real time. It also provides for the management of farms, farmers' markets, and issuance partners.

SoliMarket Portal will provide the platform for DOAG to manage administrative tasks such as:

- enrollment of participants farms, and farmer's markets,
- issuing funds
- processing transactions,
- the reimbursement of farmers via ACH transfers and
- the generation of activity reports.
- FARMERS can access the farmer portal at: <https://farmer.soliportal.com/> to view transactions and other information.
- PARTICIPANTS can view their information and check balances at: <https://shopper.soliportal.com/>

SoliMarket Register is a mobile register for farm use.

An iOS & Android mobile register application that supports both phones and tablets. The register application is for farmers to make sales of approved food items to participants.

- Participating farms approved to use the SoliMarket Register mobile application will need to have their own supplied iOS or Android mobile device with a working connection to the internet.
- Activation of the application is only possible through invitation through the SoliPortal to ensure program security.
- Transactions initiated with SoliMarket Register are digitally signed and recorded into the

SoliPortal and later processed for payment to the farmer.

- The SoliMarket Register application supports multiple users - enabling farms to create cashiers that can conduct transactions on multiple mobile devices at multiple approved markets, at the same time.

The SoliMarket Register mobile application shall provide the following functionality:

- The register app provides for checkout functions needed to ring up a transaction. It provides for the capture of the shoppers QR code to display participant balance and initiate transactions.
- The register application provides for designating the FNS established food categories of: fruits and vegetables; herbs; and honey. The application ensures that the category of items selected by the participant is eligible for redemption according to the rules of the benefit program being used.
- The register application provides for the entry of a purchase price for items in each food category.
- The register manages split tender transactions - between utilized benefits and cash – if available benefits do not cover the complete cost of the sale.
- The register summarizes current transaction details for participants to accept or cancel. In the case of acceptance, the application provides for the entry of the participants PIN code to conclude the sale.
- The register provides the farmer with the ability to review detailed transaction history.
- The Register application does not expose a participant shopper's personal information to farmers. Participants are identified within the application only by the 16-digit account number they are issued by the state.

SoliMarket Shopper is a mobile eWallet for participants.

An iOS & Android mobile eWallet application for participants to manage their program benefits and purchase eligible food items from participating farmers.

The SoliMarket Shopper application shall include the following functions:

- Display current benefit balance and validity dates.
The application provides for the participant to view their current benefit balance and expiration dates.
- Checkout
The application provides for the initiation of a sale with authorized farms operating at authorized farmers' markets and roadside stands.
- The application provides for the review of each transaction made by the participant.
- The application provides for the display of program related messages and information from DOAG.

SoliMarket Shopper Card: A Card for Participants.

In cases where participants or DOAG staff prefer, a SoliMarket Shopper Card can be used in place of the SoliMarket Shopper application. This card is used in much the same way as the mobile app - to initiate purchases from approved farmers using the SoliMarket Register app.

- SoliMarket Shopper Cards shall be a standard PVC card, manufactured according to ISO-7810 specifications, preprinted front and back with DOAG provided graphics and program text and personalized with a unique QR code and a Primary Account Number.
- The card can be utilized for transactions of any dollar amount and over multiple transactions - in the same way mobile app transactions are managed.
- The card is used with a PIN set by the participant. This PIN function provides a method for the participant to approve each transaction with a farmer. The PIN is entered by the participant into the farmers' mobile device upon transaction acceptance. Each transaction using the card generates a unique receipt, sent by email to the participant.
- Each transaction using the card shall be recorded in SoliPortal in the same way that it would be if it were done using the SoliMarket Shopper app.
- Participants using the card shall be able to access the same features and information as the SoliMarket Shopper app user by logging in online to their personal account on the SoliPortal. This includes checking benefit balance and expiration, reviewing transactions, messages, and to manage contact information as well as changing their PIN code. SoliMarket Shopper Cards can be used by the participants to which they were issued for three or more farmers' market seasons.

Additional Information regarding the program, can be found on the Department of Agriculture website at www.CT Grown.gov/FMNP. The site contains resources for farmers, WIC and senior participants, information on locating redemption sites, and includes training videos and helpline access



Section VII

PROGRAM MONITORING

On-Site Monitoring:

Market visits by DoAg will be conducted at as many authorized farmers' markets as time permits throughout the market season. Monitoring includes:

- Ensuring all products are identified and prices are posted per C.G.S. § 22-38
- Verifying all certified farmers have the Certified Farmer ID Poster displayed
- Witnessing a FMNP transaction(s)
- Verifying only Connecticut Grown farm products are being sold

Compliance Buys:

If there is an expressed concern or a formal complaint received by DoAg, a compliance buy by undercover staff may be performed. During such an event, the compliance buy may include:

- An attempt to purchase ineligible foods
- An attempt to receive change
- Determining if a farmer violates state and federal statutes, rules, and regulations
- Determining if a certified farmer is cashing electronic benefits from a non-certified farmer or other market vendors

Point of Origin:

If farm products are displayed and/or offered for sale by a certified farmer and the point of origin is in question, an on-site production area verification may be conducted by DoAg.

If this occurs, the certified farmer will be required to:

1. Provide directions to the production site
2. Grant permission for DoAg staff to inspect the production area

Receipts for CT Grown items purchased and sold at Exempt Markets must be retained for one year and include:

- 1. Name of the grower/business that sold the product, with address and contact information**
- 2. Date of purchase**
- 3. Quantity purchased, of each type of product**
- 4. Location of growing site**

Point of Origin and Exempt Markets

If a product in question is purchased for resale from another Connecticut producer, the product and/or producer must be listed on the authorized farmers' markets online information form.

Certified farmers selling at exempt markets shall be required to provide valid receipts upon request. Receipts must be retained for one year and include:

1. Name of the grower/business that sold the product, with address and contact information
2. Date of purchase
3. Quantity purchased, of each type of product
4. Location of growing site

Failure to grant the requested information is a *Class 3 Violation* and the individual shall have their certification revoked, be removed from the program, and all authorized markets.

Other Inspection Services Offered:

Production area inspections are done by request from market masters, farmers' market associations, and/or a farmer. This process, when a request is made by one of the mentioned parties, shall include an announced visit to the production area of the farmer in question. After the inspection, a written report shall be provided by DoAg to the complainant and the inspected farmer.

This report will include:

- 1.) What is being grown and the production area acreage (or equivalent)
- 2.) What stages the plants/trees are currently in
- 3.) If evidence of harvesting is present and if applicable
- 4.) Supporting documentation for products which have been identified as exempt on the authorized farmers' market's Exempt Statement Form.



Section VIII

VIOLATIONS & SANCTIONS

Violations of FMNP procedures and rules applicable to a certified farmer shall be categorized as a Class I Violation, Class II Violation, or Class III Violation.

Class I Violations

The following shall constitute Class I violations:

1. Failure to appropriately display the certified farmer identification sign.
2. Failure to clearly post produce prices during market hours.

Class I Violations shall result in a *warning letter* from DoAg to the certified farmer.

Class II Violations

The following shall constitute Class II violations:

1. Noncompliance with any of the rules and procedures as outlined in the Farmers' Certification Handbook which is not specifically identified as a Class I Violation.
2. A WIC/Senior participant is charged a price greater than the price charged to a non-participant or is charged for items not received.
3. Refusal to accept valid S/FMNP electronic benefits for eligible products.
4. Abusive or discriminatory treatment of WIC/Senior participants or DoAg staff.
5. The second like instance of a Class I Violation.

Class I Violations shall result in a *written citation* from DoAg to the certified farmer.

Class III Violations

The following shall constitute Class III violations:

1. Accepting electronic benefits for ineligible products or foods.
 - a. Example: Accepting S/FMNP benefits as payment for maple syrup.
2. Exchanging electronic benefits for cash.
 - a. Example: WIC/Senior participant provides FMNP electronic benefits in exchange for cash.
3. Accepting electronic benefits for a non-certified farmer/vendor.
 - a. Example: A baker asks a certified farmer to accept electronic S/FMNP benefits as payment in exchange for cash.
4. Failure to produce a majority of eligible products offered for sale by the certified farmer.

5. Failure to permit or comply with procedures regarding inspection of produce and/or production area.
6. Example: Documentation or site visit approval is denied when requested by DoAg or a designated individual to verify the point of origin of fresh produce on display or offered for sale by a certified farmer.
7. The third like instance of a Class I Violation.
8. The second like instance of a Class II Violation.

A Class III Violation shall result in suspension from Connecticut FMNP.

A violation involving multiple S/FMNP electronic benefits in a single sales transaction will be considered one violation. Multiple violations can be accrued on one day during one authorized farmers' market.

Due Process for Notice of Violations

1. An official notice of non-compliance or suspension shall be issued to the certified farmer by Connecticut DoAg.
2. A certified farmer may request a meeting with the DoAg to present evidence to substantiate a reversal of the notice of non-compliance or suspension within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the written notice.

Failure to respond to the notice of suspension of non-compliance within the specified time period shall constitute acceptance of the notice.



FMNP CERTIFICATION CHECK LIST

Attending only a recertification meeting will not maintain certification for the next three years. A farmer is not certified until all the items below have been received and approved by DoAg.

- 1. Be accepted into an authorized farmers market for the season
- 2. Attend a certification meeting with the Department of Agriculture
- 3. Schedule an initial site visit with DoAg staff to verify your production area, if you are new to the program
- 4. Register your farm on Connecticut elicense and upload your Crop Plan and, if applicable, the Specialty Crop Plan

*****Please note: If you are new to the program as a certified farmer, a site visit to verify your production area will need to be completed before your certification is active.*****

Once your application has been approved, you will receive your FMNP Certified Farmer Certificate and an invitation to set up your account to conduct electronic transactions will be sent from SoliSystems.

**** These frequently go to your junk mail. Please check your folders. ****

Upon receipt of your invitation, set up your farmer portal account and provide your banking information for the transfer of funds. *You will not be able to conduct transactions until your account is fully set up , including your banking information*

Review training videos on accepting electronic benefits/electronic benefit cards.

Questions can be directed to:

Erin Windham at 860-713-2543 or Ally Hughes at 860-713-5827
or emailed to CTFMNP@ct.gov

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
FMNP Farmers' Certification Handbook
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