



VICTORIAN
**FARMERS'
MARKETS**
ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP & ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

JUNE 2016

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PREFACE

Welcome to the revised version of the Victorian Farmers' Markets Association (VFMA) Accreditation Handbook.

The VFMA's accreditation system was developed in response to our members' wish to ensure the integrity and authenticity of Victorian Farmers' Markets. The original rules were registered as a Certified Trade Mark in November 2010. Since that time those rules have evolved as a result of member feedback and practical experience.

While the accreditation system has served the organisation well, after 5 years of use it was apparent that it was timely to undertake a major review. The Accreditation Review has considered all aspects of accreditation from the ground

up with the aim of making sure the system is fully aligned with the VFMA's objectives and presented in a manner that is easy to follow while also being comprehensive.

This new handbook is the result of extensive consultation with VFMA members and benefits from their experience of accreditation since 2010; it was approved by the VFMA Committee at its May 2016 meeting.

It is understood that the handbook will need to evolve to meet the developing needs and experience of our members. Members with suggestions for future consideration should address them to The Accreditation Review Committee (email office@vfma.org.au).

THANK YOU

The VFMA is very grateful to the Victorian Government, through Regional Development Victoria, who provided the financial support that enabled the project to be undertaken.

Thank you also to our passionate membership for their contribution to the development of the handbook in its revised form.



INTRODUCTION

Founded in 2004, the Victorian Farmers' Markets Association Inc. (VFMA) is a membership association, incorporated under the laws of Victoria with the purpose of supporting and promoting authentic farmers' markets in Victoria.

This Membership & Accreditation Handbook describes the Purpose and Vision of the VFMA and the means by which it will be achieved.

The VFMA is overseen by a Committee made up of VFMA members. The committee members are unpaid volunteers. The VFMA also establishes subcommittees to provide expertise and guidance to the Committee in particular areas. VFMA members may nominate for election to the Committee each year at the Annual General Meeting.

VFMA members are part of a community that exists to further the interests of Victorian farmers and to provide opportunities that improve the viability of our local producers.

2 VFMA VISION AND PURPOSE

The VFMA's Vision is to lead the Local Food Revolution of buying fresh food, direct from farmers at accredited farmers' markets. The Association and its members will work to inspire the public to connect with the growers and makers of genuine local produce.

The VFMA's Purpose is to stand up for Victorian farmers, to strengthen the viability of local producers and to jointly defend our food sovereignty through the support and promotion of accredited farmers' markets.

The VFMA defines authentic farmers' markets as places where:

- Farmers sell direct to the public in a fair marketplace not compromised by resellers;
- Farmers and producers create connections and relationships with customers and with each other;
- Customers are able to purchase quality, freshly harvested produce, supporting local farmers and regional Victorian communities;
- Customers buy fresh locally grown produce directly from the grower, and value added products direct from the producer, who receives full economic and social credit for their contribution to a sustainable local food system.

Authenticity should be integral to the term 'farmers' market'. Accordingly, in 2011 the VFMA created and registered an Accreditation Program with the ACCC to certify and differentiate authentic farmers' markets for producers and consumers. The foundation of accreditation is the certification that the substantial majority of the produce being sold has been grown in Victoria. At accredited farmers' markets, the public purchase accredited products that have been made or grown by accredited producers.

The key principles of accredited farmers' markets are that:

- The producer has grown, reared, caught or processed the produce being offered for sale, and;
- Each stall is staffed by at least one person who has intimate knowledge of, and direct involvement with, the production process of items for sale.

The following are never permitted at accredited farmers' markets:

- Re-sellers of fruit, vegetables or any other farm based product;
- Re-packagers of any food or drink;
- Art and craft where no clear farm origin is defined;
- Bric-a-brac stalls.

3 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

3.1 GOVERNANCE

The VFMA Committee is made up of elected VFMA members who give their time and effort to oversee the Association. The Committee is collectively responsible for ensuring that the Association complies with the Association Act and that individual Members comply with the VFMA Rules of Association ('the Rules'), which are available in full in the Handbook Appendix and on the VFMA website: www.vfma.org.au.

3.1.1 COMMITTEE

VFMA members may apply for election to the Committee each year during the Annual General Meeting. The details of election to the Committee are in the Rules. The Committee roles are:

- President;
- Vice-President;
- Secretary;
- Treasurer;
- Four Ordinary Members of the Committee.

3.1.2 SUBCOMMITTEES

The Committee may also appoint subcommittees to provide expertise and guidance to the Committee. VFMA members are invited to advise the Secretary if they have an interest in participating in any subcommittees. Current subcommittees are:

- Accreditation Advisory Panel (AAP)—oversees the process of accreditation;
- Disciplinary Subcommittee—convenes to oversee disciplinary issues between members and the VFMA;
- Accreditation Review Subcommittee (ARS)—oversees the policies, processes and implementation of the Accreditation System;
- Communications Subcommittee—manages the newsletters, media presence and social media of the Association
- Expert Panel—members who are able to offer advice to the Committee on an as-needed basis (for example, as members of the Disciplinary Subcommittee).

3.1.3 MEETINGS

All members are invited to participate in General Meetings of the VFMA. The procedures of General Meetings are provided in the Rules of Association. The two types of general meetings are Annual (AGM) and Special (SGM). Motions put to general meetings are decided by vote. Members may choose to attend in person and vote or submit their proxy vote to another attending member.

The business of the AGM includes: receiving the annual report and the financial statements for the preceding Financial Year; electing the Committee; deciding the membership of the Expert Panel; and setting membership fees and charges for the year.

SGMs are any other general meeting of the Association held to consider motions that require a decision by the full membership. For example, in 2015 the Committee convened an SGM to amend the Rules of Association.

The Committee relies on input from VFMA members and customers to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the Association. This may include customer market research as well as Market Manager and stallholder consultations. The Committee will continue to conduct regular reviews of the processes that guide the Association, and members will continue to be invited to provide input as and when these are conducted.

3.2 MANAGEMENT

The VFMA office administrator is the first point of contact for members and the public, redirecting enquiries and feedback as appropriate to the Committee and subcommittees.

Membership and accreditation applications are received and processed by the administrator who also manages related communications. Membership renewal reminders are sent by the administration.

The website database and file copies of member records are also managed by the administration. Queries about using the member website to renew membership and maintain public profiles are also managed by the administrator.

4 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 MEMBERSHIP TYPES

The VFMA offers two levels of membership (accredited or associate) to three different membership types (Market Trader, Market or Industry Stakeholder).

4.1.1 ACCREDITED MEMBERS

Accredited Market Trader and Market members undergo a thorough certification process. Both must be approved by the Accreditation Advisory Panel and endorsed by vote of the Committee. Accredited Members hold voting rights in the Association.

Note: There is a separate process for Industry Stakeholders wishing to assume voting rights. Industry Stakeholders must be endorsed as a Member Entitled to Vote by vote of a General Meeting of the Association.

4.1.2 ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Any entity (including an individual) is eligible to apply to be a Member if they support the Purposes of the Association. Once accepted to membership, members who are unaccredited are considered associate members:

- Associate Market Traders, if eligible, are expected to apply for accreditation;
- Associate markets, otherwise described as 'provisionally-accredited', commit to meet the requirements of accreditation within six months of joining the Association;
- Associate Industry Stakeholders have chosen to financially contribute to the VFMA but have no voting rights. These members are eligible to request voting rights at a General Meeting.

All stallholders are encouraged to apply for membership but it is recognised that some stallholders are unable to become accredited due to the nature of the products they sell.

VFMA members belong to a community that stands up for Victorian farmers, strengthens the viability of local producers and defends our food sovereignty.

Independent research has shown that farmers' markets in Australia provide many benefits:

- Opportunities for small producers to market their own products and take control of the value chain;
- Opportunities to develop new business models and products;
- Marketplace-as-business incubators;
- Community-wide benefits from the funds being retained in the area;
- Activity that is complementary to existing businesses in a community;
- Showcasing local produce;
- Increased sense of community/belonging for both shoppers and producers;
- Expanded social networks, recognition and self-esteem;
- Opportunities to educate customers on local food systems;
- Increased community interest in fresh food, its source and ideas for new products;
- Promotion of the health advantages of fresh produce;
- High-return options for farmers' produce;
- Development of innovative farming practices.

4.2 MEMBER BENEFITS

VFMA Market Trader & Market members receive:

- A business profile on the VFMA website;
- Subscription to the monthly Industry Newsletter, keeping members up-to-date and connected;
- Social media and general media opportunities and exposure;
- The benefit of being part of a movement that has a proven record of incubating new businesses and building industry networks;
- Access to high-quality markets where fresh local seasonal produce is valued;
- Network connections between markets and stallholders including VFMA services that introduce stallholders to markets and vice versa.

4.3 MEMBER OBLIGATIONS

All VFMA members have agreed to support the purpose of the VFMA and are bound by its Rules of Association and the Accreditation Handbook. Members are also expected to behave in a co-operative manner. At VFMA markets, co-operative behaviour includes:

- Refraining from any aggressive, discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour towards VFMA staff, market managers, other stallholders and customers
- Adhering to OH&S standards for safety;
- Following the direction of market managers, including in relation to the goods that may be sold at their particular market;
- Seeking the permission of the market manager before bringing newly-accredited products to market.

4.4 FEES AND CHARGES

Fees and charges for annual membership, market day levies and accreditation applications are provided on the VFMA website. Fee changes require a vote of the membership at a General Meeting.

4.4.1 MEMBERSHIP FEES

All members pay a membership fee to join the VFMA and then maintain their membership by payment of an annual renewal fee.

Failure to pay the renewal fee within three months of the membership anniversary results in the membership and accreditation status being terminated. Failure to renew within 6 months will result in a new Application for Accreditation being required if applicable.

4.4.2 ACCREDITATION APPLICATION FEES

Market Traders pay a non-refundable fee as part of an application for accreditation.

4.4.3 MARKET DAY STALLHOLDER LEVIES

In order to better align VFMA charges to the trading benefits gained by stallholders a levy is payable on a per market attendance basis.

Market operators collect the levy on behalf of the VFMA from every stallholder attending the market. The levy may be separately identified by operators as a component of the stallholder site fee. The levy must be remitted to the VFMA on a monthly basis by the Market operator.

All Market members must collect and pay the levy to the VFMA from the date that VFMA membership commences, whether the market is accredited or provisionally-accredited. Stallholder levies vary based on whether a market is in a metropolitan, interface or regional area.

4.5 INFORMATION PRIVACY

The VFMA will, wherever possible, use personal information only in accordance with the Privacy Act 2000 and any amendments. The VFMA will take reasonable steps to protect the personal information held from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Members may enquire at any point as to what information the VFMA holds about them.

By default, trading members authorise the VFMA to make public their trading name, business contact details and product information. When applying for accreditation applicants grant the VFMA permission to release contact details to the managers of VFMA member markets.

Market Members are required to disclose the contact details of all stallholders trading at their market to the VFMA for the purposes of administering the accreditation system. This should be included in the terms & conditions of the market's own stallholder application form.

5 MARKET TRADER MEMBERS

'Market Trader member' is the formal description of VFMA stallholders who sell food or other farm-based products at farmers' markets.

5.1 MARKET TRADER ACCREDITATION

Accredited Market Traders produce accredited products in Victoria (subject to 5.2) for sale at accredited markets. In order to become accredited, Market Traders submit the details of their produce and properties for review to the AAP.

Unprocessed products such as vegetables or meat are listed for review. Processed food and non-food products are assessed and given an Origin Points score, weighted towards locally-sourced produce. To become accredited, each product must achieve an average minimum of 100 Origin Points (see Appendix 11.6). The AAP may choose to accredit products that achieve an average Origin Points score of 80-99 where a Market Trader provides a valid reason why they are unable to source local ingredients (e.g. organic requirements), and demonstrates a willingness to use local ingredients when available from a named origin.

Market Traders are responsible for building and maintaining fruitful relationships with the representatives of accredited market. Accreditation does not confer the right to attend any accredited market; attendance needs to be negotiated between the Market Trader and the management of individual markets.

5.2 INTERSTATE MARKET TRADERS

Interstate producers who are located within 100kms of the Victorian border are eligible to apply for accreditation. Interstate producers further than 100kms from the border from specified agricultural regions (e.g. SA Riverland and NSW Irrigation Areas) are eligible to trade at farmers' markets as part of the quota of unaccredited stallholders. See Appendix 11.3 for eligible regions.

5.3 MARKET TRADER OBLIGATIONS

5.3.1 STAFFING THE STALLS

Experienced Market Traders know that no one sells their product better than themselves, because of their detailed knowledge of their own farming methods and produce. Customers come to accredited farmers' markets expecting to meet the producer and to be able to find out more about their food.

The VFMA requires that at each market, at least one person representing the Market Trader must be involved in the business.¹ They must also be competent to provide detailed answers about accredited products in answer to queries at the stall. Market Traders are required to keep the list of these competent representatives updated with the VFMA.

The following are not generally considered competent to act as a Market Trader's main representative at the market:

- Commercial agents;
- Temporary farmhands e.g. students/WWOOFers;
- Staff employed solely for market day attendance.

¹ Market managers may request that the AAP grant an annual exemption to this requirement on behalf of a Market Trader, where such an exemption benefits both parties and clearly supports the VFMA Purpose and Vision. The VFMA requirement for competency at the stall must still be met.

5.3.2 SHARED STALLS

In order to support small farm-based producers, the VFMA may allow up to 3 small businesses to share a stall (and thus the market day levy) at Markets. As a guide, a small business is expected to employ no more than 2 full time equivalent staff (including the owners) OR to have revenues less than twice the average individual annual income as recorded by the ABS.

The following conditions apply:

- Acceptance and the applicable site fee is at the discretion of the individual market;
- Each producer is required to be an individually accredited Fruit & Vegetable or Meat & Dairy Market Trader (Specialty Makers are not eligible for shared stalls);
- The stall must be run on a shared/rotational basis E.g. if two Market Traders participate in a shared farm arrangement, each must attend at least one market in two;
- Each product's origin must be clearly labelled on the stall.

Note: Acceptance of a shared stall arrangement is considered on a case-by-case basis by the AAP.

5.3.3 FRANCHISE ARRANGEMENTS

Market Traders selling at accredited markets under a franchise model must complete individual membership and accreditation application forms. They must show that they are involved in the manufacturing and processing aspect of the business and are not acting as resellers or collecting ready-made products for sale.

5.3.4 SUBSTANTIATING CLAIMS

Shoppers at accredited farmers' markets have a right to expect industry-wide integrity behind the claims being made by Market Traders about growing and manufacturing practices. There are a number of industry bodies that accredit methods of food production; 'free-range' and 'organic' are two examples. The VFMA relies on the expertise of select industry bodies to provide this integrity. The list of accrediting bodies the VFMA recognises is provided on the website. The list may be reviewed from time to time, in consultation with members, and may be amended subject to AAP approval.

No unsubstantiated claims may be made or displayed by stallholders. This applies regardless of whether there is a relevant certification body (e.g. 'organic') or not. Therefore, claims such as 'spray-free', 'chemical free' may not be made. In the interest of truth-in-labelling, Market Traders making claims of accreditation by industry bodies must provide the relevant documentation to the VFMA and are required to display documentation or certification number by such bodies at their stalls at all times.

5.4 MARKET TRADER TYPES

Three different types of food producers are eligible for Market Trader membership:

- Fruit & Vegetable Producers: Producers of fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts, honey, herbs, plants and cut flowers.
- Meat and Dairy Producers: Producers of meat, dairy, fish and eggs.
- Specialty Makers: Makers of Value-added products.

Fruit & Vegetable Producers and Meat & Dairy Producers are restricted to selling fresh produce and value-added products containing more than 50% of produce sourced from their own farm or other properties to which they have appropriate rights. The exceptions are wild-caught fish (under appropriate licences) and honey from hives kept on various sites. They may also sell value-added products containing more than 50% of their produce (see 5.5).

5.4.1 FRUIT & VEGETABLE PRODUCERS

These are farm-based producers whose product range is mainly vegetables and / or fruit. This category also covers nuts, honey, herbs, plant/flowers and value-added produce where the main ingredient is from the producer's own farm. As part of the accreditation process, these producers must provide details of their farming locations, all crops and varieties, growing area, selling season and annual volume produced. Honey producers provide details of hive numbers, apiarist associations and honey varieties. Plant producers provide details of their propagation practices.

5.4.1.1 Additional Criteria for Plant Producers

All annual plants must be raised by the grower. All perennial plants must be grown up for a minimum of 6 months AND re-potted to the appropriately sized pot (bonsai are excluded from the need to pot up).

5.4.2 MEAT & DAIRY PRODUCERS

These are farm-based producers whose product range may be meat, dairy, eggs or fish, and value-added goods such as cheese (where the milk comes from their property). As part of the accreditation process, these producers provide details about their farming locations, livestock species, volume, slaughter age where applicable, rearing and PrimeSafe registration (see Appendix 11.5). Dairy producers also provide details of milk types and the value-added products they make. Egg producers also provide details about the living conditions of the hens and the egg-grading facilities they use. Fish and shellfish producers provide details on species, source, quantities and their permits and licences.

5.4.2.1 Additional Criteria for Poultry Producers

Birds being sold as layers must have been raised for at least 3 months by the producer. Birds being sold for meat (slaughtered or live), under the age of 3 months must have been reared from 'day olds' (or close to), or raised for a minimum of 3 months.

5.4.2.2 Livestock sales

Only animals for consumption or that produce a consumable item (e.g. laying hens producing eggs) are eligible – pets are not eligible to be sold at markets. Meat & Dairy Producers wishing to sell livestock must be accredited and must ensure that they and their customers adhere to Victorian codes of practice for animal welfare. Customers must be provided with the relevant codes of practice for the livestock on sale. Key points from the codes are in the Appendix (11.7), but this is not to be considered comprehensive.

5.4.3 SPECIALTY MAKERS

These are producers who are not farm-based and whose main product range is value-added produce such as pies, cakes, tarts, breads, cordials, juices and tonics, ready to eat foods/meals, preserves and condiments prepared using mostly Victorian ingredients. As part of the accreditation process, these producers provide detail about the provenance and percentages of ingredients in their products. Specialty Makers and Value-Adders must retain documentation of ingredient origin that supports their accreditation data. In the event of auditing this documentation must be provided.

Pet food makers supply a PrimeSafe registration number as part of their application.

5.5 VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS

All Market Traders may apply for accreditation of 'value-added' products, where raw ingredients have been processed into food or non-food items. Examples of value-added food products include preserves, ready-to-eat products and hot food sold for consumption at the market. Examples of value-added non-food products include soap, spun wool, hides or animal manure.

5.5.1 FARM-BASED FOOD PRODUCTS

Fruit & Vegetable Producers and Meat & Dairy Producers often process their raw ingredients or materials into products that they also sell at markets. They may do this themselves, or send their raw ingredients or materials to a contracted processor within Victoria or 100km from the state border. Value-added products must contain a minimum of 50% of their own raw product and the processing method must be described during the application. If a contracted processor is used, a specialty-maker accreditation application form ('P4a') must also be completed, with the contract processor's details and processing method described. If a product contains less than 50% of their own farm based ingredient then a non-farm-based food products form ('P4a') must be used.

5.5.2 NON-FARM-BASED FOOD PRODUCTS

Specialty-makers collect ingredients from local food producers and process them to create value-added products. To achieve accreditation, their total accredited product range must average a score of at least 100 Origin Points and no less than 80 origin points for an individual product.²

5.5.3 NON-FOOD PRODUCTS

All Market Traders may apply for accreditation of non-food products, which must achieve a minimum score of 200 Origin Points.

For producers of garden inputs (e.g. worm farms and their associated by-products, manure, pea straw or lucerne) the entire production/ life cycle up to the point of sale must take place on the producer's own property or other properties to which they have appropriate rights.

5.5.3.1 Books

An accredited Market Trader may sell a book as part of the wider range of accredited products if they, their product range, or their property is featured in that book.

5.5.3.2 Ancillary products

Subject to AAP approval and then market manager discretion, the sale of ancillary products by farm-based producers, such as walnut crackers or soil blocking tools may be accepted at Markets.

² In 2015 the minimum pass score for individual products was raised from 55 to 80. Currently – accredited stallholders applying for new products must meet a new minimum of 80 origin points in 2016, with any existing accredited products falling below 80 points to be bought up to 80 points minimum by 2017.

6 MARKET MEMBERS

'Market member' is the formal description of the entity that operates an individual farmers' market. The Market nominates an individual as its representative to the VFMA. The market is also required to advise the VFMA of the contact details of the market's manager as the focus of contact for day to day matters. (These two positions may be held by the same person).

Markets are run independently of the VFMA but are required to meet the obligations of VFMA Market membership.

6.1 MARKET ACCREDITATION

To become accredited, Markets submit a list of their attending stallholders to the VFMA administration which confirms the percentage of accredited and financial stallholders. Once the minimum requirement is met and accreditation is approved by the AAP, the market becomes accredited. In metropolitan areas the minimum is 90%, while in interface and regional areas (see Appendix 11.2 for these) the minimum is 75%. It is expected that the market maintains, and aspires to improve, these percentages over time.

Market managers are able to accommodate unaccredited stallholders (who must not be resellers) within the remaining percentage at their discretion.

6.2 MARKET OBLIGATIONS

The support of Markets and their managers for the principles of accreditation and the application of these rules is vital to their effectiveness.

It is essential that markets work proactively with the VFMA to manage accreditation issues and are responsive in providing the information that the VFMA needs to effectively maintain, implement and execute the accreditation program. Examples include reporting on stallholder numbers and liaising with the VFMA on stallholder accreditation compliance issues.

Beyond the accreditation percentages mentioned in 6.1, the market should also be proactive in encouraging all stallholders to join the VFMA and all those that are eligible to apply for accreditation.

Markets are encouraged to make membership and accreditation a condition of stallholder attendance. It is suggested that as an incentive VFMA members are offered a discount on their site fees.

Market members are required to collect a levy on behalf of the VFMA from all stallholders (excluding community stalls). Levies and stallholder attendance sheets are to be submitted promptly and in any event by the month end of the market.

It is a condition of accreditation that markets operate in accordance with the law and adhere to food and other applicable government regulations. Markets must maintain insurance for third party liability and ensure that their stallholders do likewise.

The market is required to support the VFMA in the application of any rulings of the disciplinary committee.

6.2.1 PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY MARKETS

In some cases, Markets may run in tandem with local craft or community markets. To ensure the public is not deceived about which one is accredited, the following conditions need to be met:

- The two markets must be clearly separated by either a physical structure (e.g. road, fence) or by a distance of at least 7 metres.
- It should be obvious to the public when they are leaving or entering the VFMA Market. This may be achieved by signage.
- Stallholders that are not eligible to attend the VFMA Market (e.g. selling bric-a-brac, reselling produce) must be situated within the partner market.
- It is strongly recommended that stallholders in the partner market should not be selling fresh produce.
- The two markets must be identified by different names. (A period of one year from the application for VFMA Market membership will be granted to change any existing marketing materials e.g. website, flyers etc.)

6.2.2 VOLUNTEERS

Markets are often partially staffed by volunteers. The VFMA recommends that market managers become familiar with the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement and adhere to them where possible. The National Standards allow organisations to make use of simple, practical criteria across a broad range of volunteering situations. There are 8 standards addressing the key areas of volunteer involvement (*Volunteer Australia, 2015*):

1. Leadership and management
2. Commitment to volunteer involvement
3. Volunteer roles
4. Recruitment and selection
5. Support and development
6. Workplace safety and wellbeing
7. Volunteer recognition
8. Quality management and continuous improvement

6.2.3 ANIMAL DISPLAYS

Market managers may choose to allow animals to be displayed at their markets as part of the entertainment and education of the community. Exhibitors attending VFMA markets must adhere to the relevant Victorian Codes of Practice for Animal Welfare and ensure that visitors interacting with the animals also follow the Codes.

6.3 MARKET STALL GUIDELINES

Market managers are responsible for decisions about the variety and number of stallholders who attend their accredited markets. The key expectation the VFMA has is that priority be given to stallholders from the market's local area.

6.3.1 COMMUNITY / SOCIAL ENTERPRISE / NOT-FOR-PROFIT STALLS

The VFMA encourages Markets to embrace and facilitate community participation:

- Community information stalls of any kind are considered welcome;
- Casual food-serving community stalls should use primarily local produce, if possible from participating stallholders and major components (e.g. sausages and bread) must be of a known local origin, not purchased from a supermarket;
- If a community group is selling produce the market manager should be sensitive to the impact on sales for Market Traders;
- Where a community group is selling food products on a regular basis and on a commercial scale in competition with the sales of Market Traders, the group is regarded as a non-accredited stallholder, subject to market day levies. Such groups should be encouraged to apply for VFMA membership and accreditation.

6.3.2 SPONSORING SMALL LOCAL PRODUCERS AT REGIONAL MARKETS

In some rural areas, small producers wish to sell at their local market on a limited and seasonal basis. Markets in rural areas (excluding regional cities) may choose to sponsor them as 'single, own-market-only accredited stallholders' at no membership or accreditation cost. The stallholder is included in the market day levy.

To maintain eligibility for this category, the stallholder must only attend one VFMA market, either with a maximum 4 attendances per annum, or for the duration of a seasonal crop or seasonal value added items, not exceeding 4 months within a single year. A detailed product list is to be submitted, with the application to be co-signed by the market manager. Acceptance is subject to AAP approval.

6.3.3 COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES AND GOODS

The VFMA recognises that it may sometimes be beneficial for a Market to be able to include food-related services and products at the market. Guidelines to support this are as follows.

6.3.3.1 Book stalls

A one-off book launch may be held at a market if the book is specifically about farmers' markets, or producers attending farmers' markets, local food issues, health & nutrition. During the event, the book stall must be attended by the author or by a featured VFMA member. After the launch, the books may be sold at Market information stands at the market manager's discretion.

6.3.3.2 Service providers

Subject to AAP approval food-focused service providers such as knife sharpeners may be allowed to attend Markets at the manager's discretion.

7 INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER MEMBERS

Industry Stakeholder membership allows local food advocates and those who want to support or be involved with the VFMA to become members.

By default Industry Stakeholder Members are Associate Members. Industry Stakeholders may only be granted voting rights by a General Meeting of the Association.

8 ABOUT ACCREDITATION

The VFMA verifies the compliance of accredited producers and accredited farmers' markets through its Accreditation process that certifies:

- The range of farm produce, value-added food and drink products and ancillary non-food products to be sold;
- The farmers, growers, specialty-makers and other producers selling the range in their capacity as stallholders; and
- The markets at which they are sold.

All applicants for accreditation must be Associate members.

The AAP meets monthly to assess Accreditation applications and other items such as Market Day Assessment reports (8.5). Panel members also conduct premises inspections as needed.

Members are appointed by the Committee based on their competence, experience and expertise in the relevant membership type. The Committee invites applications from members to join the AAP. The Panel's operation is governed by the AAP Charter (currently under review).

8.2 APPLICATION

Market traders and Markets must apply for accreditation using the relevant Accreditation application forms, which are available on the VFMA website. The accreditation application fee must be paid at the time of application.

8.3 ASSESSMENT

The AAP may select premises for an inspection and request to see business records before they issue a verdict.

Applicants are advised by email about the outcome of the AAP assessment. Successful applicants are profiled in a newsletter to market managers and welcomed in the next Industry Update. When an application is unsuccessful, applicants receive written feedback describing the reasons.

Market Traders are encouraged to amend their unsuccessful product/s in response to AAP feedback and reapply for accreditation of the products.

On successful completion of the accreditation process, the member will be supplied with a tax receipt, a certificate and an accreditation sign. The receipt and certificate is supplied in a digital format and may be reproduced by the member. The sign is posted to the member. Signs remain the property of the VFMA. Additional signs can be supplied at an additional cost. Accredited members must agree to:

- Permit random premises and/or farm inspections;
- Participate in Market Day Assessments;
- Adhere to all relevant legislation including labelling regulations, food safety regulations, and measurement regulations.

8.4 APPEALS

Applicants who feel that a decision is incorrect may appeal in writing to the AAP within one month of receiving the result. Applicants may also request a meeting with the VFMA Committee as part of the appeal process. The Committee may nominate a member to conduct a premises inspection to resolve the dispute. Further disputes must be resolved using the procedures described in the Rules. The decision of the Committee is final.

8.5 MARKET DAY ASSESSMENT (MDA)

The VFMA conducts MDAs to monitor the status of accredited farmers' markets. MDAs provide valuable opportunities for the VFMA to hear from market managers and traders face-to-face. All members are required to participate in MDAs.

Committee-appointed assessors check the members' products and other details against the information provided for accreditation. Assessors ask questions and record suggestions and issues as part of their visit to a market. After each MDA, assessors compile a report summarising the information and issues gathered. Where an MDA has revealed non-compliance by a member, the AAP will take action. A summary of the MDA is reported to the Committee.

9 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Accredited members may display the VFMA's certified Accreditation trademark. The Accreditation regulations form the basis of the certified trademark. Members displaying the Accreditation logo are legally obliged to operate within the Accreditation regulations.

VFMA members are (legally) obliged to make sure that members of the public are not confused about whether they are attending an accredited market. In order to ensure this, the accreditation trademark must only be displayed at VFMA accredited or affiliated markets and always in accordance with these accreditation regulations. Failure to comply with any

of these conditions may result in disciplinary action as prescribed in the Rules.

The use of the trademark, 'VFMA' or 'Victorian Farmers' Market Association' or 'accredited farmers' market' is strictly controlled and may only be used by members. On ceasing membership, the trademark, 'VFMA' or 'Victorian Farmers' Market Association' or 'accredited farmers' market' or any other expression which may mislead a member of the public to believe there is a connection with the Association must cease and be removed from any type of printed or electronic material.

10 DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The Association may take disciplinary action against a Member if it is determined that the Member:

- Has failed to comply with the VFMA Rules; or
- Refuses to support the Purposes of the Association; or
- Has engaged in conduct prejudicial to the Association; or
- If the Accreditation Advisory Panel requests that disciplinary action is taken.

10.1 COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS

The Association relies on, and appreciates, being advised of suspected breaches of our rules. Such reports are treated in confidence. Complainants must provide credible information and any evidence that is available. Action will not be taken where the complaint is judged to be poorly founded or being of the nature of a personal grievance. Complaints are forwarded to the AAP by the VFMA office administrator.

10.2 DISCIPLINARY OUTCOMES

Disciplinary action may result in the withdrawal of accreditation, expulsion from membership of the VFMA and in the case of stallholder's exclusion from trading at accredited markets. Expelled stallholders may reapply for membership and accreditation after a time period designated by the Disciplinary Subcommittee.

10.3 GRIEVANCE AND MEDIATION PROCEDURES

The grievance and mediation procedures for disputes between members; or between members and the committee or the association is set out in the Rules of Association.

11 APPENDICES

11.1 RULES OF VICTORIAN FARMERS' MARKETS ASSOCIATION INC.

The Rules are available in full on the VFMA website www.vfma.org.au.

11.2 RURAL AND INTERFACE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS AS DEFINED BY STATE GOVERNMENT

INTERFACE COUNCILS		
Cardinia Shire Council	Melton Shire Council	Whittlesea Shire Council
Casey Shire Council	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	Wyndham Shire Council
Hume Shire Council	Nillumbik Shire Council	Yarra Ranges Shire Council

RURAL COUNCILS		
Alpine Shire Council	Greater Geelong City Council	Murrindindi Shire Council
Ararat Rural City Council	Greater Shepparton City Council	Northern Grampians Shire Council
Ballarat City Council	Hepburn Shire Council	Pyrenees Shire Council
Bass Coast Shire Council	Hindmarsh Shire Council	Queenscliffe (Borough of)
Baw Baw Shire Council	Horsham Rural City Council	South Gippsland Shire Council
Benalla Rural City	Indigo Shire Council	Southern Grampians Shire Council
Buloke Shire Council	Latrobe City Council	Strathbogie Shire Council
Campaspe Shire Council	Loddon Shire Council	Surf Coast Shire Council
Central Goldfields Shire Council	Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Swan Hill Rural City Council
Colac-Otway Shire Council	Mansfield Shire Council	Towong Shire Council
Corangamite Shire Council	Mildura Rural City Council	Wangaratta Rural City Council
East Gippsland Shire Council	Moira Shire Council	Warrnambool City Council
Gannawarra Shire Council	Mitchell Shire Council	Wellington Shire Council
Glenelg Shire Council	Moorabool Shire Council	West Wimmera Shire Council
Golden Plains Shire Council	Mount Alexander Shire Council	Wodonga Rural City Council
Greater Bendigo City Council	Moyne Shire Council	Yarriambiack Shire Council

11.3 AGRICULTURAL REGIONS BEYOND VICTORIAN BORDERS

Producers within 100km of the Victorian border are eligible to apply for accreditation, including Bass Strait Islands. Producers in the listed regions bordering this 100km limit may trade in VFMA markets as unaccredited stallholders. Producers from beyond these regions may not trade in VFMA markets.

LISTED REGIONS:

SOUTH AUSTRALIA	NEW SOUTH WALES
The Riverland	Riverina
Robe	Hume
BASS STRAIT	South Eastern
Bass Strait Islands beyond the 100km limit not inc. Tasmania	Western (limited to 200km beyond the existing 100km limit)

11.4 BENCHMARK ORGANISATIONS

- Australian Certified Organic
- Bio-dynamic Research Institute (BDRI)
- Free Range Egg and Poultry Australia Ltd
- Free Range Farmers' Association
- Humane Choice
- NASAA
- Organic Food Chain
- Organic Growers of Australia
- Pasture Raised on Open Fields (PROOF)
- RSPCA Approved Farming
- Safe Food Queensland

11.5 ORIGIN SCORE CALCULATION FOR LIVE ANIMAL PRODUCERS

Percentage animals by length of time animals are held on applicant's property (complete for each species)

LESS THAN 3 MONTHS	%	X 0.3	=
3-6 MONTHS	%	X 0.4	=
6-12 MONTHS	%	X 0.5	=
MORE THAN 12 MONTHS	%	X 0.7	=

Total Points scored is the weighted sum of all scores

NOTE

- Birds being sold as layers must have been raised for at least 3 months by the producer
- Birds being sold for meat (slaughtered or live), under the age of 3 months must have been reared from 'day olds' (or close to), or raised for a minimum of 3 months

11.6 ORIGIN SCORE CALCULATION FOR PROCESSED PRODUCTS

'Origin points' are based on where the ingredients originated and are scored as follows:

OWN LAND	%	X 3	=
A VFMA-ACCREDITED STALLHOLDER	%	X 2.5	=
LOCAL REGION	%	X 2	=
WITHIN THE STATE	%	X 1.5	=
INTERSTATE'	%	X 0.5	=
OVERSEAS	%	X -0.5	=

NOTE

- Milled products (e.g. flour, oats etc.) merit a score of 1 unless an invoice from the mill is provided that proves Victorian origin (2-4); in this case the relevant points will be allocated.
- Water is not considered as an ingredient.

CALCULATIONS

Each product is awarded a score and is calculated using the above matrix and weighted against the percentage of overall sales at farmers' markets. If an individual product scores less than 80 origin points, the product will not be eligible for accreditation. The producer's final score is the sum of all product points. If a producer does not yet attend any markets, the product score is an average of the range. To illustrate:

- Product achieves 150 origin points and the product is 50% of sales at markets - the product is awarded 75 points.
- Product achieves 150 origin points and the producer does not attend any markets but has a range of ten products - product is awarded 15 points.

11.7 VICTORIAN CODES OF PRACTICE FOR POULTRY WELFARE

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-legislation/victorian-codes-of-practice-for-animal-welfare/code-of-accepted-farming-practice-for-the-welfare-of-poultry>

Regarding the sale of poultry:

- Food and water must not be withheld from birds for more than 24 hours during the entire sale process including transport to and from the place of sale.
- Birds must not be carried or held in the boot of a car. Birds must not be held inside a vehicle under conditions when the temperature may exceed 33°C.
- Minimum Acceptable Stocking Density Standards should also be considered at point of sale.



VICTORIAN
**FARMERS'
MARKETS**
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