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### **K-State food scientist shares safety tips for local food sales**

Small food producers should follow safety guidelines when preparing and selling food

*By Maddy Rohr, K-State Research and Extension news service*

MANHATTAN, Kan. – As farmers markets in Kansas continue to grow and local foods sold directly to consumers increase, food safety should be prioritized among producers, says Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee.

Blakeslee added that it is the producer's responsibility to make sure they are preparing and producing food safely so they can sell the best products to their customers.

“Selling safe food should be the most important factor for any food business,” Blakeslee said. “Whether you are selling fresh produce, canned foods, frozen meat or other food products, making the effort to handle and produce the food safely will show your customers you care they are buying safe food.”

Blakeslee said knowing and using safe food handling procedures should become a habit throughout the entire business. One of the most important food-handling principles: Making a habit of washing your hands.

She added that maintaining knowledge of food storage is another important component of keeping products safe.

“If you have to keep your food refrigerated or frozen, use food thermometers to verify the food is stored properly,” Blakeslee said.

Record-keeping includes maintaining temperature logs, ingredients supplies, and more is also helpful. Blakeslee said the more information you track, the better.

“It only takes one food safety issue to be detrimental to a food business,” Blakeslee said. “In some communities, selling food locally can reduce food deserts and provide easy access to food.”

When debating if a farmers' market is best for local food sales, Blakeslee urged producers to be

prepared to sell food in an ever-changing climate. Many farmers markets are open air, so a tent to provide shade, ice in ice chests, a portable generator, and other equipment may be required to keep food safe.

“Have a portable hand washing station to keep hands clean and a portable three-compartment sink set up to wash and clean equipment,” Blakeslee said.

[Sampling Safely at Kansas Farmers Markets, farm stands, and related events](#) provides additional information on procedures and equipment regulations.

Blakeslee, who also is coordinator of [K-State’s Rapid Response Center for Food Science](#), publishes a monthly newsletter called [You Asked It!](#) that provides numerous tips on food safety.

More information is also available from [local extension offices](#) in Kansas.

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Rapid Response Center, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu>

You Asked It! newsletter, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter>

[Sampling Safely at Kansas Farmers Markets, farm stands and related events.](#)  
<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3311.pdf>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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