



The Farmers' Table Producer Guidelines

I. Introduction:

The Farmers' Table is an incorporated non-profit organization made up of independent Saskatchewan producers working together to market their farm products to Saskatchewan eaters. TFT began in 2009 as a project funded by Heifer Canada and managed by Wynyard-based non-profit Farmland Legacies. Originally envisioned as a livestock marketing system that would ensure sustainable farming practices and a fair return of sales to the farmer, TFT has since expanded its vision to include a broad range of farm products, ranging from meat and eggs to fruit, vegetables, whole grains, value added products and nonfood items.

TFT launched its online store (www.thefarmerstable.ca) in June 2013, and is currently seeking additional producer members. TFT products are available to order through www.thefarmerstable.ca for monthly delivery by producers to Regina. As the project evolves, TFT plans to increase the frequency of deliveries and/or expand delivery to Saskatoon.

Currently TFT is managed by a Board of Directors made up of producer members, with ongoing support from Farmland Legacies. Day-to-day operations are managed by volunteer producer coordinator(s).

If you have questions about joining The Farmers' Table, please contact TFT's Coordinator at farmerstable@gmail.com.

II. Holistic Goal:

To create a holistic agricultural marketing system that demonstrates economic fairness, social responsibility and environmental integrity.

III. Definitions:

Locally sourced: Producers may only sell products and value-added products that they themselves have grown and/or processed. No one may buy wholesale from someone else for retail through TFT, except for ingredients used in value-added and non-food products. *Producer:*

- **Growers:** the seller is the producer of the products being offered for sale, from lands s/he owns or rents, with control over the production, harvesting, and marketing of products, and a financial interest in them.
- **Value-added Products:** all products are produced, baked, or manufactured by the Producer and are original in nature. Simple packaging or repackaging does not constitute added value.
- **Non-food Products:** artisan products are agricultural byproducts that the producer has grown or sourced, which have been altered from their raw state, are not edible, and are handcrafted or

processed by the producer. These items may include soaps, beeswax candles, pelts, fiber, etc. Artisans must specify the sources of the components of the products.

- **Nursery Products:** are grown or raised by the producer. Nursery products are fresh cut or potted flowers, bedding plants, seeds, perennials, annuals, trees, or shrubs that are propagated from seed, cuttings, bulbs, plugs or plant divisions. Producers are required to state growing practices for these products if not certified organic.
- **Organic:** Producers may list their products as organic only if they are certified organic to the standards of the Canadian Organic Regime (COR).

Board of Directors: The governing body of TFT, which creates policy, develops vision, and supervises staff.

Coordinator: The person empowered by the Board of Directors to oversee the day-to-day operations of TFT and implement TFT policies and directives.

Distribution Day: The day on which producers deliver customer orders to the pre-arranged pick-up location in Regina and/or Saskatoon.

Guidelines: What you are reading!

IV. How to become a producer of The Farmers' Table:

1. Read TFT Producer Guidelines and Production Standards.
2. Complete a TFT Producer Application (including a working phone number and email address).
3. Submit all application materials to The Farmers' Table at farmerstablesk@gmail.com.
4. The Board of Directors will review your application and contact you with any questions. The process will take up to four weeks to complete.
5. TFT reserves the right to verify the production claims and geographic production location of products sold through TFT. TFT representatives may request to visit the place of production prior to application approval.
6. Following conditional approval by the Board of Directors, producers must provide the following before beginning to sell through TFT:
 - a. Copies of relevant documentation (e.g., organic or commercial kitchen certification)
 - b. Signed letter of agreement (agreeing to production standards and producer expectations)
7. Following final approval, the Coordinator will provide support with the online order system including training and support writing online farm descriptions and providing product information and images.
8. Producers will be required to sign an updated letter of agreement on an annual basis.
9. If a TFT producer wishes to offer a new or changed product that falls outside the scope of their original application, they must submit an addendum explaining the new product(s), including production and processing practices. Producers must wait for approval of new products before listing them on TFT online store.

V. Expectations of TFT Producer Members:

- At Annual General Meetings, each producer will be required to pay the annual producer membership fee.
- Producers agree to abide by TFT Producer Guidelines and Production Standards, and sign an Annual letter of agreement confirming their compliance.
- Producers must provide up-to-date copies of all certification documents that support claims made to TFT customers about their farming practices (e.g., certified organic, certified kitchen etc.)
- Producers are encouraged to carry liability insurance (whether as part of a home or commercial policy).
- Producers bear all costs relating to the production, processing, and delivery of their products.
- Producers are encouraged to provide at least one opportunity per year for customers to visit their farm. This is not a mandatory or regulatory visit, but rather allows customers and producers to develop a stronger relationship. Individual producers may determine their own policies with regard to inviting customers to their farms.
- Producers are expected to attend member meetings of TFT as often as possible. All producers are strongly encouraged to participate as actively as possible in organizational development and decision making. As a producer group, TFT benefits from active producer members.
- In the strong Prairie tradition of looking out for our neighbors, TFT works to donate a portion of its products to local food banks and community-based initiatives/celebrations. TFT producers are encouraged to donate their farm products to such events whenever possible.

VI. Products that may be sold through The Farmers' Table

- Please refer to TFT Production Standards for details.
- TFT does not offer exclusive rights to any one Producer to sell any one product. Eaters generally benefit from having choices.
- Purchase of items for resale through TFT is not permitted, unless it is for ingredients for an approved value-added product.
- Produce, meat, value-added food products, and non-food products sold by TFT Producers must have been produced in Saskatchewan.
- Producers selling non-food products of value to the local food system and community will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Product Duplication:
 - TFT aims to have at least 60% of products offered as edible food products.
 - Each product offered through TFT is open to 3 sellers.
 - When a member of TFT or a prospective member wants to sell a product that already has 3 sellers, they will be put on a wait list in the order of request.
 - In such cases where the 3 sellers are unable to keep up with demand, more sellers can be added with the consultation of current sellers.

- The coordinator(s) will maintain a wait list for products, along with each farm's future plans of growth, expansion, or changes, so that interested TFT members can be consulted when demand increases beyond production.

VII. General Operations & Guidelines

- TFT bears the responsibility and cost of maintaining a website and publicizing the products of TFT Producers. TFT receives orders, provides a way for products to be distributed to customers of TFT, collects payment from customers, and forwards payments to the producers.
- TFT provides a basic screening of products and producers based on our published parameters, via the TFT website.
- At no time does TFT have title to any products. TFT has no inventory. The products that go through the distribution system are owned either by the producer or by the customer who purchases the product. All complaints or requests for refunds or return of merchandise should first be brought to the attention of the producer; unless it is a situation where TFT itself is at fault (e.g., a TFT volunteer drops a dozen eggs while helping unload them). If a successful resolution cannot be achieved between the affected producer and customer members, a complaint to TFT may be made (see section IX).
- Each producer has a page on the TFT website where they can introduce themselves and tell the story of their farming operations. Each of the producer's products and the corresponding prices will be listed on the website; customers will be able to view available products sorted by producer or product category.
- Whenever possible, a digital image of each product should be provided to the Coordinator, especially for new products or those that do not have images.
- Producers will be responsible for updating the website with new product information and availability, as well as monitoring the orders received. TFT will provide training on the online order system and offer ongoing technical support to Producers.
- TFT and TFT customers reserve the right to refuse to accept delivery of products that are not what customers ordered, or which are spoiled or contaminated or otherwise not acceptable.

VIII. Order/Delivery Period

- Deliveries are made to Regina, Yorkton/Canora once per month, usually on the first Saturday of the month and Saskatoon once per month, usually on the Monday following the first Saturday.
- TFT online store opens for an order period of 20-25 days prior to the delivery day, during which time customers place orders from the producers of their choice. Prior to this order period, TFT producers are required to update their products based on current availability.
- Once the order period closes, producers receive a list of customer orders, which they fulfill and deliver to Regina on the delivery day. NOTE: producers are encouraged to collaborate with other nearby producers in order to share in delivery labour and expenses.

IX. Delivery Day Procedures

- Orders are delivered packaged for individual customers. Some producers find that labeling items with the customer's first and last name is helpful and can reduce pick up waiting times.
- Frozen items must be hard frozen, and refrigerated items must be cold to the touch. TFT does not have refrigeration available at the delivery site(s). It is the responsibility of the producer to bring coolers on the distribution day for products that must remain chilled.
- Producers are responsible for getting their properly prepared, packaged, and labeled products to the distribution location during the 30 minutes prior to open time. TFT expects that producers take turns assisting with distribution of products on delivery day.
- TFT policy is that unless they cancel 48 hours or more before the delivery time, customers are responsible for picking up and paying for their order. If they do not, we will donate their order to charity (when possible) and they are still responsible for paying for the order.
- If the customer does not arrive in time to pick up their order on delivery day, the order can be delivered to them following the regular delivery time by the coordinator or a producer member for a fee of \$8 payable to the person making the delivery. The customer must live at a reasonable distance from the delivery site or en- route home for the producer who has agreed to deliver it to them. This must be communicated with the customer and agreed to by them before the delivery to them takes place.
- If you experience problems with the website while adding/changing products or if at any time you have questions, you may contact TFT by phone, text, or email.
- Producers must notify the Coordinator (by phone, text or email) no later than five hours before opening time if they will be absent for that distribution day.
- If absent, it is the producer's responsibility to notify customers of their absence.

X. Fees

- The annual fee for TFT producer members is \$100 per year. A producer member is comprised of all the members of a producer unit. A producer unit is self-defined and is made up of residents of Saskatchewan who are 18 years or older and work together to produce and/or process farm products marketed through TFT.
- Producers set their own prices and receive approximately 85 percent of the customer price. TFT sets an additional 15 percent of sales to cover administrative expenses including TFT Marketing Coordinator, marketing and website expenses, and the producer development fund. This financial structure will be reviewed periodically.
- Payment to producers is made within 10 business days of the delivery date. Producers will only be paid for products ordered by customers.

XI. Compliance

- A producer's application to TFT serves as the indication that they are prepared to abide by these Guidelines and by TFT Production Standards. Once approved, a Letter of Agreement between the Producer and TFT will be signed.

- TFT reserves the right to visit the place of production, with notice, before membership approval and if a legitimate complaint is filed with TFT. The Producer may refuse this visit, in which case they will no longer be able to sell through TFT.
- Violations of the Guidelines may be grounds for warnings or dismissal from TFT.
 - The first violation will result in a documented verbal warning.
 - The second violation will result in a documented written warning.
 - The third violation may result in suspension and/or dismissal from TFT.
 - If the case of a serious violation, TFT Board of Directors may be convened to call for a producer's immediate dismissal from TFT. The dismissal will require documented proof of an egregious violation. The producer will be given an opportunity to review the documentation, prepare a defense, and appear before the Board.
 - If, after receiving a warning or suspension, a producer is in disagreement over the infraction, the producer may make written application to the TFT Board to be heard on the issue. Both the Producer and the Coordinator will appear before the Board and present their sides of the issue. The decision of the Board is final.
- All complaints must be addressed in writing to the Coordinator and/or a Board member.
 - The Coordinator will conduct an investigation and/or farm inspection of the producer in question.
 - If the Coordinator is unable to resolve the complaint, a written follow up may be made to the TFT Board. The decisions of the Board of Directors are final.

XII. Insurance

- All approved producers are encouraged to carry their own liability insurance, whether through a home or commercial policy.

XIII. Wholesale

- Producers are encouraged to sell products at wholesale quantities and prices to local restaurants. (Please inform the Coordinator of your interest in wholesale.)

XIV. Changes to these Guidelines

- TFT Producer Guidelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Board of Directors. If changes are made, all producer members will be notified and updates will be made public on the website.