

WLFC General Producer Guidelines

Anyone interested in selling through the Wooster Local Foods Cooperative, Inc. (hereafter WLFC) should read and agree to these Product Guidelines prior to applying as a producer. These guidelines clarify Local Roots' goal of creating a consumer-driven marketplace supporting locally created products and/or sustainability.

Members-Only Requirement: Producers are required to be members of the WLFC. If desirable products are not offered through existing WLFC producers, WLFC may seek out products from outside its membership base. If comparable quality products with consistent availability are available, WLFC market staff should give preference to its existing membership when seeking new products.

Product Quality & Standards: The following guidelines emphasize a focus on locality and/or sustainability of products/companies. Products that align with any or all of the following may be given preference.

- Locally sourced/created/value added (within 500 miles) and with minimal inputs
- Operate with a public transparency report of sourcing/practices that promotes an ecological balance, fair labor standards, conservation of biodiversity, and does not encourage synthetic fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides.
- Products with human/environmental welfare certifications, including but not limited to: Organic, Non-GMO, Fair Trade, B Corporation, Humane, Ohio-Made.
- Producers are strongly encouraged to use compostable or locally accepted recyclable packaging. (WLFC Staff can help producers find these supplies if help is needed).

Compliance with Health, Safety and Related Laws: All products must comply with federal, state, and local health regulations, licensing, and labeling requirements. Producers are expected to inform themselves on issues governing the production, display, distribution, sampling and sale of their products. Anyone wishing to sell through WLFC should research the rules and regulations regarding the products they are wishing to sell prior to applying as a producer member.

Market Display, Prioritization, & Exclusivity

The amount of space given to each producer is at the discretion of the market staff and will be based on product mix and divided up to make the best overall experience for the shopper.

If at any time the market becomes too crowded (overall or with any one type of product) the market staff may assign in market priority to certain vendors based on the following criteria:

- Quality and Sales History
- Human/Animal/Environmental Welfare Certifications and/or Impact
- Geographical Proximity

These criteria will be applied objectively, and priority will be assigned without compromising quality or safety of products. WLFC management will ultimately determine which products are for sale in the market.

Responsibility of Products

To keep our commission rates lower than market average, Local Roots does not assume liability for missing, stolen, or damaged items. If a producer believes items are continually missing Local Roots staff will work closely with the producer for better inventory management systems and can review each scenario on a case by case basis.

All producers who make products that are consumable are required to have a minimum of \$1 million general liability insurance on their businesses. A copy of your insurance certificate specifically evidencing “Wooster Local Foods Cooperative” must be provided to the market staff at the time of onboarding.

Producer Discontinuation

Producers may cease to be active under the following conditions:

- Failure to restock for a consecutive month with no response to communication efforts, particularly applicable to producers not dealing with agricultural/seasonal products.
- Lack of response from the producer after multiple attempts of communication by Local Roots staff. A formal warning will be issued, indicating the potential discontinuation of the partnership unless necessary steps are taken.
- Stocking of inappropriate/distasteful items
- Lack of sales, inconsistency of stocking, poor communication to the Local Roots team.

This procedure aims to uphold professionalism and clarity throughout the producer exit process, ensuring a well-managed and organized transition for all parties involved.

Initial: 5/29/09

Revised: 2/24/10, Removed insurance requirement

Revised: 7/2010

Revised: 9/2011, Added ready to eat, main ingredient must be local

Revised: 7/2013, removed mushrooms from wild/forged, added “Producer Representative”

Revised: 4/2016, Streamlined product guidelines, explained disclosure, removed online references and policies section

Revised: 6/2020, revised in response to the 2020 Strategic Plan to include products of consumer interest/support, quality and ability to sell products and sustainable/environmentally friendly products/producers/companies. Edited for brevity.

Revised 1/2024, to include shrinkage policy and producer discontinuation.