

March 26, 2020

Peterborough Public Health (PPH) has received several complaints from concerned residents regarding the Peterborough Regional Farmers' Market (PRFM) operating during this difficult time.

The PRFM has made substantial changes to their operations amidst this COVID-19 pandemic. Markets like this are typically seen as being social gatherings with a community focus. This is certainly not the message being put out by the PRFM in these circumstances. Ontario has deemed the following food businesses as being "Essential Workplaces":

"Businesses engaged in the retail and wholesale sale of food, pet food and supplies, and household consumer products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation and essential operations of residences and businesses, including grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores, markets and other similar retailers;

Restaurants and other food facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for delivery or takeaway, together with food delivery services;

Businesses that farm, harvest, process, manufacture, produce or distribute food, including beverages, crops, animal products and by-products, aquaculture, hunting and fishing"

From: <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/ontario-closing-at-risk-workplaces-to-protect-health-and-safety.html>

In order to implement infection prevention and control measures at this time of COVID 19, the PRFM has made the following changes to their operations:

- 1) They have moved outdoors to increase ventilation and decrease the risk of respiratory illness.
- 2) They are asking vendors to pre-package what they can and to limit displays.
- 3) They are recommending that customers call ahead and pre-order directly from their vendors. Contact information for their vendors has been provided on their website:
<https://www.ptboregionalfarmersmarket.org/>
- 4) There are no seating areas or play areas for children.
- 5) They have asked that customers and vendors not attend if feeling unwell, have recently travelled, or have had any known potential exposure to the illness.
- 6) They have publically asked people to "GET IN and GET OUT!" via social media.
- 7) They have staff/volunteers onsite to discourage gathering and encourage social distancing.

Peterborough Public Health has provided advice to the PRFM and we conduct weekly inspections to ensure that the above-mentioned control measures are implemented. Based on our observations and the evidence, the PRFM provides no increased risk for transmission of COVID-19 than other retail food suppliers that continue to remain open. In addition, the PRFM has advised Peterborough Public Health that they will continue to address public concerns through enhanced messaging and reassurance that although the market remains open, it will not be "business as usual".

For further information, please contact: **Matt Faris**, Public Health Inspector, (705) 743-1000, ext. 318