



Cowichan Valley Co-operative Marketplace  
360 Duncan Street, Duncan, BC V9L 3W4  
(250) 710-4737  
www.cow-op.ca  
info@cow-op.ca

## Cow-op.ca Website Seller Guidelines

***All potential sellers must read and agree to our Seller Guidelines prior to submitting a Web Seller Application Form.***

### A. About Us

1. Cow-op.ca is an initiative of the Cowichan Valley Co-operative Marketplace (CVCM), a non-profit Community Services Co-op, incorporated in October 2014, to develop collective initiatives addressing local food security and farm viability in the Cowichan Region.

### B. General

1. ***Cow-op.ca is an online ordering system designed to improve the access to and distribution of Cowichan-Region grown and processed foods.*** We provide customers a catalog of available local food products that includes information about who, how, and where the product was grown, processed or handmade. We receive orders, notify the appropriate producers, distribute the food, and process payments from the customer and to the farmer or food processor. As of June 2017, we offer our service to both Cowichan and Victoria customers.
2. One must become a member of the CVCM and qualified by our Board of Directors and Market Manager in order to sell through our online market, [www.cow-op.ca](http://www.cow-op.ca).
3. Each seller will be assigned a user name and invited to create a unique password as well as receive a one-on-one training session with the Market Manager before selling online. It is the **seller's responsibility to generate their own bios, and add and manage their product inventory.** Training videos are available at any time by logging in to the seller's account. While the website is designed to be intuitive, our market manager can assist producers experiencing problems. However, fees may be incurred for additional training time.

4. Part of a seller's approval to the site will be based on the food/product categories and specific items they identify for sale upon their initial application. Should a seller wish to add a new item within a different food/product category, they must first obtain permission from the Market Manager and submit the necessary Island Health regulatory paperwork as set out in Item G.

### **C. The Order Cycle of Cow-op.ca (Also known as a Sales Period)**

1. Customers from Duncan area or Victoria area order and pay online (via their computer and mobile devices) from Friday noon to Tuesday midnight every week.
2. Sellers receive a list of all orders early Wednesday morning (called a pick ticket) after the virtual market has closed the night before. Two separate pick tickets are issued for Duncan and Victoria orders.
3. Sellers deliver all pre-paid orders to Lockwood Farm (3805 Cobble Hill Rd, Cobble Hill, BC, V0R 1L5) on Wednesdays, between 2:00 and 4:00pm as per board of direction discretion and seasonal adjustments. ***\*\*Please note that as Lockwood is a produce and chicken farm, bio-security is critical to them and producers are asked to be mindful of wearing non-farm footwear when making their deliveries\*\****
4. Producers will unload their orders into marked customer bins and check off items from the customer packing slip. Market Manager, staff or volunteers will be there to assist. All frozen items are stored in freezer overnight, and all produce stored in walk-in coolers overnight.
5. Thursday morning, orders are loaded into Lockwood Farm's refrigerated truck at 8:30am. The truck drops Duncan orders to Cowichan Green Community at 9:00am and continues down to Victoria to drop Victoria orders to Zero Waste Emporium (1728 Douglas St.) by noon. Customers pick up their orders that same day, from noon-6 in Victoria and from 3-6 in Duncan.
6. Unclaimed orders are still charged to the customer, and will go to food bank or community kitchens if not claimed during the allotted time.
7. Final transactions for the purchase are processed on Friday morning, allowing correction for any missing produce or orders rejected in accordance with section E5 hereof.
8. Sellers should update their inventory between 7:00 pm, Thursday and noon on Fridays, for the next week selling period. Autofill occurs every Thursday night at 7:01 pm for those sellers who have products they wish to relist every week.



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9. Friday noon, the market reopens for the next selling period.
10. The market will be open year-round, and closed for any time at the discretion of the Market Manager and Board of Directors.

#### **D. Membership, Fees, and Commission Rates**

1. Sellers can become members of the CVCM for a one-time membership fee of \$50. The share is redeemable any time they leave the co-operative.
2. Membership in the CVCM entitles producers to the following:
  - access to CVCM program and voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting
  - ability to sell through the online market, [www.cow-op.ca](http://www.cow-op.ca)
3. All sellers pay an annual \$25 web listing fee, which may be subject to future increases.
4. As of June 2018, commission rate on [www.cow-op.ca](http://www.cow-op.ca) sales is set at 25% for members of the CVCM. This rate is reviewed annually by the CVCM membership and may be adjusted as required.
5. Sellers are responsible to upload products for sale each week, and set the price they wish to receive. The marketplace website program automatically adds the 33.3% markup to the listed price. **For member sellers, their unit price is multiplied by 33.3% to arrive at the 25% commission that the co-operative takes off the final customer price.** For example, if you want your customers to pay \$10 for a product, you enter \$7.50 in the unit price field in our computer system. (\$7.50 + 33% is \$10, or 25% of \$10 is \$7.50).
6. CVCM will pay sellers by cheque, bi-weekly for the two previous sales periods, at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Sellers will be paid for all accepted orders.
7. If your product requires the collection of tax, you must notify the Market Manager upon application to the market.

#### **E. Accepted Products for Sale**

1. In keeping with the Co-op's goal of strengthening local farms and food sustainability, food products must be:
  - Consumable
  - Locally grown or processed
  - An agricultural or aquacultural product
2. All products from new sellers will be reviewed by the Market Manager and Board of Directors to ensure that they are eligible for sale through the CVCM. The CVCM retains the right to verify the production claims and geographic production location.
3. Products must meet standards for Food Products Sold through a Food Facility as outlined in Item G.
4. All food products must be delivered market-ready: cleaned, bunched or packed in the correct quantity for each order, and **labelled with product name that matches the website product name, farm name, weight/quantity and reference id (customer name)**. Standardized labels are available for printing through the website and it is mandatory that sellers use these labels. **Unlabeled items will not be accepted.**
5. All fresh produce must be bagged in food safe packaging consistent with Island Health Guidelines. Items normally sold in pints or other opened containers (strawberries, cherries, tomatoes, etc.) must be placed in a contained package to avoid spillage during the transport of the orders.
6. CVCM reserves the right to refuse delivery for products that are not what customers ordered, underweight, or which are spoiled, contaminated, or otherwise not acceptable. Any orders rejected by the customer at time of pick-up due to issues of quality or quantity will not be sold and that part of the customer's order will not be processed, nor will seller receive payment for that portion of their delivery. All produce/products are non-returnable to the seller.
6. Any seller with three such rejections can have their rights to sell on the website removed, at the discretion of the CVCM Board of Directors and Market Manager.
7. Any customer complaints post pick-up will be routed by the Co-op to the seller and it is up to the seller to decide how they wish to address the concern.

## **F. Production Systems and Related Claims**



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1. Sellers are responsible for disclosing information about their production techniques, products and ingredients.
2. Complaints or accusations of improper production practices or sourcing by others should be made to the Board of Directors for resolution and should not be part of the marketing of any seller.
3. Any "Organic" claim must be accompanied by the certification number and name of the certifying body. These products will be identified on the products listing with the organic certification number. Board and market manager reserve the right to remove unsubstantiated production claims on the online farmers market website.
4. For any product containing multiple ingredients, all ingredients must be listed on the website in the product description field.
5. The CVCM is not responsible for the claims made by sellers about their products or practices. The CVCM does not make any guarantees relating to the pricing, quality, or safety of the food. These responsibilities lie solely with the sellers.
6. Regardless of production practice, participating sellers shall make their farm/production facility available for inspection by the Board of Directors as needed.

#### **G. Island Health (formerly VIHA) Standards for Food Products sold through a Food Facility.**

1. All produce sellers must comply with the government's rules relating to weights and measures.
2. All fresh egg sellers must comply with the Island Health rules relating to sales of farm eggs: Eggs must be clean and crack-free.
3. All meat sellers must provide proof of certified slaughter and processing facility and all meat products must be labelled with product type and name of slaughtering and processing facility.
4. All processed goods must be made in an Island Health approved commercial kitchen/processing facility. A copy of the Island Health inspection report must be provided upon application to the Cow-op.ca.
5. All foods that require refrigeration or are frozen will be transported to the distribution centre under the applicable Food Safe Guidelines.

## **H. Standards for Sale of Nonfood Items**

1. The CVCM does not currently accept non-food vendors. This policy may be updated in future at the discretion of the CVCM Board of Directors.

## **I. Liability and Insurance**

1. The CVCM assumes no liability for products represented in our site. All producers listing products for sale on the Cow-op website are strongly advised to consult with their insurance provider for liability insurance.

## **J. Application Process**

1. Sellers can visit [www.cow-op.ca](http://www.cow-op.ca) and download the required forms or contact [marketmanager@cow-op.ca](mailto:marketmanager@cow-op.ca) to have these forms sent to them.
2. Sellers are required to submit their Web Seller Application Form, and all necessary Island Health paperwork requirements as outlined in Item G.
3. Sellers must become a member of the CVCM, and must also submit a Membership Share Application form at this time.
4. Payment for web listing fees and membership can be made by cash or cheque. Payments will not be processed until seller's application has been approved. Applications will be reviewed by the Market Manager and Board of Directors and the seller's account will be activated as soon as possible.
5. If a seller has submitted all the required paperwork, following approval the Market Manager will schedule a training session with the seller and get an account set up for the seller as well as assist with getting products listed.