



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 access to and distribution of Cowichan-Region grown and processed foods.*** We provide buyers 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 sellers, distribute the food, and process payments from the buyer and to the seller. As of June 2017, we offer our service to both Cowichan and Victoria buyers.
2. One must become a member of the CVCM and receive approval from our Board of Directors and Market Manager in order to sell through our online market, 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 provide 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 sellers experiencing problems. However, fees may be incurred for additional training time.
4. As noted in Section C (Seller Acceptance Criteria), a seller's approval to the site is largely 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 not identified in their initial application, they must first obtain permission from the Market Manager and submit the necessary Island Health regulatory paperwork as set out in Item G.
5. In order to enable buyers to make informed choices and to further our mandate of supporting local farms, we may make available to buyers certain information about each seller's products or production practices, such as information relating to the geographic origin of a product's ingredients. Seller agrees to provide any product information reasonably requested by us, and further agrees that (a) such information may be disclosed to buyers on Cow-op.ca,

and (b) such information may be incorporated into functionality that allows users to rank or filter product listings.

C. Seller Acceptance Criteria

1. Cow-op.ca strives to help local farmers succeed by connecting them with buyers. To this end, we seek to attract and retain a strong network of buyers by offering a diverse array of products, including local produce, value-added food items, and other agricultural products.
2. Products that may be listed on Cow-op.ca fall into the following four categories:
 - (i) Locally grown produce and agricultural products (vegetables, grains, meats, eggs, flowers, etc.)
 - (ii) Locally processed products made primarily from locally grown ingredients (jams, pickles, baked goods)
 - (iii) Locally processed products made primarily from non-locally grown ingredients
 - (iv) Other products

All new seller applications are reviewed by the Market Manager and Board of Directors. Submissions that fall into categories (i) and (ii) are given priority, and submissions that fall into categories (iii) and (iv) are assessed on a case-by-case basis, having regard to whether the product category and/or specific items identified for sale materially enhance the overall product mix on Cow-op.ca. In the case of processed foods, consideration will be given to the percentage of ingredients grown locally. All seller approvals are at the absolute discretion of the Board.

For the purpose of these guidelines, “local” means the Cowichan Valley region and adjacent regions.

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

1. Buyers 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 pick tickets) after the virtual market has closed the night before. Sellers deliver all pre-paid orders to the current packing facility - Hope Farm (3504 Drinkwater Rd.) - on Wednesdays, between 3:00 and 5:00pm as per board of direction discretion and seasonal adjustments. *****Please note that as Hope Farm is a chicken farm, bio-security is critical to them and sellers are asked to be mindful of wearing non-farm footwear when making their deliveries*****
3. Sellers will unload their orders into marked customer bins and check off items from the buyer packing slip. Market Manager, staff or volunteers will be there to assist. All frozen items are stored in freezer overnight, and all orders stored in walk-in coolers overnight.
4. Following packing of orders, Duncan orders are delivered from Hope Farm to Cowichan Green Community and Victoria orders are delivered to Lockwood Farms in Cobble Hill and stored overnight in coolers/freezer. Thursday morning, orders are loaded into Lockwood



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Farms' refrigerated truck. The truck drops Victoria orders to Zero Waste Emporium (1728 Douglas St.) by noon. Buyers pick up their orders from noon-6 in Victoria and from 3-6 in Duncan on Thursday.

5. Unclaimed orders are still charged to the buyer, and will go to food bank or community kitchens if not claimed during the allotted time.
6. 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.
7. Sellers should update their inventory between 7:05 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 automatically relist every week.
8. Friday noon, the market reopens for the next selling period.
9. The market will be open year-round, and closed for any time at the discretion of the Market Manager and Board of Directors.

E. 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 sellers to the following:
 - access to CVCM programs and voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting
 - ability to sell through the online market, www.cow-op.ca
3. All sellers pay an annual \$25 web listing fee, which may be subject to future increases.
4. As of February 2019, commission rate on www.cow-op.ca sales for members of the CVCM is set at 25% of the final buyer price for non-bulk product and 15% of the final buyer price for bulk product. This rate is reviewed periodically by the CVCM membership and may be adjusted as required. For the purposes of this section, "bulk product" is defined as a large-format product that is $\geq 10x$ the typical retail size for that product (e.g. 5 lbs of salad mix; 10 lbs of carrots). Product must be designated as bulk upon listing and any such designation is subject to review and approval by the Market Manager.
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 applicable markup to the listed price to arrive at the displayed price. **For member sellers, 33.3% is added to the unit price for non-bulk product to arrive at the 25% commission that the co-operative takes**

off the final buyer price, and 17.65% is added to the unit price for bulk product to arrive at the 15% commission that the co-operative takes off the final buyer price.

- Example #1 (non-bulk): If you want your buyers to pay \$10 for a non-bulk product, you enter \$7.50 in the unit price field in our computer system. ($7.50 + 33.3\%$ is \$10, or 75% of \$10 is \$7.50).
 - Example #2 (bulk): if you want your buyers to pay \$100 for a bulk product, you enter \$85 into the unit price field in our computer system ($85 + 17.65\%$ is \$100, or 85% of 100 is \$85).
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.

F. Technical Standards

1. Food products must meet standards for Food Products Sold through a Food Facility as outlined in Item H. Non-food items must meet standards for Sale of Nonfood Items as outlined in section I.
2. All products must be delivered market-ready: clean, packed in the correct quantity for each order, and **labeled with product name that matches the website product name, farm name, weight/quantity and reference id (buyer 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.**
3. All fresh produce must be bagged in food safe packaging consistent with Island Health Guidelines. Items normally sold in pints or other open containers (strawberries, cherries, tomatoes, etc.) must be placed in a contained package to avoid spillage during the transport of the orders.
4. Fragile items must be packed in a manner that appropriately protects against breakage or loss during transit.
5. CVCM reserves the right to refuse delivery for products that are not what buyers ordered, underweight, or which are spoiled, contaminated, visibly defective, or otherwise not acceptable. Any orders rejected by the buyer at time of pick-up due to issues of quality or quantity will not be sold and that part of the buyer'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 buyer complaints post pick-up will be routed by the Cow-op to the seller and it is up to the seller to decide how they wish to address the concern.



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G. Production Systems and Related Claims

1. Sellers are responsible for disclosing accurate 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.
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 products sold through Cow-op.ca. These responsibilities lie solely with the sellers.
6. Regardless of production practice, sellers shall make their farm/production facility available for inspection by the CVCM, Market Manager, or Board of Directors as needed. The CVCM, Market manager, and Board of Directors retain the right to verify any claim made by a seller, including production claims and geographic production location. Provision of false or misleading information may lead to removal of unsubstantiated claims, removal of affected products, disqualification of seller, and/or any other action deemed appropriate by the Board and Market Manager.

H. Island Health 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 labeled 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.

I. Standards for Sale of Nonfood Items

1. Any nonfood items must meet reasonable expectations of product life, function and safety, and must comply with all applicable requirements set out in federal, provincial, and local laws, regulations, and rules.

J. Liability and Insurance

1. The CVCM assumes no liability for products represented in our site. All sellers listing products for sale on the Cow-op website are strongly advised to consult with their insurance provider for liability insurance.
2. Seller shall indemnify the Cow-op, the CVCM, and their respective directors, officers, agents, and employees against all claims arising out of seller's breach of these guidelines.

K. Application Process

1. Sellers can visit www.cow-op.ca and download the required forms or contact 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 payable to Cowichan Valley Co-operative Marketplace. 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 and has received 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.