



FARMERS MARKET PLASTIC REDUCTION TOOLKIT

RESOURCES FOR MARKET MANAGERS AND VENDORS

The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group's Plastic Solutions team thanks the Go Green chapters of Highland Park, Barrington, and Vernon Hills & Lincolnshire for creating and sharing this toolkit.

Link to original toolkit: [Https://gogreenhp.org/farmersmarket/](https://gogreenhp.org/farmersmarket/)

"What makes the farmers market such a special place is that you're actually creating community around food."

-- Bryant Terry

Dear Market Manager,

Consumers are growing concerned about the health impacts of food wrapped in plastic packaging and the increasing environmental pollution from single-use plastics.

The BIG problem with plastic is that it does not biodegrade. It only breaks down into smaller pieces which then work their way into our air, water, soil and into the bodies of fish, wildlife and humans. A recent study by Australia's University of New Castle found that we are all consuming roughly a credit card's worth of plastic each WEEK. Moreover, foods wrapped in plastic carry their own health risks, as chemicals from plastic packaging have been shown to be leaching into our food.

Farmers Markets are places consumers look for healthy sustainable choices. Using plastic bags and plastic containers for freshly grown produce goes against that choice. We are asking Farmers Markets across Illinois to take the lead in promoting plastic-free shopping by encouraging shoppers to bring reusable bags and containers. We also request market vendors to switch to safer alternatives such as cans, cardboard, paper or glass when packaging their products.

To assist with this endeavor, our toolkit includes sample language, graphics and links for use in marketing materials, websites, social media and vendor stations. We also encourage you to reach out to local community organizations and invite them to help you with implementing a Plastic-Free Market.

We have a shared responsibility to reduce the use of single-use plastics. Together we can make a difference to the surmountable issue of the plastic crisis.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our request. We welcome your feedback or questions at info@esragplastics.org,





Tips and Sample Language

Copy and paste or modify wording to suit your market audience.

Our market is committed to the environment and local landscape!

We encourage you to use your own shopping bags and refuse single use plastics whenever possible. Here are some easy ways to shop plastic-free anywhere.

- Keep reusable bags in the front seat of your vehicle or on your doorknob at home. You'll remember to grab them if you see them.
- Bring containers to the market to transport and protect berries, muffins and other delicate items.
- Organic cotton produce bags are preferable to synthetic, but using any bag you already own is preferable to buying new.
- Bring tea towels to wrap lettuces and greens in, then transfer straight to the crisper.
- Read an excellent information sheet from the Northbrook Farmers Market about the trouble with plastic bags here: <http://bitly.ws/olck>.





Dear Vendor,

As we look ahead to summer and our Farmers Markets, we are excited to offer an opportunity to reduce the large quantity of plastic waste that Markets generate and in the long run save money for all of our providers. Healthy fresh food does not pair well with plastic, and we are working to substitute plastic packaging with earth-friendly, reusable containers and bags.

Plastic is a petroleum product generating millions of pounds of toxins and polluting air and water, not only in the areas where plastic is manufactured, but also in communities hundreds of miles away. Single-use plastic is an exponentially growing problem for all of our waterways and the fish, waterfowl and marine animals that inhabit them. These toxins move up the food chain until they reach our dinner tables.

Lastly, most recent findings show that plastics leach from containers into our foods. Water from plastic bottles has been found to have 23% more microplastics than tap water. Our bodies are taking in enough plastic every week to make a credit card!

If we work together and plan creatively for a market that supports sustainable practices, we all will benefit.

Use the tips below to reduce your reliance on plastic, and please email your thoughts and suggestions to us at info@esragplastics.org.

Thank you for sharing your bounty with local communities. We appreciate your time and effort and know your customers do, too.





Vendor Tips for Single-Use Plastic Reduction

- Calculate how much you spend on plastic bags each season. How much have you spent on bags in the past 5 years?
- Try to stop handing bags out automatically. Ask your customer, “Do you need a bag today?”
- Offer bags upon request only. Print one of the free signs below!
- If a customer has a reusable bag, thank them for bringing it by ringing a bell or cheering. They’ll probably remember it next time. This can build customer loyalty.
- Hang up one of our free printable signs every week to show customers you care about reducing plastic pollution.
- Try selling reusable produce bags. Price them to make profit or offer one free with minimum purchase. Organic cotton is the safest option for food, people and the planet.



Free printable signs and social media graphics

[PDFs](#)

[PNGs & JPEGs](#)

