



About

Clay County takes pride in its agricultural roots. While the Clay County Government is actively seeking funding to provide a permanent location for a farmer's market, the Clay County Extension Office, having received many requests for a local farmers market in Hayesville, formed a small committee to start the groundwork to build a tailgate market to be the foundation of the future farmers market in Clay County.

The mission of the Clay County Farmers Market is:

- To promote and encourage the development of local, small-scale agriculture.
- To provide and administer a seasonal marketplace for local producers of agricultural products.
- To enhance knowledge about the economic importance of supporting local farmers and the nutritional benefits of eating fresh foods.
- To promote the local heritage of rural living and social interaction.

The Clay County Farmers Market operating hours for 2025 are Thursday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM May 8 – September 25, 2025. The Market is located at Hayesville Town Square.

Vendor Guidelines

Vendors will be accepted from Clay County and neighboring counties including (but not limited to):

- North Carolina – Clay, Cherokee, Macon
- Georgia – Towns, Union, Rabun

All vendors are expected to conduct themselves courteously and respectfully when dealing with customers, other vendors, and market staff/volunteers. Vendors shall not participate in arguments or make threatening remarks toward other vendors, customers, and/or market staff/volunteers.

Booth space is not assigned and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Set up is allowed to start at 8:00 AM on the day of the event.

All produce/products must be of the highest quality and are subject to the judgment of Market Management. Additional booths will be granted by Market Management upon request, but no guarantee for granting this request is given.

Vendors must adhere to federal, state, and county guidelines and health certifications. Copies of all certifications/licenses are to be attached to the application and to be kept on file.

Product Guidelines

All items for sale at the Clay County Farmers Market must be agricultural products, agricultural value-added products, or baked goods. **No crafts will be accepted.**

Food Trucks/Vendors will be permitted to participate in the event. To apply as a food vendor, submit an application and you will be notified if you are approved and the market committee will work with you on the dates that are available for you to attend.

Additional Guidelines

- The Market Management is empowered to answer questions, solve problems, and amend Market policies.
- The pricing of goods is at the discretion of the individual vendor. Vegetables and other products will be sold by the piece or by volume not by the pound. The use of scales is prohibited at the Market.
- All produce must be homegrown within Clay County or the home county of the vendor. Resell products will only be accepted at the discretion of the market committee for out-of-season produce.
- Vendors agree to allow committee member(s) to inspect the growing location.
- Vendors are responsible for making sure that all persons working in their booths are familiar with and adhere to all Clay County Farmers Market operating guidelines and rules.
- The Clay County Farmers Market Management will make efforts to promote the Market by maintaining the Market, maintaining the Market's Facebook page, and providing information to other websites that list local farmers' markets, the Chamber of Commerce, and the local newspaper.
- The Clay County Farmers Market is not responsible for collecting sales tax. Vendors are responsible for collecting and paying their own sales tax.
- Clay County Farmers Market and persons associated with or selling at the Market shall not discriminate against any individual regarding matters of age, sex, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any physical or mental disability.
- Live animal sales are permitted for small livestock animals only and must be approved by the committee. Sellers are required to follow & show proof of and display at the booth all state-required licenses, certifications, and health documentation of the animals.
- All home-based food businesses must display their licenses/certifications clearly at their booth during the event. Our office is happy to make laminated copies (1 per season, free of charge) for vendors to display.

Market Day Rules

1. We ask vendors to be set up and ready to go at 8:30; all spaces are first come, first served.
2. I understand that Clay County has a zero-tolerance policy if any of the rules are broken or violated, and I will be notified in writing if I have broken any of the rules. Furthermore, I will be asked not to return to the market as a vendor.
3. The safety of customers and vendors is a priority at the Farmers Market. Vendors arriving and departing from the Market must drive slowly and carefully, especially during set-up and operation.
4. There shall not be any solicitation for political or religious reasons.

5. Smoking is strictly prohibited within 25 feet of the market. Alcohol, drugs, or any other illegal substance use is strictly prohibited on the market grounds.
6. Electricity and water are limited. No generators are permitted (except for food trucks, for which we require low-noise generators).
7. Each vendor is responsible for cleaning their space of any debris at the end of the Market Day.
8. Vendors must be packed and exited from their booth by 12:30 PM. No signs, shelving, tables, furniture, or vehicles shall be left at the Market.
9. A vendor's failure to adhere to these policies set forth herein results: a first offense brings a verbal warning, and the second offense brings expulsion from the Market.

By participating in the Market, a vendor automatically agrees to abide by the rules of the market.

Definitions & Resources

1. Value-added products – Value-added agriculture products focus on increasing the economic value and/or consumer appeal of an agricultural product. Often producers have products they can market as both original and a value-added agricultural product.
2. Agricultural Products - defined as produce that is grown from seed or plant such as grain, trees, nuts, fruits, vegetables, and other horticultural products.
3. Baked Goods – defined as bread, cakes, pastries, and similar items that are baked in an oven.
4. For more information, including an application for starting a home-based food business visit the following websites:
 - a. NCDA Food & Drug Protection Division - <https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/food-drug-protection>
 - b. NC Cooperative Extension Food Business Portal - <https://foodbusiness.ces.ncsu.edu>
5. For questions or concerns, contact Clay County Extension at (828) 389-6305.
6. Market Committee – Kim Terrell, Tyler Osborn, Benita England, Karen Holcomb, Phillip Moore. The market committee serves as the market manager and oversees the market operations.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity provider.