



Colleen Donovan: 6-30-2019

Vendor Scale Requirements

Farmers market shoppers must have total confidence when they buy from a vendor. This means that they must be charged the correct price and given the correct change. This is sometimes challenging given the changing signage, the fast pace of transactions at markets, paying cash in combination with other currencies, and using a low tech cash box instead of a cash register with receipts.

Two things every market manager can do to ensure shoppers have total confidence in their purchases are: 1) to verify that vendors have a Scale License; and 2) that they are using certified scales that have been inspected.

Scale License

Any vendor who charges shoppers based on the weight of a product is required to have a “Weighing and Measuring Devices Addendum” to their Washington State Business License. In the farmers market world, this is called a “Scale License.” And in the State of Washington Business Licensing Service world, this is called an “endorsement.”

This means that any farmer or other vendor who puts their products on a scale to figure out a price, must have a Scale License from the State of Washington.

You can verify that a vendor has a scale license by using the Department of Revenue “[Business Lookup](#)” search: <http://bls.dor.wa.gov/checkstatus.aspx>. Enter the vendor’s UBI number in the search box. The vendor business information will show up.

There will be a table called **Endorsements**. Look for “Scale-Small” to be listed. If it is not listed, contact vendor to find out what might be going on.

Endorsements						
Endorsements held at this location	License #	Count	Details	Status	Expiration date	First issuance
Scale - Small		3		Active	Apr-30-2020	Apr-03-2019

Note: It is better to use the UBI number than the farm or business name to look up a vendor. A business will have one UBI number whereas they may go by various names.

Scale Inspections

There are state laws (RCWs) requiring that all commercial scales are registered (through getting a Scale License); accurate; and have a special “certificate of conformance.”

The WSDA Weights and Measures Program has a great 2-page brochure on “Vendor Scales at Farmers Markets.” It was updated in 2017 and includes:

- Market Manager Responsibilities
- Vendor Responsibilities
- Weights and Measures Inspector Responsibilities

[Vendor Scales At Farmers Market Brochure-WSDA 2017](#)

You can also contact WSDA Weights and Measures Program at (360) 902-2035.

Suggested Market Practices

[] Be sure to ask if the vendor has a business license and “Weighing and Measuring Devices Addendum” in your vendor application. Check to see that they answered “yes” if they are going to sell products by weight.

[] Invite a Weights and Measures Inspector to your vendor meeting and/or have someone come who can inspect vendors’ scales during the vendor meeting. Any other occasion when vendors are gathered will work. This saves them time and helps ensure happy compliance.

[] Do a “desk audit” by looking up a vendor in the Department of Revenue Business Lookup (using their UBI number) to verify their scale license.

[] Help problem solve. Share the WSDA’s Vendor Scale brochure to help educate vendors and market staff. If a vendor needs to update their scale license, recommend that they call the State of Washington Business Licensing Service at (800) 451-7985. In 2019, the cost was \$10 per small scale. Small scales weigh up to 400 pounds. Form: <https://bls.dor.wa.gov/forms/700341.pdf>

[] Randomly test your vendors’ scales during a market day. For best results, please let your vendors know at the beginning of the season that you have this right and may do so in order to ensure your market integrity and shopper confidence.

[] Check to see if your market has any sort of issue or irregularities by sending out a secret shopper to make sure prices, weights and change were correct. If an opportunity for improvement is noted, then a “unscheduled test” may be helpful. It is important to be fair to all vendors and give them an equal opportunity to demonstrate their compliance.