

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Robert Rivas, Chair

AB 623 (Committee on Agriculture) – As Introduced February 12, 2021

SUBJECT: Farmers' markets: county agricultural commissioner certificates

SUMMARY: This bill would change the period of time in which a certified farmers' market (CFM) certificate is valid from 12 months to up to 12 months and make other conforming and technical changes.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Allows for directing marketing of agriculture products at CFMs, farm stands and Community Supported Agriculture.
- 2) Requires a CFA operator to annually register with the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) by applying for and obtaining a certificate from a county agricultural commissioner that shall be valid for 12 months.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: Until 1977, regulations required farmers to properly pack, size, and label their fresh fruits, nuts, and vegetables in standard containers to transport and sell in markets anywhere other than the farm site. CFMs in 1977, by CDFA regulations, exempted farmers from packing, sizing, and labeling requirements.

The direct marketing of agricultural products through CFMs benefits the agricultural community and consumers. CFMs provide a flexible marketing alternative without disrupting other produce marketing systems. The high quality and fresh produce brought to the CFMs by its' producers creates a diverse market and provides the consumer with opportunity to meet the farmer and learn how their food supply is produced.

CFMs provide a great opportunity for small farmers to market their products without the added expenses of commercial preparation. This increases their net income and makes it possible for them to stay in business. There are approximately 750 certified farmers' markets and approximately 2,700 certified producers. Of these markets, about 60% are year-round markets and the balance is seasonal. In a typical year, the majority of the seasonal markets operate from April through October of each year.

Not all CFMs operate year-round; approximately 60% of markets are seasonal, and most seasonal markets only operate from April through October of each year. However, due to current law, CFM operators are required to file quarterly reports to CDFA on the vendors that participated in their CFM, each market day, for the entire previous quarter. By changing the CFM certificate valid period to cover only the period when a CFM is open, CFM operators will only need to submit information to CDFA during the time the CFM is in operation.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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