



## BCAFM Quick Guide

# Guidelines for Selling Cosmetics at BC Farmers' Markets

To legally sell cosmetics in Canada, including at BC farmers' markets, manufacturers must comply with the requirements outlined in Health Canada's [Food and Drugs Act](#) and [Cosmetic Regulations](#).

### What is a cosmetic?

The Food and Drugs Act defines a cosmetic as “any substance or mixture of substances, manufactured, sold or represented for use in cleansing, improving or altering the complexion, skin, hair or teeth and includes deodorants and perfumes.” This includes “handmade” cosmetics sold through farmers' markets, home-based businesses and craft sales.

## What do I need to do?

### Ensure your product is safe

Above all, your product must be safe to use and must not pose any health risks when used as intended. Check Health Canada's [Cosmetic Ingredient Hotlist](#) of substances that are either restricted or prohibited for use in cosmetics.

All cosmetics manufacturers are also encouraged to adhere to [Good Manufacturing Practices \(GMPs\)](#) to help prevent product contamination. This includes things like proper sanitation and equipment maintenance.

### Learn more

[Regulatory information for cosmetics](#) - legislation, guidance documents and useful links

## Understand the labeling requirements

Each product needs to have a label that complies with Canada's cosmetic labeling requirements, including:

### Required information:

- Product identity
- Ingredient list (in INCI format)
- Net quantity (how much product is in the container, in metric units)
- Manufacturer contact information
- Directions for safe use of the product

**Bilingual language requirements:** Your product is exempt from bilingual labeling requirements if:

- Your product is a “local” product, meaning it's only sold in the local government unit (city, town, etc.) that it was manufactured in, or the one next to it.

### AND

- It's sold in a local government unit where one of the official languages is the first language of less than 10% of the population. For example, if you sell your product in a city where only 2% of the population identifies French as their first language, your label only needs to be displayed in English. Unsure about the language percentages in your area? Check the [Mother tongue by geography, 2021 Census](#).

**No therapeutic claims:** Avoid making therapeutic claims, such as modifying body functions or preventing or treating a disease or condition (e.g. “prevents acne”). These types of claims are only allowed on drugs or natural health products, not on cosmetic products. Instead, stick to claims about the product's cosmetic effects (e.g. “cleanser for acne-prone skin”).

### Notify Health Canada

For each cosmetic you sell, you need to submit a [Cosmetic Notification Form](#) to Health Canada prior to vending at a farmers' market. This allows Health Canada to keep track of products and ensure their ingredients are safe for use. You'll need gather a few details about your product, including:

- Brand name and description
- Business contact information
- Ingredients list in INCI format and their concentrations

Once approved, you'll receive a Cosmetic Number. Keep this number handy—most farmers' markets require this number to ensure you've gone through the notification process and will ask for it in your vendor application.

### Questions?

Contact the Health Canada Cosmetics Program: [cosmetics@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:cosmetics@hc-sc.gc.ca)