

11 August 2015

To all SAGE Farmers Market Stall Holders

Changes to stall holder fees

The committee has been agonising over the profitability of the market, fees paid to Council and fees collected from stall holders, for some time.

SAGE took on the challenge of running a genuine farmers market as a natural progression of the work SAGE is doing to rebuild our local food system and to support local producers and value-adders doing the same thing. The intention was for profits to be fed back into programs that support and promote sustainable agriculture. Unfortunately, that hasn't yet happened. Our market breaks even at best.

We feel it's important that stall holders understand where their site fees go, so here is the basic breakdown:

Standard fee per site	\$25.00
Paid to Council per site	\$13.00
Gross profit from which all other costs are paid	\$12.00

In general terms, Council receives more of your site fee than we spend on the site coordinator, promotion, insurance – basically everything else – combined. It's simply not sustainable.

To reassure you, the committee, in particular Stuart Whitelaw and myself, have taken our request for a reduction in fees to the highest levels of management in the Council and all the way back down again. All suggestions to somehow reduce the fee or return some of the funds raised to SAGE for supporting local agriculture were considered, but refused.

Alternatively, Council has provided support to the market in other ways and this has resulted in some very tangible benefits. Completing the e-market is one example. While these efforts are valued and deeply appreciated, the stark reality remains that our market is not a profitable enterprise.

Over the last few weeks, Stuart Whitelaw and I have had many conversations with numerous market managers from NSW and Victoria and have discovered two things. Firstly, the fees we pay to the controller of the site (in our case, Council) are among the highest by a long way. Secondly, the fees we charge to stall holders are among the lowest.

As such, the committee has resolved to increase the standard site fee by \$5.00 per week. Other fees remain the same (please see proposed change to Rule 14, below).

This does not end the issue, however. We will continue to attempt to raise funds with the donation boxes we have recently introduced. We are committed to making the e-market successful, which will become another source of income for the market and SAGE. But more importantly, we are resolved to continue to negotiate with Council to come to a fee arrangement that is more consistent with other farmers markets.

P.T.O.

Proposed change to rules & regulations

14. Site fees will be collected by the SFM Site Coordinator or, if they are unable to attend the market, another member of the SFM Committee approximately half an hour after the market commences.
 - 14.1. Site fees:
 - 14.1.1. \$30.00 per 3m wide x 6m deep site
 - 14.1.2. an additional \$5.00 for a powered site
 - 14.1.3. an additional \$7.00 per stall holder for SAGE Inc insurance cover
 - 14.1.4. fees are not refundable.

Please be advised that the SFM Sub-committee has resolved that this fee increase be formally adopted at the next SFM Sub-committee meeting, expected to be in the first week of September. If you wish to make any comment about this rule change and fee increase, you are welcome to discuss it with any of the committee members. All contact details can be found on our website's contact page. Or in person is always good, too.

Southlands Fruit & Vegetables

Don't forget to let me know if you'd like a sign to put up at your stall, reminding your customers that they can buy your product at Southlands during the week (if that's the case).

e-Market

Also don't forget that you can join the e-market to sell online at any time. It's an option available exclusively to stall holders of the market (at this stage!), so take advantage of it. The more producers and products we have online, the more trade it attracts. Feedback from e-market producers indicates that pre-sales help them to know how much to pick or make, with less waste at the end of the day. Just let me know if you'd like to get started.

EXISTING e-MARKET PRODUCERS please fill in your forms and return them to me as soon as you can. Time to make things official.

Smoking

This is a reminder to all stall holders that smoking is not permitted during the hours of operation of the market (Rule 19). Please be aware that the SFM committee is in the process of creating a suite of market policies that guide the overall operation and direction of the market and this will include a blanket no-smoking policy anywhere in Riverside Park during the hours that the licence from Council is in effect. Those hours are from 1pm to 7pm. This policy will apply to stall holders and the public.

This policy reflects the NSW government's recent update to its own legislation regarding smoking in public places.

That's it for now.

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on behalf of the
SAGE Farmers Market Committee

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