



# Common Ground Country Fair

## September 25, 26, & 27, 2026

### Guidelines for the Agricultural Demonstrations and Young Maine Exhibit Tent

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*The Common Ground Country Fair has the right to close any exhibit or booth, or require the removal of any item from an exhibit or booth, that fails to comply with the guidelines set forth. Please familiarize yourself with these. Thank you.*



# Agricultural Demonstrations and Young Maine Exhibit Tent Guidelines

## Common Ground Country Fair

### September 25, 26 & 27, 2026

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the **Agricultural Demonstrations** area is to provide space for individuals and organizations furthering sustainable agriculture and strengthening rural communities. The emphasis is on teaching and demonstrating farming and gardening skills, strengthening agricultural economies and communities, and organization building and networking.

The purpose of the **Young Maine** area is to promote farm-to-school connections, school gardens, experiential education and active healthy lifestyles for Maine's youth by providing a setting for organizations and individuals who work with Maine's youth to showcase their programs; network with each other and fairgoers; and present talks, workshops and related activities, talks, workshops and related activities.

#### **Guidelines:**

1. The mission of all groups participating in the Agricultural Demonstrations and Young Maine Exhibit Tent should be in accord with the Area's guidelines, the CGCF and MOFGA.
2. The Ag Demo & Young Maine Exhibit Tent is an educational, not commercial, venue. The primary purpose of booth displays must be educational. (If your purpose is primarily commercial, you should apply to a different area at the Fair. Contact the office at [commonground@mofga.org](mailto:commonground@mofga.org) or 568-6041 if you have any questions or for more information.)
3. Complementary to the educational focus of a booth, exhibitors may sell educational materials and resources (books, reports, DVDs, media) at their booth that are pertinent to the agricultural and/or educational work of the exhibitor. Only items with prior Area Coordinator approval will be permitted. Exhibitors may not sell other items or products or distribute sales and marketing collateral for a commercial enterprise.
4. Organization-building activities such as mailing list sign-ups are permitted. Free literature may be distributed. Donations may be accepted but active fund-raising schemes are not acceptable.
5. Out of respect for all exhibitors and Fairgoers, the activities and displays of all exhibitors must be located within the assigned booth space or speaking/demonstration area.
6. All tables should be tended during all Fair hours all three days. The area coordinators will permit exceptions with good cause.
7. The area is open to participants in the following three categories:
  - a. Those who share ideas and resources that promote farm-to-school connections, school gardens, civic engagement for youth, youth mentoring, youth empowerment, sustainability, experiential education, and active healthy lifestyles for Maine's youth.
  - b. Those who cater to farmers and producers and are promoting their organization and its



programs, although they may also engage in some educational activities.

c. Those who attend primarily to demonstrate or educate people in specific farming and gardening skills, although they may also represent an organization.

8. Space is limited in the Agricultural Demonstrations and Young Maine Exhibit Tent. Preference will be given to exhibitors who cater to and engage with Maine's youth and preference is given to grassroots, non-profit, and local organizations and organizations that provide resources or technical support to farmers and producers and preference goes to those actively educating and/or demonstrating farming and gardening skills. Additionally, if demand exceeds available space, exhibitors may be limited to one table.

### **Fiber at the Common Ground Country Fair**

*Statement of Purpose:* The fiber at the Common Ground Country Fair emphasizes Maine-grown/raised fiber. Whenever possible, fiber is to be grown/raised and processed by the farmer. Unless otherwise noted in the specific area guidelines, all animal fiber must be from the state of Maine. Chemically treated fiber, such as Superwash, is not allowed. Incorporating synthetic glitz into fiber items is not allowed.

*Statement of Preference:* The person who spins, and/or weaves or knits over the one who purchases yarn; the one who uses natural dyes from native & cultivated plants over synthetic; the one who uses unbleached fiber over the one who uses bleached fibers; the one who weaves or hand paints over the one who sews with purchased material; the one who prints on clothing they made over the one who prints on ready-made clothing; the one who uses natural fibers over the one who only uses synthetic fiber

#### **Guidelines:**

- Applicants are required to name their fiber & processing sources and must produce receipts upon request to verify their sourcing.
- Participants are required to label each group of animal fiber items for sale for fiber content and origin if any of the fiber content is not Maine raised, even if processed in Maine. Individual items need not be labeled.
- Participants are encouraged to include educational displays about their fiber's sources and processing.



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## THE MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

**Mission:** Transforming our food system by supporting farmers, empowering people to feed their communities, and advocating for an organic future.

**Vision:** MOFGA's vision is a future where local organic farming nourishes all people, and sustains thriving ecosystems, healthy communities, and fair economies. We'll accomplish this through our mission to transform our food system by supporting farmers, empowering people to feed their communities, and advocating for an organic future.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE COMMON GROUND COUNTRY FAIR

Each year, the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) hosts the Common Ground Country Fair (CGCF), which takes place on the third weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) after Labor Day. The following guidelines apply to all people attending the Fair in any capacity.

1. Pets are not permitted on the fairgrounds or in the Fair parking areas. Animals tied to trees or cars, or left within vehicles (whether locked or not), may be removed by the local animal control officer.
2. No smoking on the fairgrounds, except for the designated smoking area across from the Fair Office.
3. Fair participants may not build fires without written permission from the CGCF office.
4. The CGCF follows Maine laws regarding public drinking of alcohol and use of controlled substances on the fairgrounds and in the Fair parking lots.
5. Audio and video devices audible to the general public are prohibited on the fairgrounds unless they are part of a CGCF-approved demonstration.
6. All demonstrations must be approved by the CGCF office. Busking is not allowed.
7. Do not feed livestock or other display animals unless tending to your own animals.
8. Skateboards, bicycles or other unauthorized wheeled vehicles are prohibited on the fairgrounds.
9. Kites are not allowed. Drones are not allowed unless specially authorized by the CGCF Office in writing.
10. Unauthorized possession of firearms, weapons, or explosives is not allowed on the fairgrounds.
11. The CGCF office assumes no liability for damage to or loss of personal property.
12. Harassment (verbal, physical, or sexual) and physical altercations are not allowed.

**Statement of inclusion** - MOFGA strives to promote organic food and a sustainable farming community that is inclusive of all people that validates diverse identities including race, class, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or beliefs. We urge all exhibitors and presenters to consider their participation through the lens of race, equity, social justice, and supportive local food systems. We expect all attendees to be courteous, respectful and to refrain from inappropriate language, humor, gestures, or statements that discriminate against any individual or group.

If attendees are not abiding by the Guidelines, MOFGA Directors shall take actions to address and change the attendee's behavior. MOFGA reserves the right to ask attendees to leave the premises at any time and, to the extent their conduct constitutes a violation of law, may be subject to arrest. If an attendee is asked to leave or chooses to leave, refunds will not be given. In the event of a dispute, the decision of the MOFGA Directors will be accepted as final.



## GUIDELINES FOR ALL DEMONSTRATORS, EXHIBITORS AND VENDORS

*Henceforth, the words “vendor” and “vendors” refer to “demonstrator(s)” and “exhibitor(s)” as well.*

*The Common Ground Country Fair has the right to close any exhibit or booth, or require the removal of any item from an exhibit or booth that fails to comply with the guidelines set forth.*

### **Application Process**

1. A non-refundable application fee must accompany each application (with the exception of Youth Enterprise Zone applications) for booth space in commercial areas.
2. Interested vendors must apply each year.
3. Area Coordinators determine application deadlines for respective areas. The Fine Art and Craft Market Coordinators do not accept applications postmarked after their established deadline. Other Area Coordinators process timely applications before late applications, allocating space first to timely applicants. Late applicants receive space if available.
4. A late fee may be applied to late applications.
5. Area Coordinators review vendor applications each year and give preference to vendors in good standing who meet respective area guidelines. The “vendor in good standing” guideline does not apply to areas where juries review applications for quality.
6. Failure to meet application and/or contract fee deadlines will result in forfeiture of booth location and/or booth space.
7. Area Coordinators, in consultation with MOFGA staff, may refuse to accept any vendor who does not meet the Guidelines of MOFGA, the CGCF, or the Area itself.
8. The CGCF office does not grant vendors exclusive rights to sell any particular item.
9. Vendors must reside in Maine and represent Maine-based businesses or organizations. The CGCF accepts goods and services not made in Maine if they are important to the quality of rural living and are not yet available from a Maine-based business or organization.
10. Area Coordinators give preference to applicants who make their products with sustainably harvested, natural resources from Maine. When a product made in Maine depends upon materials or components from elsewhere, its approval will depend upon the need it fills, the value added by the Maine worker who makes it and the source of the materials or components. Examples of products not made in Maine but acceptable if they contribute to the quality of rural living are: books; farming and gardening tools; cotton fabric; soil supplements; hardware; animal feeds; home heating units for renewable energy sources; and tractors, rototillers, and accessories. Examples of unacceptable products not made in Maine are: those making no essential contribution to the quality of rural living; those detracting from Maine’s becoming more self-sufficient; or those which exploit producers or consumers.
11. Vendors must list on their application all items and services that they wish to sell. Items and services listed on the application must relate directly to the area to which the vendor applies. Vendors serving or selling any food item or sample that is not certified organic must submit an Ingredient Form with their application. The CGCF will not permit the sale of items not listed or approved on the applications. The CGCF requires vendors to remove such items from booths immediately. Vendors may not take orders for display items that are not approved for sale.
12. Vendors may sell their own business T-shirts, but may not sell T-shirts of other businesses or organizations. The CGCF restricts sales of other promotional products.
13. Vendors may not share booth space. Each business or organization must apply for booth space separately.
14. Vendors needing any amount of electricity must fill out electricity request forms and return them to the CGCF office by the contract deadline. Vendors needing electricity in excess of an amount designated by the CGCF Electrical Coordinator must pay for it. Payment is due by the respective area contract deadline.
15. Vendors wishing to be listed in the directory of Fair participants must fulfill contract or registration obligations by respective area deadlines.
16. Applicants must answer all questions on their area application forms. Area coordinators may ask applicants for clarification on questions answered unclearly. Area coordinators reserve the right to reject applicants who fail to provide requested clarification.



17. The CGCF does not accept applications from network or multi-level marketing businesses.

## Participation in the Fair

1. Vendors agree to make no misrepresentations, implicit or explicit, about the nature of their businesses, the nature of their products and services offered or their ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds.
2. All MOFGA-certified growers and processors are eligible to receive a \$10/day reduction in vendor booth fees for all areas of the CGCF.
3. All food or ingestibles served or sold at the CGCF, even free samples, must adhere to the MOFGA Food Policy.
4. All non-certified organic garlic sold at the CGCF should be labeled not certified organic garlic.
5. Only MOFGA/CGCF may have a raffle on the fairgrounds. All other raffles, free or otherwise, are prohibited.
6. Food and meals served by the Common Kitchen are for use by current CGCF volunteers only.
7. Vendors who camp in their booths must contact the Fair office to get a permission form and must attach the form to the outside of their booths for the evening. Vendors may not camp elsewhere on the fairgrounds. Only vendors or associated staff may camp in vendor booths.
8. The State of Maine requires the CGCF to send a list of commercial vendors and their tax ID numbers to the state tax office. Vendors are responsible for reporting earnings and workers' pay to the IRS and the State of Maine.
9. Vendors assume all risk for their property. Neither the CGCF nor MOFGA will be responsible for any loss or damage from any cause.
10. MOFGA, doing business as the CGCF, disclaims any authority of control over the operation of vendors. Vendors assume all rights and responsibilities for the conduct of their operations including, but not limited to: obtaining liability and general coverage insurance for vendor-related activities and adhering to all local and state ordinances and regulations. MOFGA does not have separate vendor coverage under any insurance it may maintain.
11. Vendors must have general liability and completed operations insurance coverage with \$2,000,000 general aggregate and \$1,000,000 for each occurrence for the duration of the Fair, including during the vendor's move-in and move-out; name MOFGA as Additionally Insured; and provide a Certificate of Insurance to MOFGA by June 1. MOFGA reserves the right to change this coverage requirement.
12. In the event of a dispute, the decision of the CGCF officials will be accepted as final.

## Passes

All vendors and personnel are required to have a gate pass for admission to the Fair. The CGCF provides a limited number of gate passes for vendors. Vendors may purchase additional tickets in advance from the Fair office. Vendors and staff without passes will not be granted admission to the Fair.

## Booth Operation

1. Vendors must set up booths and be ready for business by 8:45 a.m. each day of the Fair.
2. Vendors must staff their booths for the duration of the Fair—from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.
3. Vendors should bring an adequate amount of food or merchandise to last through the entire Fair.
4. The CGCF assigns booth spaces to vendors. Vendors may not change booth location or designated boundaries of any booth space. Vendors must place all supports within the boundaries of their assigned booth spaces.
5. Vendors must restrict their activities to their booth spaces. The CGCF prohibits hawking of wares.
6. Vendor contracts are for space only. The CGCF does not supply tables, chairs, or other booth supplies *unless otherwise specifically stated in that Area's Guidelines*. Vendors should prepare for dirt/grass floors in tents and outside vendor locations.
7. Vendors must make their booths as attractive as possible. Vendors may not use plastics (clear, colored, or poly-tarps) in the construction of booths. The only exception to this is rip-stop nylon. Preferred materials include



canvas, denim and cotton. Vendors may cover booths with plastic tarps at night, but must remove them by 8:00 a.m. daily.

8. Be prepared for inclement weather.

9. Only Vendors or associated staff are permitted in the area behind the booth, “backstage area”, throughout the duration of the Fair.

## **Move-in/Move-out**

1. Vendors may set up booths all day Thursday before the Fair weekend, or before 8:00 a.m. on Friday of the Fair. Vendors needing to set up before Thursday should make arrangements with their Area Coordinators.

2. The CGCF restricts vehicle movement on the fairgrounds. The CGCF prohibits vehicles from entering the fairgrounds after 8:00 a.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. All vehicles already on the fairgrounds must exit by 8:30 a.m. Vehicles may return to the fairgrounds once the All Clear has been given and the Gates have been opened by Safety. Friday and Saturday. On Sunday, all Vendors must wait till the Fair Safety Coordinator gives permission to move onto the grounds when all Fairgoers have left. Please note this re-entry time will vary due to conditions on the fairgrounds.

3. Vendors must obtain permission from the MOFGA's Facilities Coordinator before digging any holes. Vendors must fill in holes before leaving the fairgrounds.

4. Consult with your Area's Guidelines for the time your booth needs to be cleaned up and removed from your exhibition area.

## **Utilities**

Water and/or electricity are not available in all areas or booth locations on the fairgrounds.

### Electricity

1. The CGCF provides electricity, where available, for a fee to vendors.

2. Vendors needing electricity must indicate such on their application and, if accepted, submit an electricity request form and payment with their contract.

3. Vendors must bring suitable panels, cords and outlet strips to meet their electrical needs.

4. The CGCF encourages electricity conservation. Using light-emitting diode (LED) lights will cut consumption dramatically.

### Water

Vendors needing water must contact their area coordinator to determine whether the CGCF can meet their needs.

### Cooking/Heating Equipment and Propane

1. Any participant using cooking equipment must have an appropriate fire extinguisher. Any vendor who serves food must have a 20 BC-minimum fire extinguisher. The CGCF encourages all vendors to obtain 40 BC-minimum extinguishers.

2. Cooking is only allowed in designated areas with 11lb propane or butane cylinders. No solid fuel may be used without permission. Food vendors wishing to use propane or butane tanks greater than 11lb must receive Fair Office approval, must pass the state onsite inspection before operating cooking equipment, and must operate in an approved area.

3. Per State of Maine regulations, propane tanks must be secured firmly on a hard, non-combustible surface, i.e. cement blocks, tin, etc... Vendors must supply their own surface on which to secure tanks—the ground alone does not suffice. The Fire Marshall will check for compliance.

## **Compost and Recycling**

CGCF strives to produce Zero Waste. To that end, all waste at the Fair is sorted for compostable and recyclable materials by our Compost and Recycling volunteers. To assist in these efforts:



1. Vendors must separate all of the trash they generate into compostable/non-compostable waste and take the waste to the CGCF recycling area daily (not public Resource Recovery Stations).
2. Vendors shall break down and clean cardboard boxes of tape, staples, etc., tie them in bundles, and take them to the CGCF recycling area, or take them home.
3. Vendors must take their entire booths -- including carpets, display racks, storage containers, zip ties and decorations -- home with them. All booths must be taken down by Monday night unless special arrangements have been made with the vendor's Area Coordinator.
4. Vendors that leave trash in their area risk non-acceptance at future Fairs.

### **Cancellation Policy**

1. The CGCF makes no refunds for cancellations made after August 1.
2. The CGCF makes no refunds in the event of inclement weather.



## MOFGA Food Policy As of October 23, 2016

The food offered at all MOFGA events embraces MOFGA's mission "The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association is a broad-based community that educates about and advocates for organic agriculture, illuminating its interdependence with a healthy environment, local food production, and thriving communities." \*

The food offered emphasizes seasonally available ingredients. Whenever possible, the ingredients are produced organically in Maine. Ingredients not subject to organic guidelines are produced or harvested sustainably. Ingredients produced or grown outside of Maine reflect MOFGA's commitment to support "sustainable, organic farming regardless of geographic boundaries. MOFGA is committed to building relationships, when appropriate, with farmers and movements who share our mission."\*\*

\* Statement of Purpose, MOFGA Bylaws. January 2018

\*\* Policy adopted by the MOFGA Board at the June 2007 meeting.

**Decision Tree:** When considering the use of any ingredient in your menu item or food product, ask these questions to determine if that ingredient may be used.

1. Is the ingredient/item organic and produced in Maine? If so, use it.
2. If not, is there a reasonable substitute that is organic and produced in Maine? If so, use it.
3. If not, is the ingredient grown or harvested sustainably in Maine? If so, use it.
4. If not, do farmers who share our mission produce the ingredient/item organically outside of Maine? If so, use it.
5. If not, do farmers who share our mission produce the ingredient/item sustainably outside of Maine? If so, use it.
6. If not, don't use it.

We define a sustainable food and agriculture system as one wherein:\*\*

- fertility of our soil is maintained and improved through the use of natural organic materials, such as compost, and through the addition of organic minerals
- toxic substances, such as sewage and industrial by-waste, are not used in any aspect of food production
- seeds and plants or animals derived through the use of genetic engineering are not used in any aspect of food production, including livestock feed
- availability and quality of water are protected and enhanced
- practices are safe and healthful for workers, communities, and consumers
- practices protect the diversity of both plants and animals and the welfare of farmed and wild species
- livestock have access to the outdoors are able to express natural animal behaviors and movement. They are not given growth hormones, antibiotics, or other synthetics for disease prevention or growth except upon veterinarian diagnosis for worming (this also pertains to fish)
- practices do not include the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides
- practices conserve the flow of energy and the discharge of waste
- practices enable us to produce healthful food without compromising future generations' ability to do the same

\*\*\*Definition adopted by the MOFGA Board at the October 2016 meeting.