



MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

About Us

The Halifax Regional Food Hub (HRFH) is a new nonprofit co-operative committed to building and strengthening Nova Scotia's local food system by connecting local producers throughout mainland Nova Scotia to wholesale buyers within the Halifax Regional Municipality. By supporting local producers, building Nova Scotia's local food infrastructure, and creating efficient channels for food distribution, the Halifax Food Hub will increase Nova Scotia's economic resiliency, food security and food sovereignty.

The Food Hub provides services such as aggregation, storage (dry, cold, and frozen), online ordering and payment processing, order fulfillment, and last mile delivery. As a not-for-profit co-operative food hub, we bridge the gap between regional producers and local buyers by fostering relationships, removing barriers to access, building economies of scale, and providing resilient infrastructure.

Mission

Our cooperative strengthens the local food economy by connecting small and mid-sized Nova Scotian producers with wholesale buyers in HRM, through a centralized system that simplifies aggregation, distribution and expands market access.

Vision

A resilient and equitable local food system where small and medium-scale producers thrive, wholesale buyers access local food with ease, and our region's food security and economy grow stronger through collaboration and sustainability.

Governance

HRFH is governed by a Board of Directors elected by members. The Board oversees policies, strategic direction, and the hiring of the Executive Director. Board meetings are held monthly and are open to members in a non-voting capacity. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held each year to review finances, discuss goals, and vote on key matters. Each member has one vote.

MEMBERSHIP POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Membership

Membership Eligibility

Membership in the Halifax Regional Food Hub is open to individuals and organizations that support the mission of strengthening Nova Scotia's local food system.

Eligible members may include:

- Producers and agricultural businesses
- Food processors and value-added food businesses
- Wholesale buyers, including restaurants, retailers, institutions, and food service operators
- Non-profit organizations and community groups
- Individuals who wish to support the development of a resilient and sustainable regional food system

Membership Application

Prospective members must complete the HRFH Cooperative Membership Application and submit it to the Executive Director for review. Producer members will also complete an initial product intake form (included in the Cooperative Membership Application) and onboarding process. Membership is contingent upon approval and purchase of membership share.

Membership Rates and Fees

Membership share \$50 + Annual fee for producer members: \$50 (starting the following year)

Payments can be directed by e-transfer to info@halifaxfoodhub.ca

Member Benefits

- Aggregation, storage (dry, cold, frozen)
- Online ordering and payment processing
- Order fulfillment and last-mile delivery
- Marketing and sales support
- Access to cold storage rentals (subject to availability)
- Vote at AGM
- Run for Board of Directors

Member Responsibilities

As a member of the Halifax Regional Food Hub (HRFH), you agree to:

- Participate in Hub activities, meetings, and cooperative governance where possible.
- Uphold the cooperative principles of transparency, equity, and shared responsibility.
- Fulfill any financial commitments such as annual fees
- Maintain honest and accurate communication regarding your products, practices, and capacity.
- Abide by all Hub policies, procedures, and quality standards.

Members contribute to a respectful, inclusive, and cooperative environment by:

- Respecting diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences within the local food system.
- Acting with integrity, accountability, and openness in all dealings connected to the Hub.
- Sharing knowledge, resources, and support to foster collective success.
- Not incurring debt within the co-operative

Termination of Membership

Voluntary Termination

Members may choose to end their participation in HRFH at any time. To voluntarily terminate membership:

- The member must provide written notice to the Executive Director and make a request for the refund of their membership share (\$50). Refunds will only be issued if the co-op is in sufficient financial health to do so, as determined by the Board and required by the Co-operatives Act. The refund may be delayed until the co-op is in good financial standing.
- All outstanding invoices must be paid in full.
- Any equipment, containers, or shared resources provided by HRFH must be returned.
- A short exit interview or feedback form may be requested to help HRFH improve future services.

Involuntary Termination

HRFH reserves the right to suspend or terminate a membership that does not follow the bylaws and policies of the co-operative or act in the best interest of the co-operative. Some examples being:

- Repeated failure to meet product or safety standards
- Chronic late or missing deliveries
- Non-payment of invoices
- Discriminatory or harmful behaviour toward staff, members, or customers
- Breach of co-operative values, bylaws, or this handbook

Prior to termination, members will typically receive:

- A written warning
- A chance to address and correct the issue
- A final decision by HRFH staff and/or the Board

In urgent cases (e.g. food safety risk, harassment), HRFH may suspend a member immediately while the matter is reviewed.

Operations & Food Hub Policy

Order Cycle

The HRFH operates on an order cycle system where product is available to buyers during a set time each week.

FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR
Producers Update Inventory by 7pm Halifax Food Hub Ordering Cycle Begins Store Opens at 7pm	Shopping Open	Shopping Open	Shopping Open Store closes at 3pm Producer Receives Picklist by 5pm	Producers harvest & pack products sold	Producers drop off orders at Food Hub 9am-5pm or At distribution partner 7:15-8am	12pm Orders leave Halifax Food Hub for delivery

- Each week buyers shop online from Friday 7pm through Monday at 3pm
- Once the store closes on Monday, producers will receive an email by 5pm with picklist information.
- Producers prepare their products for delivery to:
 - Halifax Regional Food Hub: 21 Williams Ave Unit 100, Dartmouth, NS B3B 1X3 between **9am-5pm** on Wednesdays or otherwise arranged with Food Hub staff.
 - Distribution Partner (WFM2Go): 24 Elm Ave, Wolfville, NS B4P 1Z9 between **7:15-8am** on Wednesdays. To utilize this service please connect with Halifax Food Hub staff.
- Producers update their inventory by Friday at 7pm in time for that week's store opening, and the process repeats!

Allowed Products & Product Categories

Produce

- All products must be of the freshest and best quality possible, harvested as close to the pick-up time as possible.
- Vegetables must be rinsed to remove field dirt and debris.
- Vegetables must be whole and unwashed (not advertised as ready to consume), unless coming from a GAP-certified farm.
- All products must be pre-weighed to exact weight if being sold by weight, and quantity must be kept consistent if being sold by the bunch.

Meat And Seafood

- All meat and seafood must be processed in a provincially licensed facility and kept frozen in compliance with the food safety regulations of Nova Scotia.
- Meat vendors must also retain records, invoices, and receipts to allow for tracking of meat products.
- All meat vendors must ensure meat products are labeled indicating the plant number(s) where meats have been slaughtered and processed.
- Pre-packaged meats and seafood must have labels on the package.
- Frozen meat products must be kept at -18°C or lower.
- All meat and seafood must be boxed separate from other products and frozen products must have “Keep Frozen” indicated on the label.

Eggs

Eggs must:

- Be washed and graded at a licensed facility, as required by provincial law. Must be stored at a temperature of 4°C or lower.
- Be labelled with the farm name and pack date
- **Please inform the food hub of what facility your eggs are graded at.**

Value-Added Products

Producer members may only sell value-added products that they themselves make. Purchasing ingredients for value-added products are permitted. Value added products must use as many ingredients as feasible produced by the member, or purchased from Nova Scotian farmers.

Producers must have:

- ⇒ All required food safety certifications and inspections
- ⇒ Accurate labelling including ingredients, allergens, and expiry dates

Additional product categories (e.g. wild-harvested, herbal, non-food items) may be considered on a case-by-case basis with Board or staff approval.

Product Listing

Listings should reflect accurate availability and current pricing. Vendors are responsible for managing inventory levels in the system. If a vendor does not update their listings, previously posted products may be hidden or removed at the discretion of HRFH staff.

Local Line Account Management

If you do not wish to manage your own Local Line account and own inventory, the Food Hub can manage your account and inventory. If you have any issues and require us to update any information please contact us.

Please visit the links sent in our welcome email to learn more about how to set up your account and add products to your storefront.

Product Pricing

The Halifax Regional Food Hub adds a 23% mark up to the set price. This mark up supports the operational cost of running the Food Hub. Producers are encouraged to adjust their prices to reflect the administrative, marketing, and distribution work that the Food Hub assumes on their behalf. Prices must be submitted by the weekly product posting deadline (7pm on Friday). HRFH reserves the right to consult with producers on pricing that is significantly above or below market norms.

If you want the consumer to pay a specific price divide that by 1.23. For example, if you want your item to cost the consumer \$5, divide by 1.23 = \$4.07

Product Standards

Food Safety

We take food safety seriously and expect all producers to follow practices that reduce the risk of contamination. All products sold through the HRFH must meet NS Food Safety Regulations or the Safe Food for Canadians Act. Any meat, seafood or value-added product needs to be approved by the Public Health Officer before being added to the Food Hub. All products that

require temperature control to maintain their safety are required to be prepared in a facility that has a Food Establishment issued by Nova Scotia Environment.

Safe Food Handlers Certification

At least one person involved in the production or processing of value-added products should hold a valid Safe Food Handling Certificate.

This is required for producers making ready-to-eat products, prepared meals, baked goods, and similar items.

Quality Control and Product Refusal

While formal grading is not required for most products, all products must be of market-grade quality—free from spoilage, major blemishes, pests, or other defects (unless otherwise specified, ie: seconds, B grade). HRFH reserves the right to return or refuse any product that does not meet its quality standards, customer expectations or food safety requirements, including products received outside of acceptable temperature ranges.

Packaging Standards

All products delivered to the Halifax Regional Food Hub must be packaged in a way that ensures product integrity, food safety, and ease of handling and distribution. Producers are responsible for providing clean, appropriately sized packaging for each item and for maintaining high standards of cleanliness and presentation.

- **Packaging must be clean, durable, and appropriate** for the product being sold.
This includes being moisture-resistant, able to protect from contamination, and suitable for cold storage (where applicable).
- **Products must be packaged at the size advertised on Local Line.**

Labelling Standards

For Boxes

- ✓ The name of your farm
- ✓ Indicate the total number of boxes
 - If sending one box label as "Box 1 of 1"
 - If sending two boxes label as "Box 1 of 2" and "Box 2 of 2"

Certifications

Producers must provide copies of valid certifications (if applicable), including but not limited to:

- Organic certification, Certified Naturally Grown
- Ocean Wise or other seafood sustainability designations
- Food safety certifications

Products sold with certified claims must have up-to-date records on file with the hub.

Billing and Payment

Producers are paid on a biweekly basis via direct deposit. Please send your banking information or a void cheque to admin@halifaxfoodhub.ca.

Conclusion

The Halifax Regional Food Hub is excited to work alongside you to strengthen and expand Nova Scotia's local food systems. We look forward to building relationships that will contribute to greater efficiency and support for local producers in our province.

Contact

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us

General Inquiries

info@halifaxfoodhub.ca 902-943-6282

Eli Milton

Executive Director

director@halifaxfoodhub.ca

Appendix

Quick Start Check List

- ☐ Read Membership Handbook
- ☐ Send \$50 membership share to info@halifaxfoodhub.ca
- ☐ Sign up to Local Line
- ☐ Send banking information (transit, institution, and account number) to admin@halifaxfoodhub.ca