



## Measurement Standards

### Ensuring Alaskans Receive the Full Measure At Farmers' Markets and Roadside Stands

Alaskans have one more reason to enjoy the colorful, fresh, flavorful bounty of seasonal fruits and vegetables sold from roadside stands, pickup trucks, and farmers' markets. The regulations ensuring buyers receive sufficient and accurate information are as much in force from these casual venues as a large grocery store. Vendors also benefit from the public confidence, which results from their compliance with the regulations. And all Alaskans benefit by buying Alaskan Grown.



### Methods of Sale

Produce may be sold by several Methods of Sale: weight, count or measure. For example:

| Method of Sale                | Examples             |      |               |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------|---------------|
| Direct sale by weight         | Rhubarb              | 0.50 | Per pound     |
| By weight in prepackaged form | 2 pounds of Broccoli | \$2  | Per package   |
| By count                      | Garlic               | \$1  | For six each  |
| By measure                    | Strawberries         | \$2  | Per dry quart |

### Direct Sale by Weight

Direct sales by weight are determined at the time of the sale. For example, a customer selects a cabbage, the vendor weighs it in the customer's presence, and the sale immediately follows.

### Scale Requirements

In Alaska, all commercial weighing devices must be evaluated under the National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) and be issued a Certificate of Conformance by the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) attesting the design, features, operating characteristics, and performance have been examined and have met national standards for commercial use.

In addition, scales used in direct sales must be registered and certified both initially and annually by the Alaska Division of Measurement Standards and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (MS&CVE). It is illegal to use an uncertified scale.



## **Purchasing Commercial Scales**

The Division of MS&CVE suggests that prior to purchasing a scale, whether new or used, vendors obtain the make and model number and call the Alaska Division of MS&CVE at 907-345-7846, to be certain it can be certified.

## **By Weight in Prepackage Form**

When a product is weighed, packaged, and a quantity statement applied prior to the sale, it is considered a prepackaged product. Scales used for prepackaged products do not have to meet the requirements of the Alaska Division of MS&CVE. However, the package must contain at least the weight specified on the package.

Weights and Measures inspectors will periodically inspect and randomly weigh the contents of the packages, using a calibrated, certified scale. The net weights of the samples must average the stated net weight or more. For example, on a selection of two-pound packages, the lot would be approved if the average weight of the selections were two pounds or more. The lot would be rejected if the average of the weights were less than two pounds.

Fruits and vegetables lose water weight after being harvested. The weight of a bag of carrots packaged Wednesday will not be the same by Saturday's market. In this case, compensating product weight should be added to ensure the net weight is accurate when it is sold.

In addition, there are legal requirements for the label. All prepackaged products must have a label that gives:

- 1) the name of the product,
- 2) a quantity statement (weight, measure, or count), and
- 3) The net weight (the weight of the product excluding the weight of the wrapping material or container). This may be expressed as net weight, or abbreviated to net-wt. However, "approximate net weight," "more than net-wt," or "at least net-weight" are not acceptable. An example of the proper wording is: Net-wt 2 pounds.

If packaged at a location different from the site of the sale, labels must include the name and address of the packing facility. Vendors should also be aware of FDA labeling requirements, as well.

## **Selling by Measure**

Dry weight, such as a dry pint or dry quart, is measured by cubic inches, not the shape of the container. The container should be full. But the product should not be compressed, and it does not have to be rounded above the sides of the container, unless necessary to achieve the legal measure. Just as water weight can be lost after harvest, volume can decrease as well. Some settling also can occur in transit. The contents must be level with the top of the container at the time of sale. It is recommended growers overfill containers slightly to allow for settling.

Liquids, such as honey and birch syrup, are sold by liquid measure, which is slightly smaller since there is no possibility of air spaces in a liquid. For example, a dry quart is 67.2 cubic inches; a fluid quart is 57.75 cubic inches.



| Dry Measure   | Cubic Inches | Liquid Measure | Cubic Inches |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| One bushel    | 2150.42      | One gallon     | 231          |
| 1/2 bushel    | 1075.21      | One quart      | 57.75        |
| 1/4 bushel    | 537.60       | One pint       | 28.875       |
| One dry quart | 67.20        | One cup        | 14.435       |
| One dry pint  | 33.60        |                |              |

### Fees

To have a scale certified by the Alaska Division of Measurement Standards and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement requires a registration fee, based on the capacity of the scale. The same amount is due yearly to register the scale. Fees are due in July and are not prorated.

| Device Registration Fees (Per AAC 90.920) |      |
|---|------|
| Up to 50 pounds                           | \$12 |
| 51-1000 pounds                            | \$19 |

For additional information, contact the Alaska Division of Measurement Standards and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, 12050 Industry Way, Building O, Anchorage, Alaska 99515, or phone: 907-345-7846.