

Doylestown Food Club Handbook

Welcome to the food club! It is our hope that you find this handbook a useful source of information.

Table of Contents

Website Contact Information.....	1
Useful Links.....	1
Terms and Conditions of Participation.....	2
Mission.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Organization	4
Membership	5
Steering Committee.....	5
Ordering.....	6
Local Food Producers.....	6

Website Contact Information

If you have any additional questions after reading this handbook, feel free to email them to one of the addresses below:

General questions:	contact@doylestownfoodclub.org
Membership:	membership@doylestownfoodclub.org
Producer questions:	producercare@doylestownfoodclub.org
Volunteering:	volunteer@doylestownfoodclub.org
Website questions and ordering:	web@doylestownfoodclub.org

Useful Links

Meeup website:	www.meetup.com/doylestownfoodclub
Ordering website:	www.doylestownfoodclub.org

Terms and Conditions of Participation

Who we are: The Doylestown Food Club is a food buying club consisting of volunteer community members who seek out high quality local food items such as produce, dairy products, eggs, meats, and other products. Dues paying members of the club share the responsibilities of picking up, storing, and sorting our orders on a biweekly basis. All perishable items are moved in coolers and stored in appropriate refrigeration. Care is taken by all members to treat our orders as they would their own weekly grocery goods.

What we do: All members, whether or not they pay dues, are welcome to participate in meetings and the meetup website. Only dues paying members may place orders. Members contribute as their time allows in supporting the club's needs, which include website maintenance, ordering, promotion, food pick up and care, distribution, identifying producers, providing professional advice and opinions, and generally insuring that the club functions efficiently and fairly. In addition, many members of the club are working toward steering our club toward forming a brick and mortar food co-op in Doylestown.

Dues: Members of the Doylestown Food Club have the option of paying annual dues in the amount of \$100. Dues are refunded 100% if a member leaves after one order; thereafter, they can request a pro-rated refund of \$8 per remaining month. Members who volunteer more than 12 hours in a six month period are eligible for a refund of \$40 at the end of six months, for a total of up to \$80 per year. Dues allow members of the club to place orders for local foods on a biweekly basis. Dues collected go directly toward covering the financial needs of the club, which include the cost of meetup website, club insurance, and distribution supplies (coolers, baskets, ice pack, cleaning supplies, and the like). Should the club choose to become a co-op, dues will either be reimbursed to members or, with member permission, fund membership in the co-op. The club's dues policy is subject to change as announced at meetings and/or through our websites.

Producers: Member contribution is essential to the club's determination of appropriate producers. Identification and selection of producers is based on members' local food needs as determined by polls on the meetup website (and possibly elsewhere). Brief descriptions of the farming practices of each of our producers are provided on our pricelist, along with ways to obtain more in depth information (e.g. websites, phone numbers).

By using our website or becoming a voluntary dues paying member of the Doylestown Food Club, you agree that you understand the nature of the club, its basic organization, and your responsibilities. You also agree that you understand the purpose of dues and the club's refund policy. You agree that your participation poses risks similar to those of shopping in a grocery store, at a farm stand, or at a farmers' market. You will hold the club, its sponsors, and its members harmless for any injury, illness, or other harm sustained as a result of your participation, regardless of the negligence of any party. You acknowledge that you have read this participation agreement and fully understand its contents.

Mission

The Doylestown Food Club aims to bring local consumers and local producers together, creating a self-sustaining local food economy, in which producers take care of the soil, plants, and animals; and consumers nourish themselves and their families while supporting local growers and producers. Ideally, we seek sustainable practices by expert farmers, and where possible support polycultural; organic; and humane producers in close proximity to our members. We strive to find the best products (sustainable, humane, and organic) at the fairest prices as near to our homes as we can.

Purpose

The food club was founded in order to address the need of conscientious consumers to purchase locally-produced foods at the best possible price in one place. The food club's long-term goal is to form a co-op with a storefront to serve the Doylestown community. Forming and operating a co-op takes much time and planning, and many members of the club are currently participating on a steering committee to work towards this goal. In the meantime, through the generous donation of time and resources of our volunteers, the food club is putting local foods on the tables of our dues-paying members.

It is the belief of our membership that local buying, while often times more costly in the short term than regular supermarket buying, is rewarding for several reasons. First, local buying reduces the number of miles foods must travel to reach our homes, which is better for our environment. Second, local buying supports local producers, which is good for our economy. As more conscientious consumers create a market in Bucks and Montgomery counties for locally grown or produced foods, we hope to sustain our current farmers and add more as we grow. Finally, local buying allows our members to know where their food is coming from and how it is produced. It is truly a pleasure for our volunteers to arrive at a farm to collect our orders and shake hands with the farmer who grew our food. We provide general information concerning farming practices on our websites, and our producers are happy to answer any additional questions.

As a club, and ultimately as a co-op, we intend to work cooperatively with other organizations who share our goals. We are members of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) and are contributing members of Local Harvest. We receive assistance from local cooperatives, such as Lehigh Valley Co-op and Weaver's Way. We hope to work closely with the Bucks County Foodshed Alliance, the Heritage Conservancy, and any other organization that values and supports local food production. Many of our members frequent a variety of local food suppliers, such as farm markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), and seasonal open-air markets. We share information about these local resources on our websites and at club meetings.

Organization

Websites: The club is currently organized through the use of our two websites. Our Meet-up website is used primarily for the purpose of scheduling events, such as distribution, club meetings, and steering committee meetings. We also use the site for discussion of volunteer needs and case splitting. Our ordering website, located at www.doylestownfoodclub.org is currently used for all ordering by dues-paying club members. Ultimately, it will house a variety of club documents and a calendar of events. While fully functional for ordering, our .org website remains under construction.

Coordinators: The activities of the club are organized by several coordinators.

- Meet-up site Hosts greet new members, answer questions, and direct inquiries to other coordinators.
- Producer Coordinator (producercare@doylestownfoodclub.org): primary producer contact. She sets up accounts, negotiates pricing, collaborates with volunteer coordinator to schedule pick ups, and helps with our ordering system.
- Volunteer coordinator (volunteer@doylestownfoodclub.org): identifies needs of the club and finds volunteers to fill them. Our volunteers perform tasks ranging from pick up of foods to data entry, and everything in between. We are a 100% volunteer effort at this point, and we rely heavily on the good will of our membership to provide for our needs.
- Technical Coordinators (web@doylestownfoodclub.org): our tech experts maintain our .org website and have set up our ordering system.
- Membership coordinator (membership@doylestownfoodclub.org): answers questions about membership and maintains a database for the club.
- Treasurer (treasurer@doylestownfoodclub.org): maintains all accounting records for the club.
- Distribution coordinator (contact@doylestownfoodclub.org): identifies possible sites for distribution, collates orders, and works with volunteers to help make distribution run smoothly. Our distribution coordinator is also the club's contact for Neshaminy Valley Natural Foods, a natural foods distributor that provides dry goods unavailable locally to our members.

Ordering and Distribution schedule: The club operates on a biweekly schedule of distribution. Our ordering window opens at 6pm every other Friday (except holidays) and closes at 6 pm the following Monday. Prior to the opening of the ordering window, our producers access their accounts on our site to update their offerings and set prices. At the closing of the ordering window, they access their accounts to view invoices and prepare our order. Our volunteer coordinator schedules drivers to pick up our orders from our producers on Wednesday and Thursday. We all meet at our distribution site (currently the Goddard School at the Farm, located at 100 Farm Lane in Doylestown) to sort, pay for, and pick up our orders. Payment by check is due at pick up, while payment through

PayPal is due immediately following pick up. Because of the costs associated with electronic payments, the club assesses them a 3% fee.

Membership

There are two types of members in the club. Regular members, identified as those who have joined the club through the Meet-up website, are welcome to participate in all of the club's activities (use of the Meet-up site, meetings, volunteering, etc.) except ordering. Because of the costs associated with the club (website maintenance, insurance costs, supplies, etc.), members must pay dues in order to participate fully in placing and receiving orders. New dues-paying members are always welcome to join the club, provided they agree to the club's terms as identified earlier in this document. Applications for membership must be made at www.doylestownfoodclub.org. Dues must be received by check on the Thursday before our ordering cycle opens to place an order within the window that opens on Friday. A check in the amount of \$100 for annual dues can be collected at meetings or sent to the following address:

Doylestown Food Club
67 Meadow Lane
Doylestown PA 18901

Please be sure to include your email address and Meet-up screen name with your check. You will receive an email confirmation that dues have been received, and your status on our website will change from "pending" to "active." You'll then be ready to order!

Because the club relies completely on volunteers to conduct our business, we offer a refund every six months in the amount of \$40 to members who volunteer 12 or more hours during that period. Most, if not all, of our members will be offered refunds totaling \$80 per year because of their various contributions. In addition, we are willing to refund dues completely to any member who wishes to leave the club after one order. Thereafter, refunds are offered on a pro-rated basis.

When you become a dues paying member, we'll contact you to see how you can participate.

Steering Committee

Regular members of the club, as identified on the Meet-up site, are welcome to participate in the co-op steering committee. Meetings of the committee are scheduled through the Meet-up site and are expected to take place monthly. The committee is comprised of three subcommittees, which include planning, membership, and finance. If you have vision, drive, and time, please join us!

Ordering

The club uses a public domain ordering system designed for food co-ops and buying clubs. While it is not perfect, it does simplify the process of ordering tremendously. The system allows for access by both producers and members so that collating and communication is streamlined, which saves hours of time.

To place an order using the system, log in. Products are organized in a variety of ways. You can see lists of products organized by category or producer. You can also download a full PDF catalog of products. When you see a product you want to order, click on the shopping cart icon. Indicate the amount or quantity and click on “add to my basket.” The product will be placed on your order. When you are finished shopping, simply log out. There is no process in the system for you to finalize your order. When the ordering window closes, your order is considered final. Up until that time, you may make any changes you wish to your order. If you plan to pay using PayPal, you will receive a final bill for your order at distribution. Please do not make payment to PayPal before distribution, as your total may change due to actual weight and/or availability of your ordered items. You may also pay by check at distribution.

You are strongly encouraged to use the “notes to producer” function on the system if you have any preferences or questions concerning items. If you are willing to accept a substitute for an item that may not be available, you can indicate that as well. If you have any questions about how to order, or if you experience any problems with the system, please contact us at web@doylestownfoodclub.org. General questions should be directed to contact@doylestownfoodclub.org.

Local Food Producers

Our vendors are identified by club members, based upon food preferences, or are self-referred. Vendors must be located within a convenient driving distance for our volunteers and/or must be able to deliver to a club member. New vendors must be willing to participate in our ordering system. Preference is given to vendors who supply consistently high quality foods; availability of delivery service is ideal. While the club does not give preference to vendors based upon farming practices, we do provide this information to our members, who can then make purchasing decisions based on personal preferences. It is our hope to be able to provide foods from three general categories: conventional, natural, and organic. Depending on the farming practices utilized, there may be significant price differences among producers.

At this time, the club does not charge any “mark up” on our vendors’ items. This policy, however, is subject to change. Should the club form into a co-op, it will be necessary to charge a co-op fee in order to cover the many costs associated with operating at that level. In addition, due to vendor concerns about publicizing their wholesale prices, only

dues-paying members will have access to pricing information. The club will no longer produce a pricelist for general viewing.