



PO Box 1060, Ventura, CA 93002

February 2, 2021

Re: Venice Farmers Market

Dear James Murez,

I am writing formally to you as a notification that I am uncomfortable with statements you directed at me at the Farmer's Market. On three separate occasions, spanning over the last 6 months, I felt your comments were inappropriate.

On the first occasion, I was paying my market fee to you. You had a new hairstyle that other vendors and customers were commenting on that morning. I said, "Your haircut looks nice." You replied, "Now all you have to do is ask me on a date and I will say yes." That response left me feeling confused and bothered because you have a wife that shops at farmer's market and I was not inferring in any way that I wanted to have any relationship with you outside of the market.

On the second occasion, which was in September 2020, I was inside my booth talking to you about a new olive oil on my market table. You interrupted our conversation and said, "Hold on, I have something to do, I'll be back to flirt with you later." I believe we were having an exclusively business conversation about the oil, which you then interrupted to insert a sexual connotation. This encounter made me feel disgust, confusion, irritation, and shock.

On the third occasion, which happened on January 30, 2021, you were in my booth talking about waiving market fees during the rain for every vendor. I was speaking to you about different markets I worked and how each market has its own unique polices and rules about absences and exceptions.

I told you the following story:

"When my husband and I worked Playa Vista farmer's market a couple years ago, we had an incident where we were 20 minutes late to the farmer's market and not allowed to work. We were late because my husband suffered a medical emergency that morning. We had thought it was a heart attack, we were terrified, and an ambulance was called. They cleared him an hour later saying it was a panic attack and we still tried to make it to the market to work, but we were denied entrance and charged an absent fee because we were late." You then replied, "Did he have a heart attack because he saw you naked?" This

response from you made me feel very disrespected, violated, small and insulted. Not only was I speaking about my husband, but I was telling you about a serious event and the only reason I was sharing this story was because we were discussing market fees and absences. Your reply about me being naked was completely out of line and unprofessional.

Your comments toward me make me apprehensive about any future dialogue with you, I am uncomfortable being in your presence, and I feel the market is no longer a safe setting.

Since January 30<sup>th</sup>, I have felt anxiety and stress thinking about my future work at the market. I am writing to let you know I do not feel like I can return there, nor will any other representative from the farm be exposed to this inappropriate environment. This is a difficult decision because it is one of the more profitable markets for the farm - it is our 2<sup>nd</sup> best money-making market. Additionally, four generations of my family are from Venice, my friends live there and visit the market, and I currently live only a few miles away. The customers are knowledgeable about olive oil and have been engaging and appreciative of our product. I have come to know many of the “regulars” and look forward to my brief chats with them weekly. Especially during a pandemic, these short interactions brighten my day. However, all these positive reasons for working the market DO NOT outweigh my disgust with your behavior as a Manager.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gina', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gina Arrasmith  
Vendor for Buon Gusto Farms

CC: Maria Tenorio Alfred, Inspection & Compliance Branch, CDFA  
Mark Mooring, Managing Member, Buon Gusto Farms