

CHAPTER 4

Rules, Regulations, Licensing and Liability

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CHAPTER 4

Rules, Regulations, Licensing and Liability

When planning to raise farm products for sale, you need to know and understand a variety of issues. Some relate to how food products are handled from harvest to sale and others relate to how your products are positioned in the marketplace. Food safety is of paramount importance. It starts on the farm and is a consideration from post-harvest handling to processing, packaging and distribution. Rules and regulations, including licensing and labeling standards, are designed to help you present safe food products for public consumption.

REGULATIONS

State Regulations

The State of Wisconsin has developed food regulations for farmers wishing to market to consumers and to grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions. Contact DATCP's Division of Food Safety at 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFoood@wisconsin.gov for more information. Read the following pages for a summary of state requirements by product and market.

Local Regulations

Counties, townships and cities are local government units that may have regulations that apply to your business. Some typical kinds of regulations include:

- Limits on size or location of advertising signs
- Permits required for excavating or new building construction
- Local health codes regarding food preparation and sale
- Zoning regulations on types of enterprises that can be conducted in certain areas
- Requirements for size and placement of parking areas
- Requirements for bathroom and hand washing facilities (especially for agritourism enterprises)

Overview of Food

Marketing Regulations

DATCP's Division of Food Safety has regulatory authority over food sold in Wisconsin. Generally, the more food products are processed, the more they are regulated.

Less Regulation	More Regulation
Raw, unprocessed foods	Processed foods
Single-ingredient foods	Multiple ingredients foods
Shelf-stable foods	Sold at a location off the farm
Sold to the end consumer	Sold to a retailer for sale to consumer
Small sales volume	Large sales volume

Local government officials and farmers who have started new enterprises agree that it is far better to work together early to avoid problems, rather than trying to fix things that were not properly done or permitted. County and city governments divide responsibilities among departments, and the department names can vary from place to place. Rural townships may have their own planning and zoning guidelines. It is best to check with both county and township officials before proceeding on any farm business expansion.

To find out the name(s) of local officials:

- Check your county's website
- Call the county courthouse administrative office
- Check the Wisconsin Towns Association website www.wisctowns.com/town_sites.html

LICENSING AND LABELING

State requirements that affect local food marketers may include inspection of processing facilities, review of labels on packaged food products, inspection of scales and collection of food samples to be analyzed for contaminants or composition requirements. Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) inspectors typically visit local food marketing operations if warranted by consumer complaints.

Processed Food Business Licensing

Starting a processed food business will require state and, possibly, federal licensing depending on the products involved. If you plan to primarily sell your products directly to consumers, you will need a retail food establishment license. Internet sales are considered retail sales. If you plan to sell primarily through wholesale distribution, you will need a food processing plant license.

Key requirements for license include:

- The facility must be an approved (commercial grade) kitchen. Using your personal home kitchen is not allowed. If you plan to start the business in your home you will need to construct a separate kitchen room dedicated to this food business. The dedicated kitchen will need to have washable floors, walls and ceilings. The lighting will need to be adequate for commercial purposes, and the room must be properly ventilated. A three-compartment sink or NSF-approved dishwasher will be needed for washing your equipment and utensils. A separate hand sink is also required. Some starting operators rent time in an area restaurant, school or church kitchen to satisfy the separate commercial kitchen requirement without having to invest in a new, separate kitchen of their own.
- Equipment such as stoves, sinks and mixers must be of approved design, be easily cleaned, and in good repair. If the equipment bears the NSF certification, you can feel certain that it will meet these design requirements.
- Other utensils like pans, bowls and spoons must be smooth, non-porous and easily cleaned. Almost all utensils currently manufactured meet this requirement.

For more information about NSF go to www.nsf.org/regulatory

For exact legal requirements for commercially processing food in Wisconsin go to www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/atcp/atcp070.pdf

Processed Food Labeling

Accurate information on processed food labels helps consumers make informed choices about food. Labels provide weight and content information to help consumers choose the best value for their money. The ingredient list identifies products consumers may need to avoid due to potential allergic reactions or other health concerns. Your packaged products must be properly labeled with:

- The name of the product
- A listing of the ingredients in decreasing order of predominance by weight
- A net weight or volume statement
- The name and address of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor
- Nutrition information, unless exempt

Contact state or local food inspectors for specific questions regarding labeling. DATCP does not require label approval prior to a food product's manufacture or distribution. DATCP's Division of Food Safety does not 'approve' labels but its staff will answer questions and provide assistance. The responsibility to comply with current food labeling requirements rests solely on the manufacturer or distributor of the food products. For specific information about processed food labeling go to <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Labeling> or contact the Division of Food Safety at 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFood@wisconsin.gov

Resources for Food Labeling

A Food Labeling Guide

U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/2lg-toc.html
94 pages that includes information on basic food labeling as well as information on nutrition facts, trans fat and allergen labeling.

Division of Food Safety Labeling Information WI DATCP

<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Labeling>
DATCP's Division of Food Safety website provides general information. However, go to the FDA website for the most up-to-date and comprehensive information available.

Food Label Sources

WI DATCP

<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Labeling>

A list of Wisconsin sources for design and printing of food labels.

Frequent Food Label Questions

WI DATCP

<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Labeling>

An 8-page publication covering the most basic information on food labeling.

Meat Business Licensing and Labeling

New processors must meet several standards to obtain a license for a meat business. State of Wisconsin meat plants must meet the same standards as USDA-inspected meat plants and must implement a food safety system called Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). A licensed meat establishment is required to implement HACCP plans and have a Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure (SSOP) in place. The HACCP is a risk-based approach to manufacturing food products that identifies the critical step(s) in the manufacturing process and performs a monitored, quantifiable function in those places where there is a danger of causing or promoting microbiological, physical or chemical contamination. The SSOP is a written plan that outlines the monitored procedures followed to maintain overall plant sanitation, including daily cleaning, regularly scheduled maintenance, food handling practices and employee hygiene.

Labeling meat products differs from other processed foods due to the greater risks and requirements that meat processing involves. The State of Wisconsin meat inspection program and meat establishments work together to ensure that meat products produced and sold comply with required standards for safety, identity and wholesomeness set by the state and federal governments.

It is illegal to feed garbage or food scraps containing animal parts or meat juices to swine, unless it is from your own home. Swine producers cannot buy or accept garbage or food scraps from restaurants, even if meat is removed from it, because meat juices are likely present. Stale bakery, waste from apple cider presses and other food waste that has no

animal parts or meat juices may be fed to swine. The devastating outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom in 2001 was traced to garbage feeding. Other diseases may also be transmitted in food waste, including trichinosis, which also can infect humans.

For references to specific aspects of meat labeling, see Chapter 55 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code: www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/atcp/atcp055.pdf It explains labeling requirements, including weight, inspection, safe handling instructions, and other pertinent information. See the resources below for a summary of the Bureau of Meat Safety & Inspection's labeling guidelines.

Resources for Meat Business Licensing and Labeling

Direct Marketing Meat

UW Extension

www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3811-15.pdf

Direct marketing meat fact sheet.

Direct Marketing Meat Guide Book

UW Extension and WI DATCP

www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3809.pdf

A comprehensive guide for Wisconsin meat producers.

Meat Product Formulation and Labeling

WI DATCP

http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Meat_Safety

Before a meat or custom/not-for-sale product can be marketed in Wisconsin, its formula must be approved by the Division of Food Safety. In addition to meat, this could include water, spices, cures, flavoring, binders or extenders.

Wisconsin's State Meat Inspection Program

WI DATCP

http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Meat_Safety

Standards of safety and purity.

Weights and Measures

The same weights and measures laws apply to direct marketers of farm produce as to all other retailers. Scales must meet standards for commercial scales set by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). They must be “legal for trade”, National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) approved (if put into service after January 1, 1997), and be able to be calibrated. Scales do not need to be registered, but are subject to inspection by a state or local representative of weights and measures.

If a commodity is weighed at the time of sale, the scale’s indicator must be visible to the consumer. By law, liquid commodities shall be sold by liquid measure and non-liquid commodities shall be sold by weight. The law permits other methods of sale only where the method is in general use and does not deceive the consumer. One exception is eggs. They are sold by both count and size. Closed containers of apples must comply with the USDA grade standards, which must be stated on the container.

Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code provides rules for selling fresh fruits and vegetables. Some, like apples, corn and cantaloupe can be sold by weight or count, while others, like asparagus, beans and potatoes must be sold only by weight.

If an item is packaged before sale, it must be labeled according to the requirements of Chapter 90 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. The label must list the name of the food, any ingredients other than the raw product, net weight, liquid measure or count as required - metric translations are optional but may be helpful in targeting certain ethnic markets - name and address of the processor, packer or distributor, a declaration of quantity and any other information required by law, such as grade and sizes for eggs. No quantity declaration is required for packages weighed at the time of sale and for clear packages of six or fewer fruits or vegetables, if the fruit or vegetable is sold by count. If all packages are of uniform weight or measure, an accompanying placard can furnish the required label information.

When a local food producer advertises any pre-packaged food product and includes the retail price in the advertisement, the ad must list the package contents by weight or volume or state the price per whole measurement unit. (For example, \$1.25 per pound.)

WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

The rules of a state agency have the effect of law and are issued by an agency to implement, interpret or make specific legislation enforced or administered by the agency, or govern the organization or procedure of the agency. “Wisconsin Administrative Code” means such rules as they may be amended from time to time. See the chapters for Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (ATCP) at www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code.html.

State Requirements by Market for Products of Non-Animal Origin

APPLE CIDER	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	No license required Cider must be pressed by the producer/seller Cider must be fully labeled including approved warning statement
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	No license required Cider must be pressed and bottled by the producer/seller Local ordinance may apply Cider must be fully labeled including approved warning statement
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed food processing plant Must comply with juice HACCP 21CFR120 Finished product must be fully labeled
BAKERY ITEMS	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Mobile retail food establishment license required for bakery products that are unpackaged or that require refrigeration for safety
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant
BAKERY ITEMS (FRUIT-BASED)	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Mobile retail food establishment license required for bakery products that are unpackaged or that require refrigeration for safety Local ordinance may apply
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Non-Animal Origin

CANNED FOOD PRODUCTS (low acid)—Small Scale Processing	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Home or farm-based processing not generally feasible for meats or low acid canned foods such as beans, corn, peas, etc. Inadequate processing during the canning of low-acid foods may cause these foods to become unsafe. Small-scale processing is generally impractical because the equipment needed to produce consistently safe food is highly technical and expensive.
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Not applicable
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Not applicable
DRY FOOD MIXES AND BLENDS	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Mobile retail food establishment license required for unpackaged product sales
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled.
FRUIT—Cut	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Local ordinance may apply Additional license depends on cut fruit being sold
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Non-Animal Origin

FRUIT—Frozen	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Additional license depends on type of fruit being sold Local ordinance may apply Frozen fruit must be maintained frozen Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
FRUIT—Raw	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	No license required
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	No license required
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No license required
HERBAL AND FLAVORED VINEGAR	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	No license required Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
HONEY	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm, Door-to Door or at Farmers' Market or Distributing to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No license required for honey sold as beekeeper's own that has no added color, flavors or ingredients Honey must be handled in a way that assures food safety Honey must be fully labeled including Graded or labeled "Ungraded"

State Requirements by Market for Products of Non-Animal Origin

JAMS AND JELLIES	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm, Roadside Farmstand, Farmers' Market or a Community Event	An individual may process in a home kitchen without a food processing plant license within parameters of s. 97.29 (2)(b)2 and s. 97.29(6). Producer must also meet the requirements of the Emergency Rule to create ATCP 70.03 (7)(e)(f) and (note). Please be aware these rule requirements may be subject to change. Product must be fully labeled
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Local ordinance may apply Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
MAPLE SYRUP	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm,	No license required
Door-to Door or at Farmers' Market	Food must be handled in a way that assures food safety Maple syrup must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Food processing plant license required Maple syrup must be processed in a commercial facility Maple syrup must be fully labeled
VEGETABLES—Cut	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment, food processing plant, or mobile retail food establishment Additional license depends on type of cut vegetable sold Local ordinance may apply Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from producer's licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Product and Market of Non-Animal Origin

VEGETABLES—Frozen	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Additional license depends on type of vegetable being sold Local ordinance may apply Frozen vegetables must be kept frozen Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from producer's licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
VEGETABLES—Pickled (acidified)	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm, Roadside Farmstand, Farmers' Market or Community Event	An individual may process in a home kitchen without a food processing plant license within parameters of s. 97.29 (2) (b)2 and s. 97.29(6). Producer must also meet the requirements of the Emergency Rule to create ATCP 70.03 (7) (e) (f) and (note). Please be aware these rule requirements may be subject to change. Successfully complete an Acidified Food Training Course or utilize a scheduled recipe approved by a process authority or from Ball or Kerr Blue Book Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Selling Door-to-Door	Finished product must come from a licensed food processing plant Local ordinance may apply Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
VEGETABLES—Raw	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	No license required
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	No license required
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No license required

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

ANIMALS/CAPTIVE GAME/EXOTICS—Pheasants, Deer & Bison	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail food establishment license required Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Meat may be weighed on-farm with approved scale or weighed by package at processor Product storage areas must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed) Product storage must be used exclusively to store meat sold to customers Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below Meat must be fully labeled
Producer Sells Live Animals and Consumer Arranges for Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No license required
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile retail food establishment license required Local ordinance may apply Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Product storage must be used exclusively to store meat sold to customers Product storage must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed) Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warehouse license required Registration as meat distributor required Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Warehouse freezer and producer's vehicle must be inspected to ensure it is sanitary and that frozen meat will be maintained in a frozen state Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at an internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

AQUACULTURE—Farmed Fish & Seafood	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment or food processing plant license required Packaged fish must be fully labeled
Fee Fishing	Fish eviscerated and filleted as a service to paying fee fishing customers is not licensed by Division of Food Safety
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Mobile retail food establishment license required Frozen fish must be maintained frozen Unfrozen fish products must be maintained and delivered at an internal temperature of 38°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Packaged fish must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Fish must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant that meet the requirements of 21CFR123 Frozen fish must be maintained frozen Unfrozen fish products must be maintained and delivered at an internal temperature of 38°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Fish must be fully labeled
DAIRY—Butter, Cream & Fluid Milk	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm (Farmstead Dairy Plant)	Dairy Farm license required for persons or businesses to operate a dairy farm Dairy Plant license required to process all dairy products Buttermakers license required for persons to be in charge of or supervise the making of butter that will be sold Dairy products must be maintained at internal temperature of 45°F or below Dairy products must be fully labeled
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Mobile retail food establishment license required Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Dairy products must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No additional license required when dairy products come from producer's licensed dairy plant Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 45°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Dairy products must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

DAIRY—Cheese Made from Pasteurized Milk	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm (Farmstead Dairy Plant)	<p>Dairy Farm license required for persons or businesses to operate a dairy farm</p> <p>Dairy Plant license required to process all dairy products</p> <p>License required for persons to be in charge of or supervise the making of cheese that will be sold</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained at internal temperature of 45°F or below</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<p>No additional license required when dairy products come from producer's licensed dairy plant</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 45°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled</p>
DAIRY—Cheese Made from Raw Milk - Raw Milk Cheese	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm (Farmstead Dairy Plant)	<p>Dairy Farm license required for persons or businesses to operate a dairy farm</p> <p>Dairy Plant license required to process all dairy products</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained at internal temperature of 45°F or below</p> <p>License required for persons to be in charge of or supervise the making of cheese that will be sold</p> <p>Raw milk cheese must be aged a minimum of 60 days prior to sale</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled and aged for 60 days</p>
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<p>No additional license required when dairy products come from producer's licensed dairy plant</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 45°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled and aged for 60 days</p>

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

DAIRY—Flavored Milk, Ice Cream, Kefir, Sour Cream & Yogurt	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm (Farmstead Dairy Plant)	Dairy Farm license required for persons or businesses to operate a dairy farm Dairy Plant license required to process all dairy products Dairy products must be maintained at internal temperature of 45°F or below once culture is complete Dairy products must be fully labeled
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Mobile retail food establishment license required Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Dairy products must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No additional license required when dairy products come from producer's licensed dairy plant Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 45°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)
EGGS	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	No license required Eggs must be sold directly to consumer Must be handled in a way to assure food safety including storage at 45°F or below Used carton labels can't be misleading (remove original labeling when re-using cartons)
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Mobile retail food establishment license required Food processing plant license required Eggs must be stored at 41°F during storage and transportation Eggs must be fully labeled including a Grade statement or "Ungraded"
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Food processing plant license required Eggs must be fully labeled Eggs must be stored at 41°F during storage and transportation

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

LIVESTOCK—Cattle, Swine, Sheep, Goats & Ratites	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<p>Retail food establishment license required</p> <p>Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Meat may be weighed on-farm with approved scale or weighed by package at processor</p> <p>Product storage must be clean and located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed)</p> <p>Product storage must be used exclusively to store meat sold to customers</p> <p>Frozen meat must be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen meat products must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below</p> <p>Meat must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Sells Live Animals and Consumer Arranges for Processing	No license required
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required</p> <p>Local ordinance may apply</p> <p>Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Meat may be weighed on-farm with approved scale or weighed by package at processor</p> <p>Product storage must be used exclusively to store meat sold to customers</p> <p>Product storage must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed)</p> <p>Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Meat must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<p>Warehouse license required</p> <p>Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Registration as meat distributor required</p> <p>Warehouse freezer and producer's vehicle must be inspected to ensure it is sanitary and that frozen meat will be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at an internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Meat must be fully labeled</p>

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

POULTRY—Farm-Raised Chickens, Ducks, Geese, Guinea Hens, Squab & Turkeys Less than 1,000 birds per year

Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<p>No license or inspection required for home slaughter and sale</p> <p>Birds must be healthy and come from producer's own flock</p> <p>Poultry can only be sold directly to consumer</p> <p>Producer maintains custody of birds until sold</p> <p>Processed poultry must be handled in a way that assures food safety</p> <p>Frozen poultry must be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled including "Not inspected"</p>
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required</p> <p>Local ordinance may apply</p> <p>Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Frozen poultry must be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<p>Warehouse license required</p> <p>Registration as meat distributor required</p> <p>Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Warehouse freezer and producer's vehicle must be inspected to ensure it is sanitary and that frozen meat will be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled</p>

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

POULTRY—Farm-Raised Chickens, Ducks, Geese, Guinea Hens, Squab & Turkeys	
More than 1,000 birds per year	
Type of Sale	Regulations
<p>Producer Selling from Farm</p>	<p>Retail food establishment or meat plant license required Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Product storage must be used exclusively to store poultry products sold to customers Product storage must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed) Frozen poultry must be maintained frozen Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below Poultry must be fully labeled</p>
<p>Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market</p>	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required and a warehouse license if food is stored more than 24 hours Local ordinance may apply Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Product storage must be used exclusively to store poultry products sold to customers Product storage must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed) Frozen poultry must be maintained frozen Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Poultry must be fully labeled</p>
<p>Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution</p>	<p>Warehouse license required Registration as meat distributor required Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Warehouse freezer and producer's vehicle must be inspected to ensure it is sanitary and that frozen meat will be maintained frozen Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Poultry must be fully labeled</p>

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

RABBITS	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No license or inspection required for home slaughter or sale Producer maintains custody of meat until sold Meat can only be sold directly to consumer Meat must be handled in a way that assures food safety Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below Meat must be fully labeled including “Not inspected”
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers’ Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile retail food establishment license required Local ordinance may apply Rabbit must be processed at a licensed food or meat processing plant Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled including “Not inspected”
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finished product must come from a licensed food processing-plant Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled including “Not inspected”

FOOD SAFETY, LIABILITY AND FARM INSURANCE

Marketing Fresh, Raw Fruits and Vegetables

Farmers in Wisconsin are considered an “approved source” for fruits and vegetables they raise themselves. They can sell any quantity, to any person or business, without a food license. Even though no licensing is required, farmers still have to take reasonable care to avoid contamination of their produce with disease organisms. Food safety starts in the field and continues through the process of harvesting, washing, packaging, storing and transporting fruits and vegetables.

Marketing Eggs

Farmers can sell shell eggs produced by their own laying flock on their farm. No license is required if selling on their farm, but farmers are required to be licensed if they are selling off their property such as to grocery stores, restaurants or food services. Farmers are considered an “approved source” for shell eggs if they are licensed, follow the safe handling guidelines for shell eggs and properly label the eggs as defined in Chapter 88.08 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. Eggs are a perishable product, and must be handled properly to ensure food safety. See page 115 for state requirements.

Marketing Meat or Poultry

Farmers can sell meat and poultry products that have been processed at licensed and inspected processing facilities. The rules vary depending on the type and quantity of meat you are selling and to whom you are selling it. For more information on rules and regulations for meat and poultry, go to pages 105.

Marketing Dairy Products

Dairy products can be produced, processed and sold directly from the farm with appropriate licensing and in a facility that meets state and federal standards. Training and certifications are required for making cheese and butter. For more information on requirements associated with marketing dairy products, go to page 113-115.

For a link to the Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (ATCP) chapters of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, see page 106.

Food marketers must be familiar with and comply with state and federal food laws. In Wisconsin, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is responsible for administering laws concerning weights and measures, packaging and labeling, food advertising and trade practices, and food production and protection (food safety).

Contact DATCP’s Division of Food Safety regional office as your first step to obtain food safety information as it relates to food marketing or food processing. Call either the Madison office at 608-224-4700 or the Eau Claire office at 715-839-3844.

Food Safety Guidelines

Wisconsin’s Food Law states only safe and wholesome food can be offered for sale. It is illegal to manufacture, prepare for sale, store, or sell food unless the food is protected from dust, insects, and any other unclean, unhealthy, or unsanitary condition. To prevent contamination, equipment must be suitable for the type of product being sold.

Marketing Processed or Prepared Foods

Wisconsin Act 101 allows small-scale producers to sell canned fruits and vegetables that are naturally acidic or have been acidified by pickling or fermenting. These products include salsas, sauerkraut, jams and jellies, and pickled fruits and vegetables. Several restrictions apply to these sales. Search <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> for more information on selling home-canned foods under this bill.

Other products, like canned carrots, fish, meat or pickled eggs, may only be sold by licensed vendors. Obtaining a license requires an approved kitchen separate from a home kitchen. Those selling a canned pickled product are encouraged to take a training course in safe canning procedures. The training courses also teach how to conduct pH testing of your product. For more information, call the Division of Food Safety at 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFood@wisconsin.gov.

Learning about safe food handling is good business for any farmer who wants to market a food product. When you sell a food product to the public, even if you are not required to have a license, you still need to follow safe food handling practices. Handling food safely can protect your customers from illness and you from liability. Some of the best practices for handling food are common sense, but some practices are not obvious. Restaurant and food service personnel are well-trained in food safety. If you are bringing food products to sell to them, they need to see you are handling products correctly or they may refuse to accept a shipment from you.

It is helpful to learn the guidelines the food industry follows. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) is an internationally accepted protocol for ensuring food safety. The HACCP procedures are useful information not only for farmers, but for anyone who is processing or preparing a food for sale to the public. For more information go to <http://sop.nfsmi.org/HACCPBasedSOPs.php>.

Food Safety Concerns

Cross-Contamination

Cross contamination occurs when disease-causing organisms move from one type of food to another, or from the food handling environment onto food. Some examples include:

- Using a knife and cutting board to cut up a chicken. The knife or cutting board is not cleaned and hands are not thoroughly washed before cutting up lettuce for a salad. The lettuce can pick up salmonella or other bacteria from the chicken residue left on the knife, cutting board or hands.
- Using a utensil to place pieces of raw meat in a pan for cooking. The same utensil is not cleaned before it is used to remove the cooked meat from the pan, moving the germs from the uncooked meat onto the cooked pieces.

Food Contamination on the Farm

Food contamination can happen in the field during the growing season, harvest and packaging or transport, all before the products get to point-of-sale. Contamination can be caused by fecal material coming in contact with vegetables or water-borne bacteria. Some

examples include:

- A field worker fails to wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and returns to picking vegetables.
- Rain water flows across a barnyard and past a nearby packing shed. The water splashes on a crate of lettuce being hauled to the shed, thus contaminating the lettuce with barnyard germs.

Preventing Food Contamination in the Field

Ways to prevent contamination include:

- Keep pets and livestock out of areas where food is grown, processed, packaged, transported or otherwise handled.
- Be aware of wildlife in your fields, remove or cover wild animal feces if possible. Avoid picking fruits or vegetables from areas right next to wild animal feces.
- Pay attention to the routes you take on your farm. Avoid tracking soil or mud from livestock areas into vegetable or fruit areas.
- Direct rain run-off from livestock areas away from vegetable or fruit areas.
- If manure is used for fertilizer, allow plenty of time for it to break down between spreading and harvest of a crop. The USDA Organic program rules require that manure must be tilled into the soil at least 120 days prior to harvest of a crop that has direct contact with the soil (such as lettuce), and at least 90 days prior to harvest of a crop that does not have direct contact with the soil (such as sweet corn).
- If you irrigate, look for ways to avoid contamination of irrigation water.

Preventing Food Contamination During Packing, Storing and Transport

Ways to prevent contamination include:

- Wash hands again, and again and again.
- Keep watch for anything that could cause cross-contamination.
- Make sure water used for washing fruits and vegetables is from a clean source and is not contaminated on its way to the wash area.
- When washing fruits and vegetables, it is generally best to wash them under running water that can drain away rapidly. Soaking a batch of vegetables in a tub of water can cause cross-contamination if one of the vegetables is contaminated.
- Keep clean, washed, ready-to-eat vegetables and fruits separate from raw vegetables and fruits.

What is GAP/GHP?

There is an increasing focus in the marketplace on good agricultural practices to verify farms are producing fruits and vegetables in the safest manner possible. Third-party audits are being used by the retail and food services industry to verify their suppliers conform to specific agricultural practices. *Good Agricultural Practices* (GAP) include on-farm production and post-production processes resulting in safe and quality food products. *Good Handling Practices* (GHP) include those used in handling and packing operations that minimize microbial contamination of fresh fruits, vegetables and tree nuts.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service, in partnership with state departments of agriculture, offers a voluntary, audit-based program to verify agricultural practices. GAP/GHP audits verify the implementation of a basic food safety program on the farm. This includes examining the farm practices and handling/packing procedures focusing on packing facilities, storage facilities and wholesale distribution centers. These audits are based on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Guidelines to Minimize Microbial Contamination for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and are a fee-based service.

USDA-trained and -licensed auditors provide GAP/GHP certification. GAP certification audits are conducted during harvest when harvest crews are at work. GHP audits are performed when the packing operation is running and workers are present. This federal/state audit program does not cover processed fruits and vegetables. (Inspection of food processors is provided by DATCP's Division of Food Safety.)

The GAP certification process covers three sections of the USDA Federal/State Audit Checklist for farm operations that do not pack their own products:

1. General questions
2. Farm review
3. Field harvest and field packing

The GHP certification process is an add-on for farm operations that conduct packing of fresh fruits and vegetables. The process includes three additional sections in the audit checklist:

4. Packing house review
5. Storage and transportation (optional)
6. Traceback (optional)

Every operation must compile a food safety program that outlines the standard operating procedures and policies that are in practice for the requirements in each section of the audit. In certain circumstances, documentation must also be provided to substantiate practices or analyses of possible contamination.

Go to www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5050869 to view the full USDA Audit Verification Checklist. General questions and parts 1–5 apply to GAP/GHP farm operation audits.

Contact Tim Leege at 715-345-5212 or via email at tim.leege@wisconsin.gov

- Keep packaging areas clean. Clean packing tables with a disinfectant solution in between batches of fruits or vegetables.
- Do not stack dirty things on top of clean things. Keep meat, poultry, and egg products physically separated from fruit and vegetable products.
- When transporting, do not load produce with non-produce items.

Prevent Food Contamination During Processing and Preparation

Ways to prevent contamination include:

- Wash hands again, and again and again.
- Watch for anything that could cause cross-contamination.
- Clean and sanitize all utensils, cutting boards, countertops or other surfaces in between batches of food.
- Wash all vegetables and fruits prior to processing and keep separate from unwashed vegetables and fruits.
- Keep meat, poultry and egg products physically separated from fruit and vegetable products. In a refrigerator, store raw meats that might drip juices in a container that will not leak.
- Follow safe canning procedures.

Produce from Flooded Areas

Generally speaking, state and federal food safety regulations do not cover flooding situations. Regulations governing manure and pesticides also do not address flooding. However, produce that has come in contact with flood water is considered adulterated and cannot be sold for human or animal consumption. For more information go to www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/issues/ExtensionResponds-Flood.html for resources on flood issues regarding homes, agricultural production and frequently asked questions. More resources are listed at the end of this section.

On-Farm Food Safety

Regardless of the size of your farm business or the products grown, all farmers selling food products for public consumption must be aware of food safety and the tips they can observe to minimize contamination.

Public concern about food safety has increased in recent years and farmers should be aware that proper steps need to be taken with their products to eliminate possible avenues of contamination. Safe produce begins with the production and handling practices on the farm. Products grown and sold with little biological contamination are less likely to result in health hazards caused by poor handling during later preparation stages. Farmers and their employees have the critical job of minimizing product contamination by learning about potential sources of contamination and by using Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs).

GAPs are a set of recommendations that can improve the quality and safety of the food products grown. These general guidelines can be incorporated into or adapted by any production system. GAPs focus on four primary components of production and processing: soils, water, hygiene and surfaces.

Soils

Manure is a good form of fertilizer but contains pathogens which may be harmful if there has been insufficient time for bacteria to break down volatile components. You can minimize the risk of manure contamination by using the following steps:

- Allow a minimum of 120 days between manure application and fruit and vegetable harvest
- Incorporate manure into soil or use a cover mulch after application to reduce risk of product contamination from rain or irrigation splash
- Use aerobic composting of manure which destroys microbes
- Apply manure in fall to allow competing bacteria to neutralize volatile components



Photo courtesy of Luna Circle Farm

Food safety starts on the farm and is a consideration from post-harvest handling through sale to the consumer. Proper handling techniques prevent contamination of food during packing, storing and transport.

Water

Water used for irrigation, cooling, processing or cleaning equipment and facilities should be free of microbial contaminants. Avoid using surface water for post-harvest handling procedures. Regularly test your water supply for bacteria contamination. Additionally, water sanitation products are available for produce washing water.

Hygiene

Proper hygiene and health, clean clothes and shoes, and safe practices can assure safe food. Provide clean and appropriately stocked restroom and hand washing facilities for field and processing employees to decrease the risk of product contamination.

Surfaces

Produce comes in contact with surfaces during harvest and processing. These include containers, transport bins, knives, and other utensils, sorting and packaging tables, and storage areas. Basic GAPs to help ensure clean surfaces include:

- Keep potential contaminants such as soil and manure out of the processing area or facility
- Remove spoiled produce in the field
- Clean and sanitize equipment and facilities daily
- Control animal contamination

Source: On-farm Food Safety: Guide to Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Iowa State University Extension PM 1947a. This publication has several references and resources for more information about general produce food safety, GAPs, and food safety plans with websites listed. www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1974A.pdf

Resources for On-Farm Food Safety

Dairy Food Safety Study Guides

Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Network
www.wisconsinairyartisan.com/food_safety_study_guides.html

Link to food safety study guides for state dairy licensing.

Food Code Fact Sheet

WIDATCP
http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Food_Code_Fact_Sheets

A comprehensive list of guides to Wisconsin Food Code.

Food Safety Begins on the Farm

Cornell University
www.gaps.cornell.edu
Good Agricultural Practices Network for Education and Training

Food Safety Risk Management Guide

Kansas State University
www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/foodasyst/foodasys.pdf
Includes an overall checklist for food safety risks during production and marketing of beef, poultry and produce.

Good Agricultural and Handling Practices

USDA
<http://agriculture.sc.gov/UserFiles/file/GAPGHP%20Brochure.pdf>
A program brochure that includes answers to frequently asked questions.

Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
<http://www.fda.gov> (Search "Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards")
This comprehensive, 49-page guide offers tips and procedures for keeping produce safe.

Produce from flooded areas

WIDATCP
<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> (Search Vegetable Flood Guidelines)
Considerations for growers, packing houses and processors

Sample Farm Safety Manual

Oregon Department of Agriculture
www.oregon.gov/ODA/ADMD/docs/pdf/gap_safety_program.pdf
Sample Food Safety Program that can be modified to fit a farm operation.



Photo courtesy of Tara Kindtschi

Eggs are a perishable product and must be handled properly to ensure food safety.

Processed Food Safety

Fruits, vegetables and other food products can be processed on a small scale if safe and sanitary methods of processing and handling are followed. These processed foods include jams and jellies, pickled or acidified fruits and vegetables, herbal or flavored vinegars and even baked goods.

Farm-based processing is generally not feasible for meats or low-acid canned foods such as beans, corn and peas. Inadequate processing during the canning of low-acid foods may cause these foods to be unsafe. Small scale processing of these foods is generally impractical because the equipment needed to produce consistently safe food is highly technical and expensive.

Certain kinds of foods are "potentially hazardous." This term applies to food that may become unsafe if not held at appropriate temperature of 41°F or below or 135°F or above, depending on the product. Potentially hazardous foods of animal origin include products such as milk, milk products, eggs, meat, poultry and fish. Foods of plant origin that are potentially hazardous include plant foods that are heat-treated, raw sprouted seeds (such as alfalfa sprouts), cut melons and garlic-in-oil mixtures. Potentially hazardous foods must be handled with appropriate temperature control to ensure food safety.

If you start a small-scale business processing foods such as pickled products, herbal vinegars, dressings or any food sold in air-tight containers (canned food), state and federal regulations require you use an approved written process, or recipe. You must submit your scheduled process (recipe) to DATCP's Division of Food Safety (DFS) prior to licensing. DFS does not approve processes, but will review and evaluate the process based on available scientific data resources. You must submit the process, or recipe, to a "competent process authority" for evaluation. A process authority would either provide you with a written statement that your process is safe, or may recommend you do further testing before the process can be approved.

If you intend to sell your product outside of Wisconsin, or use ingredients originating from outside Wisconsin, you must file your process

with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Since almost all processes use an ingredient from an out-of-state source, you will invariably have to file your process with the FDA if you thermally process low-acid or acidified food products. Operating under a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan requires filing your process with the FDA and is not necessary for acid foods. Retailing an acidified food requires an approved process, applying for a variance, and passing better processing school.

For more information on obtaining an approved written process prior to licensing, call the Division of Food Safety at 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFood@wisconsin.gov.

For HACCP guidelines through FDA, go to www.cfsan.fda.gov/~brd/haccp.html.

Liability Concerns

Most farms and farm businesses, and certainly farms with direct and intermediate marketing enterprises, have complex mixtures of potential personal and business liabilities. Insurers nationwide are gaining experience with alternative farm enterprises. Because farm insurance needs are complex, you should work directly with an insurance agent to identify your particular needs and to obtain the kinds of coverage necessary.

Farmers who market products need to regularly review their insurance needs with an insurance agent and attorney. Liability questions are more challenging than those raised by simple physical property coverage. Insurance companies offer a diverse range of coverage. Individual policies are available for physical loss of property, liability and workers' compensation, as well as coverage for other specific needs. The alternative most local food marketers select is a package policy that combines all types of coverage in one policy.

Farm Insurance

Farmers are exposed to liability for their enterprises, whether conducted on the premises or away from them, such as while selling at a farmers' market. You are also exposed as a result of injuries to you or one of your employees. If your product causes harm to the buyer, you may be held liable. Liability insurance is



Photo courtesy of Department of Tourism

Besides assessing rules and regulations for your business, you must determine the risk involved in your enterprise. Whether selling on-farm or through various markets, farmers need to regularly review insurance needs for their business.

essential to pay for sums you may become legally obligated to pay.

The main areas of insurance needed typically include liability for products sold, for visitors to the farm, for farm workers, as well as coverage for the value of crops grown and property and equipment owned.

Product Liability

Liability for the food that you sell is called "product liability." This is handled differently depending on where and how much product you sell. On-farm sales may be covered through your regular property insurance package, but don't assume that is the case. Ask your insurance agent if you are covered if someone gets sick from food that you sold. If you are selling to grocery stores or food services, they may require you to carry separate product liability coverage. Some farmers' markets require each vendor to carry their own liability coverage. If you are selling product through a distributor, you probably will be required to carry product liability coverage. Following safe food handling and food processing practices are necessary

to limit your liability exposure and to guard against people becoming ill from your products. Some buyers may refuse your product if they realize you failed to follow safe food handling practices.

Premises Liability

Liability for people who visit your farm is called “premises liability.” If your farm enterprises involve having visitors to the farm, ask your insurance agent if your policy covers all liability exposures. For example, a policy may cover visitors who are guests, but not customers of a farm-based business.

When you have a farm enterprise that invites customers to the farm, such as a Pick Your Own farm, a petting zoo, or a corn maze, there are safety measures you can take to minimize risk to your customers such as:

- Make sure the areas that customers visit are free of debris
- Get rid of wasp and hornet nests near areas visited by customers
- Eradicate harmful weeds such as poison ivy, stinging nettles, and ragweed
- Strictly follow re-entry times for any pesticides
- Lock up farm chemicals, if used
- Keep farm equipment away from customer areas
- Post signs to warn of any dangers you are not able to remove
- Have a well-marked and large enough parking area



Farmers are liable for the food they sell. Some farmers' markets require each vendor carry their own liability coverage.

Not only do such measures protect your customers, they give you some protection against claims of negligence should an injury occur at your farm.

Workers' Compensation and Employers' Liability Insurance Coverage

You have liability for any farm worker you hire. Most employers - including family farmers - are required to carry workers' compensation insurance for employees. Under Wisconsin law, a person engaged in farming is required to obtain a workers' compensation policy when that person employs six or more employees for 20 consecutive or nonconsecutive days during a calendar year. Employees injured on the job receive medical and wage benefits. If workers' compensation doesn't apply, the injured party can still receive compensation from the employer for monetary loss and possibly pain and suffering.

As with product and premises liability, you need to talk to an insurance agent to discuss insurance coverage needs relating to your employees. If you are exempt from carrying workers' compensation, you still need to make sure you have adequate farm worker coverage on your regular farm property insurance package. Also, farmers who are exempt may still choose to purchase workers' compensation coverage as a benefit to their employees.

As a farm employer, you have liability not only for injuries to your employees, but for injuries or losses they may cause to others. To lessen this risk, post clear guidelines and written job descriptions for your employees and discuss this liability concern with your insurance agent.

Property Insurance Coverage

Farm property includes buildings, vehicles, equipment, and inventory. A clear explanation in the policy is essential so you know what the policy provides.

Farm property insurance includes coverage for different types of farm structures, vehicles, machinery, equipment, inventory, livestock and crops. Coverage options may vary depending on the type and cause of loss. Losses may include damage to or loss of physical items that are owned, leased or contracted by your business.

You must know the value of the property or equipment you wish to cover and today's replacement value of these items. You'll also want to evaluate what type of losses will impair your farm operation and for how long.

Read your farm property insurance policy carefully to know the risks covered and any conditions, restrictions, or exclusions that may limit insurance coverage. Review your insurance coverage annually and make any needed adjustments.

Crop Insurance and Livestock Price Insurance

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) of the USDA underwrites crop insurance for farmers. The RMA provides insurance for a wide variety of crops, including many fruits and vegetables. For a list of crops covered, go to www.rma.usda.gov and search "Crops Covered." Then choose the list of crops covered for the most recent year.

RMA's Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) product provides protection against low revenue due to unavoidable natural disasters and market fluctuations that occur during the insurance year. Covered farm revenue consists of income from agricultural commodities, including incidental amounts of income from animals and animal products and aquaculture reared in a controlled environment. For more information go to www.rma.usda.gov/policies/agr.html.

AGR-Lite insurance is available through underwriting by the RMA. This whole-farm income insurance policy is based on a farm's five-year history of revenue, plus the current year's farm plan. This type of plan may be attractive to diversified enterprises since coverage is not tied to one specific crop or mix of crops.

For producers to qualify for disaster programs administered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency, such as the Livestock Forage Program, Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish, and the Tree Assistance Program, farmers must have their own baseline crop insurance.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) program provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. For more information go to www.fsa.usda.gov and search NAP or go to your local FSA office.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

This program, while not an insurance, is available to eligible producers on farms in disaster counties that have incurred crop production or quality losses and whose economically significant crops are covered by crop insurance or NAP. For more information go to www.card.iastate.edu/iowa_ag_review/summer_08/article3.aspx

Resources for Risk Management and Insurance

Agent Locator

USDA-RMA

www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/companies/RMA
RMA's online agent locator lists crop insurance and livestock price insurance agents.

Risk, Liability and Insurance for Direct Marketers

UW Extension

www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3811-7.pdf
A brief introduction to liability and insurance for direct marketers.

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

USDA

www.rma.usda.gov/pubs/rme/fctsht.html
Online publications and crop fact sheets.

BUY LOCAL, BUY WISCONSIN

The “Buy Local” food movement is one of the fastest growing trends in agriculture today and is an important influence economically, socially, and culturally. Local food initiatives are gaining momentum in Wisconsin and are creating new business opportunities for state farmers.

Wisconsin farmers and small food manufactures produce an abundance of wonderful food. Increasing access to local markets is a win-win solution for the farmer, retailer and consumer. “Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin” will help create the structure to link all of the players and will provide the producer training necessary to increase locally produced food in our schools, grocery stores and restaurants.

Mark Olson, Renaissance Farm



Photo courtesy of Department of Tourism

The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program efforts strengthen connections between producers, retailers, institutions and consumers by developing and expanding local food markets for Wisconsin farmers and processors.

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin is a comprehensive program to support local food systems by working with farmers and food buyers to develop new markets for Wisconsin food products. The design and components of this program represent the ideas and experience of individuals from across the state who logged hundreds of hours in research, working group meetings, and online forums for information sharing. The combined efforts of growers, producers, and individuals representing grassroots and nonprofit organizations, industry working groups, the University of Wisconsin, and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection resulted in legislation to fund a statewide program.

The *Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin* program positively impacts farmers, communities, consumer nutrition, the environment, and Wisconsin’s economy by supporting increased availability and demand for locally grown foods. A competitive grant program funds local food efforts that increase the sale of Wisconsin grown or produced food products or expand agricultural tourism in the state. In addition to grant funding, the program:

- Offers competitive grants to support the infrastructure of local food systems
- Provides one-on-one technical assistance program from local food producers
- Identifies food safety barriers and implements solutions
- Arranges intensive, day-long workshops designed to educate local producers and business to facilitate successful ventures
- Partners with DHS, DPI, CIAS, REAP, AmeriCorps Farm to School and many other state-wide farm school programs
- Compliments the work of existing local food programs including SavorWisconsin.com, Something Special from Wisconsin™ and other efforts across the state

For more information on the *Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin* program, email DATCPBLBW@wisconsin.gov or go to: <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> (Search “Buy Local”).

WISCONSIN LOCAL FOOD MARKETING GUIDE



A Producer's Guide to Marketing Locally Grown Food

SECOND EDITION

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WELCOME TO THE WISCONSIN LOCAL FOOD MARKETING GUIDE SECOND EDITION

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is proud to present the second edition of the award-winning *Wisconsin Local Food Marketing Guide*. The first edition garnered the Wisconsin Library Association Government Roundtable's Distinguished Document Award and received the American Library's Association's Notable Document award.

This beautifully illustrated book provides guidance to food producers seeking local markets. It discusses direct marketing, selling to restaurants and other intermediaries, market development, and legal compliance. Cogent prose and fascinating profiles make this a pleasure to read. Though a portion of the text is specific to Wisconsin, this title belongs in every library serving farmers and other producers.

- Library Journal, May 15, 2010

This edition includes updated information from the first edition, while growing and expanding the content to capture the growth occurring in local foods. Highlights of the new edition include:

- New and updated profiles
- Improved 'Getting Started' section for the beginning farmer and new ventures
- New resources, tools and considerations for those launching a new business or farm
- Marketing additions including social media and promotional programs
- Farm to school update
- Additions on artisan meat, wine and beer production
- New information on sales tax and food sampling laws for farmers' markets and agritourism
- Updated grocery section
- New information, resources and updated regulations

The *Wisconsin Local Food Marketing Guide* publication was made possible through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program, which strives to increase the sale of Wisconsin food products to local buyers.

This publication builds upon the research and efforts of the Minnesota Institute of Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) and their publication, *Marketing Local Food*. This project's first installment was also made possible by the North Central Risk Management Education Center and continued through the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program funding.

Thank you for your interest. We hope you are successful with your future endeavors.



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The publication is also available online at <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> - Search "Local Food Marketing Guide"

Additional copies of this publication can be obtained by contacting:

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INTRODUCTION

Putting a Face and Place to Food: Local Food Brings Resurgence of New Agriculturalists

From farmers' markets to community supported agriculture, from artisan cheeses to specialty meats, Wisconsin's original entrepreneurs - its farmers - are reinvigorating agriculture in the state. These progressive farmers are transforming the landscape and culture of agriculture. Their influence is affecting how food is grown and how new food systems will be built. They are an important piece of Wisconsin agriculture, complementing the successful commercial agricultural industries built in Wisconsin.

In the past, more people had a connection to the land as producing food was a necessity of life. Communities created festivals around the planting and harvesting seasons, beseeching good crops and bountiful harvests. Their lives and the lives of their neighbors were intimately connected to the harvest yields produced from their efforts.

In the past century, as rural populations gravitated toward urban centers, many of the connections people traditionally had with the land became strained and even broken. Today, the average U.S. citizen is three generations removed from production agriculture. Without the direct connection to growing food themselves, consumers have begun expressing an interest in knowing where and how their food is produced and grown. This desire to make a food connection has linked food producers and consumers.

Local food production is a groundswell sweeping across the state's countryside and inside urban areas, creating opportunities for Wisconsin farmers. New customers are streaming to farmers' markets, seeking not only farm-fresh

produce but also a connection to the land on which it is grown. Studies have shown that consumers are increasingly looking for food diversity, freshness and ties to food producers.¹

Consumers are rediscovering the bounty grown in Wisconsin. From garden vegetables to fruit trees; from honey and maple syrup to meat products; from restaurant creations sourcing local foods to simple, home-cooked meals, a new food landscape is appearing on Wisconsin's tables. As Wisconsin witnesses and participates in this expansion of local food production, a resurgence of textures and flavors is surfacing to benefit both producers and consumers.

The timing has never been better to enter the local food production systems in Wisconsin. Increased consumer demand, interest in preparing healthy meals, information availability, and expertise willingly shared with new producers have changed the dynamics so that small- and large-scale farmers, alike, can thrive in the marketplace.

Recent polls and studies reveal a growing local food trend. Nearly everyone, from consumers to large chain stores, is taking part at some level. A 2008 survey found that 82 percent of American consumers had purchased local food, while only seven percent had not.² According to an analysis conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, many large retail chains have made efforts to locally source their products.³

¹Food Marketing Institute. 2009. U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends, Food Marketing Institute: Arlington, VA.

²Onozaka, Y., Nurse, G., and D. Thilmany McFadden. 2010. "Local Food Consumers: How Motivations and Perceptions Translate to Buying Behavior." *Choices*, Vol. 25.

³Martinez, S. et al. 2010. "Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues." U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Report 97.

This expanding demand has shown itself in both direct and indirect markets. Between 2009 and 2010, the number of farmers' markets in the United States grew by 16 percent, to 6,132 from 5,274.⁴ The 2007 Census of Agriculture found Wisconsin is home to 437 farms marketing their products through Community Supported Agriculture, ranking seventh out of all 50 states. Restaurants are also a large purchaser of local food. The National Restaurant Association's 2008 'fine dining' operator survey found 89 percent of operators offered locally grown or locally made items, and 90 percent believed local food would become more popular in the future.

The range of local agricultural products available has expanded as farmers have responded to the public's interest in the food appearing on their plates. As consumers' desire to reconnect to food drives their buying choices, farmers are presented not only with new opportunities to meet that demand, but also an opportunity to tell the stories of their farms, lifestyles and philosophies.

These expanding markets provide excellent potential for new and existing producers. The scope of Wisconsin's production diversity covers many areas, and each new producer brings a unique set of skills and perspective to the table. The *Wisconsin Local Food Marketing Guide* is intended as a resource for farmers and producers. It will acquaint you with some of the opportunities you can use to market your food products. You will learn from those who pioneered innovative production and marketing approaches. Understanding what's involved in local food marketing will better prepare you for success.

There are many reasons for wanting to produce food products for sale locally. A satisfying experience and growing marketing opportunity are among some of the many reasons. No matter your reason, you will find the resources and information you need to start your business in the following pages.

⁴U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2010. "USDA Announces that National Farmers Market Directory Totals 6,132 Farmers Markets In 2010." News Release 0390.10.

Selling Local Foods

- Consumers have a growing interest in the food on their plate; they want to know where and how their food is produced and grown
- Selling your products should be compatible with your personal philosophy and sense of stewardship
- Local food production establishes a sense of community



New growers need to find a place in the market to match their land, facilities, abilities and scale of production.

Richard de Wilde, Harmony Valley Farm



CHAPTER 1

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CHAPTER 1

Getting Started - A New Business Venture

How do you get started in local food production and marketing? What do you need to consider? Like any business venture, establishing the entire concept and developing the initial steps may seem overwhelming. You must learn and become proficient with a whole new set of skills for your business to succeed.

The good news about local food production and marketing is that you do not have to start from scratch to learn the business. This guide provides information on many valuable resources available to help you get started, develop a plan, and define your goals. There are people who have already developed local food production and marketing systems that work. Some are profiled in this guide and others are listed in the resource sections. Some are speaking at workshops or displaying at events around the state. Those who have paved the way can provide answers to questions and give encouragement.

Most have had to ask themselves many questions along the way while developing and guiding their business. This section provides resources for those looking to start farming or a food business, as well as those who have experience and are looking to expand into new types of production and/or are interested in marketing locally.

GATHERING INFORMATION

For those unfamiliar with farming or your new business avenue or interest, the first steps, such as acquiring land or planting seeds may be a complete mystery. Fortunately, many resources and opportunities exist for beginning farmers to help them get started with agricultural production. It is also important to remember that the steps of beginning farming are flexible, and no two farmers follow the exact same formula in starting a farm or a new venture.

On Farm Experience

One excellent opportunity for new farmers is to work or intern on an existing farm. Many experienced farmers are eager to share their excitement and knowledge about farming. Some offer special teaching sessions during their program on topics like irrigation or machinery. Internships usually last for a growing season but sometimes continue for a year or longer. Websites maintaining up-to-date listings of jobs, internships and apprenticeships are included in the first colored box on page 8.

Attend Classes and Conferences

Many new and experienced farmers also enroll in classes and workshops in order to expand their agricultural knowledge. Some classes or conferences only last a day or two, making it a quick and easy way to gain information on a new topic. You can find these on the next page in the colored box.

Resources for Beginning Farming

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Grant Program USDA

www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmerandrancher.cfm
A federal program for farm or ranch operators with less than 10 years of experience.

Beginning Farmer Resource List

Center for Rural Affairs
www.cfra.org/resources/beginning_farmer
A list of various opportunities and resources for beginning farmers.

Loon Organics: A Prototype Technical Case Study for Beginning Farmers

Profiles in Sustainable Agriculture
<http://sustagprofiles.info>
This case study details a couple's training and transition from farming on rented land with mentors to buying their own farm.

Resources for Beginning Farmers

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
<http://www.misa.umn.edu/FarmFoodResources/index.htm>
This guide contains many resources for farmers across the Midwest.

The Upper Midwest Organic Resource Directory

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service
www.mosesorganic.org
A reference guide to organic resource groups and certification.

Beginning Farming Educational Tools

Jobs, Internships and Apprenticeships:

Farm-Based Education Jobs

www.farmbasededucation.org/page/farmbased-education-jobs

Farm-Based Education Association

Sustainable Farming Internships and Apprenticeships

<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/internships/>
National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service

Seeking Farmers-Seeking Land Clearinghouse

www.landstewardshipproject.org/fb/resources.html
Land Stewardship Project

Internship Board

www.misa.umn.edu/StudentPrograms/Internships/index.htm
Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture

MOSES Farmer-to-Farmer Mentoring Program

www.mosesorganic.org/mentoring.html
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service

Classes:

Beginning Farming Courses

The Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems
www.cias.wisc.edu/category/education-and-training/
Beginning farming courses: Beginning Dairy & Livestock or Beginning Fruit, Vegetables and Flowers.

Farm Beginnings

Land Stewardship Project
www.landstewardshipproject.org/farmbeg.html
Farmer-led educational training program designed to help people who want to evaluate their enterprise.

Whole Farm Workshops

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
<http://michaelfieldsagainst.org/work/education/workshops/index.shtml>
Offers workshops such as Soil 101 and Pest & Disease Management.

Farm Business & Production Management Degree

Wisconsin Technical College System
www.witc.edu/pgmpages/farmbus/wtcs.htm
A series of classroom and on-farm courses taught over a six-year period, resulting in a technical diploma.

Conferences:

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Workshop Roadshow

Wisconsin DATCP
http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Business/Buy_Local_Buy_Wisconsin/index.aspx
Workshops held in locations around the state to provide the tools to take advantage of markets.

Organic Farming Conference

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service
www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html
This annual conference has over 60 informative workshops.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Conference

Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers Assoc.
www.wisconsinfreshproduce.org/WFFVC/
A winter conference open to growers and operators, offers networking opportunities and a trade show.

Midwest Value Added Agriculture Conference

River Country Resource Conservation and Development Council
www.rivercountryrcd.org/valad.html
Aimed at bringing farmers together to network and learn about local projects and resources available.

BUSINESS DECISIONS AND PLANNING

Choosing a local food marketing strategy that works for you depends on your personal preferences, the amount of product you produce and your ability to work with state inspections, customer contact, food preparation and risk.

Every producer needs to become aware of current business opportunities and future possibilities. What is going on in the markets you are currently interested in and what possibilities or trends are being suggested or discussed? These are some of the questions to consider as you research market opportunities. Engaging in these steps provides opportunities to gather market information. In addition to these initial steps, read professional organizations' materials, network with market buyers and then make on a decision on initial product(s) to produce and test.

The exercises below and on the next page are a great start for thinking about what kinds of marketing might suit you. Yet, do not let these be the only considerations. If there is one defining feature of the local food movement, it is creativity. You just might find a new way to do things that matches your preferences.

Which Markets Suit Your Personal Preferences?

Do you like working closely with people and having a lot of public contact?

If so, consider opportunities where you can work directly with the consumer such as, farmers' market or agritourism. If not, consider working with restaurants, grocers or distributors.

Do you prefer to secure wholesale prices or do you seek a premium price?

You can receive secure wholesale prices through distributors or institutional food service. Achieve premium pricing through an on-farm store, CSAs, farmers' markets, Pick Your Own, restaurants, or grocery stores.

Market Types

Many options exist for marketing food locally. Some of the most visible local food sales are direct from farmer to consumer, but there's more than direct marketing. There are growing opportunities to connect to a local food system through intermediate marketing. Consider balancing your risks by choosing more than one marketing avenue.

Direct Marketing is selling your farm products directly to consumers for their use. Products are not sold for resale. It allows for a direct connection at the point of sale for the producer and the consumer. Farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) farms, agritourism, Pick Your Own and on-farm stores are all forms of direct marketing.

Direct Marketing

Benefits

- Higher product prices eliminating the middle portion of the distribution system
- Consumer connection at point of sale
- Direct feedback from customers when introducing new varieties or products

Challenges

- Higher product prices do not necessarily lead to greater profits
- Time consuming
- Must have good customer relationship skills

Success in direct marketing comes from producing a high-quality product where the consumers feel they are getting a better product for their money than if they buy elsewhere. Value is created when a product meets, or exceeds, the customers' expectations.

Intermediate Marketing is selling your product to a specific buyer for resale. This can include restaurants using food to make a menu item, grocery stores selling to the consumer and even institutions such as schools and hospitals. You can also sell to wholesalers and distributors.

Intermediate Marketing

Benefits

- Brand exposure at multiple locations
- Potential to reach more consumers
- Consistent orders from buyers
- Larger volume can increase efficiency

Challenges

- Owners and buyers change
- Price received is usually lower than those for direct marketing
- Seasonal supply can be a challenge to relationships with certain buyers

Product Research

Write out your product idea in pencil as there will probably be changes to your initial idea. Then start calling on prospective customers (not family and friends) asking them what they like and dislike about your idea. After visiting with prospective customers, you will have gained unrivaled market information and may now know what product or product attributes signify an opportunity.

Ask prospective customers or hold a focus group on your product. This will reveal if your product is really needed in the marketplace and allows you to test price points and preferences with different buyers and target audiences. It will also help determine the market volume demand, a crucial part of business plan projections. If required, adjust your product to meet market needs.

Those considering adding value or processing raw agricultural products must use capital wisely. In order to conserve capital, it may be to your advantage to use others' resources to initially produce your product. It is critical to invest strategically and wisely to ensure the strength and development of your business.

- Source product from growers whose production standards meet your requirements
- Use others' facilities to produce and package your product:
 - Contract manufacturing and/or packaging
 - Rent facility (maybe off production hours) and produce and/or packaging
 - If needed, contract for distribution

When pricing your products for market, you need to develop a pricing program for each product. This will allow you to incorporate all expenses, such as materials, transportation, packaging and marketing costs, yet obtain a fair return on your labor. Setting prices is typically the hardest thing farmers do when they market products.

Creating a Business Plan and Budget

Marketing produce, meats or value-added farm products is a business. Like any other startup business, it takes an investment of time and money to ensure success. Finding your place in the market depends on your land base, scale of production and managerial abilities.

Developing a business plan helps you define your business, provides you with direction to make sound decisions, helps you set goals and provides a means to measure progress. A business plan increases your chance of success. Business plans do not need to be extensive, but must answer several questions that enable you to focus your efforts. Developing and writing your plan forces you to examine the resources you have available and the ones you need. You can also evaluate the capital investment and additional materials required. Having a sound business plan with cost and income projections supports a knowledgeable case for a loan, should you need to raise startup funds. It also points you in the right direction for future growth opportunities.

Resources for Business Planning, Budgets and Funding Sources

Budget Projection for Vegetable Production

Iowa State University Extension
www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/pm2017.pdf
This enterprise budgeting tool can help growers estimate the costs and revenue associated with producing a product.

Building a Sustainable Business

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
<http://www.misa.umn.edu/Publications/BuildingaSustainableBusiness/index.htm>
A guide to developing a business plan for farms.

Business Planning for Any Value-Added Agricultural Business

WI DATCP Division of Agriculture Development
http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Business/Business_Resources/index.aspx
A comprehensive listing of resources and technical assistance provided as a tool to help small businesses develop and grow.

Enterprise Budgets

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
www.cias.wisc.edu/category/economics/enterprise-budgets
Enterprise budgeting tools for dairy sheep, dairy goats, poultry, and specialty foods.

Grower to Grower: Creating a Livelihood

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
www.cias.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/grwr2grwr.pdf
Farmer-Led Case Study on Financial Success Comparison

Wisconsin School for Beginning Market Growers

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
www.cias.wisc.edu/wisconsin-school-for-beginning-market-growers
An intensive three-day course on how to set up and run a successful market garden or small farm.

Business Plan Basics

A business plan is as important for an established business as it is for startups. A business plan should have a realistic view of your expectations and long-term objectives. The process of developing a plan forces you to clearly understand what you want to achieve and how and when you can do it. This process includes evaluating, discussing, researching and analyzing aspects of your proposed business and may ultimately determine the financial feasibility of your ideas.

Purpose of a Business Plan

- Helps clarify your objectives
- Develops a structure for your business
- Aids financial discussions with lenders or investors
- Provides a benchmark for comparing actual performance with initial goals

Before Writing a Comprehensive Business Plan

- Define your target audience
- Determine requirements to reach goals
- Decide the likely length of the plan
- Identify the main issues to be addressed

Business Plan Outline

- Introduction
- Mission, Vision and Objectives
- Company Summary
- Product/Service Offerings
- Market Analysis
- Target Markets
- Marketing/Sales Strategies and Projections
- Operational/Manufacturing Plans
- Management
- Financial Projections
- Appendices

Your business plan should be realistic about expectations and long-term objectives. By using an outline such as the one above, you will be able to write each section concisely yet comprehensively. One key is to address only those matters of real substance and major significance within the main sections of the plan. See the list of resources on this page to obtain more specific information on business planning and developing budgets.

Other Business Resources

Land

Every farmer needs land, whether it's for planting, livestock or processing. Finding affordable farmland can sometimes prove to be challenging. However, several projects now exist that seek to partner retiring farmers with beginning farmers, eventually leading to a transfer of ownership. The resources below also include programs that identify available land in your area.

Farm Link

WI DATCP Farm Center

http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Farms/Wisconsin_Farm_Center/Farm_Transfers/Farm_Link/index.aspx

Farm Link is a farm transfer matching program, basing matches on compatible goals and needs.

Land Bin

www.landbin.com/land/wi

A database of land for sale in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Land Stewardship Project Clearinghouse

Land Stewardship Project

www.landstewardshipproject.org/lb/resources.html

A clearinghouse for beginning farmers seeking to rent or buy land.

Lands of America

www.landsofamerica.com/america

A large database of land for sale across the country, including farms and ranches.

Labor

Another aspect to beginning a farm or a new food business venture is to hire labor. Some options include finding interns, hiring foreign labor, or allowing volunteer work. One of the easiest ways to find labor is to post your opportunities online. Also consider posting these opportunities on the resources listed on page 8 in the box under jobs, internships and apprenticeships.

Crop Mobs

<http://cropmob.org>

An organization that arranges for groups of non-farmers to volunteer on a farm for a short period of time.

Foreign Labor Certification

U.S. Department of Labor

www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov

The H-2A program allows employers to utilize foreign labor on a temporary basis in agricultural jobs.

Job Center of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

<https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com>

A large job database for all sectors of the economy.

Financing

Most new businesses or business ventures require external funding to get started. Private banks are not the only option. Make sure to investigate public lenders and private organizations that exist to develop rural areas or to encourage entrepreneurship.

Business Resources

WI DATCP

http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Business/Business_Resources/index.aspx

A comprehensive listing of resources provided as a tool to help small businesses develop and grow using money, information and technical assistance.

Building Sustainable Farms, Ranches and Communities

The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service

<http://attra.ncat.org/guide/index.html>

A guide to federal funding programs for agriculture and rural communities.

Strategies for Financing Beginning Farmers

Center for Rural Affairs

www.cfra.org/files/BF-Financing-Strategies.pdf

A brief guide to financial considerations for new farmers and a list of funding sources.

The Farmer's Guide to Agricultural Credit

Rural Advancement Foundation International

www.rafiusa.org/pubs/Farmer%27s%20Guide.pdf

A guide to agricultural borrowing and lending, including tips on what lenders will look for and how to get ready to borrow money.

Technical Assistance

Looking to experts for technical assistance can be an asset to your business. These areas can include but are not limited to: business planning, accounting and financial organization, packaging and label development, food safety, grant writing assistance, market development, etc.

Agricultural Innovation Center

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/aic/>

Educational resources, a network for seekers and providers of technical assistance and limited financing opportunities.

Producers First

WI DATCP Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Program

http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Business/Buy_Local_Buy_Wisconsin/Producers_First/index.aspx

For new and beginning farmers. Small to mid-sized farmers may receive funding up to \$3,000 for one-on-one technical assistance.

The U.S. Small Business Administration

www.sba.gov/index.html

An independent agency of the federal government created to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation.

Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network

<http://www.wenportal.org>

WEN's mission is to provide seamless access to the statewide network of entrepreneurial resources and expertise to create new ventures; help grow existing business, and move forward high potential entrepreneurs to enable Wisconsin to be competitive.



Luna Circle's stand at the Dane County Farmers' Market features vegetables, herbs, and certified organic vegetable plants.

PROFILE

Luna Circle Farm

Producers First
Participant

Tricia Bross

www.LunaCircleFarm.net

Developing and creating a market for farm products based on your personal philosophy can be an avenue to success. Luna Circle Farm's strong commitment to sustainable agriculture has led to a self-sustaining farm ecosystem that produces a wide variety of vegetables and herbs, as well as sales of vegetable plants.

"Our commitment to low-input, small-scale agriculture has remained constant throughout the years," says Tricia Bross. She has owned and developed Luna Circle Farm near Rio for the past nine years. "I spent the previous 12 years in the Gays Mills area and really loved it. But as I developed my business, I found that I didn't like the four-hour commute to the Saturday Madison Farmers' Market, so I decided to move closer to that area," she explains.

"I grew up in Wisconsin but moved to New England and during a four-year period, I interned on several farms with different produce production systems. For anyone whose life situation allows them to do that, it's really a fantastic way to get a huge education on what you can do with your program."

"I knew from my experience as an apprentice in the East that we could handle 2 acres of produce before hiring other help. We did 1.75 acres for several years and then hired some help to expand the farm."

"I use a technique called holistic resource management. That's a process where you set your goals, but they're not just business goals, they encompass your entire lifestyle. I like to think of them as a quality-of-life viewpoint."

"I look at any big-purchase items and then compare it with my goals and ask if they will help meet these goals, which are a quality-of-life issue, and a certain environmental sense and a commitment of paying my workers as much as I can. Those things are all important to who I am as a person and it's important that the decisions I make be based on them."

"I didn't invest in a lot of equipment but I have two small tractors: one for plowing and tilling and one for cultivating. I do have different attachments to do different things but I try to do as much of my weeding as I can mechanically. Our rows are spaced for our equipment and not necessarily for people."

"Before you plant, you need to figure out where you're going to market because otherwise you might have beautiful tomatoes, but nowhere to take them."

Tricia Bross, Luna Circle Farm

"If I were to offer a suggestion to a new grower it would be to try to hire your tillage work done if you can; at least in the beginning. A lot of people, when they think about a farm, think about a tractor. Everybody thinks that that's the glamorous part of farming. But actually, if you have limited income, you might want to invest your money in a good walk-in cooler so that your produce looks really good. You can grow great food, but if you don't have a way to chill it and cool it so that it looks good when you get to the farmers' market or your CSA, you're not going to make any money."

“On our 20 acres we raise 4 acres of vegetables. I have a nice pole barn that has a double cooler. One room is for the vegetables that don’t like it so cold like squash, tomatoes, and potatoes, and is kept between 55° and 65°F. The other room is about 35° for those vegetables, such as lettuce, broccoli, greens, and so on, that like being that cold.”

“We converted an old wood drive-through corn crib into our wash area with sinks and tubs. It’s a place where we do bunching of vegetables and has good air flow in summer. I have five greenhouse structures that are 30’ x 95’. We’re doing much more growing at the beginning and end of the season in the ground in those greenhouses. Last year I was able to keep selling at the farmers’ market until about the twelfth of December.”

“We need to stagger our plantings through the year. Anyone who wants to grow vegetables needs to learn about succession planting, like how many times you can plant things during the year. It depends on what works for you and you have to experiment a little at first.”

“Prices are probably the hardest thing to determine for a new grower. You need to pay yourself for your work. You’re providing a good product. I think many people make the mistake of under-pricing their products.”

“We’re looking at our total production costs for every crop, including time spent planting. It’s a lot of recordkeeping but we’re trying to keep track of each crop to see if we’re pricing our products to reflect that. You also need to consider your transportation costs, which have consistently kept rising and I will need to adjust my prices to reflect that.”

“Our promotion includes a website which draws a lot of traffic. But what makes the most difference to me is that I sell all the CSA shares I want to sell and then I’m in good shape. I do a brochure that I put out at natural food stores. This year we have 90 CSA shares, but if I go to more shares then I will have to cut down on the farmers’ market.”

“If I could offer another piece of advice for a new grower it would be to learn proper post-harvest handling techniques for every vegetable they raise. You can’t take improperly cooled produce to a market and expect it to look good to the customers passing by. I teach a three-day class at the UW–Madison called ‘Beginning Market Gardening’ and that’s one of the things I really stress. If it doesn’t look good it won’t sell. So do a good job.”

“I can’t actually stress enough how important classes like that are. I had somebody who called me recently who said that he wanted to grow tomatoes for the farmers’ market and thought he had the space to grow half an acre of tomatoes, but he had no idea how to market them. Before you plant, you need to figure out where you’re going to market because otherwise you might have beautiful tomatoes but nowhere to take them.”

Prices are probably the hardest thing to determine for a new grower. You need to pay yourself for your work. You’re providing a good product. I think many people make the mistake of under-pricing their products.

Tricia Bross, Luna Circle Farm



Luna Circle Farm does plantings every week of the summer to assure a consistent supply of vegetables for both the farmers’ market and their CSA.

PROFILE

Cates Family Farm

Dick & Kim Cates

www.CatesFamilyFarm.com

Direct marketing their beef products has become a specialty of the Cates family. They grass-finish steers from spring through fall and market to more than 200 customers, including households, restaurants and retail stores.

“There’s no doubt that people want to make a connection with farms and farmers,” Dick Cates says. “It’s on an unprecedented scale and the opportunity for succeeding by offering a quality product is wide open.”

Cates believes there are several reasons for this renewed interest in local foods, including people being tired of losing control, losing contact and losing a relationship with food production. “I think people are reacting to that and taking back some control by re-establishing relationships and connections with place and the people who raise their food.”

Reducing carbon footprint is another reason for interest in finding local produce for the family table. “Only through collaboration and cooperation can we reduce our carbon footprint and have a chance to do our part to protect the planet,” he states. “It’s clear that our present dominant food system requires exorbitant energy for packaging and transporting food across the country and the world.”

Another reason, he says, is the increasing concern people place on what they consume and what the impact of their food is on their bodies and the environment. “By making these conscious choices, they can have some control over that,” he adds.

Cates Family Farm near Spring Green addresses those concerns by producing a quality product that finds its way to more than 200 customers each year. “We try to find a market for each kind of cut,” Cates notes. “We don’t have a large number of restaurants because oftentimes they want high-end cuts, and there are only so many you can get from an animal. We do have one restaurant that wants everything from tenderloin to soup bones. We have stores that want different products. Some want ground beef, some want sliced deli meat, and some want sausage or smoked meats. We try to match the markets with what we have available.”

Households are the most diverse customers because they generally want a package of mixed cuts. With households, Cates



Photos courtesy of Cates Family

Market Opportunities for Farmers

For anyone wanting to get into direct marketing, they need to make themselves known at farmers’ markets first.

Dick Cates, Cates Family Farm



The Cates family welcomes many visitors every year, including this class from Growing Power in Milwaukee.

The market is expanding and we’re riding a huge wave right now. I don’t feel we’re competing with anyone else because there’s room for many more in this business.

Dick Cates, Cates Family Farm

Providing a comfortable environment for our animals is as important to us as it is to their well-being; for it adds an element of dignity to our profession of animal husbandry. To be acknowledged for our work by a reputable organization such as the Animal Welfare Institute is a meaningful embrace from a bigger world.

Dick Cates, Cates Family Farm



says they can move a large quantity of beef but he treats their needs differently. “A family is coming to us with a food budget to get food for their family for six months,” he says. “We offer larger packages of beef for our households at a price savings because our food is part of their daily budget. So the pricing is different.”

As farmers return to traditional ways of raising their animals, markets are opening up for their products. “For anyone wanting to get into direct marketing, they need to make themselves known at farmers’ markets first,” Cates says. “There you have a predisposed buyer and lots of them. Even those who may not buy at that moment are interested and potentially are buyers. Farmers’ markets are a wonderful way to meet new customers - chefs, retail food buyers and household customers. In time, word-of-mouth will be your best promotion, if you treat your customers well and have a good product.”

For growers wanting to enter the direct market, Cates offers some suggestions. “One key is to market as much of your beef ahead of the butchering time as possible,” he explains. “That way you can reduce freezer size and storage costs, and you’re not handling it into your freezer and then back out when you deliver it. Being able to deliver as you pick it up at your processors saves you a lot of work.”

Cates says that’s one of the skills you develop when coordinating processing with delivery times. He believes a direct marketer needs to work on your business, not, in your business. “You have to stop working just on fences, your cattle, your equipment, because you need to work on your marketing. It’s

better to figure out how to add value to your product and spend less on the traditional farming chores and tasks. Find help with the traditional farm tasks if you are unable to do both well.”

That’s the route the Cates took when they started 20 years ago. “You need to build business relationship marketing,” he notes. “You also have to recognize that as a farm family, you have a unique story to tell. That’s what people are



Photo courtesy of Liliane Miller

Dick Cates explains his farm program to the staff of L’Etoile restaurant. Field trips are a great chance for everyone to learn more about local food and the farmers who produce it.

interested in learning. So your business relationship starts with talking with people to propel your business forward.”

Cates believes there is one more ingredient needed: “As long as you conduct honest business and do what you say you’ll do, offer to return the food if it’s not up to par, you can move ahead. The market is just expanding and we’re riding a huge wave right now. I don’t feel we’re competing with anyone else because there’s room for many more in this business.”

PROFILE

Coulee View Family Farm

Producers First
Participant

Dean and Kim Zimmerman
www.CouleeViewFarm.com

Coulee View Family Farm is on a mission to produce better tasting meat and poultry. On their farm in southwestern Wisconsin, Dean and Kim Zimmerman began raising poultry in 2008 and have already expanded to raising turkeys and hogs.

Before beginning their new venture, the Zimmermans researched animal husbandry methods and talked to experienced farmers. They began raising a small number of chickens, but as Dean Zimmerman explains, “We got carried away from there. We added the pork sort of accidentally. We raised a couple for ourselves, decided it was fun, and it grew from there.” Coulee View Family Farm now sells its products at several farmers’ markets, at select retail stores and through its meat CSA.

The hardest part of beginning a farm was finding customers. “That would be challenge number one,” says Zimmerman. “You don’t ever get past it, but it becomes manageable.” He also cites the amount of labor as a challenge. “We raise everything outside. The labor input for pasture-based chicken and hogs is high.”

The Zimmermans have utilized the resources of several agricultural organizations to improve their business. Dean explains that conferences and association events can be a great source for networking and for getting new ideas.

In 2009, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection selected the Zimmermans as one of the first Producers First clients. Through the program, DATCP pays for the Zimmermans to hire two consultants to address technical problems on the farm. In Coulee View’s case, consultants are helping the Zimmermans implement an accounting system and develop marketing skills. “Producers First helped us get a handle on our costs,” says Zimmerman. “It helped us look for other markets. We started in the retail part to begin with. That’ll be a growth opportunity for us.”

Keefe Keeley, Program Manager for Producers First, explains that the program helps not only the clients but the entire food system. “Producers who participate in this program have benefited greatly from professional assistance addressing a specific need of their farm operation,” he says. “As producers increase profitability, the local food market sector grows.”

“Don’t be afraid to get started,” Zimmerman advises other new farmers, “but start slow and don’t out-produce your ability to market your product.”

Producers First helped us get a handle on our costs. It helped us look for other markets.”

*Dean Zimmerman
Coulee View Family Farm*



The Zimmerman family out on the farm.

Photo courtesy of Coulee View Family Farm

SETTING PRICES FOR VARIOUS MARKETS

Setting Prices

In local food system markets, you take responsibility for obtaining pricing information, deciding on a pricing strategy, and setting the prices for your products. When you are selling directly to the consumer, you also are doing the marketing work. It takes time and effort to market a product, prepare it for sale, package it, promote it and get it into the hands of your customers. You need to charge enough to pay yourself for all that effort. You may encounter customers who complain about your price. Do not be too quick to lower your price in response to complaints. Recognize the value in your own product and charge a price that reflects that value, but realize not everyone will agree with your pricing decisions.

If you choose to market your products to an intermediate buyer - someone who is not the end consumer of the product - you need pricing information to help negotiate the terms of sale. In some cases, you might be offered a 'take it or leave it' price for a raw product. Should you take it? Knowing the wholesale prices for your product on the open market can help you decide. For information on wholesale prices, go to the resources on page 19.

What if you have a product of exceptional quality or a specialty product that costs more to produce than the typical commodity? You'll need to do your own research on prices for similar products. Be ready to explain why you deserve the price you are asking. Provide buyers with information about your production methods or special product features to help them capture a good price from the end consumer.

Sometimes you need more than a high quality food product to obtain the price you want. Well-designed packaging, a label that supports a brand identity, or third-party certification can add value to a product in your customer's eyes. However, packaging, labeling, branding or certifications all have a cost in money and time and you must earn enough extra to cover these costs.

Pricing Strategies

You must decide on a pricing strategy - or strategies - that work for you. Pricing is based on

market demand and the supply available; the greater the demand with a limited supply, the higher the price. In some cases, where large quantities are available, products may still command a high price depending on demand. Combining pricing strategies can help you find a variety of ways to market your products.

Variety in your marketing and target markets keeps you from being dependent on just one buyer and lets you market different grades of product in different ways. Your pricing may also depend on the buyer. Supplying a consistent, quality product may offset price dips occurring in other markets.

Price Based on Costs - 'Cost Plus'

'Cost plus' should be the basis of your pricing program. If you lose money on what you grow, other pricing strategies will not matter. With 'cost plus,' you use financial records to determine the cost of producing a product, packaging and marketing it, and delivering it to your customer. You then decide what profit you need to make and add that amount to the other costs to arrive at the price you will charge a customer.

Enterprise budgeting is important for this pricing strategy because it helps track your costs of production. In addition to costs of growing, be sure to include the time, labor, and other expenses you put into processing, packaging, labeling, advertising, and selling your product. Some enterprises involve holding a product in storage. You need to account for the cost of holding that inventory. Delayed payments are another hidden cost. If you sell to an intermediate buyer such as a distributor or a restaurant, you may wait at least 14 days and perhaps up to 60 days between delivery of the product and payment. For more information on calculating your cost of production, go to page 10 and refer to the resource for enterprise budgets.

Price Based on Perceived Value

This pricing approach allows you to take into account the intangible things valued by many customers - humane handling of livestock, for instance, or the knowledge that you



Developing a strong relationship with your buyers includes having your price goals established. Ongoing communication will create an atmosphere where you can ask for feedback about the quality of your products and discuss pricing in a candid manner.

practice a specific stewardship on your farm, or the special “taste of place” no other farm can match. Customers may attach more value to your products and reward you for using farming practices they like. In turn, you can charge more than the average price for similar products. Pricing information, however, can be difficult to find, since so much of a product’s value depends on the customer’s tastes and preferences.

You may need to persuade customers that your farming practices merit a higher price. Achieving a value-based premium price may require investing time in marketing activities and educating customers.

Price Based on Retail Price

Consumers pay retail prices for food at the grocery store, yet setting retail prices can be difficult. The Economic Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports average retail prices for crops and livestock. Prices change monthly, depending on the season and which products are in short or abundant supply. Retail grocery prices in your area can differ greatly from the national average. If your area is far from shipping terminals, for example, transportation costs will probably be reflected in higher retail food prices.

While USDA numbers can help you monitor retail prices and seasonal fluctuations, checking grocery store prices in your area will provide the most helpful information. Look at prices on products similar to yours. If you have a specialty product - such as grass-fed, Food Alliance labeled or exceptional quality - compare prices in stores that carry similar products to

Pricing Based on Costs – ‘Cost Plus’

Advantage

- Helps verify you are making a profit on your product

Challenge

- Keep detailed financial records to be sure you are correctly figuring your total costs - if you are mistaken, you risk losing profits

Pricing Based on Perceived Value

Advantage

- Achieve profits well beyond what you might expect with other pricing strategies

Challenge

- Finding the right customers who highly value what you have to offer

Pricing Based on Retail

Advantage

- Retail price rewards you for the effort you put into processing, packaging, marketing, and distributing your product

Challenge

- Customers might be accustomed to buying their groceries at stores that offer discounts, so the prices they pay for items might differ from your estimates of average retail prices

Pricing Based on Commodity or Wholesale Markets

Advantage

- Much information is available on market prices for a wide variety of commodities

Challenges

- Prices do not reflect the labor you put into packaging and marketing your product
- Market fluctuations that have nothing to do with the quality of your product can affect your profits

Pricing Based on Buyer Relationship

Advantage

- Mutual decision making on pricing builds strong relationships with your buyer

Challenge

- Buyers can change frequently and another new relationship must be built



Photo courtesy of Luna Circle Farm

Pricing is a balancing act and you need to know your cost of production to set a base price for your products. You must set a price high enough to reward yourself for your work. This is balanced with the needs of your customers who are looking for full value for the price they pay.

see what you might charge. Remember grocery store retail prices reflect a percentage mark-up from what the producer was paid. Some grocery stores routinely offer certain products at a loss to bring customers into the store. This is a sales strategy that most farmers can't match.

Price Based on Commodity or Wholesale Market Prices

The commodity market price rewards the effort that goes into producing a raw product and getting it to a point of sale. For products such as raw fruits and vegetables, the commodity market price pays the farmer for production as well as first steps in processing and packaging. For example, a farmer might wash vegetables, cut tops off of root vegetables, and pack them into crates prior to selling them to a distributor at the commodity price. Basing your price on the commodity market could be appropriate if you are selling a raw product right from your farm without any special branding, labeling, or marketing efforts.

Wholesale price can mean different things depending on the buyer. It may include some processing, packaging, shipping, and handling costs. Most online resources show wholesale prices on the east and west coasts and perhaps the Chicago terminal price. Shipping costs result in higher wholesale prices in areas far from terminals. Prices paid locally by distributors or other intermediate buyers can provide useful information if you plan to sell to this type of buyer or to other local markets. Determining

wholesale prices may take extra work on your part to contact distributors or grocery store buyers in your area to ask about the prices they are paying for products.

Price Based on Relationship with Buyer

One of the most important elements of selling local food products is the opportunity to build relationships with your customers and buyers. The strength of this relationship can have a great effect on pricing. For example, if you share cost of production information, your buyer may offer suggestions on how to best price your product. Sometimes a buyer will tell a farmer that their price is too low. When both you and your buyer mutually decide on a price that is fair, it supports

Pricing is always a concern for growers and, in general, farmers tell us what price they want. If the price is high, we usually try it out for awhile and if it doesn't work we try to negotiate with the grower.

Dani Lind, Viroqua Food Cooperative

and strengthens the whole local food system. Understanding the price-setting structure for different markets will help you set prices for your products that are fair, yet still provide a profit for your efforts.

Resources for Pricing

Crop Budgets for Direct Marketers

UW Extension
www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3811-9.pdf
Specialty crops as profit centers and as a comparison to other crops.

Market News Service

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/MarketNews>
Click on Market News Service for wholesale prices.

Organic Price Report

Rodale Institute
www.newfarm.org/opx
Organic wholesale market prices (market produce)

Today's Market Prices

www.todaymarket.com
Conventional wholesale prices from terminal markets.

MARKETING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Branding

While part of marketing is connecting your name to your product to help customers recognize a brand, the key step is making sure customers always experience a quality product when they buy that brand. If you direct market and have face-to-face contact with your customers, your face and name are your brand. People recognize you and know the products you are selling.

If your marketing path takes you two or three steps away from face-to-face contact with your customer, then it becomes important to find other ways to help your customers recognize your products. Developing a brand identity and a label to support your brand is one way to gain recognition. It can be as simple as applying preprinted stick-on labels with your company name and logo. It could involve developing your own website or glossy brochures with photos of you and your farm, information about your farming practices and your mission statement.

Product Promotion

Promoting your farm products involves making your farm or market name recognizable to the public. In direct marketing, you have an advantage of talking directly to customers. This creates special relationships with those who buy your products. With intermediate marketing, you need to develop an awareness of your farm and the products you have available. You start by deciding on a farm name - and often product names - and perhaps develop a farm logo and informational materials.

Promotional tools can include advertising, sales, promotional programs, public relations, websites and online specials, to name a few. For more information on how to promote your farm, see the resources listed to your right.

Online Marketing and Social Media

The Internet is a powerful tool for reaching a large, diverse audience, and can be a useful tool for local marketing. A website allows you to convey information about your farm, your production practices and your values without overwhelming potential customers.

While there is a cost in both time and money to set up an Internet-based system, it is available at any time of day or night. For example, Pick Your Own farms can alert customers to peak picking times. Or, agritourism enterprises can advertise hours, location and special events. Listing your farm with an online directory - or several directories - can help local customers find you. Developing your own website can be a great publicity and sales tool as an increasing number of people turn to the Internet to find information and do their shopping. The Internet is one possible approach for managing the ordering and billing for retail or institutional sales; however, be sure to back up electronic records.

Many farms now keep in touch with customers through social media networks. Sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube allow you to share your story and build brand identity. By posting photos, anecdotes, and videos online for customer viewing, you can foster a stronger connection between consumers and their food. Consult the resources list at the end of this section for an excellent guide to creating and maintaining social media sites.

Resources for Marketing

UW Extension

<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Direct-Marketing-C12.aspx>

#A3811-13 "Developing Your Farm's Marketing Plan"

#A3602 "Direct Marketing of Farm Produce and Home Goods"

#A3811-18 "Market Research: Surveying Customers to Determine Their Needs"

#A3811-1 "Strategies to Attract and Keep Customers"

#A3811-6 "To Your Customer's Door: Direct Delivery"

Discover Your Social Web: An Ohio Farm Bureau Guide to Social Media

Ohio Farm Bureau

http://ofbf.org/uploads/Social-Media-Guide-V2_single-pages-PRESS.pdf

This guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to create social media pages as well as general background information.

Promotional Programs

Surveys indicate that more than 70 percent of Wisconsin consumers are more likely to purchase a product made or grown in Wisconsin than one from outside the state. By associating your product with an existing Wisconsin branding program or by listing it on a web directory, you can easily reach customers who are looking for locally-made products. The blue boxes below and on the next page highlight programs that promote local foods.



Promotional programs, certifications and other tactics can help differentiate your product in the marketplace.

Examples of Promotional Programs

Buy Fresh Buy Local

www.foodroutes.org/bfbltoolbox_1.jsp

This branding label is used in Wisconsin and other states to identify programs supporting local food production. The Buy Fresh Buy Local label also connects consumers to the many and varied sources for local foods, from grocery stores to restaurants and farmers' markets. Buy Fresh Buy Local partners - restaurants, markets, and farmers - are encouraged to use the branding broadly. See more details about this program in the profile on page 24.

Something Special from Wisconsin™

www.SomethingSpecialfromWisconsin.com

Something Special from Wisconsin™ (SSW™) is a trademarked program administered since 1983 by the Division of Agricultural Development at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The SSW™ logo (shown at right) provides a quick, reliable way for shoppers to identify Wisconsin products at grocery stores, retail outlets, farmers' markets and restaurants throughout the state.



The program offers an online searchable directory, a website highlighting the program and a wholesale catalog for grocers and retailers. Something Special from Wisconsin™ is a membership based program requiring at least 50 percent of the value of the product or service to be attributable to Wisconsin ingredients, production or processing activities.

Local Dirt

www.LocalDirt.com

This national website connects food producers with food buyers. Producers pay a yearly subscription fee to list their products and locations on the database. Individuals, businesses, buying clubs and distributors can search the website for local products and place orders to be delivered or picked up in person.

SavorWisconsin.com

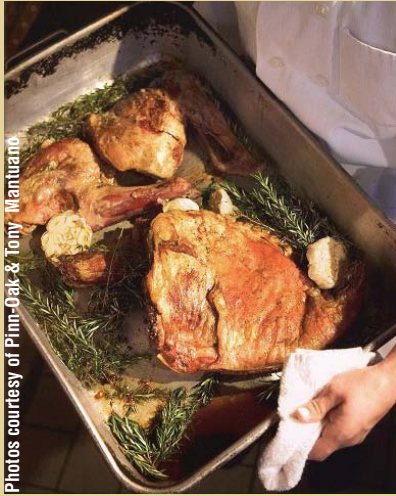
www.SavorWisconsin.com

Launched in 2002,



this site is an online promotional tool connecting consumers with Wisconsin companies and products. The site is a free marketing tool for Wisconsin producers. Producers can create and list a company profile and publicize events for free. The site also allows companies to link to their own website, list products sold and much more.

SavorWisconsin.com features more than 1,700 businesses and a listing of farmers' markets and events throughout the state. More than 40,000 visitors search the website each month. Guided by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP); University of Wisconsin-Extension, and the Wisconsin Apple Growers Association (WAGA), the website's goal is to enable consumers to find their favorite Wisconsin products easily, searching from their computer.



Photos courtesy of Pinn-Oak & Tony Mantuano
The farm's trademark WisconsinLamb™ is sold using the slogan "We Sell Flavor."

PROFILE

Pinn-Oak Ridge Farms, LLC

Steve and Darlene Pinnow

www.WisconsinLamb.com

Value-added farming is one way for farmers—whether they grow produce or produce meat products—to increase their profits and opportunities. Steve and Darlene Pinnow carved a niche by developing their WisconsinLamb™ trademark, using a unique slogan "We Sell Flavor," and selling directly to restaurants, grocery stores, culinary schools, farmers' markets and private individuals.

When we made the decision to market at the high end, I felt we needed something to readily identify it. Wisconsin has a good name with consumers and I was looking for something that was regional rather than local. We attached the product we sell to it and then worked through a lawyer to trademark WisconsinLamb™ which we use on all the labels of products we sell to stores and restaurants.

Steve Pinnow, WisconsinLamb™

"I would consider myself a professional direct marketer," says Steve Pinnow, who with his wife Darlene, owns Pinn-Oak Ridge Farms, LLC near Delavan. "I got into it when 'value-added' became the buzzword in the 1980s while we were raising pigs." Pinnow explains that his first lamb sale came at a time when the market was seeking more lamb products. "Anyone getting into direct marketing should try to have a unique product," he notes. "Then when you've got their attention, you need to have volume to meet the demand, and you have to be consistent." Pinnow says those three key components are essential to success. His approach - at the time the food market was "crying desperately for good-quality lamb and it just wasn't there" - was to quit raising pigs and develop a feeder lamb program. Until then, he says, the lambs they raised were mostly used as lawn mowers and 4-H projects.

"Local, local, local' has become the new buzzword and the demand is going to be there," he explains. "I've seen a shift in restaurants and consumers in that they do want to buy local. If you have the product and it's a quality product, you won't have any trouble selling it."

Lamb Protocol Developed

To increase his market share, Pinnow developed a protocol under which he created his marketing trademark, WisconsinLamb™. "We used an Agricultural Development and Diversification (ADD) program grant to develop our protocol for raising lambs," he recalls. "At the time, I needed more lambs because I couldn't meet the demand by myself. So I developed a program where I could access feeder lambs from other farmers that met my requirements. Produce growers have done it and now we've done it with animals, and I believe we're the first to do this with lambs."

Pinnow works with 30 farmers who raise their lambs with no antibiotics, are born on pasture and are raised to 110 pounds when he buys them. "Last year, we bought 700 feeder lambs that were raised under our protocol. Meeting our protocol is demanding but our suppliers get \$12 more per head than they would on the commodities market," he says. "So we're keeping other local farmers in business and we're raising a very fine product."

He feeds the lambs for 30–60 days until they reach 130 pounds when they're ready for market. "Our feeding program is highly nutritious and because lambing occurs at three different times during the year, I can stretch the availability of my products throughout the whole year," he says.

Every one of the 2,100 lambs Pinnow markets each year goes through his barn. "We sell lamb that has never been frozen to 60 stores and restaurants," he says. "Plus we sell to individuals and through the Internet which has become a great marketing tool."

Branding Makes a Difference

Pinnow points to one ingredient that sets his products apart - branding. "When we made the decision to market at the high end, I felt we needed something to readily identify it. Wisconsin has a good name with consumers and I was looking for something that was regional rather than local. We attached the product we sell to it and then worked through a lawyer to trademark WisconsinLamb™ which we use on all the labels of products we sell to stores and restaurants."

Pricing is a consideration for new producers and Pinnow suggests developing a business plan that will work for your situation. He also suggests producers take a close look at pricing products. "That's the one thing I would look closer at if I were starting over because I was under-pricing my product from the start. But that's changed and now I'm about 50–75 cents per pound above the wholesale commodity market and I still can't fill the demand."

On-Farm Processing Planned

Developing a consistent processing schedule helps keep his inventory at a minimum. "We have 40 stores on our weekly call list," he explains. "I call them on Monday to get the orders for that week. Then I'll take the lambs for processing on Tuesday and make my deliveries on Wednesday. I don't need a lot of rented freezer space and it's less handling. Because we sell everything we raise, we don't have any carryover that needs long-term storage."

The Pinnows are building their own processing plant on their farm with a capacity to process 3,000 lambs a year. "We'll hire our own butchers and I'm going to learn myself," he says. "We're also building a commercial kitchen so we can add some value to our other products like making stew or shepherd's pie or other lamb products. We do some of that now with marinated roasts and we're looking at smoked lamb legs."

The commercial kitchen will allow the Pinnows to develop culinary schools. "We've worked very hard on getting connected with culinary associations. Through them we've done lamb carcass cutting classes at their schools for those learning to cook," he says. "After we get our commercial kitchen running, we will do a lot of advertising with culinary students. It may not be a quick turnaround but we think they'll remember us three or five years later."



Pinnows raise their lambs on pasture.

Anyone getting into this type of marketing should try to have a unique product. Then when you have the market's attention, you'll need volume to meet demand and your product must be consistent.


Steve Pinnow, WisconsinLamb™



A cooking demonstration features lamb supplied by Pinn-Oak Ridge Farm.

PROFILE

Buy Fresh Buy Local Southern Wisconsin

www.reapfoodgroup.org 

Buy Fresh Buy Local Southern Wisconsin is a project of the REAP Food Group. The program is designed to develop a market for local and sustainably grown foods in restaurants and institutional food service operations. Buy Fresh Buy Local's two primary goals are: 1) fostering increased purchasing relationships between food service organizations and local producers, and 2) educating consumers about the value of locally grown food.



Program staff provides networking resources, communication tools, marketing materials, and hands-on facilitation to chefs and farmers to promote increased purchasing relationships.

Because consumers are placing increased importance on locally grown foods, the Buy Fresh Buy Local label also helps connect consumers to the many and varied sources for local foods, from grocery stores to restaurants and farmers' markets. The attractive Buy Fresh Buy Local label evokes the agricultural heritage of Wisconsin. Buy Fresh Buy Local partners (restaurants, markets, and farmers) are encouraged to use the branding broadly. Media-focused PR tells the stories of chefs who serve local foods, while special public events such as "Burgers and Brew" educate consumers about the value of eating locally. Looking for the logo, consumers see how easy it is to enjoy local foods on a regular basis.

Labeling and Third-Party Certification

Labels and certifications can help you present a larger image of your products to customers. Your brand might be just you or your farm, but you can add to your image by using labels or certifications that make a statement about your farming practices.

A label may indicate that the farmer follows certain production practices, but labels do not always represent a structured set of standards. See pages 25 and 26 for label and certification examples. Furthermore, an outside party does not need to verify that the label is being accurately used. For instance, producers do not need to become certified to label their eggs as free-range or cage-free.

A certification program is more structured. To use the certification label, your farm must be enrolled in the certification program and must meet program criteria. You must set up a recordkeeping system to track your farm operations to verify that you continually meet those criteria. An inspector visits your farm to check your records and confirm that you are meeting the program criteria. For most of these programs, there is an annual inspection/certification fee. For example, to become certified as organic by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, an accredited third party must inspect and approve your farm. Organic farms must pay an annual fee and submit to an annual review in order to keep their certification status.

Some production based labels are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). A variety of labels are available for farmers, but some of these labels have little criteria and can be confusing for customers. If you choose to use labels that are not widely recognized, research exactly what they mean so you can explain them to your customers. Be aware that the use of multiple labels can actually be a turn-off for customers who can become confused and annoyed trying to sort everything your product stands for.

Resources for Labeling and Third Party Certification

Guidebook for Organic Certification

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES)
www.mosesorganic.org/guidebook.pdf

EcoLabel Index

www.ecolabelindex.com

An independent guide to eco-labels.

Ecolabel Value Assessment

Iowa State University

www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/ecolabels/index.htm
Eco-label market research report.

Requirements for Labels and Certifications

LABEL/ CERTIFICATION	SIGNIFICANCE/ MEANING	APPROVAL/ CERTIFIER	WEBSITE
Animal Welfare Approved	A farm meets certain standards of animal treatment.	Animal Welfare Institute	www.animalwelfareapproved.org
Certified Humane Raised & Handled	Eggs, dairy, meat or poultry products come from animals that are treated according to certain standards.	Certified Humane	www.certifiedhumane.org
Food Alliance Midwest	A farm meets certain sustainability standards.	Food Alliance	http://foodalliance.org
Free-Range/ Cage-Free	Poultry products or eggs come from birds not raised in cages and which have space to roam	Neither label requires third party or USDA approval. USDA does have requirements for eggs, but does not define free-range or free-roaming claims for any meat or poultry products.	www.fsis.usda.gov (Search “Meat and Poultry Labeling Terms”)
Grass-Fed	Meat products coming from animals fed on grasses and forages, never grains.	Most third party agencies certify according to USDA standards. Farmers may use the label without certification, but may be inspected at random. Those found to be wrongly using the label are subject to fines.	www.ams.usda.gov (Search “Grass-Fed”)

Requirements for Labels and Certifications Continued

LABEL/ CERTIFICATION	SIGNIFICANCE/ MEANING	APPROVAL/ CERTIFIER	WEBSITE
Healthy Grown™ Potatoes	Potatoes are grown according to reduced-pesticide, sustainable agriculture standards.	Protected Harvest	www.healthygrown.com
Naturally Raised	Livestock used for the production of meat and meat products have been raised entirely without growth promotants, antibiotics except for ionophores used as coccidiostats for parasite control, and have never been fed animal by-products.	The USDA sets standards. See resources on page 105 for more information on meat labeling.	www.ams.usda.gov (Search “Naturally Raised”)
USDA Organic	Organic crops are raised without using most pesticides, petroleum-based fertilizers, or sewage sludge-based fertilizers. Animals raised on an organic operation must be fed organic feed and given access to the outdoors. They are given no antibiotics or growth hormones.	USDA standards have been set through the National Organic Program. Third party agencies certify on behalf of the USDA.	www.ams.usda.gov (Search “Organic Program”)

ADDING VALUE TO PRODUCTS

In the broad sense, “value-added” is a term used to identify farm products that are worth more than the commodity market price because of an added feature or practice. This added feature can be a physical change, such as processing, or a characteristic of the product that has value to consumers. For example, the product is raised according to a special standard. Or, the product may be part of an agritourism enterprise in which its value is tied to the entertainment or educational experience provided. In the narrow sense, value-added refers only to processing a raw product into something of higher value.

Season Extension Techniques

Meat, dairy and processed products may be supplied year round; however, the length of Wisconsin’s growing season may be a challenge for fruit and vegetable growers. A common barrier farmers in northern climates encounter when they try to sell fruits and vegetables locally is their ability to supply some produce only during a few months of the year. Many buyers, especially grocery stores and restaurants, prefer a year-round supply.

Season Extension

Advantages

- Increase farm income throughout the year
- Provide products not normally in season
- Secure new markets

Challenges

- Higher production costs (increased energy costs for heating)
- Additional costs of storage facilities
- Limited amount of products can be grown using these techniques

Another challenge associated with growing produce in Wisconsin is the need to carefully plan and budget to make seasonal income cover expenses and provide capital for the next growing season. Produce growers can use a number of season extension techniques, alone or in combination, to help with cash flow from season to season:

- **Greenhouses.** Plants are typically grown in containers, trays or shelving units. Year-round production is possible with a heat source.
- **Row covers.** “Floating” row covers are made of a lightweight fabric that sits directly on the plants. “Low tunnels” are covers of plastic sheeting or fabric that are held away from the plants by hoop-shaped frames. This technique helps protect plants from early frosts and can extend the growing season by a couple weeks.
- **Storage facilities.** Winter storage of vegetables, such as root crops, cabbage, onions, garlic and squash, has allowed some farmers to supply food services, grocery stores and individual customers throughout the winter. With this technique, be sure to pay attention to proper storage requirements. For more information on post-harvest storage, go to page 121 and refer to the food safety concerns section on packing and storing.

Farmers who produce meat, dairy or poultry products can use season extension techniques, as well. The most common is storage of the product for later sale. Locate cold storage warehouses near you by contacting an intermediate market representative, such as a grocer or distributor, and ask for contacts. Meat lockers may be able to provide short-term cold storage for products they process for you. Consider matching your marketing efforts to the location of cold storage warehouses. If the nearest warehouse is in a town 30 miles away, for instance, look for opportunities to sell your stored product in that town or nearby markets.

Resources for Season Extension

Characterizing Wisconsin’s Food Systems from Production to Consumption: A Reference Document

WI DATCP
<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/uploads/About/pdf/CharacWIFoodDistribSystem.pdf>

A report on Wisconsin’s food system, including directories of the state’s largest producers, processors and warehouses.

Seasonal High Tunnel Financial Assistance

USDA National Resource Conservation Service
 Environmental Quality Incentives Program
www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov

Contact your county’s USDA Service Center for more information.

- **High tunnels.** Plants are placed directly into the ground within a greenhouse-like structure. These structures are adaptable for year-round production in Wisconsin.

Food and Value-Added Processing

Many farmers who market locally are interested in value-added products as a way to earn a greater portion of the consumer's food dollar. For some consumers, just knowing that an item was grown locally has added value. Processing raw commodities into ready-to-eat foods can also broaden your market to include customers who are not interested in making their own jam, salsa, bread, sausage and other products, and thus add value in the form of convenience.

Food processing requires inspected and approved kitchen facilities. The categories of allowed and restricted types of processing should be reviewed prior to starting. For more information about food processing licensing visit page 104. For requirements by product for various markets, go to page 107.

Ways to Access Inspected, Approved Processing Facilities

There are several ways to access facilities for approved processing.

- Hire a co-packer to produce your product. With this option, you supply the raw materials and perhaps the recipe for your product. You hire an existing food processing business to do the food processing, packaging and labeling for you. The co-packer will be responsible for securing proper licenses and bear the burden of liability, although you will likely need to carry additional insurance for your business.
- Rent existing facilities to do your own processing. This can be a good transition option if you want to test your idea. You will be the primary processor and will need to obtain a processing license and liability insurance.
- Invest in facilities and equipment to do your own processing. With this option, you need to consult early with local and state regulators about licenses, permits and requirements for the facilities. Used equipment is generally acceptable to regulators if properly maintained, and is usually less expensive than new equipment.

Resources for Value-Added Processing

A Checklist for Starting a Value-Added Ag Enterprise
 UW Extension
www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/AValueAddedChecklist.pdf

Food Business Incubator Network

UW Extension Agricultural Innovation Center
<http://fyi.uwex.edu/foodbin>

The Food Business Innovation Network (Food BIN) is an informal collaboration of public and private organizations working together to provide access to facilities and technical assistance for aspiring food processors.

Value-Added Guide

Tufts University
http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/downloads/guides/PL_ValueAddedGuide.pdf

This guide covers processing raw fruits and vegetables into a finished product and packaging value added products.

Value-Added Food Products Development

Oregon State University
<http://oregonstate.edu/dept/foodsci/foodweb>
Offers information about value-added production and processing technologies.

Artisan Dairy Products

Dairy production makes a significant impact on Wisconsin's economy. During the past decade, the production and marketing of artisan dairy products made from milk of cows, goats or sheep has boomed. Artisan products are hand-made, or made using relatively small-scale specialty techniques. Many capture the uniqueness and special identity of each product, as well as the artisan making it. Small-scale producers can become licensed as cheesemakers with the appropriate training and offer products for public sale.

Farmstead Dairy Information

Starting a farmstead dairy requires a lengthy process of researching options, obtaining licenses and developing a business plan followed by labeling and market development. The investment for developing a milk production and milk processing business is typically high.

There are many resources available to help you navigate these regulations if you decide to market milk products from your farm. See page 104 for more information on licensing, food safety considerations, other rules and regulations for dairy products.

If you are interested in establishing an on-farm dairy plant to process fluid milk products, butter or cheese, your facility must meet and comply with Wisconsin regulations.

As you proceed in obtaining the required coursework, licensure and forms for starting your own farmstead or artisan dairy, be sure to contact DATCP's area food and dairy specialist

early in the planning process. You should continue to work closely with the local food safety inspector when your business is up and running.

Resources for Artisan and Farmstead Dairies

Case Studies of Wisconsin Dairy Artisans

UW Extension and Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/CaseStudiesofWisconsinDairyArtisans.pdf

Dairy Artisans

Babcock Dairy Institute
<http://babcock.cals.wisc.edu/?q=node/34>
Reports from travel abroad research by dairy processors.

Dairy Business Innovation Center (DBIC)

www.dbicusa.org
DBIC provides assistance to starting or expanding value-added dairy businesses.

How to Become a Dairy Artisan

Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Network
www.wisconsinartisan.com
Click on "What is the WDAN?"

State Regulations on Licensing and Labeling of Dairy Products

WI DATCP Division of Food Safety
www.wisconsinartisan.com/pdf/DATCP_Farmstead_Dairy_Requirements.pdf

To obtain contact information for area food and dairy specialists: phone 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFood@wi.gov.



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

Both small- and large-scale farms have capitalized on growing markets for artisan dairy products made from the milk of cows, sheep and goats.



Photo courtesy of Dairy Business Innovation Center

Artisan Meats

Wisconsin is home to a thriving meat industry, and boasts more state-inspected meat processing facilities than any other state. In 2009, the industry contributed \$12.3 billion to the state economy. In addition to large-scale production, more Wisconsin producers are reviving the small-scale practices of past sausage and cured meat makers. Taking inspiration from the state's artisan cheese and beer industries, these producers are crafting traditional old-world varieties of meat while at the same time, creating new specialty meat products found nowhere else.

Starting an artisan meat company is a complex process. Fortunately, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection offers a Specialty Meat Development Center. The Meat Enterprise Assistance Team offers consulting services in several areas, including business development, product development, labeling and packaging, market development, food safety and quality. Producers can also enroll in the center's Master Meat Crafter Program, an in-depth course teaching process verification, food safety, product development, curing and processing skills. After the course, producers earn the right to place the Master Cured Meat Crafter seal on their products. Contact: Jeff Swenson at Jeffrey.Swenson@wisconsin.gov or visit their website at <http://specialtymeatswi.blogspot.com>.

For more information on meat business licensing and labeling, see page 105.

Resources for Artisan Meats

Direct Marketing Meat

UW Extension and WI DATCP
www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3809.pdf
A comprehensive guide for Wisconsin meat producers, focusing on food safety and regulations, meat processing and marketing.

Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors

www.wi-amp.com

Wisconsin Beef Council

www.beeftips.com

Wisconsin Pork Producers Association

www.wppa.org

Wisconsin Sheep Breeders Co-op

www.wisbc.com

Wisconsin Bison Producers Association

www.wibison.com

Wisconsin Commercial Deer & Elk Farmer's Association

www.wcdefa.org

Wine and Beer Production

Beer is a Wisconsin tradition, and new microbreweries and wineries are changing the face of state alcohol production. With more than 100 wineries and breweries to choose from, Wisconsin is one of the top alcohol-producing states in the country. The exceptional expertise of local wine- and beer-makers has garnered numerous awards and draws visitors from across the nation. To create a truly local product, consider growing your own hops, barley or grapes. These burgeoning industries have their own professional associations and resources, making it easier than ever to start production.

Vineyards and breweries realize that in addition to increasing demand for their product, there is genuine interest in experiencing a “sense of place.” Thus wineries and breweries themselves have become popular tourist destinations. Wisconsin wineries and breweries typically host product tastings, but many now offer regular tours of their operations. Special events and festivals are also big draws.



Wisconsin wineries and breweries number more than 100 strong.

Resources for Wine and Beer Production

Starting a Winery or a Brewery

Getting Started in a TTB-Regulated Industry

Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
www.ttb.gov/industry-startup/industry-startup.shtml

This website provides step-by-step instructions for how to complete the federal permitting process for a winery or brewery.

Liquor Tax Permits

WI Department of Revenue

<http://www.revenue.wi.gov/faqs/ise/liquor.html>

A step-by-step guide for how to obtain state and federal permits for a winery or brewery.

Wine

Growing Grapes in Wisconsin

University of Wisconsin Extension

<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/A1656.pdf>

This publication offers state-specific information on grape production.

Starting Your Own Wine Business

University of Tennessee Extension

www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/pbfiles/PB1688.pdf

Production and regulatory information for new wineries.

Winery and Vineyard Feasibility Workbooks

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

www.agmrc.org (Search “Feasibility Workbooks”)

Workbooks, videos, and information to help set up a financial plan for a winery.

Wisconsin Grape Growers Association

<http://wigrapes.org>

The association’s website has helpful presentations and resources on growing grapes and starting wineries.

Wisconsin Winery Association

<http://wiswine.com>

This website profiles the wineries across Wisconsin and provides travel information to tourists.

Beer

Beer Making and Packaging Classes

Master Brewers of the Americas Association

www.mbaa.com/education/education.html

The MBAA offers beer making and packaging classes at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Pro Brewer

www.probrewer.com

This website provides many resources in many areas, including business planning and production science. It also offers several calculation tools related to beer production.

Wisconsin Brewer’s Guild

www.wibrewersguild.com

This association focuses on promoting its members’ brews.

PROFILE

Snug Haven Farm

Judy Hageman and Bill Warner
spinach@snughavenfarm.com

Snug Haven Farm has modified the traditional definition of farming and extended-season marketing. With their one-acre spinach production under a hoop house system, Judy Hageman and Bill Warner have extended the season at the beginning of the year when few greens are available in Wisconsin. They operate a four-season farm in a region credited with a 150-day growing season.

“We grow an acre of spinach under hoop houses,” Bill Warner explains. Warner, along with Judy Hageman, resides on the 50-acre farm where Judy’s father lived for 90 years. “Although we’ve been selling at the Dane County Farmers’ Market since 1989, we began farming here in 1995 with two-thirds of an acre that now has nine hoop houses on it. Last summer we added the other third of an acre with four more structures.

“Our specialty is spinach grown in hoop houses over the winter, and is unique because it’s incredibly sweet due to the freezing and thawing process it needs. Spinach is 95 percent of our winter crop. The rest is arugula which is a spicy green plant that’s part of the mustard family.

“Most people think of extended-season growing as late in the year. That’s where we’re different. We extend the season at the beginning of the year at a time few, if any, have greens available in Wisconsin.

“After a long winter, people are looking for some fresh greens but there isn’t a lot of selection available in April. A few vendors have something to offer and we have spinach. For four months we’re ahead of other growers because of how we’ve developed our early production system. We’ll have tomatoes ready in July and flowers available earlier than most. In November and December we’re at the Monona Terrace market and then it moves to the Senior Center for January through March and the first half of April.

“Aside from these markets, our biggest business is with restaurants. We sell to one or two in Madison and from four to six in Chicago. Our CSA [Community Supported Agriculture] market started about nine years ago and evolved from selling to six people for a month and a half until that season’s production was over to selling the next year all winter. Just by word-of-mouth it’s grown to be a third of our business. It’s similar to a CSA but it’s only spinach; nothing else. They pay for one or two pounds every two weeks dropped off at different sites.



Photo courtesy of Snug Haven Farm
Bill Warner and Judy Hageman grow spinach in hoop houses during the winter as a specialty crop.

The idea of using an extended-season approach has worked well for us.

Bill Warner, Snug Haven Farm



Photo courtesy of WI Homegrown
Madison elementary students enjoy spinach fresh from Snug Haven Farm’s hoophouse on a farm field trip, part of the Wisconsin Home Grown Lunch program.

Most people think of extended-season growing as late in the year. That’s where we’re different. We extend the season at the beginning of the year at a time few, if any, have greens available in Wisconsin. We’re four months ahead of other growers because of how we’ve developed our early production system. *Bill Warner, Snug Haven Farm*

PROFILE

Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen and Hodan Center, Inc.

Annette Pierce, Director of Food Service
www.HodanCenter.org
www.WI.InnovationKitchen.org

Hodan Center, Inc. provides work services, food services and enrichment activities for persons with disabilities in Iowa, Lafayette and Grant counties. Their mission is to help individuals achieve life goals specific to their abilities.

The center operates six resale/retail stores in six counties as well as a full service catering business. About 40 people help prepare and package a line of Farmhouse Recipes including jams, pickles, cookies, soups, sauces, and other food items. The product line includes 150 different bottled liquids and dry mixes, which are sold at more than 700 stores in 26 states

The operation sources about 20 to 25 percent of its food from local sources, says current Director of Food Service Annette Pierce. She adds, "By this time next year we should be hopefully bypassing that number." In 2010, the Kitchen was able to purchase 24,000 pounds of rhubarb and 3,000 pounds of broccoli from local sources.

The Hodan Center has been able to improve its percentage of locally grown food because of its new Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen, a community access, commercial processing kitchen. The kitchen contains four main areas for canning, baking or catering, dry production and dehydration. Staff process Farmhouse Recipe products in the kitchen, but other companies can rent the kitchen or hire on-site staff to process food for them. Once prepared, staff can package, label and ship the food as necessary. Some of the products processed in the kitchen end up in the on-site retail store for sale to visitors. In addition to the commercial kitchen, the Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen offers a meeting room for food and community events. Producers and entrepreneurs can also rent the facility and equipment to process recipes themselves, with appropriate certification.

The Hodan Center has an annual budget of about \$3 million, with nearly \$2 million brought in from resale stores, subcontract production work for area companies, food-service operations and donations from individuals and businesses.



Photos courtesy of Hodan Center

Workers at the Hodan Center (above) and the Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen (below)

You can come in with a recipe or some ingredients from your farm or small business and have them process it. That's completely unique in the United States... Caterers and others can benefit from the preparation and storage services available.

*Rick Terrien, Iowa County
Area Economic Development Corporation*



PROFILE

Farm Market Kitchen

Mary Pat Carlson, Founder and Executive Director
www.FarmMarketKitchen.com

The Farm Market Kitchen Incubator, located in the marina district of Algoma is a regional shared-use food processing business incubator. It is a project of The Living Lake's Heritage, Inc., a non-profit organization based in Algoma.

Over 100 start-up and expanding food businesses have received business counseling, technical support, marketing assistance, access to commercial kitchen space and one-on-one support since the doors opened on this community-based economic development project in 2002.

The kitchens are available for rent by the hour with a number of processors classified as anchor tenants. These anchor tenants rent on a consistent weekly basis. In addition, the facility provides custom processing services to a number of clients who choose not to process themselves but contract with the Farm Market Kitchen to produce the product for them. These products include baked and canned items.

“Although access to a certified commercial kitchen and technical support are important, this project has focused on building successful food businesses by developing the project as a business incubator,” explains Mary Pat Carlson, founder and executive director of the kitchen. “Those graduating from the incubator and opening their own facilities or sharing existing facilities often continue to receive assistance from the staff of the Farm Market Kitchen Incubator through the newly developed ‘incubator without walls’ program.”

Graduating businesses have gone on to develop successful businesses throughout northeast Wisconsin. Carlson states, “My goal was to provide an environment of support for processed, value-added agricultural products and to build a strong local food network. And, although there is a very strong focus on developing a local food network, some of the businesses have developed national and global distribution of their products.”

The incubator offers a number of workshops and training sessions throughout the year, including food processing sessions, sustainability workshops, business development programs and marketing support. In addition to working with food entrepreneurs of northeast Wisconsin, Carlson now consults with individuals and groups from around the state. She adds, “What a truly rewarding way to support the local economy and the strong entrepreneurial spirit of the people of our state. It is not an easy task to grow, process, and market local foods and work within the guidelines that assure consumer safety. But those that do are rewarded with the satisfaction of knowing they are providing a quality local product that not only nourishes the body but the spirit. The best part is often the stories that go with the products. Each one brings a bit of the unique heritage and culture of their daily lives along with the products they produce.”



The Farm Market Kitchen opens its doors to over 100 start-up and expanding food businesses. The access to a commercial kitchen allows different companies to create diverse Wisconsin made goods, like those pictured below.

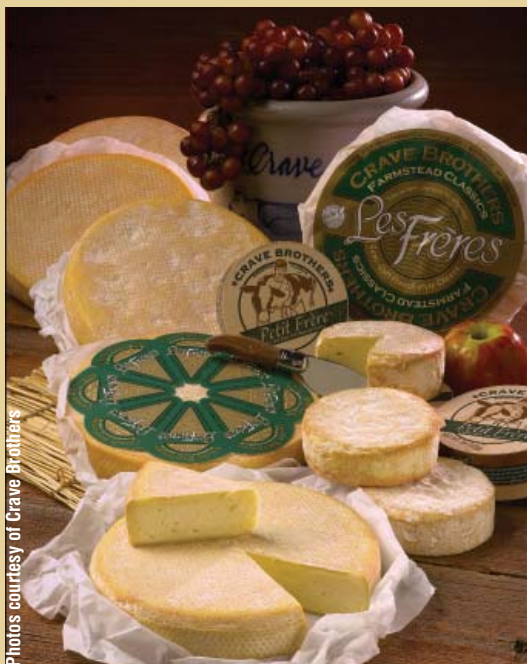




Mark, Tom, George and Charles Crave used innovative approaches to build their family business.



George Crave is a licensed cheesemaker and manager of the on-farm cheese factory which produces award-winning cheese.



Old World techniques matched with modern facilities create distinctive cheeses for the Craves' expanding markets.

PROFILE

Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese

George & Debbie Crave
www.CraveCheese.com

The Crave Brothers Dairy Farm and Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese of Waterloo has been innovative in its approach to building a sound family business while seeking more and better ways to be environmentally responsible and sustainable.

Charles, George, Thomas and Mark Crave and their families started farming together on a rented farm, milking 57 cows. Today, farm-fresh milk produced by the Craves' 900 cows is pumped underground to their farmstead cheese plant, where cheesemakers use a combination of modern-day equipment and Old World techniques to craft the award-winning Crave Brothers Farmstead Classic™ Cheeses. Daily, they make Fresh Mozzarella, Mascarpone, Farmer's Rope® String Cheese and Les Frères® and Petit Frère® washed rind cheeses. Through the dairy farm and cheese factory, the Crave family enjoys telling the story of modern dairying that emphasizes cow comfort and working in harmony with the land to produce quality milk and artisan cheeses.

"We like to emphasize that we're a farmstead, family business and are sustainable," Debbie Crave says. "We take great care with the land that we farm to raise corn and alfalfa for our cows.

We give our cows individualized care, and we contribute to the local economy and participate in civic events."

We feel good knowing that you can add value to your milk on the farm and make a profit. It takes time and hard work but it can be accomplished. We talked about this idea for about one to two years and really used the resources available to see if it had merit.

Debbie Crave, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese

"We've worked with a marketer that helps sell our cheese. They get into stores and food service establishments around the country and tell our story," Crave explains. "We also work with a local distributor to sell our cheeses in Wisconsin and northern Illinois. We host tours to inform potential customers about our cheese and family businesses."

Local distribution is only one method they use for cheese sales. “We do have brokers and distributors that sell into other areas,” Crave continues. “Our customers tell us when they need to receive the product and, if they have a trucker we use them, otherwise we arrange transportation.”

One reason for the expansion in herd numbers, as well as the cheese plant, was to provide opportunities for future generations of the Crave family. Four brothers farm together and each has a different role. George is a licensed cheesemaker and manager of the cheese factory; Charles is records manager and in charge of feeding; Thomas is in charge of equipment maintenance, crop planting and harvesting; and Mark manages the young stock, herd and employees.

The Craves are recognized as innovators and industry leaders in using technology to transform their business. For example, manure produced from their herd is turned into a dependable, renewable source of clean and sustainable energy. A sophisticated, computer-controlled, anaerobic digestion system that generates electricity - enough to run their rural Wisconsin farm and cheese plant and power up to 30 area homes - runs on organic waste. Also, once the liquid has been separated from the manure, the remaining solids are recycled and used as cow bedding and in a line of organic potting mixes.

The Crave family is always looking for new ideas and keeps current on packaging. “Being environmentally sound is very important to us,” Crave notes. “We are committed to continuing our farm’s emphasis on green energy and sustainable farming. We’re pleased that our farm can serve as a model for other dairies in the state.”



Photos courtesy of Crave Brothers

Five unique cheeses are made every day. Craves promote their cheeses through a simple brochure at trade shows and conferences. They also developed sell sheets and offer recipes that incorporate their cheeses. The website is an important marketing tool.

One reason for the expansion in herd numbers, as well as the cheese plant, was to provide opportunities for future generations of the Crave family.

Debbie Crave, Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese



Milk from the Craves’ 900-cow dairy herd is pumped underground to the on-farm cheese factory.

CHAPTER 2

Direct Marketing: Producer to Consumer

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CHAPTER 2

Direct Marketing: Producer to Consumer

FARMERS' MARKETS

Farmers' markets provide a good point of entry to try direct marketing. You set your own price and sell what you have available. A mutual education process takes place at the market. Customers connect your face and your farm to the food they are buying. In turn, you learn about customer preferences and build a good reputation.

Farmers' markets are a valuable part of the local food system and are growing as more communities embrace them. Most communities have open-air markets, but sometimes the markets are inside a building. Farmers who are successful at markets have several things in common: they bring high-quality products and they emphasize the freshness and quality of the food to customers. They also set a price that allows a profit, yet is low enough to appeal to consumers.

Farmers' markets and market management vary from place to place. Farmers' market participants usually do organizational work over the winter. If you want to join a farmers' market, you should contact the market organization or the market manager well in advance of the growing season. Each market may have requirements for its vendors that you must meet before you can join, or at least before you can sell, at the market. The following features of farmers' markets may help you evaluate whether your local markets are a good match for you.

Features of Farmers' Markets

Location

Location is extremely important for the success of any farmers' market. When you are deciding whether to join a farmers' market, consider these points about its location:

- Market highly visible from streets and walkways
- Vendor access to telephones, electrical outlets, water and bathrooms
- Adequate parking for customers or good public transportation
- Other businesses nearby that sell products similar to what might be sold at the farmers' market
- Cleanliness of market area
- The distance of market from your farm

Farmers' Markets

Advantages

- Good entry point for farmers who want to try direct marketing
- Set your own prices
- Help customers connect your farm to the food they buy
- Learn customer preferences and build your brand
- Good avenue to introduce new products and gauge customer reaction

Challenges

- Product might not sell out
- Need to be present at market regardless of weather
- Customers' loyalty may be to market, not to you as an individual vendor
- Need to maintain good relationships with management and other vendors



Photo courtesy of Department of Tourism

Small-Town Market

Advantages

- Often more personal
- More one-on-one contact
- Can build brand quickly
- Less likely to have waiting list

Challenges

- Fewer potential customers
- Potential smaller return on investment

Large-City Market

Advantages

- Potential for selling larger volumes of product
- Contact with numerous grocery and restaurant owners/managers
- Larger audience for your farm name, products, reputation

Challenges

- More travel and time involved
- Consistent attendance to develop/maintain customer recognition
- May be a waiting list to get in

Market Characteristics

Every market across the state and nation has characteristics which can impact your product sales. Helpful information to consider when selecting a farmers' market:

- Amount of foot traffic during the market and estimated number of consumers
- Estimated sales for an average vendor
- Time and day of the market
- How your products will complement those of other vendors

Market Rules and Regulations

Specific rules of operation for farmers' markets vary. It is important the market have a clear set of rules and a process for enforcement of the rules, to ensure all vendors are treated equally and fairly.

Topics covered by typical farmers' market rules:

- A membership fee, stall fee or other way that vendors help support the market
- Restrictions regarding farm's distance from the market, production practices and/or farm size
- Types of products allowed: produce, meats and dairy products, arts and crafts
- Vendors required to arrive, set up and pack up to leave at certain times
- Vendors required to display certain information such as farm name, licensing and prices
- Restrictions on individual vendor's displays and advertising
- Requirements that vendors be present a certain percentage of market days and restrictions on arriving late or leaving early
- Policy for vendors who cannot attend a farmers' market day; how far in advance must they notify the manager and are there penalties for non-attendance
- Space limitations for each vendor; everyone may get the same size space or there may be an extra fee for a larger space
- How spaces are allotted for the season; on a first-come first-serve basis, a lottery system or priority to vendors with more seniority
- Market participation in nutrition programs or food recovery programs

Check with the market manager about farmers' market rules and state or local regulations that apply to what you want to sell. Some markets also provide online access to rules and regulations.

Weights and Measures

All vendors must follow state rules on selling produce or other foods. The Weights and Measures division of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is responsible for certifying vendors' scales. Some products can only be sold by weight, while others can be sold by weight or count. Read more in the Weights and Measures section on page 106.

Food Sampling

Unless prohibited by a local ordinance, vendors may offer free product samples, provided that they follow safe food handling procedures. These procedures include, but are not limited to:

- Washing hands thoroughly and frequently
- Using time and/or temperature control when serving potentially hazardous food
- Using clean and sanitized contact surfaces
- Protecting food from consumer and environmental contamination
- Preventing bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods

Be sure to check with the local government for additional restrictions on free product samples.

Insurance Coverage

Farmers' markets sometimes carry liability insurance that covers accidents that may happen during the market. Some farmers' markets might offer broad liability coverage to vendors and charge higher fees to pay for it. Farmers might be required to carry their own product or general liability insurance, or they might choose to do so even if the market does not require it. Check with your market manager on which types of insurance your market requires. For more information on liability and insurance see page 125.

Sales Tax

Farmers' markets require individual vendors to collect and report sales tax for taxable goods. Some farmers must obtain a seller's permit from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. Vendors that only sell non-taxable items, such as fruits and vegetables for home consumption, do not need a permit. If you sell taxable items, such as flowers, sandwiches, or heated foods or beverages, you must obtain a seller's permit.

Fortunately, reporting and submitting sales tax has never been easier. The Department of Revenue website has several programs set up to help vendors manage their sales tax submissions. See the resources section for more information on the sales tax.

Starting a Farmers' Market

Like any business enterprise, starting a farmers' market requires planning and lots of work to succeed. If there is no farmers' market close to you, consider starting one. Farmers' markets have been established by local governments, farmer groups, civic organizations, community service agencies, university extension educational programs and private citizens. Coordinating special events around market day may be helpful in drawing customers. Farmers' markets can succeed if those involved are dedicated to making it work. For more detailed information on starting a farmers' market, see the resources on the next page.

Steps to Starting a Farmers' Market

- Determine market characteristics such as variety of vendors, community involvement, easy access for customers
- Create a sponsoring organization by assembling stakeholders to discuss governing body, mission, goals, rules, regulations
- Identify location with ready access for vendors and customers
- Create simple, easy-to-read market signage to provide key information
- Designate market manager to oversee operations
- Identify and recruit farmers, participants
- Establish bylaws; define responsibilities and membership
- Adopt and enforce rules and regulations that benefit all vendors
- Establish food safety guidelines for prepared foods
- Create vendor stall arrangements, establish vendor mix
- Develop a budget including expenses for insurance, permits, advertising and salaries
- Determine fee structure for vendors (fees are primary source of income for a market)

Source: How to Start a Farmers Market, Velma Lakins
Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

Resources for Farmers' Markets

Getting Started as a Vendor

Getting Started with Farmers' Markets

Wallace Center

www.wallacecenter.org/our-work/Resource-Library/wallace-publications/handbooks/Farmer11-1_Pr.pdf

This guide covers issues such as finding your own niche, understanding competition and deciding how much to charge.

Plain Language Guide to Selling at a Farmers Market

Tufts University

http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/downloads/guides/PL_FarmerMarket.pdf

This booklet guides you through choosing a market, designing your market stand, setting prices and making sales.

Questions Farmers Should Consider when Joining a Farmers Market

University North Carolina Cooperative Extension

www.ncmarketready.org/questions-farmers-should-consider-when-joining-a-farmers-market.html

Twenty questions to think about before joining a farmers' market.

Marketing Strategies

Marketing the Market

Kansas Rural Center

www.kansasruralcenter.org/publications/MarketingTheMarket.pdf

A brief guide to marketing principles for farmers' markets.

Selling Strategies for Local Food Producers

University of Missouri Cooperative Extension

<http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G6222>

Advice for how to sell your products at farmers' markets.

Some Thoughts on Selling at Farmers Markets

Rodale Institute

<http://newfarm.rodaleinstitute.org/features/0504/farmmarkets/index.shtml>

Twenty-two lessons from a life-long farmers' market vendor.

The Art and Science of Farmers Market Displays

University of Vermont Extension

www.uvm.edu/extension/community/farmersmktdisplayfactsheet.pdf

A short guide on how to create effective displays for your stand.

Sales Tax Information

Temporary Events

Wisconsin Department of Revenue

www.revenue.wi.gov/pubs/pb228.pdf

This publication more specifically covers sellers' permits and tax filing as they relate to farmers markets, which are categorized as a temporary event by the Department.

Wisconsin County Sales Tax Rates

Wisconsin Department of Revenue

www.revenue.wi.gov/faqs/pes/taxrates.html

This page provides a chart of the sales tax rate in every county in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Sales and Use Tax Information

Wisconsin Department of Revenue

<http://www.revenue.wi.gov/pubs/pb201.pdf>

This publication covers important sales tax information, including what items are tax-exempt.

Starting a Farmers' Market

Developing a Sense of Community

Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

www.pps.org

This nonprofit organization hosts training sessions for market managers, offers grants and hosts a listserv for farmers' market managers.

Farmers' Market Promotion Program

USDA-AMS

www.ams.usda.gov (Click on "Grant Programs")

This program is available "to expand or promote local farmers markets, roadside stands and similar agricultural ventures."

How to Start a Farmers Market

USDA-AMS

www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3022129&acct=wdmgeninfo

Step-by-step general guidelines for developing marketing and operational strategies prior to initiating a farmers' market.

Membership Organization

Farmers Market Coalition

www.FarmersMarketCoalition.org

A nonprofit membership organization serving as an information center for farmers' markets.

Understanding Farmers Market Rules

Farmers' Legal Action Group

www.flaginc.org/topics/pubs/arts/FarmersMarket.pdf

Article for farmers to understand their responsibilities and rights as vendors at the farmers market.

Locating Farmers' Markets

Farm Fresh Atlas

Research, Education, Action and Policy on Food Group, Inc.

www.FarmFreshAtlas.org

These guides include a list of farmers' markets, farms, restaurants, stores and other businesses that sell local food and use sustainable production and business practices.

Farmers Market and Local Food Marketing

USDA-AMS

www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets

This website provides information about starting markets, funding and resource publications.

Local Harvest

www.localharvest.org

This website allows consumers to search for farmers' markets, family farms and other food sources.

SavorWisconsin.com

WI DATCP, UW Extension and Wisconsin Apple

Growers Association (WAGA)

www.SavorWisconsin.com

Wisconsin has more than 200 farmers' markets.

SavorWisconsin provides a comprehensive online search to help you locate markets and food events.

Nutrition and Food Recovery Programs

Farmers' markets across the United States can participate in federal programs created to provide fresh, nutritious, unprocessed foods (such as fruits, vegetables, and herbs) to people who are nutritionally at risk. Programs include the Women, Infants, and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC-FMNP), the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in Wisconsin as FoodShare. The Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the federal agency in charge of these programs. In Wisconsin, the Department of Health Services administers these programs.

People eligible for these programs receive checks (coupons/vouchers) they can use from farmers who have been authorized (directly or through their participation in an authorized farmers' market) by the state to accept these checks. Some farmers' markets have installed Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) technology to serve customers who participate in FoodShare. People who use the program also receive nutrition education, often through an arrangement with the local WIC agency. Education is designed to encourage program participants to improve and expand their diets by adding fresh fruits and vegetables and to advise them in preparing foods.

Some farmers' markets have arrangements with local food pantries that take unsold produce at the end of market day. Vendor participation in these food recovery programs is usually voluntary. Many food pantries are affiliated with America's Second Harvest, a nationwide food recovery and distribution network.

Resources for Nutrition and Food Recovery Programs

A Guide to Accepting Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Payments at Farmers' Markets in Wisconsin
<http://wi-farmers-market-guide.wikidot.com>
Provides detailed information about the process for farmers' markets to become authorized to accept EBT payments.

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin
www.feedingamericawi.org
The state's largest food bank, serves eastern Wisconsin.

Hunger Task Force
www.hungertaskforce.org
Runs several programs that distribute food to families in need.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic/Fmnp/senior.htm
State program provides checks to low-income seniors to be redeemed at farmers' markets.

SHARE
www.sharewi.org
Nonprofit food-buying club that helps over 7,000 families. The program is incorporating locally grown produce in its offerings.

Wisconsin Food Security Program
UW Extension, Wisconsin Food Security Consortium
www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/cfs
Provides information on public and private programs.

Women, Infants, and Children-Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC-FMNP)
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic/Fmnp/fmnp/home.htm
This state program provides checks to families to be redeemed at farmers' markets.

PROFILE Chequamegon Mobile Farmers' Market

Joy Schelble, Nutrition Educator
Joy.schelble@ces.uwex.edu

Chequamegon's Mobile Farmer's Market project is designed to create greater access to fresh, locally grown produce in Ashland and Bayfield Counties, and Red Cliff and Bad River Tribal Communities. The mobile markets bring produce from local producers to 10 communities that do not have an established farmers' market. The mobile market encourages the use of Women, Infants, and Children Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC-FMNP) and Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMN) vouchers. All proceeds from sales go directly to farmers.

The mobile market's education and outreach focus teaches customers how to purchase, prepare, and store food. Market days feature local producers on-site for information and conversation as well as family activities to create a "fun" atmosphere and enjoyable experience.

PROFILE

Dane County Farmers' Market

Larry Johnson, Market Manager
www.dcfm.org

Providing a clean, fun and safe atmosphere in which to buy locally grown food and specialty products has made the Dane County Farmers' Market a success. While it has the advantage of a large urban population from which to draw, its success can be replicated in smaller cities, villages and towns, as well.

The Dane County Farmers' Market has been so successful that your odds of winning the state lottery are almost better than finding new vendor space at the market site. Every Saturday and Wednesday during three seasons, from mid-April through early November, crowds of people come to downtown Madison's Capitol Square to survey and procure some of the freshest Wisconsin produce the state has to offer. During winter months, the market moves indoors and continues every Saturday, closing only on Christmas and New Year's Day.

"The success of the Dane County Farmers' Market continues because it's the largest producer-only farmers' market in the country," says Larry Johnson, one of seven individuals to serve as market manager. "All items behind the tables are produced by the vendors. No re-sale items are allowed."

The Dane County Farmers' Market began in 1972 and keeps the producer-only theme that has made the market unique. Roughly half the market's 300 vendors attend every Saturday. Others attend with specialty products that may only be available at specific times. So sought-after are the vendor spots that there is a minimum three-year waiting list for those who want to sell on the Square. You'll find the season's best offerings of vegetables, flowers and specialty products at the market and all produced within Wisconsin's borders. Meat, cheese, baked goods, preserves, honey, candy and maple syrup are a few of the many products offered for sale.

The contact between customer and producer can create a special bond through the weekly visits by the consumer seeking the vendors of their favorite products. This bond is a trust that can be cultivated in small farmers' markets, as well. The key ingredients are good produce fairly priced and a willingness to meet your customer in their own setting.

"Our market thrives in the heart of the activities on the Square," Johnson notes. "Our vendors line the outside edge of the State Capitol grounds. There usually are other activities occurring at the same time as the farmers' market because the interior of the State Capitol [outer ring] is used for nonprofit, political and



The largest producer-only farmers' market in the United States offers Wisconsin-grown products.

Our market thrives in the heart of the activities on the Square. Our vendors line the outside edge of the State Capitol grounds. There usually are other activities occurring at the same time as the farmers' market because the interior of the State Capitol [outer ring] is used for nonprofit, political, and public information booths, and for various entertainment activities.

Larry Johnson,
 Dane County Farmers' Market



Large-City Markets

One advantage of large-city markets is the potential for selling large volumes of product. Vendors have found that it is one of the best forms of advertising their farm's products. Grocers and restaurant managers frequently shop the markets, too, leading to further sales opportunities.

public information booths, and for various entertainment activities." The central location of the market makes it easily accessible by bike, bus, car and walking. This market provides a safe venue for families with young children and for elderly shoppers.

The Dane County Farmers' Market is a nonprofit corporation with nine elected vendors who serve on the board of directors. This body has developed a guide book detailing the responsibilities of vendors to each other, to the market location and to the public. By granting membership to a vendor, the board can maintain quality control over the enterprise by policing operational and product legitimacy issues if they surface.

"Volunteers are an important part of the market," Johnson says.

The size of the Dane County Farmers' Market requires help from many volunteers to keep it running smoothly. Small-town farmers' markets can benefit from having volunteers help, as well. *Larry Johnson, Dane County Farmers' Market*

"They help with the Information Booth on Saturdays by answering questions, greeting visitors and distributing free literature. They also help with the Winter Market Breakfast which is a full breakfast where the main ingredients are vendors' products. We have the Friends

of the Dane County Farmers' Market, a small group that supports the market's educational and outreach activities. Volunteers assist with food tastings, school program planning and presentations, market tours and distribution of Food Share program information."

The size of the Dane County Farmers' Market requires help from many volunteers to keep it running smoothly. Small-town farmers' markets can benefit from having volunteer help, as well. Making visitors feel welcome to the market area can be a key to its success.

"Organizers of new markets should try to recruit volunteers early in the process of developing a farmers' market," Johnson recommends. "In some cases the market group may want to work with a local Chamber of Commerce, a historical society, a neighborhood organization where they site the market, to get their help. Local organizations or businesses may help provide tables and chairs for visitors to the market. In our case, vendors provide their own setup materials, such as tables, chairs, tents, or whatever else they feel necessary - within reason - for their comfort and safety."

Trash and refuse generated from selling at a farmers' market is a potential problem. All vendors must clean up their sales areas completely before leaving and haul their waste home. Customers are provided access to trash containers. The market started a recycling program and encourages customers and vendors to bring cloth bags or plastic bags for reuse.



PROFILE

Viroqua Farmers' Market

Emily Rozeske

www.Viroqua-Wisconsin.com

Diverse, year-round produce is what the Viroqua's farmers' market capitalizes on. Founded in 1990, the producers-only market has become successful enough that it is now turning away vendors due to space constraints.

Since its founding, the Viroqua farmers' market has taken place on Saturday mornings. Saturday was chosen because it accommodated vendors who had full-time, non-farming jobs. The original market offered 19 vendor spaces, but the market has grown substantially over the past 20 years. Emily Rozeske, the market's manager, explains that two years ago the market had no waiting list, and now there are at least 10 vendors on a waiting list vying for one opening in the summer market's 54 seasonal spaces. The Viroqua farmers' market has become popular enough with tourists and local residents that it runs a second day on Tuesday evenings in the summer and fall.

"Being one of the epicenters of organic production in the area has helped make the market a success," says Rozeske. The strength of agriculture in the area allows the market to offer a broad selection of products.

"We have a maple syrup vendor who also raises hogs and chickens, and who goes and picks wild mushrooms and brings them to the market," Rozeske adds. "Each vendor is really diversified. We have everything from someone who does just a single craft to someone who sells a variety of different produce and meat."

The Viroqua farmers' market is one of few to run year-round, though this niche is growing. The winter market takes place indoors from November through April. Fresh produce is available through the end of December. In the later winter months, vendors offer root cellar produce and other products like herbal tinctures. Thanks to hoopouses and greenhouses, fresh vegetables are now available in early spring. Though the winter market is much smaller than the summer market, with only six to nine vendor spaces, attendance is consistent. This winter will be the first time the market has had a waiting list for vendors for this season of the market.

Next year, the summer market will offer kids' days. "We plan on incorporating one Saturday per month as a kids' day, with kids' activities that are free, to bring in families," says Rozeske.

Rozeske advises new farmers' markets to leave room for expansion. "We're going through some growing pains now," she says. "What we have to figure out in the future is how to accommodate more people into our market."



This year-round market features an indoor winter market and special events during the summer.



Photos courtesy of Viroqua Farmers' Market



PROFILE

Fondy Food Center

Young Kim, Executive Director
www.FondyMarket.org

The Fondy Farmers Market is one of the largest producer-only markets in southeastern Wisconsin. It covers 38,000 square feet, features 30 local farmers, and is open four days a week during the growing season.

“The Fondy Food Center was created to ensure the continued supply of fresh vegetables into central city Milwaukee,” explains Young Kim, the center’s executive director. “Like many American cities, mainstream grocery stores have left certain areas of Milwaukee for the suburbs, but people here still need to eat, and with all the health problems we’re seeing these days, people need to eat more healthy foods.”

Bringing fresh produce into Milwaukee is only part of the plan. “We can bring tons of broccoli into the city,” observes Kim. “But people won’t buy it if they don’t know how to cook it.” To this end, the center has culinary education programs designed to spark a revival in the consumption of locally grown produce. “Taste the Season” is a live cooking demonstration program that introduces vegetables to neighborhood cooks with simple, one-pot recipes. The center also started the Youth Chef Academy, a 12-part curriculum aimed at middle school-aged kids.

Fondy works with local growers with its “GrowRight Program.” This program was designed to strengthen farmer relationships by providing education and marketing assistance. On-farm visits are made by marketing staff members to assess each farmer’s challenges and opportunities. The visits have revealed a shortage of high-quality and affordable farm land in Southeastern Wisconsin, a problem that the agency hopes to address in the coming years. Fondy is also one of only four Wisconsin markets to accept Wisconsin QUEST Foodstamp Cards.

With the assistance of Fondy Food Center’s innovative strategies, Milwaukee residents are getting the healthy foods they need, and Wisconsin farmers have access to a unique market.



Photo courtesy of Young Kim

The center has culinary education programs designed to spark a revival in the consumption of locally grown produce.

The Fondy Food Center was created to ensure the continued supply of fresh vegetables into central city Milwaukee.

Young Kim, Fondy Food Center



Photo courtesy of Avant Images, Kimberly Poindexter

Fondy Farmers Market is Milwaukee’s largest. Fondy supports local growers with education and marketing assistance.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) offers producers a system of supplying consumers with fresh, wholesome, nutritious products weekly at a predetermined site. Next to farmers' markets, CSA farms have become one of the fastest growing marketing systems today because of the benefits derived by both farmers and members.

What Is CSA?

Through CSAs, local households and farmers work together to share the responsibility of producing and delivering fresh food. Households support the farm by paying an annual fee in the winter or spring that entitles them to a "share" of the season's harvest. Once harvesting begins, members pick up a weekly box of fresh foods which may include produce, fruits, cheeses, eggs, meats, poultry, flowers, herbs or preserves. Pick-up sites are often located at a member's house,

a business or at the farm. Most farms create a newsletter that accompanies each delivery, with notes about farm activities, descriptions of what's in the delivery, cooking tips and recipes. Many farms also create opportunities for their members and families to visit the farm and participate in farm events. The typical CSA season in Wisconsin runs from the end of May through mid-October, although more and more CSAs are offering products year-round. Farms offer a diversity of share options, including extended season shares, multiple share types and sizes, special funds and payment plans to accommodate households on a tight budget.⁵

What Is Involved?

There are four key ingredients in a successful CSA:

- Expertise in growing or raising product
- Customer service
- Planning
- Recordkeeping

Community Supported Agriculture Advantages

- Creates added value to products
- Funds available for purchase of seeds and planting
- Can produce a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, meats, dairy and much more
- Assists families in healthy eating

Challenges

- Labor- and time-intensive
- Sound planning needed for entire growing season
- Expertise in using equipment and/or managing workers

Expertise

Knowing how to grow or raise your food products successfully is the first step in developing a CSA. If you are a novice at farming, learning how to manage a CSA while learning production practices may be difficult. Experience can be gained by working with other established farmers or CSAs that will allow you to step into a more responsible role as your knowledge increases. Refer to the Beginning Farming section of Chapter 1 for useful resources. Production knowledge is critical to satisfy the expectations and trust of your members. Gaining experience in production by selling as a vendor at a farmers' market or other market venues allows you to develop your production knowledge and develop a customer base for the future.

Customer Service

The sense of community the farmer establishes with the subscriber is at the heart of a successful CSA program. Customers join CSAs because they want fresh food and because they want a real connection to the farm that grows their food. Part of the value you add to your products is communication with your CSA customers.

⁵Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC)



Packing a fruit box for CSA delivery.

This can be accomplished with weekly or monthly newsletters or by including recipes with weekly shares. Encouraging communication and feedback from your members will help keep you informed about their concerns.

Planning

A successful CSA farmer must be able to plan an entire season's production before one seed is planted or one animal is purchased. For vegetable production, having an extensive knowledge of vegetables, varieties, and their rates of maturity will help you develop a system of timing and succession plantings to ensure a consistent harvest throughout the season. A well-organized approach will help you manage plantings for steady, season-long production so that customers receive the diverse, weekly box of produce they were told to expect when they joined the CSA.

For meat production, a successful CSA livestock farmer must be able to calculate from three to 18 months' worth of animal production. Depending upon the species raised, year-round CSAs require animal production to be staggered throughout the year to provide a constant supply of product. This can mean changing to nontraditional production practices and when animals are born.

Planning for and achieving a successful supply of product will allow you an opportunity to expand your program in the future if you choose. Satisfied members are the best advertising a CSA can get. See additional information at the end of this section for resources on timing. Also see the first chapter for information on classes, workshops and working on other farms on page 7.



A successful CSA farmer must be able to plan an entire season's production before one seed is planted.

Vegetable	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Beans, Green					
Beets					
Broccoli					
Brussels Sprouts					
Cabbage					
Carrots					
Cauliflower					
Celeriac					
Cucumbers					
Eggplants					
Fennel Bulb					
Fresh Herbs					
Garlic					
Kale & Collards					
Kohlrabi					
Leeks					
Lettuce					
Onions					
Peas, Snap					
Peppers					
Potatoes					
Radishes					
Rutabagas					
Spinach					
Squash, Summer					
Squash, Winter					
Swiss Chard					
Tomatoes					
Turnips					

*Dark shading indicates when we plan to distribute a vegetable frequently. Light shading shows when we plan to distribute an item less frequently.

Courtesy of Two Onion Farm

Two Onion Farm raises about 25 different vegetables and provides the information above to their CSA members to show the approximate time the farm expects to distribute the vegetables. In communicating to their members, the farm notes that each vegetable ripens in its own specific season and eating seasonally is a benefit of membership because each vegetable is at the peak of flavor and freshness.

Recordkeeping

Keeping detailed production and financial records is necessary for success. A CSA is a business and members are investing in your program because of the expected return on their money in the form of farm products. You are looking for a profit for your time and effort invested.

Before setting a share price, you need to estimate all costs for the growing year, including your salary or profit margin. If your financial estimates are wrong, you may risk not recovering your costs or the ability to pay yourself for your time and effort. If your production estimates are wrong, you risk shortchanging your customers and losing their business. Consulting with other successful CSAs about their initial estimates may help you develop your original projections. Careful recordkeeping during your startup years is extremely valuable in helping you make estimates in future years. Refer to the budget projection resources at the end of this section for detailed information on determining your cost of production.

Considerations for Starting and Operating a CSA

Members

Once you've decided to build a CSA, you'll need to decide how many members you want and then recruit them. If you already sell at a farmers' market, you can talk to customers to learn if they would be interested in being a CSA member. At this stage, you will need to have membership share costs established and a preliminary list of the types of products you plan to provide, as these will probably be some of their first questions. Established CSA farmers suggest starting small, developing a solid member base, and learning as you grow.

Generally, vegetable CSA farms serve about 20 to 30 households (harvest shares) per acre in production. For example, a 200-member farm would likely cultivate at least 8 eight acres a year (more when considering land in cover crops/fallow). These acres would be planted with at least 40 to 50 types of crops, including vegetables, berries and herbs. At least five full-time seasonal workers would likely be required.

Depending upon the animal species offered in a meat CSA, one animal per month can serve one to 30 or 40 households. Offering multiple species in the CSA requires a great deal of time and coordination. You must ensure that all products are ready on the delivery date and that enough is produced to meet the volume needed for the entire CSA season.

Size and Price of a Share

The size of a share and the price for each can vary from one region to another. For vegetable CSAs, regular memberships for the Madison area ranged from \$500 to \$650 per season in 2010.⁶ A Wisconsin season typically runs for 18 to 20 weeks, starting the end of May. Each customer box is typically 5/9 of a bushel, and is estimated to feed a family of four. Pricing options may vary and half-shares are popular among small families or single people.

Meat CSAs have more flexibility with share size and season length due to the fact that the products are typically frozen. Some Meat CSAs run concurrently with vegetable CSAs. Others are offered year round. Pricing options for the Madison area in 2010 ranged from \$400 to \$900 per season in 2010. Share sizes range from Small to Large, feeding one person or a full household.

⁶ Madison Area Coalition of Community Supported Agriculture (MACSAC)

Health Insurance Rebates

Eating healthy has caught the attention of insurance companies that view this approach as a means to fewer health problems and lower associated costs. A partnership between several health insurance companies and the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC) includes a health insurance rebate program. Through MACSAC and participating insurance providers, CSA members may receive a \$100 to \$200 rebate on their health insurance by subscribing to one of MACSAC's CSA farms.

Some CSAs offer a work share program for customers who commit to working a specified time at the farm and then receive a discount in return for their work. Others offer a discount if members pick up their share at the farm.

Harvesting and Post-Harvest Handling

Most CSA deliveries are weekly. You need a system to harvest, wash, store and pack your produce in a clean place for storing and packing. Cold storage is necessary for vegetables that are harvested a few days before delivery. Post-harvest handling has a large impact on the quality and value of the products being sold. Developing specific standard operating procedures for postharvest handling can ensure your customers receive a consistent product. For more information on post-harvest handling see the food safety section on the page 120.

Meat Processing

Meats sold through a CSA must be processed at a state or USDA inspected facility. The products are typically taken from the processor to a licensed storage facility for packing and delivery to CSA members. Meat CSA delivery options vary from one producer to another, although most producers deliver one or two times per month. Meat CSA products are typically frozen and are not in need of immediate consumption. Meat CSA farms use varied packaging methods for deliveries. The most common is paper or plastic bags. Depending upon the variety of meat products offered in the CSA, bags can provide more flexibility than boxes when packing and transporting to the CSA pick-up location. Members may be encouraged to bring coolers to place their product in to ensure they are kept frozen during transpiration home.

Delivery and Schedules

Deliveries can be made to locations convenient for CSA members. Some CSAs allow pick-up of shares at the farm. Others collaborate with local food co-ops, churches and offices to act as their drop-site host; some members may even be willing to open their home as a drop site for others in their area. Drop-site hosts may receive produce or discounts for their time and effort. The time frame for pick-up is important to maintain freshness. A discussion with prospective members about their preferences helps establish an orderly and timely delivery schedule.

CSA farms use varied packaging methods for deliveries. Some use heavy-duty, waxed cardboard boxes or plastic crates that are collected and re-used. Others use light-weight cardboard boxes that are replaced as they wear out or are lost. Members may even be encouraged to use tote bags for pick-up at the drop site.

Product Mix

CSA farmers often consult their members about what kinds of products they would like to receive in their boxes. Starting with a basic product mix is wise. As you gain experience, you can try more novel ideas. One of the valuable aspects of CSA membership is the varied mix of uncommon food products that may be offered as well as information and recipes for using these foods.

Resources for Community Supported Agriculture

General CSA Resources

Community Supported Agriculture

Appropriate Transfer of Technology for Rural Areas
www.attra.org/attra-pub/csa.html

This publication reports on the history of Community Supported Agriculture in the United States and discusses various models that have emerged.

Local Harvest

www.LocalHarvest.org/csa

This website provides a list of CSA farms in Wisconsin.

Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC)

www.macsac.org

Promoting and supporting Community Supported Agriculture farms, and coordinating community and farmer education programs about the benefits of sustainably grown local foods.

Milwaukee CSA Initiative

Slow Food Wisconsin Southeast

www.slowfoodwise.org/milcsa.php

The Milwaukee CSA Initiative is dedicated to building a rural and urban network bringing farmers and the community closer together.

CSA Supports Sustainability

CSA is a unique and sustainable movement of food production and consumerism that:

- Fosters mutual respect and support between those who eat the food (CSA members) and those who grow it (local farmers)
- Introduces new and exciting varieties of food products that may not be available or members might not otherwise buy at a grocery store, thus broadening health and palates
- Gives members an active and ecologically- friendly role in the production and distribution of quality food
- Allows members the opportunity to visit and work on the farm, to become familiar with and connected to where and how their food is grown
- Gives members the enjoyment of locally available foods while learning about eating seasonally - this means having the freshest food possible, while sharing in the natural cycle of the seasons as a community

Courtesy of Tricia Bross, Luna Circle Farm

CSA Production Resources

CSA: More for your money than fresh vegetables

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
www.cias.wisc.edu/crops-and-livestock/csa-more-for-your-money-than-fresh-vegetables

CSA Farms: Management-Income

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
www.cias.wisc.edu/economics/community-supported-agriculture-farms-management-and-income

Managing a CSA Farm: Production-Labor-Land

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
www.cias.wisc.edu/economics/managing-a-csa-farm-1-production-labor-and-land

Managing a CSA Farm: Community-Economics-Marketing-Training

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)
www.cias.wisc.edu/farm-to-fork/managing-a-csa-farm-2-community-economics-marketing-and-training

Post-Harvest Handling & Storage Requirements

University of California Davis

<http://PostHarvest.ucdavis.edu/Produce/Producefacts/index.shtml>

Recommendations for maintaining post-harvest quality and storage requirements of fruits and vegetables.

Wholesale Success

www.familyfarmed.org/wholesale-success

Book produced by FamilyFarmed.org, this manual addresses selling and post-harvest handling.

PROFILE

Two Onion Farm

Chris & Juli McGuire

www.TwoOnionFarm.com

Even if you know what you want to raise on your farm, marketing is key to reaching your income and lifestyle goals. Two Onion Farm tried farmers' markets and wholesalers and now focuses exclusively on Community Supported Agriculture.

Located on a 12-acre farm in the rolling hills of southwestern Wisconsin, Two Onion Farm is owned by Chris and Juli McGuire. In the past six years, they have developed markets in the Platteville and Madison areas, Dubuque, Iowa and Galena, Illinois for their CSA farm. They share their perspectives on producing and marketing locally grown food in the answers to the following questions.

What business plan did you have when you started?

When we started, we set goals for our farm, including an income we wanted to achieve. But we didn't have a business plan as such. Looking back that was one of the things we should have had. It's been a learning experience because, initially, we did not do enough research to determine the land, equipment, facilities, labor and sales we needed to meet our goals. We needed more tractor equipment, hired labor, land and sales to meet our quality-of-life and income goals than we realized initially. If we had realized this at the outset we could have saved ourselves some grief. If we were to offer some advice to new growers it would be to take some time at the beginning to do the research and form a realistic expectation about what kind of farm you will need to operate to meet your income and quality-of-life goals. For diversified vegetable growers like ourselves, it is very helpful to read a publication from the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems entitled "Grower to Grower: Creating a livelihood on a fresh market vegetable farm." Talk to other experienced growers, as well.

How did you determine the size you wanted to be or what you wanted to do?

We knew from the start that we wanted to raise delicious produce for people in our community, to preserve our land and the environment and to provide everyone working on our farm with meaningful, safe, rewarding work. That's never changed.

Initially we had unrealistic expectations about the size we would need to achieve in order to meet our income and quality-of-life goals. Although we knew that we wanted to raise vegetables for people in our region, we were not sure how we wanted to market them. We tried farmers' markets and some wholesaling but then settled on the CSA model. Different marketing outlets work well for different people. Sometimes you have to try several things to find what works best. In our case, we like CSA because



The McGuire family raises diversified vegetables on their farm.

If we were to offer some advice to new growers it would be to take some time at the beginning to do the research and form a realistic expectation about what kind of farm you will need to operate to meet your income and quality-of-life goals.

Chris McGuire, Two Onion Farm



Photos courtesy of Two Onion Farm.

The whole family gets involved on the farm, one of the advantages of rural living.

What has worked for you?

One thing we did right is that we emphasized quality products from the start. We have always done our utmost to raise delicious, beautiful vegetables and we have never regretted that. Our customers love it and we are proud of it.

Marketing through a CSA model has been a good choice for us, although it took us several years to settle on that model. The CSA gives us a direct connection with our members. We communicate regularly with our members and many of them come to our farm to visit or to help in farm work through our working member program. The direct contact is extremely rewarding for us. It's fantastic to get direct personal feedback and compliments from our farm members.

As farmers, we appreciate knowing the people who eat the food we raise, and our customers love to know the farmer who raises their food. Those personal connections enrich all of our lives.



The McGuires knew from the beginning they wanted to raise delicious produce for people in their community.

it provides direct contact with our customers and it gives us a stable market.

What are your biggest investments? Our largest investments were for land, facilities and equipment. We did not hire any labor for our first three growing seasons. Now, in our fifth season, our biggest expense is hired labor. Looking back, we should have invested earlier in tractors and tractor implements. Labor-saving equipment makes you more profitable and happier, and you can improve the quality of your products. We also should have hired more labor earlier in the life of our farm. Hired help allows you to do more, do it better and do it in a more timely fashion. Besides, working with other people is fun and makes the workload seem lighter.

How did you find your customers? Word-of-mouth is the key. It is the least expensive and most effective method of promotion. We have also promoted our farm by tabling at fairs, speaking to church groups and environmental organizations, and distributing our brochures. Being part of a larger organization, MACSAC - the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition - which promotes CSA and directs interested customers to our farm and other CSA farms, has been very beneficial. MACSAC is a wonderful organization. When local growers work together to promote their products, everyone benefits.

How do you price and promote your products?

Initially we set our CSA share prices to be similar to or lower than prices from other farms. This was a mistake. We found that we could not cover our costs and sustain ourselves in the long run at those prices. After operating the CSA farm for several years we raised our prices steeply and explained the price increase to our members. We needed to raise our prices to continue to produce good food and to remain in business. We lost a few members because of our price increase but the majority stayed with us because they enjoy our produce and because they have a personal tie with our farm. Since then we have continued to grow our membership. We have developed an informative, uncluttered website and an organized, detailed brochure to explain our offerings to potential farm members. The website and brochure have been effective for us.

What advice would you offer to new growers? We would suggest they attend field days, grower meetings and conferences where they can meet other growers and learn from them. This kind of networking is worth a lot starting out. Don't be afraid to mechanize. A tractor is your friend. Also, don't be afraid to hire labor. We work less, enjoy our work more, feed more people and make more money now that we have hired help. If you are considering vegetable production and are looking to start somewhere, try to buy or rent the best soil you can afford, make sure you have access to irrigation water and be sure to invest in facilities to wash and cool produce. It is important to keep good records of production, expenses, labor and sales. This will help you determine where you are going or where you have been.

PROFILE

Vermont Valley Community Farm

David & Barbara Perkins

www.VermontValley.com

Vermont Valley Community Farm is one of the largest CSA farms in Wisconsin serving 1,800 families and offering more than 150 varieties of produce. Hosting festivals during the summer and fall allows share members an opportunity to visit the farm and enjoy nature and the environs of the farm. In addition to their CSA, the Perkins have developed a certified organic seed potato business.

“We discovered the CSA model after working different jobs and decided that we wanted to farm on our own,” David Perkins explains. “We found a farm in 1994 in a beautiful area and started our first deliveries the next year. Our plan was to derive our entire income from the farm within five years. But we kept part-time jobs until our business increased so that we could work full-time on the farm.

“We have 1,800 families in our program and we consider every one of them a part of our farm. We host four fun events throughout the summer and fall and encourage people to come out and see where their food is grown. Our large worker share program has been in place almost since the beginning and our members will work in organized programs. If they buy a weekly share, they can do one shift of four hours once a week for 20 weeks and that will cover the cost of their entire 20-week share.

“Our main workforce includes Barb and me, and our children, Jesse, Eric, and Becky. In addition, we have three almost-year-round employees plus seasonal help for the busiest six months.

“The worker share program is one way our members can help offset the cost of their share and they provide us with extra workers. More importantly, it allows members to make a connection with their food. It’s not an easy program to administer, but it is worth it to us. While this program is an important part of our work force, it doesn’t replace the need for other workers, as well. There is a lot of hand work done here.

“We reach our members through a paper we call ‘This Week’s Produce’ which is put in with the vegetables every week explaining the more unusual items in the box. While it’s so much easier to reach our members with email, we still use an old-fashioned piece of paper, too.

“We still do brochures, and make them available in several places, but they become less important every year, and we use them less, even though our farm continues to grow.

“We’ve been asked how we developed a business plan but that’s a hard question to answer. We used the CSA model and that’s



Barbara and David Perkins host events at their farm throughout the summer and fall, encouraging people to come out and see where their food is grown.



Workers wash chioggia beets in the packing shed. The farm offers over 150 varieties of produce.

Photos courtesy of Vermont Valley

We reach our members through a paper we call “This Week’s Produce” which is put in with the vegetables every week explaining the more unusual items in the box. While it’s so much easier to reach our members with email, we still use an old-fashioned piece of paper, too.

*David Perkins,
Vermont Valley Community Farm*



Photos courtesy of Vermont Valley

A worker share crew displays a harvest of heirloom tomatoes.

much different from a typical business plan. We had determined how many CSA shares we needed to sell to be full-time. That number was 500 shares within five years. That was our goal and we reached it on schedule.

“We like the CSA because we don’t feel we’re competing with anyone. That’s a bit different than at a farmers’ market where there is price competition. We’ve now reached the point where our discussion every winter is whether we want to expand or not. We decide our growth in the winter time before we set our plans. For this year we set a 20% growth and we achieved that.

“We begin in February with our greenhouse and make our last delivery in December with storage items such as potatoes, carrots; produce that will store well. When we built our greenhouse, we built it bigger than we needed at the time because we knew we were going to grow.

If others are considering pursuing a similar program, there are several considerations they should think about. First, I believe the CSA model will be a key to their success but they need to understand it and what it means. Developing relationships with people who get your food is very, very important. They will need to learn succession planting because we plant each week from spring through early August so that we can provide for our members.

David Perkins, Vermont Valley Community Farm



The farm’s growing season starts in February in the greenhouse. The last CSA delivery is made in December. This scene shows fall garlic planting with the farmstead in the background.

“Our biggest investment, aside from the land, has been the equipment and the refrigeration system. The equipment is indispensable because it eliminates a lot of the heavy work, although we still hand weed because of being organic.

“We have four cooling systems which are used for different produce. Different produce needs different temperature regimes. When we were small we only used one, but that grew as we did because we ran out of space.

“We believe it’s good to be a part of a group larger than ourselves. We are members of MACSAC, who work together to share knowledge and match customers with farms. Everyone in the group is allowed to set their own prices because each farm is an independent operation and situations may be different in relation to length of season, produce offered, and other factors.

“Our program is something others can replicate, particularly now. There’s a huge demand for locally grown produce and sales are not a problem. You must do a good job at all aspects of the business, just like any business. Not only has the organic market exploded, but the CSA model has grown, as well. There is also a lot more useful information available for new growers than when we started, and people should take advantage of that.”



Photo courtesy of Scotch Hill Farm

PROFILE

Scotch Hill Farm

Tony & Dela Ends

www.ScotchHillFarm.com

Learn from others, intern at a variety of farms if possible, go to field days, ask lots of questions, and listen to what experienced people say.

Tony Ends, Scotch Hill Farm

Diversification has allowed Scotch Hill Farm to expand its markets. The farm offers subscriptions for fresh produce, eggs from free-range poultry and goat milk soaps. In order to meet the farm's goals, Tony and Dela Ends works with a number of collaborative organizations in the region.

Now in its 14th season, Scotch Hill Farm at Brodhead is a CSA farm that markets more than 100 varieties of produce, value-added products made from goat milk, and eggs from free-range chickens. Tony and Dela Ends provide answers to a number of questions often asked by new farmers.

Would you do anything different if you were starting out today?

Everything - food, farming, the economy, the marketplace, even government agencies and institutions - is different than when we first began trying to grow crops and livestock and sell directly to the public. Spiraling energy costs, indebtedness and production expenses seem now more than ever to be the determinants of success or failure for most agricultural enterprises. We've adjusted to changes, sometimes by necessity, sometimes by being wary and watchful.

What has worked for you? We were warned not to go into debt by a number of older and retired farmers. We listened. We worked two, three, sometimes four part-time jobs to pay for initial livestock, equipment and facilities. We bought, rehabilitated and sold two residential properties in order to come up with enough equity to buy our present farmstead. We rented little corners of land from larger cash grain farmers. We grew extremely slowly as a result, learning by trial and error, experimenting with production and sales, testing markets. We built a kitchen with largely recycled materials from a salvage yard, rehab projects and a store going out of business. We built this building with an eye to meeting commercial food processing requirements, but never completed those requirements, as we made use of the space and facility for cleaning and packaging fresh vegetables - consistently about two-thirds of our business - and making goat milk soap and skin care products - the other third of our farm income - which do not require licensing, inspection, and certification. Direct marketing, rather than trying to enter wholesale markets, has worked for us up to this point.

What were some challenges? Agriculture as a business is production, marketing/sales, financing. We learned to produce in the field, add value and sell. Yet we have never been able to obtain sufficient financing to purchase land to securely increase



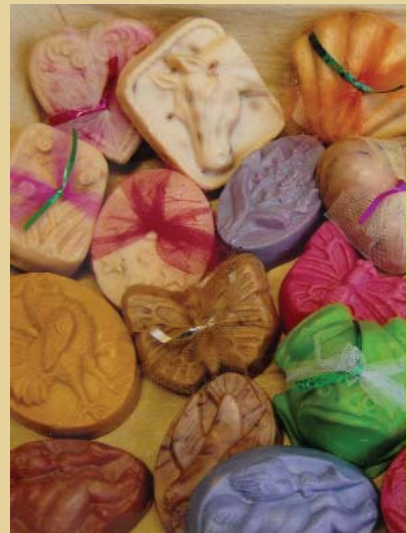
Photo courtesy of Dave Haldiman

scale and efficiency. Land was selling for about \$1,200 an acre in our area 14 years ago. It is \$3,000 to \$5,000 an acre now within 20 miles of us, and \$35,000 to \$65,000 beyond that circle toward metro areas where development pressure is ever more intense. We were asked a number of times early on to partner in purchase of land. We did not want to carve up farms into smaller parcels. In retrospect, this seems a mistake, though it would have violated the warnings not to take on debt. If we had owned even smaller tracts of land as a base of production and been able to invest in a well, irrigation, packing shed and a second walk-in cooler for fresh vegetable production, we could have grown more rapidly and shed the off-farm work earlier on. We used to go to four local farmers' markets within 30 miles of our farmstead. We consolidated delivery to two days and focused on just two Wisconsin communities and several Chicago neighborhoods. Our sales have increased dramatically; we have more production time at home and get best use out of delivery days. As gasoline and vehicle costs have increased so much over the past five years, this has become ever-more important.

How did you determine what you wanted to do or the size you wanted to be? We learned a lot from nearly five years of assisting agronomists, soil scientists and educators in a nonprofit institute, helping them develop on-farm research projects in nutrient management, alternative grain production, subscription vegetable crop production, cover cropping and marketing. We joined a number of grower organizations and went to field days, trials, workshops. All of this was extremely helpful to us as we learned and grew our own business, from 5 vegetable subscribers in a 15-week growing season, to a projected 250 subscribers, a 20-week season, and possibly some winter greens in hoop houses and cold frames this season, our 14th year.

Gross returns from direct market organic vegetable crop sales can range from \$8,000 to \$17,000 per acre, depending on degree of mechanization, greenhouse and other facilities capabilities, availability of land for rotations, and double- or triple-cropping within a season. Roughly about one-third of gross farm income goes to labor, about one-third to overhead and production expenses. We believe our profit margin has been less than larger, specialized vegetable crop farms up to this point - consistently under 20%, rather than the 30% figure we hear other growers mention. About 250 vegetable subscribers can help a producer come very close to self-sufficiency and sustainability with a modest income.

We have deliberately integrated animals into our vegetable crop production as a commitment to traditional family farming, farming according to organic practices, and on-farm soil fertility. We have paid a price for this diversity, with the added expense and time livestock require. Those who discouraged this approach may be singing a different tune as fertilizer costs rise, and agro-fuels divert land away from ready, cheap availability of purchased feeds and forage. Soon, only those who grow their own feeds and forage may have livestock at any scale of production. Only those who have livestock may have secure, on-farm sources of soil fertility.



Photos courtesy of Scotch Hill Farm

Value-added items produced on the farm include goat milk soaps and skin care products.

We learned to produce in the field, add value, and sell. Direct marketing, rather than trying to enter wholesale markets, has worked for us up to this point.

Tony Ends, Scotch Hill Farm



Photo courtesy of Dave Robinson

We have deliberately integrated animals into our vegetable crop production as a commitment to traditional family farming, farming according to organic practices, and on-farm soil fertility. Tony Ends, Scotch Hill Farm

Photo courtesy of Scotch Hill Farm
Scotch Hill Farm cooler before CSA deliveries.

Press releases that focus on new offerings, new products and new features of our farm have worked well. Several grants have made it possible for us to attend trade shows and mail materials to targeted markets. We have not seen a return from them yet. Websites are only as good as the marketing and advertising of the address.

What resources have been helpful to you? We owe a lot to Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC) for their leadership, models, influence, consumer education, organizing all of the growers to contribute to the *A to Z Cookbook*, and coordinating insurance rebates for fresh vegetables purchased from its members.

We also must credit the USDA Small Business Innovation Research program for helping us to innovate with value-added skin care products from goat's milk and for helping us to teach eight other dairy goat farms to do so in several grant projects. DATCP's Dairy Goat Initiative has opened many new doors to growth for the dairy goat industry in our state in the past two years. The UW-CIAS [Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems] has terrific staff and publications. We encourage people who want to farm to connect with these resources.

Did you develop a business plan at the start? We developed formal business plans several times to try to obtain financing for farm purchases, but we were denied funding. We did not have enough equity, capital or land. We have set farm growth goals each year, scaling our purchase of seed, planting and production according to how sales went. We limited spending beyond production costs to one or two pieces of equipment per year to increase efficiency. We tested markets, watched what sold, dropped what did not sell, analyzed what made something sell, stuck with winners and let go of losers. We kept detailed records for four years of time for farm production and value-added production. We've tracked our expenses and sales every year. We culled animals that did not produce. We kept active in exhibitions at county and state fairs for herd improvement. We reduced our number of animals when it became apparent we did not need so many to make money with milk soap.

Were your projections within an acceptable range of what actually occurred? What would you advise to someone starting out? Yes. We marked steady and consistent growth. We rehabilitated our buildings, rebuilt machinery and honored our contracts with vegetable subscribers - even through drought and severe flooding.

Learn from others, intern at a variety of farms if possible, go to field days, ask lots of questions and listen to what experienced people say. Diversify somewhat in shrewd ways. Don't spread yourself thin, but don't specialize in risky ways. Count costs carefully. Recognize that profit margins are not high, especially starting out.

Our biggest investments were equipment, greenhouses, transportation and refrigeration. Our initial investment costs were about what we expected or anticipated.

How did you find customers? How have you handled pricing and promotion? Sales have grown from word-of-mouth endorsements, professional affiliations, tabling information at free events. We have tried to be comparable in our prices to similar products and crops sold in respective markets. We have kept very detailed records of production expenses and adjusted expenditures and investments of time and money year-by-year.

PROFILE

The Rustic Table Producers First Participant

Kim Cassano & Richard Toebe
www.TheRusticTable.com

Matching up goals and farm practices has become the core strategy of The Rustic Table. Kim Cassano and Rich Toebe run one of the first meat-only CSAs in the state. Although they are only in their first year as a CSA, Cassano and Toebe have found that the CSA structure fits their goals for their farm and their lives.

Located in northern Wisconsin, The Rustic Table places a high priority on the welfare of its animals. Cassano explains, “I try to think back to what the animal’s natural environment was and really try to provide all the pieces of that for them. That includes their food and also a social life.” This improves their well-being and contributes to creating a healthier, better quality product, she says.

Starting small has been Cassano’s and Toebe’s strategy for the first year. “We knew we wanted to start small because we wanted to take some time to really figure out how this all works together: what CSA means when it’s a meat CSA, and also how to manage the inventory because we’re selling exclusively through the CSA. We have a set number of animals and have to decide what the share is going to look like up to two years down the road.

“MACSAC has been a very helpful resource,” says Cassano. “It’s a great way to connect with other farmers who are doing similar things and to learn from some of their experiences.”

Workshops and conferences on agricultural techniques also helped The Rustic Table get its start. Cassano and Toebe both worked on several types of farms before starting to farm themselves. When they decided to create a meat-only CSA, they were able to attend workshops to learn directly from other farmers.

Pricing can be a challenge given the expectations many customers have about the cost of food. As Cassano explains, “We wanted to make sure that we could actually make a living from this. We took our end goal, and we looked also at all of the costs that would go into producing the product, and we took that to arrive at a price.

“I think the biggest thing that we learned from our early years selling to the conventional market is how important it is to us to match what we do on the farm with our goals and our values,” says Cassano. “We really found it difficult to keep running up against those conflicts. We weren’t in line in terms of what our goals were, and what our market was, and what we were therefore able to do on the farm. It is more profitable and more rewarding if these aspects of the business are consistent with one another.”



This Rustic Table and owners Kim Cassano and Rich Toebe are pictured above. Below you can see the diversity of animals they raise and care for as part of their meat-only CSA.



Photos courtesy of The Rustic Table

PROFILE

Growing Power

Will Allen, Founder

www.GrowingPower.org

Growing Power, an innovative, Milwaukee-based program, provides hands-on training, outreach, and technical assistance by developing systems that help people grow, process, market, and distribute food sustainably. Its farmers' co-op links urban and rural growers in collaborative marketing efforts.

Growing Power is a nonprofit organization and land trust that supports people from diverse backgrounds and the environment in which they live by helping to provide equal access to healthy, high-quality, safe, affordable food. It also is the site of the last functional farm in the Milwaukee city limits.

Will Allen, founder of Growing Power, is a former professional basketball player who grew up on a Maryland farm. When he bought the Milwaukee farm in 1993, he wanted to create an environment where people of all ages could learn how to grow food for their own use. His vision was to create a hands-on program where people come to learn and work. "We start by engaging the community, growing soil that grows food, that grows people, that grows communities," says Allen.

The Growing Power program includes 14 greenhouses, a kitchen, indoor and outdoor training gardens, an aquaculture system and a food distribution facility. It raises worms, rabbits, bees, goats, chickens, ducks and fish. It also uses more than six million pounds of the city's food waste each year for composting. Two goals of Growing Power are to develop sustainable food production, as well as support the growth of communities through the creation of local gardens.

"We conduct workshops and demonstrations in aquaculture, aquaponics, vermiculture, horticulture, small- or large-scale composting, soil reclamation, and marketing, along with other subjects," Allen explains.



Will Allen created an innovative program to help people grow food in a sustainable way.

Urban Agriculture - Community Food Systems Approach

We start by engaging the community, growing soil that grows food, that grows people, that grows communities.

Will Allen, Growing Power



Growing Power has greenhouse facilities, a kitchen, indoor and outdoor training gardens, an aquaculture system, and a food distribution facility.

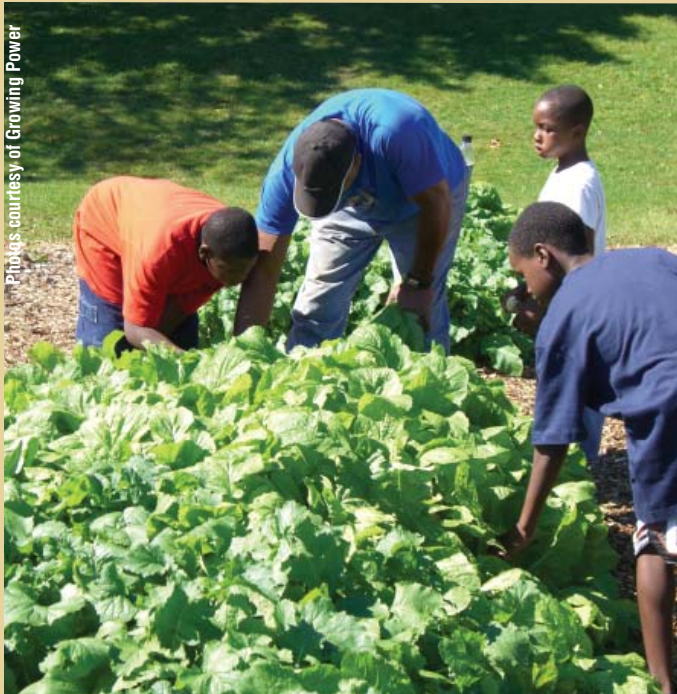
Photos courtesy of Growing Power



People of all ages learn how to grow food during the National Workshops.

Growing Power project participants leave the workshops with improved skills that they can take back into their communities and pass on to others. He adds, “We run numerous collaborative projects including a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee to train city youth in gardening. We also offer tours at our facilities and each year we host several thousand visitors.”

Growing Power has developed its Farm-City Market Basket Program that’s a CSA-style food distribution program designed to connect urban consumers with small-scale, local food systems in the region.



Growing Power runs numerous collaborative projects in the community including programs to train city youth in gardening. Allen is working here with children at the Maple Tree project site.

“Our Market Basket Program consists of weekly deliveries of boxes of produce from our Rainbow Farmer’s Cooperative to neighborhoods throughout urban Milwaukee and Chicago,” Allen explains. “This program serves as a year-round food security program that supplies safe, healthy and affordable whole good vegetables and fruits to communities at a low cost. Because the program operates on a weekly basis, each customer may engage week to week at a pace that’s right for them.”

Growing Power offers two types of market baskets: Farm-City Market Basket and Sustainable Box. The Market Basket is designed to make whole good fresh vegetables available to urban customers who may have limited access to these products. The basket consists of 10–15 varieties of vegetables in quantities intended to provide for the food needs of two to four people for a week.

We conduct workshops and demonstrations in aquaculture, aquaponics, vermiculture, horticulture, small- or large-scale composting, soil reclamation, and marketing, along with other subjects.

Will Allen, Growing Power

“During spring, summer and fall, most of the produce comes from our farmers’ co-op,” notes Allen. “During the off-season we supplement through a small-scale, family-owned, local wholesaler of conventional produce. We strive to support small, local farms and businesses through this relationship during the winter months.”

The Sustainable Box is similar in content, consisting of 10–15 varieties geared toward a family of two to four members. It differs, however, by including sustainably grown, organic produce available at an affordable price to communities who may or may not have been previously exposed to this kind of food. Allen continues, “For the Sustainable Box, from spring through fall, all the produce comes from our co-op. During the off-season we supplement this program through a certified organic, small-scale, family-owned wholesaler on the south side of Chicago. This relationship allows us to support one of our local partners and is a necessary national alternative source of organic produce for all kinds of consumers.”

AGRITOURISM

Tourism-based farming enterprises have become successful marketing programs because they appeal to many emotions involved with past connections to farming. Many people remember visiting a relative's farm as a child and they want their own children or grandchildren to have the same experience. Encouraging this reconnection and offering a venue that fosters a sense of connection to food and those who produce it also provides an excellent educational opportunity. As more people are concerned about where their food comes from, agritourism is a way to bring the customer to your products. An agritourism farm can become a destination and also offer a variety of activities to entertain, educate and enlighten their customers.

People are interested in visiting farms, eating healthy and seek an authentic experience.

Ray Antoniewicz, A-Z Farm

Choosing the Right Enterprise

Agritourism involves a huge responsibility on your part because you will be hosting people from many walks of life. Before deciding to enter this market, consider your reasons for doing so. Is it to boost the income of your farm? Connect with consumers? Provide a community service?

Once committed to your decision, you should do everything possible to provide a positive experience for your visitors. One way to determine what may be involved or find out what will work in your particular situation is to talk with other farmers who have developed a successful agritourism business. If your area has notable historical elements, maybe this would be of interest to others. Perhaps you are close to urban areas to allow hosting of specific festivals throughout the year. Hayrides, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, sleigh rides, barn dances or other entertainments can all be viable options for your farm.

Getting Started

Once you decide what you want to do, contact your local or state authorities to determine what regulations you must comply with, such as local zoning ordinances, building requirements and customer needs. These can be discussed with the town chair or the county supervisor for your area. You will also have to physically prepare your farm for visitors. A safe, clean, well-kept, photogenic farmstead is inviting and will make the best impression for new customers and enhance their experience. The public will be entering your personal and professional space, so you will need to set up some ground rules to help manage your customers. Determining what hours to be open, how many days a week, whether you will accept appointments outside regular hours and how many workers to hire are just some of the many decisions you will need to make.

In addition to assessing rules and regulations for your business, you will need to determine the risk involved with your enterprise. Some activities carry a high degree of risk, such as horseback riding, while others may not. The presence of visitors on your farm is a risk for you. Be sure to discuss your plans with your insurance provider to determine what coverage will be needed to protect your farm and family. See page 125 for more information on liability and farm insurances.

Agritourism

Advantages

- Earn extra income for your farm
- Provide educational experience/valuable community service
- Revive pleasant memories for visitors
- Deepen consumers' understanding of where their food originates from

Challenges

- Requires safe, fun activities enjoyed by all ages
- Farm location may determine traffic rates
- Requires good relationship skills and high level of customer contact
- Requires a basic understanding of marketing and promotion

Attracting Visitors

Once you have established your enterprise, you need to attract people to your farm. Getting your name out to the public and attaching a good reputation and image are great marketing tools that will be effective. A wide range of marketing options are available and choosing the most effective is important. Repeat visitors are an excellent word-of-mouth advertisement, but you need to rely on more strategies to increase your business. Working with the media can provide exposure to your business that reaches a wide audience.

Good stories attract the attention of local radio, television and newspaper reporters and can be an excellent way to let the public know of your business.

Another good resource is your community or county tourism marketing organization. This may be the local Chamber of Commerce or economic development organization. They have a vested interest in growing the area's economy through tourism and helping your agritourism business succeed. In addition to destination marketing organizations, you can network with other tourism businesses nearby. Is there a bed and breakfast in the vicinity that could promote your agritourism opportunity to its guests? Cross market with other area businesses, exchanging brochures, can be mutually beneficial. Invite owners of stores, restaurants and lodging properties to visit and experience your farm so they can better sell it to their customers.



Photo courtesy of A-Z Farms

Ideas for Agritourism Enterprises

- Agriculture food and craft shows
- Animal feeding, animal birthing, petting zoo
- Barn dances
- Bed & Breakfast (rural and historical)
- Corporate picnics
- Family reunions
- Farm or ranch work experience
- Floral arranging, wreath making
- Food festivals
- Guided crop tours
- Harvest festivals
- Hay rides/sleigh rides
- Historical tours
- Historical displays (ag history, machinery)
- School and educational tours and activities
- U-Pick operations

Source: Compiled from "A to Z: Potential Enterprises for Agricultural and Nature Tourism," The University of California Small Farm Center and "Taking the First Step: Farm and Ranch Alternative Enterprise and Agritourism Resource Evaluation Guide," NRCS Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism.

An agritourism destination is only as good as the directions to get there. Your customers need to know how to find you. Some advertising techniques include: providing brochures with directions to your farm; designing a logo specific to your enterprise; creating business cards that can be distributed in as many locations as possible; and developing online resources like a website and social media pages.

Offering people a variety of ways to spend their money while on your farm is key to a successful business. Seasonal offerings such as strawberry desserts, fruit pies, apple cider or other produce you may grow can provide ways to increase your profits. Holding demonstrations on wool spinning, quilting, pumpkin carving or other activities in which visitors can participate will connect them to your farm in ways they may not have thought about before arriving.

Ready for Business

You can test your readiness to host visitors by holding a trial event or weekend for family and friends. Allowing them to investigate all the activities you offer will help determine what adjustments are necessary to make things flow smoothly for your customers. You should also check for easy flow and accessibility from the parking areas to where activities take place. Providing well-marked signs for bathroom facilities will reduce questions. Also, create a plan of action in the case of a serious health emergency involving a visitor.

Details That Make a Difference

- Clean, neat, and photogenic surroundings
- Restroom facilities that are convenient and clean with a place to change diapers
- Safe and fun play areas for children
- Seasonal decorations
- Accessibility for people with varying physical abilities
- A well-stocked first aid kit for minor mishaps

Partnering

Working with tourism organizations can help your program. Tour operators use local attractions to provide short day trips for a variety of customers. Explaining your program and what you have to offer may provide another source of visitors. Offering a package tour where visitors can receive a discount or redeem a coupon for an item to purchase may be an attractive offering for the tour company. Tourism organizations can also help with media by getting information about your farm out to the public.



Agritourism Trails

Interested in working with other agritourism destinations in your area? Consider developing an agritourism trail. Wisconsin is already home to several trails in a variety of areas:

- Farmers in southern and central Wisconsin formed the Autumn Harvest Trail. The trail combines orchards, vegetable farms, quilt shops and more.
www.waga.org/AHT/autumn_harvest_trail.htm
- Northern Wisconsin has its own trail for the fall: the Bayfield Shores Harvest Trail. Customers order goods online throughout the summer. Then in October they visit the trail sites and pick up their purchases in-person.
http://bayfieldharvesttrail.org
- The Cranberry Highway runs through Central Wisconsin during the fall. Visitors can request a highway or bike guide map, or they can take a guided tour through a third-party group in the area.
www.visitwisrapids.com/go/index.php?category_id=2144
- Wineries of Wisconsin offers visitors information about Wisconsin's 36 wineries. Tourists can meet winemakers, tour vineyards and wineries and sample wines. The group's website offers trip itineraries, video profiles of the wineries, and other useful tools.
www.WisWine.org

Any combination of agritourism sites can form a trail. Explore the resources list at the end of the section for potential partner organizations.

Tourism in Wisconsin

Here in Wisconsin, we nurture originality and creativity in all its forms. And to a great degree, that means celebrating the bounty of the land and the down-home hospitality of the people. Visitors and residents alike need not look much farther than the farmstead down the road or the local town square to see what we mean. There are artisan cheesemakers and microbreweries, working-farm B&Bs, tours of cranberry bogs, weekend farmers' markets that spring up in every corner of the state, and classic supper clubs with cherry cobbler on the menu.

Tourism is growing. In fact, the culinary traveler movement, persons who plan their vacations around authentic food and beverage offerings, is blossoming into a 27-million strong interest group across the country. The connection that tourism and agriculture feature in Wisconsin, as two of the top three industries in the state, is staggering, as tourism tallies some \$12.8 billion in traveler expenditures each year and agriculture generates \$59 billion to the state's economy.

Wisconsin is geared to reach tourists far and near, and continues to reach out to culinary travelers with a Fall Sampler brochure; year-round publicity efforts featuring destinations, experiences, chefs and culinary delights; and even the Travel Green Wisconsin business certification program, which furthers efforts to protect the beauty and vitality of the land. Finding a niche in the agritourism arena is a great opportunity to educate consumers while helping them make their own Wisconsin food connections.



Photo courtesy of Gary N-ski

Resources for Agritourism

A Traveler's Guide to America's Dairyland

Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
www.eatwisconsincheese.com/assets/pdfs/WisconsinCheeseMap.pdf
A colorful map listing Wisconsin cheese plant tours and cheese retail locations.

Joint Effort Marketing program

Wisconsin Department of Tourism
<http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/Grants/JEM.aspx>
The Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) program is one of many programs available to get started. Funds are available for destination marketing projects, sales promotions, and one-time, new, or existing one-of-a-kind events.

Renewing the Countryside Project

Renewing the Countryside, Inc
www.RenewingTheCountryside.org
Click on "Special Projects" then "PR Toolkit"
This public relations kit contains easy-to-use tools such as press release templates, fact sheets, and resources to publicize your farm or rural business.

SavorWisconsin.com

WI DATCP, UW Extension, and Wisconsin Apple Growers Association (WAGA)
www.SavorWisconsin.com
SavorWisconsin.com allows for consumers to search for local events and provides businesses profiles and ability to sign-up and promote events for free.

Travel Green Wisconsin

Wisconsin Department of Tourism
www.TravelGreenWisconsin.com
This voluntary certification process, the first of its kind in the country, recognizes tourism businesses that have made a commitment to continuously improve their operations in order to reduce their environmental impact.

Tourism Industry Partners

Wisconsin Department of Tourism
<http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/Partners.aspx>
A list of local and statewide tourism organizations that could help set up agritourism sites or trails.

Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association

www.VisitDairyland.com
This website lists travel destination farms, an events calendar, and an agricultural adventure map.

Wisconsin Department of Tourism Field Specialists

Wisconsin Department of Tourism
<http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/Services/Department+Field+Staff.aspx>
These specialists spend one-on-one time with owners, organizations and local officials to help map out plans for growing local tourism economies through collaborative efforts.

PROFILE

A-Z Farm

Ray & Alice Antoniewicz
www.A-ZFarm.com

Agri-education is becoming a valued part of many producers' programs. A-Z Farm has developed creative ways to form a second revenue stream while emphasizing public education about farming. Ray, Alice and the Antoniewicz family have developed a balance between a working farm and offering the public an on-the-farm experience.

A-Z Farm has operated for 40 years, but only within the past decade have Ray and Alice Antoniewicz changed it from a horse and sheep farm to a concentration on sheep. "Our kids were bringing friends and their classes from school for visits to show what we were doing with the horses, and sheep were more or less a sideline," Ray Antoniewicz notes. "We were always fielding questions about our farm, and our present program evolved from that to what we're doing now. We did hear about people who invited the public out to their farm for a rural experience and we decided that with all the experiences available here that we would try something like that."

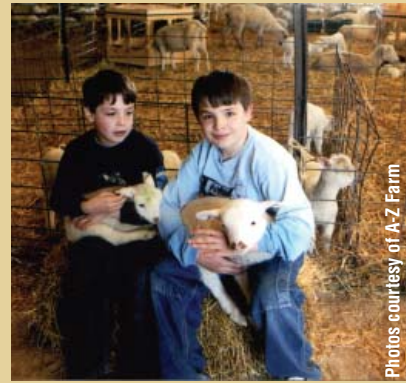
A large indoor riding ring with attached stables was equally well-suited for sheep events, such as shearing and lambing weekends. The large, clear space provides room to set up pens and shearing areas for public viewing and an area to care for the ewes and lambs when they arrive.

Open Houses Evolved into Selling Products

Antoniewicz recalls, "We had an open house to show the public what we were doing with the sheep. Very quickly people began asking if they could buy our products. We were also raising chickens, turkeys and rabbits, so we began offering meat sales, as well. Then we brought in several vendors with sheep-related merchandise that they can sell and they also do a good job in answering questions."

Both Ray and Alice are proponents of using their farm to teach about agriculture and connect to visitors seeking an authentic experience. "We didn't start out to sell things but it has evolved and we now offer demonstrations by local spinners, felters and other crafters," Antoniewicz explains.

During the last three Sundays of March, the public is invited to view newborn lambs and other farm animals, as well as the opportunity to see live lamb births. The Antoniewicz family and volunteers answer visitors' questions, explain the products derived from sheep and their wool, corral young animals in pens for visitors to pet, discuss the different breeds of chickens in their flock, and other details in a bustling atmosphere.



Photos courtesy of A-Z Farm

Sheep events are popular with visitors of all ages.

We promote the idea of an educational experience versus one only of tourism. We feel very strongly about the educational aspects of what we offer. The average urbanite is so far removed from the farming experience or background that it has provided us with a great arena for teaching.

Ray Antoniewicz, A-Z Farm



Local spinners, felters, and other crafters offer demonstrations during farm events.



We had an open house to show the public what we were doing with the sheep. Very quickly people began asking if they could buy our products.

Ray Antoniewicz, A-Z Farm



A-Z opens its farm to the public for sheep shearing demonstrations and spring lambing.

“We do charge an entrance fee for the shearing events and to attend the lambing barn,” Antoniewicz says. “We keep the cost low so that people of any means can enjoy coming here and being a part of our farm for a short time.”

Opening Your Farm to the Public

Public safety is a concern for farmers who decide to enter the agri-education or agritourism field. “We carry liability insurance and we have a liability release form that we use for tour groups and each visitor in that group needs to sign it,” Antoniewicz says.

Ray and Alice don’t think the size of the farm matters except in one point. “Everyone has to learn how much work they can handle. However, if you start too small there may not be enough for people to see to stay interested. A

10-minute visit may not be fulfilling to them,” Antoniewicz notes. “If you decide to go large then you need enough people to help so you’re not overwhelmed by the number of visitors. Your location is a factor to some degree and I think it helps if you’re the first one in your area to offer a particular kind of experience, otherwise there might be too much competition. I don’t think there’s any set formula, but I do think you have to offer something that people are interested in.”

Providing a public venue may involve local regulations. “Before we finally decided to open to the public, I checked with our town officers about ordinances that might affect what we do,” Antoniewicz recalls. “I would suggest that people check with their town and county agencies first before they do anything.”

Regulations, safety, location and type of venue offered are just some of the issues you need to consider before starting your program, but there are others, as well. “I think one of the reasons we’ve been successful is that we pay attention to some of the smaller details,” he explains. “Cleanliness is very important. Don’t have trash or broken equipment lying around. Although we let visitors pet our lambs and rabbits, our staff are the only ones who enter the pens to bring them out to pet. We don’t allow the public into the animal enclosures. That’s both a safety and health issue.”

Ray and Alice suggest that people wanting to start an agri-education venue look for ideas that are a little different. “Don’t be afraid to try some ideas,” Antoniewicz suggests. “People are interested in visiting farms, eating healthy and seeking an authentic experience. Others can do what we do and be successful if they set their goals to do a good job in providing a safe, enjoyable and educational experience.”

PROFILE

Wollersheim Winery & Cedar Creek Winery

Philippe & Julie Coquard

www.wollersheim.com

www.cedarcreekwinery.com

Wollersheim Winery is one of America's oldest wine estates and is a national historic site, dating back to the 1840s. It sits on a scenic hillside overlooking the Wisconsin River, just across from Prairie du Sac. Established as the Wollersheim Winery in 1972, today the vineyards are comprised of 27 acres of French-American and American hybrid grapes from which the winery produces seven different estate wines.

In 1990, Wollersheim Winery bought Cedar Creek Winery in Cedarburg, just outside of Milwaukee, and added Cedar Creek to its list of wines. Cedar Creek Winery is also located in a historic stone building and has underground cellars perfect for barrel aging Cedar Creek wines. Cedar Creek Winery is located in the historic Cedar Creek Settlement.

Between the Wollersheim and Cedar Creek brands, the wineries produce 100,000 cases a year. Owner and winemaker Philippe Coquard has combined tradition with the unique climate and growing season of Wisconsin to produce regional wines that reflect the taste of Wisconsin.

Several times a year, Wollersheim Winery and Cedar Creek Winery host wine tasting events which include local Wisconsin specialty cheeses such as Carr Valley Cheese, Cedar Grove Cheese, Emmi-Roth Kase USA and Sartori Cheese. Guided winery tours and wine tastings are offered at either winery throughout the year. "We market our wines in a variety of ways," says owner Julie Coquard. "We put a lot of information on our websites and our Facebook pages, as well as advertising in traditional ways. Our wines are not only sold at the two wineries, but also in Wisconsin and Northern Illinois stores and restaurants."

"We like to support wine as a lifestyle to be enjoyed with food, especially locally grown or locally made food, because it pairs well with our wine," says Coquard. "Education is a huge part of who we are. Our winery tours emphasize teaching people about how wine is made, as well as grape growing and wine tasting." A tour of either winery features a visit to the underground cellars and an explanation of the winery's history, the winemaking process and wine aging. Tours are offered throughout the year, along with special events that attract visitors, making the wineries destinations.



Photos courtesy of Wollersheim Winery



PROFILE

Autumn Harvest Trail



Anna Maenner, Director

www.waga.org/AHT/autumn_harvest_trail.htm

In an excellent example of collaboration, 18 Wisconsin businesses joined together in 2008 to form the Autumn Harvest Trail. The Wisconsin Apple Growers Association, the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association and the Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers Association led the project. Anna Maenner, director of the project, says, “The Trail gives producers and resellers a way to join together to reach consumers and to partner with each other to promote increased local food sales.”

One of the most important elements that Maenner notes about getting businesses involved with this program is the concept of “coopetition.” Maenner explains that “Coopetition is a concept that has helped our program flourish. You may see other farms, organizations or business as competition, but when you work together in cooperation it benefits everyone.”

The creators hoped to increase the sale and consumption of local goods, as well as to connect visitors to their food and the land through this concept. Twenty-six businesses now comprise the trail, including orchards, wineries, a pumpkin patch and more.

“We want consumers to have a food experience that creates a food memory that will bring them back to these destinations in the months and years ahead,” says Maenner.

Participating businesses use a variety of marketing strategies. The trail created a website profiling the different destinations and ran radio advertisements. Project leaders contacted newspapers and magazines to encourage them to write articles on the trail. Members also direct their visitors to other businesses along the trail.

A Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin (BLBW) grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection helped fund the marketing aspect of the trail. Maenner notes, “The grant gave us the funding to try something and experiment. When you have a new project, businesses are hesitant to jump on board as they don’t know what the return on investment (ROI) will be. With the BLBW grant we were able to experiment to learn what worked. This helped us develop the project and the program by identifying the elements needed to make the project a success.”

A big aspect of the program that has also helped the Autumn Harvest Trail is a consumer survey, which attendees complete to be entered in a drawing. Since people are excited to enter to win products and gifts from tour stops, it has helped the group gather information about who the visitors are, where they heard about the program and what stops they visited. Plus the additional information is great to provide to businesses on the trail to showcase and provide insight into the value of the program.

“The local foods industry needs a coordinated effort to bring in consumers, a way to provide them with a diverse and interesting experience and a way to increase the amount spent by consumers on local food,” says Maenner. “The Autumn Harvest Trail addresses these needs.”

Coopetition is a concept that has helped our program flourish... When you work together in cooperation it benefits everyone.

Anna Maenner, Autumn Harvest Trail

ON-FARM STORES AND PICK YOUR OWN

On-Farm Stores and Pick Your Own differ from other methods of direct marketing because customers travel to you to make their selection and purchase. These businesses can be individually owned, family-run or a cooperative effort between farms.

On-Farm Stores

Wisconsin farmers have developed on-farm stores for fruits, vegetables, popcorn, milk and meat products, to name a few. Many also include value-added items such as honey, maple syrup, baked goods, wine, preserves or clothing and crafts made from wool or other animal products. These creative marketers frequently leverage location with tourism routes and offer both recreational and educational experiences.

Several business details are important when considering an on-farm store. Your store needs to be attractively arranged and allow easy access to your products. On-farm stores are generally in a building separate from your home, but some may be attached to it. Depending on your location, local ordinances and market objectives, you may need to rezone a part of your farm as commercial, which may impact your tax base. Check with your local zoning and planning commission to get approval before starting any building project to make sure you comply with regulations, such as structure size and placement.

Consider using local or regional media to publicize your on-farm store. This can be an

effective method for alerting potential customers to your business and thereby encourage them to visit your farm. Establish hours of business that are convenient for your customers' schedules. These hours may vary according to your schedule. Your daily routine may be altered based on store needs for staffing. Having someone present at all times is the biggest challenge for on-farm stores. For detailed information on establishing on-farm stores and roadside stands, see the resources listed at the end of this section on page 70.



On-farm stores can leverage location with tourism routes and educational experiences.

Pick Your Own

Pick Your Own (PYO), sometimes called U-Pick, is a direct marketing business where customers come to your farm to pick the produce being offered. This arrangement can provide mutual benefits for both customer and farm owner. The customer gets the freshest produce possible at a price generally lower than retail outlets. Large quantities can be picked at a reasonable price for home canning or freezing.

The farmer benefits by having customers provide most of the labor to harvest, although many PYO farms also offer pre-picked quantities at a higher price for customers who prefer the fresh produce or berries or the pleasure of coming to your farm, but don't want to do the picking.

On-Farm Store

Advantages

- Convenient location on production site, no travel needed
- Customers can see first-hand the product's source

Challenges

- Need to be present during open hours
- Need to display product, could require shelving and coolers
- Need to organize and manage labor

Pick Your Own

Advantages

- Customers come to your farm for your products
- Customers harvest the crops

Challenges

- Must direct customers to picking areas, may need to re-harvest if incomplete
- Must have good customer relation skills



Vegetables, berries and a number of other crops are suitable for Pick Your Own farms.

Getting Started

Before starting your business, assess the time you need to invest to be successful and have satisfied customers. During the picking season, many PYO farms are open seven days a week to keep their fruits and vegetables from maturing too quickly and spoiling. However, you still have the flexibility to determine your hours of business.

You or your employees must be available during picking hours. Having responsible and well-trained workers helps you handle pay lines, customer questions and/or complaints, parking and other issues.

A PYO business provides a lot of customer contact with many people walking around your farm. You need to adapt your field operations to picking times. Weeding and irrigation must be done when customers are not present. This often means doing the work during late evenings or early mornings. To be successful you need to have picking hours that are convenient for customers, usually during the day and through weekends.

Pick Your Own Crops

Your crop choices will be influenced by location, soil type and whether there are similar businesses in your area. Most people think of vegetables and berries when they think of PYO crops. Asparagus, rhubarb, strawberries, raspberries, apples, grapes, pumpkins and many other fruits and vegetables are suitable choices for this type of business.

Other Considerations

If you are a grower with established berry beds, you will need an efficient system for marking rows and areas that have been recently picked. This directs your customers to good picking while making sure the whole crop is harvested as it ripens. To eliminate waste, you or your employees may need to do follow-up picking in places that have not been thoroughly covered. If you sell your products by weight, you will need a trade-legal scale - Refer to the Weights and Measures section on page 106.

Some PYO farms use boxes or containers as the sale measure. This requires telling your customers what constitutes a full container or box

and what extra charges are for overloaded containers. With people present in various areas of your property, you'll need to manage liability risk carefully. See page 125 for more information on premises liability insurance and other types of farm insurances.

Providing a pleasant experience for your customers and a quality product at a price they perceive as a good value will help establish your business.

Resources for On-Farm Stores, Pick Your Own and Roadside Stands

Idea Plan: Roadside Markets, Stands, and Equipment
Penn State Cooperative Extension
www.abe.psu.edu/extension/ip/IP790-33.pdf
Provides blueprint-type plans for building roadside stands.

Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
www.sare.org/publications/marketing.htm
This 20-page bulletin offers snapshots of the many alternatives to marketing commodities through conventional channels.

Pick-Your-Own and Farm Stands: Options for Your Business
UW Extension
www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3811-14.pdf
This publication lists the various considerations to be made when establishing a Pick-Your-Own business.

Pick Your Own Information
Ohio State University Extension
http://ohioline.osu.edu/b782/b782_34.html
Provides estimated return on investment tables for various raspberry and blackberry production systems.

Roadside Stand Marketing of Fruits and Vegetables
University of Georgia
www.agecon.uga.edu/~caed/roadside2.pdf
Contains specific information about roadside stands, such as estimating customer sales from traffic volume. Also contains information about marketing, promotion and customer relations applicable to any direct marketing operation.



ROADSIDE STANDS



An icon of rural areas for decades, roadside stands are enjoying a renewed popularity.

Roadside stands are a traditional market that is enjoying a renewal. Letting the customer come to you is another direct way to market your products. A roadside stand should be attractive to capture the attention of people driving by. You should have enough products for sale that you are offering a reason for potential customers to stop. Choosing a site may present challenges if you do not live on a well-traveled road. Cooperating with another business in a prime location may help establish your stand.

These markets can range from tailgate sales along village streets to artistically enhanced portable stands with extensive displays and product offerings. They can be placed in high-traffic areas and employ staffing or have honesty pay tables, where customers choose from the selection presented and place their money in a secure container.

Check with your insurer about liability issues related to setting up your stand. Contact local officials to learn about township or county ordinances that may pertain to roadside stands. County public health ordinances may apply. Finally, talk to others who have successful roadside stands already in place and learn from their experiences.

PROFILE

Oneida Nation - Tsyunhehkwa Farm

Jeff Metoxen, Manager
www.tsyunhehkwa.org

The Oneida Nation provides an agricultural program for tribal members and the community to become involved with at Tsyunhehkwa Farm. The Tsyunhehkwa program was created to focus on rejuvenating and preserving traditional agricultural practices, and it plays a key role in providing food security and sovereignty for the Oneida Nation. The Tsyunhehkwa Farm, Cannery and Retail Store are all open to the public.

A culture-based community program is at the heart of tsyunhehkwa (joon-hey-qwa), the Oneida Nation program committed to sustainable and renewable practices in producing high-quality foods that cultivate holistic health for all life forces. “The foundation of our program contained the role of cultural significance and education,” says program manager Jeff Metoxen. “We are striving to keeping traditions alive and share the cultural values of what the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin has to offer in this area. It is important that we all share in our cultural values and knowledge, and pass it on to future generations.”

Heirloom white corn, grass-fed beef, pastured poultry/eggs, organic fruits, vegetables and berries are grown on the 83-acre Tsyunhehkwa Farm. The program’s Cannery produces corn soup, canned white corn, dehydrated white corn, white corn flour, apple butter, salsa, pickles, jams and more.

Over 1,500 food and natural health care products are available at the Retail Store. These products include goods from the Cannery and the Farm, as well as other items from outside vendors. Besides purchasing food, customers can receive information on the traditional uses of herbs and essential oils, research healthcare topics and attend health-related workshops. Metoxen explains, “The store provides information on how to use products to assist our customers and clients in their choice of products that are going to best suit their needs.”

The Tsyunhehkwa program is part of the Oneida Community Food Assessment, which is developing an Oneida Tribal Food Policy that aims to have local foods constitute a certain percentage of annual overall purchases. In addition, the Tsyunhehkwa Farm is a member of the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems, which also includes the Oneida Nation farm, food distribution and health center. This collaborative group works toward integrating local foods and similar services into their community. They look at the best ways to provide for their community and what educational role they can apply together and as individual programs and entities.

They are also part of the Oneida Living in Balance (OLB), an initiative that provides services to the community that promote local resources into healthier lifestyles. Other OLB members include the Oneida Health Center, the Environmental Department and a Grants Office. OLB provides cooking classes that demonstrate healthier choices in meal preparation, including events designed to get people to enjoy physical activities, such as walking circles.



Heirloom white corn drying at the farm. Nutritional analysis completed on the corn showed a higher protein value compared with other varieties of conventional corn.

Products from the Tsyunhehkwa Farm include raw corn, dehydrated corn, corn soup, corn bread, and flour. These products are processed at the farm’s Cannery and are available in the Retail Store.



Photos courtesy of Oneida Nation

PROFILE

The Tree Farm

Chris & Karen Upper
www.TheTreeFarm.net

The state's largest Pick Your Own vegetable and flower farm is owned by Chris and Karen Upper at Cross Plains. The farm offers a unique venue for customers wishing to participate in harvesting produce without having to invest time in planting and growing. The farm also offers Cut Your Own Christmas trees during winter.

How did you start your business? We planted our first Christmas trees in 1968, and in 1973 we offered our first vegetables and trees for sale. We now raise more than 50 varieties of vegetables, 8 herbs and more than 20 Cut Your Own flower varieties, all on 15 acres. We also have six varieties of Christmas trees.

What marketing techniques do you use? We make great use of our website because it is very up-to-date and we can change it quickly. We use it to let people know what we've planted for the year, and on what dates the vegetables and flowers are typically ready for picking so they can plan their trips to our farm. We can add comments alongside each if there is something we want to mention. During the peak season, we change the information daily. When they come to pick, we give them a sheet of paper that shows where everything is located in the field, tips on how to pick the produce and the price. We also use a map on our website to show how people can find us.

What do people find attractive about Pick Your Own?

It's fun! It's recreation. It's an inexpensive excuse to be outside and gently active in a beautiful location. Picking your own food can be deeply satisfying. It's also about quality. And flavor. It's about food fresh enough to pickle or freeze. (When you pick it you know it's fresh.) All the fun of the harvest without all of the work!

What are the rewards of owning a Pick Your Own business?

We love to be outside and we love fresh produce. We love sampling and tasting and trying different planting combinations. That's the diversity that makes our business so interesting. Many growers like to go to farmers' markets but we prefer to be here on our farm. For us, it's a different lifestyle that doesn't include the pressure of other businesses. Plus, we enjoy people and helping them learn about the different products we have.



The Tree Farm overlooks beautiful Indian Lake County Park.

Photos courtesy of The Tree Farm

What suggestions do you have for anyone wanting to develop a Pick Your Own?

Teaching and communication skills are necessary. Many customers need to learn how to harvest produce without damaging the crop. Organize fields for optimal customer harvest as opposed to optimal yield. Listening skills are also important. Our customers tell us what and how much to plant. A final suggestion: enjoy the people and the produce.



The farm raises more than 50 varieties of vegetables plus herbs and 20 Cut Your Own flower varieties.



PROFILE

Brightonwoods Orchard

Bill Stone

www.BrightonwoodsOrchard.com

Brightonwoods Orchard provides a relaxing on-farm atmosphere where visitors take self-guided tours of a cider press. As an added feature for children, there is a two-story tree house to explore. A half-mile trail through the woods offers visitors a short excursion to stretch their legs.



At peak season, more than 30 apple varieties are available at the on-farm store. The orchard also sells autumn-related items and grapes.

Located on one of Southeastern Wisconsin's scenic rustic roads, Brightonwoods Orchard near Burlington is adjacent to the Richard J. Bong State Recreation Area, a managed prairie with hiking trails, campgrounds and visitors' center.

The orchard started in 1950 as a weekend retreat, and an initial hobby orchard of 3 acres soon grew to 16 acres with almost 200 varieties on more than 2,500 dwarf and semi-dwarf trees. Brightonwoods Orchard sells apples and other autumn-related products in their apple barn. They also grow and sell their own grapes.



Photos courtesy of Brightonwoods Orchard

Owner Bill Stone is intent on preserving existing heirloom varieties and has worked with Cornell University's Geneva Fruit Testing Station to propagate experimental varieties while still growing standard and newer commercial varieties. Their on-farm cider operation uses ultraviolet light for processing instead of pasteurization, which preserves the distinct flavor of the apples. Frozen cider is sold year-round. A collaborative effort begun in 2001 is Aepfel Treow Winery, which features onsite production of sparkling apple and pear wines, plus several table and dessert wines.



The orchard's award-winning apple cider is a unique blend of more than 10 varieties.

CHAPTER 3

Intermediate Marketing: Producer to Buyer to Consumer

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CHAPTER 3

Intermediate Marketing: Producer to Buyer to Consumer

SELLING TO INTERMEDIATE BUYERS

Intermediate marketing offers producers a way of selling farm products to a specific buyer for resale. The range of venues available is increasing. Sales to these markets can be attractive because they offer a way to diversify production and market outlets. Buyers include restaurants, grocery stores, institutions, schools and hospitals. You may also sell your products to wholesalers and distributors who, in turn, sell them to retail or institutional outlets.

Opportunities for product promotion through intermediate buyers vary by market. Much depends on your buyer. Providing your buyer with point of sale materials and other promotional items about your product could strengthen your relationship and be beneficial for both of you.

Key Steps for Selling to Intermediate Markets

Many farmers find benefits in using both direct marketing and intermediate marketing methods to sell their products. To your right in the green box are some of the different types of markets to consider. Some key steps for successful intermediate marketing are below:

- Identify new buyers
- Conduct outreach through a call, letter and/or email
- Schedule a meeting and begin creating a relationship with a buyer before the growing season starts
- Maintain communication throughout the year
- Develop a buy/sell agreement in a form that both parties can agree upon

Types of Intermediate Markets

Food Retailer: Any food business that buys food products for resale to the end consumer. Food retailers include restaurants, grocery stores, specialty stores and institutional food services.

Institutional Food Service: Institutional-type sales include those to nursing homes, group homes, prisons, schools (including colleges) and hospitals.

Food Service Management Company: This for-profit business supplies staff people with catering and restaurant expertise to work on-site at schools, colleges and other institutions, such as corporate campuses, to provide the food offered at these locations to employees, students and clients.

Distributor: A distributor is a for-profit business that buys food products from farms or food businesses and sells those products to restaurants, food services, institutions or other retail food businesses.

Wholesaler: A wholesaler is a business that may buy food products from farms or food businesses and sells those products to distributors and/or to restaurants, food services, institutions, grocers or other retail food business.

Collaborative Marketing Groups: A group of farmers that organizes, formally or informally, to work together on marketing, distribution, and sales.

Building Buyer Relationships

Pay attention to the details that may help you build a strong, long-term relationship.

Gauge Interest in Local Food Products

- Does the buyer currently purchase local foods? Have they had success with other local growers? If so, they may be interested in purchasing more local food products.
- If they have not purchased local food before, find out what has sparked their interest to consider it. Are they responding to customer demand, looking for less expensive products or wanting to support the local economy?
- What products are they looking for? What quantities do they require? What price are they willing to pay?

Outline Benefits of Purchasing Local Food

- Local food can enhance restaurant or store promotional efforts and generate customer interest and loyalty. Consumers are becoming more aware of the wealth of food choices available and the benefits of eating fresh, flavorful, locally sourced food.
- Schools and institutions can help meet goals for providing healthy food choices by sourcing foods locally.
- Local farmers can produce specialty crops not available from the usual distributors which supply restaurants, grocery stores or institutions. Particularly in rural areas, access to foods other than mainstream products is limited.
- Local food can be competitive, if not in price, then in quality.

Share What Products You Have to Offer

- Provide product samples when possible. In the initial meeting before the growing season, bring samples of your packaging, labels, farm information, in-store or restaurant materials.
- Have your price goals established before approaching the buyer. To learn more about setting prices, read the farmer profiles in this chapter. Refer to page 17 for details on pricing strategies.
- Provide descriptions of products you currently produce. Ask what other products may interest the buyer.
- Prepare a product availability sheet for the buyer to keep as reference.

Meet with the Buyer, Build a Relationship

One of the most important aspects of the local food movement is creating relationships with your buyers. Find out the name of the chef, department buyer, institutional buyer or distributor, and schedule a meeting. Begin your conversation by determining buyer interest in purchasing local food products and ask questions to find out how you could best work together.

Asking and Answering Questions

Be prepared to talk about your farm and specific details about your product(s). In addition to your product availability sheet, be prepared to answer or discuss:

- Can you deliver? What day and time?
- Is your delivery refrigerated?
- If not refrigerated, how soon after harvest can you guarantee delivery?
- What time of day and day of week can you deliver?
- Will someone from your farm unload the truck, or does our staff unload the truck?
- Will your delivery driver take a background check?
- Do you have liability insurance?
- Do you have training in post harvest handling?
- Do you have any food safety training or certificates?

Questions to ask a potential buyer:

- What types of produce do you prefer?
- What is your billing process like?
- Do you have a goal for sourcing a certain percentage of your food locally?

Product Availability Sheets

It is a good idea to bring a product availability sheet, like the example on the next page, to quickly illustrate your product offerings. An informational sheet should cover:

- Quantity of product per week
- Price
- Size and packaging
- Number of weeks product will be available
- Quality standards
- Ordering and delivery schedule

Follow Up with a Written Agreement

A written agreement between a buyer and seller is the best insurance that both parties understand and meet each other's expectations. These agreements need not be extensive or formal. In many cases, an agreement with a buyer may be verbal. Many transactions proceed on mutual trust alone. Determine your and your buyers' comfort level regarding the use of contracts. Also be sure to cover aspects like license, insurance or certification requirements.

Continued Communication Throughout the Year

After securing a sale and an agreement with a buyer, it is a good business practice to maintain timely contact by the buyer's preferred communications method(s). Touch base with your buyer throughout the year and as you begin to plan and develop your next production cycle. Ongoing communication will create an atmosphere where you can ask for feedback about the quality of your products and gain insight into future needs.

Understand your buyer's schedule. Many chefs plan their menus several weeks ahead and need a notice about what products will be available. Department buyers also need to know several weeks in advance when your product will be available in order to

discontinue their current product source and allow room for yours. Talk with the buyer about scheduling deliveries. Livestock producers should plan their production schedules around holidays and seasonal events that may require greater quantities or a specialized product.

Buyers typically like a two-week notice when a purchased product is going to be harvested and delivered. Keeping your buyers informed of the current status of your products allows them to anticipate delivery times. This can also provide them time to seek alternative sources for similar products in the event of unanticipated production changes. Most buyers object to the surprise of orders that cannot be filled or delivered on time. They have set schedules and disruptions in product availability or delivery can create situations where they may not want to buy again from farmers who cannot consistently meet their commitments.

Ordering and Billing Methods

Intermediate buyers prefer ordering and billing procedures that are as simple and streamlined as possible. You should develop an accounting system that meets your needs and is easy for the buyer to understand and make payment. Whether you get paid on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis needs to be determined at the start. There are different

Sample Product Availability Sheets

PRODUCE	Box Size	Price/Box	Season Available	Quantity Available/Week	Comments
Spring Crops					
Broccoli	1 1/9 bushel	\$0.00	Mid June–Mid July	100 boxes/week	Gypsy-tight, firm heads; great color
Snap Peas	10 lb box	\$0.00	Mid June–Mid July	20 boxes/week	Small and sweet for salads
Summer Crops					
Green Curly Kale	24 bunch box	\$0.00	Mid June–Mid Oct	100 boxes/week	New variety
Fall Crops					
Butternut Winter Squash	35 lb box	\$0.00	Mid Sept–Mid Oct	200 boxes/week	Try our soup recipe
Yukon Gold Potatoes	10 5-lb bags	\$0.00	Mid Aug–Dec	10 boxes/week	Popular variety, excellent baked

MEATS	Price/Pound	Specs	Description	Comments
BEEF				
<i>Package Orders</i>			<i>Delivered: cut, wrapped, labeled, frozen</i>	
Side	\$0.00	180–200 lbs	Steaks, roasts, ground beef, ribs, soup bones, other cuts	Can be custom cut
Mixed Quarter	\$0.00	90–100 lbs	Same as side of beef	Can be custom cut
15-pound Variety Pack	\$0.00/pack	15 lbs	Mixed steaks, roasts, ground beef, processed meats	Ideal for food samplings
BEEF				
<i>Individual Cuts</i>			<i>Delivered: cut, wrapped, labeled, frozen</i>	
Steaks–Rib Eye	\$0.00	4 12–14 oz. steaks/pack	3/4 inch thick	Can be custom cut
Sausage	\$0.00	1-lb sticks	Garlic and other flavors	Available year round
CHICKEN				
Whole	\$0.00	5–8 lbs	Delivered: cut, wrapped, labeled, frozen	Can be custom cut
LAMB				
Whole	\$0.00	50 lbs carcass weight	Delivered: cut, wrapped, labeled, frozen	Place holiday order now
PORK				
Ham Roast	\$0.00	Specify weight	Smoked	Limited amounts naturally smoked pork available

ways to develop a process that works for both the buyers and the suppliers. Some ordering and billing suggestions include:

- Use two paper receipt books: one to record deliveries to a central packing location and another one to record customer orders
- Take orders by phone, email and/or fax and have a set operating procedure
- Find out payment procedures. Institutions generally use a net 30 day billing cycle and pay with a purchasing credit card
- Provide an invoice to be signed by the person taking your delivery

Once again, the crucial marketing task for farmers is on-going communication with buyers.

What You Need to Know and Do to Sell in Intermediate Markets

Some of the key aspects to research and explore before you enter an intermediate market are below. Consider how these expectations will impact your operation and the opportunity cost to meet these expectations.

- Compliance with food safety regulations
- Post-harvest handling, storage and distribution
- Packaging and labeling
- Need a consistent supply and liability insurance

Food Safety Regulations

There has been an increasing focus on food safety assurance in the marketplace for fresh fruits and vegetables. Legally, farmers selling raw fresh fruits and vegetables are an “approved source” for all markets. However, many intermediate markets are looking for a level of assurance that the farm they are purchasing from has some kind of food safety plan.

Be sure to have an understanding of general on-farm food safety principles and consider preparing a Standard Operating Procedures manual for your farm. In addition, some intermediate markets require growers to have their farm audited by a third-party, most commonly GAP/GHP. Please refer to page 122 for additional information. DATCP is working to address food safety concerns for growers and buyers alike with the Food Safety Project for the Wisconsin Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Industry. Find out more about the project at <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> (Search “Wisconsin

Food Safety Assessment for Fruits and Vegetables”). For rules and regulations for all food products by market, please refer to Chapter 4.

Post-Harvest Handling, Storage and Distribution

It is extremely important to wash, cool and store your fruits and vegetables properly while maintaining the appropriate temperature to prevent spoilage. There can be a considerable amount of time between when you harvest and when your product is used by the buyer. It is extremely important to cool fruits and vegetables to the proper temperature quickly after harvest and to maintain proper temperature throughout the entire chain of transport from field to storage, storage to truck and truck to buyer. Hydro-cooling, icing and forced air cooling are quick methods of removing field heat. You may also need to consider investing in a cooling facility and/or a refrigerated truck.

If you use storage facilities on your farm to extend your season for supplying products to a food retailer, you need to pay close attention to good post-harvest handling and storage conditions. Good post-harvest practices increase the shelf life and maintain the quality of fruits and vegetables. For resources on post-harvest handling for fruits and vegetables, including storage conditions, see the next page.

Meat, eggs and dairy products require different handling and storage methods. Refrigeration or deep cold storage is necessary at all times for dairy products and perishable meats to ensure safe storage and delivery. During transport, meat and dairy products must be handled according to safe handling requirements for perishable foods and kept refrigerated at 41°F or below or kept frozen if labeled as such.

Rinse water for cleaning eggs must be at least 20°F warmer than the eggs and not colder than 90°F. Prior to processing and packing, eggs must be kept at an average temperature of 60°F or lower. Once processed, packed eggs must be refrigerated at 45°F or lower at all times, including while in transport.

See the resources that follow this section for more information on post-harvest handling and storage. A summary of applicable state rules and regulations for all these products, go to page 107.

Packaging and Labeling

Packaging is important when selling your farm products and plays an important role in intermediate marketing. Standards of packaging and sizing are generally consistent throughout the food industry. Most distributors do not want to repackage products and they expect your shipments to arrive in standard package sizes. If this is your market, you should study these standards and familiarize yourself with sizing requirements. Talking with your buyer to learn their product packaging and labeling needs is essential to fulfill expectations. This will help create a strong relationship as you strive to fulfill the needs of your customer, the buyer.

In Wisconsin, meat sold to the public must be processed at a licensed state or federal facility, inspected, packaged and appropriately labeled. Milk and dairy products must be produced and processed in licensed facilities that are inspected and approved by the state. Dairy processing operations are also subject to federal inspections. Packaging and labeling standards apply to milk and dairy products. Eggs are subject to grading, sizing and labeling requirements. Products such as honey and maple syrup also have standards and regulations regarding grading, packaging and labeling.

The product you deliver should be clean and of good quality. Consistency between what the buyer ordered and what they receive is important. If you cannot fill the order exactly as specified or desired, communicate that before making a delivery. A summary of applicable state rules and regulations is on page 103.

Consistent Supply

While meat, dairy and processed products can be supplied year-round, a consistent supply of fresh, locally grown vegetables is difficult in northern climates. Seasonal sales, however, are acceptable to some food services. Some farmers who market to institutions provide a seasonal supply of fresh vegetables, but manage their plantings to have a consistent supply throughout the growing season. Another way to have a consistent supply is through careful storage of crops. This can be accomplished by taking produce directly from the field to cold storage following good post-harvest handling guidelines and storage requirements. You then continue weekly deliveries throughout the fall, winter and

following spring. Yet another method of providing a consistent supply is to process and preserve produce during the growing season. See page 27 for more information on season extension techniques and practices.

Liability Insurance

Farmers or farmer groups who want to market to intermediate markets often need product liability insurance. Some farm insurance policies include coverage for products sold from the farm, but this is not adequate for sales to intermediate markets. The amount of insurance you need depends on what products you are selling and whether you are selling to a public or private market. Fresh, raw fruits and vegetables are considered low risk, and insurance for those might be less than higher-risk products, such as meat. Finding an insurance agent with experience in farm marketing can be difficult. Ask if your insurance agent is willing to work with you on a policy that will meet your needs. If not, it is worthwhile to shop around for an agent with experience insuring market farms. See page 125 for more information on product liability insurance.

Resources for Intermediate Marketing

Post-Harvest Handling and Storage Requirements **Produce Facts**

University of California–Davis
<http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Produce/Producefacts/index.shtml>

Recommendations on maintaining post-harvest quality and storage requirements of fruits and vegetables.

Wholesale Success

www.FamilyFarmed.org

Selling, post-harvest handling and packing produce.

Post Harvest Handling for Best Crop Quality

Wisconsin School for Beginning Market Gardeners
www.bse.wisc.edu/hfhp/tipsheets_html/postharvest.htm

Tip sheets for post-harvest handling of fruits and vegetables.

Quality and Packaging Standards

PLU Codes

The International Federation for Produce Standards
www.plucodes.com

This site provides free Web access for all Price Look Up (PLU) codes for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Quality Control

USDA

www.ams.usda.gov

Information on USDA grading standards for quality control. Click on Grading, Certification and Verification, then Standards.

RESTAURANTS AND GROCERY STORES

Restaurant Trends

Restaurant trends have a significant impact on the food industry and touch the entire chain of production through consumption. Trends affect producers, distributors, chefs and anyone who is part of the food service industry.

One of the most important trends affecting producers is the increased reliance of restaurants, grocery stores, hospitals and universities on using locally grown food sources rather than accessing sources halfway across the country or around the world.

Among those products expected to experience the highest increase in per capita expenditures through 2020 are fruits and vegetables, with most consumers preferring locally grown foods as they become increasingly concerned about nutrition, safety, variety and convenience.

American consumers are more sophisticated and adventurous than ever, seeking out new and exotic flavors on menus. Seven out of 10 people say restaurants provide flavor and taste sensations that cannot be easily duplicated at home. Chefs surveyed identify alternative source ingredients - locally grown produce, organics, sustainable seafood, grass-fed and free-range items - as being among the “hottest” menu trends.

On average, an American adult buys a meal or a snack from a restaurant 5.8 times per week and spends 48 percent of their food budget on food away from home. Chefs are meeting this demand: 89 percent of dining operators served locally sourced items in 2008, and 90 percent believed the trend would become more popular over time.⁷ This should provide an increasingly strong market for farmers entering this market for many years to come.

⁷National Restaurant Association www.restaurant.org

Selling to Restaurants

Benefits

- Ability to experiment with unique varieties and new products
- Increased brand exposure by listing the farm name in menu and/or in restaurant promotions
- Consumers receive direct satisfaction from product use by creative chefs

Challenges

- Restaurants generally do not have much storage space; they require smaller quantities and multiple deliveries
- Requires good communication skills with managers/chefs

Ask These Questions

- How long will my item(s) remain on the menu?
- Can you ensure my product will be purchased during the entire season of availability?
- How will you promote my product(s)?
- What cooperative promotions would you consider?
- May I run a special or coupon with my product(s)? Is this required?
- What is your mark-up/margin for products?



Photo courtesy of Nathan Berg

Grocery Trends

The Wisconsin Grocers Association and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection surveyed Wisconsin grocers to assess their local food purchases. The aim of the August 2007 survey was to garner information that would help Wisconsin farmers better link with grocery store buyers, creating new market opportunities for both parties. Surveys were sent to 33 grocery stores in the three targeted cities of Eau Claire, Green Bay and Milwaukee. Thirteen of those surveyed responded and the results provided a window into reasons they did or did not purchase local foods.

For the purposes of this study, the term local product was defined as those produced within an hour or two drive of the store surveyed, or perhaps up to 120 miles.

The study concluded that most grocers responding did not carry local products because it was not convenient or they were not part of the local food “cause.” However, these same grocers would stock local items to keep customer loyalty and if customers demanded them. Grocers appeared to realize they would have to carry local products to contribute to their customers’ desires of supporting their local community and local economy.

The study showed that one key to accessing local food stems from a more personal philosophy where consumers seek out products they believe are good for them. Increasing education to more people was deemed one way to boost demand for local food products.



Selling to Grocery Stores

Benefits

- Can sell large quantity of product
- Increased brand exposure
- Consumers have access to your product seven days a week

Challenges

- May need to develop competitive pricing
- May require extra labeling including Price Look Up (PLU) labels or Universal Purchasing Code (UPC)
- May require nutritional labeling



The diversity of products being sold in grocery stores continues to grow. From fresh produce to shelf stable products to value-added goods the opportunities are endless. Pictured above and at left are just a taste of Wisconsin products available in local grocery stores.

The study also revealed significant opportunities to educate grocers. Many grocers in urban areas didn't realize that it was legal to purchase products from local growers, particularly meats that are state inspected and producer licensed. It was also found that independent grocers, particularly those identified as being in Milwaukee and Eau Claire, went to farmers' markets to find local producers because they did not know how or where to find them. A 1999 study of 38 Wisconsin grocers found that over half of their locally purchased food came directly from the farmers.⁸

Consumers are requesting more local food and grocers are looking to enhance shopper loyalty. The results from this survey should alert local producers that there is a ready market to tap; they just need to make an effort to reach it.

Resources for Selling to Restaurants and Grocery Stores

Grocers Buy Local

www.grocersbuylocal.com

Website and database of Wisconsin grocers interested in purchasing locally grown fruits, vegetables, meats, cheese and more from local farmers, growers, producers and manufacturers.

Selling Directly to Restaurants

UW Extension

<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/A3811-05.pdf>

A short guide for how to start selling to restaurants.

Selling Directly to Restaurants and Retailers

University of California–Davis

www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cdpp//selldirect.pdf

Answers to critical questions when selling to restaurants and retailers.

Selling to Restaurants

Appropriate Transfer of Technology for Rural Areas

www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/sellingtorestaurants.html

Guide to selling to restaurants.

Wisconsin Farmer Chef Connection

www.wibuylocal.org

This educational website is designed to facilitate effective working relationships between farmers, chefs, and professional food buyers.

⁸ Lawless, G., et al. 1999. The Farmer-Food Buyer Dialogue Project, UWCC Occasional Paper No. 13, University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Cooperatives, Madison, WI.

Selling to Restaurants and Grocery Stores

Typically, chefs and department buyers work with distributors due to the convenience of accessing food products delivered in standardized quantities and sizes. More chefs and department buyers now seek to work with local farmers for their product needs because of the excellent food quality they can access. This may provide you with an opportunity to step in and become a reliable supplier for locally grown food products.

What Chefs and Department Buyers Want

- Good communication with producers is important. Some may prefer phone contact or emails once initial contact has been established. Be professional in all your dealings. Schedule a time to discuss mutual expectations.
- The product you deliver should be clean and of good quality. Consistency between what the buyer ordered and what they receive is important. If you cannot fill the order exactly as specified or desired, communicate that before making a delivery.
- Make certain you fully understand how your product is to be packaged and sized. Some buyers have specific preferences and you need to understand what they want, or together devise an acceptable alternative. Go to page 79 for resources on standard package sizes and quality standards.
- Understand your buyer's schedule. Many chefs plan menus several weeks ahead and need notice about what products will be available. Department buyers also need to know several weeks in advance when your product will be available in order to discontinue a current product source and allow room for yours. Talk with the buyer about scheduling deliveries. Livestock producers should plan their production schedules around holidays and seasonal events that may require greater quantities or a specialized product.
- Develop an accounting system that meets your needs and is easy for the buyer to understand and make payment. Whether you get paid on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis needs to be determined at the start. Provide an invoice to be signed by the person taking your delivery.



Dave Swanson, founder of the state's first Restaurant Supported Agriculture (RSA) visits farms to taste the products they sell.

PROFILE

Braise Restaurant Supported Agriculture

David Swanson
www.BraiseLocalFood.com



Building off of the Community Supported Agriculture structure, David Swanson has created one of the first Restaurant Supported Agriculture (RSA). Through the program, more than 50 farms provide ingredients to 16 businesses through Braise RSA.

How does the RSA work?

During the winter, Swanson meets with member restaurants to determine what kinds of ingredients will be needed in what quantities. He then meets with member farms, who decide

which farms will grow which ingredients and what prices they will set. When the harvest season begins, Braise RSA collects the produce and transports it to a central hub. From there, produce is grouped for the different businesses and delivered to its final destination once or twice a week. Each farm sets its own price for different products. According to Swanson, restaurants are willing to accept this unusual circumstance in exchange for the high quality of the products and the rarer varieties of ingredients they obtain.

What challenges does the RSA face?

Many chefs are not used to purchasing local food. Swanson explains that RSA food often is not as efficiently or as nicely packaged as normal restaurant supplies, or that it might have dirt on the outside. "Sometimes the weather plays havoc on crops," he adds. "Sometimes the supply is low or high. Sometimes there's a hailstorm and lettuce is ruined." According to Swanson, these factors force chefs to think on their feet and adapt to the situation.

Swanson plays the mediator between farmers and restaurants. "We tell them that this is the way that food is," he explains. "What I try to do, with my restaurant experience, is go to the restaurants and talk to them about ways of doing things differently to make it really work on their end." This might involve advising chefs on how to use all parts of an ingredient or how to manage sudden changes in supply.

What resources helped form the RSA?

"The ability to really see how farmers really work," says Swanson. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WI DATCP) helped him become familiar with the structure and business model of a farm, so that he could "talk to a farmer in farmer lingo." The Department also chose Braise RSA as one of its 2008 Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant recipients. Swanson cites the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, run by the University of Wisconsin, as another valuable resource.

What advice do you have for producers looking to market locally?

Swanson believes small farmers can market to restaurants relatively easily, especially independent restaurateurs, because their structure allows for opportunities to be unique or connect locally, like by purchasing locally grown products. He advises farmers to learn how to correctly handle produce and to communicate with the restaurant about timeframes and packaging. "Make sure it is easy for the end user to bring it into their facility."



Photo courtesy of Liliane Miller

At the farmers' market, Chef Tory Miller fills his wagon four to five times to secure ingredients for his menus.

PROFILE

L'Etoile Restaurant & Graze

Tory Miller, Executive Chef & Co-Proprietor
www.LEtoile-Restaurant.com

Chef Tory Miller is committed to sourcing locally grown and sustainable and organic ingredients from several Wisconsin farmers.

Tory and Traci Miller, co-proprietors of L'Etoile, have envisioned their restaurant and gastropub as a focal point for supporting Wisconsin farmers and the sustainable agriculture movement.

They have used many of the ideas and values of founder, Odessa Piper, as a springboard to further champion and support farmers and remain at the forefront of sourcing local food.



Photo courtesy of Fountain Prairie

Dorothy Priske welcomes Chef Tory to Fountain Prairie Farms. L'Etoile features the farm's Highland beef on the restaurant menu.

Chef Tory loves using local ingredients for exceptional quality and diversity. L'Etoile and Café Soleil have a close relationship with Dane County Farmers' Market and have built a strong relationship with Wisconsin farmers who grow a wide variety of organic and naturally-raised foods.

L'Etoile's pioneer involvement in accessing sustainable agriculture products for its menus not only supports Wisconsin farmers but raises the profile of local and regional food production to a new level of awareness.



Photo courtesy of Liliane Miller

Local ingredients are used in the restaurants because of their exceptional quality and diversity.



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch

Chef Tory leads a cooking class for students at Sherman Middle School in Madison.

PROFILE

Miller & Sons Supermarket

Carl Miller

<http://millerandsonssupermarket.net>

Miller & Sons Supermarket has been a leader in the local food movement for over a century. Representing the fourth generation of family ownership, Carl Miller strongly believes in continuing to provide local food for his customers.

“If you go back in history, a couple generations back when the Miller family got involved, there were famers involved. It was the thing to do. My father continued to do it as much as possible, 30 or 40 years ago. It has now become a big thing again,” shares Miller.

Why do you offer local food?

Miller & Sons provides locally produced produce, eggs meat, and baked goods at its locations in Verona and Mount Horeb.

It sets us apart,” says Miller. “People love it. As fast as you put it out, it goes away. We sign it, or make it so people know that it’s there, and they pick it up.” The store has historically purchased a lot of local food in the summer, but Miller says they’re trying to “take it to the next step.”

Community is important to an independent grocer and Miller and Sons are grateful and proud to serve the community. Customers are Miller’s most important asset and keeping them happy and satisfied is the number one goal.



Photo courtesy of Miller & Sons Supermarket

How do you manage pricing?

According to Miller, about 60 percent of the time his suppliers have a price in mind. The other 40 percent of suppliers are more open to negotiation with the supermarket. “We like to work out a comfortable deal for both of us,” he says.

Has supply been a problem?

“Not at all,” says Miller. Customers are willing to purchase produce at certain times of year. This past summer, they were eagerly awaiting homegrown cantaloupe. “People are looking and asking, but if you tell them that they’ll be here next week, they’re willing to wait for them. They may buy a regular one at that time to last them the week. But when the big ones come in from the local producers, they’ll buy two or three of them.”

What resources have helped you purchase locally?

“The state and many organizations have tried to help hook up the retailer up with the producer,” explains Miller. “That’s helped. We have a website we can look at if we really want to buy something we do. It’s good for both parties.”

What tips do you have for producers who would like to sell to grocers?

“Don’t be afraid to ask,” advises Miller. He tells the story of a woman who came into the store and asked if Miller would purchase some pumpkins her child had grown. Miller bought about one hundred pumpkins from her and used them to decorate the produce section of the store.



Photos courtesy of Just Local Food

Just Local Food is structured as a worker-owned cooperative.

We're here to answer our customers' questions and the only way we can do that is understand the farmer.

Aaron Ellringer, Just Local Food



Freshness, service, and quality are three important components at Just Local Food.

PROFILE

Just Local Food Cooperative

Aaron Ellringer, Co-Owner &
Education and Marketing Coordinator
www.justlocalfood.blogspot.com

If you summed up the philosophy of Just Local Food Cooperative, it would be “Think Globally and Buy Locally.” That’s the spirit the worker-owners of the cooperative carry with them every day and try to instill in all who walk through their doors.

“We began with several people in Eau Claire who wanted to own a business together that involved food, a grocery store or working with farmers,” recalls Aaron Ellringer, education and marketing coordinator and one of the co-op’s 10 worker-owners. “We simply ended up combining all three elements.”

Those common goals worked with the experience that four owners brought to the group. “We decided early on that although we wanted to work with people, we wanted to keep our group small and not have 50 people around the table,” he says.

Building Relationships

Their business relationships were built on trust with suppliers, which helped them expand. “We each invested \$1,000 as equity but the farmers were investing, too,” he notes. “Troy DeRosier of Crystal Ball Farms brought us milk but didn’t demand that we pay him for two or four weeks. His investment in us was the loan of his product he gave us to sell, which we wouldn’t have been able to do if he hadn’t been willing to support our efforts.”

Food-Buying Policy, Packaging, Pricing

Going onto farms allows employees to learn the story of the products offered and to place it within the larger picture of the store’s mission. “We don’t tell farmers how or what to grow,” Ellringer notes. “We want to know what they’re doing

and if we then know it’s something our customers want, that’s great. If it isn’t, we tell them. Maybe it would be a product that would sell if they helped us market it. We try to get farmers to tell their story and the story of their product. Farmers consider us their partners.

“Packaging presents some challenges for us,” Ellringer muses. “Customers have been conditioned to look at it through plastic. When we sell a package of ground beef for home delivery, the product has already been sold before it’s been looked at. So we sit down with each of our suppliers to discuss how it’s going to be packaged. Labeling and pricing is difficult and takes a long time. It would be great if that steak came with its price on it but it doesn’t.”

Farmers are allowed to set the price for their product and Ellringer says that's when they will start to negotiate. "Most farmers understand that customers are price sensitive and that we have to make something, too. Also, many realize that having us sell and market their product is saving them time."

Educating Customers

Ellringer maintains they are not only selling products, they are educating people about the farms that grow the food. "We're here to answer our customers' questions, and the only way we can do that is understand the farmer," Ellringer notes.

Just Local Food places brief descriptions and photos in the store highlighting farmer-producers. This, according to Ellringer, is one reason for their success. "There needs to be someone in our store who can tell that story to our customers. They have questions and they need to know more about these things. By how we're structured - as a 10-worker-owned co-op - each person who works in our store has a vested interest in our success. We want each farmer and supplier to succeed. Each customer that comes in is special to us in a way that's meaningful and we are able to share the stories unlike other stores could. If the farmer can't be there, what's the next best thing? It's having someone who is interested in their product. Someone who knows the farmer, who cares about that farmer. And a piece of paper just isn't going to do that. It helps and it reminds people, but each of these products is a story."

The public response has been satisfying to the owner-workers, as well as the farmers. "We've learned that local food crosses all social boundaries because it makes sense," Ellringer says. "We're rebuilding our food system in a way that people used to buy their food but it got lost somewhere along the way."

Running out of a product is a common occurrence at Just Local Food. "That may seem to be a problem to a regular store, but not to us," he notes. "Because that gives us an opportunity to educate. Why are we out of eggs? Well, it's been cold out and the chickens stopped laying. Yes, they're disappointed but we're there to educate and they're often more likely to return because they learned something about their food they didn't know before. That's why we're here and that, I believe, is why we are successful."

We try to get farmers to tell their story and the story of their product. Farmers consider us their partners.

Aaron Ellringer, Just Local Food



The store offers a wide range of local produce, as well as organic flours and grains.

Photos courtesy of Just Local Food



Photo & Map courtesy of Viroqua Food Cooperative

PROFILE

Viroqua Food Cooperative

Dani Lind, Produce Manager
 Charlene Elderkin, Marketing & Membership Coordinator
<http://ViroquaFood.Coop>

The Viroqua Food Cooperative (VFC) prides itself on offering a one-stop shopping experience of high-quality, healthy foods from farms located mainly in western Wisconsin.

The VFC began as a natural foods buying club organized by a small group of individuals who worked together to provide their families with healthy foods. They opened their first store in the fall of 1995 and now provide a market for local farmers and an outstanding place to work and shop, and they keep steady attention on their environmental footprint.



A Regional and Local map identifies the shelf items customers can choose as locally grown.

The success of VFC lies in its attention to quality, offering a wide selection of competitively priced produce and a community atmosphere that recalls an earlier time. This mixture has encouraged development of a member-owned business that supports local, organic and natural growers, and local suppliers, and provides jobs and services that stay in the community. VFC can serve as a model for other areas because the Co-op democratically represents the needs and wishes of its members and forms a powerful economic force in its community.

Charlene Elderkin is marketing and membership coordinator for VFC. “We promote local products in the store with a special ‘Local’ shelf tag,” she explains. “We define local as within a 100-mile radius of Viroqua.”

Although VFC buys most of its produce locally in season, it reaches beyond that radius to source products for the Co-op. “We also have ‘Regional’ tags that include states bordering Wisconsin where we get some store products,” Elderkin adds.

“We have a website where we promote our local farmers and producers. For the farmers we buy the most from, we have a special half-page farmer profile sign that hangs near the product. We also do print and radio ads highlighting local food and specific local products.”

Cooperative Arrangement Attractive to Farmers, Suppliers

What makes this Co-op so attractive to not only farmers and suppliers, but also to those who buy shares to become members? Dani Lind works with most of the farmers when buying produce to sell at the Co-op.

“We love having the personal connection with local farmers,” Lind explains. “We can customize our product because of our relationship with them. For example, we can request particular varieties, case sizes, bunch sizes and an extended season in ways other stores can’t or won’t ask for.”

“The best thing about this arrangement is that the money stays in the local community. Most of our farmers return the favor and support the store by shopping here. We have a customer base that demands local food and buys it when it’s available, even when there’s a cheaper California product right next to it. Oftentimes local product will cost more than that produced in California because of their smaller scale. We wouldn’t be able to carry our local product if our customers weren’t willing to pay this higher price. Part of this great customer demand or consciousness is due to a national trend and, I believe, partly due to our marketing and educational efforts.”

Each department buyer at VFC is responsible to purchase local foods whenever possible, supported by the direction of the Co-op’s mission and culture as a guiding force. “Ordering from many different small sources versus a couple of large distributors does mean extra labor and mental exercises for the buyers, and presents one of the major issues in getting local products into our store,” Lind notes. “Everyone has different schedules or deadlines, and availability sheets or not. Also phone numbers, faxes, emails, and other methods of communication can present a challenge for the buyers, but that’s all part of it.”

Lind has found labeling, certification and handling to be another store issue that requires attention.

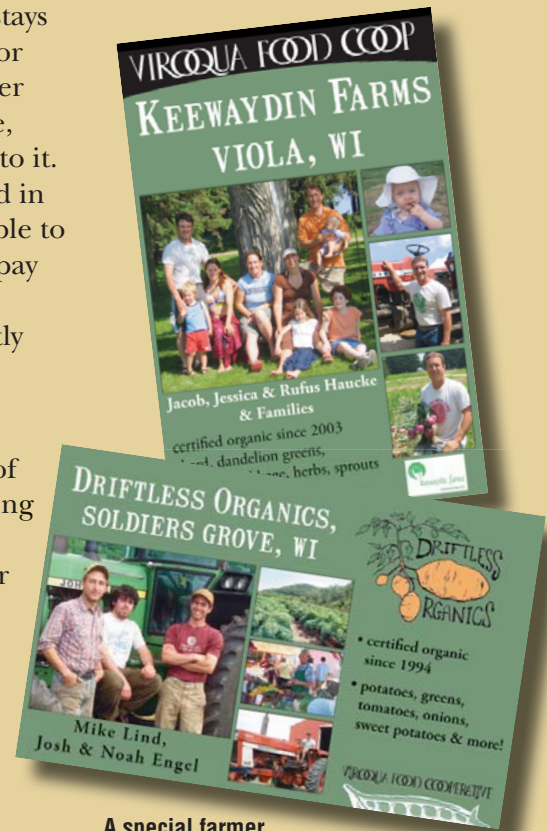
“Our buyers must have up-to-date certificates for all certified organic local growers. That’s not a problem when we buy produce from a distributor because they only need a certifier stamp on the box, as they have all the certification papers already. However, the labeling can be tricky when we work with non-certified growers because we want to be as specific as possible,” she relates.

The third challenge for VFC is its efforts in marketing each farm individually. “We provide space to identify the farmers whose produce we’re selling, and the departments can quickly get cluttered when you have profiles all

over the place in the height of summer when we’re buying from up to 20 farms,” Lind says.

Local Products Highlighted with In-Store Signs

VFC offers a unique way to identify products from local farmers through their signs. “We have green signs that say ‘Local’ [within 100 miles] for all local products in our store,” Lind says. “It’s easy to look at the produce case and find the local produce by looking for the green signs. The regional produce - from a five-state area - is marked in blue, and orange signs are used for farther afield.



A special farmer profile sign hangs near a farm’s products in the store. Farmers are also promoted on the store’s website.



Photo & Posters courtesy of Viroqua Food Cooperative

The store hosts a “meet your CSA farmer” event which provides an opportunity for members to establish a personal connection with farmers and learn about local farm products.

Above all, we like a product that's clean, has nice labels when appropriate, is fresh, and tastes good!

Dani Lind, Viroqua Food Cooperative

“There’s a big colored map above the produce case illustrating this. We also have half-sheet-sized laminated farmer profiles that we try to stick next to product that has a picture and short bio.

“We use a newsletter and email for updates and always feature news and information about the importance of buying local, articles about local farms, what’s available and so on. Our website also has a local profile page for people to learn more about our farmers.”



Viroqua Food Cooperative works with over 60 local suppliers.

The range of products offered at VFC can match many other chain stores. “We have at least 60 local suppliers at our store,” Lind continues. “We love the abundance and wide variety of local product available to us, from certified organic produce to grass-fed meat, salsa, frozen pizza, sauerkraut, coffee and body care products. We are extremely blessed with hard-working and creative folk in our community.”

Sourcing and pricing is always an issue and perhaps more of a concern for new growers. “Farmers usually come in looking for us,” Lind says. “On occasion I’ve gone to the farmers’ market and sought out new growers.

We have such an abundance of organic growers near here that I usually have to turn dozens of new growers away every year. But I will look at something new and unusual if it’s a quality product.

“We’ve been working closely with several growers to expand our selection of extended season produce,” she continues. “Because extended season growing has the dual advantages of less competition and higher prices, a couple of growers have given up summertime growing all together so they can focus on winter hoop-house production.”

Guidelines Outlined for Growers

“We have a ‘Growers Guidelines’ for the produce department that all our growers get so everyone can be consistent on issues of case sizing, labeling, having regular order or delivery days and supplying availability sheets. This saves some headaches,” she states. “Pricing is always a concern for growers and, in general, farmers tell us what price they want. If the price is high, we usually try it out for awhile and if it doesn’t work try to



A newsletter features local farms and information on the importance of buying local.

negotiate with the grower. I’ll often ask for special prices for quantity if I know a grower is long on something at its peak. Sometimes a grower will ask us for a wholesale price and we always tell them what other local growers are asking. Occasionally, I will pay more than what a grower is asking if it seems too low and I know I can sell it for a higher price.

“Above all, we like a product that’s clean, has nice labels when appropriate, is fresh, and tastes good!”



Photos courtesy of Bayfield Apple Company

PROFILE

Bayfield Apple Company



Bruce Hoekstra, John Hoekstra and Dave Kositzke
www.BayfieldApple.com

Bayfield Apple Company has been producing fruit and value-added products for more than 20 years. Last year, 76-year-old founder Einar Olsen sold the farm to two of his employees, the father-and-son team of Bruce and John Hoekstra.

Dave Kositzke recently joined the Hoekstras in running Bayfield Apple Company. “We’re a fully integrated mid-size grower,” he says. The company grows apples, raspberries, currants, cherries and pears in its orchards. It processes the fruit into jams, jellies, cider, fruit butters and fruit mustards that are distributed to wholesale, retail and institutional markets. Produce and value-added products are also available in the on-farm retail store, and visitors can tour the commercial-grade processing facility.

Kositzke cites the company’s relationship with a food broker for jams as a success. Over 300 grocery stores across the upper Midwest offer Bayfield Apple Company jams and jellies. The company is developing an ultraviolet-screened cider to sell in grocery stores, a venture Kositzke expects to succeed.

When Kositzke and the Hoekstras took over, one of their first moves was to update product pricing. “We looked at what the markets are and adjusted our prices,” says Kositzke. He and his partners performed an analysis on the total cost of production in order to ensure they were at least breaking even.

“Selling to grocery stores can be done locally on a one-and-one basis,” explains Kositzke, “but to go bigger than that, you need

Be persistent...Keep calling and stay on top of it...Once you get in the door, make sure you continue to give them a good quality products.

Bruce Hoekstra, Bayfield Apple Company



to be large enough to learn all the systems and make it work for you.”

Bayfield Apple also sells to 150 school districts. “Be persistent,” Bruce Hoekstra advises new producers. “Keep calling and stay on top of it. My son spent three months doing nothing but calling on school districts and giving them samples. Once you get in the door, make sure you continue to give them a good quality product.”

The local University of Wisconsin Extension agent and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection have helped Kositzke and the Hoekstras along the way. In 2009 Bayfield Apple Company received a DATCP Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant to restore abandoned apple orchards and sell the resulting apple cider to local institutions. Beyond the financial assistance, Kositzke says that receiving the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant helped the Company by making the owners formulate and write down their plans.

Although the Company already sells to Wisconsin and the surrounding area, Kositzke and the Hoekstras would someday like to sell their products nationwide. “We want to be in more than three states,” says Hoekstra. “We want to be in virtually every grocery store in the United States.”

INSTITUTIONAL FOOD SERVICE

Marketing to schools and colleges, health care facilities, nursing homes, prisons and other public institutions can be a way to diversify your program. Some food service companies have committed a percentage of their food budgets to source local food, and this may be a way for you to develop a new market.

Selling to Institutional Food Service

Benefits

- May contract for entire season
- Diversify and expand customer base
- Provides local food and farm connections for large, diverse audiences
- Able to sell large quantities of product to one site
- Can provide market for surplus product

Challenges

- May need to develop standard operating procedures for food safety
- Dealing with the complex layers of buyers may be frustrating
- Food budgets may vary greatly between different types of institutions

Some institutions serve 1,500 meals a week, while some serve 15,000 to 30,000. Some institutional buyers have committed to source local food when they can. Some actively seek out farmers to supply them. Entry to institutional markets may be easier by identifying which intermediate buyers are open to accessing local food and then approaching those companies. Before approaching buyers, you should match the amount you can supply to the size of the institution. Often institutions purchase at wholesale, so you will need to establish wholesale prices for your products. See page 19 for more information on wholesale pricing.

There are complex layers of management for institutional food services. Be aware that the buyer of your products is not the same as the end consumer. Depending on the type of the institution, the end consumers might have some influence over the food service choices. Schools, for example, may be sourcing local food because of student and/or parent

PROFILE

Institutional Food Market Coalition

www.ifmwi.org



The Institutional Food Market Coalition (IFM) was established in 2006 as a program in the Dane County Planning and Development Department. The goals of IFM are: 1) expand market opportunities for Dane County and regional growers; 2) to increase the sales of local Wisconsin food into institutional markets. IFM conducts systematic outreach to large volume buyers, producers and distributors throughout the year to accomplish these goals.

The coalition works to identify obstacles to local sourcing for institutional buyers, producers and distributors, and provides technical assistance to overcome these obstacles. Growers interested starting or expanding their wholesale operations can contact IFM for information about identifying and working with large volume buyers, buyer requirements, distribution, and more. Purchasers can contact IFM to collect the names and information of local growers.

To assist growers with selling wholesale, IFM conducts meetings that bring together growers with buyers to meet and learn from each other. Its website offers fact sheets on institutional buyers, their produce specifications and delivery needs, and how to market to them. Later this fall, IFM intends to release profiles about Wisconsin distributors. IFM's work is funded through a Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Contact: Olivia Parry at parry@co.dane.wi.us or Laura Witzling at witzling@co.dane.wi.us

interest. While each institution is different, some may be more interested in having a direct relationship with farmers than others. Hosting field days or “meet the farmer” events are good ways to ensure the continued support from the end consumers who may be the driving force behind the interest in sourcing local foods.

Successful sellers to institutional food markets have an understanding of their markets’ expectations, supply requirements, standardization of product packaging and delivery, liability issues that may be involved, and ordering and billing methods used or preferred.

Resources for Institutional Markets

Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions

National Center for Appropriate Technology
www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/farmtoschool.pdf
A resource guide for bringing food from farm to schools and other institutional programs.

Institutional Buyers 101 Fact Sheet

Institutional Food Market Coalition
<http://www.ifmwi.org/growers.aspx>

Marketing to Institutional Buyers 101 Fact Sheet

Institutional Food Market Coalition
<http://www.ifmwi.org/growers.aspx>

Selling to Institutions

UW Extension
www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3811-19.pdf
A short guide on how to begin selling to local institutions.

What producers should know about selling to local foodservice markets

Iowa State University
www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/other/files/PM2045.pdf
What producers should know about selling to food service markets.

Creating food system change where young people have access to healthy food choices and are encouraged to try new foods takes a broad community effort.

Doug Wubben, Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch

Schools

More and more schools are purchasing locally for social, economic and health reasons. Confronted with a rising childhood obesity rate,

school officials are looking to local farmers to provide healthy food for their cafeterias. Both public and private organizations offer resources, materials and initiatives to help schools integrate locally purchased food into nutrition curricula.

Resources for Farm to School Programs

Center for Food and Justice

Occidental College
www.farmtoschool.org
This website offers lists of programs in every state as well as many resources, including case studies, funding opportunities, policies and legislation, and groups and organizations interested in farm to school.

Marketing Michigan Products

Michigan State University
www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/MIFTS_Marketing_Guide.pdf
A step-by-step guide to selling products to schools.

USDA Farm to School

www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/Default.htm
The USDA’s website has information on the history of farm to school, grant programs for farm to school initiatives, and webinars on how to start or improve programs.

Wisconsin Farm to School

www.farmtoschool.org/WI
This website provides many resources for Wisconsin producers interested in farm-to-school, including a producers’ toolkit.

Wisconsin Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/F&V/brand.HTM

Health Care Facilities

Health Care Without Harm is a national campaign to raise awareness among health care workers on a variety of topics that impact the health of patients. One of the topics is food served at health care facilities. Health care administrators who embrace the goals of Health Care Without Harm may provide you with an opening to talk about fresh, local food. The connection of food to disease prevention and promoting good health continues to be featured in the media, and consumers are seeking out food choices based on health benefits. While this awareness may not translate into sales to health care facilities, it does provide talking points to open the door for further discussion and education on food systems and the merits of buying local.

Resources for Health Care Facilities

Healthy Food in Health Care

Health Care Without Harm
<http://noharm.org>
Click on “Healthy Food in Health Care: A Menu of Options” for steps hospitals can take to improve their food and how growers can approach institutions.

PROFILE

Farm to School Programs

2010 Farm to School Bill

In May 2010, Governor Jim Doyle signed Act 293 to promote farm to school programs. The bill created a Farm to School Council, comprised of farmers, child health experts, school food service personnel and state government representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health Services. The bill authorized a full-time position to promote farm to school programs and a grant program for school districts, nonprofits, farmers and other agencies that implement or contribute to farm to school programs.

AmeriCorps Farm to School Program

In September of 2008, DATCP launched a regional, multisite, AmeriCorps Farm to School Program. The goal of the program is to provide an innovative approach to decreasing childhood obesity by promoting healthy eating habits in students and increasing access to local foods in schools. The program provides two half-time AmeriCorps members per site; a local food procurement member and a nutrition education member. The food procurement member is focused on identifying and addressing hurdles facing local food procurement in school districts including distribution, processing, pricing and building relationships with farmers. The nutrition education member works to develop and implement curriculum and wellness plans that teach students about healthier eating habits. AmeriCorps members have reached more than 11,000 Wisconsin students with local food samples and nutrition education. Members also recruited 300 volunteers to contribute more than 3,000 service hours toward program activities. For more information visit the DATCP website at <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> (Search “AmeriCorps Farm to School”).

Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Programs

The Wisconsin DPI provides the nutrition curriculum “Nutritious, Delicious Wisconsin” and the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Standards that in part promote locally grown food. The nutrition curriculum educates school teachers, staff, administration, food service staff and community members on how to connect the cafeteria to the classroom. The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Standards promote teaching students about healthy eating and nutrition through eating local and other actions.

DPI also administers the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program. This program provides funding for elementary schools that have more than half of their students participating in the free or reduced lunch program. Students receive a fresh fruit or vegetable snack throughout the school year, and teachers are encouraged to discuss nutrition education in the classroom.

Got Dirt?

Gardening Initiative

The purpose of this initiative is to increase access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables through school, childcare and after school vegetable gardens. The initiative has the following components:

Training: Hands-on skill building experience for teachers, childcare providers and after school coordinators to prepare them to start gardens as well as how to find other expertise in their community.

Resources: The Got Dirt?

Toolkit, information on various gardening techniques (cold frames, microfarms, container gardens and classroom activities) and ideas for nutrition education.

Funding for this initiative is provided by the UW School of Medicine and Public Health from the Wisconsin Partnership Program. For more information about the initiative go to www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/gotdirt.html

[Great Lakes]

Farm-to-School Network

The Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems at the UW-Madison is the lead agency in a six-state area for a new national program to encourage schools to engage students in healthy eating habits and serve more locally grown food. CIAS will build on the grassroots efforts of the many farm-to-school initiatives currently underway, as well as those just getting started.

For more information, visit the CIAS website: www.cias.wisc.edu/economics/great-lakes-region-farm-to-school-program-network/

PROFILE

Crawford County's AmeriCorps Farm to School Program

Kathleen Hein & Marty Green, Members

The AmeriCorps farm to school program in Wisconsin provides two AmeriCorps members to 10 different sites around the state to assist in local food procurement and nutrition education. In Crawford County, AmeriCorps members Kathleen Hein and Marty Green teach children about the benefits of local food by bringing farmers into the classroom, sourcing local foods for meal and snack programs, organizing farm field trips and by planting and maintaining school gardens. They focus on educating students about the nutrition, as well as community and cultural, aspects of growing and eating local foods.

These activities have made a lasting impression on the students, and community support has grown steadily as children take their farm to school education home with them.

“We focused on starting small and building community support over time,” explains Hein. They focused on building community and organizational support for local foods initiatives through school-based farm to school committees so they can be sustained by teachers, parents, school staff and local farmers.

The AmeriCorps farm to school program has created a growing community awareness of local food and agriculture in Crawford County, and has spurred the development of new community organizations. One of these organizations is Driftless Wisconsin Grown, a group of farmers and local residents who gather to discuss ways to build and strengthen the local food economy in the Crawford County area. The organization aims to grow a sustainable local food economy through community collaboration and education that creates mutually beneficial relationships between producers and consumers. The group has already sponsored community events and has even started a new farmers' market in Prairie du Chien.

The fledgling farmers' market has been a success so far, and it is not uncommon for young students to be seen guiding their parents from booth to booth, looking for different vegetables they had the opportunity to sample at school through the AmeriCorps farm to school program. In addition, “Driftless Wisconsin Grown” has begun initial planning for a community kitchen space that could be rented and shared between local farmers, community members and schools.

Laura Brown, UW-Extension agent in Crawford County and local food activist, has partnered with the AmeriCorps farm to school program to assist with administrative support and community development efforts, and is excited about growing community involvement in local foods and support for the farm to school programs in the county.

These new community driven programs are reconnecting children and community members to agriculture, fostering healthier lifestyles, supporting the local farm economy, and improving the well-being of rural communities, according to Brown.

“This is everything that's important to rural communities,” says Brown, “We're reconnecting young people with agriculture, making community connections, and revitalizing our local economy.”



Photos courtesy of Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch

Fresh Wisconsin apples offer a healthy food alternative in schools.



COLLABORATIVE MARKETING

Working together to accomplish marketing goals is often referred to as collaborative marketing. This may include farmers and consumers or nonprofit groups working together to benefit the farmer and/or buyers. A present shift in public perception is that local farmers need the support of their communities to stay viable. By working together, groups can provide a market for small farmers who can then afford to stay on the land. It is a circular system in which all participants can benefit and customers gain access to farm products in abundance.

Examples of collaborative marketing groups include multi-stakeholder cooperatives, aggregation partnerships, produce auctions and more.

Wisconsin Produce Auctions

Produce auctions are a one-stop sales outlet for local growers where they can access many markets through selling cooperatively. Some auctions use an order buyer system which shifts the buying responsibility to a professional auction floor trader. USDA grading standards are used and uniform packaging and product size are required where possible. This website provides locations and contact information for produce auctions located in Dalton, Cashton and Fennimore. <http://ifmwi.org/auctions.aspx>

Creating a local food supply that meets the needs of the producers and the institutions has to involve all parts of the food chain.

Mary Anderson, Producers & Buyers Co-op

Collaborative Marketing

Benefits

- Can accomplish goals together that may not be achievable alone
- Allows producers to focus on growing
- Can pool products and gain access to large-volume markets

Challenges

- Group decisions may override individual ones
- Group meetings may be needed to determine direction
- Efforts may be disrupted by staff or budgeting changes

Resources for Collaborative Marketing Groups

Collaborative Marketing - A Roadmap and Resource Guide for Farmers

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/businessmanagement/DF7539.html

Outlines steps needed to organize a farmer-owned marketing cooperative.

Collaborative Marketing Resource Guide

University of Minnesota Extension
www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/businessmanagement/components/7539_d_1.html

A resource guide for identifying agencies, organizations, and businesses that may be able to provide technical and financial assistance, as well as other services.

Cooperatives: Their role for farm producers

UW Cooperative Extension
www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3811-3.pdf

A resource that explains the different types of cooperatives and how to start them.

UW Center for Cooperatives

University of Wisconsin
www.uwcc.wisc.edu

Provides information and outreach programs on cooperatives.

PROFILE

Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative



The Wisconsin Meadows brand (shown above) stems from collaborative marketing made possible by the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative. Picture below is the Cooperative's President Bob Van De Boom with his wife, Beth, out on their farm.



Bob Van De Boom, President
www.WisconsinGrassFed.coop



The Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative got its start at a grazing conference several years ago. Laura Paine, a Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection employee, contacted farmers and ranchers who were interested in forming a grass-fed beef cooperative. After an initial meeting brought these individuals together, the WGBC was born.

“A steering committee of seven people pursued what needed to be done,” explains Cooperative President Bob Van De Boom. This committee decided on protocol for the cattle and the structure of the organization, and eventually became the Cooperative’s Board of Directors.

The Cooperative currently provides beef for 27 regular customers in a variety of markets, including health food stores, Braise Restaurant Supported Agriculture (see page 83) and Community Supported Agriculture. The Cooperative sets prices and provides a sales sheet to customers. Occasionally it offers special deals. “During fourth of July we had a burger special for our biggest customer,” Van De Boom explains.

Sales and marketing have been one of the larger successes of the Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Cooperative. This stems from the members decision to sell its meat under its own brand, Wisconsin Meadows. The group also hired a sales and marketing manager to reach out to new customers and provide demonstrations on grass-fed beef at stores around the state.

“Right now our bottleneck is finding enough cattle year round so we can continue to grow,” says Van De Boom. In addition to marketing to customers, the Cooperative is currently searching for new members by setting up booths at pasture walks and conferences. Another issue has been communication between board members, Van De Boom explains. “Being across the state makes it hard to meet face-to-face.”

Now the Cooperative has 55 members and a full-time sales and marketing manager. Most of the day-to-day operational decisions are made by the sales and marketing manager, but the Board of Directors decides larger issues through email or during monthly conference calls. If needed, an issue is taken directly to the members at the annual meeting.

Laura Paine at WI DATCP continues to play a key role as adviser to the group. Leadership and diversity in the board members has given the Cooperative a strong foundation and benefit. This can be seen in the different roles members fill, as one of the members designed several Wisconsin Meadows logos and consulted a focus group for input. Another example is that members with backgrounds in sales and cattle production have contributed their unique knowledge and experience to build and improve the Cooperative.

Van De Boom advises producers looking to work cooperatively to find dedicated, communicative leaders.

PROFILE

Producers must learn how institutions are accustomed to ordering and receiving their food, which is very different from working with individuals or selling at a farmers market.

Mary Anderson
Producers & Buyers Co-op

Producers & Buyers Co-op

Mary C. Anderson
www.ProducersAndBuyers.com



How did the Co-op start?

In 2008, Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire approached the River Country Resource Conservation and Development Council about creating an organization that would link local producers to institutional food services. The hospital had committed itself to spending 10 percent of its \$2 million food budget to local food and needed a way to meet that goal. A consortium of interested parties met and ultimately formed the Producers & Buyers Co-op.



Developing the Co-op was no easy feat, according to Mary C. Anderson, RCD Resource Specialist. Producers, processors, institutions and others “spent countless hours working out the details, developing open communication between the partners and finding creative solutions to the hurdles encountered along the way.”

What were some challenges?

One issue the Co-op still encounters is the lack of buyer education on the differences between industrial and local food. Consumers don’t always understand the differences in quality, sustainability, or cost of production that come with purchasing local food. There is also a lack of local meat and produce processors. “The Co-op often has to schedule meat processing weeks to months in advance,” Anderson adds.

The lack of local infrastructure has been an issue for the Co-op. “Institutions are used to ordering and having product the next day, so their in-house storage is limited,” says Anderson. “The product cost for storage has to be passed on to institutions, making local food less competitive.” The Co-op had to develop a transportation system for itself, as well as find ways to meet the packaging and labeling needs of the institution.

What resources have been helpful to you?

One key resource for the Co-op was the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection’s Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grant. The Co-op also made use of other DATCP resources on business financing and planning.

“One of the seven guiding principles for cooperatives is ‘Cooperatives helping cooperatives,’” says Anderson. “The consortium received a lot of valuable assistance from others, including Just Local Food Cooperative in Eau Claire, the Southeast Minnesota Food Network, the Viroqua Food Cooperative, the Cooperative Foundation, and Margaret Bau, USDA-Rural Development’s Cooperative Development Specialist.”

What tips do you have for producers who would like to sell to institutions?

“Creating a local food supply that meets the needs of the producers and the institutions has to involve all parts of the food chain,” says Anderson. “Producers must learn how institutions are accustomed to ordering and receiving their food, which is very different from working with individuals or selling at a farmers market.”

To succeed at selling to institutions, all stakeholders must demonstrate commitment and leadership. Anderson explains, “Commitment to the vision and dedication to the implementation are keys to success.”

DISTRIBUTORS

Food distributors are a key component of the food system in the United States. Restaurants, caterers, convention centers, school and college food services and other types of food services all rely on distributors to supply the food and food-related products needed to serve their customers. Often, all needed food and food-related products can be ordered from one or two distributors.

Opportunities for farmers to sell their food products to local or regional food services are limited by time, staffing and money constraints for farmers and food services, alike.

Distributors meet the needs of food services for specific quantities of specific products at a specific time. Distributors can also meet the needs of farmers by handling marketing, ordering, billing and delivery tasks, thus allowing the farmers to concentrate on production. If you would like to tap into the food service market, consider working with a distributor.

If farmers choose to sell to both distributors and their potential retail customers, they may be asked to sign a non-compete agreement that the farmers will charge their retail outlets the same base price the distributor does.



Photo courtesy of Harmony Valley

Marketing through distributors allows you to sell a large quantity of product to one location.

We went to the stores ourselves and didn't use distributors. But distributors can save you a considerable amount of cost and you can't deliver it for what they can. It's going to cost you well over 30% to deliver to outlying areas.

Troy DeRosier, Crystal Ball Farms

Selling to Distributors

Benefits

- Sell large quantities of product to one location
- Can concentrate on production skills rather than marketing
- Fewer contacts needed to sell products
- The distributor can smooth out the problem of seasonal availability by buying from local farmers in season and sourcing products elsewhere when the local products are unavailable

Challenges

- Less farmer-to-consumer connection
- Less brand identification
- Price for product will be competitive

We will give our wholesale markets a one- to two-week notice of what will be available. If you can't supply it, let them know ahead of time. They don't want empty shelves and if they're expecting something from you and you don't provide it without letting them know ahead of time, they won't buy from you again. They're very unforgiving if you don't communicate your situation with them, and you need to understand that.

Richard de Wilde, Harmony Valley Farm



PROFILE

Crystal Ball Farms

Troy & Barbara DeRosier
 Troy@crystalballfarms.com



Photos courtesy of Crystal Ball Farms

Crystal Ball Farms delivers directly to stores in a 90-mile radius and provides home delivery in a 50-mile range.

We felt bottling our own milk and marketing it ourselves was the best option to maintain a decent price and control our destiny.

Troy DeRosier, Crystal Ball Farms

Glass-bottled milk and home delivery are making a resurgence in Wisconsin. Dairy farm families bottle their own milk, while adding value to their farms and communities. Troy and Barbara DeRosier have found new markets for their milk bottling business.

The DeRosiers decided they needed a better income from their 100-cow dairy herd near Osceola. They wanted something more substantial where they had more control over the end product. Their search led them in the direction of home bottling and seeking new markets.

“We felt bottling our own milk and marketing it ourselves was the best option to maintain a decent price and control our destiny,” Troy DeRosier explains. “We made the transition in the fall of 2003 and it’s worked very well for us.”

Adding a bottling facility to an existing farmstead took extensive planning. It requires three full-time and six part-time employees. “We started our organic farm at a time when there wasn’t a good market for organic milk. That’s certainly changed, as the organic market has expanded greatly since then,” Troy says.

Making Plans

To get ideas he could apply to his farm, DeRosier spent time visiting East Coast farms that were bottling and marketing their milk. “There was no software or business plan anywhere for what I wanted to do,” he relates. “It was a couple-year process and we hired an outside source to do a business plan and the financials, and it took about nine months to get up and running.”

Getting out and viewing other successful operations helped give them a concept of what goes on in a bottling plant. They needed to know where the labor was required and DeRosier says it also gave them some ideas about marketing. “I’m pretty good at marketing anyway so it was helpful in many little things,” he notes.

Although the DeRosiers couldn’t find resources to help them, there are now several programs available. He remarks, “DATCP has a value-added focus in their programs. They’re very good at helping direct people as far as whom to talk with and where to go.”

Recovering production and distribution costs was always at the front of their decision. “We used our cost of production and the margin we felt we needed for it to be worthwhile,” DeRosier explains.

Before one bottle was filled, DeRosier commissioned a survey at stores to determine what customers were looking for and how they liked it packaged. “We worked with a few key stores before we built our plant,” he notes. “Then, because we worked with those stores, they were willing to stock our product after they saw the results and knew we were serious about what we were working on.”

Creating Their Market

Crystal Ball dairy provides some of its products for sampling at stores. “That gives us a close touch with the consumer,” he says. “The stores set up a special day for us to give demonstrations and samples of our products. We get a chance to talk about our farm and how we handle our cows. We get to tell them our story and that’s what really sells.”

Crystal Ball Farms literally created its market. Taking its milk, processing and bottling it on the farm, and delivering it to stores changed their financial position and may fuel a further expansion now that they’re able to market all the milk they produce.

“We deliver directly to stores in a 90-mile radius and home delivery in a 50-mile range,” DeRosier explains. “About one-third of our business is deliveries, and we have two trucks on the road most days. We’ve made changes to more efficient vehicles, but we have to pass along the increase in fuel prices. I hate to do that because I’m still farmer-oriented, but I don’t have any choice.”

Decision to Use Glass Bottles

“The survey we did determined that we were going to use glass bottles for our milk,” he says. “Glass fits very well with the organic and high-end markets. We market half-gallons because if we went to gallons we would have to go to plastic. The way we set up the plant and process the milk all fits together. If we were going to use plastic containers we’d have to set the plant up differently and we’d have a different price point. You can get more for a half gallon because the smaller container has a higher value.”

Crystal Ball customers pay a deposit on the glass which DeRosier hopes they will return because the price of each glass bottle has risen above the cost of the return. “We have our label on all our bottles so we don’t do much advertising anymore,” he adds. “Any expansion of our market is mostly by word of mouth.

“We’re working with the state [of Wisconsin] now to put in a receiving bay to bring milk in to add to our supply,” DeRosier says. “We’re not sure we want to expand our herd because it’s easier to get help in the creamery than for the farm.”

Working with Distributors, Schools, Hospitals

DeRosier suggests that anyone looking to enter this market consider using distributors instead of doing deliveries themselves. “We went to the stores ourselves and didn’t use distributors. But distributors can save you a considerable amount of cost and you can’t deliver it for what they can. It’s going to cost you well over 30% to deliver to outlying areas.

“I think there’s room for other bottling dairies in Wisconsin,” he notes. “But I would look at other markets. I think the glass bottle market is pretty well saturated. There’s some room but only so much market because it’s a high-end product. With high fuel prices we’re working with hospitals now because they’re trying to buy more local products because it costs so much to haul it in.”

There’s a federal mandate requiring schools to improve their nutrition and they’re emphasizing doing it locally. “We are doing a pilot program with one school,” he says. “We’re not sure where it’s going yet because of the nine-month market with three months down. But it is a possibility for further expansion.”



Milk from DeRosiers’ 100-cow dairy is packaged in glass bottles and is also made into butter, ice cream and cheese products.

The stores set up a special day for us to give demonstrations and samples of our products. We get a chance to talk about our farm and how we handle our cows. We get to tell them our story and that’s what really sells.

Troy DeRosier, Crystal Ball Farms



The dairy has an on-farm processing facility and retail store.

CHAPTER 4

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CHAPTER 4

Rules, Regulations, Licensing and Liability

When planning to raise farm products for sale, you need to know and understand a variety of issues. Some relate to how food products are handled from harvest to sale and others relate to how your products are positioned in the marketplace. Food safety is of paramount importance. It starts on the farm and is a consideration from post-harvest handling to processing, packaging and distribution. Rules and regulations, including licensing and labeling standards, are designed to help you present safe food products for public consumption.

REGULATIONS

State Regulations

The State of Wisconsin has developed food regulations for farmers wishing to market to consumers and to grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions. Contact DATCP's Division of Food Safety at 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFoood@wisconsin.gov for more information. Read the following pages for a summary of state requirements by product and market.

Local Regulations

Counties, townships and cities are local government units that may have regulations that apply to your business. Some typical kinds of regulations include:

- Limits on size or location of advertising signs
- Permits required for excavating or new building construction
- Local health codes regarding food preparation and sale
- Zoning regulations on types of enterprises that can be conducted in certain areas
- Requirements for size and placement of parking areas
- Requirements for bathroom and hand washing facilities (especially for agritourism enterprises)

Overview of Food Marketing Regulations

DATCP's Division of Food Safety has regulatory authority over food sold in Wisconsin. Generally, the more food products are processed, the more they are regulated.

Less Regulation	More Regulation
Raw, unprocessed foods	Processed foods
Single-ingredient foods	Multiple ingredients foods
Shelf-stable foods	Sold at a location off the farm
Sold to the end consumer	Sold to a retailer for sale to consumer
Small sales volume	Large sales volume

Local government officials and farmers who have started new enterprises agree that it is far better to work together early to avoid problems, rather than trying to fix things that were not properly done or permitted. County and city governments divide responsibilities among departments, and the department names can vary from place to place. Rural townships may have their own planning and zoning guidelines. It is best to check with both county and township officials before proceeding on any farm business expansion.

To find out the name(s) of local officials:

- Check your county's website
- Call the county courthouse administrative office
- Check the Wisconsin Towns Association website www.wisctowns.com/town_sites.html

LICENSING AND LABELING

State requirements that affect local food marketers may include inspection of processing facilities, review of labels on packaged food products, inspection of scales and collection of food samples to be analyzed for contaminants or composition requirements. Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) inspectors typically visit local food marketing operations if warranted by consumer complaints.

Processed Food Business Licensing

Starting a processed food business will require state and, possibly, federal licensing depending on the products involved. If you plan to primarily sell your products directly to consumers, you will need a retail food establishment license. Internet sales are considered retail sales. If you plan to sell primarily through wholesale distribution, you will need a food processing plant license.

Key requirements for license include:

- The facility must be an approved (commercial grade) kitchen. Using your personal home kitchen is not allowed. If you plan to start the business in your home you will need to construct a separate kitchen room dedicated to this food business. The dedicated kitchen will need to have washable floors, walls and ceilings. The lighting will need to be adequate for commercial purposes, and the room must be properly ventilated. A three-compartment sink or NSF-approved dishwasher will be needed for washing your equipment and utensils. A separate hand sink is also required. Some starting operators rent time in an area restaurant, school or church kitchen to satisfy the separate commercial kitchen requirement without having to invest in a new, separate kitchen of their own.
- Equipment such as stoves, sinks and mixers must be of approved design, be easily cleaned, and in good repair. If the equipment bears the NSF certification, you can feel certain that it will meet these design requirements.
- Other utensils like pans, bowls and spoons must be smooth, non-porous and easily cleaned. Almost all utensils currently manufactured meet this requirement.

For more information about NSF go to www.nsf.org/regulatory

For exact legal requirements for commercially processing food in Wisconsin go to www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/atcp/atcp070.pdf

Processed Food Labeling

Accurate information on processed food labels helps consumers make informed choices about food. Labels provide weight and content information to help consumers choose the best value for their money. The ingredient list identifies products consumers may need to avoid due to potential allergic reactions or other health concerns. Your packaged products must be properly labeled with:

- The name of the product
- A listing of the ingredients in decreasing order of predominance by weight
- A net weight or volume statement
- The name and address of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor
- Nutrition information, unless exempt

Contact state or local food inspectors for specific questions regarding labeling. DATCP does not require label approval prior to a food product's manufacture or distribution. DATCP's Division of Food Safety does not 'approve' labels but its staff will answer questions and provide assistance. The responsibility to comply with current food labeling requirements rests solely on the manufacturer or distributor of the food products. For specific information about processed food labeling go to <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Labeling> or contact the Division of Food Safety at 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFood@wisconsin.gov

Resources for Food Labeling

A Food Labeling Guide

U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/2lg-toc.html
94 pages that includes information on basic food labeling as well as information on nutrition facts, trans fat and allergen labeling.

Division of Food Safety Labeling Information WI DATCP

<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Labeling>
DATCP's Division of Food Safety website provides general information. However, go to the FDA website for the most up-to-date and comprehensive information available.

Food Label Sources

WI DATCP

<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Labeling>

A list of Wisconsin sources for design and printing of food labels.

Frequent Food Label Questions

WI DATCP

<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Labeling>

An 8-page publication covering the most basic information on food labeling.

Meat Business Licensing and Labeling

New processors must meet several standards to obtain a license for a meat business. State of Wisconsin meat plants must meet the same standards as USDA-inspected meat plants and must implement a food safety system called Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). A licensed meat establishment is required to implement HACCP plans and have a Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure (SSOP) in place. The HACCP is a risk-based approach to manufacturing food products that identifies the critical step(s) in the manufacturing process and performs a monitored, quantifiable function in those places where there is a danger of causing or promoting microbiological, physical or chemical contamination. The SSOP is a written plan that outlines the monitored procedures followed to maintain overall plant sanitation, including daily cleaning, regularly scheduled maintenance, food handling practices and employee hygiene.

Labeling meat products differs from other processed foods due to the greater risks and requirements that meat processing involves. The State of Wisconsin meat inspection program and meat establishments work together to ensure that meat products produced and sold comply with required standards for safety, identity and wholesomeness set by the state and federal governments.

It is illegal to feed garbage or food scraps containing animal parts or meat juices to swine, unless it is from your own home. Swine producers cannot buy or accept garbage or food scraps from restaurants, even if meat is removed from it, because meat juices are likely present. Stale bakery, waste from apple cider presses and other food waste that has no

animal parts or meat juices may be fed to swine. The devastating outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom in 2001 was traced to garbage feeding. Other diseases may also be transmitted in food waste, including trichinosis, which also can infect humans.

For references to specific aspects of meat labeling, see Chapter 55 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code: www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/atcp/atcp055.pdf It explains labeling requirements, including weight, inspection, safe handling instructions, and other pertinent information. See the resources below for a summary of the Bureau of Meat Safety & Inspection's labeling guidelines.

Resources for Meat Business Licensing and Labeling

Direct Marketing Meat

UW Extension

www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3811-15.pdf

Direct marketing meat fact sheet.

Direct Marketing Meat Guide Book

UW Extension and WI DATCP

www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3809.pdf

A comprehensive guide for Wisconsin meat producers.

Meat Product Formulation and Labeling

WI DATCP

http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Meat_Safety

Before a meat or custom/not-for-sale product can be marketed in Wisconsin, its formula must be approved by the Division of Food Safety. In addition to meat, this could include water, spices, cures, flavoring, binders or extenders.

Wisconsin's State Meat Inspection Program

WI DATCP

http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Meat_Safety

Standards of safety and purity.

Weights and Measures

The same weights and measures laws apply to direct marketers of farm produce as to all other retailers. Scales must meet standards for commercial scales set by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). They must be “legal for trade”, National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) approved (if put into service after January 1, 1997), and be able to be calibrated. Scales do not need to be registered, but are subject to inspection by a state or local representative of weights and measures.

If a commodity is weighed at the time of sale, the scale’s indicator must be visible to the consumer. By law, liquid commodities shall be sold by liquid measure and non-liquid commodities shall be sold by weight. The law permits other methods of sale only where the method is in general use and does not deceive the consumer. One exception is eggs. They are sold by both count and size. Closed containers of apples must comply with the USDA grade standards, which must be stated on the container.

Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code provides rules for selling fresh fruits and vegetables. Some, like apples, corn and cantaloupe can be sold by weight or count, while others, like asparagus, beans and potatoes must be sold only by weight.

If an item is packaged before sale, it must be labeled according to the requirements of Chapter 90 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. The label must list the name of the food, any ingredients other than the raw product, net weight, liquid measure or count as required - metric translations are optional but may be helpful in targeting certain ethnic markets - name and address of the processor, packer or distributor, a declaration of quantity and any other information required by law, such as grade and sizes for eggs. No quantity declaration is required for packages weighed at the time of sale and for clear packages of six or fewer fruits or vegetables, if the fruit or vegetable is sold by count. If all packages are of uniform weight or measure, an accompanying placard can furnish the required label information.

When a local food producer advertises any pre-packaged food product and includes the retail price in the advertisement, the ad must list the package contents by weight or volume or state the price per whole measurement unit. (For example, \$1.25 per pound.)

WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

The rules of a state agency have the effect of law and are issued by an agency to implement, interpret or make specific legislation enforced or administered by the agency, or govern the organization or procedure of the agency. “Wisconsin Administrative Code” means such rules as they may be amended from time to time. See the chapters for Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (ATCP) at www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code.html.

State Requirements by Market for Products of Non-Animal Origin

APPLE CIDER	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	No license required Cider must be pressed by the producer/seller Cider must be fully labeled including approved warning statement
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	No license required Cider must be pressed and bottled by the producer/seller Local ordinance may apply Cider must be fully labeled including approved warning statement
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed food processing plant Must comply with juice HACCP 21CFR120 Finished product must be fully labeled
BAKERY ITEMS	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Mobile retail food establishment license required for bakery products that are unpackaged or that require refrigeration for safety
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant
BAKERY ITEMS (FRUIT-BASED)	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Mobile retail food establishment license required for bakery products that are unpackaged or that require refrigeration for safety Local ordinance may apply
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Non-Animal Origin

CANNED FOOD PRODUCTS (low acid)—Small Scale Processing	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Home or farm-based processing not generally feasible for meats or low acid canned foods such as beans, corn, peas, etc. Inadequate processing during the canning of low-acid foods may cause these foods to become unsafe. Small-scale processing is generally impractical because the equipment needed to produce consistently safe food is highly technical and expensive.
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Not applicable
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Not applicable
DRY FOOD MIXES AND BLENDS	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Mobile retail food establishment license required for unpackaged product sales
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled.
FRUIT—Cut	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Local ordinance may apply Additional license depends on cut fruit being sold
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Non-Animal Origin

FRUIT—Frozen	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Additional license depends on type of fruit being sold Local ordinance may apply Frozen fruit must be maintained frozen Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
FRUIT—Raw	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	No license required
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	No license required
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No license required
HERBAL AND FLAVORED VINEGAR	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	No license required Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
HONEY	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm, Door-to Door or at Farmers' Market or Distributing to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No license required for honey sold as beekeeper's own that has no added color, flavors or ingredients Honey must be handled in a way that assures food safety Honey must be fully labeled including Graded or labeled "Ungraded"

State Requirements by Market for Products of Non-Animal Origin

JAMS AND JELLIES	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm, Roadside Farmstand, Farmers' Market or a Community Event	An individual may process in a home kitchen without a food processing plant license within parameters of s. 97.29 (2)(b)2 and s. 97.29(6). Producer must also meet the requirements of the Emergency Rule to create ATCP 70.03 (7)(e)(f) and (note). Please be aware these rule requirements may be subject to change. Product must be fully labeled
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Local ordinance may apply Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
MAPLE SYRUP	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm,	No license required
Door-to Door or at Farmers' Market	Food must be handled in a way that assures food safety Maple syrup must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Food processing plant license required Maple syrup must be processed in a commercial facility Maple syrup must be fully labeled
VEGETABLES—Cut	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment, food processing plant, or mobile retail food establishment Additional license depends on type of cut vegetable sold Local ordinance may apply Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from producer's licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Product and Market of Non-Animal Origin

VEGETABLES—Frozen	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment license required Processed in commercial kitchen
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Finished product must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Additional license depends on type of vegetable being sold Local ordinance may apply Frozen vegetables must be kept frozen Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from producer's licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
VEGETABLES—Pickled (acidified)	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm, Roadside Farmstand, Farmers' Market or Community Event	An individual may process in a home kitchen without a food processing plant license within parameters of s. 97.29 (2) (b)2 and s. 97.29(6). Producer must also meet the requirements of the Emergency Rule to create ATCP 70.03 (7) (e) (f) and (note). Please be aware these rule requirements may be subject to change. Successfully complete an Acidified Food Training Course or utilize a scheduled recipe approved by a process authority or from Ball or Kerr Blue Book Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Selling Door-to-Door	Finished product must come from a licensed food processing plant Local ordinance may apply Finished product must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Finished product must come from a licensed food processing plant Finished product must be fully labeled
VEGETABLES—Raw	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	No license required
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	No license required
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No license required

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

ANIMALS/CAPTIVE GAME/EXOTICS—Pheasants, Deer & Bison	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail food establishment license required Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Meat may be weighed on-farm with approved scale or weighed by package at processor Product storage areas must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed) Product storage must be used exclusively to store meat sold to customers Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below Meat must be fully labeled
Producer Sells Live Animals and Consumer Arranges for Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No license required
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile retail food establishment license required Local ordinance may apply Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Product storage must be used exclusively to store meat sold to customers Product storage must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed) Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warehouse license required Registration as meat distributor required Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Warehouse freezer and producer's vehicle must be inspected to ensure it is sanitary and that frozen meat will be maintained in a frozen state Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at an internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

AQUACULTURE—Farmed Fish & Seafood	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	Retail food establishment or food processing plant license required Packaged fish must be fully labeled
Fee Fishing	Fish eviscerated and filleted as a service to paying fee fishing customers is not licensed by Division of Food Safety
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Mobile retail food establishment license required Frozen fish must be maintained frozen Unfrozen fish products must be maintained and delivered at an internal temperature of 38°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Packaged fish must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Fish must come from a licensed retail food establishment or food processing plant that meet the requirements of 21CFR123 Frozen fish must be maintained frozen Unfrozen fish products must be maintained and delivered at an internal temperature of 38°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Fish must be fully labeled
DAIRY—Butter, Cream & Fluid Milk	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm (Farmstead Dairy Plant)	Dairy Farm license required for persons or businesses to operate a dairy farm Dairy Plant license required to process all dairy products Buttermakers license required for persons to be in charge of or supervise the making of butter that will be sold Dairy products must be maintained at internal temperature of 45°F or below Dairy products must be fully labeled
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Mobile retail food establishment license required Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Dairy products must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No additional license required when dairy products come from producer's licensed dairy plant Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 45°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Dairy products must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

DAIRY—Cheese Made from Pasteurized Milk	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm (Farmstead Dairy Plant)	<p>Dairy Farm license required for persons or businesses to operate a dairy farm</p> <p>Dairy Plant license required to process all dairy products</p> <p>License required for persons to be in charge of or supervise the making of cheese that will be sold</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained at internal temperature of 45°F or below</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<p>No additional license required when dairy products come from producer's licensed dairy plant</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 45°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled</p>
DAIRY—Cheese Made from Raw Milk - Raw Milk Cheese	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm (Farmstead Dairy Plant)	<p>Dairy Farm license required for persons or businesses to operate a dairy farm</p> <p>Dairy Plant license required to process all dairy products</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained at internal temperature of 45°F or below</p> <p>License required for persons to be in charge of or supervise the making of cheese that will be sold</p> <p>Raw milk cheese must be aged a minimum of 60 days prior to sale</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled and aged for 60 days</p>
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<p>No additional license required when dairy products come from producer's licensed dairy plant</p> <p>Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 45°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Dairy products must be fully labeled and aged for 60 days</p>

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

DAIRY—Flavored Milk, Ice Cream, Kefir, Sour Cream & Yogurt	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm (Farmstead Dairy Plant)	Dairy Farm license required for persons or businesses to operate a dairy farm Dairy Plant license required to process all dairy products Dairy products must be maintained at internal temperature of 45°F or below once culture is complete Dairy products must be fully labeled
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Mobile retail food establishment license required Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Dairy products must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	No additional license required when dairy products come from producer's licensed dairy plant Dairy products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 45°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)
EGGS	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	No license required Eggs must be sold directly to consumer Must be handled in a way to assure food safety including storage at 45°F or below Used carton labels can't be misleading (remove original labeling when re-using cartons)
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	Mobile retail food establishment license required Food processing plant license required Eggs must be stored at 41°F during storage and transportation Eggs must be fully labeled including a Grade statement or "Ungraded"
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	Food processing plant license required Eggs must be fully labeled Eggs must be stored at 41°F during storage and transportation

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

LIVESTOCK—Cattle, Swine, Sheep, Goats & Ratites	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail food establishment license required Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Meat may be weighed on-farm with approved scale or weighed by package at processor Product storage must be clean and located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed) Product storage must be used exclusively to store meat sold to customers Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below Meat must be fully labeled
Producer Sells Live Animals and Consumer Arranges for Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No license required
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile retail food establishment license required Local ordinance may apply Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Meat may be weighed on-farm with approved scale or weighed by package at processor Product storage must be used exclusively to store meat sold to customers Product storage must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed) Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warehouse license required Livestock must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility Registration as meat distributor required Warehouse freezer and producer's vehicle must be inspected to ensure it is sanitary and that frozen meat will be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at an internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

POULTRY—Farm-Raised Chickens, Ducks, Geese, Guinea Hens, Squab & Turkeys Less than 1,000 birds per year

Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<p>No license or inspection required for home slaughter and sale</p> <p>Birds must be healthy and come from producer's own flock</p> <p>Poultry can only be sold directly to consumer</p> <p>Producer maintains custody of birds until sold</p> <p>Processed poultry must be handled in a way that assures food safety</p> <p>Frozen poultry must be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled including "Not inspected"</p>
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required</p> <p>Local ordinance may apply</p> <p>Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Frozen poultry must be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<p>Warehouse license required</p> <p>Registration as meat distributor required</p> <p>Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Warehouse freezer and producer's vehicle must be inspected to ensure it is sanitary and that frozen meat will be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled</p>

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

POULTRY—Farm-Raised Chickens, Ducks, Geese, Guinea Hens, Squab & Turkeys More than 1,000 birds per year	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<p>Retail food establishment or meat plant license required</p> <p>Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Product storage must be used exclusively to store poultry products sold to customers</p> <p>Product storage must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed)</p> <p>Frozen poultry must be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers' Market	<p>Mobile retail food establishment license required and a warehouse license if food is stored more than 24 hours</p> <p>Local ordinance may apply</p> <p>Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Product storage must be used exclusively to store poultry products sold to customers</p> <p>Product storage must be located in a clean, neat area (house or shed allowed)</p> <p>Frozen poultry must be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled</p>
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<p>Warehouse license required</p> <p>Registration as meat distributor required</p> <p>Poultry must be processed at a state or federally inspected facility</p> <p>Warehouse freezer and producer's vehicle must be inspected to ensure it is sanitary and that frozen meat will be maintained frozen</p> <p>Unfrozen poultry products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.)</p> <p>Poultry must be fully labeled</p>

State Requirements by Market for Products of Animal Origin

RABBITS	
Type of Sale	Regulations
Producer Selling from Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No license or inspection required for home slaughter or sale Producer maintains custody of meat until sold Meat can only be sold directly to consumer Meat must be handled in a way that assures food safety Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained at internal temperature of 41°F or below Meat must be fully labeled including “Not inspected”
Producer Selling Door-to-Door or at Farmers’ Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile retail food establishment license required Local ordinance may apply Rabbit must be processed at a licensed food or meat processing plant Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled including “Not inspected”
Producer Distributing from Farm to Grocery Store, Restaurant or Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finished product must come from a licensed food processing plant Frozen meat must be maintained frozen Unfrozen meat products must be maintained and delivered at internal temperature of 41°F or below using any effective method (freezer, dry ice, cooler, etc.) Meat must be fully labeled including “Not inspected”

FOOD SAFETY, LIABILITY AND FARM INSURANCE

Marketing Fresh, Raw Fruits and Vegetables

Farmers in Wisconsin are considered an “approved source” for fruits and vegetables they raise themselves. They can sell any quantity, to any person or business, without a food license. Even though no licensing is required, farmers still have to take reasonable care to avoid contamination of their produce with disease organisms. Food safety starts in the field and continues through the process of harvesting, washing, packaging, storing and transporting fruits and vegetables.

Marketing Eggs

Farmers can sell shell eggs produced by their own laying flock on their farm. No license is required if selling on their farm, but farmers are required to be licensed if they are selling off their property such as to grocery stores, restaurants or food services. Farmers are considered an “approved source” for shell eggs if they are licensed, follow the safe handling guidelines for shell eggs and properly label the eggs as defined in Chapter 88.08 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. Eggs are a perishable product, and must be handled properly to ensure food safety. See page 115 for state requirements.

Marketing Meat or Poultry

Farmers can sell meat and poultry products that have been processed at licensed and inspected processing facilities. The rules vary depending on the type and quantity of meat you are selling and to whom you are selling it. For more information on rules and regulations for meat and poultry, go to pages 105.

Marketing Dairy Products

Dairy products can be produced, processed and sold directly from the farm with appropriate licensing and in a facility that meets state and federal standards. Training and certifications are required for making cheese and butter. For more information on requirements associated with marketing dairy products, go to page 113-115.

For a link to the Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (ATCP) chapters of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, see page 106.

Food marketers must be familiar with and comply with state and federal food laws. In Wisconsin, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is responsible for administering laws concerning weights and measures, packaging and labeling, food advertising and trade practices, and food production and protection (food safety).

Contact DATCP’s Division of Food Safety regional office as your first step to obtain food safety information as it relates to food marketing or food processing. Call either the Madison office at 608-224-4700 or the Eau Claire office at 715-839-3844.

Food Safety Guidelines

Wisconsin’s Food Law states only safe and wholesome food can be offered for sale. It is illegal to manufacture, prepare for sale, store, or sell food unless the food is protected from dust, insects, and any other unclean, unhealthy, or unsanitary condition. To prevent contamination, equipment must be suitable for the type of product being sold.

Marketing Processed or Prepared Foods

Wisconsin Act 101 allows small-scale producers to sell canned fruits and vegetables that are naturally acidic or have been acidified by pickling or fermenting. These products include salsas, sauerkraut, jams and jellies, and pickled fruits and vegetables. Several restrictions apply to these sales. Search <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> for more information on selling home-canned foods under this bill.

Other products, like canned carrots, fish, meat or pickled eggs, may only be sold by licensed vendors. Obtaining a license requires an approved kitchen separate from a home kitchen. Those selling a canned pickled product are encouraged to take a training course in safe canning procedures. The training courses also teach how to conduct pH testing of your product. For more information, call the Division of Food Safety at 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFood@wisconsin.gov.

Learning about safe food handling is good business for any farmer who wants to market a food product. When you sell a food product to the public, even if you are not required to have a license, you still need to follow safe food handling practices. Handling food safely can protect your customers from illness and you from liability. Some of the best practices for handling food are common sense, but some practices are not obvious. Restaurant and food service personnel are well-trained in food safety. If you are bringing food products to sell to them, they need to see you are handling products correctly or they may refuse to accept a shipment from you.

It is helpful to learn the guidelines the food industry follows. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) is an internationally accepted protocol for ensuring food safety. The HACCP procedures are useful information not only for farmers, but for anyone who is processing or preparing a food for sale to the public. For more information go to <http://sop.nfsmi.org/HACCPBasedSOPs.php>.

Food Safety Concerns

Cross-Contamination

Cross contamination occurs when disease-causing organisms move from one type of food to another, or from the food handling environment onto food. Some examples include:

- Using a knife and cutting board to cut up a chicken. The knife or cutting board is not cleaned and hands are not thoroughly washed before cutting up lettuce for a salad. The lettuce can pick up salmonella or other bacteria from the chicken residue left on the knife, cutting board or hands.
- Using a utensil to place pieces of raw meat in a pan for cooking. The same utensil is not cleaned before it is used to remove the cooked meat from the pan, moving the germs from the uncooked meat onto the cooked pieces.

Food Contamination on the Farm

Food contamination can happen in the field during the growing season, harvest and packaging or transport, all before the products get to point-of-sale. Contamination can be caused by fecal material coming in contact with vegetables or water-borne bacteria. Some

examples include:

- A field worker fails to wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and returns to picking vegetables.
- Rain water flows across a barnyard and past a nearby packing shed. The water splashes on a crate of lettuce being hauled to the shed, thus contaminating the lettuce with barnyard germs.

Preventing Food Contamination in the Field

Ways to prevent contamination include:

- Keep pets and livestock out of areas where food is grown, processed, packaged, transported or otherwise handled.
- Be aware of wildlife in your fields, remove or cover wild animal feces if possible. Avoid picking fruits or vegetables from areas right next to wild animal feces.
- Pay attention to the routes you take on your farm. Avoid tracking soil or mud from livestock areas into vegetable or fruit areas.
- Direct rain run-off from livestock areas away from vegetable or fruit areas.
- If manure is used for fertilizer, allow plenty of time for it to break down between spreading and harvest of a crop. The USDA Organic program rules require that manure must be tilled into the soil at least 120 days prior to harvest of a crop that has direct contact with the soil (such as lettuce), and at least 90 days prior to harvest of a crop that does not have direct contact with the soil (such as sweet corn).
- If you irrigate, look for ways to avoid contamination of irrigation water.

Preventing Food Contamination During Packing, Storing and Transport

Ways to prevent contamination include:

- Wash hands again, and again and again.
- Keep watch for anything that could cause cross-contamination.
- Make sure water used for washing fruits and vegetables is from a clean source and is not contaminated on its way to the wash area.
- When washing fruits and vegetables, it is generally best to wash them under running water that can drain away rapidly. Soaking a batch of vegetables in a tub of water can cause cross-contamination if one of the vegetables is contaminated.
- Keep clean, washed, ready-to-eat vegetables and fruits separate from raw vegetables and fruits.

What is GAP/GHP?

There is an increasing focus in the marketplace on good agricultural practices to verify farms are producing fruits and vegetables in the safest manner possible. Third-party audits are being used by the retail and food services industry to verify their suppliers conform to specific agricultural practices. *Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)* include on-farm production and post-production processes resulting in safe and quality food products. *Good Handling Practices (GHP)* include those used in handling and packing operations that minimize microbial contamination of fresh fruits, vegetables and tree nuts.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service, in partnership with state departments of agriculture, offers a voluntary, audit-based program to verify agricultural practices. GAP/GHP audits verify the implementation of a basic food safety program on the farm. This includes examining the farm practices and handling/packing procedures focusing on packing facilities, storage facilities and wholesale distribution centers. These audits are based on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Guidelines to Minimize Microbial Contamination for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and are a fee-based service.

USDA-trained and -licensed auditors provide GAP/GHP certification. GAP certification audits are conducted during harvest when harvest crews are at work. GHP audits are performed when the packing operation is running and workers are present. This federal/state audit program does not cover processed fruits and vegetables. (Inspection of food processors is provided by DATCP's Division of Food Safety.)

The GAP certification process covers three sections of the USDA Federal/State Audit Checklist for farm operations that do not pack their own products:

1. General questions
2. Farm review
3. Field harvest and field packing

The GHP certification process is an add-on for farm operations that conduct packing of fresh fruits and vegetables. The process includes three additional sections in the audit checklist:

4. Packing house review
5. Storage and transportation (optional)
6. Traceback (optional)

Every operation must compile a food safety program that outlines the standard operating procedures and policies that are in practice for the requirements in each section of the audit. In certain circumstances, documentation must also be provided to substantiate practices or analyses of possible contamination.

Go to www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5050869 to view the full USDA Audit Verification Checklist. General questions and parts 1–5 apply to GAP/GHP farm operation audits.

Contact Tim Leege at 715-345-5212 or via email at tim.leege@wisconsin.gov

- Keep packaging areas clean. Clean packing tables with a disinfectant solution in between batches of fruits or vegetables.
- Do not stack dirty things on top of clean things. Keep meat, poultry, and egg products physically separated from fruit and vegetable products.
- When transporting, do not load produce with non-produce items.

Prevent Food Contamination During Processing and Preparation

Ways to prevent contamination include:

- Wash hands again, and again and again.
- Watch for anything that could cause cross-contamination.
- Clean and sanitize all utensils, cutting boards, countertops or other surfaces in between batches of food.
- Wash all vegetables and fruits prior to processing and keep separate from unwashed vegetables and fruits.
- Keep meat, poultry and egg products physically separated from fruit and vegetable products. In a refrigerator, store raw meats that might drip juices in a container that will not leak.
- Follow safe canning procedures.

Produce from Flooded Areas

Generally speaking, state and federal food safety regulations do not cover flooding situations. Regulations governing manure and pesticides also do not address flooding. However, produce that has come in contact with flood water is considered adulterated and cannot be sold for human or animal consumption. For more information go to www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/issues/ExtensionResponds-Flood.html for resources on flood issues regarding homes, agricultural production and frequently asked questions. More resources are listed at the end of this section.

On-Farm Food Safety

Regardless of the size of your farm business or the products grown, all farmers selling food products for public consumption must be aware of food safety and the tips they can observe to minimize contamination.

Public concern about food safety has increased in recent years and farmers should be aware that proper steps need to be taken with their products to eliminate possible avenues of contamination. Safe produce begins with the production and handling practices on the farm. Products grown and sold with little biological contamination are less likely to result in health hazards caused by poor handling during later preparation stages. Farmers and their employees have the critical job of minimizing product contamination by learning about potential sources of contamination and by using Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs).

GAPs are a set of recommendations that can improve the quality and safety of the food products grown. These general guidelines can be incorporated into or adapted by any production system. GAPs focus on four primary components of production and processing: soils, water, hygiene and surfaces.

Soils

Manure is a good form of fertilizer but contains pathogens which may be harmful if there has been insufficient time for bacteria to break down volatile components. You can minimize the risk of manure contamination by using the following steps:

- Allow a minimum of 120 days between manure application and fruit and vegetable harvest
- Incorporate manure into soil or use a cover mulch after application to reduce risk of product contamination from rain or irrigation splash
- Use aerobic composting of manure which destroys microbes
- Apply manure in fall to allow competing bacteria to neutralize volatile components



Food safety starts on the farm and is a consideration from post-harvest handling through sale to the consumer. Proper handling techniques prevent contamination of food during packing, storing and transport.

Water

Water used for irrigation, cooling, processing or cleaning equipment and facilities should be free of microbial contaminants. Avoid using surface water for post-harvest handling procedures. Regularly test your water supply for bacteria contamination. Additionally, water sanitation products are available for produce washing water.

Hygiene

Proper hygiene and health, clean clothes and shoes, and safe practices can assure safe food. Provide clean and appropriately stocked restroom and hand washing facilities for field and processing employees to decrease the risk of product contamination.

Surfaces

Produce comes in contact with surfaces during harvest and processing. These include containers, transport bins, knives, and other utensils, sorting and packaging tables, and storage areas. Basic GAPs to help ensure clean surfaces include:

- Keep potential contaminants such as soil and manure out of the processing area or facility
- Remove spoiled produce in the field
- Clean and sanitize equipment and facilities daily
- Control animal contamination

Source: On-farm Food Safety: Guide to Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Iowa State University Extension PM 1947a. This publication has several references and resources for more information about general produce food safety, GAPs, and food safety plans with websites listed. www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1974A.pdf

Resources for On-Farm Food Safety

Dairy Food Safety Study Guides

Wisconsin Dairy Artisan Network
www.wisconsinairyartisan.com/food_safety_study_guides.html

Link to food safety study guides for state dairy licensing.

Food Code Fact Sheet

WIDATCP
http://datcp.wisconsin.gov/Food/Food_Code_Fact_Sheets

A comprehensive list of guides to Wisconsin Food Code.

Food Safety Begins on the Farm

Cornell University
www.gaps.cornell.edu
Good Agricultural Practices Network for Education and Training

Food Safety Risk Management Guide

Kansas State University
www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/foodasyst/foodasys.pdf
Includes an overall checklist for food safety risks during production and marketing of beef, poultry and produce.

Good Agricultural and Handling Practices

USDA
<http://agriculture.sc.gov/UserFiles/file/GAPGHP%20Brochure.pdf>
A program brochure that includes answers to frequently asked questions.

Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
<http://www.fda.gov> (Search "Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards")
This comprehensive, 49-page guide offers tips and procedures for keeping produce safe.

Produce from flooded areas

WIDATCP
<http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> (Search Vegetable Flood Guidelines)
Considerations for growers, packing houses and processors

Sample Farm Safety Manual

Oregon Department of Agriculture
www.oregon.gov/ODA/ADMD/docs/pdf/gap_safety_program.pdf
Sample Food Safety Program that can be modified to fit a farm operation.



Photo courtesy of Tara Kindschi

Eggs are a perishable product and must be handled properly to ensure food safety.

Processed Food Safety

Fruits, vegetables and other food products can be processed on a small scale if safe and sanitary methods of processing and handling are followed. These processed foods include jams and jellies, pickled or acidified fruits and vegetables, herbal or flavored vinegars and even baked goods.

Farm-based processing is generally not feasible for meats or low-acid canned foods such as beans, corn and peas. Inadequate processing during the canning of low-acid foods may cause these foods to be unsafe. Small scale processing of these foods is generally impractical because the equipment needed to produce consistently safe food is highly technical and expensive.

Certain kinds of foods are "potentially hazardous." This term applies to food that may become unsafe if not held at appropriate temperature of 41°F or below or 135°F or above, depending on the product. Potentially hazardous foods of animal origin include products such as milk, milk products, eggs, meat, poultry and fish. Foods of plant origin that are potentially hazardous include plant foods that are heat-treated, raw sprouted seeds (such as alfalfa sprouts), cut melons and garlic-in-oil mixtures. Potentially hazardous foods must be handled with appropriate temperature control to ensure food safety.

If you start a small-scale business processing foods such as pickled products, herbal vinegars, dressings or any food sold in air-tight containers (canned food), state and federal regulations require you use an approved written process, or recipe. You must submit your scheduled process (recipe) to DATCP's Division of Food Safety (DFS) prior to licensing. DFS does not approve processes, but will review and evaluate the process based on available scientific data resources. You must submit the process, or recipe, to a "competent process authority" for evaluation. A process authority would either provide you with a written statement that your process is safe, or may recommend you do further testing before the process can be approved.

If you intend to sell your product outside of Wisconsin, or use ingredients originating from outside Wisconsin, you must file your process

with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Since almost all processes use an ingredient from an out-of-state source, you will invariably have to file your process with the FDA if you thermally process low-acid or acidified food products. Operating under a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan requires filing your process with the FDA and is not necessary for acid foods. Retailing an acidified food requires an approved process, applying for a variance, and passing better processing school.

For more information on obtaining an approved written process prior to licensing, call the Division of Food Safety at 608-224-4700 or email DATCPFood@wisconsin.gov.

For HACCP guidelines through FDA, go to www.cfsan.fda.gov/~brd/haccp.html.

Liability Concerns

Most farms and farm businesses, and certainly farms with direct and intermediate marketing enterprises, have complex mixtures of potential personal and business liabilities. Insurers nationwide are gaining experience with alternative farm enterprises. Because farm insurance needs are complex, you should work directly with an insurance agent to identify your particular needs and to obtain the kinds of coverage necessary.

Farmers who market products need to regularly review their insurance needs with an insurance agent and attorney. Liability questions are more challenging than those raised by simple physical property coverage. Insurance companies offer a diverse range of coverage. Individual policies are available for physical loss of property, liability and workers' compensation, as well as coverage for other specific needs. The alternative most local food marketers select is a package policy that combines all types of coverage in one policy.

Farm Insurance

Farmers are exposed to liability for their enterprises, whether conducted on the premises or away from them, such as while selling at a farmers' market. You are also exposed as a result of injuries to you or one of your employees. If your product causes harm to the buyer, you may be held liable. Liability insurance is



Photo courtesy of Department of Tourism

Besides assessing rules and regulations for your business, you must determine the risk involved in your enterprise. Whether selling on-farm or through various markets, farmers need to regularly review insurance needs for their business.

essential to pay for sums you may become legally obligated to pay.

The main areas of insurance needed typically include liability for products sold, for visitors to the farm, for farm workers, as well as coverage for the value of crops grown and property and equipment owned.

Product Liability

Liability for the food that you sell is called "product liability." This is handled differently depending on where and how much product you sell. On-farm sales may be covered through your regular property insurance package, but don't assume that is the case. Ask your insurance agent if you are covered if someone gets sick from food that you sold. If you are selling to grocery stores or food services, they may require you to carry separate product liability coverage. Some farmers' markets require each vendor to carry their own liability coverage. If you are selling product through a distributor, you probably will be required to carry product liability coverage. Following safe food handling and food processing practices are necessary

to limit your liability exposure and to guard against people becoming ill from your products. Some buyers may refuse your product if they realize you failed to follow safe food handling practices.

Premises Liability

Liability for people who visit your farm is called “premises liability.” If your farm enterprises involve having visitors to the farm, ask your insurance agent if your policy covers all liability exposures. For example, a policy may cover visitors who are guests, but not customers of a farm-based business.

When you have a farm enterprise that invites customers to the farm, such as a Pick Your Own farm, a petting zoo, or a corn maze, there are safety measures you can take to minimize risk to your customers such as:

- Make sure the areas that customers visit are free of debris
- Get rid of wasp and hornet nests near areas visited by customers
- Eradicate harmful weeds such as poison ivy, stinging nettles, and ragweed
- Strictly follow re-entry times for any pesticides
- Lock up farm chemicals, if used
- Keep farm equipment away from customer areas
- Post signs to warn of any dangers you are not able to remove
- Have a well-marked and large enough parking area



Farmers are liable for the food they sell. Some farmers' markets require each vendor carry their own liability coverage.

Not only do such measures protect your customers, they give you some protection against claims of negligence should an injury occur at your farm.

Workers' Compensation and Employers' Liability Insurance Coverage

You have liability for any farm worker you hire. Most employers - including family farmers - are required to carry workers' compensation insurance for employees. Under Wisconsin law, a person engaged in farming is required to obtain a workers' compensation policy when that person employs six or more employees for 20 consecutive or nonconsecutive days during a calendar year. Employees injured on the job receive medical and wage benefits. If workers' compensation doesn't apply, the injured party can still receive compensation from the employer for monetary loss and possibly pain and suffering.

As with product and premises liability, you need to talk to an insurance agent to discuss insurance coverage needs relating to your employees. If you are exempt from carrying workers' compensation, you still need to make sure you have adequate farm worker coverage on your regular farm property insurance package. Also, farmers who are exempt may still choose to purchase workers' compensation coverage as a benefit to their employees.

As a farm employer, you have liability not only for injuries to your employees, but for injuries or losses they may cause to others. To lessen this risk, post clear guidelines and written job descriptions for your employees and discuss this liability concern with your insurance agent.

Property Insurance Coverage

Farm property includes buildings, vehicles, equipment, and inventory. A clear explanation in the policy is essential so you know what the policy provides.

Farm property insurance includes coverage for different types of farm structures, vehicles, machinery, equipment, inventory, livestock and crops. Coverage options may vary depending on the type and cause of loss. Losses may include damage to or loss of physical items that are owned, leased or contracted by your business.

You must know the value of the property or equipment you wish to cover and today's replacement value of these items. You'll also want to evaluate what type of losses will impair your farm operation and for how long.

Read your farm property insurance policy carefully to know the risks covered and any conditions, restrictions, or exclusions that may limit insurance coverage. Review your insurance coverage annually and make any needed adjustments.

Crop Insurance and Livestock Price Insurance

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) of the USDA underwrites crop insurance for farmers. The RMA provides insurance for a wide variety of crops, including many fruits and vegetables. For a list of crops covered, go to www.rma.usda.gov and search "Crops Covered." Then choose the list of crops covered for the most recent year.

RMA's Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) product provides protection against low revenue due to unavoidable natural disasters and market fluctuations that occur during the insurance year. Covered farm revenue consists of income from agricultural commodities, including incidental amounts of income from animals and animal products and aquaculture reared in a controlled environment. For more information go to www.rma.usda.gov/policies/agr.html.

AGR-Lite insurance is available through underwriting by the RMA. This whole-farm income insurance policy is based on a farm's five-year history of revenue, plus the current year's farm plan. This type of plan may be attractive to diversified enterprises since coverage is not tied to one specific crop or mix of crops.

For producers to qualify for disaster programs administered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency, such as the Livestock Forage Program, Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish, and the Tree Assistance Program, farmers must have their own baseline crop insurance.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) program provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. For more information go to www.fsa.usda.gov and search NAP or go to your local FSA office.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE)

This program, while not an insurance, is available to eligible producers on farms in disaster counties that have incurred crop production or quality losses and whose economically significant crops are covered by crop insurance or NAP. For more information go to www.card.iastate.edu/iowa_ag_review/summer_08/article3.aspx

Resources for Risk Management and Insurance

Agent Locator

USDA-RMA

www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/companies/RMA
RMA's online agent locator lists crop insurance and livestock price insurance agents.

Risk, Liability and Insurance for Direct Marketers

UW Extension

www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/publications/documents/A3811-7.pdf
A brief introduction to liability and insurance for direct marketers.

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

USDA

www.rma.usda.gov/pubs/rme/fctsht.html
Online publications and crop fact sheets.

BUY LOCAL, BUY WISCONSIN

The “Buy Local” food movement is one of the fastest growing trends in agriculture today and is an important influence economically, socially, and culturally. Local food initiatives are gaining momentum in Wisconsin and are creating new business opportunities for state farmers.

Wisconsin farmers and small food manufacturers produce an abundance of wonderful food. Increasing access to local markets is a win-win solution for the farmer, retailer and consumer. “Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin” will help create the structure to link all of the players and will provide the producer training necessary to increase locally produced food in our schools, grocery stores and restaurants.

Mark Olson, Renaissance Farm



Photo courtesy of Department of Tourism

The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program efforts strengthen connections between producers, retailers, institutions and consumers by developing and expanding local food markets for Wisconsin farmers and processors.

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin is a comprehensive program to support local food systems by working with farmers and food buyers to develop new markets for Wisconsin food products. The design and components of this program represent the ideas and experience of individuals from across the state who logged hundreds of hours in research, working group meetings, and online forums for information sharing. The combined efforts of growers, producers, and individuals representing grassroots and nonprofit organizations, industry working groups, the University of Wisconsin, and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection resulted in legislation to fund a statewide program.

The *Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin* program positively impacts farmers, communities, consumer nutrition, the environment, and Wisconsin’s economy by supporting increased availability and demand for locally grown foods. A competitive grant program funds local food efforts that increase the sale of Wisconsin grown or produced food products or expand agricultural tourism in the state. In addition to grant funding, the program:

- Offers competitive grants to support the infrastructure of local food systems
- Provides one-on-one technical assistance program from local food producers
- Identifies food safety barriers and implements solutions
- Arranges intensive, day-long workshops designed to educate local producers and business to facilitate successful ventures
- Partners with DHS, DPI, CIAS, REAP, AmeriCorps Farm to School and many other state-wide farm school programs
- Compliments the work of existing local food programs including SavorWisconsin.com, Something Special from Wisconsin™ and other efforts across the state

For more information on the *Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin* program, email DATCPBLBW@wisconsin.gov or go to: <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov> (Search “Buy Local”).

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