



Small Organic Farmer Marketing Toolkit





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Overview

This Marketing Toolkit is designed to provide you with the concepts, strategies, and insights needed to successfully market your organic products, boost sales, and expand your customer base.



Summary

- **Develop Your Mission Statement:** Every farmer should start by creating a clear mission statement that defines their farm's values, goals, and what makes them unique. This helps set the foundation for their business identity and guides all marketing efforts.
- **Identify Your Target Audiences:** Farmers must decide who they want to sell to—whether it's local consumers, restaurants, grocery stores, or distributors. Understanding your target audience is key to tailoring your products and marketing strategies to their specific needs.
- **Explore Sales Channels:** Based on your target audience, farmers can explore different sales channels. For example, if you're targeting local consumers, you might consider farm stands, farmers' markets, or CSA programs. For wholesale customers, distribution to local stores or partnering with food co-ops might be a better option.

Summary

- **Learn Marketing Channels:** Once you've defined who you are and who you want to sell to, it's important to learn about the marketing channels that can boost visibility and engagement. This may include social media, email marketing, local events, or partnerships with community organizations. These channels help you reach your target audience and drive sales through your chosen sales channels.
- **Additional Resources:** For those interested in learning more, there are a wealth of resources available, including online courses, webinars, workshops, and community support groups. These resources can help deepen your understanding of marketing strategies, tools, and best practices specific to farming and local markets.

How to Use This Toolkit

Define Your Farm's Identity: Start by crafting a clear mission statement and brand that represents what your farm stands for. This is your unique story—make sure it resonates with your values and what you offer.

Know Your Customers: Identify who you're trying to sell to. Understanding your target audience helps you tailor your marketing efforts to meet their needs and preferences.

Reach Your Audience: Use the right marketing and sales channels to connect with your customers. Whether it's through Farmers Markets, CSA programs, your website, or local partnerships, make sure you're actively promoting your farm and organic products.

Maximize Visibility: Combine in-person and digital marketing strategies to increase your farm's visibility. Attend local events, maintain an engaging social media presence, and ensure your website is up to date and optimized for search engines like Google. These efforts will help drive more sales and grow your customer base.



Why Marketing is Important

Marketing is a powerful tool that helps farmers connect with customers, build a loyal following, and grow their business.

In today's competitive market, it's not enough to simply grow high-quality products; you also need to make sure people know about them. Effective marketing can help farmers:

- **Increase Awareness:** Reach new customers who may not otherwise know about your farm, products, or how to buy from you.
- **Build Relationships:** Develop strong connections with customers through consistent and meaningful communication.
- **Highlight Unique Value:** Stand out from competitors by showcasing what values or mission make your farm special.
- **Increase Sales:** Help you sell more products to consumers and businesses.



A Farm Marketing Case Study



Shared Legacy Farm in Northwest Ohio

- Corinna and her husband began a small CSA on 2 acres in 2008
- Her husband had a full-time job off farm to support them for the first 5 years while they built up their farm
- They had a 12-customer CSA for an 18-week season in the summer
- Invested all profits back into the farm thanks to the off-farm employment
- Gradually built the farm infrastructure by installing cooler and greenhouse and moving to a tractor system.

A Farm Marketing Case Study



Shared Legacy Farm in Northwest Ohio

- They took the leap to full time farming in 2013. Had expanded to 25 acres and brought in paid labor.
- By 2017, labor was increasingly an issue and they only had **66% retention** of CSA members
- In 2018, Corinna began to research digital marketing and applied online strategies to the farm.
- Most importantly, she did a customer research project: called their long-time customers and asked them what worked for them and what didn't, what tricks and hacks they used for utilizing CSA boxes, and what their experience was like.

A Farm Marketing Case Study



Shared Legacy Farm in Northwest Ohio

- Corinna began to focus more on customer education, teaching them “how to use the box.” **Customer retention increased to 75%.**
- In 2019, Corinna placed a huge focus on consumer education and developed a “success path,” a roadmap to teach CSA members how to optimize their produce.
- The customer retention issue began to disappear, and Corinna started a Digital Farmer website to share with other farmers the things she was learning.

A Farm Marketing Case Study



Shared Legacy Farm in Northwest Ohio

- During COVID, they lost farmers market and restaurant sales but adapted their CSA with a drive-through pick-up system and online pre-sales
- The CSA became extremely popular and **customer retention in 2021 was 90%**
- By 2022, **customer retention evened out to 85%**
- Now, about 40% of their income is from wholesale and 60% from the CSA.
- Learn more at [CAFF's Digital Marketing & CSA Retention Webinar](#)

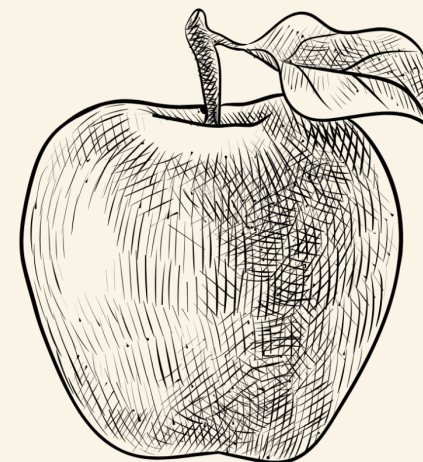


Define Your Farm's Identity



Your Mission Statement

As a small business owner and farmer, your mission statement is a powerful tool.



- Clearly and concisely explains the purpose of your farm and business to your customers - and you!
- This statement helps you stay focused on your goals and communicate your values to others.
- Your mission statement should embody your purpose and commitment
- Consider how your farm and business impact your customers, community, investors, or donors. Reflect on why you strive to support these groups and what motivates your dedication.



Drafting A Mission Statement

Creating a mission statement might seem challenging, but here's how to simplify it:



What You Do

Clearly define what your farm produces or the services you offer.

How You Do It

Highlight the core values that guide your farming practices, such as quality, sustainability, or innovation.

Why You Do It

Emphasize what makes your farm unique and why you're passionate about your work.



Mission Statement Examples



The Campbell's Company

To nourish people's lives by offering a wide variety of convenient, delicious, and affordable food choices that can help everyone enjoy a balanced, healthful diet.

Pie Ranch

To cultivate a healthy and just food system from seed to table through food education, farmer pathways, and regional partnerships.



Your Mission Statement

Clarify Your Purpose:

Define your farm's purpose, goals, and values, helping you communicate clearly with customers.

Reflect on Impact:

Consider how your farm serves your customers, community, and other stakeholders, and why you are dedicated to supporting them.

Define Your Products and Values:

Clearly describe what your farm produces or the services you offer, and highlight your core values like quality, sustainability, or innovation.

Keep It Brief and Evolving:

Keep your mission statement concise, review it regularly, and update it as your farm's goals and values evolve.



Sharing Your Mission Statement

Once your mission statement is crafted, make sure it's visible. Share it with customers, vendors, and employees.

- Incorporate it into your website, marketing materials, and email signatures.
- It should be short enough to be used as an "elevator pitch" and easy for your team to memorize, making it a great introduction for those unfamiliar with your business.



Using Your Mission Statement to Develop a Brand

Your brand is an intangible asset that sets your business and its products apart.

- A strong brand effectively conveys your message, leading to greater recognition and appeal to customers.
- Your logo, slogan, and overall look should reflect this identity and appeal to your target audience, whether it's health-conscious online shoppers, local consumers, institutions, or restaurants.
- It gives customers reasons to choose your farm's offerings over competitors—because your products are healthier, better tasting, or more sustainable.
- To define your farm's public image and connect that image to your mission statement, first, determine your brand identity—how you want to be seen.



Brand Development

Brand Development Steps



- 1. Define Your Brand Identity:** Establish your brand's personality and visual elements (logo, colors, fonts) to reflect your mission and values.
- 2. Understand Your Target Audience:** Identify who you are trying to reach, considering their preferences, values, and needs.
- 3. Create a Consistent Message:** Develop clear, consistent messages that communicate your farm's mission, products, and values across all platforms.
- 4. Develop a Marketing Strategy and Build Recognition:** Promote your brand through selected marketing channels and ensure consistent use of your brand elements to increase visibility.
- 5. Engage with Your Community:** Strengthen relationships with customers and the local community to build brand loyalty and authenticity.



Know Your Customers

Identify Your Target Customer Audiences

Consumers & Businesses



What is a Target Audience?

Your target audience is the specific group of consumers or businesses most likely to want your farm's products or services.

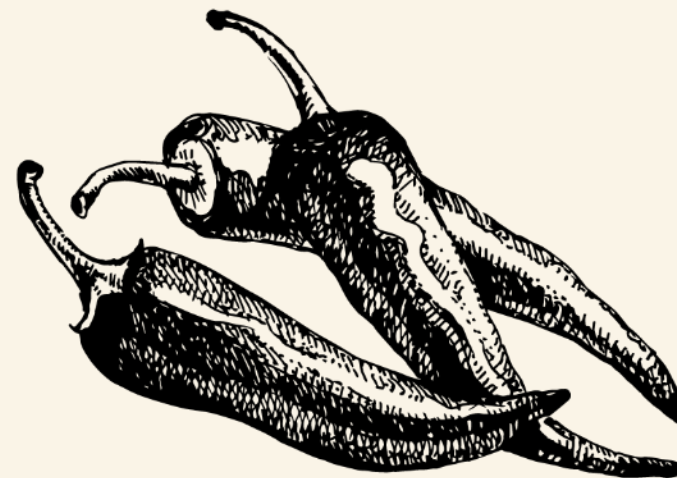
- The consumers, institutions, or businesses to whom you would like to sell
- Your target audience can be defined by factors like age, gender, income, interests, location, business types, and more.
- Defining your target audience helps you tailor your message and choose the best channels to reach them.



What is a Target Audience?

Your target audience can be broad or niche, depending on what you sell.

- Broad: Selling farm produce to families, schools, food hubs
- Niche: Specializing in unique produce such as organic heirloom or ethnic vegetables that appeal to health-conscious individuals, specific communities, or trendy restaurants



Consumers vs Wholesale

When deciding whether to sell to consumers or wholesale, farmers can consider things like:

Profit

Farmers may see higher profits selling directly to consumers than to wholesalers. Farmers who sell directly to consumers receive the full amount of the consumer's dollar and can control the price they receive for their products. However, wholesale can be a good way for farmers to sell their products in quantity.

Control

Farmers who sell directly to consumers have more control over the price they receive for their products.

Time

Farmers who sell directly to consumers may incur extra costs, including their time.

Competition

In wholesale markets, farmers may compete with regional, national, and international producers.

Pricing

In wholesale markets, prices are typically lower than direct market prices or retail prices. Farmers can make up for lower prices by selling higher volumes.



Consumer Customers (Direct-to-Consumer):

- **Individual Sales:** Sell directly to the consumer, such as at farmers' markets, farm stands, or through CSA programs.
- **Pricing Flexibility:** Prices are often higher due to direct sales and the personal nature of the transaction.
- **Customer Relationship:** Build strong relationships with customers, fostering loyalty and repeat business.
- **Smaller Orders:** Typically purchase in smaller quantities, ideal for selling produce in season or unique items.
- **Marketing Effort:** Requires more marketing to attract and retain customers, including social media or events.

Wholesale Customers (Business-to-Business):

- **Bulk Sales:** Sell large quantities of products to businesses, such as grocery stores, restaurants, or food distributors.
- **Lower Prices:** Pricing is generally lower than direct-to-consumer, due to bulk sales and long-term contracts.
- **Transactional Relationship:** Focus is more on the product and delivery, with less personal interaction with individual customers.
- **Larger Orders:** Wholesale customers purchase large volumes, requiring consistent supply and dependable delivery.
- **Less Marketing Required:** Wholesale customers are often secured through networking, contracts, or established distribution channels, reducing marketing efforts.



Self Assessment Guide - Navigation

Click the link below if you are in need of:

- Selling direct from your farmstand
- Selling in a local market, farmers market or farmstand
- Selling directly to the end user
- Selling on your website
- Communicating directly with the consumer
- Creating Marketing materials for your direct customer/end consumer.

Direct to Consumer/DTC

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Click the link below if you are in need of:

- Delivering large quantities of goods to a location for resale
- Discussing shelf placement
- Selling in a retail store
- Communicating directly with a buyer or distributor
- Tips and guide for how to communicate about your business and product guidance

Wholesale/B2B

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Reach Your Audience:

Direct to Consumer Sales Channels



Sales vs Marketing Channels

Sales Channels

- Refers to the methods or pathways through which a product or service is sold to customers.
- Examples include direct sales, retail stores, e-commerce websites, wholesalers, and distributors.
- Focuses on the transaction and delivery of products to the end consumer.
- **The goal is to make the product available and accessible to customers.**

Marketing Channels

- Refers to the platforms or tools used to promote and create awareness of a product or service.
- Examples include social media, email marketing, television ads, content marketing, and search engine advertising.
- Focuses on building awareness, generating interest, and driving customer engagement.
- **The goal is to attract and influence potential customers to drive sales.**



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

- Key sales channels: on-farm stores, website stores, Farmers Markets, roadside stands, U-Pick/Pick-Your-Own operations, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs.
- Assess your transportation and storage requirements to keep costs down and maintain efficiency.
- Start by evaluating the transportation options and routes needed for your target markets.
- Look into existing distribution systems in your area—there may be opportunities to collaborate with other farmers to share deliveries and reduce costs.

Key Considerations Include:

- Will you need to purchase a truck? If so, should it be refrigerated?
- Will you hire a driver for deliveries?
- What type of storage is necessary for your products? Do you need a cooler or ice?
- Is your dry storage clean and rodent-proof?



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

On-Farm Retail Store



On-farm retail involves selling products directly to consumers at the farm, ranging from simple setups like a farm stand to more complex operations like an orchard with a retail store.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

On-Farm Retail Store

ADVANTAGES

No Transportation Costs

Customers come to the farm, reducing marketing expenses.

No Standard Pack/Grade

Like Farmers Markets, products don't need standardized packaging or grading. Focus on attractive displays and cleanliness to encourage sales and repeat visits.

Experiential Buying

On-farm retail offers a unique, immersive experience, enhancing customer satisfaction and encouraging word-of-mouth promotion.

Instant Credibility for “Locally Grown”

Selling products directly from the farm reinforces the authenticity of "locally grown" claims, building trust with customers.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

On-Farm Retail Store

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Flow of Traffic onto Your Farm

Not all farmers want visitors to their farm

Maintenance

You will have to keep all structures and facilities clean and in good repair.

Staffing

Your store will need to be staffed or some payment system developed.



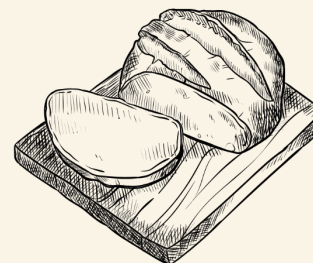
Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

On-Farm Retail Store



Staff Training

Train your staff to share your mission statement and educate customers about your growing practices and organic benefits. Prepare them to answer both simple and tough questions.



Product Samples

Offering product samples at your booth can attract customers, boost interactions, and provide valuable feedback on new varieties for future planning.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

On-Farm Retail Store

- Promote your farm store's products, address/directions, and hours of operations on your website, social media, and at other points of sale you are engaged in
- Make sure you include your mission statement
- Be consistent with your branding



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Website Store

The way Americans purchase food is evolving.

- Online grocery sales increased by 7% between 2023 and 2024
- Many consumers now prefer the convenience of ordering from home for Pickup, Direct Delivery, or Ship-to-Home.
- A website is an essential tool for online sales.
- Your website is often a buyer's first introduction to your farm. They can learn about your farm, products, and practices from your website.
- A well-designed website helps establish your credibility with customers who associate it with a trustworthy business. A website strengthens your farm's brand and local reputation.
- A well-crafted farm website can attract and retain more customers, expand your business, and give you a competitive edge.
- It helps you reach beyond your current customer base, making your farm discoverable to new buyers.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Website Store

Designing a Website

- Goal: provide clear and useful information about your farm while ensuring a good user experience
- A user-friendly website that's easy to navigate on computers, tablets, and mobile devices is crucial, as most website visitors won't return after a poor user experience.
- Focus on creating a simple, attractive, and easy-to-use site for the best results.
- Platforms like GoDaddy, Wix, and Shopify make it easy to create a farm website



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Website Store

3 Components to Creating a Website

1. Simple Design
2. Easy Navigation and Readability
3. Reflect your brand/mission statement



Simple and Effective Farm Business Website Design

1. Keep it Simple

Opt for a straightforward design to make your website easy to navigate and pleasant to use. Here's how to keep it simple:



Colors

- Limit the colors you use to 3-5 colors.
- Use the color wheel to pick complementary hues.

Fonts

- Choose one font for headings and another for body text.
- Stick to 2-3 fonts and sizes for clarity.

Photos

- Use images to break up text and enhance visual appeal.
- Balance photos with white space to avoid clutter.



Simple and Effective Farm Business Website Design

2. Easy Navigation and Readability

Ensure your website is user-friendly with intuitive navigation and easy-to-read content:

Navigation

- Create essential pages like Home, About, Products, and Contact with clear links to each page
- Some sites include a page listing Certifications or explaining more about Organic.
- Add a prominent "Shop" button and a newsletter signup option

Content

- Write short, concise paragraphs (3-5 sentences)
- Use headings to organize information.
- Ensure your site is mobile-friendly, as most users will access it via smartphones



Simple and Effective Farm Business Website Design

3. Reflect Your Brand

Your website should align with your farm's brand identity:

Brand Consistency

- Use colors, fonts, and images that reflect your brand's style and values.
- Include your logo in a prominent spot, like the top left corner, to help visitors easily recognize your brand.

Content

- Tailor your content to tell your farm's story.
- Highlight your unique qualities, whether it's family heritage or commitment to local produce.
- Remember to include your mission statement!



Simple and Effective Farm Business Website Design

Test your site with friends and family to ensure it's user-friendly. Look at it using different devices including computer, tablet, and cellphone to make sure the design works for all formats.

Consider outsourcing your website design following the tips in this guide to a local website designer.

Promote your website's products and URL/address on social media and at other points of sale you are engaged in like a farm store or Farmers Market. Make sure you include your mission statement and be consistent with your branding.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Farmers Markets



Farmers Markets are regular events where multiple farmers and growers come together to sell a diverse range of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other farm products directly to consumers from individual stands. Farmers Markets are frequently advertised to attract customers. Advertising methods might include roadside signs, billboards, websites, and ads in newspapers or online. Promotions can feature events

like cooking demonstrations, live music, customer appreciation days, vendor contests, and other special activities to draw in visitors. The responsibility for organizing and sponsoring these advertising and promotional efforts typically falls on the Farmers Market organization.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Farmers Markets Advantages

- No minimum sales requirements
- No standardized packaging or grading
- Access to valuable market information and opportunities for farmers to explore additional market channels.
- Advertising and promotion can enhance visibility and benefit all market participants.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Farmers Markets

Potential Challenges

- There may be a waiting list to get in
- Some markets may not want multiple vendors selling similar product
- Market managers will have rules that need to be followed including required setup and breakdown hours



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Farmers Markets

Getting Started



- Reach out to local market management agencies to find out which markets have available booth space.
- To sell at a certified Farmers Market in California, farms must be registered. Contact your local County Agricultural Commissioner for information on how to register as an authorized vendor or visit the [state Certified Farmers Market page](#).
- If you can't find a market in your preferred area, consider setting up a farm stand on your property or collaborating with other farmers to start a new market.
- Refer to the following checklists for essential supplies



Farmers Market Supplies Checklist: Essentials

To make your Farmers Market experience smooth and efficient, keep this checklist handy. It's useful to have a laminated copy stored in your vehicle so you can easily review and pack everything you need each week.

- ☐ **Tables:** Opt for sturdy 2.5' x 6' tables that can support your products.
- ☐ **Tent:** A 10x10' white tent is standard, offering durability and space for add-ons.
- ☐ **Tent Walls:** Choose Velcro walls from the same brand as your tent for a secure fit.
- ☐ **Weight Bags:** Secure each tent leg with weight bags to prevent wind damage.
- ☐ **Cash Box:** Carry extra cash and coins for making change.
- ☐ **Credit Card Reader:** Use a simple Point of Sale system like Square, integrated with your phone.
- ☐ **Signage:** Clearly identify your farm and display any relevant certifications.
- ☐ **Market Book and Pen:** Track sales, notes, and totals.
- ☐ **Tablecloths:** Select simple colors that complement your produce and durable material for the cloth.
- ☐ **Produce Bags and Baskets:** Ensure they meet market guidelines.
- ☐ **Display Items:** Use crates, buckets, or boards to add height and visual interest.
- ☐ **Price Holders/Signs:** Make pricing visible and easy to read.
- ☐ **Chalkboard and Chalk:** For customizable signage.
- ☐ **Business Cards:** Network with customers and other vendors.
- ☐ **Scale:** If selling items by weight. In California, scales used at Farmers Market stands must be approved, tested and sealed by the County Agriculture Commissioner, Sealer of Weights and Measures.
- ☐ **Paperwork:** Include liability insurance proof, scale certification, your organic certificate, state organic registration document, and inspection documents.
- ☐ **Product:** Don't forget the main attraction!



Farmers Market Supplies Checklist: Extras

To make your Farmers Market experience smooth and efficient, keep this checklist handy. It's useful to have a laminated copy stored in your vehicle so you can easily review and pack everything you need each week.

- ☐ **Rubber Bands:** For organizing produce.
- ☐ **Water:** For spritzing produce and drinking.
- ☐ **Boxes/Paper Bags:** For customer purchases.
- ☐ **Decor:** Add personal touches like fabric flags.
- ☐ **Hand Sanitizer:** For cleanliness.
- ☐ **Blank Price Signs:** For quick updates.
- ☐ **Swag:** Offering freebies such as bags, stickers, or pictures to color is a great way to attract children, who will usually be accompanied by their parents.

Farmers Market: Marketing Tips

- Train your staff to share your mission statement and educate customers about your growing practices and organic benefits. Prepare them to answer both simple and tough questions.
- Visit the Rodale Institute's Why Organic webpage for good information:
<https://rodaleinstitute.org/why-organic/>
- Offering product samples at your booth can attract customers, boost interactions, and provide valuable feedback on new varieties for future planning.
- Promote your Farmers Market products, address/directions, and hours of operations on your website, social media, and at other points of sale you are engaged in like a website store.
- Make sure you include your mission statement and be consistent with your branding.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Farm Stand

- A farm stand is a temporary setup in high-traffic areas away from the farm or Farmers Market to sell products directly to consumers.
- You don't need a formal setup for a farm stand. It can be as simple as a folding table with some basic signs to advertise your goods or as elaborate as constructing an open-style building.
- Starting small, like setting up a trailer with signs or flags, is a good way to test the waters
- Farm stands typically attract customers within a 30-mile radius.
- Focus your marketing efforts on reaching local consumers in your community and nearby areas. When setting up your farm stand outside your own farm, choose a visible and accessible location with ample parking, ideally near urban areas or popular routes.
- Research local regulations and secure any necessary permits, such as zoning or health department approvals.
- You will likely need a health department permit to sell any value-added products such as jams, spreads, or baked goods so research this too.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Farm Stand Advantages

- **Direct Sales to Consumers:** Sell your products directly to customers, cutting out middlemen and keeping more of the profit.
- **Increased Visibility:** Having a physical presence increases awareness of your farm and products in the local community.
- **Customer Relationships:** Build strong, personal relationships with customers, fostering loyalty and repeat business.
- **Freshness and Quality:** Showcase your fresh, locally grown produce, which can attract health-conscious consumers looking for high-quality products.
- **Educational Opportunity:** Use the farm stand to educate customers about your farming practices, organic methods, and the benefits of supporting local agriculture.
- **Marketing Opportunity:** A farm stand acts as a live advertisement for your farm, drawing in customers who may not otherwise know about your business.
- **Community Support:** Strengthen ties within your community and build a base of local supporters who appreciate sustainable farming.
- **Increased Income Streams:** Diversify your income by offering value-added products, such as jams, sauces, or baked goods, alongside your produce.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Farm Stand Potential Challenges

- **Weather Dependency:** Farm stands can be vulnerable to weather conditions (rain, heat, snow) that can affect customer traffic and product quality.
- **Limited Hours:** Operating a farm stand typically requires you to be available during specific hours, which can be challenging, especially during busy farming seasons.
- **Seasonal Variability:** A farm stand may only be open seasonally, limiting sales during off-seasons or periods of low production.
- **Labor Intensive:** Setting up, maintaining, and management requires time and effort, including staffing, inventory management, and customer service.
- **Initial Investment:** Costs for setting up a farm stand, such as permits, signage, display tables, and other infrastructure, can be significant, especially for a new or small farm.
- **Competition:** If located in a busy area, you may face competition from other farm stands, local markets, or grocery stores, which can make it harder to attract customers.
- **Logistical Challenges:** Transporting and storing perishable goods can be difficult, especially without proper refrigeration, leading to potential product loss or spoilage.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Publicizing Your Farm Stand

Roadside Signs: Your farm's roadside signs are the first impression for customers. They should be neat, high-quality, and easy to read, with a clear contrast between the background and lettering. Use large signs with fewer than eight words for quick readability by passing motorists. Symbols or a simple farm logo can enhance recognition. Be aware of local regulations on roadside signage.

Direct Mailings: Build a customer mailing list for direct communication. Send postcards or an emailed newsletter with farm images and promotional messages before harvest to draw in

customers. Collect addresses from visitors and conduct surveys to gather data for future advertising.

Newspapers: Advertise in local newspapers read by your target customers. Use your farm logo and photos in the ad to catch attention. Offering coupons in the ad can track its effectiveness.

Website: Include directions and descriptions of your products on your website. Find information on how to optimize your website so it can be easily found on search engines like Google.



Publicizing Your Farm Stand

Promote your farm store's products, address/directions, and hours of operations on your website, social media, and at other points of sale you are engaged in like a website store or Farmers Market. Make sure you include your mission statement and be consistent with your branding.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

U-Pick/ Choose-Your-Own

U-Pick or Choose-Your-Own operations allow customers to visit your farm, head to the fields, and harvest their own produce. This method is popular for berries, tree fruits, pumpkins, and Christmas trees.

Keep your customers informed by using multiple channels to communicate your hours, seasons, and any changes in product availability due to weather or other factors. Here's how you can reach them:

Social Media: Post updates regularly on platforms where your customers are active.



LocalHarvest.org, PickYourOwn.org, CalAgTour.org:

These sites are great for connecting with people searching for pick-your-own farms online.

Your Website: Use your site to keep visitors updated and engaged. Ensure it's functional and mobile-friendly for the best experience.

By staying active across these channels, you'll keep your customers informed and encourage them to visit your farm.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

U-Pick/ Choose-Your-Own Advantages



- **Increased Revenue:** U-Pick operations allow customers to pick their own produce, often at a lower cost to you, which can lead to higher profits compared to selling pre-harvested items.
- **Customer Engagement:** Provides a fun, interactive experience that connects customers with the farm, building loyalty and encouraging repeat visits.
- **Reduced Labor Costs:** With customers doing the picking, labor costs are lower as you don't need to hire as many workers to harvest the crops.
- **Marketing Opportunity:** U-Pick farms often attract local visitors and tourists, providing excellent word-of-mouth advertising and media coverage.
- **Fresher Produce:** Customers get the freshest products directly from the farm, enhancing their experience.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

U-Pick/ Choose-Your-Own Potential Challenges



- **Weather Dependency:** Weather conditions can greatly affect customer turnout and the quality of the crops available for picking, leading to potential revenue loss on bad weather days.
- **Labor Intensive for Customer Support:** Even though customers are doing the picking, you still need staff to manage the farm, provide instructions, assist with customers, and ensure safety.
- **Crop Management:** Ensuring that enough produce is available for U-Pick while preventing overharvesting or understocking requires careful planning and management.
- **Potential Damage to Crops:** Customers, especially inexperienced ones, may inadvertently damage crops while picking, reducing the overall yield.
- **Seasonal and Peak Time Constraints:** U-Pick operations are typically seasonal and can be crowded during peak times, requiring careful scheduling and management to handle large volumes of visitors.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

CSAs

Community Supported Agriculture

In a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) setup, farmers sell shares of their products to customers who receive regular deliveries or pick-ups of a diverse range of items, typically throughout the season. While CSAs are commonly associated with produce, they can also include products like meat, flowers, or a combination of different goods.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

CSAs: Community Supported Agriculture Advantages

- **Steady Cash Flow:** CSAs provide upfront payments from customers, helping farmers secure funding for supplies, equipment, and labor early in the season.
- **Customer Loyalty:** CSA members are committed for the season, creating a loyal customer base and reducing the need for constant marketing.
- **Predictable Demand:** By knowing how many members you have, farmers can better plan production and reduce waste or overproduction.
- **Community Connection:** CSAs help build strong relationships between farmers and local consumers, fostering a sense of community and trust in the farm's products.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

CSAs: Community Supported Agriculture Potential Challenges

- **High Customer Expectations:** Customers expect a consistent supply of fresh produce, and any crop failures or delays can lead to dissatisfaction and potential loss of members.
- **Time and Labor Intensive:** Managing CSA subscriptions, packaging, and delivering produce to customers can be time-consuming and require additional labor during peak seasons.
- **Market Limitations:** CSAs may limit a farmer's ability to sell surplus produce at local markets or other outlets since they've already committed to the CSA share.



Direct to Consumer Sales Channels

Publicizing Your CSA

Community Supported Agriculture

Here are some ways to market your Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program:

Social Media: Post regularly on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to share your farm's story. Short videos and special offers can help attract followers. Consider using tools to schedule posts across different platforms.

Printed Materials: Create posters, flyers, and handouts with information about your farm, what you grow, and how to contact you. Provide information on what certified organic means and why it's a good choice for consumers. Bring copies of your CSA contract to share with potential customers.

Advertise Locally: Try placing ads in your local newspaper or on community websites like LocalHarvest.org, depending on your location.

Word of Mouth: Ask current customers, friends, and community members to refer others. You can also hold small gatherings where customers invite friends and family to learn about your CSA and sign up.

Partnerships: Collaborate with local bakers or other vendors to offer additional items like baked goods in your CSA boxes and ask them to promote your CSA on their social media accounts.



Tools to Help Manage Your CSA



CSA Toolbox

An online tool to help with customer communication, paperwork, billing, and payments.

<https://www.csaware.com/csaware-difference.html>



CSAWARE

A user-friendly software designed specifically for CSAs, available from LocalHarvest.org. It helps manage complex CSA operations and costs 2% of your sales.

<https://csaware.com/>

Note that CSAs in California must be registered with the state.



Packaging Do's

Effective packaging for your products helps preserve food, reduce shipping costs, and enhance product branding. Using the right packaging ensures that your products stay fresh and appealing when they reach your customers.

Packaging is one of the key ways consumers interact with your brand. A branding design firm can help you to create this.

Your package design should represent your brand and brand values and help consumers to connect with your brand.

- ✓ Packaging should fit with the product and protect the product's integrity, keeping it fresh and safe during transport.
- ✓ Develop a package design system that is simple for your customers to navigate.
- ✓ Ensure your package design includes a clear and concise hierarchy. A packaging communication hierarchy can include:
 - ✓ Brand
 - ✓ Product Type
 - ✓ Key Benefits (limit to 3 key points)
 - ✓ Production Location
- ✓ Consider packaging material that is recycled, recyclable and/or compostable.
- ✓ If you are a certified organic operation, make the claim on your package. Consult with your certifier to make sure your labels comply with organic rules.
- ✓ Include ingredients and nutrition facts on the back if applicable.
- ✓ TIP: Communicate with your consumers about [reading organic labels](#)

Packaging Don'ts

- × Don't leave your branding off of the package, this will help customers to find your product again for future purchase.
- × Don't clutter the package with too much information. Be thoughtful about what information can be placed on the back, such as your mission, purpose or your brand story.
- × Incorrectly size the package to the product. This can result in a package design that does not appear feel thought through and has a direct reflection onto the product itself.
- × Don't make type too small to read. You generally don't want to go below 6 point type for the smallest back panel communication.
- × Don't forget any legal requirements that may be needed on the packaging for your product.
- × Don't overlook sustainability. Select packaging materials that protect the product, create a wonderful user experience and are sustainable.





Maximize Visibility

Direct to Consumer Marketing Channels



Marketing Channels

Marketing channels are the various ways you can reach and connect with your customers.

They include the people, organizations, and methods that help get your products into consumers' hands. This encompasses both online and offline strategies for promoting your farm and communicating with your target audience.



Consumer Marketing Messaging

Get consumers to your points of sale with Consumer Marketing Messaging.

- Marketing messages should show that you understand your customers' needs and offer solutions.
- The best marketing messages are impactful, clear, concise, memorable, and encourage positive action like
 - Signing up for your newsletter,
 - Visiting your Farmers Market stand
 - Purchasing products from your website.



Writing Effective Consumer Marketing Messages



1. Set Your Goal

Decide what you want to achieve with your message, such as boosting sales or increasing brand awareness in your town or online.

2. Know Your Audience

Understand your target customers, including their demographics, buying habits, interests, and challenges.

3. Address Pain Points

Identify the problems your customers face and show how your products solve them.

4. Use Keywords

Incorporate relevant keywords to help your message reach the right audience online like “certified organic” or “farm to table”.



Writing Effective Consumer Marketing Messages



5. Highlight Solutions

Demonstrate how your product or service addresses customer needs.

6. Show What Makes Your Business Unique

Emphasize what sets your farm apart from competitors, like awards or unique qualities.

7. Emphasize Your Product's Uniqueness:

Point out specific features or benefits that make your products stand out.

8. Choose the Right Marketing Channels

Amplify your message where your target audience will see it, whether online or offline.



Marketing Channels

Offline Points of Sale and Physical Marketing Materials

The point of sale is where you complete a transaction with your customers and is a real time marketing channel for you to promote your products and your brand.

The goal is to get a consumer's attention and boost both the number of transactions and the total sales amount. This means aiming to make more sales each time and encouraging larger purchases.



Marketing Channels

Offline Points of Sale and Physical Marketing Materials

Physical marketing materials like signs, posters, postcards, and pamphlets should reflect your mission statement and be consistent with your branding including your logo and colors.

The goal of these designs is to speak to your target consumer audiences' needs and get them to do something like visit your website or Farmers Market, or to purchase your products at a point of sale location.



Physical Marketing Materials Design Tips for Farmers

1. **Know Your Purpose:** Clearly define the goal of your design.
2. **Use Your Brand Colors:** Stick to your farm's colors for consistency.
3. **Keep Fonts Consistent:** Limit font styles to create a cohesive look.
4. **Utilize White Space:** Make your design easy to read and uncluttered.
5. **Learn from Others:** Take inspiration from successful brands.
6. **Incorporate Images & Icons:** Use these to enhance your message.
7. **Stay Updated:** Keep an eye on current design trends.
8. **Keep it Simple:** Avoid overcomplicating your designs.
9. **Use Design Tools:** Leverage design tools to make your work easier.
10. **Be Creative:** Don't be afraid to try new ideas.

Free Graphic Design Resources

[Adobe Spark](#)

[DesignWizard](#)

[Canva](#)

[Lunacy](#)

[Paint 3D](#)

[Krita](#)

[Blender](#)

[Inkscape](#)



Certified Organic Farmer

You can also enhance your presence as an organic farmer by clearly communicating your organic status.

Display your organic certification at your booth.

Visit www.ccof.org/store.php for CCOF signs and organic labels.



*All Organic Labels must be approved by your certifier



Marketing Channels

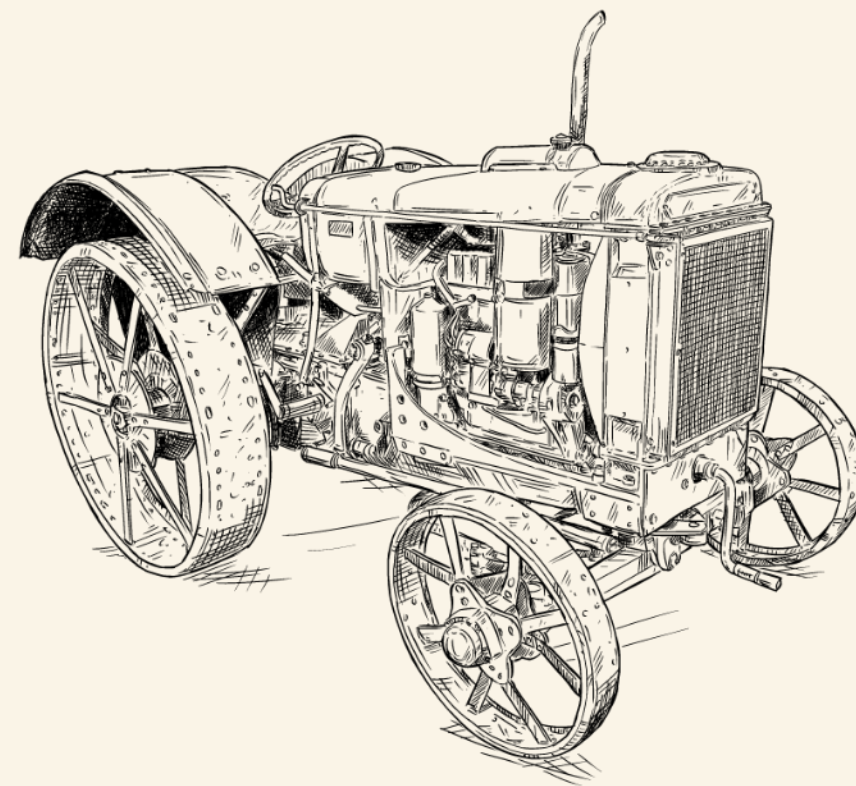
Digital Marketing

Digital marketing, or online marketing, is the promotion of your farm and its products using the internet and digital communication channels.

This includes:

- Search engines
- Social media
- Email
- Websites
- Online ads
- Online Directories

Digital marketing helps you connect with potential customers and offers unique opportunities and challenges. Many businesses blend traditional and digital marketing strategies to effectively reach their audience.



Search Engines

Search engines help users find information online by searching through vast amounts of web content.

- Search engines use complex mathematical analyses (algorithms) to index and rank web pages based on how well they match a user's search query, then provide a list of results.
- Popular search engines include Google, Bing, and Yahoo.



A Closer Look: Search Engine Optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) involves tweaking your website content so search engines like Google can understand and rank it better in search results.

- The aim is to make it easier for potential customers to find your website and decide to visit it.
- SEO also enhances user experience by making your site more accessible and easier to navigate.
- Unlike traditional marketing, SEO is free and requires only time and effort. With dedication, it offers a cost-effective way to achieve long-term benefits for your business.



Digital Marketing

Search Engine Optimization

SEO for small businesses focuses on improving your website and online presence to attract more traffic from search engines like Google. The goal is to draw the right customers to your website. For businesses with a physical location, it also includes optimizing for local search results. By improving your search engine ranking and boosting your online visibility, you can attract more potential customers and increase your sales. This approach helps you stand out against larger competitors and solidify your presence in the market.

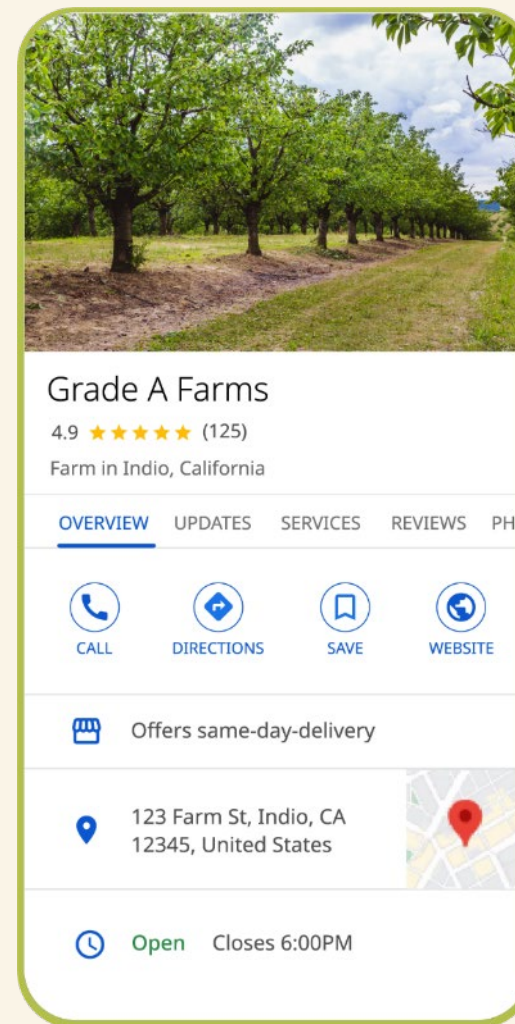


Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

1. Claim and Optimize Your Google Business Profile

If your farm serves customers in a specific area, a Google Business Profile is essential.

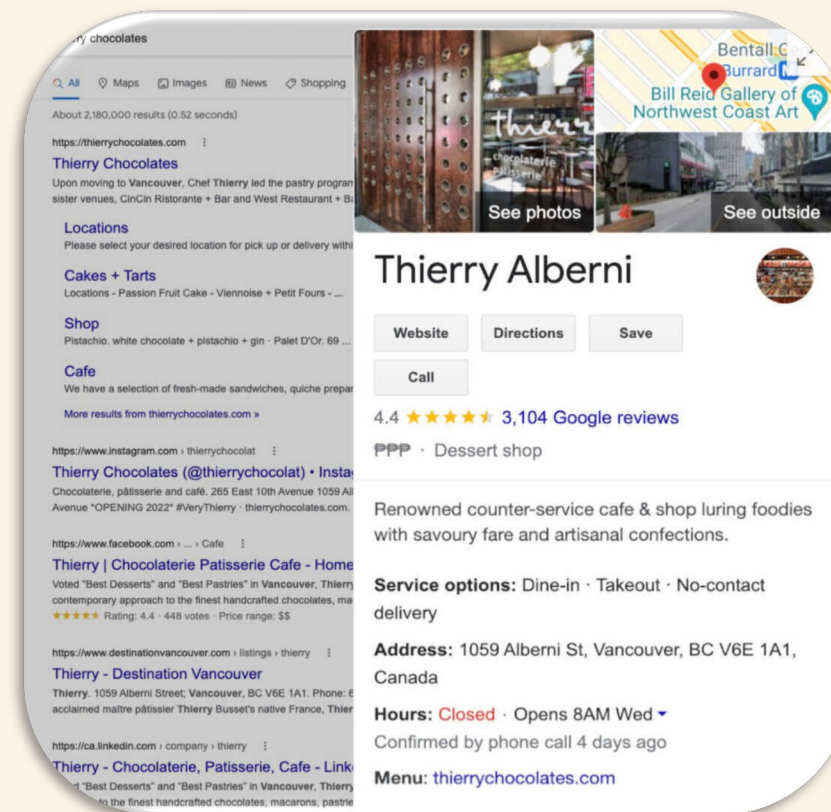
- It's a free tool that helps your farm show up on Google Search, Google Maps, and Google Shopping
- You can share key details like your phone number, hours, and what you offer.
- A Google Business profile allows users to find and learn about your farm, making it easier for local customers to connect with you.
- This step is crucial for enhancing your online presence and attracting local customers.



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Basics of optimizing your Google Business Profile:

- Set the right business category and type
- Add opening hours (and keep them up to date!)
- Add contact details
- Add photos
- Add your products or services



Claim your Google Business Profile at the link below:

https://www.google.com/intl/en_us/business/

<https://www.semrush.com/blog/google-my-business/>



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

2. Reviews



Encourage reviews and respond to them, as they impact your Google ranking and customer trust.

More reviews, even more than high ratings, can boost your business's visibility and credibility. Encourage your customers to leave ratings and reviews, and be sure to respond to all feedback—both positive and negative.

Showing that you care and are active can boost your Google ranking and attract more customers.



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

3. Do Keyword Research



Identify key search terms that will lead to your farm's profile

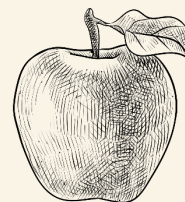
- Start by listing terms related to your farm and business to guide your content and improve search visibility.
- Dedicate 1-2 keywords per website page.
- Map your keywords to the most important pages in your website:
 - Home page
 - About page (include your mission statement)
 - Contact page
 - Blog where you can post articles or news about your business and the products or services you offer (optional)
 - Gallery of images (optional)



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

4. Optimize On-Page Elements

To improve your farm's SEO, focus on optimizing on-page elements like titles, meta descriptions, and headers.



Titles

Also known as title tags, crucial for search results



Meta Descriptions

Brief summaries that appear below the title in search results



Headers

Used to organize content and make navigating the site easier



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Titles

Also known as title tags, these are crucial for search results. Titles are often the first thing users see, so make them engaging and relevant to encourage clicks.



CCOF.org

<https://www.ccof.org> › About Us

Our History



As one of the first organic **certification** agencies, CCOF (**California Certified Organic Farmers**) has strong roots in the history of the organic movement.

- **55 to 60 characters long** to ensure they display fully in search results.
- **Incorporate target keywords** to improve relevance and visibility. Organic or certified organic are good keywords to include.
- **Clear and accurate**, describing what users can expect on the page.
- **Compelling** to encourage clicks and attract visitors.
- **Thoughtfully include your company name or brand** for recognition.
- **Keep it simple** to ensure easy readability and effectiveness.



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Meta Descriptions

These brief summaries appear below the title in search results and provide an opportunity to entice users to visit your site by highlighting what's unique about your farm.



CCOF.org

<https://www.ccof.org> › About Us

Our History

As one of the first organic **certification** agencies, CCOF (**California Certified Organic Farmers**) has strong roots in the history of the organic movement. ←

- **One or two sentences long**, between 140 and 160 characters.
- **Include one or two keywords** relevant to your content.
- **Add a call to action if it fits**, to encourage users to take the next step.
- **Meaningful and descriptive**, clearly summarizing your page's content.
- **Emotionally engaging** to attract and resonate with potential customers.



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Headers

Use headers and subheaders to organize your content clearly, making it easier for both search engines and visitors to navigate your site. Headers are numbered in order of importance starting with H1 for main titles and H2-H6 for subheadings beneath H1.

H1: Page Title

H2: Main Section Titles

H3: Subsection Titles

H4: Further Subsection Titles

H5: Very deep content structure Titles

H6: Very deep content structure Titles

P: Paragraph

- **Use an H1 tag** for the main headers or title of each page.
- **Include keywords naturally** in your headers.
- **Use H2 through H6 tags** to break up your content and create a clear structure.
- **Write for your target audience**, making headers easy to understand.
- **Use headers to summarize** the content in each section.

By optimizing these elements, you help ensure that your farm's website attracts more visitors and effectively communicates what you offer.



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

5. Develop Digital Content to Engage Your Customers

Creating content is a powerful way to attract more visitors to your website and convert them into customers.

By developing useful and engaging content, you can help potential customers find you online and stay top of mind when they're ready to make a purchase.

To be effective, your content should reflect what your target audience is searching for, which is where keyword research comes in. Use the keywords you've identified to craft content that addresses their needs and interests. This will help your website rank higher in search results and connect with the right people.



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

5. Develop Digital Content to Engage Your Customers

Leverage your unique farming experience to produce high-quality, informative content that appeals to your audience.

Use keywords and clear headers to structure your content, and enhance it with images and videos. Share your content on social media to drive more traffic to your site. Quality content not only attracts visitors but keeps them coming back



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

6. Build Relevant Online Listings and Links to Your Website

Backlinks, or links from other websites to yours, are crucial for improving your Google ranking. They act as endorsements, signaling that your site is a valuable resource.

To boost your rankings, focus on gaining quality backlinks. While building these can be challenging, a straightforward approach is to submit your business to relevant online directories like the CCOF Member Directory:

<https://www.ccof.org/resources/member-directory/>

Or LocalHarvest.org

<https://www.localharvest.org/members/register.jsp>



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

6. Build Relevant Online Listings and Links to Your Website

To maximize visibility and ensure quality links are pointing to your website, be sure to also list your business on:

- Google Business Profile
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Bing Places for Business
- Yelp for Business
- Apple Maps

These listings not only boost your SEO but also drive direct traffic to your website. Make sure your business name, address, and phone number are accurate and consistent across all directories.

Reach out to your suppliers and business associations and ask them to link to your website. If you use their products, they might add your site to their “where to buy” or “stockists” pages. You can also request a link in their testimonials or business partner sections. Getting these industry-related links can boost your website's visibility and SEO.



Six Steps to Effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The CCOF Member Directory: A Way to Connect with Institutional Buyers

CCOF is redesigning its online directory to make it easy for farm to school or farm to institution buyers to find organic growers.

Buyers will be looking for specific products in specific regions

Keep your CCOF Member Directory listing complete and up-to-date to make it easy for buyers to know what you have to offer and for them to find you

<https://www.ccof.org/resources/member-directory/>



Resolving Technical SEO Issues

Technical SEO issues can impact your rankings and visibility on search engines.

This may include:

- Pages that Google can't find.
- Broken links
- Slow site speed
- Sitemap errors
- Duplicate content
- Web security issues
- Schema implementation errors

These issues can be challenging to identify and fix, especially for small businesses with limited resources. Tools like [Semrush's Site Audit](#) tool can help. Just enter your website domain and click "Start Audit" to begin evaluating your website's health and uncovering potential issues.

A **sitemap** is a file that lists the pages, videos, and other files on a website, and the relationships between them. Sitemaps are used to help search engines understand a website and locate specific pages, and to help users navigate the site.

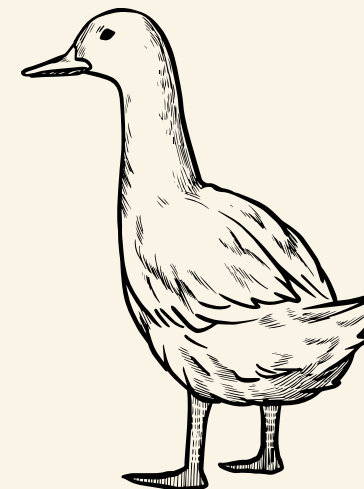
A **website schema** is a set of tags or code that helps search engines understand a website's content and display more relevant results to users. It's also known as structured data, microdata, or rich snippets.



Targeting your Customers with Paid Google Ads

Google Ads can help your farm reach more customers and increase sales.

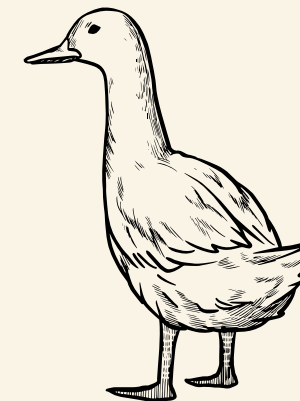
Here's a quick guide to how it works and its benefits:



What Are Google Ads? Google Ads is a pay-per-click advertising tool that places your farm's website at the top of Google search results. You only pay when someone clicks on your ad. Ads are shown based on **Keywords, Ad content, Device type, Time and location.**

These ads are labeled with black text that says "Sponsored" next to the web page address, blending with non-sponsored search results but clearly marked as paid placements.

Getting Started with Google Paid Ads: Tips for Farmers



1. Create an Account

Set up your Google Ads account with an email address and your farm's website.

2. Start a Campaign

Create separate campaigns for different products or services. Plan each campaign to maximize effectiveness.

3. Set Your Budget

Decide on your overall budget and how much to spend per campaign.

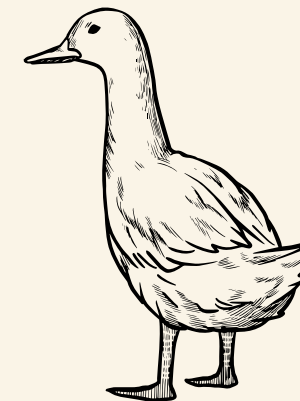
4. Identify Your Goals

Choose goals like lead generation, brand awareness, or sales to guide your campaign.

5. Use Effective Keywords

Research and select keywords relevant to your farm's products or services.

Tips for a Successful Paid Ad Campaign



Write strong Ad Copy: Craft engaging text since Google Ads only use text, not images.

Know Your Market: Tailor your keywords and ad copy to your target audience.

Optimize for Mobile: Consider mobile-only campaigns if many customers visit from mobile devices.

Use Remarketing: Target previous website visitors to improve conversions or actions you want consumers to take like sales or email sign up.

Link to Relevant Pages: Ensure your ad's language matches the landing page to boost conversion or sales.

Include Negative Keywords: Add words that shouldn't trigger your ads to improve targeting.

Complete All Fields: Fill in all details and use extensions to enhance ad visibility. Paid ad extensions, also known as ad assets, are additional information that can be added to Google search ads to help improve their performance. Ad extensions can include information like pricing, product highlights, and customer reviews.

Adjust Regularly: Review metrics and make adjustments to improve campaign performance over time.

Consider Professional Help: Hiring a digital marketing or advertising manager can help manage and optimize your Google Ads campaigns efficiently.



Email Marketing

Email marketing lets you connect with your customers on a personal level.

- Email marketing is a powerful way to promote your farm's products and services directly to your customers.
- You can send personalized messages, updates, and promotions to build relationships and guide customers through their buying journey.
- Email marketing is cost-effective and helps you connect with customers, keep them informed, and drive sales.
- While engaging your audience and building relationships through emails can be a challenge, it offers a powerful way to strengthen customer ties and keep them informed about your farm.



Email Marketing

Choosing the Right Email Marketing Tool

When choosing an email marketing tool for your farm business, consider these key aspects:

Features

Look for tools offering features like email segmentation to send different messages to different sets of customers, automation, and analytics that tell you how many people have read your email, which links they've clicked on, etc. Some tools also provide personalization and mobile-friendly designs.

Pricing

Compare free plans with paid options, which might charge based on the number of emails sent or the size of your email list.

All-in-One Tools

Some platforms combine email marketing with other features like Customer Relationship Management, which is a business strategy and software system that helps companies manage their interactions with customers.



Email Marketing

Recommended Tools

Mailchimp

Offers a free plan for up to 2,000 subscribers and includes features like automation, segmentation, and additional tools for websites and social ads.

Brevo

Provides comprehensive marketing and sales features, including email, SMS (text messages between mobile devices), and WhatsApp campaigns. It starts at \$25 per month for up to 20,000 emails, with a free trial available.

Hubspot

Known for its robust free plan, it offers excellent segmentation and is highly recommended for email marketing.

Email Marketing Quick Start Guide

- 1. Audiences:** Divide your email list into targeted groups based on interests or purchase history to send tailored messages and increase engagement. This is called "segmentation."
- 2. Timing Matters:** Send emails when your subscribers are most active, based on their behavior and time zones, to boost open rates and interaction.
- 3. Craft Compelling Subject Lines:** Use engaging subject lines to grab attention. Make them interesting and relevant to encourage opens.
- 4. Use Alt Text for Images:** Include descriptive text for images so recipients can understand your message even if images don't load.
- 5. Clear Call to Action:** Make your Call to Action prominent and action-oriented, guiding recipients on what to do next, like "Shop Now" or "Learn More."
- 6. Automate Campaigns:** Use automation to send emails based on user actions or schedules, saving time and ensuring timely communication.
- 7. Add Social Sharing Buttons:** Include buttons for sharing your emails on social media to extend your reach and build credibility.
- 8. Optimize for Mobile:** Ensure your emails look good on mobile devices by using responsive design, concise content, and easy-to-click buttons.
- 9. Signatures:** Make sure your signature outlines who the email is from (your business), has your contact info, and includes your logo if you have one - see our toolkit email signature template.

Social Media

Social media marketing involves using social media platforms to promote your farm's products and services, enhance your brand, and connect with customers.

It's a great way to boost sales, attract visitors to your website, and grow a loyal community of followers.



Why Social Media Matters for Small Farms

- 1. Reach New Customers:** Social media helps introduce your farm to potential customers by showcasing your products and values. It's an accessible way for people to discover and connect with your farm.
- 2. Engage Directly:** Use social media to interact with your customers through likes, comments, and messages. This direct communication helps build relationships and trust.
- 3. Stay on Trend:** Social media is a great place to spot and adapt to trends, including those related to sustainability and local food movements. Keeping up with trends can keep your farm relevant and appealing.
- 4. Monitor Competitors:** See what other farms and businesses are doing on social media. This can provide insights and inspiration to enhance your own strategy.
- 5. Cost-Effective Marketing:** Social media is a free platform to promote your farm. While you can invest in tools and ads, it's still a budget-friendly way to attract new customers and drive traffic to your website.

For more tips on how to make the most of social media for your farm, check out these resources:

<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/>

How to Set Up Social Media Profiles for Your Farm

- 1. Create Your Account:** Decide whether to use your personal social media accounts for your farm or create new business profiles. For platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn, set up a separate “Page” for your farm. On Instagram and Twitter, you can add a business account to your personal profile for easier management. Check resources for specific setup instructions.
- 2. Choose Your Photos:** Select a clear, eye-catching profile photo—such as your farm's logo or a representative image. Also, create a banner image for platforms like Facebook and Twitter to make your profile stand out. Tools like Canva can help you design professional-looking images easily.
- 3. Write a Compelling Introduction:** Craft a brief and engaging introduction for each platform. Prepare different lengths of your bio—short, medium, and long—to fit various character limits and showcase your farm's unique qualities.
- 4. Create and Schedule Posts:** Tailor your content to each platform's style and requirements. For example, use Instagram for images and videos, and Facebook for links and updates. Use scheduling tools to plan and automate your posts, saving you time and ensuring consistent engagement.

Steps to Use Social Media for Your Farm

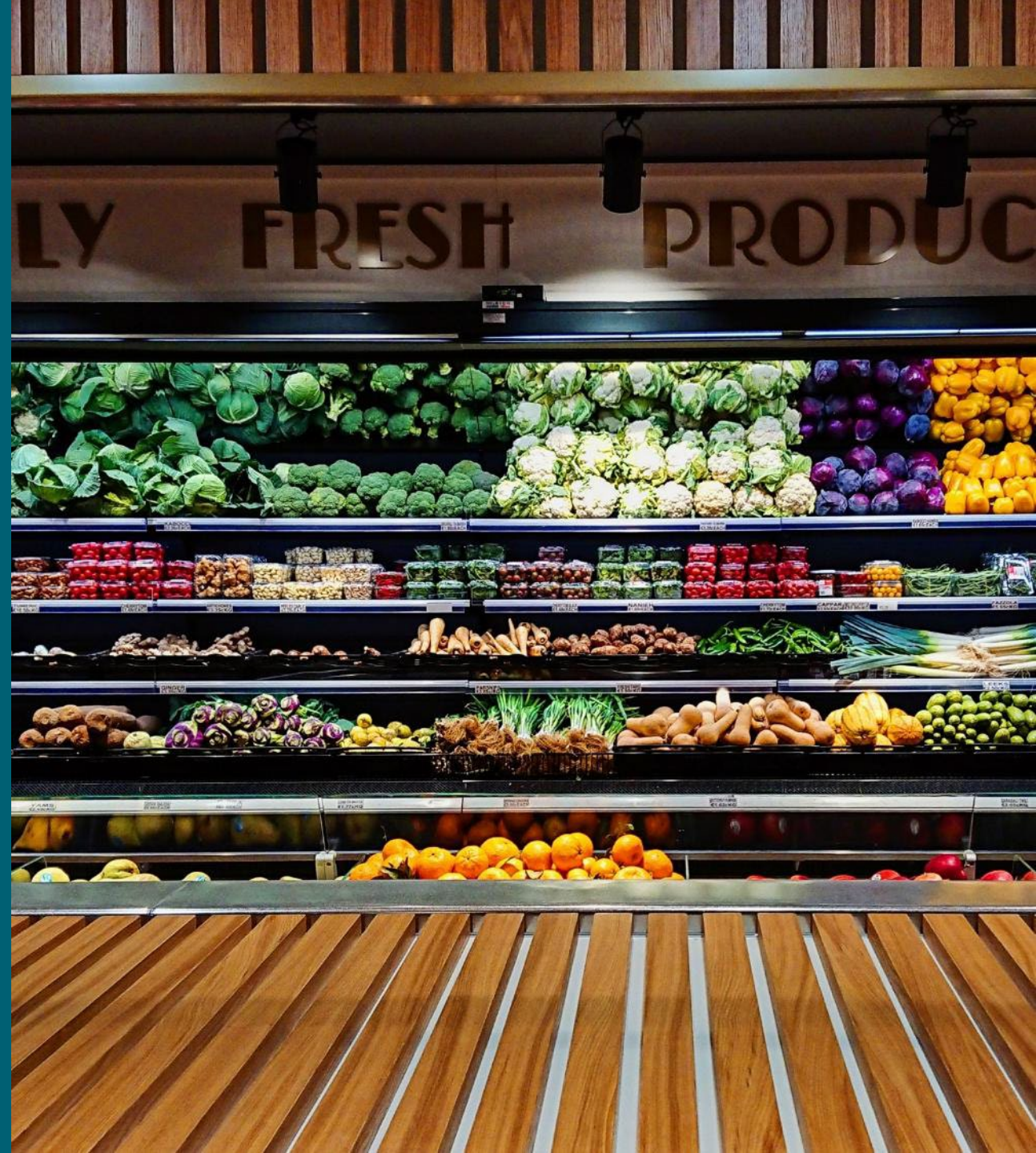
- 1. Set Clear Goals:** Define what you want to achieve with social media. Whether it's increasing brand awareness, boosting sales, or growing your follower count, having clear goals will guide your content strategy.
- 2. Know Your Audience:** Focus on reaching people who are genuinely interested in your farm.
- 3. Pick the Right Platforms:** Choose social media platforms where your target audience is active. For example, Instagram and Facebook are great for visual content like images and videos, while Pinterest can be effective for sharing farm tips and recipes.
- 4. Create unique content and consider partnering with other creators and brands.** While not essential, getting support from influential people and companies can greatly benefit your farm's visibility and reputation.
- 5. Pay close attention to feedback and comments on your posts.** Respond to comments and messages to engage with your audience. Use their input to guide your future content.





Reach Your Audience:

Wholesale and B2B Sales Channels



Wholesale and B2B

Wholesale and B2B Sales Channels

Wholesale channels usually involve selling large quantities of produce quickly, often at lower prices compared to direct sales.

These channels include selling directly to

- restaurants
- retailers (without a broker or distributor)
- distributors
- produce auctions
- produce brokers

Note that selling and marketing to processors and produce brokers is not covered in this guide.

Wholesale Buyers May Require:

- GAPs certification
- Vendor permits
- Liability Insurance
- Refrigerated trucks
- Promotional Products



Wholesale and Business to Business (B2B)



The best sales channels for a farming operation depend on factors like the size of the farm, the operator's experience, the local demographics, and the Farmers preferences.

For example, a new farmer might start with direct channels like Farmers Markets. However, as the farm grows, they might shift to selling larger quantities to high-volume buyers, depending on their business model and crop production. Business to Business sales and marketing is different from direct to consumers and it's crucial to understand how much you need to produce and the typical prices you can expect to receive in order to evaluate how profitable a B2B sales channel might be.



Wholesale and B2B

For highly perishable crops, it's essential to have a sales channel that can handle and process the harvest quickly.

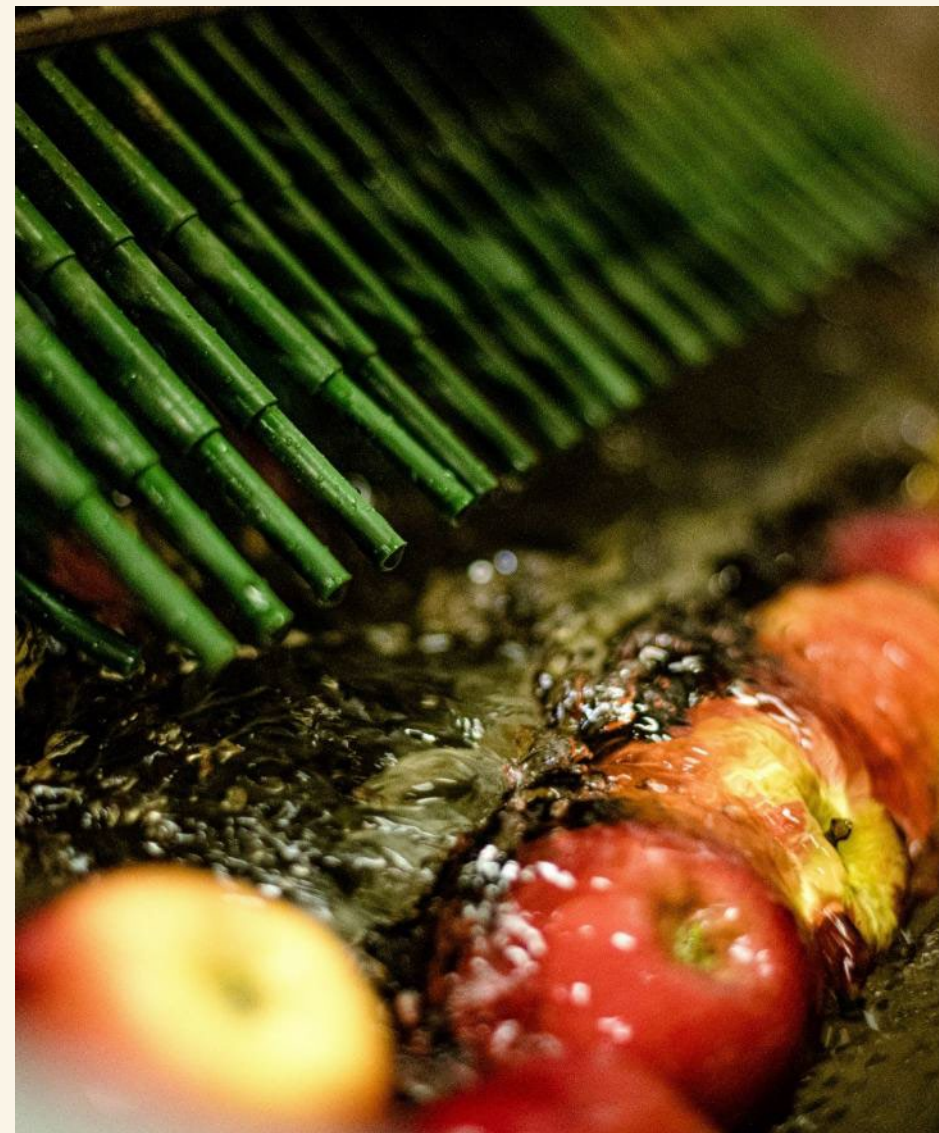
Wholesale distributors and retailers are good options because they often buy in large quantities at once. It is important to establish a relationship with such buyers through your messaging and marketing outreach in order to build trust and negotiate pricing.



Wholesale and B2B

Wholesale channels generally have fewer types of costs, but these costs can be quite high.

Expect to cover expenses such as fuel for delivery, refrigerated equipment, food safety training and certifications, packaging, and equipment for washing and sorting.



Wholesale and B2B

Wholesale and B2B channels can sometimes be stressful because they demand more preparation, such as washing, grading, packing, and delivering, as well as strict product specifications and volume commitments.

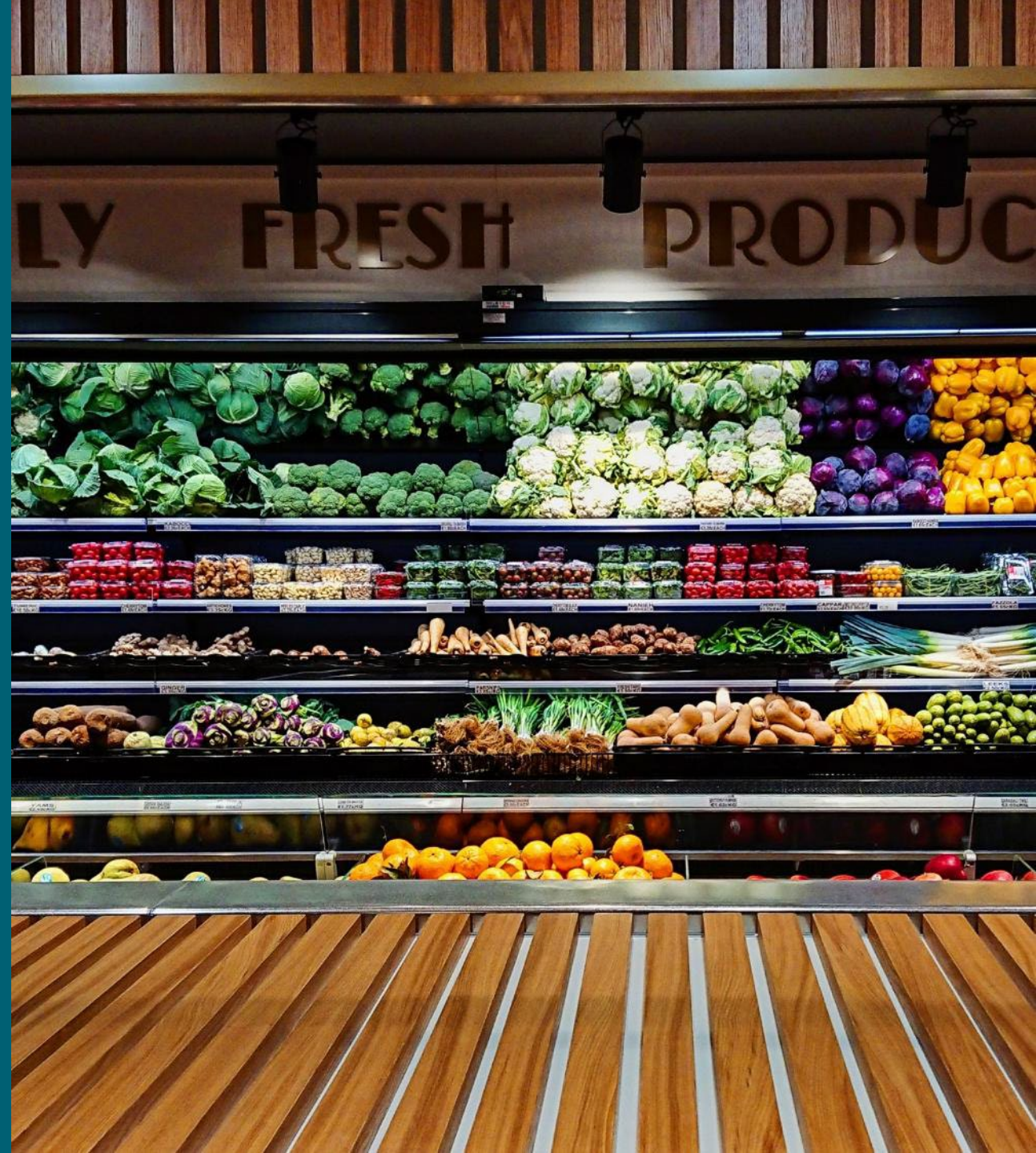
Distributors can also be quite demanding, setting prices, deadlines, and delivery requirements that producers must adhere to. Take these factors into consideration as you tailor your messaging and marketing efforts.





Reach Your Audience:

Wholesale and B2B Marketing Channels



Wholesale and B2B

Wholesale and B2B Marketing Channels

Wholesale channels usually involve selling large quantities of produce quickly, often at lower prices compared to direct sales.

These channels include selling directly to

- restaurants
- retailers (without a broker or distributor)
- distributors, including food hubs
- produce auctions
- produce brokers

Note that selling and marketing to processors and produce brokers is not covered in this guide.

Wholesale Buyers May Require:

- Food safety certification
- Vendor permits
- Liability Insurance
- Refrigerated trucks
- Promotional Products



Wholesale and B2B

Business-Specific Messaging

Your messaging needs to be targeted at businesses, which is different than consumers.



- Make sure you are using words and phrases that resonate with a business like “quality”, “consistency”, and “competitive prices”
- Leverage your mission statement
- Look at the websites of specific businesses you are targeting and notice the language they use
- Use similar wording that will make the most impact to them when describing your operation, products, and services.



Wholesale and B2B

Messaging: Quality and Results

For farmers looking to succeed in B2B sales, it's crucial to focus on product messaging that highlights both features and benefits while showing clear results.

- Keep your message clear and relevant
- Provide straightforward and specific product information
- This helps distributors and retailers by making your product more appealing and easier to use.



Wholesale and B2B

Messaging: Differentiate Your Products

Although it might be unusual to include product photos on packaging or in-store displays, in the agribusiness sector, showing real results can make a big difference.

Show a clear progression of your product—from your farm, to being sold, to being eaten by consumers. This helps buyers see exactly how the product can benefit their operations.



Wholesale and B2B

Messaging: Demonstrate Value

Marketing a product in a crowded market can be challenging because buyers will quickly demand proof of its effectiveness and value.

In agribusiness, buyers are focused on their bottom line. Even if your product costs more than what they're used to, they'll be willing to invest if it keeps its promises. If you can demonstrate real results, they're likely to come back for more.



Selling Into Food Hubs

Food hubs aggregate and sell produce to large buyers including wholesale and retail outlets and institutional buyers

- The state of California will invest \$14 million to create food hubs in 2025
- Learn more about connecting with food hubs through the California Food Hub Network:

<https://sarep.ucdavis.edu/research/foodsystems/foodhubs>



Wholesale and B2B

Food Hub Case Study: FEED Cooperative

F.E.E.D. is a cooperative network of small- to medium-sized farms in the North Bay region that offers regionally grown produce to consumers and wholesale buyers.

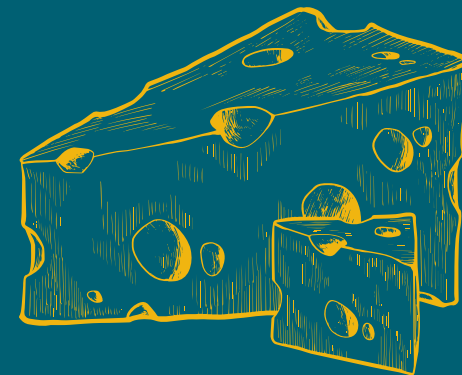
- Classic story of starting in someone's garage. In 2012 the first main warehouse location was founded.
- FEED didn't have separate retail or veggie box program prior to COVID to not step on toes of CSA farmers. But a lot of wholesale customers evaporated overnight, had to launch veggie box program.
- Hear more about the FEED Cooperative in this video
<https://youtu.be/MLwjOQFgoRU?si=KdXdTzIChKRPClPA&t=376>



Wholesale and B2B

Connecting with Buyers

Pricing Basics



Your Total Cost = Fixed Costs + Variable Costs

- Fixed Costs: Stay the Same Regardless of Amount of Production. Examples: salaried employees, rent, insurance, utilities, licenses and advertising
- Variable Costs: Fluctuate with level of production. Examples: seasonal help, seed, fertilizer, pesticides, distribution and feed

- Production: Estimate how much you will produce

Cost per unit =

(fixed costs + variable costs)/production

Production Variable Cost =

variable costs/production

Breakeven Point =

(fixed costs/price) – production variable cost

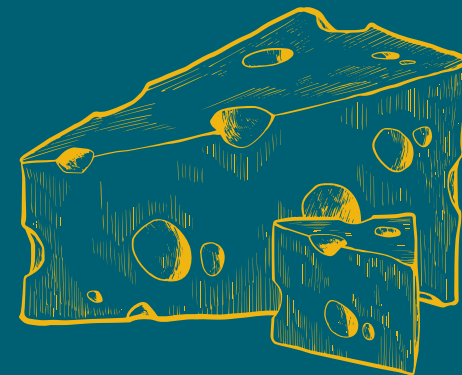


Wholesale and B2B

Connecting with Buyers

Pricing Resources

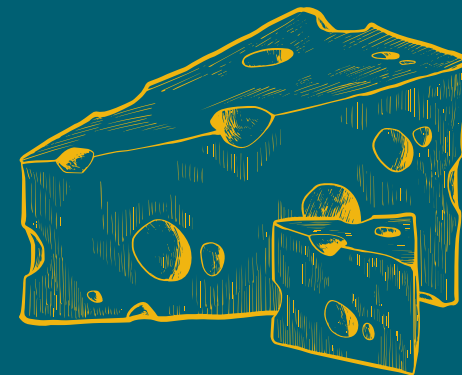
- 5 Pricing Strategies for Farmers
<https://www.farmanddairy.com/top-stories/5-price-strategies-for-farmers/499684.html>
- How to Price Farm Products
<https://www.farmanddairy.com/top-stories/how-to-price-farm-products/497201.html>
- How to Price Your Farm Products for Wholesale
<https://www.localline.co/blog/how-to-price-your-farm-products-for-wholesale>
- The Art of Negotiating for Your Farm Business
<https://farms.extension.wisc.edu/articles/the-art-of-negotiating-for-your-farm-business/>
- Farmers Market Pricing Strategies for Vendors
<https://attra.ncat.org/farmers-market-pricing-strategies-for-vendors/>
- UC Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics
<https://giannini.ucop.edu/resources/>
- Organic Cost and Return Studies in California
<https://coststudies.ucdavis.edu/organics>



Wholesale and B2B

Connecting with Buyers

Determine Pricing and Payment Terms



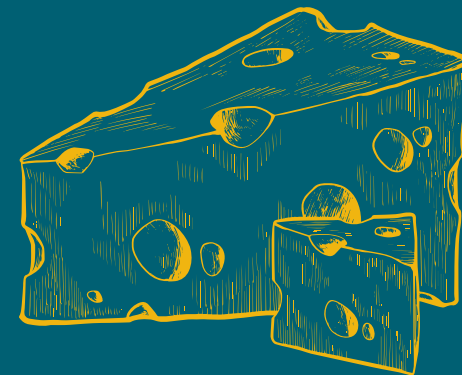
- Consider setting a stable price throughout the season to avoid fluctuations.
- Take into account your production and marketing expenses, including delivery costs and mileage, when setting your prices.
- Clearly outline pricing and payment terms upfront and discuss the billing schedule.
- If the proposed payment terms are not suitable, negotiate potential adjustments.



Wholesale and B2B

Connecting with Buyers

Initiate Contact and Schedule a Meeting



- Start by making a phone call to inquire about the appropriate contact person for purchasing produce from your farm.
- Ensure that you speak directly with the decision-maker when negotiating sales.
- Once you've identified the right person, provide a brief overview of your farm that incorporates your Mission Statement and the products you offer, and request a meeting to discuss your offerings in person.
- When you attend the meeting, bring samples of your produce and any relevant marketing collateral for your operation and product.
- If communicating via email, make sure you have a link to your website and your logo in your signature.

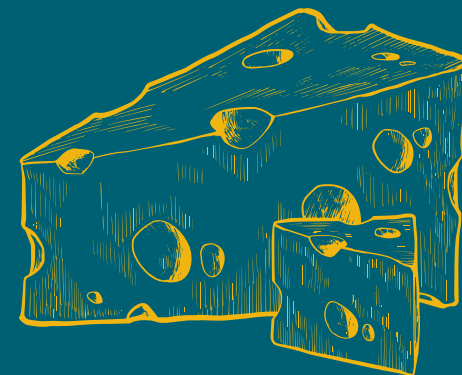


Wholesale and B2B

Connecting with Buyers

Clarify Expectations About

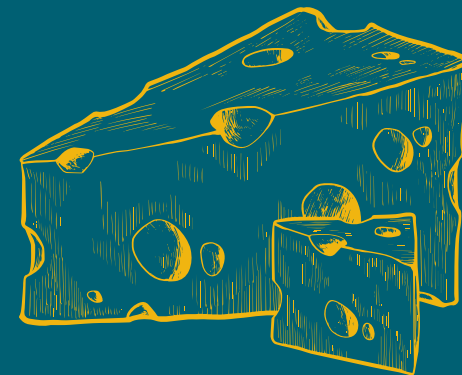
- Delivery schedules
- Ordering procedures
- Billing and payment terms
- Product quality
- Sizes
- Quantities
- Which products they are interested in
- Their desired specifications
- Preferred packaging
- Whether they need refrigerated transport for deliveries
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) certification
- Liability insurance
- Vendor permits
- Your Organic Certification credentials
- Complimentary promotional items



Wholesale and B2B

Connecting with Buyers

Set Up Schedules



Discuss with buyers their preferred methods and times for placing orders and receiving deliveries. Establish a regular order schedule and specify deadlines for order placements to allow time for harvesting and packaging as needed. Confirm exact delivery locations and adhere strictly to their instructions. Ensure you provide advance notice for special orders and maintain punctuality in your deliveries.

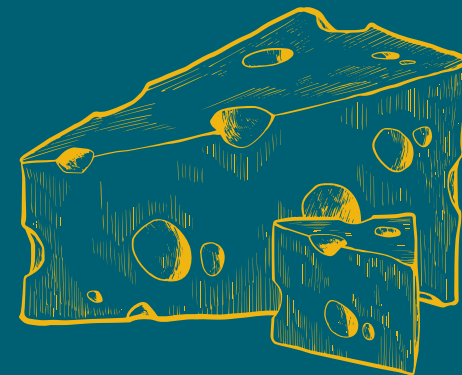


Wholesale and B2B

Connecting with Buyers

Collaborate on Promotion

- Assist your buyers in promoting the organic quality of your products reflected in your mission statement.
- Offer to provide branded farm brochures or other collateral for them to share with their customers.
- Ask them to include a link to your website or share your social media content with their consumer audiences.
- Propose to make in-store or restaurant appearances (or even consider a virtual event if they have a large online following) and offer to educate their sales team or staff about your products.
- Consider giving them a tour of your farm to showcase the freshness of your produce and illustrate how it is grown or produced.



Wholesale and B2B

Maintain Good Communication

Like most of us, Wholesale buyers don't like surprises.

They rely on receiving high-quality produce, complete orders, and timely deliveries. If you can't meet these expectations, giving advance notice in a professional way is crucial. B2B buyers prefer clear communication about the quality and quantity of your produce over simply maintaining a steady supply. Keeping them informed about your crop status allows them to plan for any shortages, failures, or quality issues. Effective advance communication can help you keep a wholesale account and maintain a strong business relationship.



Wholesale and B2B

Exporting

Exporting your products to distributors and retailers in other countries is a great way to expand your market and sales and increase the visibility of your operation's brand.

Use the USDA website to explore options and resources for exporting goods.

<https://www.usda.gov/topics/trade/exporting-goods>

Contact your certifier to learn about international equivalency and other marketing agreements.

<https://www.ccof.org/organic-certification-services/international-programs/export-certificates/>



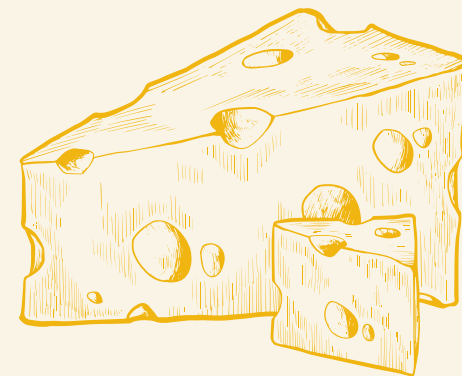
Wholesale and B2B

Packaging

Wholesale customers typically expect standardized packaging sizes to help them manage their inventories and compare prices.

- Research what packaging guidelines your buyers require by reviewing their guidelines on their website or by speaking to them directly.
- Ensure you are following USDA organic labeling guidelines and that your certifier has approved all labels.
- Carefully evaluate the costs of your packaging and account for this in the selling price and business costs.
- Often producers use cardboard boxes labeled with a sticker or printed branding/logo on them.
- In addition to boxes, you also may need to use other marketing supplies like
 - quart and pint containers,
 - plastic bags,
 - twist ties,
 - rubber bands





Review this guide's
Packaging Dos and Don'ts
but remember, this is always dependent
on the guidelines of who you are selling
to.

Packaging Dos and Don'ts: p. 60-61



Wholesale and B2B

B2B Marketing Channels

Almost as important as direct communication to businesses and wholesalers is having a digital presence where they can find YOU!

It is important for you to market yourself online and at industry events whenever possible to expand your operations visibility and show other how great your products are and to build credibility within the agriculture industry.

Refer to the section in this document titled [Marketing Channels](#) (p. 63) for more information.



Wholesale and B2B

Digital Channels: Website

A website is essential for B2B sales because it's the main place where potential customers can discover your farm, what you offer, and how you can help them.

It helps build trust and credibility while making information available around the clock. This is important for strengthening your brand and attracting serious leads. In other words, your website works like a 24/7 sales representative, helping you connect with a larger audience and engage with them whenever they're ready.

Make sure your contact information (and preferred way of contacting you – don't have an email address you never check or a phone number that does not work) is available on every page of your website in the Footer: the area at the bottom of a web page that offers key information to users.



Wholesale and B2B

Digital Channels: Social Media

The same type of information you prepare for your in-person meetings and calls with wholesale buyers and restaurants should be available on your website and on Social Media.

- Show your products in stores or being loaded onto pallets or into a refrigerated container.
- Include reviews from businesses who buy from you on the quality or reliability of your products or services.
- Highlight your operation's and products' features and benefits, differentiate your products from competitors, and demonstrate value to wholesale buyers through all of your website's text, image, and video content.
- Follow brands on Social Media channels that you want to sell to and monitor the type of content they post – this can be insightful to understand what they are looking for in a producer and who they are selling to whether at a restaurant or in a retail store.



Wholesale and B2B

Digital Channels: Business Listings

Business listings are important for farms because they help promote and advertise your farm, making it easier for potential customers to find you. They give potential customers the key details they need to learn about, reach out to, and find your farm.

Important Directories to be listed in include:

- CCOF Directory: [Directory - CCOF.org](https://ccof.org/directory/)
- USDA Local Food Directories <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/food-directories>
- CAFF's California Farm Directory <https://caff.org/directory/>



Wholesale and B2B

Trade Shows and Industry Events

Trade shows and industry events are incredibly useful for B2B marketing because they offer great opportunities for market research, finding new leads, and boosting your farm's visibility.

Meeting people face-to-face at these events can provide instant feedback and open up chances for deals, showing just how important personal connections are for making the most of trade shows.



Wholesale and B2B

Trade Shows and Industry Events

Trade shows and industry event passes can be very expensive so be strategic about where and how you decide to attend.

If you have the budget for a booth or as a sponsor, research who is in attendance first and determine what kind of leads and how many would justify the cost. Often, just buying a pass for the day and starting conversations with people can turn into lucrative relationships and

leads. Always remember to include your mission statement when describing your farm or operation and be prepared to answer questions relating to your farm's and products' features and benefits, differentiating your products or services, and demonstrating value.



Wholesale and B2B

Trade Show and Industry Events Marketing Material

Trade show and industry event materials are important because they help showcase your farm's brand, products, and services. They can also attract new customers and boost your farm's credibility. Make sure all of your business marketing materials incorporates your mission statement and brand into its design, has your contact information and website url listed, and looks professional.

Examples of trade show marketing materials include:

- Business Cards
- Pamphlets and one-pagers about your farm and/or products
- Product and Price Charts
- Cheap giveaways with your operation's name and contact info like pens or magnets



Additional Resources

[Organic Marketing 101 \(pdf\) \(ccof.org\)](#)

[Marketing Resources for Farmers](#)

[Organic Opportunity Communications Toolkit](#)

[USDA Organic Retailer Toolkit \(pdf\)](#)

[Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a](#)

[Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses](#)

[Growing Opportunity](#)

[The Role of Food Hubs in Local Food Marketing \(pdf\)](#)

[Tools for Small and Midsized Livestock and Poultry \(pdf\)](#)

[The Role of Cooperatives in Local Food Systems](#)

[Development](#)

[Local Harvest](#)

[How to Direct Market Your Beef](#)

[Courses & Trainings – Cornell Small Farms](#)

[Resources – Cornell Small Farms](#)

[How to Start a Farm: Beginning Farmers and Ranchers](#)

[Farm Marketing Resources](#)

[Scaling up your Vegetable Farm for Wholesale Markets](#)

[Transformation: Buyer Engagement \(pdf\)](#)

[Wholesale Readiness Training](#)

[Having Multiple Distribution Channels to Reach Customers
\(Youtube Video\)](#)

[7 SEO tips for Agricultural Businesses](#)

[HubSpot Academy Marketing and Training Library](#)

[Selling Real Farm Products in a Virtual Marketplace](#)

[Good Roots, formerly known as Kitchen Table Advisors](#)

[CAFF Farm to Market Program](#)

[Farming 101](#)

[Rutgers Farm Management \(pdf\)](#)



Additional Resources (URLs)

https://www.ccof.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/2021-05/Organic%20Marketing%20101_0.pdf

<https://caff.org/farm-to-market/marketing-resources/>

<https://ota.com/communications-toolkit-download>

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOPRetailerToolkit.pdf>

<https://www.sare.org/resources/building-a-sustainable-business/>

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdafiles/Outreach/pdfs/Publications/FSA-Guide%20FINAL%20as%20of%20Dec%202016%20digital%20only.pdf>

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/sr73.pdf>

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/livestockpoultrytool.pdf>

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=USDA+youtube+local+food+and+cooperatives&view=detail&mid=B72D2605E133AE64F2B3B72D2605E133AE64F2B3&FORM=VIRE>

<https://www.localharvest.org/>

<https://www.sare.org/resources/how-to-direct-market-your-beef/>

<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/online-courses/>

<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/resources/>

<https://www.farmers.gov/your-business/beginning-farmers>

<https://www.beginningfarmers.org/marketing-resources/>

<https://www.sare.org/resources/scaling-up-your-vegetable-farm-for-wholesale-markets/>

<https://file-cdn.mercyforanimals.org/mercy4animals.wpengine.com/sites/450/2023/11/Transformation-Buyer-Engagement.pdf>

<https://misa.umn.edu/farm-food-resources/wholesale-readiness-training#:~:text=Wholesale%20Readiness%20Training%20is%20offered,the%20Minnesota%20Department%20of%20Agriculture>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOaT-SkYdLo>

<https://www.agtivation.com/7-seo-tips-for-agricultural-businesses>

<https://academy.hubspot.com/courses?q=marketing%20training&library=true&page=1>

<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/2019/07/selling-real-farm-products-in-a-virtual-marketplace/>

<https://growgoodroots.com/resources/>

<https://caff.org/farm-to-market/>

<https://www.farmanddairy.com/category/farming-101>

<https://sites.rutgers.edu/farm-management/wp-content/uploads/sites/752/2022/09/tomarket.pdf>





Glossary



Glossary of Terms

Certified Organic Products

Certified Organic: Products that have been produced and processed according to strict organic standards, verified by a third-party certification body.

Organic Standards: Regulations outlining the practices allowed in organic production and processing, including restrictions on synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, and genetically modified organisms.

Certification Body: An independent organization accredited to verify that producers and processors comply with organic standards.

Organic Label: A label indicating that a product has been certified organic, often featuring the logo of the certification body.

Transitional Organic: Products from farms or businesses in the process of converting to organic production, but not yet fully certified.

Organic Integrity: Maintaining the purity and authenticity of organic products throughout the supply chain.

Traceability: The ability to track the movement of organic products from farm to consumer, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Organic Farming: An agricultural system that promotes ecological balance, biodiversity, and soil health through practices such as crop rotation, composting, and natural pest control.

Organic Processing: Handling and transforming organic raw materials into finished products without the use of synthetic additives or processing aids.

Organic Ingredients: Raw materials used in organic products that have been certified organic themselves.

Glossary of Terms

Consumers

Organic Consumer: An individual who purchases and consumes certified organic products.

Health Consciousness: A concern for personal well-being and a desire to make healthy food choices.

Environmental Awareness: A recognition of the impact of food production on the environment and a preference for sustainable practices.

Ethical Consumption: Choosing products that align with personal values, such as animal welfare and fair trade.

Premium Pricing: The higher price often associated with organic products compared to conventional alternatives.

Label Reading: Carefully examining product labels to identify certified organic products and understand their ingredients.

Organic Market: The segment of the food market dedicated to the sale of certified organic products.

Consumer Demand: The level of interest and willingness to purchase organic products among consumers.

Consumer Education: Informing and empowering consumers to make informed choices about organic products.

Organic Lifestyle: A commitment to incorporating organic products into various aspects of one's life, beyond just food.

Glossary of Terms

Wholesale

Organic Wholesaler: A business that buys organic products in bulk from producers and sells them to retailers or other businesses.

Distributor: An intermediary that facilitates the movement of organic products from wholesalers to retailers or end-users.

Supply Chain: The network of organizations involved in the production, processing, distribution, and sale of organic products.

Logistics: The management of the flow of goods and information within the organic supply chain.

Inventory Management: Controlling the storage and movement of organic products to ensure availability

and minimize waste.

Bulk Purchasing: Buying large quantities of organic products at a discounted price.

Wholesale Pricing: The price charged by wholesalers to retailers, typically lower than the retail price.

Minimum Order Quantity: The smallest amount of product that a wholesaler will sell to a retailer.

Product Sourcing: Finding reliable suppliers of high-quality organic products.

Market Research: Analyzing trends and consumer demand to identify opportunities for organic product sales.



Thank You!

For any questions reach out at:

CCOFMarketing@ccof.org

