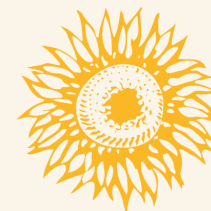




Small Organic Farmer Marketing Toolkit

Supplemental Worksheets



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Worksheet List

- Create Your Mission Statement
- Direct to Consumer Worksheet
- Wholesale/B2B Worksheet
- Farmers Market Packing List
- Organic Talking Points for Sales Employees
- Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- The CCOF Member Directory: A Way to Connect with Institutional Buyers
- Email Marketing



Create Your Mission Statement

Describe what you do or sell – be specific! Include products and services that set you apart from other businesses like yours.

Examples: Heirloom tomatoes, U-pick, specialty produce for restaurants

Describe how you grow, make, or sell your products or services – be specific!

Examples: employ diverse employees and pay living wages, maintain credible certifications, focus on biodiversity and soil health

Describe why you do what you do. What makes your farm unique? Why are you passionate about your work?

Examples: I am committed to growing unique vegetables that aren't usually found in stores; I want to protect the environment through my farming practices



Direct to Consumer Worksheet

Use this checklist if you sell your products through any of the following methods:

- ☐ Farmstands
- ☐ U-Pick
- ☐ Farmers markets
- ☐ Website (individuals can directly purchase products from your website)
- ☐ A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program

Direct to Consumer Sales Points & Tips

- ☐ Physical signage and displays
 - ☐ Clearly display your farm name.
 - ☐ Have business cards, brochures, or other handouts with your business information readily available.
 - ☐ Display certifications, include information about common certifications like organic.
 - ☐ Use chalk boards to highlight unique and/or seasonal items.
 - ☐ Provide signage in languages relevant to your community (e.g. Spanish, Hmong, Chinese).
- ☐ Staff training on messaging & sales
 - ☐ Train your staff on your mission statement and other relevant talking points like what it means to be certified organic. Have them practice "selling" to you or another employee. (See Organic Talking Points for Sales Employees worksheet.)
- ☐ Product samples
 - ☐ Offer samples of in-season or new products. Seek feedback from people who try samples.
 - ☐ Check your market and local regulations on sampling requirements.
- ☐ Social Media
 - ☐ CAFF's Small Farm Tech Hub has various social media resources here: <https://caff.org/tag/socialmedia>
- ☐ Website & web presence
 - ☐ Build website (see worksheet)
 - ☐ Optimize your website in Google and other search engines (see worksheet)
 - ☐ Develop creative content to drive interest to your site like recipes, reflections, farm updates, or gardening tips (advanced).
 - ☐ Integrate social media platforms (advanced).
- ☐ Roadside signage
 - ☐ Check local roadside signage regulations.
 - ☐ Use clear contrast between background and lettering.
 - ☐ Use large signs.
 - ☐ Use fewer than eight words .
 - ☐ Add your farm logo.



Wholesale/B2B Worksheet

Use this checklist if you sell your products through any of the following methods:

- ☐ To a retail store, e.g. independent grocery
- ☐ To a restaurant
- ☐ To a wholesale distributor
- ☐ Produce auctions
- ☐ To a food hub or aggregator

☐ Develop your target audience.

- ☐ Identify the types of business you seek to sell to.
- ☐ Research their company mission statement, values, and priorities.
- ☐ Consider what resonates with a business – for example, consistency and volume are more important factors for business buyers than for an individual shopping for their family.

☐ Develop your messaging.

- ☐ Using the research in step 1, begin crafting messaging using the following tips:
 - Keep your message clear, relevant, and succinct.
 - Use words and phrases your target buyer uses in their own business (examples: fresh, high quality, reliable).
 - Highlight certifications, testimonials, or practices that align with the buyer's values.

☐ Be prepared to meet the buyer logistical needs, such as:

- ☐ GAPs certification
- ☐ Liability insurance
- ☐ Cooler storage
- ☐ Transportation Expectations (e.g. closed vehicle) and consistent delivery schedule

☐ Leverage online presence and website listings. See the *Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist*.

☐ Initiate Contact.

- ☐ 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. (When initially establishing desired products and agreeing on prices, you might be talking to a procurement or purchasing manager. This person may be different from the person who is regularly making the orders, specifying quantities, and managing delivery logistics.)
- ☐ 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.



Wholesale/B2B Worksheet

- Make the Sale.
 - Draft a pitch script that's less than 60 seconds and incorporates your mission statement. Practice this script before reaching out to buyers.
 - Think of any questions the buyer may ask and be prepared with answers.
 - 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.
- Negotiate the deal.
 - Pricing
 - Logistics
 - Schedules
- Stay in communication, ask for feedback.
- Ask for referrals and testimonials.
- For more tips for communicating with wholesale buyers, including a sample price list template, download the Farmer's Guide to Organic Wholesale Pricing here: <https://caff.org/farmers-guide-to-organic-wholesale-pricing/>



Farmers Market Packing List

- ☐ Tables: Opt for sturdy 2.5' x 6' tables that can support your products.
- ☐ Tent: A 10' x 10' 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. In California you must have a copy of your organic certificate at your farmers market stand.
- ☐ 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, and state organic registration document.
- ☐ A Certified Producer's Certificate (CPC) is a requirement for selling at most farmers markets in California.
- ☐ Product: Don't forget the main attraction!
- ☐ Other: (example: samples and sampling utensils)
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Other:



Organic Talking Points for Sales Employees

The Benefits of Certified Organic Food and Farming

Unlike labels like "all natural," Certified Organic producers are regulated by federal law and are not allowed to use sewage sludge, bioengineering (GMOs), ionizing radiation, or most synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.

National organic standards also include regulations for organic processed products, which prohibit the use of artificial preservatives, flavors, and dyes.

Organic is for Health

Studies show that organically grown food has higher amounts of Vitamin C, magnesium, phosphorous, and iron. Organic milk contains far more omega-3 fatty acids than conventional milk.

Certified organic agricultural operations (certified organic farmers) avoid the use of most synthetic pesticides found in conventional agriculture. Chemical pesticides and herbicides have been linked to birth defects, obesity, diabetes, ADHD, and other health problems.

Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that have been given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Synthetic hormones have been linked to premature reproductive development in human females and health problems in livestock.

Each time you choose organic, you are choosing to leave these chemicals off your plate.

Organic is Non-GMO & More

The use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) is prohibited in organic production, and organic production supports a food system that values environmental stewardship, public health, animal welfare, transparent labels, and traceability of products without the use of toxic fertilizers or pesticides.

Organic is Food for Little Fingers

All parents are concerned about the health and wellbeing of their family. Children are more vulnerable to exposure to pesticides and herbicides, their bodies absorb toxins more readily than adults do, and their organs are less efficient at clearing those toxins.

Choosing to feed your family organic food reduces your risk of exposure to pesticides, GMOs, antibiotics, and hormones. Organic dairy, fruits, and vegetables provide more nutrients and vitamins for little bodies to grow strong.

Organic is a Solution to Climate Change

We can use the power of organic farms to build healthy soils that store carbon, reduce levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere, and mitigate climate change. In fact, organic soils can store 14 times more carbon than conventional soils.



Talking Points for Sales Employees

What Your Farm Has To Offer

Company Name: _____

History

Examples of facts to include: Who started your farm? How long have you been in business? [Fill in one or two talking points about the history of your company]

Key products and services

[Fill in your key products and services, attach another sheet if necessary]

What sets your products and services apart

[Fill in your company values, special offerings, etc.]

Mission

[Fill in your mission statement]

How to find out more/where to purchase additional products

[Fill in your company contact information and other point of sales if relevant]



Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist

Technical: Identify website platform (GoDaddy, Wix, Shopify; Local Line or Barn2Door cater specifically to farmers) or hiring a website designer.

Use this worksheet to help you build your website. See also the SEO optimization worksheet.

Website Platform or Designer Comparison – use this chart to compare details of website platform options.

Platform or Designer	Price	Will products be sold on the website?	Payment Gateway to accept credit cards and/or Google Pay, etc.	Customization: How much can you customize the site without technical skills?	Customer Support: Availability of support (24/7, live chat, phone, email)

Use this box to document your final platform choice and key details.

Website Designer:

Website Platform:

Renewal cycle:

Price:



Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist

Design

Choose 2-3 colors. Use an online color wheel for ideas. <https://www.canva.com/colors/color-wheel/>

Choose one easy to read font type

Choose 2-3 font sizes

Use this box to document your design choices

Colors:

Font Type:

Font Sizes:

 *Tip: If you are working with an external designer, provide them with examples of websites and features that you feel align with your brand and goals.*



Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist

Navigation & Content

Identify the key areas you want website visitors to go.

Write 3 -5 sentences for each section or create a bullet point list of items.

Required Sections:

About Us

Products or Services

Store (or "Shop") and/or Where to Find US

Contact Us



Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist

Navigation & Content

Optional:

Testimonials (can also include on the homepage)

Blog

Farming or business practices and certifications (organic, regenerative, Fair Trade, etc.)

Subscribe page for people to sign up for your newsletter (can add to every page)

Land acknowledgements (can include in "about us" section)

Resources and relevant educational materials – like why buy organic.



Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist

Imagery

- *Create a photo storage account to save your photos – AirDrop, Photobucket, Google Photos, etc.*
- *Organize your photos by section of the website for ease of selecting and updating.*
- *Review and save existing photos to your photo collection.*
- *Consider using one filter or standard coloring for consistency when taking your own photos.*
- *Begin taking photos or consider hiring a local photographer to build out your photo portfolio.*
- *Photographers looking to build their portfolio may be interested in a work trade.*

Use this box to identify your preferred photo storage location. Include details on how you want to organize the photos and any guidelines on filters or photographers.

Photo storage location:

Photo keywords to help search your collection:

Smartphone filter:

Local photographers:

 *Tip: Consider adding short videos of farm activity to engage your customers.*



Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist

Images

- *Create a photo storage account to save your photos – Air Drop, Photobucket, Google Photos, etc.*
- *Organize your photos by section of the website for ease of selecting and updating.*

Website Location	Person or Product Featured	Location (farm, market, etc)	Notes	Need new Photo?	Photo file location
Ex: About Us	Owner	Farm	Include kids, cute farm animals	No – use existing family photo	Air Drop
Ex: Products	Employee A	Farm – field A	Harvesting heirloom tomatoes	Yes	Air Drop
Ex: Where to find us	Customer	Market	Customer holding an heirloom tomato, requires consent from customer.	Yes	Air Drop



Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist

Testimonials

Adding customer testimonials can help boost your credibility. Ask 2-3 of your customers if they are willing to provide you with a testimonial for your website. Testimonials should be short (1-2 sentences) and specific.

Examples:

- *Farm A has the most delicious heirloom tomatoes, I look forward to them every summer.*
- *We are proud to source all our heirloom tomatoes for our restaurant from Farm A. We know we can count on the quality and taste.*
- *As a produce distributor, we strive to source from values-aligned companies. Farm A continually impresses us with their commitment to fair wages and sound land stewardship.*

Use this box to identify three customers from whom you can get testimonials and what you want the testimonials to be about:



Website Planning Worksheet & Checklist

☐ Website Checklist:

- ☐ Is your mission statement clearly displayed on your home page?
- ☐ Can someone look at your home page and immediately understand what you sell or do?
- ☐ Is the button or link to your store easily visible and on the home page of your website?
- ☐ Do you have an about us page featuring photos of you and/or your farm or business?
- ☐ Do you have up-to-date contact information?
- ☐ Do you have up-to-date hours of services, markets you are selling at, and other information your customers need to purchase from you?
- ☐ Do you have photos featuring people and at least one photo of a satisfied customer enjoying your product or service?
- ☐ Do you have one font throughout the entire website?
- ☐ Do you limit your color choices to 2-3 colors?
- ☐ Do you have short paragraphs (3-5 sentences per paragraph)?

☐ Home page Basics

- ☐ Mission Statement: Is your mission or purpose clearly stated on the home page?
- ☐ What You Do: Can visitors instantly understand what your business offers just by looking at the home page?
- ☐ Store Link: Is the button or link to your store easy to find and located on the home page?
- ☐ Links to other content: Is it easy to get to other pages and content from your home page like testimonials, pricing, your "About You" page, etc.

☐ About You

- ☐ About Us Page: Do you have a page that tells visitors about you, your farm, or your business? Include photos of you and/or your business.
- ☐ Contact Info: Is your phone number, email, and physical address easy to find and up-to-date?
- ☐ Business Hours & Locations: Are your hours of operation, markets, and locations clearly listed?

☐ Visuals & Design

- ☐ People in Photos: Do your photos show people, including at least one photo of a happy customer enjoying your product or service?
- ☐ Consistent Font: Do you use just one font throughout the website for a clean, professional look?
- ☐ Color Scheme: Do you limit your website's colors to just 2 or 3 for a simple, cohesive design?

☐ Content Layout

- ☐ Short Paragraphs: Do you keep your paragraphs short (3-5 sentences) to make them easy to read?



Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the practice of improving the website's visibility in search engine results, which means that your website will be at the top of the search results in Google and other search engines like Yahoo or Bing. SEO is free and can be an effective strategy to boost your business's visibility.

Get started with these 6 steps:

- Claim your Google Business Profile.
 - Go to Google Business www.google.com/intl/en_us/business/
 - Choose the correct business type(s). The options include online retail, local store, service business.
 - Add your business website link.
 - Add your business category (farm, farm shop, etc)
 - Add your hours (and keep them updated – set a reminder in your phone or calendar to update your hours once a season or at whatever frequency your hours change).
 - Add contact details.
 - Add photos.
 - Add your products and services.
- Encourage reviews and respond to reviews.
 - Remind your customers to leave reviews about your business.
 - Respond to customer reviews – both positive and negative.
 - Engaging with people who leave reviews helps boost your business profile.
 - Tip: If responding to a negative review, try starting with an apology or acknowledging the issue, offer to correct the issue, and generally stay positive.
 - Example:
 - Review: Great produce but farm stand was closed when I needed things for a holiday meal.
 - Your response: We are glad you enjoy our produce! You can find our hours on our website (insert link), and you are always welcome to contact us if you have any questions about holiday closures.



Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Use keywords to ensure customers find your website

A keyword connects what a person searches for in Google or another search engine with words on your website. Keywords help customers find your website quickly!

Circle or highlight key words from the list below that are relevant to your business, feel free to add your own. Use these keywords in your content on your webpage.

Identify two keywords for each of the following of your website pages:

Home Page

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

About You Page

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

Store/Shop Page

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

About page

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

Contact page

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

Gallery of images (optional)

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

Blog (optional)

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

Other Page (optional)

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

Other Page (optional)

Key word 1_____

Key word 2_____

Potential keywords:

- Farm Name
- _____ (Place: i.e. Watsonville, Sonoma, etc.) Farmstand
- Fresh _____ (Product: Onions, Fruit, Milk, etc.)
- Organic _____ (Product: Onions, Fruit, Milk, etc.)
- Organic _____ (Farmstand, U Pick, CSA, etc.)

Optimize On-Page Elements

- Use the keywords identified above in your website titles and headers.



Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Using the keywords identified in your website titles and headers is a simple way to make your site easier to find on search engines like Google. Here's how to do it:

Website Title:

This is the main title of your webpage, usually found at the top of the browser. Make sure your main keyword (the word or phrase people are likely to search for) is included here. For example, if you sell handmade candles, your title could be "Handmade Candles – Quality, Eco-Friendly Products."

Why This Helps:

- Search engines like Google look for keywords in titles and headers to understand what your page is about.
- Using the right keywords helps people find your website when they search for those terms.
- It also helps visitors quickly know what your page is about, making it easier for them to navigate your site.

Develop Digital Content :

- You are an expert in your business and your customers will be curious to learn more from you. Consider adding a blog to your site – the content can be whatever is relevant to you and your expertise. It could be recipes, personal reflections, updates on the farm, gardening tips, or whatever you feel compelled to offer. Adding additional content to your website and social media channels can help drive traffic to your website.
- Use these prompts to get started:
- What topics am I passionate or knowledgeable about?
Examples: pest management, seasonal cooking, employee appreciation.
- What topics would my customers be interested in learning from me about?
- What topics would I be motivated to write, photograph, or film?

Headers (H1, H2, H3):

These are the titles or subheadings within the content of your page. H1 is usually the most important heading (typically the page title), and H2 or H3 are used for smaller sections of content. Include relevant keywords in these headings to make it clear what each section is about. For example, under your main title, you could have a heading like "Eco-Friendly Candles for Every Occasion" (H2), and then "Why Choose Our Handmade Candles?" (H3).

**see pg 82 "Headers" of Small Organic Farmer Marketing Toolkit.*



Just remember, don't overstuff keywords (like repeating them too many times). Use them naturally where they make sense!

Build relevant online listings and links to your website.

- Drive customers to your website by listing on other relevant websites.
- Potential websites:
- Local nonprofits may maintain directories and other listings.
- Federal, state, or local government agencies may have listings.
- Other popular sites include localharvest.org, CAFF's California Farm Directory <https://caff.org/directory/> and CCOF's Member Directory <https://www.ccof.org/resources/member-directory/>



SEO Checklist & Directory

- ☐ Set up your Google Business profile and keep it updated.
- ☐ Encourage your customers to leave reviews.
- ☐ Respond to reviews – both positive and negative. Use professional, positive language when responding.
- ☐ Identify key words for your website (i.e. words that customers may search in Google).
- ☐ Incorporate key words into your website titles, headers, and text.
- ☐ Add creative and interesting content when possible. Provide examples such as a blog post featuring a seasonal recipe.
- ☐ List your business on relevant sites.
- ☐ Resolve technical issues. Make sure that your website does not have:
 - ☐ Broken links
 - ☐ Missing website pages
 - ☐ Slow website speed
 - ☐ Website site map errors
 - ☐ Duplicate content
 - ☐ Web security issues
 - ☐ Schema implementation errors

The CCOF Member Directory:

A Way to Connect with Institutional Buyers

CCOF has redesigned 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 via your MyCCOF account or on your renewal application.

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



Email Marketing

Email marketing is when you send emails to your customers or potential customers offering your products or services. You don't have to just sell products or services – you can also build trust and loyalty with your customers by sending personalized messages, updates, and promotions. Email marketing is cost-effective and helps you connect with customers, keep them informed, and drive sales.

Choose an email marketing tool:

You can use a service that helps you design, automate, send emails to a large audience. These services can also provide helpful information, like how many people opened the email and clicked through the email. Popular services include Mailchimp, Brevo, and Hubspot. (Some services may charge fees.)

Consider using AI tools to help you write effective emails.

Explore ChatGPT and other AI tools to quickly help you write engaging emails.

Content checklist:

- Is your email communicating the right message to the right audience?
- Are you sending your emails when your subscribers are most active? (example – if you are on PST then consider sending during morning PST hours).
- Does your subject line pique your audiences interest?
- If you are using images, have you included a description of the image under it in case the image doesn't load?
- Does your email have a clear call to action? (shop now, learn more, visit soon)
- Does your email have links or buttons for people to share your content on their social media?
- Have you tested viewing the email on your phone?
- Does your signature contain key business information, including contact information and the option to "opt out" of your emails to filter out uninterested subscribers?



Email Marketing Workbook

Who is your audience? Be specific – examples: parent shopping for the kids, a foodie, wholesale produce buyers.

What action do you want your audience to take? Be specific – examples: purchase more, visit your farm stand, spread the word about your farm.

What would compel your audience to take the action you want? Examples: a sale/low prices, low stock, in-season specialty item, convenience, taste, etc.

What image could you add to your email to convey your message and support your call to action? Include people, especially customers, in your images when possible.



Email Marketing

Examples

Example 1:

- *Audience: Current customers*
- *Call to action: Help promoting the farm, selling oversupply of tomatoes*
- *Compelling information: tomatoes are heirloom, tomatoes are on sale, and they can purchase them locally at your farm stand.*

Subject line: Tell your friends – heirloom tomatoes now on sale at our farm stand!

Dear Customer,

We are at peak season for our delicious heirloom tomatoes, and we need your help getting these fresh and unique varieties to our neighbors' tables. Help spread the word – heirloom tomatoes on sale through the end of the week. Bring your friends and have fun shopping at the farm stand.

Your farmer,

Joe Flower

Joefarm.com

555-555-555

Farm stand hours 12-4 every Saturday and Sunday
121 old fork road (just past the metal fence post)

Example 2:

- *Audience: Current customers who purchase your tomatoes but may be interested in other products (tend to be environmentally conscious foodies)*
- *Call to action: Try our new product – heirloom tomato salsa*
- *Compelling information: made with the tomatoes our customers know and love, access to local products during off season*

Subject line: Try our new heirloom salsa – now sampling at the Farmers Market

Dear Customer,

If you love our tomatoes, you will love our salsa. Stop by our farmers market booth this weekend to try a sample of our new locally made, small batch salsa. Now you can taste our delicious heirloom tomatoes all season long.

Your farmer,

Joe Flower

Joefarm.com

555-555-555

Farm stand hours 12-4 every Saturday and Sunday
121 old fork road (just past the metal fence post)



Email Marketing

Email Drafting Template

Outline:

- Audience:
- Call to action:
- Compelling information:

Subject Line:

Include what would compel your audience to act and the action you want them to take.

Signature:

Include your name, business information, address, location, and any helpful tips like helpful driving instructions or special hours.

Content:

Elaborate on the action you want them to take, include compelling photos or testimonials if helpful.

Dear _____,

