



Selling to Restaurants 101

Rooting into Restaurants

CHECKLIST

STEP ONE: GETTING YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR

- Make a list of restaurants you want to meet with
- Showcase your product to the Chef
- Develop your price sheet & produce list

STEP TWO: QUALITY & CONSISTENCY (#1 PRIORITY)

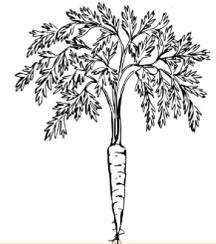
- Outline product quality expectations
- Ask for feedback and adjust accordingly
- Certifications and Regulatory Considerations

STEP THREE: ORDERING, DELIVERY & PAYMENT

- Set up schedules for ordering, delivery & payment
- Consider if you want to use a third party seller

STEP FOUR: GETTING RECOGNIZED & GOING FARTHER

- Ask for recognition on the menu/specials board
- Use HDEFA Producer Profile
- Look to develop a contract to grow specific crops for the business



Your Name

Your Farm Name

List for Farmer
Chef Mixer:

- Weekly produce sheets
- Wholesale Price List
- Order Schedule
- Delivery Schedule
- Invoices

SELLING TO RESTAURANTS 101

BEST PRACTICES FOR GETTING YOUR PRODUCT TO THE PLATE

Getting your product into a new market is important for your business to help gain brand recognition and to increase local food into the restaurant food system. However, there can be difficulties along the way. High Desert Food & Farm Alliance (HDFFA) wants to help you overcome those difficulties and get your product into the hands of some new customers! Below are tips about selling to restaurants large and small.

A special thank you to Chris Casad of Juniper Jungle Farm and James Berntson of Radicle Roots Farm for giving feedback into what's worked and what's not when selling to chefs and restaurants.

WHY SELL TO RESTAURANTS?

ADVERTISE YOUR FARM- Selling to restaurants can be a great way to advertise your farm and the products you have. If the restaurant is using your name to cross-promote the product, then you will automatically be reaching a new group of customers that might not know about your business.

LARGER VOLUME, ONE CUSTOMER- There is also value in selling a larger amount of products with minimal packaging. If you specialize in a few crops that are more profitable and successful for your farm, you can work out a relationship and sell those directly versus needing to grow everything for a CSA.

STEP ONE: GETTING YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR

FINDING RESTAURANTS

Identifying restaurants that will be interested in your product are important. Think about seeking out those that are already using local food or have a community, sustainability or environmental mission.

When you find restaurants that you want to meet with, ask to talk to the Chef. Chefs run the kitchen and normally do the food ordering. An owner may be on board with using local food but the chef is the one ordering each week and will most likely be your contact.

“Developing a good relationship with a chef is key, and it’s important for both parties to understand the demands and logistics of each other’s operations for proper service to happen with minimal friction.”

– Juniper Jungle Farm

SETTTING UP A MEETING

Setting up a meeting with the chef to present your product is a good opportunity to showcase your product and give information about your growing practices. Letting chefs taste what you have to offer is a great way to showcase why they should choose yours over conventional. Make sure to call and schedule an appointment to showcase some of your products. Calling when the Chef is not busy is a good way to ensure contact, between 2-4pm is typically a good time.

PREPARATION FOR YOUR MEETING

SHOWCASING YOUR PRODUCT- When you meet with a chef, bring a sampling of your product representative of what you typically grow or raise. Make sure to include any product that you love growing, you think would be a great fit for the restaurant, or are particularly excited about.

PRICE LIST- Setting your price can be difficult. Finding a balance between how much your products costs you to produce and the current market value for the product is key.

PRODUCE SHEETS- Projections for what you have available throughout the season as well as an example of week by week availability. How often do you harvest and deliver? If you sell meat, how often do you butcher?

STEP TWO: QUALITY & CONSISTANCY (#1 PRIORITY)

"I encourage any feedback both negative and positive from chefs. This is usually discussed when I deliver to them each week, but can be over emails or texts. I have changed the size I harvest certain crops, or waited until tomatoes are extremely ripe for some chefs or increased watering on certain crops to prevent bitterness."

–Radicle Roots

EXPECTATIONS FOR PRODUCT QUALITY & CONSISTENCY

At HDIFFA we receive a lot of feedback from buyers about quality and consistency for farm fresh products. Being a small to medium scale producer, we understand that everything doesn't always come out of the ground or off of the vine as the perfect shape, size, and color as big box stores. However, it probably tastes better than most conventional products. Using taste is an advantage to you but keeping track of aesthetic quality is important too. **Consistency is something that you have complete control over**, it might mean more sorting through your product but if a Chef wants carrots that are all small to medium in size, then it's your responsibility to sift through and take-out extra small and large ones. If you make the Chef pay for a product they didn't ask for they won't be very happy.

SET UP STANDARDS- You can present your product in a high quality way that will keep buyers returning for more. Ask the buyer how they want the product presented. Double-washed, bagged, boxed, bunched, tops cut etc. Keeping track that you're giving them the highest quality will keep them as a customer.

FOLLOW THROUGH- If a Chef asks for 15 lbs of carrots washed and bagged, make sure that they're clean before bagging. Most Chef's want to pull out the product and give it a quick rinse before using it. Giving dirty vegetables gives a bad impression.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK

FOLLOW UP- At your next delivery, check in with the way the product was delivered the week before. Does that delivery and ordering schedule work? Were they happy with the order? Generating dialog is a good way to develop the relationship.

ADJUST ACCORDINGLY – When following up with Chefs, it is a good idea to get specific feedback and that makes it easier to adjust your practices accordingly. Was that the correct size they were looking for? Was it clean enough? Were there any issues with appearance?

“Mainly it's washing or packaging issues initially, quality control comes down to the farmer and you have to adjust when you get feedback, always please the customer to the best of your ability.” –Juniper Jungle

CERTIFICATIONS & REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

FOOD SAFETY PLANS –Not all restaurants require GAP/GHP (Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices) Certification but It is good to have a conversation about expectations for food safety management. GAP and GHP are voluntary certifications using systems-based approaches to minimizing risk of microbial contamination of fresh fruits and vegetables on the farm. For more information visit :

www.oregon.gov/ODA/CID/ghp_gap.shtml

www.smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/fsma

EGGS –A producer is required to have an egg handler's license from the ODA Food Safety Division if the producer sells graded eggs to retailers, cafes, bakeries, hospitals, schools, or institutions.

MEATS & POULTRY –All slaughtered and processed meat and poultry sold in Oregon must be inspected by the USDA and slaughtered in USDA-inspected plants. For a list of USDA inspected plants, contact the Food Safety Division at the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, 503-986-4720. For farmers, make sure and price your meats adequately. Have a conversation with chefs about selling cuts versus whole or half animals.

STEP THREE: ORDERING, DELIVERY, AND PAYMENT

SETTING UP SCHEDULES FOR ORDERING, DELIVERY & PAYMENT

"I find email is best for me, because it's nice to have a clear record of what they ordered but texts work well too if you have an established relationship, because you still have a written record of the order. Order over the phone can be hard because you don't have that written record and miscommunications are more likely."

- Radicle Roots

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY- Send a weekly product availability list so Chefs can order the freshest ingredients and pick and choose what they'd like to feature. Send them out on a consistent day with the order deadline clearly stated.

EASE OF ORDERING- What is the best way for someone to order from you? Email, text, phone? Set a schedule and order deadlines so for ease of consistency.

DELIVERY SCHEDULE- Set your delivery day. No one likes to be caught off guard, set a schedule and stick to it. For example, orders placed on Monday will be delivered on Wednesday.

BILLING – Have a hard copy invoice ready when you drop produce off and an easy way for Chef's to pay. As a professional business owner, it is important to present yourself that way.

SELLING THROUGH A THIRD PARTY:

If you prefer to not develop one-on-one relationships with restaurants there are options of selling to third parties such as Agricultural Connections.

<i>Pros</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ease of product order & delivery to restaurants</i>• <i>No need to set up one-on-one relationships</i>• <i>Middle business takes care of logistics</i>
<i>Cons</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Less profit (3rd party business takes %)</i>• <i>Can't always get direct feedback from the business</i>• <i>Don't always receive name recognition</i>

STEP FOUR: GETTING RECOGNIZED & GOING FARTHER

Getting your product in the restaurant not only is a good way to diversify your consumer base and operations, but also provides another avenue through which to sell your product and increase your market. Selling to restaurants is mutually beneficial for farmers and restaurants. And furthermore, having more direct relationships is good marketing for the whole local food system.

- Ask Restaurants to have your information on hand
- Make sure your name is displayed on Restaurant specials or menu
- Ask about getting your Farmer Profile (provided by HDEFA) displayed at the restaurant

GROWN TO ORDER

“There are two sides to selling to a restaurant from a farms perspective, setting up a contract for growth and use of product, or use of excess product grown from other focuses like market and CSA.” – Juniper Jungle

Creating a contract and growing specifically for a restaurant is a great next step to take if you want to continue to expand with a restaurant. Growing specifically for someone is a great way to ensure that your product is sold before you grow it and will help you pin-point which products you'd like to grow and sell in Central Oregon.

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY AND PRICESHEET EXAMPLE

Vegetables	Units	Approximate Weight/Amount	Approximate Weight/Amount	Conventional	Organic
Asparagus*	1/2 bu. box in bunches	~12 lbs.	20 lbs	\$51.66	\$22.11
Beets	1 1/9 bu. box (with tops)	~52 lbs.	52 lbs	\$46.52	\$48.13
Beans, Green*	1 1/9 bu. box	~28 - 30 lbs.		\$46.00	
Beans, Lima	1/2 bu. box	~15 lbs.			
Beans, Purple	1 1/9 bu. box	~28 - 30 lbs.			
Beans, Yellow	1 1/9 bu. box	~28 - 30 lbs.			
Bok Choy		20 lbs		31.50*	\$47.88*
Broccoli	loose	20 lbs	20 lbs	\$21.00	\$66.78
Brussels Sprouts	loose	10 lbs		\$31.37	\$42.84
Cabbage, Green	Carton	~53 lbs.			
Cabbage, Napa	Carton	~53 lbs.			
Cabbage, White		50 lbs		17.64*	\$63.00*
Carrots	1 1/9 bu. box	~50 lbs.	50 lbs	\$31.50	\$58.28
Cauliflower*	Sell in bins loose, specify count	Ususally 1 - 1 1/2 lbs. per head		\$20.26	\$56.70*
Celery	Carton	~60 lbs.			
Corn, Sweet	Bag	42 lbs		\$22.09*	\$31.22
Eggplant, Asian	1 1/9 bu. box	~33 - 35 lbs.			
Eggplant, Large	1 1/9 bu. box	~33 - 35 lbs.	1 1/19 bushel box	\$21.00	

From the Oberlin Food Hub