



Buying from Farmers 101

Whipping Up Local Food

STEP ONE: IDENTIFY NEEDS & LOCAL PRODUCERS

- What can you make local? Make a product wish list
- Identify local producers and set up a time to meet

STEP THREE: QUALITY, CONSISTENCY, & PRICE

- Outline product quality and packaging expectations
- Keep open lines of communication and give feedback
- Talk about product pricing
- Confirm certifications and regulatory needs

STEP TWO: ORDERING, DELIVERY & PAYMENT

- Set up order, delivery, and payment schedules
- Consider if you want to use a third party seller
- Perhaps develop a contract with farmers to grow specific crops for the restaurant

STEP FOUR: RECIPES AND RECOGNITION

- Menu flexibility and specials
- Educate colleagues and staff on products you are sourcing locally
- Market the local producers on the menu/specials board or use HDEFFA Producer Profiles

CHECKLIST



Your Name

Your Restaurant

List for Farmer
Chef Mixer

- Produce needs
- Wholesale Price List
- Order Schedule
- Delivery Schedule
- Invoice specification

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BUYING FROM FARMERS 101

THE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CHEF WITH THE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE BOTTOM LINE

Incorporating local food into your menu is a great way to promote environmental sustainability, support the local economy and provide higher quality food products to consumers. Using local food at your establishment might take a little more effort but the end result and customer satisfaction is worth taking the extra steps. Below are best practices for utilizing Central Oregon food without breaking the bank.

A special thanks to Dave Flier from Rockin' Daves and Lindsey Duffy from Jackson's Corner for lending their insights into working with farmers to source products.

WHY BUY LOCAL?

"I have always wanted to incorporate local products, but didn't know how. I believe local food should be incorporated into every Chef's menu. Supporting local food supports our local farmers, who are our neighbors, friends and local foodies across from us at our favorite restaurants. I believe in their growing practices and want to support best I can, when I can." – Rockin' Daves

TASTES BETTER- Many people are pursuing local food because it tastes better, is more nutrient dense and has a smaller environmental footprint. Any chef who has spent valuable staff hours picking through salad mix shipped from across that country, can attest to the benefits of a fresher product.

EXPANDED CUSTOMER BASE- Advertising the use of local food also builds an expanded or more loyal customer base that might be willing to pay a little bit more for the higher quality, locally sourced ingredients.

RELATIONSHIPS- Building relationships with farmers can also create a partnership where you have product grown specifically for your restaurant. This gives you control over what food product you're getting and helps to specialize your menu to featuring unique products or heirloom varieties. You can give direct feedback to the grower instead of working through a large distribution network.

STEP ONE: IDENTIFYING YOUR NEEDS & YOUR LOCAL PRODUCERS

DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP

Creating a relationship with farmers can help streamline your local product while still boosting the local food economy. By developing a relationship with them you can give feedback about the product and discuss the product type and quality that you're looking for.

Do you want bigger leaves or younger potatoes? Would you like a specific set of greens in your salad mix? The producer can work with you on making product adjustments that better fit your needs. Be prepared to experiment and try things out.

"I've been trying to streamline the number of products I get rather than have a variety from each producer. This allows me to know what is coming through the door, and when. Developing a relationship in a one on one setting allows for better communication as time goes on. They see your needs, and you see theirs.

-Rockin' Daves

MAKE IT LOCAL

Using local products does not have to be all or nothing. If you are interested in using local food but don't want to invest a lot of money before you know its impact, start small. Use local food in **specials** or incorporate them into a **seasonal menu**. You can pick one ingredient you know you will use frequently and inquire about that product. No one strategy will work for all businesses. Creatively customize your partnership to suite your restaurant needs.

Starting questions, you might ask yourself:

- *What products make sense to purchase locally?*
- *What is there a lot in Central Oregon?*
- *What is your menu flexibility, do you want to incorporate local food into your main menu or just in specials?*
- *What about using local meat?*
- *What is your capacity as a restaurant and what steps do you want to take to go local?*

"Understand that farmers and chefs have a common goal- to get nutrient dense, low footprint, delicious food on the plates of customers."

-Jackson's Corner

SET UP A TIME TO MEET PRODUCERS

After considering your restaurant's needs and identifying what items on your menu you can get from Central Oregon producers, now is a good time to identify potential producer partners. If you haven't been approached by a farmer and don't know where to start, referencing the **HDFFA Food and Farm Directory** and making a few phone calls out to farmers can be a good first step. You can also call HDFFA to talk about your needs and we can suggest farmers that may work for you. Set up a time to talk with a producer in person and see if they can bring in product to sample. Think about if you would like to work with just **one producer or multiple producers**.

STEP TWO: QUALITY, CONSISTENCY & PRICE

PRODUCT QUALITY & CONSISTENCY EXPECTATIONS

“First off, we have to expect a difference in product compared to mass produced food. Knowing this is the first step. Letting the farmers know when things are great is not a problem. Mostly, it is great. They are people running a business, just like anyone else so they will always make it right if notified.”

– Rockin Daves’

SET UP STANDARDS- It is important to set up standards and expectations ahead of product delivery to prevent miscommunications especially when it comes to product cleanliness. It is best not to make any assumptions when it comes to your product needs. Talk about how you would like the product packaged or presented. If you want less top on your leeks, kale bulk instead of bunched, or salad bagged have that clear conversation ahead of time.

FOLLOW UP- When the farmer is making their own deliveries make sure to you have clearly stated your needs and have a mutually agreed upon method for communication. Delivery time is a great opportunity to check in about the last product delivery: was it the correct size you were looking for? Was it clean enough? Were there any issues with the appearance? This is a great time to let the farmer know when things are working great or need improvement. Were the cherry tomatoes on point last week? Tell them.

“I try to be accommodating and try to understand the growing process so I can understand why the product doesn’t meet the quality standards I’m used to. I communicate often about expectations.” –Jacksons Corner

TALK ABOUT PRODUCT PRICING:

The process of setting prices is something unique to each relationship. Sometimes the restaurant sets price guidelines and sometimes the producers inform the prices. Come prepared to negotiate prices with your farmer by researching the specific product and know the price range that is out there. If you are unsure about what prices are reasonable, contact HDEFFA and we can send you resources and examples that have been used throughout the U.S. We encourage folks to think creatively about their options. For example, Chefs could potentially pass sourcing local costs onto their customer, along with the benefits.

“Sometimes producers come to me and ask to negotiate a price that can work for both of us. There are lots of ways to make deals happen.” – Rockin’ Daves “

CERTIFICATIONS AND 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 farmers about purchasing cuts versus whole or half animals.

STEP THREE: ORDERING, DELIVERY & PAYMENT

ORDERING/DELIVERING QUALITY & CONSISTENCY:

Quality and consistency are qualities that are extremely important to Chefs but farmers new to this industry may not be as familiar with your needs. Make sure that you are clear in your communicating your needs.

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY- Farmers should have weekly product availability lists, but if not, ask them to provide this so that you can order the freshest ingredients and pick and choose what you would like to feature. If you have a projection for your restaurant’s specific needs, you can share that with producers and set up your orders at the beginning of the season. This way crops can be grown to meet your needs.

EASE OF ORDERING- What is the best way for you to order from someone? Maybe it’s email or text because you like having a written record of your communications. Maybe you work better when you can talk over the phone? Set a preferred method of contact and schedule for ease of consistency. Be aware of any deadlines and avoid placing last minute orders.

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

BILLING – Ask for a hard copy invoice at the drop off and set up an easy way to pay.

BUYING THROUGH A THIRD PARTY:

If you prefer to not develop one-on-one relationships with farmers, there are options of buying from third parties such as Agricultural Connections or Aloha Produce. Using a third party can be helpful in busy times or when you need larger quantities of food.

Buying through a third party

<i>Pros</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ease of product order and delivery to restaurants</i>• <i>Consistency in packaging and quality</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>Higher cost (3rd party business takes a %)</i>• <i>Can't get direct feedback from the farmer</i>• <i>Don't always know the name of the farm</i>

GROWN TO ORDER

Finding a farm to grow specifically for your restaurant and creating a contract is a great next step to take if you want to have increased ease of ordering and delivery consistency. Contracting from one farmer as they are doing their crop planning in spring is a great way to plan ahead and ensure that a specific product is available to you for the whole season in the quantity that fits your needs. Looking ahead in this way can help farmers to better plan their planting schedules and income projections.

STEP FOUR: RECIPES & RECOGNITION

MENU FLEXIBILITY AND SPECIALS

Staying vague in menu language with “local” or “seasonal” versus item specific, allows you to be flexible and adapt to change and Central Oregon production inconsistencies.

“Specials work really well for local food because sometimes the quantity of supply is unknown. When using local food on the menu, we stay vague and our customers can ask what they are” –Jacksons’ Corner

EDUCATION AND MARKETING

If you are sourcing local it is important to talk about the local produce you are using and the producers you are working with. Not only does it give you a competitive edge and allows you to differentiate your food, but highlighting the local food in your restaurant serves as marketing for the entire local food system. To this end, it is a good idea to have producers' information on hand and the local food you use marketed in multiple formats.

- Make sure the farms you work with are displayed on your specials or menu
- Communicate with back of the house and front of the house about which farms you are working with and their products you are currently using. If you are excited about radish seed pods from Joe Farmer, let your colleagues know
- For more marketing, ask about getting Farmer Profiles (provided by HDEFA) to display

"I love to tell the story of my farmer." –Rockin' Daves

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY AND PRICESHEET EXAMPLE

Vegetables	Units	Approximate Weight/Amount	Conventional	Approximate Weight/Amount	Conventional	Organic
			Est. Available			
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	Usually 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