



### **STEP ONE: IDENTIFY NEEDS AND LOCAL PRODUCERS**

- Find out what's in season
- Make a product wish list
- Identify local producers and set up a time to meet

### **STEP TWO: QUALITY, CONSISTENCY, AND PRICE**

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

### **STEP THREE: ORDERING, DELIVERY, AND PAYMENT**

- Consider whether you want to use a distributor
- Set up order, delivery, and payment schedules
- Consider developing a contract with farmers to grow specific crops for you

### **STEP FOUR: RECIPES AND RECOGNITION**

- Keep your menu flexible, offer specials
- Educate colleagues and staff on products you are sourcing locally - invite producers to share their story
- Market the local producers on the menu/specials board or use HDFFA Producer Profiles

## SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CHEF, 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 builds an expanded or more loyal customer base that might be willing to pay a little bit more for 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 supply while 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 with 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, and 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 HDFFA 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/programs/MarketAccess/MACertification/Pages/GAPGHP.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/MarketAccess/MACertification/Pages/GAPGHP.aspx)  
<https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/wrcefs/fda-updates>

**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.

**Meat & 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 Two: Quality, Consistency, and Price

### Ordering/Delivering Quality and 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 communicating your needs.

**Product Availability** – most farmers should have weekly product availability lists, but if one is not offered, ask them to provide this so that you can order the freshest ingredients 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 multiple one-on-one relationships with farmers, you have the option to buy from distributors 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.

<i>Using a distributor or other third party</i>	
<i>Pros</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ease of product order and delivery to restaurants</i></li> <li>• <i>Consistency in packaging and quality</i></li> <li>• <i>No need to set up one-on-one relationships</i></li> <li>• <i>Middle business takes care of logistics</i></li> </ul>
<i>Cons</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Higher cost (3rd party business can add 20%-30%)</i></li> <li>• <i>Can't get/give direct feedback from the farmer</i></li> <li>• <i>You don't always know the name of the farm or control the source</i></li> </ul>

## 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 and Recognition

### Menu Flexibility and Specials

Staying general 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 allow 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 HDFFA) to display

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

Product availability and price sheet example from the Oberlin Food Hub:

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	

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