



BUYING FROM LOCAL FARMERS

tip sheet for chefs

- 1** Identify your preferred method of communication, email, phone or text.
- 2** Communicate desired specifications regarding size. A range is preferable given these are natural products.
- 3** Communicate desired volume, delivery days and times.
- 4** Establish payment terms up front. Most farmers are going to want C.O.D. but may be amenable to setting up an account if the volume of business is large enough and consistent.
- 5** Provide critical feedback on quality and specifications early on so farmers have an opportunity to improve their product and meet your expectations. Explaining how the items are being used will help farmers with processing and packaging protocols. For example, if you aren't going to use the carrot tops, it's easier for the farmer to cut them off in the field instead of washing them with the carrots.
- 6** Advance notice of order changes due to menu changes will allow farmers to find other outlets for their product. Don't wait until the day of delivery.
- 7** Products that require third party processing (e.g. meat) need as much advance time as possible to get on the schedule. Try to provide estimates on volume needs for the season and make adjustments as you go along. It is much easier to cancel an appointment with the butcher than to try to add one at the last minute.
- 8** Provide critical feedback on packaging.
- 9** If you are going to cancel an order, or discontinue working with a farmer, be upfront on the reasons so the farmer can learn from the experience.

SELLING TO RESTAURANTS

tip sheet for farmers

MEET EARLY IN THE SEASON

Arrange a time to meet and discuss with chefs in the winter before the coming season to make sure you have a clear understanding of what they're looking for, pricing, and volume.

PLAN AHEAD

Make sure you have a clear, realistic sense of what portion of your business and marketing efforts will be dedicated to restaurant sales.

FLAVOR FIRST

When growing for a restaurant, consider flavor foremost when selecting varieties. If a variety is particularly desirable for its flavor, but is not a high yielder, communicate this to chefs to negotiate a price that still makes it profitable for you to grow.

FIND YOUR NICHE

Consider growing crops and varieties that chefs do not already have access to, but be sure that you can grow these successfully on your farm. Consider offering free samples of new products.

AVAILABILITY LISTS

As much as possible, send your availability list to the restaurant on a regular schedule. Some chefs prefer to communicate by email, others by phone or text. However you communicate, try to establish a regular protocol so you know what to expect week to week.

DETERMINE THE RIGHT PRICE

Know your production costs. Product specifications, processing and volume ordered will affect price. If there are any additional fees, e.g., delivery or processing, articulate those up-front. Communication early on is critical in determining a price that works both for you and the restaurant and is sustainable on both ends.

BE CONSISTENT

This is one of the most important aspects of working with chefs. Plan your successions carefully so that you can offer consistency in your products for as many weeks as possible. Avoid the temptation to overpromise: make sure you can deliver on your commitments. Budget for a certain amount of seconds and losses due to disease when projecting inventory.

ANTICIPATING A SHORTAGE? COMMUNICATE!

If you anticipate a shortage of particular products, communicate as early as possible, so chefs can make adjustments in their menus and/or orders with other growers.

PACKAGING & DELIVERY

Communicate about what packaging the restaurant prefers and set-up a regular delivery schedule