

Building Buyer Relationships

Pay attention to the details that may help you build a strong, long-term relationship.

Invite the grocery store owner, the chef or the buyer to the farm for a tour and dinner.

Gauge Interest in Local Food Products

- Does the buyer currently purchase local foods? Have they had success with other local growers? If so, they may be interested in purchasing more local food products.
- If they have not purchased local food before, find out what has sparked their interest to consider it. Are they responding to customer demand, looking for less expensive products, or wanting to support the local economy?
- What products are they looking for? What quantities do they require? What price are they willing to pay?

Outline Benefits of Purchasing Local Food

- Local food can enhance restaurant or store promotional efforts and generate customer interest and loyalty. Consumers are becoming more aware of the wealth of food choices available and the benefits of eating fresh, flavorful, locally sourced food.
- Schools and institutions can help meet their goals for providing healthy food choices by sourcing foods locally.
- Local farmers can produce specialty crops not available from the usual distributors which supply restaurants, grocery stores, or institutions. Particularly in rural areas, access to foods other than mainstream products is limited.
- Local food can be competitive, if not in price, then in quality.



Share What Products You Have to Offer

- Provide product samples when possible. In the initial meeting before the growing season, bring samples of your packaging, labels, farm information, or in-store or restaurant materials.
- Have your price goals established before approaching the buyer. To learn more about setting prices, read the farmer profiles in this chapter. Refer to pages 23-24 for details on pricing strategies.
- Provide descriptions of products you currently produce. Ask what other products may interest the buyer.
- Prepare a product availability sheet for the buyer to keep as reference.