



ATTRA Is Back at Your Service

Thanks to the efforts of supporters from every state, NCAT's ATTRA project is once again offering a full slate of services. If you have questions about your farming or ranching operation, you can call ATTRA's toll-free help lines, 800-346-9140 (English) or 800-411-3222 (Spanish).

"We are delighted to have federal funding restored for this critical program," says Kathleen Hadley, NCAT's Executive Director. "Thank you to everyone who expressed concern and helped us restore our funding, whether through donations or by calling or writing their members of Congress in support of ATTRA."

NCAT will continue to explore alternative funding sources for the project. The majority of ATTRA publications and several important databases are available free of charge from the website, www.attra.ncat.org. However, there is a small fee for some publications to help fund ATTRA services. For a \$50 yearly subscription, you can download as many publications as you want.

We will no longer print and mail ATTRAnews. The newsletter will be available online and email subscribers will continue to receive it. Please send your email address to karenv@ncat.org if you would like a free subscription.

Direct Sales to Local Grocery Stores and Restaurants

An increasing number of farmers and ranchers are selling their products to nearby restaurants and grocery stores. Those businesses want to satisfy their customers' demand for meals made from products grown close to home.

Producers may have a greater degree of control over quality and price when they sell close to home, rather than to distant wholesalers. This issue of ATTRAnews looks at the pros and cons of direct sales to local grocery stores and restaurants.

Selling Directly to Grocery Stores

Advantages

- You may be able to sell larger volumes.
- The store may buy a range of products once you have introduced your first product.
- There is potential for a long-term relationship with the store, especially if you build a brand identity for your farm.

Considerations

- The first sale may be difficult because grocery stores have a limited amount of shelf space, already have regular suppliers, and may prefer to buy from fewer suppliers.
- Payment is not immediate but generally occurs on a predictable monthly cycle.
- Standard packing and postharvest practices are required. Produce should be delivered clean and cold.
- Grocery stores may require a PLU (product lookup number) or UPC code (Universal Product Code, represented by a barcode).



Some grocery stores are eager to carry local produce and will feature local producers with special displays and in-store food demonstrations.

Photo: Rex Dufour, NCAT.

Inside:

Resources for Selling to Grocery Stores and Restaurants

Advertised prices of last week's produce nationwide and by region
www.marketnews.usda.gov/portal/fv

Chefs Collaborative network brings together chefs and the greater food community, including farmers, to celebrate local foods and foster a sustainable food supply.
www.chefscollaborative.org

Guide for Farms Considering Selling in Grocery Stores, and Is Selling to Grocery Stores Profitable for Farms or Processors? are reports from the Local Fare project based in Southern Wisconsin.
www.uwplatt.edu/cont_ed/LocalFare/links-resources.html

Product Lookup numbers (PLUs). A complete list is online at
www.plucodes.com

Selling to Restaurants is an ATTRA publication that details how to successfully deal with chefs.
www.attra.ncat.org/marketing.html

Selling Directly to Restaurants & Grocery Stores is a Small Farm Handbook from the Washington State Department of Agriculture.
<http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/DOCS/3-sellingDirectlyToRestaurantsAndGroceryStores.pdf>

Selling Produce to Restaurants: Marketing Guide for Small Acreage Growers by Diane Green, a farmer who has been selling herbs, flowers and produce to restaurants for over a decade. Book sales benefit Rural Roots, an Idaho nonprofit working to enhance local food networks. www.greentreenaturals.com

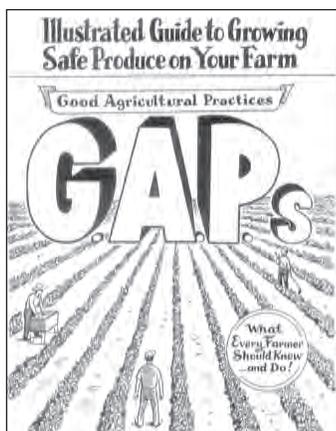


The following ATTRA publications include useful information for direct marketing to grocery stores and restaurants. The publications can be downloaded from ATTRA's website, www.attra.ncat.org. Or call 800-346-9140 for a printed copy. Publication prices vary. Many are free to view online or download.

- Adding Value to Farm Products IP141
- Beef Marketing Alternatives IP290
- Evaluating a Farming Enterprise IP041
- Illustrated Guide to Growing Safe Produce on Your Farm: GAPs IP382. *Also available in Spanish:*
- Guía Ilustrada para Producir Alimento Seguros en su Granja SP382
- Keys to Success in Value-Added Agriculture IP172
- New Markets for Your Crops IP328. *Also available in Spanish:*
- Nuevos Mercados para Su Cosecha SP309
- Pork: Marketing Alternatives IP153
- Postharvest Handling of Fruits and Vegetables IP116
- Season Extension Techniques for Market Gardeners IP035
- Selling to Restaurants IP255
- Scheduling Vegetable Plantings for Continuous Harvest IP323
- Specialty Cut Flower Production and Marketing IP025
- Sustainable Season Extension: Considerations for Design IP416

Illustrated Guide to Growing Safe Produce on Your Farm: Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)

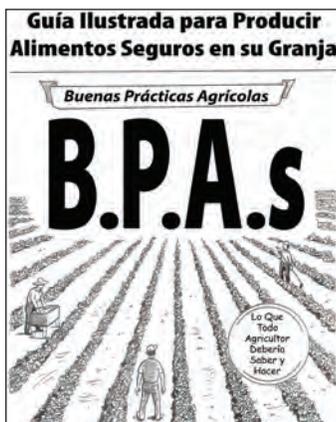
Newest in ATTRA's Illustrated Series in English or Spanish



Using graphic-style illustrations, these new guides show how farmers can reduce the risk of produce contamination on their farms. Topics include the following:

- Proper use and disposal of water
- Best methods for composting and application of manure
- Good hygiene habits for workers
- Proper sanitation of processing surfaces and transportation vehicles
- Importance of accurate record keeping
- Many useful resources and links

The series now includes seven guides. All are available in English or Spanish and two are available in Hmong.



The Illustrated Series

Finding Land to Farm (English, Spanish)

Illustrated Guide to Sheep and Goat Production (English, Hmong, Spanish)

New Markets for Your Crops (English or Spanish, as well as a Spanish-language audio download)

The Organic Chronicles (English, Hmong, or Spanish)

Organic Integrated Pest Management Field Guide (English, Spanish)

Start a Farm in the City (English, Spanish)

Selling Directly to Restaurants

Some restaurants, especially locally owned ones, want to feature dishes and menus that use local produce. This presents a good marketing opportunity for farmers to sell to them directly.

Advantages

- Chefs value fresh, high-quality products.

Considerations

- Expect small order size and frequent delivery.
- Chefs value top-quality produce.
- It's important to provide the buyer with a weekly availability list.
- Chefs may require a consistent supply of particular items.

Tips for Direct Sales to Restaurants ✿ key points

- Be consistent. Chefs expect a product will be delivered if they put it on the menu.
- Build a relationship with the entire staff. Chefs move frequently.
- ✿ Chefs are on a tight schedule and generally require deliveries when they're not busy, such as before 10 a.m. or between 2 and 5 p.m.
- Introduce new products by dropping off free samples with your regular deliveries.
- ✿ Fax or email a list of available products for the chef to order from.
- Use the chefs as your best source of market information. They may know what the next big thing is before you do.
- Know how the chef is using your product and be prepared to talk about other ways to use it.
- In the autumn, ask the chefs what products they want you to grow next season.
- ✿ Ask about each restaurant's needs: pack, size, variety, post-harvest preferences, new items, and how they would like to place orders (by fax, text message, phone, email).

Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- How far in advance do the chefs need to see an accurate schedule of product availability in order to allow them to plan their menus?
- What restaurants are the best fit for my product profile? Ethnic? High-end gourmet? Specialty bakeries?



When delivering produce to restaurants, it is especially important to be punctual and to present a clean appearance. Photo: Markristo Farms.

- What production, handling, storage, and delivery methods will I use to ensure the freshest and highest quality products to high-end chefs? Highlight these in outreach to chefs.
- How frequently and quickly am I able to deliver to restaurants? What are the chef's expectations about this?
- ✿ How do the restaurants want to communicate with me? Cell phone, text message, email, fax?

The articles in this issue are adapted from ATTRA's new series of Marketing Tip Sheets (available in both English and Spanish) for selling through the following channels:

- Farmers Markets
- Grocery Stores
- Restaurants
- Roadside Stands
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

The series will also include tips for direct sales through agritourism, the Internet, livestock auctions, and to institutional customers. A second set of tip sheets will focus on wholesale markets.

To learn more about direct marketing, see these past issues of ATTRAnews, all free to download from the newsletter archives at www.attra.ncat.org/newsletter/archives.html:

- Community Supported Agriculture
- Farmers Markets
- Marketing Livestock Products
- Planning and Planting for Your Markets



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Tips for Direct Sales to Grocery Stores

key points

- Be professional, reliable, and on time when communicating and delivering products.
- Visit or call the store and ask for an appointment with the produce buyer before the season begins. Provide the buyer with product samples, a product list for the full season, and a price list.
- ✂ Always provide a bill or invoice when you deliver your products. Ask the receiving clerk to sign a copy that you keep for your records.
- Build relationships with everyone who handles your product.
- ✂ Ask about and follow the store's expectations for pack, size, grade, or post-harvest practices.
- Communicate with buyers weekly during the growing season about your product availability.
- ✂ Plan your plantings for continuous harvest and adequate volume to meet expected demand from the store.
- Offer the store lots of opportunities to promote and profile your farm along with your products.
- Offer to provide farm tours, pictures of your farm for display, and in-store demos of your products.

Key Questions to Ask Yourself

- What products do local grocery stores want that I could supply, including specialty ethnic foods?
- Does a particular chain have an interest in purchasing locally?
- What is my plan to ensure a consistent supply of a few key products over a period of several weeks?
- Do I have a Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) plan? Does this buyer require it?

New Publications from ATTRA

- Apples: Organic Production IP20
- Community Gardening IP376
- Composting: The Basics IP410
- Disease & Insect Management in Organic Small Grains IP388
- Equipment & Tools for Small-Scale Intensive Crop Production IP417
- Evaluating a Farming Enterprise IP041
- Financing Your Farm: Guidance for Beginning Farmers IP420
- Illustrated Guide to Growing Safe Produce on Your Farm IP382
and the Spanish version:
Guía Ilustrada Para Producir Alimentos Seguros en Su Granja SP382
- Meat Plants: Improving Profitability in Small and Very Small Plants IP385
- Micro-Hydro Power: A Beginner's Guide to Design & Installation IP383
- Micro-Hydro Power: Is It Right for My Farm? IP384
- Nutrient Management in Organic Small Grains IP391
- Organic Small Grain Production Overview IP408
- Pasture for Organic Ruminant Livestock IP374
- Planning for Profit in Sustainable Farming IP419
- Returns on Renewable Energy Investments IP413
- Small-Scale Livestock Production IP411
- Specialty Crops for Cold Climates IP414
- Sustainable Season Extension IP416
- Weed Management in Organic Small Grains IP390

ATTRAnews

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