

TIPS FOR Producers



1. Be persistent

It may take several calls before you talk to the right person at the right time, while having the right product in hand. Don't be afraid to keep trying.

2. Sell your product

Arrange to visit buyers personally and take free samples. If you offer something special or unusual and know its uses, don't be afraid to offer advice.

3. Make a commitment

Businesses need a consistent product, so always work to meet buyer expectations when it comes to quantity and quality. If your product changes, call the buyer well in advance and give them the option to accept it or find another source.

4. Maintain communication

Consistently share what's going on at the farm with your customers, follow up on deliveries, find out buyers' needs, and ask them what is appreciated and what can be improved. It's all about the relationship.

5. Set a schedule

Most restaurants and other buyers have established delivery times, so you'll need to work within them. Know their busy times and plan your visits and calls accordingly.

6. Know your customers

Eat at restaurants and read their menus to see how products are used (many menus are also online). Shop at grocers to see how products are displayed and marketed.

7. Standardize billing

Prepare itemized invoices ahead; make sure your billing materials include your logo/farm identity. Some buyers are not set up for COD. Flexibility with terms can offer more opportunities, but notify buyers if they are past due.

8. Specialize and diversify

Make yourself unique. Offer something they can't get elsewhere, and you'll have your foot in the door for a long time.

9. Prep your produce

Buyers expect produce that is clean and ready to use. Doing the prep work could make the difference in gaining a repeat customer. Don't know how your customer wants produce prepped and packed? Ask them to see samples of what they like.

10. Tell us your tips

Help us improve and grow this list for next year: Email your ideas to appgrown@asapconnections.org.

Find wholesale buyers looking for local products in ASAP's online *Wholesale Local Food Guide* at appalachiangrown.org/wholesale.

BUYING LOCAL



TIPS FOR Buyers

1. Expect quality

Locally grown farm goods should meet or exceed your quality standards. But the word quality doesn't always mean the same thing to everyone. Freshness? Flavor? Uniformity? Visual perfection? Know what is important to you, and make your standards clear.

2. Make a commitment

It helps the farmer if you buy consistently while a product is in season. In fact, if you establish steady buying patterns, they may even adapt their growing practices to meet your needs.

3. Cultivate trust

Remember that it's all about the relationship. Remain flexible and patient.

4. Maintain communication

Establish a predictable routine for phone calls, orders, and questions, and give as much advance notice of your needs as you can. Do you prefer to call or be called?

5. Understand pricing

Local farms aren't a source for bargain-hunting; assume you'll pay a full, fair price for farm goods. Discuss pricing with farms to make sure they are getting what they need for their products, while also fitting your budget. Can you pay more for some products if a farm can come down on others?

6. Think seasonally

Sourcing what's fresh and in season will put more local foods on your menus and in your stores; your customers and area farmers will appreciate it. A seasonal produce availability chart is available from ASAP.

7. Pay promptly

Most farmers like to be paid either COD or in seven days. If terms are required, discuss them up front.

8. Clarify your requirements

If you have certain requirements for farmers, like GAP certification or liability insurance, be sure to let them know.

9. Learn more

Continue to seek out information about products that are available, and inspire your co-workers/staff to do the same. Visit the farms if you can, or visit area tailgate markets where many farmers sell.

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