

Tips for Selling to Restaurants

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Questions?

The Culinary Gardener



Who We Are

1.25 acres in year-round production. Sell produce 52 weeks/year.

We grow organically but have no certifications.

Located in Weaverville, NC 10 miles from downtown Asheville

3 full time employees

100% of sales to restaurants. 12 in Asheville and 1 in Atlanta. No secondary market

~200 varieties of crops per year

Most crops planted in small quantities, but we grow larger quantities of brassicas, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, shell beans, radicchio, little gems, and edible flowers.

Each account gets a different availability list based on purchase history and quantities available.



Relationships

A good relationship is essential for longevity with a restaurant account

I initially developed my relationships by bringing product samples to restaurants I wanted to work with.

First meeting--speak to your style and vision as a farmer, but let the quality and appeal of your product do most of the talking. Don't act too cocky or self conscious.

Both chefs and farmers can be very awkward. As long as you don't act super weird and have a good product, you will be fine!

Communication leading up to delivery day is via text. Most direct and effective communication--some chefs don't have personal email addresses, but all have phones.

I do all the deliveries. This is where I am able to communicate directly with chefs.



Quality

Number 1 most important

Enormous amount of labor involved in our harvesting and processing techniques. Main reason I have 3 full time employees on 1.25 acres.

50% total expenses is labor

No seconds--detracts from overall quality and not worth the small additional revenue

Quality=unique crops or variety selections of crops focused on flavor (#1), texture, color, size, delivered in a pristine form.

Chefs know my product by look



Quality as Value Added

Unique crops/curated variety selection

Combine with growing and harvest techniques that always strive to maximize inherent beauty, flavor, texture

No yellow or diseased leaves, no broken leaves, no bruises, keep crops symmetrical in shape, minimal to no pest damage

Harvest to maximize usability, not weight. No outer leaves on radicchio, little gems, cabbage

Packaging and presentation equally important

Allows me to charge premium prices. 60% above retail, 30% retail and 10% slightly below retail (helps to create balance)



Trialing

Always looking for new crops or varieties of crops--there's got to be something better out there!

Less than 10 chef requests for crops per year. They leave it in my hands so it's up to me to grow desirable produce.

15-20% of total varieties per year I have never grown before

Huge amount of risk involved in this approach

Most don't make the cut=lost revenue

A few successful crops or varieties per year can equal tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars in future revenue.

Success stories: Tetragonia, Agretti, Artichokes, Sweet Alyssum, Sprouting Cauliflower, Crosnes, Forced Radicchio



Against the Grain



Who We Are



full time farm family

80% gross vegetables

20% gross livestock

certified Biodynamic,
Organic and AWA

Market Channel Breakdown

Farmer's Market - 45%

Restaurants - 22%

CSA - 15%

Food Hub - 7%

On-farm/distributor/natural foods store - 11%



Building Relationships



Initial meeting:

-what crops do chefs want?

-what crops can you grow at the price point they want?

-what communication system works best?

Annual meeting:

-reflect on past year sales

-what else can we do?

Consistency is Key

weekly listings

predictable delivery
times

quality

packaging



Lot#

619 Camp Joy Rd.
Zionville, NC 28698

Certified Organic by OneCert, Inc.
Certified Biodynamic® by Demeter



CERTIFIED
BIODYNAMIC®



Start Small and Know Your Limits

build a few strong relationships

stay close to the farm

don't promise too much

be receptive and responsive

know your price point

Colfax Creek Farm



Grass Fed Beef

Pastured Pork

Pastured Chicken

Pastured Eggs

Our family has been farming here in Western North Carolina for nearly 120 years. We are proud to be farmers and cherish the many relationships that farming creates. At Colfax Creek Farm, we work to balance the traditions and heritage of our past while influencing and inspiring future generations of farmers. The goals of creating a better food system, regenerating the lands and soils that we farm, and reviving the rural communities around us all drive us to become better farmers and stewards of our land and animals.

We currently serve to over a dozen restaurants in the Asheville area and several more across the Foothills and Upstate South Carolina.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS!

- Pricing
- Production
- Logistics
- Growth

- Build Relationships
- What's the best way of communication?
- Be flexible
- Be consistent
- Be persistent
- Always remember easy come, easy go!



Questions?

**Grower-Buyer
Meeting
12:30-2:15**