

Want to know more?

Contact these groups.

- Buy Fresh Buy Local:
Iowa program—
www.practicalfarmers.org/buyfresh.asp
national program—
www.foodroutes.org
- City or county health inspector
- Food Alliance—www.foodalliance.org/
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship—
www.agriculture.state.ia.us/agdiversification.htm
- Iowa Department of Inspection and Appeals—www.dia.iowa.gov/food
515/281-6538
- ISU Extension Distribution Center—
www.extension.iastate.edu/store
- ISU Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management Extension: local foods—
www.iastatelocalfoods.org
- Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture—
www.leopold.iastate.edu
- Produce Marketing Association—
www.pma.com
- United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association—www.unitedfresh.org
- United States Food and Drug Administration: “Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables ”—
www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/ProduceandPlanProducts/ucm064574.htm

These resources focus on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS):

Cornell University Good Agricultural Practices Project—
www.gaps.cornell.edu

New England Extension Food Safety Consortium—
www.hort.uconn.edu/ipm/foodsafety/index.htm

United States Department of Agriculture—
www.ams.usda.gov/fv/fpbgapghp.htm

University of California-Davis Postharvest Technology Research and Information Center—
<http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu>



LEOPOLD CENTER

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... and justice for all

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What producers should know about selling to local foodservice markets



Gary Guthrie farms near Nevada, Iowa.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

Selling fruits and vegetables to local foodservice markets helps the regional economy, raises consumers' awareness of food origins, and contributes to a sustainable world. A good marketing strategy includes telling your food production story, identifying the action steps you've taken to minimize food safety risks, and clearly communicating with potential buyers.

While most fresh produce is not classified as a potentially hazardous food, outbreaks of foodborne illnesses from raw produce have raised concerns of consumers and food buyers. As the person selling food, you have a responsibility not only to ensure its safety but also to be prepared to explain the action steps you've taken to demonstrate how you have taken reasonable care.

Protect your product

Follow GAPS (Good Agricultural Production Practices)

- Use a water testing program and keep test records on file.
- Use potable water for post-harvest cleaning of food products and when cleaning storage containers.
- Protect wells and other water sources from contamination (e.g., manure, livestock, chemicals, or pets).
- Regularly wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces.
- Incorporate raw manure into the soil at least 180 days prior to harvest.
- Do not use raw manure on crops harvested within 120 days.

- Clean and, when possible, sanitize baskets, totes, and other containers used to collect or transport food products on a regular schedule, and additionally, as needed.
- Use food grade packaging materials that are clean and stored in areas protected from pests and animals (pets and wild).
- Store food product(s) at appropriate temperatures.
- Use an enclosed packing facility that is protected from pests and domestic animals.

Ensure worker sanitation and safety practices

- Workers are trained about proper sanitation and hygiene practices.
- Toilets and handwashing facilities with appropriate supplies are available to workers in the field and in the packing facility.
- Workers are aware of and practice handwashing—after eating, smoking, and using toilets, and before packing product.
- Bare hand contact with foods is limited.
- Workers change aprons and gloves between harvesting and packing.
- Workers are aware of illnesses and symptoms when they should not work around food (e.g., fever, diarrhea, nausea).

Tell your story

Share your farm and personal profile

- Mission statement—why you do what you do
- Length of time as a community member
- Level of community involvement
- Your production practices
- Your farming history and that of your family
- Pictures of your facility and product(s)
- Special recipes with your products

Provide buyer(s) with promotional materials about your farm and product(s)

Discuss business details

Talk about product specifications

- What are the foodservice's requirements to become a vendor (i.e., application process, insurance coverage, etc.)?
- What is the buyer's desired variety, quality, and size of product(s)?
- What substitutes are acceptable to the buyer? When does the buyer need to know that a substituted product will be delivered?
- What are appropriate packing containers? (Type of packaging must protect integrity of food items; garbage bags are not acceptable.)

Explain the ordering procedure

- How far in advance will you be able to give information about available products and amounts?
- How should orders be given to you? (By phone, FAX, online?)
- If you are unable to fulfill an order (amount or quality), how and when will you tell buyer?
- What is the price and unit of costing?

Discuss the delivery options

- When is the best time for orders to be received?
- How frequently are deliveries needed?

Determine the payment process

- How much time does the buyer need to add a vendor to its list?
- What is the timing for payment of invoices?

Build a long-term relationship

Ask for feedback and listen to comments

- Are there any preferred varieties?
- Is product a consistent quality?