



MARKETING IS AN ESSENTIAL PART IN THE SUCCESS OF A SMALL FARMER GROWING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.

Although many people who join the farming industry are drawn to the production and growing tasks, the farm will have no sustainable success without marketing.

Marketing is what sets apart some small operations from simply being a hobby.

This marketing publication is intended to be used as a starting point for small fruit and vegetable farmers in Northwest Florida. It will help these individuals identify different steps that need to be taken in order for them to have the opportunity to pursue marketing in new, emerging, or traditional marketing channels.

FARMERS' MARKETS



Farmers' markets are a very traditional and long standing market venue. Farmers' markets provide a common space for farmers and consumers to connect. Location, hours, and facilities are important aspects for successful farmers' markets. Good location with predictable hours and adequate facilities draw consumers to the market to buy local produce. **Advantages of selling at a farmers' market include: setting your own prices, building relationships with consumers and other farmers, and minimal start-up costs and overhead expenses.**

CHECKLIST

Requirements and recommendations for Farmers' Markets:

OBTAIN LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSES AND PERMITS

FOLLOW FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES

COOL PRODUCT DURING STORAGE/DELIVERY

PACKAGE PRODUCTS ACCORDINGLY

CREATE AN ATTRACTIVE BOOTH DISPLAY

FOLLOW FARMERS' MARKET RULES AND REGULATIONS

FOLLOW FLORIDA COTTAGE FOOD LAWS

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSES AND PERMITS

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) is the regulatory authority for selling produce in the Florida Panhandle. FDACS does not require a license or permit to sell fresh, unprocessed fruits and vegetables from a roadside stand. However, county and/or city permits may be required in your area to sell fresh, unprocessed produce. Please check with your local agencies before selling at a farmers' market. It is always a good idea to purchase a business tax receipt (business license) for the county where your business is located.



FOOD SAFETY

Foodborne illnesses are a serious issue that require the attention of growers and buyers. Considering the complexity of the food system, there is potential for widespread foodborne illnesses to occur because of contaminated produce. Prevention of contamination is the key to reducing the risk of human pathogens appearing on fresh produce. Food safety plans are required to sell produce to other markets but are not required for direct sale markets such as farmers' markets. However, food safety plans are not difficult to make and will help prevent foodborne illnesses. This is extremely important for farmers who sell directly to the consumer since your goal should be to establish and maintain a good relationship with the consumer. (<http://bit.ly/1sdCTEY>).

STORAGE/DELIVERY COOLING

Produce must be cooled, stored, and delivered appropriately to maximize the shelf life. This can be a difficult task for small growers because of the lack of essential equipment such as a refrigerated truck. It is important for these growers to choose lower maintenance crops that have lower respiration rates. Utilizing shade trees and canopy covered trailers, removing field heat without delay, and packing with crushed ice are some simple techniques that can be used to prevent the product from getting too warm. Good records must be kept to monitor the temperature of the product from harvest to delivery.

PRODUCT PACKAGING

Consumers make purchases based on their emotions and package color and shape. It is important that your product packaging communicates your farm's image and product quality to the consumer. Fresh produce in a clean carton is simple and allows the consumer to inspect for quality, but creative labeling can incite an emotional response of farm loyalty in the consumer. Labelling should simply display the name of your farm in a design that reflects your farm's values.



BOOTH DISPLAY

Farmers' Markets typically feature vendors selling the same or similar products. A good way to differentiate your products from those of your competitors is with a creative and attractive display. Color, signage, and cleanliness are extremely important components of a good farmers' market display. Colorful tablecloths, banners, and display containers can make a booth stand out. You should have signage unique to your farm and that proudly communicates your values and traditions. Your goal should be to create a "brand" for your farm and its products. Your products should neatly and cleanly be arranged on the table or in containers.



FARMERS' MARKET RULES AND REGULATIONS

Farmers' Markets are typically non-profit organizations that garner direction and guidance from an advisory board. Farmers' Markets require a market manager who is either a full-time employee or vendor volunteer, depending on the size of the market. It is important that you choose a market that has similar values to your own. A well-organized farmers' market will have well-structured bylaws and rules in place that are enforced. The bylaws and rules typically include items such as an organizational structure, purpose and objectives, and hours of operation.

FLORIDA COTTAGE FOOD LAW

Value-added products help to distinguish and diversify a farmers' market booth and can potentially increase interest in farm products. The Florida Cottage Food Law allows individuals to manufacture, sell, and store certain types of "cottage food" products in an unlicensed home kitchen. These home kitchens are not inspected by any state government entity, though local laws may apply. Cottage foods are to be labeled accordingly. Annual gross sales from cottage food items cannot exceed \$15,000. Cottage food items must be labeled properly. For more information about the Florida Cottage Food Law, visit www.freshfromflorida.com/Business-Services/Search-by-Business/Food-Inspections/Cottage-Foods. You may also use this shortened link: <http://bit.ly/1pl5wOK> or scan the QR code below:



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
REGARDING MARKETING
FRESH VEGETABLES AND
FRUIT, CONTACT YOUR
LOCAL UF/IFAS
EXTENSION AGENT.**

This is one in a series of marketing checklists intended to be used as a starting point for small fruit and vegetable farmers in Northwest Florida. It will help these individuals identify different steps that need to be taken in order for them to have the opportunity to pursue marketing in new, emerging, or traditional marketing channels.

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