

**DIRECT SALES TO RESTAURANTS** or FARM TO TABLE

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**Legal Aid of Nebraska, Farm Law Project**  
In collaboration with  
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**GROWING POPULARITY OF SELLING DIRECTLY TO RESTAURANTS**

- Restaurants receive high-quality, fresh and local foods while supporting the local economy
- Consumers appreciate, and are often willing to pay more, for the better quality goods
- Producers continue to build relationships with local businesses and customers
- Surveys show profitable for restaurants also



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## CHALLENGES IN FARM TO TABLE

- In a nutshell: getting the right product in the right quantity to the right place at the right time
- Limited seasonal availability
- Inflexible restaurant menus coupled with varied harvest times
- High turnover and tight finances within restaurants
- Costs to producers when meeting state health regulations



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## WHAT RESTAURANTS WANT

- High quality products that are fresh and have good flavor
- Knowledge of how a product is raised or grown
- Consistent quality of products
- Strict adherence to food safety
- Knowledge of a product's possible uses
- Enough quantity to meet demand



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## APPROACHING POTENTIAL RESTAURANTS

A strong relationship with restaurants requires trust, patience, and effort and is invaluable to a successful partnership.

- Do your research. Eat at the restaurant, noting the menu, the clientele, and special features.
- Find out who is in charge of procuring food (chef or manager) and ask for the best time (not meal hours) to meet with them.
- Be professional. Dress neatly; bring photos, samples if possible and written information about its history, location, and practices.



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## APPROACHING POTENTIAL RESTAURANTS

- Tell them what you can provide and when, how it will be sold, how often you can deliver, and how much it will cost.
- Be direct about what you are able to do, your flexibility, and how much you can supply
- Explain why your product is better than the competition
- Learn what their logistical demands are: delivery, packaging, standards, invoice procedure, etc.
- Have all contact information.
- Invite them to your farm.



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## MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP

- Develop logistics that work for both you and the restaurant (time of deliveries, packaging, reuse of containers).
- Always be on time.
- Develop and maintain a simple, clear invoice system.
- Reliability is crucial so restaurants can plan ahead and fulfill menu options.



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## MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP

- Communicate your projections and any possible obstacles, preferable a week or two in advance.
- Bring seed catalogues to the restaurant during winter – let chefs have some input into selection
- Be attentive – call and ask if they are pleased; discuss their future plans; stay in touch

**Be reliable, flexible and honest.**



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Adapted from University of California Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University Extension, Traces, UNL Food Processing Center and ATTRIA

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