

FARMERS MARKETS

Growing

Legal Aid of Nebraska, Farm Law Project
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WHY SO POPULAR?

Farmers markets have sprung up all over the country as consumers demand the best and freshest produce.

- Local markets offer opportunity to connect local producers with local consumers.
- Communities are strengthened both economically and socially.
- Fresh, healthy food is provided to communities, some of which would otherwise be without.
- If no market already exists in your area, there are many resources to help start one.



GETTING STARTED

- Careful planning and budgeting is crucial. Use resources available to draft business plan.
- Familiarize yourself with health and legal guidelines for everything from post-harvest handling to setting up your stand. Again, use resources provided by state and local agencies.
- Sellers of home-baked or value-added goods must attend special trainings or have a Level II or Level III Food Handler's Permit. Check with your county health department or area health inspector.

POST HARVEST HANDLING AND STORAGE

- The best quality gets the best prices, so bringing high-quality, safely-handled and well-packaged produce to market is essential.
- Look to online guides for safe handling and storage of produce, including those from UNL, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service and the Department of Defense.



THE STAND

Stand Presentation

- Organized and neat
- Food off the ground in food grade containers
- Wear disposable gloves when handling food
- Dispose of trash properly
- Keep stand shaded if possible



THE STAND

Produce Presentation

- Produce should be washed (or at least rinsed so most visible dirt is removed) and labeled with name, price and any interesting information about the item
- Group produce by use (all salad ingredients together) or by type (all peppers together)
- Keep your stand full; if running low move produce to smaller containers
- Spritz produce with water on hot days (of course with drinking water)
- If hot consider packaged ice or freezer blocks under containers, or display some produce and keep remainder in coolers

The Stand



PRICING/MARKETING

Pricing

- Price fairly (considering your costs) but give yourself a fair markup. Know your competitors prices and quality.
- Customers will pay reasonable prices for high-quality produce from producers they know
- Keep prices stable but remember it is easier to lower prices than to raise them
- Have a cash box, small bills and change, and a paperweight
- If you use a scale at the market it must be certified.

Marketing

- Tell your story. Customers like to know where you are from, what you grow and how, so they can put a face to a farm.
- Consider "branding" with a logo and a name that customers will remember. A small handout to put in their bag is helpful
- Offer samples: new customers taste your quality and returning customers can try new items (no special permit is needed)

BASIC SALESMANSHIP

- Be friendly, courteous, kind and outgoing
- Be professional and presentable
- Be knowledgeable about your product
- Be attentive and ask questions when appropriate
- Be open to negotiation



*Adapted from UNL Local Foods Network,
ATTRIA, and Univ. of Missouri Extension*
