



# What are my marketing options?

*The objective of this topic is to present market types relevant to beginning farmers, find those best matched with their capacity and interests, and establish the requirements to enter those marketplaces. There are **many** ways to market farm products. The ones you choose will be critical to the success and sustainability of the business you are running!*

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES: WHY DO THIS?

- Farmers need outlets to sell their goods to earn income.
- Many consumers don't shop direct from farmers anymore, so farmers must get creative to encourage customers to shop.
- It's easy to default to a farmer's market. New options have developed, please consider all of them. The market must be right for the farmer. Appropriate markets change as the farm evolves.
- Farms can optimize their income by selecting the outlets that are the best match for their skill set.

## BEST LOCATION

A quiet space where you can have a focused discussions with those on your farm who would be involved in the marketing of your products.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES: WHAT CAN PARTICIPANTS LEARN?

- To learn about all the **options** to sell products.
- How to **rank** the market opportunities to determine the best ones for a given farm.
- The farmer needs to make good plans to make the **biggest impact** with the marketing outlets selected.
- By looking at all the market options, a farm manager can rule out those that are not a good match for their business! (see options chart, expanded in next pages)

## BEST TIME OF YEAR

Fall/Winter/Not in growing season



## Marketing

### What are my marketing options?

#### IMPORTANCE FOR BEGINNING FARMERS

The most obvious outlet for a small farmer or beginning farmer is to attend the local farmers market. This is NOT the only option!

Perhaps, start with the first marketing module before doing this one. It will help you see what your skill sets and products are before choosing a marketing avenue.

Consider your time constraints, growing choices, staffing options to help you select the right market, maybe more than one market type!

There is value to marketing through a diverse set of outlets to maximize income potential and minimize risk.

#### UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULUM

We'll review all options. It's up to you to choose which is best for your business.

Not only can you learn from the resources offered here but also from one another and other farmers you speak with. This approach is a big part of this and all the modules offered..



## Facilitator Planning & Preparation

Activity	Est. Instructional Time
Consider Farmers Markets	1 Hr
Consider Online Sales	1 Hr
Consider Wholesale Sales	1 Hr
Consider Operating a CSA	1 Hr
Consider a U-Pick Operation	1 Hr
Rank your Top 3 Marketing Outlet Choices	



## Technical Content

### KEY WORDS:

**Gross price** Gross price is the total price you sell your product .

**Net price** Net price is defined as gross price minus any costs you incur from selling the product.

**Revenue** The income you earn from your products before expenses are subtracted.

**Expenses** Costs associated with growing and selling your products.

**Vendor Fees** Traditional farmers markets charge a stall rental fee on a weekly or seasonal basis.

**Cottage Food Law** These are the rules if you are selling anything that is made in your home kitchen. MDARD has detailed information.

### Food Hub

A food hub is an organization that manages the collections and distribution of produce.

The produce is collected from several farms and may go to several markets such as schools, community kitchens and farm stands.

It often provides food to area outlets that are local or regional.

Food hubs strengthen the ability of producers to meet local/regional wholesale/retail/institutional demand.

**Net price = Gross price - Expenses**

### GAAMP

Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs) are guidelines for farm management that help promote a positive image of Michigan agriculture.



## Marketing

### What are my marketing options?

## Technical Content

### KEY WORDS:

**Online Commerce** Using the **internet** to sell your products, from ordering through payment. Requires delivery or pickup of product.

**Platform** The online access method or web site that processes product information and sales. There are several apps that can do this such as????

**SNAP or EBT** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also called the EBT card, Food Stamps, Bridge Card, offered as food assistance

**CSA** Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a unique model in which a farm provides a specified amount of produce or farm products to a customer on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly schedule during the growing season. The customer pays the subscription fee before the season.

**CSA Share** The agreed upon contents of your weekly/biweekly/monthly box/bag with your consumer base. Should be specific and be able to answer questions about how many people could use the share/for how long.

**Agro-tourism** Agritourism is a commercial activity that combines agriculture and tourism to attract visitors to a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business. The goal of agritourism is to educate and entertain visitors while generating income for the business owner.





## **FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Farmers should match their skills and products with the market type(s) they choose.

### **It is helpful if the facilitator has:**

- Experience in marketing farmed or cottage food products
- Managed a farmers market or done online marketing
- An understanding of the skill sets needed and the desire to ensure selection of the right markets for beginning farmers
- Has a basic knowledge of the participants' farming situations

### **Additionally, the following actions would be good (but not mandatory) to help learners to apply the concepts:**

- Have developed a business plan for an agriculture business that addresses marketing.
- Understands the costs of farming and benefits of different market options.
- Understands how to and the value of sales tracking and sales growth trends



## FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION (*cont.*):

This theme consists of two modules.

The **first module** presented how a farmer may sell their produce to various markets. It encourages them to think about who would be participating in their marketing initiatives and what are theirs and the skill sets of their team members. The first module also guides them to clearly identify what they are selling. It is possible that a farmer will grow produce to satisfy specific markets.

**This second module gives an overview of each of the outlet types, allowing the farmer to think about which is the best match for them based on their abilities, preferences, what they grow, amount they grow, where they are located, and what time they have available.**

See the *following* page for a chart that describes the various market-types.

## Building a Thriving Marketplace

### A FOCUS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

At Michigan markets, on average half of vendors (47%) are farmers, primarily selling the agricultural food products they grow or raise. Many of these farmers also offer other types of products, including crafts (23%), cottage foods (21%), and/or licensed food products (16%). When weathering seasonal changes or unexpected crop issues, farmers can still make their trips to market worthwhile by supplementing with sales of other products to make their income more consistent.

**\*From the MIFMA Census of Michigan Farmers Markets**





## KWL Process

*Know, Want to Know, Learn*

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### **Suggested prompting questions for farmers to share from their experience:**

- Which market outlets are you already very familiar with? What is your *first* idea of a way to market your produce?
  - What are your thoughts on each?
- Have you already possibly selected a market? Why?
- How much up-front money do you need to start?
  - Stall fees, employee expenses, travel expenses
- How regularly do you need payment from the market where you will sell?
- What kind of pricing and volume of produce can you handle? (wholesale is less, and requires higher volume whereas direct sales get a higher price, but you'll sell fewer items)



### **Suggested prompting questions to find out what participants want to learn:**

- Imagine yourself in each outlet
- Which of YOUR skills match the outlet?
- How does the the \$ timing match your needs? (cash on the day of the market vs payment through a platform, perhaps 30-60 days out)
- How does the volume, variety, and type of harvested product from your farm match the market's needs?
- What kind of infrastructure do you already have and what will you need to develop to begin marketing to new outlets?



## Primary Activities

*Assess your marketplace options*

### Activity 1

#### Consider Farmers Markets

This is the most traditional way of selling farmed goods direct to consumers. Farmers markets have a long history and are great opportunities to grow community!

##### **Action: Visit Farmers Markets**

Visit some farmers markets to get a feel for the environment and differences between them. Observe the difference in time of day and the impact of weather. Speak to a couple of farmer vendors and market master if possible.

### Activity 3

#### Consider Wholesale Sales

Wholesale opportunities are larger volume sales often at lower "wholesale" pricing. If you have a lot of product, consider this.

##### **Action: Talk with a grocer that carries some local product:**

Set up an appointment to visit their store, ask questions to understand the process and possibility of selling to them.

### Activity 2

#### Consider Online Sales

Online sales are a newer way to sell goods, either directly to a consumer or to a bigger account like an institution!

##### **Action: Sign up for an online platform**

Watch a video from an online sales platform ([Barn2Door](#))- 5 minutes. See what is required, ask questions (usually a chat bot) and get a feel for what is required in this sort of market.

### Activity 4

#### Consider operating a CSA

CSAs are a weekly, biweekly or monthly obligation to provide a set of products to a consumer or family.,

##### **Action: Talk with several farms offering CSAs in areas other than your own. CSAs differ widely and you should look at several.**

Watch the [Barn2Door video](#) - 5 minutes. See what is required, ask questions (usually a chat bot) and get a feel for what is required. Check out [LocalHarvest](#) for CSA information



## Primary Activities (cont.)

*Assess your marketplace options*

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### Activity 5

#### Consider a U-Pick Operation

U-Picks are a way to get consumers to come to YOU. They would come to your property and pick the products that you grow.

**Action: Visit several U-Pick operations to see how they operate, what their infrastructure is like, and better understand the scenario where you would have customers spend time on your property!**

Visit **several** U-Pick operations and really look at the operational needs of running one-from production to delivery to the customer and everything in between. Each is a little different but you will see the requirements. Be sure to also note the requirements for U-Pick regarding food safety for produce.

### Activity 6

**Rank the 3 market options that fit your capabilities/skills/return requirements**





# 1. Consider Farmers Markets

Visit a busy market. Also visit a quiet one.

## OVERVIEW

Every farmers market is different: different days, different farms in the area, different rules, different fees, different business, and even different focuses (i.e. *produce vs crafts*). Some markets lack items that you grow and will be more interested in your attendance.

Questions to ask are suggested on the next page.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

Bring a **notebook**. Observe the market, first from the consumer's viewpoint and second, from the vendors viewpoint.



## FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The facilitator should be able to envision the “field trip” and engage the farmer with ideas of what to look for.

The facilitator should check out farmers markets within a reasonable travel distance and select at least two markets to visit that will provide two very different market experiences for the learners. Optionally, the facilitator could reach out to the market managers for more information and even invite them to meet the beginning farmers.

To locate nearby farmers markets, use this tool from the Michigan Farmers Market Association: <https://mifma.org/find-a-farmers-market/> or the other websites listed at the end of this activity.



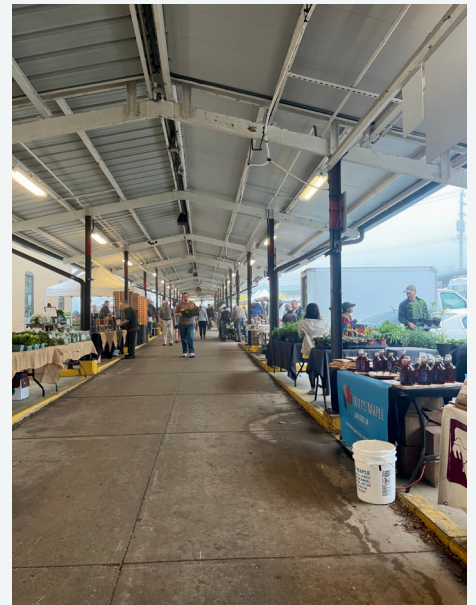
Norm Holtz at this booth at Easter Market in the early dark am hours. Photo by Kathy Sample



## 1. Consider Farmers Markets

Here are some things you might do during your visit to market:

- Perhaps practice these questions with each other prior to a trip to the market. Give each other feedback.
- **Upon arrival**, just observe the vendors, customers, stall setup and general feel of the market. Is it a style where you would like to sell. Do you think your produce is compatible with what is on offer. Also consider the time of the growing season for your visit.
- **Approach the Market Manager** to ask questions:
  - How many vendors are here?
  - What other products do you need to be a robust market?
  - What are the market rules?
  - When is the market open?
  - What times is the market the busiest?
  - What is the foot traffic?
  - what is the overall inclo m at this market (they will likely have general answers but it will tell you about volume)
  - Is this a producer-only market? what are vendor requirements for what they sell?
- **Approach individual farmers** in the market area where you hope to sell.







## 1. Consider Farmers Markets

**Here are some things you might do during your visit to market (cont.):**

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- If asked in the right way, and **not during a busy time**, farmers want to help each other out. Don't be disappointed if one refuses to talk with you, find the ones that will talk to you, keep asking different farmers to find the ones who are forward thinking and have a reputation for being friendly.
  - Introduce yourself and share a bit about your farm and tell them that you are looking for a market to sell your produce.
  - Ask about how they like this market
  - Ask if there are other markets and venues in the area. Which other markets do they sell at, if any?
  - Make it a general conversation about the needs of this particular market and/or what they like about selling here
  - Go really early or at the end of the market (though they may be trying to get out of there) so you do not disrupt their sales times.
- Watch **customers** in this market
  - Are they engaged, happy to be there?
  - What are they buying?
  - How are they shopping - using credit, cash, SNAP EBT?



*\*From the MIFMA Census of Michigan Farmers Markets*



## 2. Consider Online Sales



### OVERVIEW

Sign up for an online platform tutorial or trial. (Note: You'll have to enter personal information here)

Watch the Barn2Door video - 5 minutes.

See what is required, ask questions (usually a chat bot) and get a feel for what is required. It is *one* example of an online platform. Inclusion of this video is not a recommendation/endorsement .



**Note:** Barn2Door is an online platform; like all of these platforms they are constantly growing their offerings.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Computer
- Internet connection
- Concentration
- A notebook for taking notes



### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The platform sites are now using video testimonials which offer some interesting feedback, but the farmer needs to go deeper and actually *investigate each platform*.

For example, these platforms offer a comprehensive solution, at a cost, and the farmer may actually need something (i.e. a web site) that could be developed at a lower cost than signing up for a comprehensive platform.

Encourage them to talk to their friends about what they like of that platform and do not like..

Also, once you are in a platform it is hard work to change, so the time spent up front is really valuable.

Another useful activity would be to have folks take this quiz about whether E-Commerce is right for their farm: <https://caff.org/IS-ECOMMERCE-RIGHT-FOR-MY-FARM/> and also read the Tips for Beginners section on this linked website.











## Marketing

### What are my marketing options?

## ACTIVITY 2 - HANDOUT

# Online Platform Options

(not comprehensive, always changing. Ask other farms what they are using. Once you pick a platform and start using it, it is very difficult to change to another.)

ONLINE PLATFORMS	Overview	Web Site	Comments
Barn 2 Door 	Provides marketing, e-mail, web site development, marketing toolkit. Produce specific, caters to small farms.	<a href="https://www.barn2door.com/marketing-overview">https://www.barn2door.com/marketing-overview</a>	Probably the most used, constantly updating, form feedback has been good. Feedback is that you need to really learn the platform and then it will be much easier.
Harvie 	Harvie is dedicated to making it easier for you to buy your everyday groceries from local farms, small businesses and artisans.	<a href="https://www.harvie.farm/">https://www.harvie.farm/</a>	Harvie is nationwide and set up to sell for one or more farms, and they also have some food hubs that do customer CSAs so they know the CSA business
Market Wagon 	Market Wagon partners with more than 2,500 local farmers and artisans to deliver their goods to 45,000+ doorsteps.	<a href="https://marketwagon.com/">https://marketwagon.com/</a>	Started in Indianapolis, active in Michigan, required that the former come to the warehouse and put their items in the orders, which is fine if you got a lot of orders but not if you did not sell much....
Local Line 	This platform allows you to create a website and sell directly to customers, but it can also connect you to grocery store and restaurant buyers looking for farm-fresh inventory.	<a href="https://site.localline.ca/">https://site.localline.ca/</a>	Canadian Company, small but responsive, continually updating, used by small farms as well as food hubs...
Farmish.com 	Create a free listing to sell your homegrown produce, chicken eggs, supplies, plants, trees, and more. Active and needs more sellers.	<a href="https://getfarmish.com/">https://getfarmish.com/</a>	Based in Michigan, matching consumers with farmed goods
GrazeCart 	"Selling food online is hard. We make it easy, with all the tools and strategy you need to scale sales, inventory, shipping, and more."	<a href="https://www.grazecart.com/">https://www.grazecart.com/</a>	Focused on meat, owned now by POS Nation, a larger POS company
Squarespace 	Allow your customers to browse your merchandise, add items to their cart, and check out simply and efficiently. Not produce specific. No personal help.	<a href="https://www.squarespace.com/e-commerce/sell-products">https://www.squarespace.com/e-commerce/sell-products</a>	General retail, impossible to find a human to work with
Shopify 	Shopify is a complete commerce platform that lets anyone start, manage, and grow a business. Build an online store, manage sales, market your products. Not produce specific. No personal help.	<a href="https://www.shopify.com/blog/what-is-shopify">https://www.shopify.com/blog/what-is-shopify</a>	General retail, impossible to find a human to work with; subscription fees are \$\$\$

**Note: The list on online platforms is constantly changing. For example, at the time of this writing, Harvie is redefining it's future. Talking with other foarmers is a great way to see the platforms that are working for them.**

## Want a deeper dive into online platforms?

The CSA Innovation network has developed a comprehensive list of online platforms that you can use as a reference if you want to investigate online commerce more thoroughly.



## 2. Consider Online Sales

### PROCEDURE

When you sign up for these platforms, you are usually going to be signing up for their mailing lists, so be aware of that.

“Barn2Door,” is one of the larger platforms to offer online services and this is *only one suggestion*. Use the chart from the previous page to check out other possible online services to see which one fits your preferences. Ask friends and other farmers what they use and how they like it.

Before you proceed to sign up, make a list of **what you need from such a platform**.

- Web Site development?
- Marketing e-mails to customers?
- A point of sale processing venue that accepts payment and how?
- An inventory management system

The Community Alliance of Family Farmers has developed a **quiz** that helps farms understand how e-commerce might fit with their operations.

You should take this quiz even if you are not ready to commit to e-commerce. note that most online services offer a free trial period. Take advantage of a free trial, or free versions to play around with everything and understand what platforms they offer. Choose a time to sign up for a trial when you actually have time to try it out as trials are typically a short period of time then they charge you. Also visit this site to see what other farmers think of various platforms offered by **Taste the Local Difference**.

Note: Online platforms want to capture all of your business, all aspects from listing products to capturing \$; but there are individual companies that may do some of these less expensively. You don't have to do everything with one company. You may want to host your website with Company A but your online store with Company B, etc.



## 3. Consider Wholesale Sales

### OVERVIEW

Speak directly with a grocer who carries some local products (the produce manager is ideal).

Wholesale accounts can be good to move volume of produce, provide standardized products, and a way to expand your farm.

Wholesale buyers expect lower prices, have quality expectations, food safety requirements. They also may stop buying unexpectedly so it is good to talk about those practices.

Wholesale accounts require a good relationship, like all initiatives. Exploring this possibility will help you both establish relationships and identify if this is a good outlet for you.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bring a notebook and take notes.
- Ask questions about existing relationships with farmers and what the wholesaler needs from you.
- Be ready to speak with different levels of management in the store(s)

### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The realities of wholesale can be a big step for a smaller farmer and a *big reach* for a beginning farmer, so they need to know the associated demands from the wholesaler.

Facilitators could invite a grocer to meet with the students, even virtually, to allow for direct questions and a complete learning experience. The students could prepare questions in advance for the facilitator to review them.

Selling to **local schools** is also an option. The **Michigan Farm to Institution Network** may be able to help get you connected directly to schools and/or distributors and food hubs that sell to schools.

This may be a good opportunity for the facilitator to role play with the participants about how to set up a conversation with a potential wholesale customer. It'll make it easier when they go and do it.



### 3. Consider Wholesale Sales: GROCERY

#### OVERVIEW

Talk directly with a grocer that carries some local products (the produce manager is ideal).

Wholesale accounts can be good to sell a large quantity at one time, require specific sizes, packaging, and types of produce. These accounts require relationships, like all initiatives. Exploring these relationships will help you both establish relationships and identify if this is a good outlet for you.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bring a notebook.
- Ask questions about existing relationships with farmers and what the wholesalers needs from you.
- Be ready to speak with different levels of management in the store(s)

#### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The reality of wholesale is that the **quantities** are larger, and **delivery** is demanding, **pricing** is lower, and the **payment process** needs to be clearly defined, and small producers need to establish expectations in a contract so ensure that everyone understands the arrangement.

Another plus to working wholesale is streamlined and minimal "customer touches"







## 3.Consider Wholesale Sales: RESTAURANT

### OVERVIEW

Talk directly with a restaurant manager or owner in your area. Not a large chain but a small local site.

Restaurants accounts can be good to sell a large quantity. These accounts require relationships, like all initiatives.

Do they buy from any local farms? What products could they buy? What would be their view of doing this if they are not doing it now? Can they make a commitment to you?

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bring a notebook.
- Ask questions about existing relationships with farmers and what the wholesalers needs from you.
- Be ready to speak with different levels of management in the store(s)

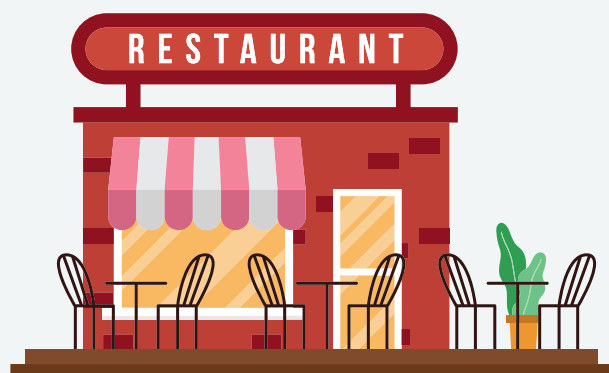
### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Restaurants are one of the more difficult customers because they are looking for product at low prices, and their needs vary based on menu changes.

Chefs may not have the **time** to deal with different suppliers, or may have commitments from their management.

Also **payment** from restaurants needs to be clearly set up so it runs smoothly and is on a schedule,

There are some chefs out there who understand that locally sourcing can be a superior product, but this takes a close relationship and willingness to deal directly with the farmer.







## 4. Consider operating a CSA: Community Supported Agriculture

### OVERVIEW

A Community Supported Agriculture share requires a level of planning and expertise to operate. Timing of extended season crop production and recruiting customers early in the year are critical.

Each share should contain an amount of food to meet the established needs of the member agreement. It can be a produce CSA, produce and fruit, meat, whatever you want to market. You should anticipate family/share size and what you are offering the consumer.

To provide a wide array of produce, aim to harvest between five and 12 different types of produce each week. Plan the number of available shares your farm can accommodate.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- A meeting room to learn
- A farmer who does a CSA to present
- A flip chart or board to record learners comments and questions

### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The facilitator should know about the practical aspects of a CSA operation.

Here is a good resource to familiarize yourself with CSAs: <https://caff.org/csa/>



- Best to have a CSA farmers about their experiences, good and bad.
- Have learners look up CSA operations on line to see the wide variety.
  - FSA site:
  - Ask learners to discuss if they would select CSAs for market outlet and why



## 4. Consider operating a CSA

### Recommended steps to take in planning to start a CSA *from the Michigan CSA Network*

- **Understand your local zoning laws and license requirements.** You don't want surprises when it comes to establishing your business. Are you zoned correctly? Do you need special permission to distribute in the location for customer pickup or is it even allowed?
- **Who are your customers?** Find your network, learn what they want in a CSA
- **Develop a business plan and budget:** A realistic cost breakdown of expenses that includes operating expenses (seeds, water, fuel), land, equipment, labor and any other expenses. Module 1 has recommendations for resources.
- **Decide on your CSA attributes:** How many weeks will you run, how many different products will you have?
- **Decide on your sales platform** - how will you interact with your customers? IE Local Food Marketplace, Barn2Door, etc.
- **Insurance:** Make sure you have the right insurance in place to safeguard your livelihood.
- **Consider working memberships** (customers work on farm x hours for less cost of a share).
- **Set expectations early:** CSAs are an opportunity for farmers to share the risk with consumers. Make sure members are aware of the risks and potential for leaner years.
- **Create contracts:** market price of the share and the length of the season are included with each share and pickup times and locations. Indicate if you take EBS or offer reduced prices or smaller payments over time for those who need assistance to pay.





## 4. Consider operating a CSA

### Recommended steps to take in planning to start a CSA (cont.) *from the Michigan CSA Network*

- **Plant accordingly.** Consider how many weeks of the CSA and what can you include in the share each week. Will you give people choices or do they just collect a bag of prefilled veggies?
- **Cultivate memberships:** CSA members may stop, so you need to keep adding members. Try to learn why they quit, so you address things that consumers do not like.
- **Marketing:** Offer existing members a discount for referrals, share the CSA details on your social media pages or pass out flyers at your local markets. Include the relevant information, like share price, length of the season and what types of produce will be available. Make it easy for people to sign up.
- **Operational considerations:** Storage, packing materials, provide a bin that the customer uses for produce each week or provide a cardboard box that can be recycled at the end of the season.
- **Establish a pickup or delivery system.** Delivery comes with high costs.
- **Develop a plan for surplus** such as donate to the Food Bank or to a Soup Kitchen.



## 4. Consider operating a CSA

### Think about the promotional efforts to market a CSA

#### PROCEDURE

**Customer retention** is critical; you will need to *continually* market your CSA. People will drop off for various reasons.

One of the biggest benefits of memberships is receiving payment in the off-season when cash flow can be tricky and funds are needed to start the season. The flip side to this benefit is the pressure to meet this commitment and members' expectations. While CSAs are often framed as a way to share the risk of farming with committed supporters, the reality is that members aren't going to stick around if the farmer consistently cannot deliver the expected value.

*Here is an example of a newsletter containing a reminder about the CSA. Consider how you can promote a CSA and get new customers.*

2. We are already thinking of the transition between summer and fall and our **Fall Vegetable CSA starting September 11th**. Fall is the best season to be a member in my opinion (we have the widest variety and most bounty of the year) and can take some of the work out of going back to school and holidays, knowing that you already have a source for fresh food.



It is soon going to be harvest season for this year's cattle. After a summer of fresh pastures, we respectfully offer them as nourishment to our community. We have a very special and small cattle operation, and we only offer a few animals a year, so now is your chance to be a part of our **Beef Membership program**.

Learn more here:

[Beef Share Membership Guide](#)



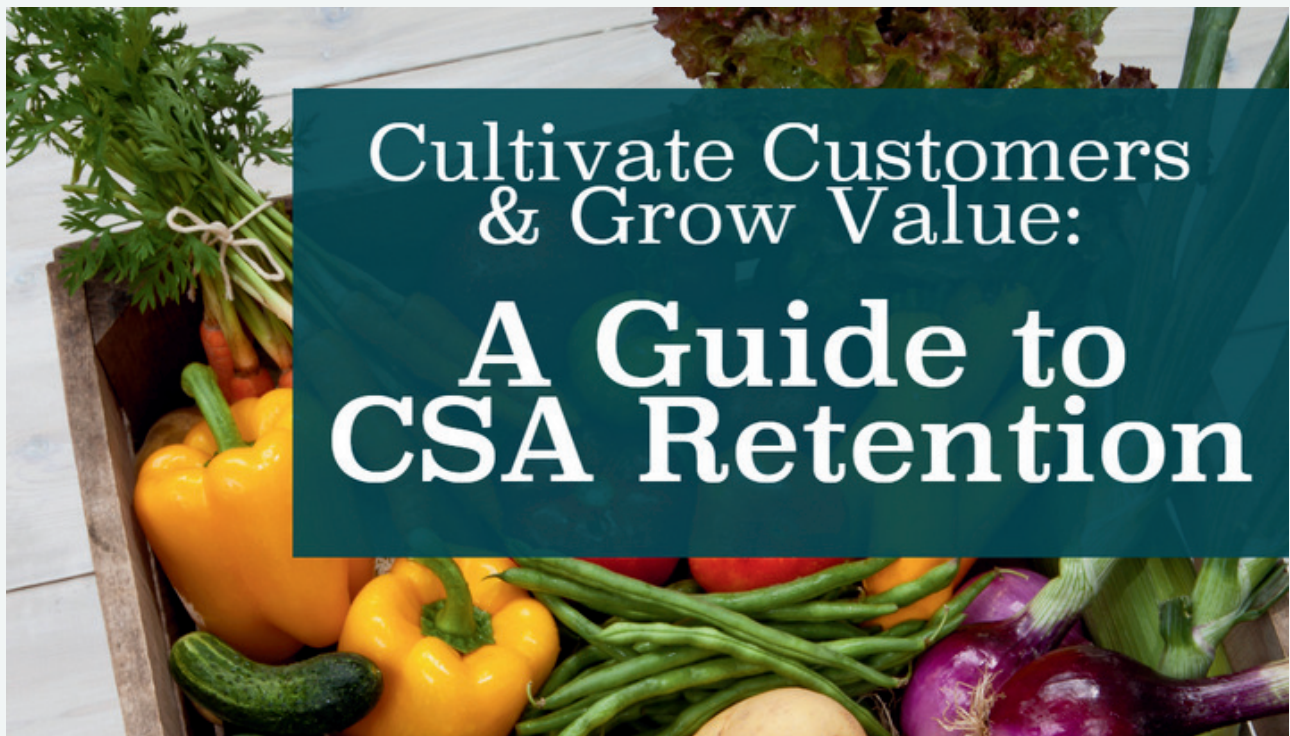
## 4. Consider operating a CSA

What platform would you use to run your CSA?

### PROCEDURE (cont.)

Today's CSAs work using a variety of communication methods and tracking software. Do you need such a thing?

There are many platforms, as discussed before. Some of them offer lots of information for you on different aspects of running a CSA:





## 5. Consider a U Pick Operation

### *Visit several*

#### OVERVIEW

U Picks can vary quite a bit. Your farm will need to grow the right things for the public to pick. And at a U Pick Operation you can really leap into agrotourism.

Find several U pick operations. It is best to visit in-season, and to observe what infrastructure is needed to bring the public onto your land.

Farm stands also fall into this category as you will have the consumer coming to YOU.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bring a notebook.
- Ask questions about existing relationships with farmers and what the wholesalers needs from you.
- Be ready to speak with different levels of management in the store(s)

#### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

U-Picks are very seasonal and can offer a concentrated sales opportunity. They are also an opportunity for agrotourism, which is increasingly a way for farms to make money.

Only select products are appropriate for U-Pick, and location matters, because you will want to have a lot of visitors.





## 5. Consider a U Pick Operation

### Considerations

- Having people on your site means having the right liability insurance
- Safety instructions are something you'll want to think about and post (i.e no dogs, if you don't have a place to keep them off the crops)
- Infrastructure will be important to make people comfortable on your property - rest rooms, and parking, for example
- Are you accessible, do you need to have accessible considerations for people who need them?
- Do you need to have power and other infrastructure to where the consumer is? For processing sales? Refrigeration? (Some stands have an honor system and a refrigerator.)





## 6. Rank your TOP 3 marketing outlet choices

### PROCEDURE

Carefully review the table listing the options; using 1-3 +s depending on how good you feel about a market or use 1-3 -s if you do not think the market type is for you. Really think through which options fit your products, skill sets, and goals for spending time.

Use the attached chart to consider the positives and negatives, the skill set matches, make notes with your team, and rank the options in order of appeal to you. Make a list of things you may not know or may need to seek more information to better understand.

Considerations	Farmers Market (Traditional one day/week)	CSA – single or as a participant	Retail / Restaurants / Wholesale / Distributors/Hub	Online	On-Farm Stand / /U-Pick
<b>BENEFITS (+) CHALLENGES (-)</b>					
Do you want to be customer-facing? Can you be available on the day of your local market? Are you a "relationship development" type of person? How much face-to-face interaction is ideal for you? Do you have retail system experience? Are you a "people person"? Do you have a helper? More than one?					
How many hours can you dedicate? Which hours and which seasons?					
Which outlets is your product suitable for? Do you have enough product?					
Can you/do you currently work with other local farms on projects? Do you share resources?					
Do you have strong computer skills? Can you work a POS system? Do you know the rules for SNAP?					
What are the demographics of your area? Are they saturated? Where are the customers? Do you have good traffic near your property?					





## My marketing options, ranked\*

\*It may be that you select more than one of these outlets, depending on your situation. If you have capacity to do it, marketing through a diverse set of outlets can maximize income potential and minimize risk.

1.

2.

3.