

How to Get Started with a Farm Store

Direct sales through a farm store, stand, or market allow farmers to establish a connection with customers, gaining valuable feedback and building customer loyalty. Direct sales yield higher profit margins, foster a sense of community, promote farm-to-table consumption, and enable farmers to showcase their unique products and stories.



Location, Location, Location

Farm stores and stands on highly trafficked roads are sure to get the most business. Knowing how many cars pass by each day, and at which times, can help you set your hours of operation. Roadside signs can be helpful in getting customers to your farm, especially if the farm is located off the main road, but check with your town officials about any size and placement restrictions for signs in your town.

You must also consider where on the farm you want your store or stand to be located. Right on the road? Closer to the barn? Near the coolers? Be deliberate and thoughtful about selecting a location, and don't shy away from asking neighbors, Extension agents, or farm staff where they think it should be.

Supplementing your own products with complementary local products like bread, honey, maple syrup, milk, crafts, jams, pickles, etc., can make the store more appealing to visitors.

Deciding what to sell

Some farmers sell only produce they grow themselves. Others purchase additional produce or products to supplement what they grow and support other farmers in their area. For example, many small-scale farmers find it unprofitable to grow sweet corn, but find that sales of other produce are compromised if they do not have sweet corn for sale.

4 tips for displaying food and products in your store



Overflowing baskets of produce invite customers in and encourage them to purchase. Keep your displays looking full and colorful, but also make them user-friendly. Baskets make great displays, because they make selection easy, and reduce risk of the whole arrangement falling apart.

Make sure your products are clearly marked. Knowing your customers provides you with important information about how to package your products for the best sales. Some customers will always look for a product that is prepackaged, weighed, and priced, so they know exactly what they are paying for. Other customers will want to select and bag their own product. Find ways to accommodate both types of customers. You might also try packaging a variety of items together to help customers gain a sense of how to use unfamiliar items.



Products should be front and center. All other materials – baskets, boxes, table covers, signage – are there to complement the product. When you select awnings, tablecloths, and containers, use background colors that enhance what you are selling. Avoid using colors that clash with your products or send mixed messages to the buyer. There has been lots of research on the role of color in marketing, and the evidence certainly points to a connection between color, emotion, and consumer behavior. For example, green is often linked to nature, representing growth, renewal, and vitality.

Lighting is important. Lighting is important not only to the appearance of your products but it's also critical for visitor safety.



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