

Selling Locally for Farmers and Growers

The Future of Food

Locally sourced food is the **way of the future**. Consumers are recognizing more and more the advantages of purchasing and eating local food. Local produce is fresher, tastes better, supports the local economy, is better for the environment and has higher nutritional value. Locally grown produce and products are in more demand than ever!



Local food supports healthy people, a healthy environment, and healthy economics.

Tips to Selling Locally

It's easy to get started or to continue to build local connections. Here are just a few tips for how to become involved and stay connected.

- Meet with local chefs, retail shop owners, and meal-serving establishment managers. Invite them for **farm tours** to discuss how you can work together.
- Participate in area **farmers' markets**. Contact the market manager about requirements for being involved or join forces with other farmers to keep costs down. For a full list visit: <http://sdfarmbureau.org/BuyLocal/Farmers-Markets.php>.
- Become involved in a **community supported agriculture** (CSA) program. In a CSA, consumers commit financially for an extended period of time, providing you with guaranteed and predictable income.
- Talk to your **current distributor** about providing your produce to local restaurants, meal-serving establishments, or retail establishments.
- Reach out to the local farm bureau and health department for how to get involved in programs that promote local growers: www.sdfarmbureau.org and http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/awm/farmers_markets.html.
- Be **open-minded** when others contact you about using you as a source. It's flattering that they thought of you! But also...
- **Know your limitations**. Ask yourself the questions: "How many restaurants/CSAs/markets can I sustainably support?" And be honest with yourself and others when you've reached capacity.

Food for Thought

The National Restaurant Association lists the top culinary trends of 2014 as **locally sourced meats and seafood, locally grown produce, and environmental sustainability**. These aren't just passing trends. Ten years from now, they predict the top three will be environmental sustainability, local sourcing and health/nutrition. **What a great time for products that are *San Diego Born & Raised!***



Ideas to Get Going

Use the San Diego **Farm Bureau's San Diego Grown 365 Exchange** website at <http://sandiegogrown.com/>. This tool is designed specifically to help connect farmers with retail stores, restaurants, distributors, and institutional buyers interested in sourcing locally grown products.

Participate in **Harvest of the Month**. Each month features a widely available locally grown fruit and vegetable, as shown in the calendar below. Learn more at <http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/>.



January	February	March	April	May	June
Grapefruit	Kiwi	Mandarin	Cucumber	Berries	Strawberries
Cauliflower	Beets	Peas	Carrots	Avocado	Corn
July	August	September	October	November	December
Melon	Pears	Apples	Squash	Persimmon	Oranges
Green Beans	Bell Peppers	Tomatoes	Zucchini	Sweet Potato	Greens

Overcoming Challenges

There can be challenges and concerns when it comes to selling produce locally. Below are a few of the most common, with ideas for how to tackle them.

Selling locally isn't profitable.

- **It can be!** Selling direct to consumers, you cut out the cost of the middleman.
- **Higher margins.** Local outlets can often charge slightly higher prices for produce, giving you a higher margin.
- **Manage costs.** Start-up costs for selling locally may seem high, but if managed well can be kept to a minimum and quickly made up.

My distributor doesn't provide to local consumers and I don't have the capacity to do it.

- **Ask them** if they would consider it. This can be powerful, especially if you have relationships with local restaurants or retail stores that want your produce and are willing to work with the distributor as well.
- **People can come to you!** Consider making pick up at your farm an option for a CSA or similar program.

I don't know how to market myself locally.

- **Keep it simple.** Displaying produce doesn't have to be fancy: keep it simple, creative and attractive.
- **Stand out.** Grow a unique variety of fruit or vegetable.
- **Hire a marketing professional** that can help get you up and running. There are many that are reasonably priced.

For more information, visit: <http://www.sdfarmbureau.org/BuyLocal/SD-Grown365.php>

