



## Homegrown Produce Vendor Guide

**“The process of selling to retailers is very easy if you have good product, a fair price, and are willing to take care of them as customers.” Bryan Jones, Produce Supervisor – Mac’s Fresh Market**

- **Quality** – The product needs to be fresh as possible with no scarring, bruising, rotten spots, or otherwise unsaleable faults
- **Price** – Needs to be competitive with market price (most companies will not pay more than what they can get the product for from their normal warehouse or supplier)
- **Delivery** – This should be discussed at the time of the sales pitch and followed through with consistency and punctuality (don’t promise 3 day delivery knowing you can’t deliver but twice a week)
- **Communication** – Make sure to follow up with managers after the sale to make sure the product was up to standard, and that it has been selling. (If retailer sees that you care and have a good product, they are willing to help push it)
- **Appearance** – Make sure to be clean, groomed and professional when approaching possible buyers

### Getting Set Up to Sell Your Product to Retailers:

- **Know Your Product** – Whether it’s strawberries or sweet potatoes, know your season – what the peaks and valleys are, and your beginning and ending harvests (Remember that the number 1 priority for retailers is to take care of their customer needs)
- **Know the Market** – Check retail prices at several different markets to know the average going price for your product – understand that you will be selling wholesale, not retail. Most retailers double their cost to cover shrink (spoils). If you see \$1.00 a lb., retailers most likely paid .50 a lb.
- **Build the Relationship** – Introduce yourself to the store manager and explain the benefits of having your product in their store. Ask for their input about selling local produce. Most retailers like to offer local products when possible.
- **Know your Quantities** – Ex: Case = 24 units - Know the lbs. per case, bunches per case, heads per case, or bushels
- **Pricing – Establish unit prices prior to each season** – Remember that grocers may want to mark your wholesale price up by 50 or 75% - breaking a case (for restaurants or those wanting a smaller quantity of product) may require you to adjust your wholesale price up by as much as 20%. Learn to project your pricing
- A resource list is available through the Central Louisiana Local Foods Working Group which includes links to sites such as the USDA organic & conventional pricing report that is given annually or *Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association* pricing guide for organic products only
- **Industry Knowledge** – Know what retailers are looking for before you approach them. Ask what grocers or restaurant owners would like to see in their businesses in the future



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### RESOURCE LIST

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*United States Dept. of Agriculture; Agriculture Marketing Services*

#### **Wholesale Market Price Reports:**

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateO&rightNav1=ViewU.S.TerminalMarketPriceReports&topNav=&leftNav=&page=FVMarketNewsTerminalMarketReportsMore>

*United States Dept. of Agriculture; Agriculture Marketing Services*

#### **AMS Market News:**

<https://marketnews.usda.gov/mnp/>

*Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association*

#### **Organic Price Reports**

<http://www.mofga.org/Default.aspx?tabid=260>