

## Examples of Marketing Alternative for Small Farmers

There are a variety of ways that small scale farmers reach their customers with direct marketing. Some may be more suited to your farm and products than others. For many farmers, a combination of several marketing outlets is effective. Specific examples of direct marketing strategies include:

U-pick	Internet or mail order
Roadside stand	Coop marketing
Farmer's market	Consumer's cooperatives
Community markets	CSA or Subscription
Retail outlet	Institutional sales
Chefs & Restaurants	

The following tables highlight some of the advantages as well as the challenges of various direct marketing strategies.

### U-Pick

U-Pick Advantages	U-Pick Potential Disadvantages
No harvest costs	Location is critical
No transportation costs	Liability
No middleman	Intrusion on family life
Product mix is not critical	Parking and Staffing
	Limited growth potential and product value

### Roadside Stand

Roadside Advantages	Roadside Potential Disadvantages
No middleman	Location is critical
No one on your farm	Appearance, upkeep of the stand
Can re-sell of products you don't raise	Advertising
Long potential season, depending on the crop mix	Product mix
Usually limited transportation and packaging	Parking and traffic
	Staffing - long business hours

## Farmers Market

Farmers Market Advantages	Farmers Market Potential Disadvantages
No middleman	Requires farmer to be good salesperson
No one on your farm	Can be time intensive
Product mix can be supplied by other vendors	Packaging and presentation are important
Networking opportunity	Distance to market
	Market fees
	Market season and days may not fit your needs
	Competition among vendors

## Internet or Mail Order

Internet or Mail Order Advantages	Internet or Mail Order Potential Disadvantages
Reduced physical infrastructure needs	Management of web site
No one on your farm	Freshness advantage may be lost - not appropriate for extremely perishable items
Very flexible hours (weekends and evenings are fine!)	Payment mechanisms and security of transactions
Growth is virtually (no pun intended) unlimited	Packaging is critical
	Shipping cost and reliability

## CSA and Subscription

CSA and Subscription Advantages	CSA and Subscription Potential Disadvantages
Up front payments help with cash flow	Hard "sell: because of the up front cost to the consumer
Income doesn't depend on weather (farmers market) or crop prices (retail)	Requires consistency with variety
Acts as an "insurance policy" in case of crop failure in the case of CSAs	Member turnover
May help with labor shortage; many CSA member volunteer on farm	Requires highly organized farmer and "core group" of helpers
Satisfied members are great advertising	Delivery logistics can be complicated

### Cooperative Marketing

<b>Cooperative Marketing Advantages</b>	<b>Cooperative Marketing Potential Disadvantages</b>
Large potential for growth	Now you're part of a group - you may not like all the decisions
Pooled resources - purchases, advertising, transportation, etc.	Legal costs and time to establish a coop
Product mix and variety of group is greater than any one producer	Management is critical - hiring professionals may be the best route
Little added infrastructure or demand on the farm	Competition among members (prices go up so I decide to sell my stuff somewhere else, for example)

### Consumer Cooperatives

<b>Consumer Cooperative Advantages</b>	<b>Consumer Cooperative Potential Disadvantages</b>
Stable, non-volatile market	Requires organization of or by consumers
High growth potential	High degree of management required
Farmer gets high portion of food dollar	Staff/personnel issues
Small farmer investment	Legal responsibilities
	Formal organization with rules and regulations, just like a grocery store

### Institutional Markets

<b>Institutional Market Advantages</b>	<b>Institutional Market Potential Disadvantages</b>
Non-volatile market	Up front legwork - contacts
Very long planning cycle (up to a year in advance)	May require that farmers or group of farmers meet regulatory requirements
High potential for growth in Florida	Failure to deliver is a disaster
	May be suitable for a limited number of products
	Transportation, delivery
	Requires large and consistent volume

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