

FIELD DAY RESOURCE GUIDE

Diversifying Labor: Production Skills vs. Marketing Skills



SEEDS & SPORES FAMILY FARM

What started as a backyard garden over twenty years ago has now grown to an 8-acre farm with twelve extensively-used hoophouses. At Seeds and Spores Family Farm, Jeff and Leanne Hatfield have committed to providing their community with locally-grown, nutritious food through their CSA program, locally-owned restaurants and grocery stores, an online platform, and the Downtown Marquette Farmers Market. When it comes to diversifying production skills and marketing skills, Jeff is nothing short of an expert and knows how to build meaningful relationships with customers that have helped grow his direct-marketing farm business.

TIPS FROM THE FARMER

1. Grow your farm and your market together.

It's important to balance the growth of your farm with the growth of your market. Keeping track of your customers and sales will ensure that you produce an appropriate amount of food for your market. Jeff suggests starting small and building your customer base gradually, then adjusting your production to match.

2. Get familiar with your products and how to use them.

Jeff and Leanne attribute a large part of their marketing success to building relationships with their customers. Being able to chat with customers at the CSA pickup and farmers market about their favorite products, how to cook with them, and their favorite recipes has helped Seeds & Spores create connections with customers that keep them coming back.

3. Let employees and volunteers explore their strengths and interests on the farm.

Letting employees and volunteers manage farm projects and tasks that they enjoy creates a positive and productive work environment. Determine your farm employees' strengths and weaknesses to effectively assign direct-marketing tasks and build your customer base. Jeff and Leanne let their employees try new things and explore new projects to see where they really thrive on the farm.



RESOURCES

- 1. 5 Tips for Marketing Your Farm.** Farm and Dairy, 2017.
Whether you're new to farming or just looking for some new marketing techniques, Farm and Dairy has provided these 5 simple tips for successful farm marketing. These strategies can help any farmer create a marketing strategy best fit for their farm.
- 2. Guide to Farming: Direct Marketing Options.** Tara Hammonds, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 2019.
Interested in direct marketing options? This easy to understand article lays out all of the direct marketing options available for farmers. With options like farmers markets, on-farm sales, community supported agriculture, and more, this article will help you understand what your options are and how to get started.
- 3. Getting Started with Exploring Market Possibilities for Your Ag Products.** Ron Goldy, MSU Extension, 2015.
MSU Extension has provided this informative webinar on marketing options for your agricultural products. From direct marketing options to marketing tools and projected budgets and pricing, this webinar has everything you need to begin your farm's marketing plan.



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