

## CULTIVATING LOCAL CHECKLIST

# Getting started in direct-to-consumer sales

1 / 9

Starting or diversifying a farm business requires careful planning, especially when exploring direct sales channels. Through the Cultivating Local project, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) has developed a series of nine checklists to support you in your direct-to-consumer sales journey.

## Plan and scope your vision

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**Do your research.** Determine the products or experience you would like to sell. You will have to consider the logistics of production as well as the demand and potential markets for your product.

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**Consider value-added products.** Showcase your farm product in value-added items like canned or dried goods, beauty products, textiles, beverages, etc.

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**Identify your sales channels.** You may decide to sell direct from your farm through custom order pickups, a farm stand, a retail store, a restaurant, etc. Alternatively, you could sell direct-to-consumer at farmers' markets or through wholesale markets and retailers.

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**Develop a business plan.** Once you have identified the product(s) and customer experience, plan accordingly. Learn about your customer demographic, define your sales channels and develop a business plan. Check out the business plan templates at [fcc-fac.ca](http://fcc-fac.ca) on the "Business Plan Tools" page to help get started.

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**Research applicable regulations.** Identify regulations and local land use planning policies that may apply to your business. Contact your local authorities early in the planning process, including: your municipal planning and economic development staff, local public health unit, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA), the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, and/or the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Learn more at [Ontario.ca](http://Ontario.ca) through the 'Ontario's agriculture and food laws' page.



## Consider your staffing needs

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**Determine if you need more employees** and explore grants/programs available.

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**Legal obligations.** Learn more at Ontario.ca through the “Employment Standards Act” page about what is expected of you as an employer in Ontario.

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**Promote that you are hiring.** Leverage AgCareers.com or your local workforce planning board to post your job opportunities.

## Explore funding and financing options

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**Reach out to your local Community Futures Development office** to assist with funding, counselling, and strategic planning.

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**Visit AgPal.ca and Farm Credit Canada** at fcc-fac.ca to learn about funding programs for the agricultural sector.

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**Learn about financing opportunities** by contacting the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC), or your local bank

## Leverage networks and expertise

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**Look up the commodity or agricultural organization** most relevant to your operation for resources and support. OMAFA keeps a directory of local boards, marketing boards, and representative associations.

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**Find business development support** by finding your Community Futures Development Corporations at the “Find Your Local CFDC” page or your local “Small Business Enterprise Centre” through the Business and Economy page at Ontario.ca.

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**Contact your economic development or tourism office** for learning and networking opportunities.

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**Consider joining your local chamber of commerce.**

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**Attend industry conferences and events** to meet experts, farmers and future farmers and to exchange ideas and best practices.

In response to consumer demand and growing interest in opportunities to sell local, OFA's Cultivating Local project has developed a series of nine checklists, nine recorded workshops, a resource hub, and a final report. To learn more, visit: [ofa.on.ca/cultivating-local/](https://ofa.on.ca/cultivating-local/)



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