

CULTIVATING LOCAL CHECKLIST

On-farm stands and stores

2 / 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.

Research applicable regulations

☐

Find local planning requirements through your local municipal website and contact your planning department.

☐

Food safety. Reach out to local authorities, including your local public health unit, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness to ensure that you are compliant. Your Local Public Health Unit may inspect your food premise. Check out “O. Reg 493/17: Food Premises” for more information.

☐

Building safety. Ensure that your stand or store is compliant with local fire code regulations, and all other building-related compliance measures like accessibility.

Decide on a point-of-sale system

☐

Staffing. Determine if your on-farm stand or store will be staffed or if payment will be received via an honour system.

☐

Consider a range of payment options, including cash or e-transfer, or an automated electronic system like Shopify or Square, depending on your business needs.

☐

Ensure that your inventory and sales can be accurately tracked for accounting and bookkeeping purposes.



Operating your on-farm stand or store

☐

Marketing and promoting your products. Understand your target audience and tailor your advertising accordingly. See Cultivating Local checklists five and six, for marketing and social media tips.

☐

Evaluate accessibility. Ensure that your business is accessible and signage is visible so that customers can safely park and access your on-farm stand or store.

☐

Determine staffing needs. Consider applying for grants and programs to offset labour costs.

☐

Consider partnering with neighbouring producers. Diversify the products you are offering by sourcing from other local farms or businesses.

☐

Reputable branding. Consider joining the Foodland Ontario program to access free retail display signs and use the trusted logo. Apply at Ontario.ca/foodland or email foodland@ontario.ca for more details.

Evaluate your progress

☐

Track your performance. Track sales, customer feedback, and foot traffic to evaluate the success of your farm store or stand.

☐

Be flexible and make adjustments. Adjust your products offered and inventory based on customer preferences, market trends, and seasonal fluctuations.

☐

Use budgeting tools. For help using market and pricing information to make decisions for your business, download the “farm business decision calculators” available at Ontario.ca.

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/



The Project was funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.