

Resurgence in Farmers' Markets is Good News

Jennifer Abel, Master's Degree Candidate
Joan Thomson, Associate Professor
Audrey Maretzki, Professor
The Pennsylvania State University

On any given summer Saturday, a visitor to a farmers' market in Ithaca, New York; Madison, Wisconsin; Lawrence, Kansas; Knoxville, Tennessee; Cochise County, Arizona; or any one of the 2,476 markets throughout the country will be greeted with mounds of fresh-picked produce and, in a lot of places, fresh baked goods, meat, cheese and eggs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports two decades ago, less than 100 farmers' markets operated in the nation. The first directory, published in 1994, listed 1,755 markets.

Farmers' markets and other direct-marketing venues were the norm during the 19th century, but lost popularity when refrigeration and improved transportation systems made it possible to ship produce long distances. Recent decades have seen a revival in



Don Janssen, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

farmers' markets as health-conscious consumers demonstrated a desire to get the freshest produce possible.

In surveys conducted throughout the country, consumers rank freshness as the number one reason for buying produce from farmers' markets, and as the main factor they consider when buying produce anywhere. These surveys also indicate consumers perceive the freshest produce to be available at direct markets like farmers' markets.

The resurgence in farmers'

markets is good news for consumers, communities and farmers. Outlets for locally-produced foods provide more than just the freshest possible food. They help establish connections between consumers and food producers, provide an additional income source for farmers, and in general, serve as a tool for community development. However, starting them and keeping them in operation demand a great deal of attention to consumer, vendor and community needs.

Follow Guidelines when Selling Crops Directly to Consumers

Dale T. Lindgren
UNL Horticulture Specialist
Laurie Hodges
UNL Vegetable Specialist

Growers raising horticultural crops in Nebraska sell part of their crop through direct marketing outlets, such as pick-your-own farms, roadside stands and farmers' markets. Produce sold through these marketing outlets usually is sold by number or count, such as a single tomato or fruit or a dozen ears of sweet corn; weight, such as one pound of snap beans; or volume, such as bushel, lug, carton, crate or quart.

Although many sell fresh produce using a unit count, growers are encouraged to sell by legal net weight since this is most accurate for both the consumer and the grower. Produce sold by weight can be weighed, packaged and then label the package with net weight at home or sold by weight at the time of sale using a state-certified scale.

Here are some guidelines for selling horticultural crops for direct marketing to consumers:

- **Asparagus**, sold in one-half to 2-pound bunches, 45-pound bushel, 10-pound 3-quart basket or 32-pound crate.
- **Snap, green and wax beans**, by pound; 1 bushel is 28 to 30 pounds.
- **Dry edible beans**, by pound; 1 bushel is 60 pounds.
- **Beets** without tops, in 2-pound bunches; with tops 50- to 56-pounds per bushel.
- **Broccoli** by head or bunch, a 23- to 25-pound crate or bushel.

- **Brussel sprouts** by quart or weight (approximately 1.5-pounds per quart).
- **Cabbage**, often sold by the head, 50-pound crate.
- **Carrots** without tops, by pound, or a 50-pound bushel.
- **Cauliflower**, sold as a head, 50-pound bushel.
- **Swiss chard**, sold in a bunch or by weight.
- **Cucumbers**, by pound or count; 48- to 50-pounds per bushel.
- **Eggplant**, sold by count; 33- to 35-pounds per bushel.
- **Garlic**, sold in bunches or pounds.
- **Gourds**, sold by count.
- **Horseradish**, sold in 2- to 4-pound bags or in a 50-pound bushel.
- **Kale**, sold in 1- to 1.5-pound bunches or 18-pounds per bushel.
- **Lettuce**, sold by bunch or head or in a carton of 2 dozen.
- **Muskmelon**, sold by count or in a 48-pound bushel.
- **Okra**, sold by pound or in a 26- to 30-pound bushel.
- **Onions**, dry bulb types, often sold by count or in bags of 5, 10 or 50-pounds.
- **Parsnips**, sold by pound or in 48-pound bushel.
- **Peas in edible pods**, sold per pound or in a 8- to 10-pound peck.
- **Sweet bell peppers**, sold by count or in 25- to 30-pound bushel.
- **Potatoes**, sold in 5- to 10-pound bags or in a 50-pound bushel.
- **Shallots**, sold in bunches of 12 or in a 25-pound bushel

containing 5 dozen bunches of 12.

- **Spinach**, sold in 1 to 1.5 pound bunches or in a 18-pound bushel.
- **Sweet corn**, by the dozen or in a 35- to 40-pound bushel or a crate of 5 dozen.
- **Sweet potatoes**, sold by pound in a 48- to 50-pound bushel.
- **Watermelon**, sold by pound or by individual count or in a 70- to 90-pound crate.
- **Apricots**, sold by pound or by bushels that weigh 50 pounds.
- **Blackberries**, sold in quarts that weigh 1.5 pounds.
- **Cherries**, sold in quarts that weigh between 1 and 1.75 pounds, bushels that weigh 56 pounds or lugs that weigh 15 to 16 pounds.
- **Peaches**, sold by pound or in a 50-pound bushel.
- **Raspberries**, sold in a one and one-half quart.
- **Strawberries**, sold by the quart that weighs 1.5 pounds.

Because of the variation in produce and containers, some of the unit weights are average and all are *approximations only*. State regulations regarding the sale of products by weight and scale inspections are available through the Division of Weights and Measures, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 94757, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68509-4757.

FOR MORE INFO

NebGuide G1640 "Weights and Measures for Horticultural Crops" is available at the extension office and online at <http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g1640.pdf>



University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ten Lawn Irrigation Tips

John C. Fech
UNL Extension Educator

1. **Measure the amount of water applied in a 15-minute period using collection devices** such as tuna or coffee cans. Adjust the runtime to deliver the required amount.
2. **Kentucky bluegrass lawns, in general, require** 1 inch per week in April and May, 1-1/4-inch per week in June, 1-1/2 in July and August, 1-1/4 in September and 1 inch in October.
3. **Use a screwdriver or soil probe to measure moisture** (rainfall + irrigation water) penetration into the lawn.
4. **Water to the bottom of the roots.** Use a small shovel to determine how deep the roots are. Actually the soil should be kept moist to about half an inch deeper than the deepest roots to encourage downward growth. Roots are shallow in summer and deeper in spring/fall.
5. **When watering on a slope, use "delayed starts."** Run your sprinklers until you notice runoff, then stop. Wait 3 hours, then resume. Aerate to increase infiltration.
6. **Water in the early morning** (4 a.m. to 10 a.m.). This allows the grass blades to dry, making them less susceptible to foliar diseases. Watering is more efficient in morning due to less evaporation and wind speed. Change the time your system runs monthly, or at least seasonally. Contact a lawn sprinkler professional if you need help.
7. **Observe your sprinkler system once per month.** Look for heads that don't turn, heads that spray into the street or onto a sidewalk, bent or damaged heads, clogged or worn nozzles or orifices, turf growth around heads that impede water delivery, puddling and runoff.
8. **Adjust sprinkler heads** as landscape plants grow larger and begin to block the spray pattern. New installations of benches, decks, etc. can also decrease irrigation efficiency.
9. **On days when temperatures are above 90°F, run your sprinklers 5-10 minutes** per zone in the afternoon to cool the turf and reduce stress. This is called "spritzing," and it reduces the symptoms of summer patch disease.
10. **Create water zones** by putting plants together that have similar water needs. Each turf species has a different water requirement which is also distinct from ornamentals. Ornamental plants should be grouped into low-, moderate- and high-water users. Each zone of plants should be irrigated according to its needs.



Example watering zone

University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources