

Producer Worksheet 2A: Market Channel Assessment

Choose the Farm to School market channel mix that works best for you

There are many ways to get your products into schools – these channels offer diverse benefits and must be explored with key considerations in mind. The key is identifying a market channel (or multiple channels) that allows you to find the balance between what the buyer (the school) needs and what you, the producer, can reasonably produce and at what price you can produce it.

Brainstorm some advantages and disadvantages of each marketing channel. When comparing market channels, here are some factors to consider:

- How much time will it take? Similarly, does it require working certain days/hours?
- How will it affect my bottom line?
- Will it require additional equipment? Packaging?
- Will it require additional insurance? Certification?
- What kind of person-to-person relationships will I need to build?
- What are my personal preferences? For example, do I like talking to customers directly?
- How does the market channel align with my farm goal?

Unfortunately, there's no easy way to identify the perfect market channel for your farm or business operation. You'll have to weigh all the variables and make a decision based on what works best for you and what is available in your area. Think about what variables matter most to you and emphasize those in making your decision.

Using the table on the following page, rank the channels against each other. A "1" is given to the channel that is the "best" for each criteria. In other words, a "1" for Price means the highest prices you receive. A "1" for Risk means the least risky channel. In the Total Score column, simply add across for each channel. For Final Rank, give the channel with the lowest score a "1"; this is the **best channel**.

Notes (You can note qualifications to your ranking and identify pros and cons here):



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Market Channel Assessment Worksheet 2A (continued)
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1 being the best criteria (think #1!) and 5 being the worst.

	Direct to School	Intermediate (including food hubs)	Wholesale and/or Broadline Distributor
<i>Profit margins</i>			
<i>Time investment</i>			
<i>Equipment, packaging, infrastructure</i>			
<i>Insurance, certification requirements</i>			
<i>Time spent marketing</i>			
<i>Brand identity</i>			
<i>Alignment to farm goal</i>			
<i>Risk associated with expansion – if needed</i>			
<i>Other</i>			
Total			
Final Rank (1-3)			

Remember, the lowest number has the highest ranking for you!

Notes, continued (You can note qualifications to your ranking and identify pros and cons here):



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