

Information and Expectations for Buyers

Working Together—By sourcing from their community farms, buyers are promoting healthy fresh foods and supporting their local economy. This kind of aggregated farm wholesale market is new to our modern food system, and is helping to lead VT and the rest of the country to revitalize community-based agriculture and infrastructure. Committed buyers are key members of the development team, and the Network needs their loyalty. Together, farmers and buyers are building a gold model for healthier, more resilient communities. In joining the network, we hope buyers will commit to placing regular orders providing feedback.

But Isn't Local Food More Expensive? Not necessarily. Check out the prices here; some will be lower than conventional sources, and the quality and freshness will most likely be better (Remember to add 10% for delivery—the rest goes direct to the farmer). In 2010, most WFFN buyers found they could source about 5% of their weekly food bill from network farms, providing super fresh local products WITHOUT changing their financial bottom line. As inventory expands in 2011 (yogurt, cooking cheese, etc), this percentage will increase. So buyers can easily source a significant quantity of food from farms within 20 miles without increasing their food budget!

Becoming a WFFN Buyer—Buyers in the Windham area, simply register free at the top right of this page and order! Thankfully, our market has yet to require buyer credit reviews and we happily supply W-9s upon request. Buyers ordering for the first time should call or email the network coordinator (Hans Estrin/ hestrin@uvm.edu) at 802 579 5519 to verify and discuss deliver.

Minimum Orders—Minimum orders are based on a buyer's location, and determined by the market coordinator. We currently pay for delivery (truck and driver time) with a 10% fee, and a buyer's minimum order will reflect the true delivery cost.

Ordering and Delivery—Buyers can view inventory and prices and order on-line before the posted order deadline. Please double check your basket and delivery time before placing an order. Special requests, questions or instructions can be added with each order. Buyers can also call 802/ 579 5519 to place an order. Buyers can add forgotten items by calling the coordinator or simply placing another order. If buyers miss an order deadline, they should call the coordinator to see if they can squeeze in! Deliveries come to the buyers dock or kitchen by 3 pm on delivery day unless there is another agreement. Because produce is often picked and washed the morning of delivery, deliveries usually arrive after noon. Buyers are encouraged to use the "Previous Orders" button on-line to save time repeating similar orders.

Product Inventory—WFFN Vendors are responsible for keeping their on-line inventory up to date. Thus the product should be available if it is listed. The coordinator will attempt to contact you ASAP if there need to be any changes.

Product pricing—WFFN vendors set their own prices and receive 100% of the price they set. A delivery and service fee (usually 10%) is added to the sub-total of your bill. Special note on cheese prices: Because unit weight is variable, cheese prices often have to be modified (usually up) to reflect the actual delivered weight.

Choosing your Vendor—Buyers order directly from farms/vendors and can choose where their products come from. Buyers should take time to explore each vendor on “Meet our Farmers” or “Order by Farmer”. Each invoice will verify which farm each product has come from. Buyers are also encouraged to contact farmers directly. As a result of WFFN, Many buyers have regular contact with one or more farmers.

Product Quality and Liability--WFFN never owns product-- It is a delivery service that transports food over short times and distances--usually about 6 hours, and no more than 24 hrs—under refrigeration (34-45 degrees F). We guarantee that product is handled correctly and kept cool during this transport or short-term storage. Because WFFN Vendors sell directly to their customers, they are liable for the quality and freshness of their product. Problems with product quality or damage rarely occur and are resolved on a case by case basis. Bottom line: we aim to keep everyone happy—If there is a problem, buyers should report it to the network coordinator or farmer as soon as possible.

Packing-- We request that our vendors sell only high-quality product packed in clean, transportable boxes or bags, labeled with their farm name. Some product may be delivered in plastic packing crates. These crates are worth \$15 a piece, so buyers must save them for future pick-up. We encourage buyers to reuse or recycle cardboard boxes. Currently, WFFN is not reusing boxes.

Insurance—We strongly encourage all WFFN vendors carry product liability Insurance, ideally for \$1,000,000 or more. Please contact WFFN Farmers or the Market Coordinator for more information.

Food Safety--The majority of WFFN Inventory is grown on farms that carry third-party food safety certification—either USDA GAP (Westminster Organics, Old Athens Farm, High Meadow Farms) or JP Sullivan (Green Mountain Orchards). Dutton Berry Farm is also scheduled to become GAP certified in 2011. Most of the other farms (Deep Meadow, New Leaf, and Walker Farm) have completed UVM Extension’s Practical Food Safety Workshop (http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/Practical_Food_Safety_3-11.pdf) and written Practical Food Safety Plans in 2010. The WFFN Coordinator (also a food safety service provider) visits each farm and reviews, when necessary, best practices on site. Grafton Village Cheese and Commonwealth Dairy are sterile facilities that are regularly inspected and adhere to the highest food safety standards. While no food safety plan, inspection or certification will guarantee safe food, all WFFN vendors are acutely aware of best practices and are doing all they can to minimize on-farm food safety risks. Please feel free to contact WFFN Coordinator or vendors directly for more details.

Invoice Payment—Buyers will receive an invoice with their delivery and payment is due (check or Cash) within 30 days. Paying on time is essential because it allows WFFN to redirect funds to farmers ASAP, who need it to cover their past production costs.