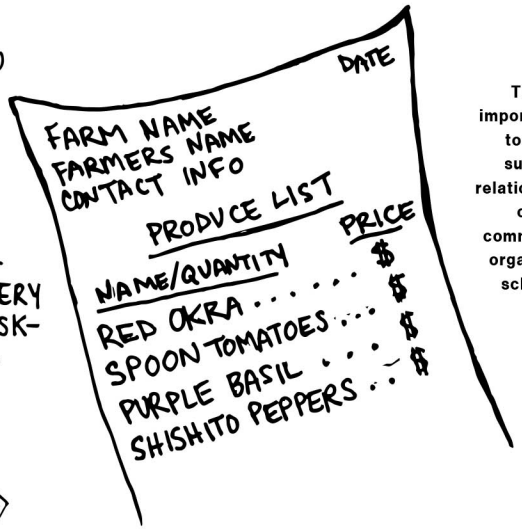
HOW TO: TALK TO A CHEF

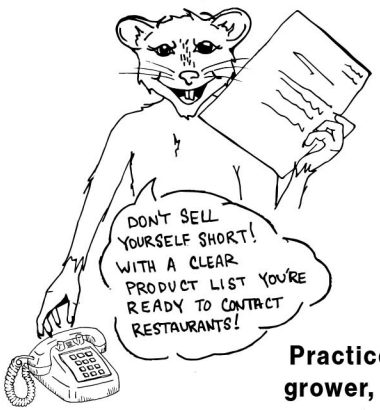
Are you a farmer who wants to build relationships with restaurants who will buy your harvests? At 4G Farms in Scottsboro, AL they have been cultivating these types of relationships and have learned a lot of skills that will help you get started!

MAKE A LIST OF ALL POTENTIAL PRODUCE YOU MIGHT HAVE TO OFFER & WHEN. HAVE PHOTOS OF EXAMPLE HARVESTS.

DETERMINE COST OF PRODUCTION, FACTOR IN DELIVERY FEE. BE CONFIDENT IN ASKING FOR A PREMIUM THAT IS SUSTAINABLE FOR YOU!



The most important pieces to building successful relationships with chefs is communication, organization & scheduling.



CONSIDER HOW FAR YOU WANT TO TRAVEL FOR DELIVERIES. INSTAGRAM, IN PERSON & PHONE ARE GOOD CONTACT OPTIONS. BE CONSCIENTIOUS OF WHEN YOU GO IN OR CALL, AN HOUR OR TWO BEFORE SERVICE STARTS IS BEST.

Practice your spiel! Clearly state that you are an organic grower, from a local sustainable small farm who practices organic growing methods. Express that you want to work with the chefs, can be flexible if they are looking for specific produce, packaging or quality. As a farmer you are offering a higher quality and a more flexible relationship & are competing with a no hassle consistent big truck delivery system. Try to be streamlined and communicative as possible. If going in person, sample bags are helpful, be sure to give them directly to a chef.

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KEEP TRACK OF PAYMENT! BRING INVOICES WITH DELIVERIES. GET PAID AT DROP OFF, IF NOT POSSIBLE, BE CLEAR ABOUT WHEN PAYMENT IS DUE, "PAYMENT DUE IN 30 DAYS". STAY ORGANIZED ABOUT WHO HAS PAID OR NOT & WHEN PAYMENT IS DUE.

USDA SE TOPP Southeast Center Transition to Organic Partnership Program

Is there a Farm Food Delivery Collaborative in your area? A group that delivers produce for farmers in refrigeration trucks, for a small fee.

Chefs prefer quantities measured in lbs & how produce is processed, ie: turnips with or w/o tops, chickpeas in or out of pods.

Use social media. Restaurants use IG a lot & will tag the farm in photos of dishes they made with your produce.

Make sure you & the produce are presentable for deliveries!

ONCE A RELATIONSHIP IS ESTABLISHED COMMUNICATION EACH WEEK ABOUT AVAILABILITY WILL BE MADE. CREATE A LIST OF WHAT WILL BE AVAILABLE THAT WEEK & EXPECTATIONS OF TIMELINE.

Restaurants can be great ways for small-scale sustainable and organic growers to find homes for niche harvests, not be in competition with mainstream produce price points & a way to grow their farm business. Some chefs even like less desirable produce that might not be presentable for a market. Each relationship with a chef will be different & will take some trial & error to find what works best for you!

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