



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PURCHASING DIRECTLY FROM A FARMER

This detailed list of questions may be helpful for those who are interested in purchasing products directly from a farmer. An explanation is provided for each question. The purpose of the explanation is to define the question itself and/or to provide information that may be helpful to better understand a farmer's response. It is important to keep in mind that farming can sometimes be unpredictable (e.g., weather); when talking with farmers about their products, understand that flexibility is important and even if a desired product is not available, the farmer may have an alternate option.

1. What do you grow and when is it available?

- General question establishing what the farmer can supply and the time at which his product is available.

2. Do you grow year-round?

- In South Carolina, many farmers do not produce year-around. This helps establish whether or not this producer can supply 12 months of the year.

3. What is the cost, per pound/per bushel?

- Farmers price their products in different ways. Make sure you understand the quantities in relation to the price.

4. How far in advance can you tell me what products you have and when it will be available?

- Typically, a farmer knows their production schedule and should be able to tell you their production estimates prior to ordering.

5. Will the products we order be freshly picked?

- Depending on the product, the farmer may pick the day of, or the product may have been in cold-storage for several days.

6. Can we buy your seconds? If so, what is your adjusted price?

- Seconds is a term used to describe product that is not USDA grade A/ #1 product and will have some minor defects. Generally, these do not impact the use of the product. Farmers often are willing to sell seconds (#2) at a discounted price.

7. If you did not have what we ordered, would you supplement without notice?

- If a particular variety is unavailable, the farmer may supplement that product with another.

8. Is what we order going to be ready to eat?

- Often times the product will need to be washed and prepared. A farmer is most likely to sell you a whole product (not processed).

9. What is the shelf life of my order?

- Depending on the product, most items will have a shelf-life of 7-14 days when properly stored.

10. At what temperature should I store your products?

- Different products have different storage requirements. Potatoes and tomatoes are stored at 50°F, leafy greens are stored at 40°F.



11. Do you wash and pack the product at your facility?

- Some farmers have packing sheds where they are able to prepare the product for long-term storage.

12. Can you deliver directly to the preschool?

- Not all farmers have the ability to deliver their product.

13. How often can you deliver?

- Farmers have unpredictable schedules. If regular deliveries are desired, it's important to schedule in advance.

14. Is there a minimum order amount for delivery?

- Each farmer may have their own minimum order amount for delivery.

15. Do you have refrigerated delivery?

- Not all farmers have the equipment to deliver a refrigerated product. If your product requires refrigeration, the farmer will have made sure that proper post harvest handling techniques have been followed.

16. Can we pick up products at the farm?

- Many farmers are willing to have on-farm pick up of their products as this is most time efficient for them.

17. What is the best time to contact you?

- Farmers' schedules often change and can vary widely.

18. What is the best way to reach you?

- Not all farmers use computers or have smart phones. Double check with your producer as to which type of communication they prefer (phone, email, in person).

19. Can we reject our order if the product does not meet agreed upon standards?

- Agreed upon standards can vary. If you've ordered a fresh-cut product and what you've received has been in cold storage, this does not meet agreed upon standards and you may reject that order.

20. What forms of payment do you accept?

- Most farmers operate on a cash or check only basis. Some farmers may be able to process debit/credit cards.

21. What are your terms of payment?

- Ideally, a farmer will want to be paid upon delivery. Alternative terms can be discussed as necessary.

22. Would you consider planting specific products and/or larger quantities to sell to our site?

- This question should be asked early as farmers often plan 2-3 seasons ahead. Expect to have a written agreement with the farmer if this option is available.

23. Do you conduct farm tours for children?

- Not all farms are open for agritourism events.

24. Do you speak to groups?

- Some or many farmers are willing to do speaking engagements.

25. Would you donate products for taste tests?

- Often times, farmers are willing to donate left-overs for taste testing.

