



CT Department of Agriculture

Briefs

Managers of CT Grown farmers markets are in the process of submitting requests for Farm-to-Chef cooking **demonstrations** for the upcoming market season. The demo schedule should be available by mid-May. Chefs then will be contacted and invited to sign up for specific dates and locations.

The **Big E Harvest New England Kitchen Theater** seeks chefs for a series of live cooking demonstrations given throughout the 17 days of the fair (9/12/08 through 9/28/08). Products also are needed for sampling tables (do not need to be staffed by the product supplier). If interested, please contact Linda Piotrowicz by [email](#) or at 860-713-2558.

Planning is underway for the next summer chefs' **workshop**. This year's workshop will be held in Milford and again will focus on CT Seafood. There will be a segment dedicated to discussing distribution. Additional information to come.

Distribution of CT Grown products continues to be a hot topic among members. See Page 5 for ideas on how to move product around the state.

If you struggle with **pricing** your product, check out Page 2 for some great tips from the Western MD Research & Education Center.

Farm-to-Chef **members** are popping up all over the media and at events throughout CT. Page 5 highlights some of these appearances, as well as other media stories that may be of interest.

Thanks to all who responded to our annual meeting follow-up **survey**. Your feedback will help to ensure that the next event is even more productive and enjoyable. Please see Page 4 for our **responses** to a variety of comments submitted.

Contributors are sought for this newsletter. It is, after all, your forum! Do you have experience that other members could benefit from? Lessons learned? Please contact Linda Piotrowicz by [email](#) or at 860-713-2558.

April 2008

CT Grown Now in Season

CT Grown seafood, dairy, eggs, meat, honey, and maple syrup are available year-round.

Lettuce, herbs, and other greens are produced in a number of CT greenhouses throughout winter.

Our state is blessed with several **winter farmers' markets** this year, as well as a number of **year-round farm stands**. Please see Page 8 of this newsletter for an ever-growing listing.

Spring is here. It won't be long before we see additional **greens** and **asparagus**.

If you need help locating any CT Grown items, please [contact us](#).



Contact Us

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Product Pricing Tips

Is the Price Right?

*By Ginger S. Myers, Regional Extension Specialist, Marketing
Western Maryland Research & Education Center*

Whether you're gearing up to sell at a farmers' market, through your roadside stand, or by private treaty, you cannot thrive in business today without a pricing strategy. The price you set for your product must fall between two points: what the customer is willing to pay and your breakeven point (the point at which you start losing money).

What should you charge for your product? Charge too much and it won't sell. Just reduce the price and fix the problem. But, charging too little is far more dangerous. If you choose to compete on price, you may not only forego significant revenues and profits, but also fix the product's market value position at a low level. Once prices hit the market it is difficult to raise them. Research reported by the *McKinsey Quarterly* shows that 80 to 90 percent of all poorly chosen prices are too low.



The latest studies indicate that price is a major consideration for between 15 and 35 percent of the population - which means between 56 and 85 percent of the people concentrate on factors other than price. Many businesses act as though 100 percent of the population is price obsessed. This delusion nibbles away at their profits and attracts only the most disloyal of all customers.

Your pricing objective is to let your customers know the amount of money charged for a product or service, right? Actually, there are multiple layers of pricing objectives. When almost identical brand name items, such as peanut butters, are priced differently, it's because the manufacturers are pursuing different pricing objectives in their marketing strategy.

Here are some steps to follow to help you set the right price and pursue your marketing objective.

Develop a pricing strategy - consider:

1. Utilizing odd-ending pricing (\$3.99 instead of \$4.00), standard mark-up pricing (typically a manufacturer marks his price up 15% over his total cost per unit, a wholesaler 20% over his costs, and a retailer 40% over his costs.), or customary pricing (when the product "traditionally" sells for a certain price, such as a pack of gum).
 - Targeting "quality" customers versus "quantity" customers
 - Offering volume discounts or add-on products
 - Offering two layer pricing- one price for premium service and a lower price for an economy service
 - Matching competitor's pricing
 - Always using the same price to establish consistency

Product Pricing Tips (continued)

2. Develop a goal for your pricing strategy. "What's the goal for your business?" Pricing is part of your marketing strategy and reflects how you position your product. If you want to be the go-to-guy for a certain product or service, then you need to always sell only top quality product and offer great service. You may have to extend operating hours for customer convenience or perhaps offer a money-back, no-questions-asked return policy. If you're positioning your enterprise as a family activity, then you need to have activities and operational hours geared towards the weekends with family-friendly packaging, activities and prices.
3. Study the competition. The Internet can give you an abundance of information about your customer, the marketplace and the profit potential - all at a very low cost. You can even interview some potential customers. You might tell them you're thinking about selling a certain product and ask them what they are currently paying for similar products.
4. Calculate your total costs of producing a product or offering a service by adding together your fixed costs + variable costs. Once you have your total costs, you can calculate the break-even price for a product or service. Of course you're not in business to just break even.
5. Identify your added value. "What's your unique selling point? Is it quality, different varieties, free delivery, convenient location, or locally grown? What can you offer that customers are willing to pay more to obtain?"



Remember this golden rule when setting prices: perception is everything. How customers view your product or service and what they are willing to pay for it is based upon perceptions. In the end, customers will tell you loud and clear through their purchasing behavior whether or not your prices are too high, too low, or right on the money.

The [Western Maryland Research and Education Center \(WMREC\)](#) consists of a single 491-acre facility located in Washington County. Housed at this facility are faculty and staff of the Maryland Cooperative Extension (MCE) and [Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station \(MAES\)](#) - both components of the University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR).

Extension specialists representing the areas of farm management, natural resources, small ruminants (sheep and goats), viticulture & small fruit, and nutrient management programs conduct educational outreach programs for their respective fields.

Feedback Forum

Last month we promised a section of the newsletter would be dedicated to member questions and comments on a wide variety of topics. To date, we have received no such submissions from members. This month we will use this space to feature a sampling of comments submitted through the annual meeting follow-up survey, as well as responses from the Department of Agriculture (DoAG) where appropriate.

Q: What was the most important thing(s) you learned?

- More about what is happening statewide pertaining to farms and product, and more about what needs to happen in the future to connect farms and restaurants.
- How we as farmers can work together with vendors and local chefs.
- Chefs are extremely interested in offering local agricultural products to their customers. However as much as the desire, we still need to find an equitable & economic means of bringing farm products-from all over the state, to chefs all over the state.
- How everyone agreed that communication and networking are very important
- It was interesting to get different perspectives and concerns depending on where you are in the scheme of things.
- That many restaurants and colleges are using local food products in their menu.
- That there are some extremely interesting people to make connections who are committed to excellence in their field as well as innovation
- Great chefs in the area, who really want to use local food.
- The importance of the face-to-face component for chefs and farmers and the model that Yale has created and continually develops to work with local farmers.

Q: Comments on venue?

- Would've been even better during a more seasonal time of the year for outdoor use.
DoAG Response: Indeed! However winter has proven to be the best time to bring together farmers, since they are consumed with farm work during warm weather.

Q: Please include any additional comments or suggestions relating to the meeting here:

- Creating a forum for this type of dialogue among these two groups is essential. Bravo to the State for being a leader and recognizing this need!
- This was a great start to initiate conversation.
- The food provided was excellent and bravo to the farms and chefs who provided it. However, as this was a group of environmental activists, plastic water bottles, and cutlery felt wrong. Next time perhaps, we may look forward to a bin for "scraps for pigs" and reusable table settings.
DoAG Response: We did consider alternatives but unfortunately they were not logistically or financially feasible.
- This is exciting, really. If we had more of a "look" so that consumers can see that a restaurant is making an effort to buy local.
DoAG Response: We plan to provide window decals for participating Farm-to-Chef restaurants and facilities that serve CT Grown, but the logo must be converted to another format first. We are working on this .
- Would like to concentrate a little more on seafood industry.
DoAG Response: The Farm-to-Chef summer chefs' workshop has showcased the CT seafood industry for the past two years and plans to do so again in 2008.

Please send future queries and comments to Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov. Submissions may be edited for publication.

Member and Media Watch

The *San Francisco Chronicle* recently featured the American Planning Association's new policy to encourage members to "help build stronger, sustainable and more self-reliant local food systems" as part of their work. One project highlighted is Hartford's busline linking low-income resident with grocery stores. [Read the article.](#)

Worcester's *Telegram* ran an update 4/6/08 on the progress of the rebuilding efforts at Adams Farm in Athol, MA. Adams was one of only a few USDA-approved meat processing facilities in New England, and was used by many CT meat producers, until it burned down last year. Its new expanded facility, tentatively scheduled to open this fall, should come as welcome news to all locally grown meat enthusiasts. [Read the entire story.](#)

Connecticut's winter farmers' markets were the topic of a Sunday 3/23/08 *New York Times* article. Click [here](#) to read the story online; see Page 6 of this newsletter for a complete listing of early spring farmers' markets and farm stands.

Got (goat) milk? If not, you may want to check out the *Hartford Courant's* 4/10/08 article about the state's goat dairies. The story includes a close-up look at some of our hardest-working farmers. [Read it.](#)



FTC member chefs Peter Gorman ([Unquowa School](#)), left, and John Turenne ([Sustainable Food Systems](#)) at the Master's Table indoor farmers' market fundraiser on 3/15/08.

FTC member, holistic health counselor, raw foods chef, and owner of Catch a [Healthy Habit Cafe](#) **Glen Colello** shows viewers how to make his acclaimed Holy Cacao smoothie in a video on the *New Haven Register* website. [Watch it.](#)

Glen also is serving as a consultant for three *Hartford Courant* journalists who have embarked on a 30-day raw food journey. Read their [blog](#).

Denise Appel, Chef-Owner of CHOW and ZINC restaurants, will be the Chef de Cuisine on 4/26/08 at the Hartford [Fire and Ice](#) benefit for Interval House. On 4/27/08, she'll be part of the [Elm City Iron Chef Competition](#) in New Haven.

Chefs **Tim Cipriano** and **Emily Brooks** from [Master's Table Farm Market](#) will appear on the weekend edition of [WFSB-3 TVs Eyewitness News](#) 4/13/08, 5/10/08, and 5/18/08.

Kevin Cottle, Executive Chef for the [Country Club of Farmington](#), will do a CT Grown demonstration on WFSB-3 TV the morning of 4/19/08.

Executive Chef **Scott Miller** from [Max's Oyster Bar](#) in West Hartford will use fresh CT shellfish for his own demonstration on WFSB-3 TV 4/20/08.

All WFSB TV Eyewitness News weekend cooking demos are broadcast live between 8:00 and 9:00 AM.

Jonathan Rapp, Chef-Owner of [River Tavern](#) in Chester and creator of [Dinners at the Farm](#) will prepare a special dinner on 5/18/08 at the CT River Museum. This benefit gala will celebrate the seasonal running of shad and highlight the diversity and importance of local foods and producers. Connecticut oysters, mussels, scallops, and, of course, shad will be showcased. For more info, visit the [Dinners at the Farm website](#)

Farmer **Pauline Lord** from [White Gate Farm](#) and **George Hall Farm** CSA member Susan Geiger were guests on WTIC 1080 AM's [Greener Living with Dr. G.](#) on 4/5/08. Pauline and Susan talked about organic farming and community supported agriculture.

Early Spring Shopping Venues

WINTER/EARLY SPRING FARMERS' MARKET DATES AND LOCATIONS

Fairfield

Indoor Winter Farmers' Market

Saturdays through April 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM
 Fairfield Theater Company, 70 Sanford Street (adjacent to train station)

New Haven

Wooster Square Farmers' Market

Third Saturday of month 10:00AM to 1:00 PM
 (4/19/08)
 Russo Park, corner of Chapel Street and DePalma Court

New London

Fiddleheads Food Cooperative Indoor Farmers' Market

Wednesdays—**NEW DAY!** 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM
 Saturdays 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
 13 Broad Street, New London

YEAR-ROUND FARM STANDS/STORES

Bishop's Orchards Farm Market

1355 Boston Post Road, US Rte. 1, Guilford Mon. – Sat. 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM
 203-458-PICK (7425) Sun. 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm

227 Ekonk Hill Road, Sterling Mon. – Fri. 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM
 860-564-0248 Sat. – Sun. 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Four Mile River Farm Stand

124 Four Mile River Road, Old Lyme Daily Self-Serve, Honor System
 860-434-2378

Holmberg Orchards Farm Store

1990 Rte. 12, Gales Ferry Daily 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
 860-464-7305

Killam & Bassette Farmstead

14 Tryon Street (Rte. 160), South Glastonbury Daily 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM (Nov. – Jun.)
 860-633-1067 Daily 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM (Jul. – Oct.)

Lyman Orchards Apple Barrel

Jct. Rtes. 147 and 157, Middlefield Daily 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM
 860 349-1793

Rogers Orchard

Home Farm, Long Bottom Road, Southington Late July through Mid May
 860-229-4240 Daily 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Sunnymount, Meriden-Waterbury Road, Southington Daily 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
 203-879-1206

Sankow's Beaver Brook Farm

139 Beaver Brook Road, Lyme Daily 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
 860-434-2843

Urban Oaks

225 Oak Street, New Britain Fridays 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM or by appointment
 860-223-6200

White Gate Farm

83 Upper Pattagansett Road, East Lyme Wednesdays Noon to 7:00 PM
 860 739-9585 Saturdays 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

If you know of other farmers' markets or farm stands open this winter, please [contact us!](#)

Distribution Deliberation

Getting products from the farm to the kitchen continues to be a challenge for many of our members. Sometimes working with a wholesale distributor is the answer. Direct delivery can work well, especially if both parties are located near each other. Other times, more creative solutions are in order. If you are struggling with this issue, consider these options:

CT Farm Fresh Express is a new company started by East Haddam resident and local food lover Deb Marsden. CT Farm Fresh Express offers delivery of CT Grown farm products across the state for a distance-based delivery fee. Orders can be placed weekly via email. For more information, visit the [website](#) or call Deb at 860-917-7627.

The Growing Green Coop is forming now with plans to bring local food and other green products to members throughout the state. Growing Green Coop vehicles will run on biofuels created with recycled oils picked up at participating restaurants. For more information about this initiative, contact Imani at 860-246-5700 or visit the [website](#).

Next-Day Shipping Services such as Fed-Ex can be used to deliver all kinds of farm products, including cheese, meat, and seafood. For FedEx guidelines on packaging perishable items are available [online](#). With today's high price of fuel, this option may prove to be less expensive than delivering or picking up yourself!

If you have used other distribution methods successfully and would like to share you ideas, please send them to Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov .

Would you like to include locally produced products such as olive oil and vinegars in your restaurant or next culinary demonstration? For a list of

CT Specialty Food Companies please visit the [CT Department of Agriculture's website](#).



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Farm-to-Chef is a free program that helps connect local culinary professionals with producers and distributors of CT Grown products. Informational newsletters, workshops, networking, promotions and other opportunities are provided to members as part of the program.

The program also helps the public locate restaurants and other dining facilities that serve CT Grown foods.

Farmers, wholesalers, chefs, and other food service professionals are encouraged to join. Please contact Linda at the [CT Department of Agriculture](#), Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov or 860-713-2558, for more information.