

Marketing Specialty Vegetables

UC Cooperative Extension in Fresno

by Richard Molinar & Michael Yang - 2001



Where Can I Sell?

1. Roadside Stands: Three very important keys to success are location, location, and location. A busy or frequently traveled street or intersection will help considerably. It may also help to have a variety of produce, and of course, very good quality. Advertising will let people know about you. Anything you can do to make yours “different” will make it more attractive and inviting to customers -- consider “**organic**”, or “**pick-your-own**”. And don’t be afraid about contacting the media (newspaper etc.) to let them know about a possible story. Some stands are only seasonal, but others may operate year-round.

other things to consider:

- ~ ~ signage - nice signs in front people know what you have
 - consider a name for the stand - “Smith’s Specialty Produce”
- ~ ~ fresh paint - a clean looking stand is more attractive
- ~ ~ clean surroundings - keep weeds down, settle dust if water is available
- ~ ~ parking - make it easy for people to pull off the road

2. Processor Contracts: Selling to a processor might involve a very strict legal contract, or may be somewhat loose. Prices paid to the farmer are sometimes preset, so growers know ahead of time what they will be getting for their crop. The temptation is there to shop around for better prices, but in doing so, grower dependability and reputation may suffer, and bridges burned with the processor.

Wawona Frozen Foods - strawberries and fruits

JR Wood, Inc. - strawberries, fruits, and certain other vegetables

3. Terminal Markets/ Wholesale Markets: Worldwide, these central distributing points are close to ocean ports and/or railroad lines. Some of the larger wholesalers are located at these markets where large volume purchases and sales are made. 34 cities worldwide are listed including New York, Boston, Chicago, Paris, Mexico, Tokyo. Current terminal market prices are given for that day based on supply and demand. Produce prices for South San Francisco and Los Angeles are listed for California. The internet site address is [www.ams.usda.gov/fv/mnacs/terminal.htm]. These prices will give you a close approximation what various fruits and vegetables are selling for at that facility.

There are other wholesale market places in California - one in Oakland and the other in Central San Francisco. Various wholesalers are also located in these market places. The San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market has 30 different wholesalers located at their facility - some specializing in ethnic foods or certain kinds of produce. Check out their web site at [www.sfproduce.org]

4. Local Vegetable Shipping Houses: These may be strictly shippers, or a combination of grower, packer, and/or shippers. They provide the service of buying farm produce and then shipping it to their customers. There is usually a commission involved for this service but the farmer is saved the hassle of having to store, find buyers, or ship the produce. Some of the businesses operate strictly on a consignment basis, whereby an approximate price is given the farmer but not until it is actually sold is the final price known. There may also be a reduction in number of boxes paid for if quality is marginal or oversupply demands that a better quality be required, boxes may have to be repackaged or a reduced price paid based on a certain percent of lower grade in each box. The farmer has much less control over his/her produce in this situation. Some of the information below was obtained from the industries “Blue Book and/or Red Book”.

Types of products handled

Baloian Packing	485-9200	tom,sq,ck.Pp,O,gno,fv,bc,ep,jal,mexfv,nappa
Central Valley Food	456-3464	orientfv
Cherta Farms	442-1704	pea,chtom,orientfv,zu
Nat Feinn & son	268-7848	orientfv, bc,greenhouse
Jungle King	486-3560	O,ep
World Farms	268-8828	orientfv,sugp,btterm,moqua,longb,sinqua,gail,ep,fruits

OK Produce	445-8610	tom,let,o,sq,ep,pp,fv
Sunnyside Inc	896-7200	chtom,pp,sq,ck,pom,gno
Fresno Produce Inc	252-7393	chtom,let,orientfv
Best Oriental Produce	292-9384	orientv (2747 N Sunnyside)

5. Specialty and Retail Stores: Generally a year round, large volume is needed to get into the supermarket chain stores. Specialty markets such as Melissa's, Friedas, Trader Joe's, Whole foods (organic) etc. might be interested in various specialty crops – (www.melissas.com; www.friedas.com; www.brookstropicals.com; www.coosemans.com)

6. (Certified) Farmers Markets: California has over 340 certified farmers markets located throughout the state. Farmers can sell their produce from stands at these locations close to retail prices. A certified is registered by the state (county ag commissioner) and must follow certain guidelines and policies...You can only sell what you produce, you cannot buy and resell. A complete list of markets can be found on the internet [www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets] or [farmersmarket.ucdavis.edu]. Not all markets are certified nor are most swap meet markets. Some farmers sell at one or two markets a week, while other farmers may be driving to 10-15 markets a week. Disadvantages are

- * many markets have a waiting list of farmers wanting to sell there
- * only a limited volume can be sold in this manner (to the general public)
- * traveling is required of the farmer, taking away valuable time on the farm

<u>City Market Name</u>	<u>location</u>	<u>time</u>	<u>contact</u>	<u>open</u>
Clovis Clovis Old Town CFM	Pollasky/5 th	fri 5:30-9	298-5774	May-Sept
Coalinga Coalinga CFM	Coalinga plaza	tur 6-9	269-9089	May-Sept
Dinuba CFM	Tulare/L	tue 5-8	591-2707	June-Aug
Kingsburg CFM	Tulare/18 th	thur 5-8	897-1111	June-Aug
Fresno "Vineyard" Sat. CFM	Blackstone/Shaw	sat 6-12	222-0182	
Fresno "Vineyard" Wed CFM	Blackstone/Shaw	wed 3-6	222-0182	
Fresno Tower District CFM	Fulton/Olive	tue 5:30-8:30	497-8362	July-Sept
Reedley CFM	G/11 th	wed 4:30-7:30	638-5484	May-Sept
Riverpark CFM	Blckstne/Herndn	tue 5:30-9/S 9-2	994-9292	

7. Restaurants – sometimes better than retail prices can be received. Example, in NY snow pea tips sell for \$5.00 per pound, whereas here, they sell for \$.75 per pound. They are interested in smaller quantities though.

8. Other:

CSA - Community Supported Agriculture. Consumer-paid monthly or yearly subscriptions whereby the farmer provides a basket or bag of in-season produce/fruit to homeowners, usually on a weekly basis. See "Small Farm Newsletter" articles and listing on the web site for Community Alliance with Family Farmers – (www.caff.org)

Cooperatives – can be formed to either help market products or to improve buying power of ag products
Internet (E-commerce) – EBAY.com, Horsepower.com, www.buyproduce.com,

9. Market problems:

Market Enforcement
1683 N. Helm Ave.
(559)452-9831

Farmers Advocacy Group
Lyle Babcock
(559) 535-4249

Small Claims Court
(559)448-3450

Better Business Bureau
(559)222-8111

