

TIPS FOR PURCHASING DIRECT FROM LOCAL VENDORS

- ▶ Develop values statement: why are you purchasing local foods, how does it support your store's mission
- ▶ Train staff to support store mission and values
- ▶ Develop policies to ensure efficiencies when purchasing from local vendors. For example, protocol for ordering, delivering, invoicing/billing, product liability insurance, product barcoding, etc.
- ▶ Create a summary sheet on your policies to share with existing and prospective local vendors
- ▶ Set up an initial in-person meeting with prospective vendors, and annual check-in meetings with existing vendors
- ▶ Learn as much as possible about the vendor: who are they? What is important to them? What are they producing? Where are they located? How are they producing? What products would they like to sell to you? What are their expectations for selling to you?
- ▶ Request product availability and price list, and negotiate as appropriate
- ▶ Request product samples and references from their other customers
- ▶ Ensure that product is properly produced, packaged and marketed in accordance with all state and federal regulations (requirements vary based on product category so ask producer and/or do your own research before purchasing)
- ▶ Request marketing and point-of-sale materials (signs, brochures, flyers, informational sheets)
- ▶ Establish opportunities for local vendors to help you market their product through demos, events, and so on.

