

Lowes Foods Local Produce DSD Vendor Inquiry

Date _____

Business name and contact name: _____

Phone and email: _____

Website: _____

Store host you are working with (if applicable): _____

Dear valued farmer,

Thank you for your interest in being a supplier for Lowes Foods!

Founded in 1954, Lowes Foods employs nearly 9,000 people and operates over 100 full-service supermarkets in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Locally owned and operated, Lowes Foods is truly a homegrown company committed to bringing community back to the table, by providing our guests with the freshest and most innovative local products from local suppliers like yourself!

Please fill out the below information and attach a narrative addressing the questions on pages 3 and 4. Mail all proposals to the below address. Please expect to hear from us within 2 weeks of mailing your application.

**Krista Morgan
Locally Grown Accounts Representative
Lowes Foods
PO Box 24908
Winston-Salem, NC 27114-4908**

For questions: Krista Morgan
krista.morgan@lowesfoods.com 336.775.3218 ext. 53218

Total acres in produce: ____ Years growing produce for sale, including stands: ____

Description of what else is on the farm (livestock, etc): _____

Where do you currently sell your produce?

wholesaler/distributor CSA my own farmstand broker
 farmers market food hub restaurant
 to other farm stand owners grocery or other retailer

Products/approximate dates available:

Spring crops: _____

Summer crops: _____

Fall crops: _____

Winter crops: _____

Perennial crops: _____

Will product be washed or cooled prior to delivery? Please describe.

Will product be delivered on a refrigerated truck? Please describe.

If product is washed, what is the source?

Well _____

Stream _____

Pond _____

Municipal _____

If irrigation is used, what is the source?

Well _____

Stream _____

Pond _____

Municipal _____

Is irrigation and wash water source tested? _____ How often? _____

Is field exposed to runoff from animal confinement or grazing areas?

Yes _____ No _____

Are you GAP certified? Yes _____ No _____

Have you attended GAP Training? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, when and where? _____

Does your farm have a written food safety plan? Yes _____ No _____

Are you USDA Certified Organic? YES NO

GROWER signature _____

Other items to address in an attached narrative:

Do you have experience and history in growing the items you are interested in selling? Understanding the variety characteristics, labor needs, shelf life expectation, etc. is impossible without previous experience. We like to work with experience growers who know the harvest and post-harvest needs for that crop and general grading standards.

Do you have an established brand/name recognition and customer base that will attract customers to your product in a retail setting? Tell us your story! Having an established presence in the community around the stores your product will be in will help sell the products, including social media presence.

Do you have general liability insurance? If you are set up as a vendor, we will require a copy of one million insurance policy (general liability with products aggregate line).

Are you able to get orders from stores and deliver product to stores with suitable transport?

- For direct store deliveries, orders are made on a weekly basis by calling or emailing with store. Some stores may choose to do a set order each week.
- Delivery 7am- noon, M-F for direct to store. Twice a week deliveries, for example a Tuesday and Friday delivery, as weekends are busiest times for selling produce.
- Good communication is critical! We need to know in advance of harvest or with weather setbacks. Our guests expect us to be in stock.
- If crop quality, color, taste, size changes, let us know in advance of delivery or we may refuse the product. Use of technology, i.e. sending photos of crops, is a plus.

Please be aware that wholesale pricing is different than the prices you can receive direct marketing at farmers markets. Our prices paid are based on weekly market price. Payment terms are 14 days by check in mail. Managers will set price with you weekly when order is placed. Please attach a sample invoice.

What quantities are realistic for us to order of your crops? To get an idea of industry trends/popularity of produce items in mainstream retail: www.producemarketguide.com/article/guide/commodity-info. Example: Turnips are 0.1% national sales while tomatoes are 7.4%.

Are you familiar with standardized pack sizes and quality/grading specifications? Do you have a retail ready product including professional packaging? Are PLU or UPCs on all products to be sold? If not, are you willing to obtain them, either from a UPC reseller* or the GS1 system?

For PLU and UPC information by crop: www.producemarketguide.com/article/guide/commodity-info. Note: A source for UPCs is Barcodes Talk (A UPC Reseller) www.barcodetalk.com, each item UPC costs an estimate of \$20. An additional cost is to order the stickers, or Barcodes Talk sends the vendor the jpeg file of the barcode to work onto their existing label.

Can you support our stores by attending local sampling events approximately one day per month? As a new vendor, our guests may not know of your farm or brand. Sampling, staff support, and face time with guests is strongly suggested

Please attach any other notes on your food safety program. We will visit your farm to note if you follow practices described on this food safety checklist:
<http://www.iowafreshfood.com/site/checklist.html>

Additional resources on food safety:

List of labs performing water testing in NC and other grower assistance:
www.ncmarketready.org/ncfreshproducesafety

Upcoming food safety workshops in North Carolina:

www.ncfreshproducesafety.ncsu.edu/category/training-events

www.ces.ncsu.edu/local-county-center and www.carolinafarmstewards.org/gaps-workshops/

General tips and strategies to reduce risk for small farmers:

[/www.carolinafarmstewards.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CFSA_GAPS-web.pdf](http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CFSA_GAPS-web.pdf)

Writing a food safety plan: NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force:

www.ncfreshproducesafety.ncsu.edu/good-agricultural-practices/audits-plans/food-