

THE PROFITABLE PIG: THE FARMER'S GUIDE TO PORK SALES



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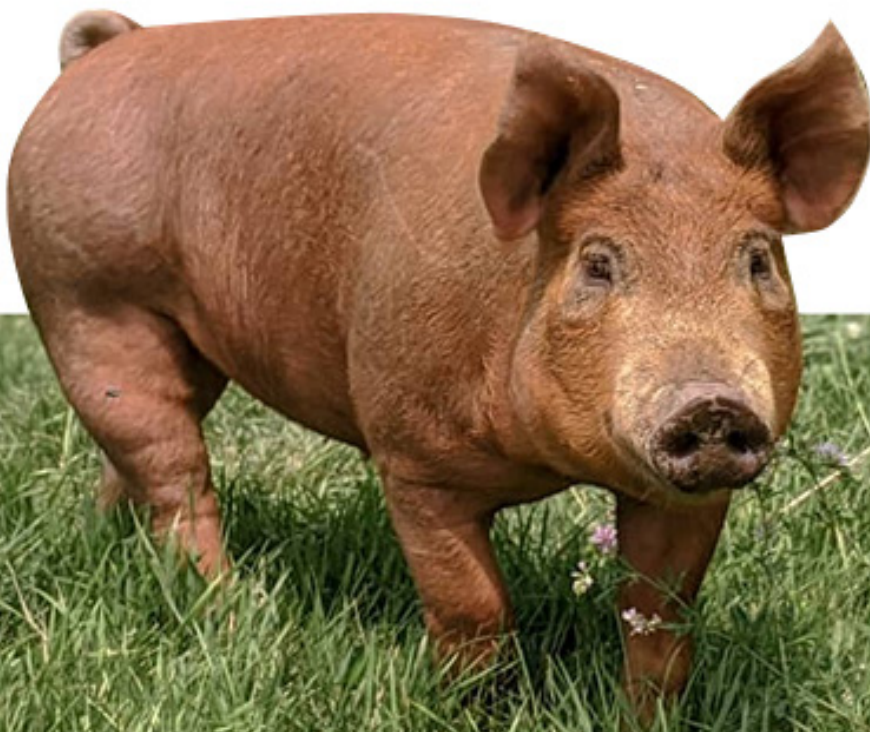


Introduction

Building a direct to consumer pork Farm business does not have to be daunting. Successful Farms have shared their tips for forming a strong foundation for recurring sales, streamlined operations and becoming a staple within their community. It takes more than simply raising and harvesting your pork products; you must maintain consistent marketing efforts, offer convenient sales and have a system that allows for simple management of inventory, Buyers and fulfillments. Leverage an eCommerce solution built for Farmers to give your community access to your products anytime, from anywhere. Follow the 5 steps to effectively sell your pork products to maintain a successful farming operation.

Selling Your Pork Direct to Consumers

When you sell your pork direct to Buyers within your local community, you can better control and manage your sales, from harvest to fulfillment. If you sell pigs in the sale barn, you typically have little to no control over pricing and the treatment of your animals. **Sell on your own terms to command premium pricing, and raise your animals in a humane and sustainable environment that will promote a healthier product the local community appreciates.** Set up fulfillment schedules to align with harvest dates, set up Pre-Orders to sell out in advance and bundle products together to move more animals through your store.



92% of buyers prefer to shop locally to support the local producers.



With the “MAHA” (Make America Healthy Again) movement, many households want healthier, more sustainable products from local businesses.

Use this to your benefit, marketing your practices and commitment to your community when selling, online and in person. To sell your pork products direct to your community, you must know what type of Buyers you plan to target for marketing efforts, pricing, packaging and placement of your items.



Consider creating an Ideal Customer Profile sheet to uncover local Buyers you want to attract.

List their location (rural, suburban, or urban), family size, grocery budget, etc. Once you understand these details, you can determine what size Subscriptions they will likely purchase, where to focus fulfillments, and how much they are willing to pay for sustainable food. Some Farms will survey Buyers to gain this information, and their preferences regarding what they want to see in your store. Conduct surveys at local events like the Farmers Market, or online through email newsletters and social media to better understand Buyer preferences. Offer a 10% off discount to incentivize customers to complete the survey.



READ: How to Find the Perfect Retail Buyer for your Farm

Using a Farm eCommerce platform will allow you to offer convenience to local Buyers so they can shop from anywhere at any time, and select a fulfillment that fits their schedule. Your inventory, customer list and transactions are automatically tracked within the platform, saving you time and the headache of manual work that can be streamlined. Leverage an eCommerce solution that can connect your online and in-person sales in real-time, so every purchase is automatically synced and organized in the backend. Once you set up your online store, consider soft-launching your sales to family and friends (to better understand the process, ease-of-use for Buyers, and uncover any opportunities to simplify your operations). Afterward, launch your Farm store to your community to start collecting orders.



Buyers will spend more time and money with brands they trust, so maintain regular communications with your customers, and keep them updated on what is happening on the Farm.

Prices, fulfillment options and inventory offerings should be transparent, so an eCommerce experience that helps you communicate the available self-serve options is key. Give customers different avenues to shop online and in person to make it easy for them to access your products. Get to know them personally to foster a loyal relationship that will result in repeat purchases.

Packaging and Pricing Your Hogs

Successful Farms utilize Subscriptions and bulk sales to move whole hogs through their store. Moving the whole animal will help you stay out of the freezer business.



While only 3% of Americans have a chest freezer, 97% of Americans could opt into Subscriptions that will apportion pork cuts month over month in a bundle box format.

Consider bulk sales for some Buyers, but focus primarily on monthly pork Subscriptions for optimal sales. Package your products to appeal to different household sizes, such as 1 person, 2 people and 3+ people boxes (in 10, 20 and 35 pound bundle boxes).

READ: [Best Kept Secrets for Selling Half & Whole Hogs](#)





For bulk sales, you can offer half and whole hog options to move larger product quantities in one sale. Use an eCommerce platform that will allow you to (1) take deposits for your bulk orders for cash flow upfront, or (2) capture pay-as-you-go Subscriptions that are automatically charged ahead of each fulfillment. If you move your product in bulk, sell by finished weight as opposed to hanging weight to make it clearer for Buyers, and help your Farm avoid explaining cost breakdowns (and allow you to factor in all costs into the final charge).

Bundle box Subscriptions will allow your Farm to package various cuts together, including popular products (everyone loves bacon!) and lesser-known options. You can move any product that doesn't sell on its own within these boxes to further ensure you move the whole animal. **You can build recurring income with Subscriptions, and choose to offer Farmer's Choice boxes to eliminate confusion and extra work when packaging orders, and avoid decision fatigue for Buyers.**

LISTEN: Selling Half and Whole Hogs from the Farm

Price your pork products at a premium, as they are higher quality than what is offered at the local grocer. Explain your practices to Buyers so they understand the quality of sustainably-raised, chemical-free products that support the local economy. Share your Farm online (socials, email and website) and in-person (Farm tours) to allow customers to build a personal connection with you, ensuring they will become repeat Buyers. You must build a viable business to continue selling, and customers who feel a commitment to your Farm will pay a premium.



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Don't try and permanently price your prices below everyone else just to try and gain market share, because it will not save you. It will just run you out of business quicker. If your numbers are even slightly wrong, you're gonna know it within a month. You've got to make sure that your margins are good and that you're making money. Price your products at a premium. If no one is complaining that your prices are too high, then your prices are too low.

- Tom, Bennett Farms (MI)

Marketing your Pork Products to Sell Out

To build a strong, loyal base of customers, your Farm must invest in ongoing marketing efforts and regular communications. As a business owner, driving sales to your store is crucial. **Using online and in-person marketing tactics will allow you to establish Buyers who will repeatedly purchase from your Farm store, especially once they taste your products.** Make sure to collect customer emails online and in-person, and encourage them to follow your social media for consistent updates, and the ability to communicate Farm events and new products. Visit community gatherings to attract new customers and build partnerships to expand your reach.



Online platforms will allow you to reach a wide range of Buyers, while still focusing on local visibility. Without digital profiles, it can be difficult for customers to find and interact with your Farm business. **Utilize an online presence to expand your access and build relationships with more Buyers.** This can provide a peek into life on the Farm, allow them to view your products and help form a personal connection with your brand. Use social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to grow your visibility online and allow you to engage with other local businesses or community members, while sharing about your Farm and any upcoming events or sales. Utilize collaboration posts when partnering with local influencers or businesses to expand your reach to their audiences. You can offer free products in exchange for a cooking video or post of your products on their feed to grow trust with their followers.

READ: [Farm Marketing: Guide to Market your Products](#)

Email marketing will allow you to directly communicate with Farm Buyers about any new pork offerings, Subscription sign-ups or personal stories to build trust. The Barn2Door + Mailchimp integration automatically segments Buyers based on the product and purchase history, helping you tailor your messaging for loyal customers or laggard Buyers, making sure they are being contacted with emails specific to their relationship with your Farm. Consider encouraging email sign-ups with promos and exclusive offers, such





as a 10% off your first order code, or early access to new products. You can retain Buyers with discounts for previous subscribers, offer them the ability to open up your private store with a certain purchase, or give access to high-demand items with a Subscription order.



In-person marketing efforts are crucial for small, local businesses. This is a great way to attract new Buyers and quickly build personal relationships.

Consider where you can find your ideal Buyers: at Farmers Markets, community events (such as festivals) and within their local loop (businesses, churches or schools). **Choose your go-to-market avenues wisely to determine if they will be profitable for your business, and which locations will be worthwhile for you to frequent.** Consider your presence to make it easy for Buyers to shop, and offer samples to show them the quality of your product (meat sticks, bacon bits, etc). See if you can set up a booth or hand out flyers to promote your products at markets, community events, festivals, fairs, concerts or fundraisers. This will allow you to reach more local Buyers interested in your pork products.

LISTEN: Busting Farm Marketing Myths

Offer convenient pick-up locations that are easily accessible within your community's local loop. **Not only will this make it easy for Buyers to obtain their orders, but high-volume areas may attract new customers to your store.** Partner with other local businesses for shared promotions or product bundles. As a pork Farmer, you can partner with another Farm for eggs or a bakery for bread for a sausage and bacon breakfast bundle. Partner with a produce Farm for beans to create a pulled pork dinner box. These will make your product offerings more enticing.



Give local schools and community members volunteer opportunities to attract extra help on the Farm, and also provide a sneak peek into how you run the business. These opportunities may attract Buyers who would otherwise not be familiar with your Farm. Offering Farm dinners or tours can also bring new customers onto your land, and give you an extra revenue driver. Partner with a local chef for an on-Farm dinner event, or host monthly tours where people can feed the hogs. Sell the tickets online and make your Farm a staple within the community.

Make It Convenient for You and Your Buyers

The easier it is for Buyers to access your pork products, the more they will shop and spend. **A simple storefront that answers all of their questions, clearly lays out packaging, pricing and fulfillments, and an avenue to access your products 24/7 from any device will make your Farm stand out.** Consider pick-up locations that will benefit your Farm and your Buyers. Choose places where many Buyers can pick-up their products at once, eliminating the need for you to travel all across your state or region. If you have a high concentration of customers in a specific neighborhood, you can encourage a loyal Buyer to become a pick-up captain, who will host all orders in a shaded area at their house where the customers can come and grab their purchases.

READ: [The Data on Buyer Demand for Local Farm Pick-ups](#)





The local loop is any area in your community that potential Buyers may frequent or pass by as a part of their weekly routine. **Areas such as local schools, churches, businesses, libraries, gyms, or community centers can be great pick-up locations for Buyers, and allow you to fulfill multiple orders at once.** If you attend a Farmers Market, consider making that a pick-up location, as your Buyers may already go there to shop routinely, and it can encourage them to add to their order as they see your other products in the booth. Prominently display your signage, a QR code, and use branded boxes, bags, tape and stickers to constantly market your brand to new and existing customers, even during fulfillment day. Passersby will be intrigued when they see neighbors and friends picking up fresh pork from your Farm, so make it easy for them to identify your store and scan a QR code on your vehicle or packaging.



Offer direct delivery to their doorstep for a fee (e.g. \$9.95 / order). As delivery straight to someone's door will require time and money for gas, and Buyers expect to pay a fee, consider adding a charge when people select that fulfillment option. There is no need to offer 'Free' delivery over a certain price (this is fully your choice as the Farmer). Either way, it is recommended to use branded delivery vehicles and product packaging to attract new customers and maintain a professional image.



Align your fulfillment schedule with pork harvest dates at the butcher. **This will save you from rushing to sell product, and help you organize your inventory before harvest.** Set up your schedules so you can pick up from the processor and fulfill your orders the same day (or have Buyers go straight to the processor for fulfillments). Stay out of the freezer business by being smart about your inventory. Use software that helps track and schedule out dates, to easily communicate when products will be ready for Buyers.

READ: [Simplify your Farm Delivery Day](#)

Partnerships and Value-Added Products

Utilize partnerships to expand your reach within your local community and increase your product offerings. Find other local businesses and Farms at community events, at Farmers Markets or on social media and plan out ways to create a mutually beneficial partnership. It is wise to formulate a plan when approaching these businesses to increase their trust and help create a smooth planning process. **Partner with local businesses like gyms or health food stores to promote the benefits of sustainably-raised pork and other pastured proteins.** Local bakeries may use your products in premade casseroles or pies, while wine shops can curate a ready-to-eat charcuterie board with your pork products (all pointing back to your Farm).



LISTEN: Building Farm Partnerships in your Community's Local Loop

When partnering with other Farms, you can create a bundle box, such as a mixed protein grillers box with a beef Farmer or a stir fry bundle with veggies from a produce Farm. If you have an on-Farm store, or simply know your target audience may enjoy products that you do not currently offer, consider offering other Farms' products within your own store. **Many successful Farms will sell bakery goods or pantry items from other local businesses within their online and in-person store to make their Farm a one-stop-shop for Buyers, increase revenue and help support another small business.**

Find local influencers online and offer to send them a free product to promote your business on their social media profiles. They may also do a giveaway for a free bundle box or gift certificate to your Farm store to give their followers a chance to try your products as well. **This will help your brand build trust with people who are already following the influencer, expand your reach and lead more potential Buyers to your store.**



READ: Farm HERO: Sell your Pork in a Variety of Ways!

Successful Farms will partner with chefs to have them create recipes to post on their Farm website, include in Subscription boxes or post on social media. This makes the idea of cooking new, unfamiliar cuts more approachable, and makes your food look appealing to a new audience. Also, if any restaurants use your products in their food, be sure to ask if they can include your Farm name on their menu or social media, so local community members know where they can access the fresh products their favorite restaurants use. It is crucial to market and maintain a strong presence for your pork products within your community to maintain consistent sales and build a loyal customer base.





Conclusion

Running a direct to consumer pork business requires planning, a trustworthy brand, a loyal base of Buyers, a reliable eCommerce solution and a commitment to sustainably-raised products. Do not get overwhelmed by all of the steps needed to get started. Instead, lay the foundation for a successful, profitable pork business by learning from other Farmers who have been in your shoes.

With a proper understanding of your community and ongoing marketing efforts, you can grow and maintain a sustainable direct-to-market pork business. While you got into the industry to Farm, it is crucial to understand the other steps to sell all your products and become a staple in your community. Make your sales convenient and easy, and build a loyal relationship with your Buyers for a successful, long-term pork operation.

Barn2Door offers software for Independent Farmers to create and promote their brand, sell online and in-person, and save time managing their business. If you're curious to learn more, **[watch this 5-minute video.](#)**