

## Selling Farm Produce by Count, Volume or Weight

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One of the first decisions to make when setting up for consumer direct sales of produce on a farm, is how to measure and sell product. The three most common methods of measurement and sales are by count of items, by volume using containers, and by weight using a scale.

### Selling by Volume or Count

The simplest method is to measure and sell by volume or count. For example, apples may be sold by the half bushel volume or sweet corn by the ear count. When using this method for U-pick, issue the customer a container(s) from the field station before picking; the customer fills the container and brings it back to the station for payment. Pre-determine the average weight of the container full of produce and the price needed for that volume of produce. Offer several sizes of containers, to match the needs of the customer. Consider small pails for kids who want to pick along with an adult. Five-pound buckets are usually the largest container size. If it makes sense in the budget, loan wagons to tote the buckets.



### Set up a Field Station for U-pick

Create a field station where customers first enter the field. At this station, assign customers picking rows or sections, distribute containers, weigh the picked product or count the containers of picked produce, and provide a place for, or instructions for, payment.

### Make Sure to Stay in Compliance with Agency Regulations

Other than a scale license, if you are selling only fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts grown on your own farm directly to individual customers, Oregon does not require state licenses or inspections. However, it's wise to stay informed about changes in the laws and practices.



### Selling by Weight

To sell by the pound, purchase a scale and have that scale licensed by Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). To get a license: complete a license application, complete a "placed in service" report and return these with payment of the license fee to ODA. These forms are available on ODA's website. License fees are listed on the application form. Call ODA's Weights & Measures Office for more information and to schedule an inspection at 503-986-4670. Scales must be positioned at the field station so the customer can accurately read the scale



Photos: Audrey Comerford OSU

from a reasonable position without intervention by the scale operator. If you have a cashier at another location on the farm, the field station operator may record the number of containers or the weight on a slip of paper and give that to the customer to take to the farm's cashier.

### References

*Recommended Methods of Sale for Fruits and Vegetables*, Oregon Department of Agriculture. (internet May 29, 2019)

*Develop a Pick Your Own Business*, University of Vermont Extension. (internet May 29, 2019)

Oregon State University has *The Catalog* —the source for current, peer-reviewed, research-based learning materials.

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