Working with Local Farmers
Whole Foods Market

To become a Whole Foods Market vendor
- $1 million general liability insurance policy – required
- Organic certification – desired, not required (if organic copies of certs required)
- Open to farm visits by Whole Foods Market
- Food safety certification – desired, not required
  - Salad greens, sprouts and processed veggies have more strict requirements
- Distribution either direct store delivery or via distributor

Pricing
- Know your costs of production and price accordingly!
- Competitiveness with like products is critical – do market research
  - Be responsive to market conditions – higher supply = lower prices
- Understand difference between wholesale, retail and farmers’ market pricing

Distribution
- Strategic choice requiring balance of pricing, volume, and ensuring a robust variety of market outlets, etc.
- Receiving – be sure to know and follow protocols, e.g. hours, sign-off of invoice, etc.
- Boxes – reusing is great, but need to follow organic rules; picking up and reusing boxes is ideal for those who deliver directly to the store
- Packaging choices regarding type of packaging (or lack thereof), size, labels, etc. can be an area of collaborative discussion and experimentation to determine customer preference and reduce expense/waste

Communication
- This is critical to a successful relationship
- Communicate when product is not available, as early as possible to enable ordering of substitute product
  - This does not mean that you will lose the relationship – quite the opposite!
- Do not substitute items without asking if alternative products are desired

Dual lining products
- It is possible to carry the same product from imported and local sources at different prices, similar to an organic premium. However, the pricing should not be wildly divergent and it would help to have some distinguishing characteristics, for example local organic is much more compelling when placed up against imported conventional.

Desired products – just a few to get us started…
- Spinach
- Non-sweet potatoes
- Carrots
- Celery
- Non-sweet onions
- Organic melons
- Grapefruit
- Stone fruits
- Rhubarb
- Citrus – lemons, limes with greater consistency
- Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries – any berries!
- Organic zucchini, squash, pumpkins
- Organic tomatoes
- Organic eggplant – esp. globe variety
- Garlic
- Cauliflower
- Organic cabbage