



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: Feb. 3, 2010 (10-02)  
Contact: Mike Louisell (360) 902-1813

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560  
Visit our Web site at: [agr.wa.gov](http://agr.wa.gov)

## **WSDA handbook helps farmers launch, expand direct-sales businesses** *Regulations and strategies for farm and food businesses in Washington available online*

**OLYMPIA** – Farmers who sell their agricultural and food products directly to consumers now have a new tool to help launch a business or expand into new products: the Washington State Department of Agriculture’s (WSDA) *Small Farm & Direct Marketing Handbook*.

Announced at the annual meeting of the Washington State Farmers Market Association last week, the handbook provides practical information about the resources available to farmers, how to operate a farm business, marketing strategies and regulations on specific products. Chapters include sections on licensing, food safety, organic certification and marketing directly to consumers through farmers markets, retailers and institutions, community supported agriculture (CSAs), farm stands and U-pick, and information on agri-culinary tourism. It also discusses regulations affecting the marketing of specific products such as poultry and meats, eggs, fish and shellfish, fruits and vegetables, honey, milk and dairy.

The 125-page handbook can be downloaded at <http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/>

WSDA Director Dan Newhouse notes the information in the handbook makes it easier for businesses to navigate local, state and federal rules to sell their goods, as well as capture a higher percentage of the retail food dollar.

“Helping farmers sell their products and increase the economic viability of small farms is the core mission for our Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program,” Newhouse said. “A lot of farm wisdom went into this handbook and we paid special attention to summarizing pertinent rules and regulations in plain language.”

Direct marketing has grown in popularity as consumers voice preference for buying fresh local products and learning more about where their food comes from and how it is produced. The vast majority of Washington’s 39,000 farms are classified as small farms.

Sales at 140 farmers markets exceeded \$55 million in 2008, the latest figures available. There also are about 200 Community Supported Agriculture operations where consumers purchase regularly from a local farm and some 500 farm stands that provide the public with additional opportunities to buy locally.

The new handbook builds upon what was formerly called *The Green Book*, last revised in 2006. The handbook will be a valuable resource not only for farmers, but also county health departments, farmers market

MORE

managers, agricultural professionals and anyone who wants to know the ins and outs of selling farm products direct to consumers.

“The handbook answers frequently asked questions for information on farm maps for marketing, labor regulations for interns and apprentices, educational opportunities and farm loan programs,” said Patrice Barrentine, direct marketing coordinator, Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program.

The *Small Farm & Direct Marketing Handbook* was partially funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency. Printed copies may be obtained by e-mailing your address to [smallfarms@agr.wa.gov](mailto:smallfarms@agr.wa.gov) or by calling Leisa Schumaker at (360) 902-1926.

### **Small Farm & Direct Marketing Program a resource for farmers**

WSDA personnel in the Small Farm & Direct Marketing Program support small farm and food product businesses. Areas of expertise include matters concerning direct marketing, producer grants, farmers markets, merchandising, immigrant farm support, beginning, minority and women farmer outreach, value-added products, small-scale meat processing, infrastructure development, farm business, risk management and other topics.

Contact Patrice Barrentine in Olympia at (360) 902-2057 or [pbarrentine@agr.wa.gov](mailto:pbarrentine@agr.wa.gov) or Fred Berman in Bellingham at (360) 676-2059 or [fberman@agr.wa.gov](mailto:fberman@agr.wa.gov) for further information.

###