



# Washington State Department of Agriculture

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## **Local buying mission in Spokane County to connect farmers and buyers for stronger local food links**

**OLYMPIA** – The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) is hosting a tour and tradeshow to help small farmers reach larger markets with their products and connect them with buyers interested in locally grown foods. The goal is to bring buyers from local grocery stores, restaurants, farm stands, school and institutional food services onto farms – and farmers into food businesses – to demystify what goes into sourcing local food.

[The Local Buying Mission Tour and Tradeshow](#) will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday Oct. 5. It will begin at Gonzaga University and return for a networking trade meeting at Gonzaga’s Hemmingson Community Center. Gonzaga University, Washington State University Extension, and LINC Foods, a co-op of Spokane-area farmers, are co-sponsors of the event.

The tour will visit local farms, a local food distribution cooperative, and a food service operation for a behind-the-scenes look at the path local produce takes from farm to fork. Along the way, buyers and farmers will have the opportunity to learn about each other’s businesses and explore how to make direct sourcing relationships successful.

“We know there is tremendous demand right now for locally grown produce in restaurants, grocery stores, and food service operations for schools and other institutions. Even brewpubs are seeking local ingredients for their beers and pub foods,” Laura Raymond with WSDA, Small Farm Direct Marketing, said. “At the same time, many growers want to provide their community with healthy, fresh produce but don’t know how to connect with local buyers, while many buyers know their customers desire local products, but need good relationships with farmers. This event is meant to bring both of these groups together.”

The tradeshow will provide time for one-on-one “speed” meetings, mini technical assistance sessions, and a happy hour reception featuring refreshments made with products from participating farmers.

Anyone interested can register online or visit [www.agr.wa.gov/marketing/smallfarm](http://www.agr.wa.gov/marketing/smallfarm) and look for the link to the [Food Safety Workshop series](#) for more information.

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