

Food Safety Tips for Consumers Buying Direct from Farmers

Many consumers are buying more food products directly from the producer through online sales, at a farmers market, through a food box pickup or delivery, or other methods. Buying direct from farmers is a great way to support local farmers and food producers! However, when buying directly from the producer, the consumer needs to take more responsibility to ensure the safety of the food that they are purchasing. Some key tips that consumers should consider include the following:

- Visit with the producer and ask them about their production and handling practices. Ask if they have the applicable licenses or any voluntary certifications or trainings in food safety.
- Ensure that any cut or peeled produce, and any meats, eggs, cheeses and milk have all been kept under refrigeration ($\leq 40^{\circ}\text{F}$) - or frozen - throughout production, handling and transport to your home.
- For optimum safety, milk should be pasteurized for safety. More information on this is available from: www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/raw-milk-misconceptions-and-danger-raw-milk-consumption
- Observe any photos and descriptions of the food and the practices the farmer uses, as well as observing the food itself to indicate that the food items are processed, handled, and stored in a sanitary manner.
 - o After harvest, produce should not be stored directly on the ground.
 - o Food packaging should look clean
- If you visit the farm to pick up the products, wash your hands before and after you visit the farm. Don't visit a farm, farmers market, or other public places if you are sick.
- If orders are shipped, be sure they arrive on time, with no damage to packages, and at proper temperature for safety. Report any issues to the producer.

For more information: Shopping Safety at Farmers Markets Fact Sheet- KSU/MU: <https://extension2.missouri.edu/n1301>

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