



## **Growers Guide 2009**

The North Country Grown Cooperative, Inc. is a wholesale agricultural cooperative that markets a variety of locally grown or processed products to regional outlets and promotes sustainable and safe agricultural practices.

Introduction  
**What is the North Country Grown Cooperative, Inc.?**

North Country Grown Cooperative, Inc. is a cooperative corporation established February 2, 2005 by St. Lawrence County producers through New York State Cooperative Corporation Law and filed with New York State Secretary of State. Its purposes as stated in its Articles of Incorporation, are:

*...assisting its members, including other cooperatives with which it is affiliated, by performing services connected with the purchase, financing, production, manufacture, warehousing, cultivation, harvesting, preservation, drying, processing, cleansing, canning, blending, packing, grading, storing, handling, utilization, shipping, marketing, merchandising, selling, financing or otherwise disposing of the agricultural and food products of its members or of any byproducts thereof, including livestock waste or other organic agricultural wastes, or connected with the acquisition for its members of labor, supplies and articles of common use, including livestock, equipment, machinery, food consumed by the members, their families or guests; and for any other purposes permitted under the Cooperative Corporations Law.*

The cooperative markets and delivers locally grown produce to colleges, restaurants and other regional institutions. Products offered by the cooperative include seasonal vegetables and fruits, as well as meats, maple syrup, and honey that are offered all year.

**How it Began...**

PACES Dining Services at SUNY Potsdam began regularly purchasing locally grown food in 2002. In 2003 and 2004, area agencies and individuals together with local farmers expanded the sales to other schools by establishing the Farm-to-School Support Project (FTSSP). The FTSSP continues as an educational and outreach entity under the umbrella of Seedcorn, Inc., a nonprofit organization located in Potsdam. Financial assistance for the FTSSP came by way of sales to schools, donations through GardenShare, and a Small Farms Educational grant through the Cornell Small Farms Program. As well use of facilities, staff time and support came from SUNY Potsdam PACES Dining Services, St. Lawrence University, the Ganakee Group, Clarkson University faculty, St. Lawrence County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell University's Agriculture Innovation Center and other area schools.

The members of the FTSSP planned the formation of the cooperative which took approximately ten months. The cooperative is owned and operated by its members. The Board of Directors is elected by the membership and is comprised of farmers and non-farming individuals vested in supporting a local food system for the North Country. The annual meeting of the cooperative will be held in January of each year. This *Grower's Guide* explains how the organization works and what is expected of all farmers who want to take part.

## How to Participate in North Country Grown Cooperative, Inc.

North Country Grown, Inc. is open for membership and seeks additional members. Small and large growers, producers, and farmers are welcome. Full membership in the cooperative, including voting rights, is a one-time shareholder fee of \$100.00. This fee can be paid out of product sales through the cooperative.

Occasionally, producers may be asked to participate in an educational or community event or work with a student intern, etc. Care will be taken to ensure that time demands are minimal. These events are opportunities to reach out into the North Country. By educating students, parents, and other community members about the benefits of buying local produce, the visibility of the cooperative and its marketing opportunities will increase.

### **Membership:**

Membership in the cooperative is not required. However members have additional rights and privileges. Membership in the cooperative is granted according to the bylaws of the cooperative. All producers will be required to sign the Producer's Agreement annually, provide a tax number (upon request) and to agree to abide by the following guidelines.

### **Collection and Advance Reporting-- in Season:**

Producers may bring their produce to the central collection facility twice a week, on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays between 8:00 AM and 9:30 AM. The collection facility is the CCE Lab facility on Rt. 68 approximately 3 miles south of Canton. It is the responsibility of the producer to bring the produce to the collection facility.

You must report in advance what produce (and how much) you will supply for the next collection. You must make this advance report to the cooperative manager by 10:00 AM on Tuesday for the Thursday collection and by 10:00AM on Thursday for the following Tuesday collection. You may make the report in person on collection days or by phone (769-5061 or cell 323-0850), by e-mail ([drumlins@northnet.org](mailto:drumlins@northnet.org)), or by postal mail (178 Fayette Road, Massena, NY 13662). You do not need to provide produce for every collection, but only produce reported in advance will be accepted and you are obligated to provide what you offer in the advance report.

If for any reason you are unable to provide the produce offered in your report, you must contact the manager *immediately*. The manager will try to replace the produce through another producer.

### **Collections and Advance Reporting--Off Season:**

During the winter months and any slow periods the procedure will vary depending on customer needs. The deliveries are typically made once a week and the day of the week may change. The producer may be asked to deliver the product themselves if it is a small volume. The manager and producer will work together to plan the time and implementation of deliveries to ensure efficient use of resources.

### **Preparing Your Produce:**

During growing, harvesting, and packing, you must follow the North Country Grown Cooperative, Inc.'s guidelines for food safety practices. All of your produce must meet food service requirements for size, ripeness and cleanliness. All produce must be fresh and clear of breaks, bruises, dents, stems, leaves, roots, and all soil. In addition, your produce must be packaged according to food service requirements for count or weight and must be packed in the required bags or boxes (see packing guidelines chart). Boxes must also be labeled with the farm name and date packed. Growers must supply the required boxes, which will not be returned. Growers can acquire boxes themselves or purchase them from the cooperative at a discounted price. The cooperative will try to have enough boxes available, but may not always be able to provide all boxes. The price for a box will be \$0.50/each. Regular onion bags will cost \$0.20/each other large net bags will be \$0.25/each.

**Water Tests:**

It is the policy of NCGC to require an annual water test from all producers who grow leafy greens or wash products that will not be cooked before being consumed. This would include lettuce, spinach, greens, herbs, etc. Certified organic growers are exempt as they are required to have their wash water tested or use a municipal water source for certification.

**Tally Sheet:**

Each time you provide produce, you must fill out and sign a tally sheet, showing exactly what items and quantities you are providing. The manager will verify what you are providing and must initial the tally sheet. These tally sheets will provide the basis for determining your payment. You will not be paid until your properly completed Tally Sheet is received.

**Pricing:**

In order to keep produce prices competitive, the cooperative charges buyers in keeping with national supply and demand. The prices change weekly and cannot be known in advance. Prices are set by the manager. Current market prices are checked on line and the past history of prices charged are taken into consideration. Producers are encouraged to make the manager aware of the price that they need in order to cover their costs. This would help with pricing.

**Oversupply:**

If the supply of produce is greater than the food services can use, the cooperative will accept such products from growers on a rotating basis. The order of preference will be 1<sup>st</sup> Cooperative members who have provided projections, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cooperative members, 3<sup>rd</sup> Non-members who have provided projections, and 4<sup>th</sup> Non-members. New cooperative members joining after the official start of the season (August 18, 2009) would be considered in the second category.

One member will not be allowed to fill the entire need for a product if other producers also offer the same product. Up to 50% of current sales, at the maximum, are reserved for a member with greatest seniority. Up to 10% of sales every year will be reserved for development of new members.

**Payment and Handling Fee:**

The cooperative's customers will provide payment only to the cooperative, which in turn will pay the individual producers. The cooperative will pay the producers upon receiving payment from the customer.

The cooperative will deduct a 15% for cooperative members and 20% for non-members handling fee. This fee will be used to handle the expenses of the cooperative. Any leftover amount may be in part distributed at the end of the year by a vote of the members.

**Policy on dealing with delinquent members:**

Members who fail to meet the terms laid out in the Producer's Agreement will receive a letter reminding the member of their responsibilities to the NCGC. The letter will be signed by the President of the Board and delivered by hand or by mail. It will reiterate the terms of the Producer's Agreement where lapses have been observed and request that the member increase their attention to these requirements. Following delivery of the letter, the President will meet with the delinquent member. If little or no improvement is observed following these steps, the Board will rule on suspension or termination of membership in accordance with Article 1, Section 2 of the Bylaws.

# Food Safety Practices

## Microbial Contamination

All producers selling through the North Country Grown Cooperative are required to follow all applicable state and federal regulations for production and sale of farm direct products. All new producers will be given a copy of *Reduce Microbial Contamination with Good Agricultural Practice* at the time that they receive the first copy of the Producer's Agreement to sign. Recommended food safety practices for fruits and vegetables are presented in the publication. Additional copies can be acquired through Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County.

## Pesticide Use

All producers selling through the North Country Grown Cooperative who choose to use pesticides must do so in accordance with state and federal law. All pesticides are regulated by state and federal laws in order to protect the user and consumer.

Read labels carefully. Follow instructions. Most pesticides are poisonous to humans and animals. Handle them with care. Store them in closed, plainly labeled original containers, out of the reach of children and animals. Keep pesticides in locked storage facilities. When handling, do not allow pesticides to come in contact with the skin. Do not apply on a windy day. Do not smoke while handling pesticides. Do not inhale dusts, sprays, or vapors. After handling pesticides, wash hands and face before eating or smoking. To avoid accidental injury to susceptible plants, avoid drift of sprays and dusts. Use separate equipment for applying hormone-type herbicides such as 2,4-D. Dispose of empty containers so that children cannot play with them.

In New York State, pesticides that are highly toxic or that are persistent and accumulative are placed on a restricted-use list and may be sold to and used only by certified applicators. "Restricted-use pesticide" or "restricted pesticide" means any pesticide listed in Section 326.2 of Part 326, according to the criteria of Environmental Conservation Law, Section 33-0101(42), or any pesticide whose labeling bears the statement "Restricted-Use Pesticide."

Commercial applicators of pesticides as well as private applicators who use restricted-use pesticides must be certified. Certification exams and re-certification credits are given through the state; consult your Cornell Cooperative Extension agent or regional pesticide specialist if you have questions concerning certification.

Please refer to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation circular 865, part 325, *Rules and Regulations Relating to the Application of Pesticides*, for further information relating to the use of pesticides in New York State. In addition, the book *2003 Integrated Crop and Pest Management Guidelines for Commercial Vegetable Production* is available in print from Cornell Cooperative Extension or online at <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/recommends>.

## Resources for Water Testing

Life Science Laboratories  
103 St. Lawrence Ave  
Waddington, NY 13694  
315 388 4476

Donna Gokey  
501 Tracey Road  
Lisbon, NY 13658  
315 386 2757

Converse Labs\*\*\* Will pick up on the farm  
800 Starbuck Ave, Suite B101  
Watertown, NY 13601  
315 788 8388 or 800 427 5227

## 2008 Sample Sale Prices

Product	Package	Average Price in 2008
<b>Apples</b>	bushel/box	\$25.00
<b>Beans</b>		
Conventional	20 lbs/box	\$26.00
<b>Organic</b>		<b>\$30.00</b>
<b>Broccoli-conventional/organic</b>	20lbs/box	\$25.00/ <b>\$28.00</b>
<b>Cabbage</b>		
Conventional/ <b>Organic</b>	50 lbs/box	\$25.00/ <b>\$37.50</b>
<b>Carrots</b>	50 lbs/bag	\$25.00
<b>Cantaloupe Melons</b>	30lbs/box	\$22.00
<b>Cauliflower Conventional/Organic</b>	20lbs/box	\$25.00/ <b>\$28.00</b>
<b>Cucumbers conventional/organic</b>	40 lbs/box	<b>\$32.00/\$40.00</b>
<b>Lettuce</b>		
Heads	24/box	\$24.00
Mix conventional/ <b>organic</b>	by the pound	\$6.00/ <b>\$6.50</b>
<b>Herbs</b>	4oz/zip-lock bag	\$4.00-\$4.50
<b>Honeydew Melons</b>	30lbs/box	<b>\$20.00</b>
<b>Onions</b>		
Red	25lbs/bag	\$22.50
Yellow	50 lbs/bag	\$26.00
<b>Peppers</b>		
Green conventional/ <b>organic</b>	1 1/9 bu box	<b>\$21.00/\$26.00</b>
Red/Yellow/orange	1 1/9 bu box	\$26.00
Hot-misc	By the pound	\$2.00
<b>Potatoes</b>		
Red/white	50 lbs/box	\$35.00
Organic	50 lbs/box	\$50.00
Fingerlings/special conventional/ <b>organic</b>	50lbs/box	<b>\$37.50/\$62.50</b>
<b>Squash</b>		
<b>Summer/Zucchini conventional/organic</b>	20 lbs/box	<b>\$22.50/\$25.00</b>
Winter	35 -40 lbs/box	\$28.00-\$34.00
<b>Tomatoes, Cherry/Grape</b>	6 quarts/box	\$21.00
<b>Tomatoes, Slicing</b>	25 lbs/box	\$28.00
<b>Bison Patties</b>	10 lbs/box	\$40.00
<b>Honey</b>	½ gallon	\$15.00
<b>Maple Syrup</b>	Gallon	\$42.00

This list is not all-inclusive; please inquire about items not listed above.

Produce prices change weekly and cannot be known in advance.

Questions? Call North Country Grown, Inc. Manager Sue Rau at 769-5061 or cell: 323-0850

North Country Grown Cooperative, Inc.  
**Producer's Agreement 2009**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Farm: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_, NY Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone with Area Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I agree to abide by the guidelines of the North Country Grown Cooperative, as outlined in the Grower's Guide 2009.\*\*
2. I agree to allow North Country Grown Cooperative to deduct a handling fee from my gross sales, to cover operating expenses.
3. I agree to sell only those foods grown on my own fields, through my own farm operation.
4. I agree to grow and harvest my crops in keeping with applicable state and federal regulations and the food safety practices described in *Food Safety Begins on the Farm*.
5. I agree to report in advance, prepare my produce, deliver it to the collection center, complete tally sheets, and receive payments as outlined in the *Grower's Guide 2009*.
6. I agree to support the North Country Grown Cooperative by welcoming visits to my farm, participating in training and orientation opportunities, and sharing information with other growers and participating organizations as needed.
7. If I am unable to maintain participation in the North Country Grown Cooperative as outlined above, I agree to withdraw from the organization and/or work with North Country Grown in order to fully participate again.

Producer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

North Country Grown Cooperative, Inc. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Print Name & Title): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Members who fail to meet the terms laid out in the Producer's Agreement will be notified in writing by the President of the Board and subsequently visited in person by the President. If little or no improvement is observed following these steps, the Board will rule on suspension or termination of membership in accordance with Article 1, Section 2 of the Bylaws.*