REACH NEW CUSTOMERS

GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS FOR DIRECTORY LISTINGS

The Minnesota Grown Directory is designed to help you reach customers interested in buying local, no matter your business model! This guide will help to understand directory listing **content requirements, style requirements,** and **key questions** customers may have.

Minnesota Grown reserves the discretion to modify listings to meet requirements and delay posting directory listings until they meet the requirements. For content discrepancies, Minnesota Grown may refrain from posting a listing and reimburse the listing cost if an agreed-upon modification cannot be found.

Please email any questions, concerns, or clarifications to **mngrown.mda@state.mn.us**

Content Requirements

The Minnesota Grown Directory is focused on direct-to-consumer sales. If selling wholesale, please check out our **Wholesale Directory**. Businesses and markets listed in this direct-to-consumer directory should:

1. Sell direct to the final customer (e.g. online sales, farm stand, farmers market, CSA shares.)
2. Sell products that are at least 80% grown/raised in Minnesota by your business, OR
   be a farmers' market with vendors who grow/raise product in Minnesota, OR
   be a business creating a value-added product featuring ingredients that are 80% grown/raised in Minnesota.
   Wild rice must be 100% grown/raised in Minnesota by your business to be listed in the directory.

Listing descriptions are limited to 460 total characters, including spaces and punctuation.

Listings should focus on your business/market practices, rather than broad claims.

No political references of any kind and no profanity allowed on listings.

Regulated Market Claims. The food world is full of marketing claims, many of which are regulated and need to be accurate/verifiable. Many words such as "lean", "low-fat", "high-protein", and "organic" have legal definitions. Other product claims such as "no-hormones" or "no-steroids" may not be used when describing meat, poultry, and seafood. If you are uncertain about the legality of wording for your directory listing or labeling, please call MDA's Food and Feed Safety Division at **(651) 201-6272** for clarification.

Product Types are the way customers search our directory. Be careful in selecting products you currently offer to ensure your listing appears on the correct search pages. You may **only select product types for items that you grow, raise, or create** from Minnesota Grown agricultural products. Select all product types that apply for your online listing.

Categories Requiring Certifications, Licenses, or Program Participation

New **Accepts SNAP/EBT.** This should only be selected by producers or farmers' markets who accept SNAP/EBT <u>directly</u>.

Food Hub/Aggregator. Persons, farms, or organizations selling aggregated products from multiple farms must have a food handler license from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

GAP Certification. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification refers to a voluntary, regulated food safety verification and certification process. Only members who have *current* GAP certification at the time of license application/renewal can use that term in their directory listing text.

Hemp. Producers selecting hemp as a product type must be a currently licensed member with the MDA Industrial Hemp Program: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants/hemp

Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). This can only be selected by farmers markets or winter farmers markets who are registered with FMNP: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/seniorfarmers-market-nutrition-program

Milk and Other Dairy Products. Persons selling milk and other dairy products should have reviewed the MDA Dairy Inspection Program information and be following any requirements for their farm: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/dairy-minnesota

Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certified (MAWQC). This product will only be given to businesses who are certified by the MAWQC program: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/environment-sustainability/minnesota-agricultural-water-quality-certification-program-1

Certified Organic. Certified organic is a regulated market claim based on the USDA's National Organic Standards. Our "Certified Organic" product type will only be given to businesses whose certification is up-to-date and have been certified through an accredited body. All members requesting "Certified Organic" as a product type should e-mail their most recent certification to **mngrown.mda@state.mn.us**. This will be cross-referenced against the USDA Organic Database: https://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity/

Nursery Stock Growers and Dealers. Persons selling nursery stock must have a valid MN Nursery Stock Dealer or Nursery Stock Grower certificate through the MDA. They must sell only certified nursery stock and provide verification of certification: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/plants-insects/nursery-certification-and-plant-regulation

Other Categories

New **Producer Identity Filters**. In response to requests for this feature from buyers, we are piloting filters that will allow buyers to search for producers by identity. Providing this information is optional. The information will be public on your directory listing and can be removed at any future time. We will be collecting feedback on this pilot throughout 2024 and will have an opportunity to fine-tune the filters or change course for 2025 renewals. Read more about this pilot project: https://minnesotagrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Producer-Identity-Filters-Pilot.pdf

Farmers Markets. Members can only use the "Farmers Market" product type if your market includes at least three vendors selling products they grew/raised. Additional product types available to farmers markets are "Winter Farmers Market" and "Farmers Market Nutrition Program". Markets whose Winter Market(s) are at a different location than their regular market must purchase an additional listing. Similarly, businesses such as nurseries or garden centers who host a farmers' market on site - in addition to selling their own Minnesota Grown products - are required to purchase two listings: one for the farmers' market and one for their business.

Do <u>not</u> select product types that customers can find at your market (ex. sweet corn, bakery products), as these are reserved for individual business. You may describe the types of items customers will find at your market in your <u>listing description</u> text.

CSA Farms. This category should be used by members offering CSA shares. If you would like your pick-up locations listed on our CSA map, be sure to also send an updated list of your pick-up locations, including location names (e.g. Lakewinds Co-op Richfield, or Duluth Member Home) and full addresses (street, city, state, zip) to mngrown.mda@state.mn.us

Style Requirements

- Refrain from using all-caps.
- Use hyphens between phrases like cut-your-own and pick-your-own for clarity.
- Phone numbers, websites, addresses, and email addresses should not be repeated in the listing description text since they are already entered in their own fields and appear directly above the listing text.

Space-saving Abbreviations

Minnesota Grown uses abbreviations on all directory listings to maximize the description text space available to you. Exceptions may be made if needed. Please reach out if this is the case for your business.

- **Open hours.** Month-Month: day time, day time. (Ex: *Nov-Dec: Mon-Fri 8a-5p, Sat 11a-3p, Sun 5-7p*.)
- **Months.** All months will be shortened to three letters, except July and June. (Ex: *Mar, Apr, Sep, Oct*)
- **Days of the week.** All days of the week will be shortened to three letters. (Ex*: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu*)
- **Time.** Hours will be listed as a single number (without colon, additional zeros), unless needed for clarity. A single "a" or "p" will be used instead of AM or PM. "Noon" may be used for clarity. (Ex: *10:30a-1p, Noon-2:30p, 2p-5p*)
- **Other abbreviation** will be used where commonly understood by the public. (Ex: *hrs* (hours), *wk* (week), *wknd* (weekend), *yr* (year), *lb* (pound), *mkt* (market), *pls* (please))

Maximizing your Listing Description

Answering these four common questions in your listing will help potential customers purchase from you!

What do you sell?

Product Types must be items you grow/raise/ create from agricultural products yourself, but additional items may be mentioned in listing text:

"We make artisan farmstead cheese on our central MN dairy farm"

"Tours & private events are available yr-round."

"Gifts, candy, and decorations can be found in our on-farm holiday store."

What makes your product(s) unique?

Set yourself apart from the crowd by mentioning features unique to your business/market.

"We specialize in 8 University of Minnesota varieties, including Honeycrisp, Zestar! & SweeTango."

"Our crops, pasture, produce, and herbs are certified organic." (See Content Requirements for more info on using the term "certified organic".)

Do we share a mission/values?

Customers "buying local" for a wide variety of reasons. Be sure to include info that will help people match their values to your mission and/or values:

"We are a CSA farm that provides meaningful employment to individuals with special needs!"

"Our farm focuses on restoration of soil, protection of water, and humane treatment of livestock."

How can I buy from you?

Now that they're interested, don't for get to tell your customers how to take the next step:

"Call ahead for picking hours and weather conditions."

"Shop our website or call for more information."

"Find us at the Blaine Farmers Market: July-Oct."