

Farmer Guide



**An Oregon Farm Direct Nutrition Program
training and reference tool for farmers**

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

About the Oregon Farm Direct Nutrition Program

Oregon's Farm Direct Nutrition Program focuses on encouraging seniors and WIC families to purchase locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Families with young children who participate in WIC and seniors who participate in the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program receive checks to spend directly with local farmers who grow fruits and vegetables.



Research indicates that increased access to and consumption of fresh, local fruits and vegetables is a key component in preventing obesity. Farm Direct makes fresh produce available to those who might otherwise have to do without this vital part of a healthy diet. Farm Direct supports local farmers' markets and farmers as well as WIC families and low-income seniors. Keeping local farmers in business is important to our communities as well as our health.

Farmer qualifications and authorization

“Farmer” is defined as a person who owns, leases, rents or sharecrops land to grow, cultivate or harvest crops on that land.

A signed, three-year agreement with the State is required for participation in Farm Direct. Each year 10% of farmers will be monitored on-site by WIC State staff.

To be authorized, a farmer must grow, cultivate or harvest produce in Oregon or a bordering county to sell at a farmers’ market or farm stand.



Farmers authorized to accept **Farm Direct checks** must comply with regulations outlined in Oregon Administrative Rules 333-052-0020 through 333-052-0130.

In order to accept **Farm Direct checks**, the farmer must participate in a training by a market manager or State WIC staff.

Farm Direct checks

Farm Direct checks are green and are issued in specific denominations which may differ from year to year.



Farm Direct senior recipients may have someone else shop with their checks on their behalf.



Farm Direct eligible fruit and vegetables

Farm Direct checks may be accepted for locally grown:

- Fresh fruit
- Fresh vegetables
- Cut herbs

“Locally grown” means grown in Oregon or bordering counties of Washington, California, and Idaho.

Farm Direct eligible foods may not be processed or prepared beyond their natural state except for the usual harvesting and cleaning processes.

Produce items purchased from wholesale distributors and any imported produce such as bananas, pineapples, and oranges are **not allowed with Farm Direct checks**.

Other items that are **not allowed** include:

- Processed foods such as milk, honey, jam, dried fruit or herbs, baked goods, cider, cheese
- Produce plants such as tomato or basil plants
- Non-produce foods such as eggs, nuts and seeds, fish, meats
- Non-food agricultural items such as potted plants, seeds, cut flowers
- Non-food items such as crafts and jewelry

Inform your bank or credit union in advance that you will be depositing/cashing Farm Direct checks.

Before taking Farm Direct checks to the bank:

- Stamp your 4-digit farmer stamp in the box on the front of each check and endorse each Farm Direct check on the back.
- Bundle all your Farm Direct checks together and handle them as a separate transaction at the bank. If you are depositing other checks, fill out separate deposit slips for your Farm Direct checks versus your other checks.
- Try to cash/deposit checks frequently. Do not save them up until the end of the season. This will help the state determine whether there is enough funding to distribute more checks.
- Depositing large numbers of checks all at once at the end of the season may create problems with your bank and potentially delay your reimbursements.



More banking notes

- Torn Farm Direct checks may be repaired with scotch tape. Do not tape over the computer-encoded line at the bottom of the check or the dollar amount on the check.
- Altered Farm Direct checks will be returned unpaid to the authorized farmer. (For example, a Farm Direct check with a “1” written in front of the \$4.)
- Lost Farm Direct checks cannot be replaced. Store them in a secure location. Remember, WIC participant names are confidential.
- Your farmer stamp must be clear and dark enough to read (in black ink only). Banks process electronic images of checks rather than the checks themselves.
- To void or cancel a Farm Direct check, write or stamp VOID on the face of the check.

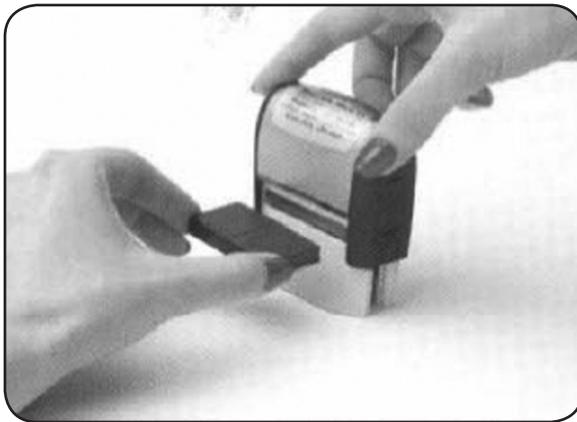
Farmer stamp and ink pad replacement

Keep your 4-digit farmer stamp in a safe place. You are responsible for stamp and/or ink pad replacements. Replacements may be ordered at an office supply supplier of your choice.

The following specifications optimize readability by our banking contractor:

- Arial Unicode 24 pt
- Height – 1/2 inch
- Length – 3/4 inch

Remember to add ink to the ink pad when the stamp lightens. The pad may need to be replaced once a year or so, depending on how much use it gets.



Signs

Your agreement with the State requires that you post the “Farm Direct Nutrition Program Checks Welcome Here!” sign in a visible location, wherever you are in operation. If you need additional signs, please call the State WIC Office.

Green
Sign



Oregon Farm Direct Nutrition Program Checks



WELCOME HERE



Oregon Farm Direct Nutrition Program ACCOUNT NUMBER 3000000

First day to use: **June 1, 2012** Last day to use: **Oct. 31, 2012** VALUE: **\$4.00**

Four Dollars
No change given

Pay to the order of: **Authorized Farmers**
(Not valid at grocery stores)

Use to buy locally grown, unprocessed
fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs only.

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Oregon Department of Agriculture Oregon Health University

This is an equal opportunity program and employer
Este es un programa de igual oportunidad para todos

Revised 2012

Questions, comments, and complaints

Your Farmer Agreement requires that Farm Direct and WIC shoppers be treated the same as other shoppers. If a participant behaves disruptively, follow your customer service policy and, if possible, report it to the State WIC Office. Farmers may call the appropriate contact below with any questions, comments, or complaints regarding program participation, including any reports of discrimination based on race, color, religious preference, age, disability, or sex.

Oregon Department of Agriculture

For questions about farmer participation: (503) 872-6600

State WIC Office

For signs and other supplies and questions about banking issues: (877) 807-0889, option 2 (toll-free)



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