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**PRODUCER MANUAL**

**Membership, Protocols and Crop Specifications**

Created by North Iowa Fresh, LLC

April 2015

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Supported in part by a

 SARE Farmer Rancher Grant

PURPOSE OF THIS PRODUCER MANUAL

This Manual is intended for Full or Current Associate members of North Iowa Fresh, LLC

Page 4 - The North Iowa Fresh Introduction and

Page 5 - New Member Application is intended for potential, new North Iowa Fresh members.

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**Acknowledgements**

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This manual was developed by North Iowa Fresh, LLC member, Jim Cherry, based upon from the following resources:

* Checklist from - Field To Family Regional Food Coalition and the “Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce” (PM2046a) produced by Iowa State University Extension which received support from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.
* Crop Specifications from *Grower’s Manual: A Template for Grower Cooperatives* produced by Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.
* Some of the crop specifications in this manual have been modified by members of North Iowa Fresh, LLC

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**North Iowa Fresh, LLC**

**INTRODUCTION**

**WHO IS NORTH IOWA FRESH, LLC?**

North Iowa Fresh, LLC is an independent producer owned business formed in February 2014. It was formed in conjunction with Healthy Harvest of North Iowa' collaborative marketing work.

Full members include: Matt Brandenburg, Jim Cherry, Jan Libbey, Josh Nelson, Mary Jane Newswanger, Bill Rasmuson, Jeff Short, and Larry Turner.

Our broker is Andrea Evelsizer.

North Iowa Fresh, LLC’s **Mission** is to

* Connect our producers and buyers
* Bring local, fresh, and nutritional products to market
* Support the sustainability of local producers

**Slogan:** *Rooted in tradition, growing in innovation*

**VALUES** - Participating producers are interested in building strong connections between local food producers and North Iowa communities. It’s important to these producers that the foods are produced with sustainable practices that demonstrate good stewardship of the environment.

**WHO CAN SELL THROUGH NORTH IOWA FRESH, LLC?**

North Iowa Fresh, LLC is open to all Healthy Harvest of North Iowa Buy Fresh, Buy Local Members interested in expanding their marketing opportunities.

Wholesale marketing vegetable crops is our primary focus for 2015.

**NORTH IOWA FRESH MEMBERSHIP**

1. Two levels at which producers may join
	1. **Full membership** is a one-time payment of $400. This includes rights to contribute to product marketing through North Iowa Fresh accounts as well as decision making privileges and sharing in the profit and/or loss of the company.
		1. Full members have first priority in filling orders for product marketing.
		2. Full members with North Iowa Fresh are still expected to join the Healthy Harvest of North Iowa Buy Fresh, Buy Local program (Basic or Full Membership level)
	2. **Associate membership** is an annual membership of $35, associated with Healthy Harvest of North Iowa’s Buy Fresh, Buy Local Food Guide - either the "Basic Plus" or "Full Plus" level.
		1. Associate members have the opportunity to market product through North Iowa Fresh

**MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA -**  Every North Iowa Fresh producer member must

1. Be a member of **Healthy Harvest of North Iowa Buy Fresh, Buy Local**
2. Have record of an **annual water test on file**
3. Have **attended at least one food safety training workshop (**additional options to verify food safe practices in lieu of training are being developed)



 **North Iowa Fresh, LLC**

 **NEW PRODUCER INFORMATION FORM**

**To become a new member of North Iowa Fresh, LLC**, please read the North Iowa Fresh, LLC Introduction, and then complete the following information Form and send to Larry Turner, windingcreek@frontiernet.net or mail to 1275 Taylor Ave., Belmond, IA 50421. *Your application will be reviewed and a response provided within 2 weeks of receipt.*

Have you talked with North Iowa Fresh member or broker about membership? Yes No

If yes, who did you talk with? : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_date of conversation\_\_\_

**Desired Membership level: \_\_\_** Full Membership (permanent) \_\_\_ Associate Membership (annual)

**CONTACT DATE:**

Primary Contact:

Farm Name:

Address:

Town: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Zip code:

Email:

Home Phone:

Business phone/Cell:

What is the best way to contact you?

**BEST PRACTICES -** Please provide documentation of

* Water test for the water system that you use for irrigation and produce washing (must be current within the last 12 months of this form). Be sure to attach a copy of your test results
* Participation in at least one Food Safety Training Workshop

(You may provide a certificate if provided with your workshop)

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

Workshop Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Workshop Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(\*Additional options to verify food safe practices in lieu of training are being developed)

* Products (check all that apply)
	+ Vegetables
	+ Fruit
	+ Honey
	+ Baked goods
	+ Eggs
	+ Meat
	+ Other : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Production practices (check the best option)
	+ Certified organic
	+ Natural, Chemical/Drug-free
	+ Grassfed/Pastured
	+ Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For OFFICE USE ONLY

Date application received: Date of follow up to Producer:

* Record of current water test provided
* Documentation of food safety training provided
* Producer Checklist provided

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**North Iowa Fresh, LLC**

 **ANNUAL PRODUCER INFORMATION FORM**

***All current North Iowa Fresh members need to complete this form to make sure NIF records are current.*** *Please* complete the following information and send to Larry Turner, windingcreek@frontiernet.net or mail to 1275 Taylor Ave., Belmond, IA 50421. *Your application will be reviewed and a response provided within 2 weeks of receipt.*

**Current Membership level: \_\_\_** Full Membership (permanent) \_\_\_ Associate Membership (annual)

If you checked Associate Membership, do you want to change your membership to ‘Full’? Yes No

**CONTACT DATE:**

Primary Contact:

Farm Name:

Address:

Town: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Zip code:

Email:

Home Phone:

Business phone/Cell:

What is the best way to contact you?

**UPDATE YOUR RECORDS**

**Water Test**

* Please attach your most current water test results (must be current within the last 12 months of this form)

**Food Safety**

* Have you had any updated food safety training?

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

Workshop Location: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Workshop Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Have you developed your farm food safety plan?

**PRODUCER CHECKLIST**

**Which description best describes your production practices?** (check just one)

* Certified organic
* Natural, Chemical/Drug-free
* Grassfed/Pastured
* Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Have there been any changes to any of your products or practices that should be reflected in your Producer Checklist?**

* **Yes -** If yes, please submit an updated Checklist
* **No -** No update needed

For OFFICE USE ONLY

Date application received: Date of follow up to Producer:

* Record of current water test provided
* Documentation of updated food safety training provided
* Updates to Producer Checklist recorded

**MEMBER EXPECTATIONS**

Collaborative marketing through North Iowa Fresh, LLC is about more than just selling the product. In order for this business to function smoothly, all producer members must contribute by working together. The following protocols were developed to lay out expectations of members in practices, planning, decision making, new member outreach, and communication.

**Coordinated Wholesale Protocol**

1. Every North Iowa Fresh producer member is expected to
	1. Be a member of **Healthy Harvest of North Iowa Buy Fresh, Buy Local**
	2. Have record of an **annual water test on file**
	3. Have **attended at least one food safety training workshop**
		1. additional options to verify food safe practices in lieu of training are being developed Every producer member is responsible to know and be in compliance with all appropriate federal, state and local inspections, licenses, statutes and ordinances.
2. Producer records
	1. New producers must complete and submit the New Member Application form (pg. 5) and a Producer Checklist (pg. 10-14).
	2. All members who have filed the above forms with NIF, must complete and submit an Annual Producer Information Form. (pg. 6)
3. North Iowa Fresh, LLC carries $4 million of product liability insurance that will cover all participating member sales through NIF.
	* 1. It is still a good practice for individual members to carry their own adequate liability coverage.
4. Producers may only sell products they themselves have grown, processed or crafted. A producer may not buy wholesale from someone else and then market the product through North Iowa Fresh, LLC.
5. North Iowa Fresh producer members are expected to follow the crop specifications laid out in this manual for the crops they are marketing through NIF.
6. North Iowa Fresh producer members, themselves, are responsible for all their own packaging. Orders may be coordinated among members.
7. North Iowa Fresh producer members are responsible for making sure their product is delivered to the appropriate account on the designated delivery day. When possible, coordinated deliveries are encouraged. NIF does not reimburse for deliver mileage.

**New Member Outreach Protocol**

All Full members are encouraged to introduce NIF to potential new members. Our goal is to add 2-3 producers each year. The New Member Information Form (pg. 5) is available to be shared as part of the outreach.

**Communication Protocol**

**Winter is planning time** - all Full members are expected to participate in planning meetings during late fall/winter. Communication is mostly in person meetings, conference calls or email.

**Spring to December is our main delivery season -** all members are expected to report their weekly product availability on a google form. Communication is mostly weekly via the google form and messages from the NIF Broker to producers.

During the delivery season, our NIF Broker, coordinates producer inventory reports, soliciting orders from buyers, and reporting orders to respective producers.

**All members are expected to follow this process, monitoring their email for messages regularly.**

It'svery important that all members support this communication protocol and that **all orders go through our broker, Andrea Evelsizer.** If, during a delivery, producers have a conversation with a buyer about product order interest, they must report that to Andrea and let her handle the follow up.

**Weekly Product Inventory Report Review**

1. All NIF members are expected to report product availability on a weekly basis (even if the have no product that week) during the NIF sale season (starting approximately late April).
	1. A link to the producer inventory google form will be sent to all members. This will be the same link used every week.
	2. A google calendar reminder will be sent weekly to all members
	3. Inventory reports must be completed by 5 a.m. Monday each week
2. Product inventory reports will be summarized by the NIF Broker, and an order request sent to NIF buyers
	1. Most buyers are expected to report orders by mid-Monday
	2. Producers will receive order update (even if they do not receive any orders that week) from the NIF Broker by end of Monday
	3. Deliverers will be Tues./Wed. and Thur/Fri
3. Delivery information: including date and quantity delivered to each buyer should be reported to Tim via e-mail by Saturday at noon. This will allow him to process the billing invoices and confirm that the orders match the delivered items.

**For more information:**  contact Larry Turner, windingcreek@frontiernet.net, 515/571-3264

**TIPS FOR WATER QUALITY TESTING & PRODUCT LIABILITY INSURANCE**

**Water Quality Testing**

In Iowa – one FREE annual test by County Sanitarian – offered in 98 of our 99 counties.

IOWA - Find your local contact through the Iowa Environmental Health section of Iowa Department of Public Health. Director, Ken Sharp

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/webmap/default.asp?map=envhealth\_resources

Test for

* Total Coliform
* E Coli Bacteria
* Nitrates
* (if run through LGI, Iowa Falls) Sulfates

The test fee ($22) is covered by REAP funds

If the test comes back “unsafe”, repeated testing until it is a clear report will be provided.

MN – check same department, 651/201-4600 Well Management Section of MN Dept of Public Health

http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/waterquality/test.html

**Help for North Iowa Fresh, LLC Product Liability Insurance Requirement**

Many farms have property liability insurance, but product liability is specific to cover the risk of illness from your products.

Here is a list of points you should discuss with your insurance agent:

* What products you are selling
* Where you are selling
* What you are using for transportation

Be Specific! Review Policy Coverage and Exclusions

North Iowa Fresh, LLC provides product liability insurance coverage for its members.

If you do not currently have product liability insurance, but want to explore options in addition to NIF coverage, we have found a product through Farm Bureau that will be priced at $226/$1 million coverage(2014). You will also need to pay a $45 annual Farm Bureau membership for this coverage.

The contact we would recommend for more information is Jay Jung, Charles City Farm Bureau office, 712/490-1290 or jay.jung@fbfs.com. North Iowa Fresh, LLC purchased liability ins. coverage through Farm Bureau with Jay’s assistance. Jay is a member of Healthy Harvest of North Iowa Buy Fresh, Buy Local, and has helped us gather this information.

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**Producer Checklist** *for* **Farms Selling through**

 **North Iowa Fresh, LLC**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Total acres farmed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Promotional materials available: YES NO**

**Available Products -** *circle all that apply* **- VEGETABLES/FRUIT/HERBS/ MEAT** (processed at state or USDA inspected locker)/**HONEY/FLOWERS./SMALL GRAIN/EGGS** (egg handlers license required)/**DAIRY**

**Is your facility licensed and inspected to process products? YES NO**

**Do you carry product liability insurance? YES; Dollar amount\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ NO**

**For school sales: Are you available to visit school(s) and talk with students about how your product is grown? YES NO**

**Is your farm available for student field trips? YES NO**

**Other current school or local customers and contact information:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What products (if any) are certified organic?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**If chemicals (i.e. pesticides/herbicides/fungicides) are typically used - what products are used on crops and when are they applied?**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

*\*\*The following checklist is meant to facilitate communication between farmers and food buyers, and give buyers background knowledge on the farms they may be purchasing from. Checking “no” on a given question does not penalize you and will not necessarily prohibit you from selling to institutional buyers. This is the start of the conversation, giving buyers a jumping off place from which to ask questions and learn more about your farm.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Production Practices*** | ***Yes*** | ***No*** | ***N/A*** |
| * What water sources are used for irrigation? (check all that apply):

\_\_\_Well \_\_\_Municipal \_\_\_\_Pond \_\_\_\_Stream \_\_\_\_Other |  |  |  |
| * What water sources are used for product washing? (check all that apply):

 \_\_\_Well \_\_\_Municipal \_\_\_\_Pond \_\_\_\_Stream \_\_\_\_Other |  |  |  |
| * Are wells protected from contamination?

 (E.g. wells are sealed, covered, secured, etc.) |  |  |  |
| * Please list the date of most recent well water test\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Please provide a copy of the most recent well inspection report) **Provided w/Prod. Info. Form**
 |  |  |  |
| * Are farm livestock and other wild animals restricted from growing areas?
 |  |  |  |
| * Are portable toilets and/or restrooms available to staff on the farm
 |  |  |  |
| * Are portable toilets used in a way that prevents field contamination from waste water?

 (e.g. waste water is not uphill from, or in close proximity to growing areas)  |  |  |  |
| * Is land use history available to determine risk of product or soil contamination?

 *(e.g. runoff from upstream, flooding, chemical spills, or excessive agricultural*  *crop application)* |  |  |  |
| * Is field currently exposed to runoff from animal confinement or grazing areas?

 (e.g. animals are not kept uphill from, or in close proximity to growing  areas) |  |  |  |
| * Is land that is frequently flooded used to grow field crops? *(If responded yes please answer number 11 if answered no please skip to number 12.)*
 |  |  |  |
| * Are coliform tests conducted on soil in frequently flooded land? If yes, what are the results?
 |  |  |  |
| * Is raw manure incorporated at least 2 weeks prior to planting and/or at least 120 days prior to harvest?
 |  |  |  |
| * Is manure application schedule documented? *(copy of application schedule may be requested)*
 |  |  |  |
| * What types of manure are used?

 \_\_\_\_ Raw manure \_\_\_\_\_Composted \_\_\_\_\_Aged \_\_\_\_\_No manure used |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Product Handling*** | ***Yes*** | ***No*** | ***N/A*** |
| 1. Is there a risk of contamination/recontamination with manure after harvest?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Harvesting baskets, totes or other containers are (check all that apply):

\_\_\_washed with potable water before use \_\_\_sanitized before use \_\_\_stored in areas protected from pets, livestock, wild animals, and other contaminants?  |  |  |  |
| 1. Is harvesting equipment/machinery that comes in contact with products kept as clean as possible?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Is potable water used to wash products?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Is product protected as it travels from field to packing facility?

(e.g. product is packaged/covered/sealed to protect from contaminants) |  |  |  |
| 1. Are food grade packaging materials used?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Are new packaging crates, totes, boxes used each time?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Are packaging materials stored in areas protected from pets, livestock, wild animals, and other contaminants?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Are temperature logs for coolers and refrigerators maintained?
 |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Transportation*** | ***Yes*** | ***No*** | ***N/A*** |
| 1. Is product carefully loaded to keep product intact and to minimize physical damage and risk of contamination?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Is transport vehicle well-maintained and clean?

 (e.g. Trailers and containers must be free of visible dirt, odors, and food particles) |  |  |  |
| 1. Is transport vehicle designated to solely deliver food products?

 If no, is vehicle properly cleaned prior to loading of food products?  |  |  |  |
| 1. Are products kept at an appropriate temperature during transport?

 (e.g. cold products to be held ≤ 40° Fahrenheit ) |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Facilities*** | ***Yes*** | ***No*** | ***N/A*** |
| 1. Storage and packaging facilities are separated from growing areas by approximately:

\_\_\_less than 25 ft \_\_\_25-50 feet \_\_\_50-100 ft \_\_greater than 100 feet |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the product packing area provide separate space for culling and storage?

(e.g. keeping culled products separate from good products) |  |  |  |
| 1. Is storage off of the floor or ground?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Are packing areas covered from overhead contamination?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Are surfaces that come in contact with food regularly washed, rinsed with potable water, and sanitized?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Do workers have access to toilets and hand-washing stations with proper supplies?

(e.g. paper towels, soap, potable water, hand-washing sink) |  |  |  |
| 1. Are toilets and hand-washing stations cleaned and regularly serviced?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Is a pest control program in place?
 |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Worker Health and Hygiene***  | ***Yes*** | ***No*** | ***N/A*** |
| 1. Are workers trained about hygiene practices and sanitation?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Are signs posted to reinforce hygiene practices?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Are smoking and eating confined to designated areas separate from product handling?
 |  |  |  |
| 1. Are workers instructed not to work if they exhibit signs of infection?

 (E.g. fever, diarrhea, etc.)  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do workers practice good hygiene by:
 |  |  |  |
| * + Wearing clean clothing and shoes as appropriate for conditions?
 |  |  |  |
| * + Changing aprons and gloves as needed?
 |  |  |  |
| * + Washing hands as required?
 |  |  |  |
| * + Keeping hair covered and restrained?
 |  |  |  |
| * + Limiting bare hand contact with fresh products?
 |  |  |  |
| * + Covering open wounds with clean bandages?
 |  |  |  |

**I confirm that the information provided on this Checklist is accurate to the best of my knowledge.**

**Signature of Producer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Reviewed by Food Buyer**

**Food Buying Authority (Printed):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Food Buyer’s Institution: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Food Buyers Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Food Buyers Contact E-mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Crop Specifics: Packaging, Harvesting & Grading, Cooling, and Cleaning**

Full and Associate member of North Iowa Fresh are expected to be familiar with and follow this list of crop specifications for the crops they are marketing through the group.

These specs will be reviewed annually and updated by May of each year. Any questions about these should be directed to Jim Cherry, Winnebago Beeline & Gardens, jimcherry@wctatel.net or 641/927-4428.

******Any crop with this symbol requires sanitizing**

**Asparagus**

**Packaging** 10# case – 1¹⁄₉ bushel box, with bag liner and damp single use paper towels on bottom.

**Harvesting & Grading**

Stalks should have closed bracts and be 6‐10” long. They should be fairly straight and fresh as well as free from decay and damage. There should be no broken tips, dirt, disease, or insect damage. They should be free of excess woody fiber in the stems. Harvest with a field knife in the morning or when cool. Do not harvest when stem is thinner than a pencil. Bunch in 1 pound bunches, with a rubber band, and trim for uniform height. Asparagus should be packed upright. Do not let asparagus overheat.

**Cooling** Hydro‐cool or store at 32⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Wash, sanitize and rinse.

**Broccoli (Broccolini)**

**Packaging** 18# case – 1¹⁄₉ bushel box, with bag liner

**Harvesting & Grading**

Harvest firm head with buds not open. Head should be 4‐6” in diameter, with 6‐8” of stem.

For Broccolini, stems should be 8” long and head should be small. There should be no

discoloration of bud clusters and the head should be free from decay, dirt and insects. Bud

clusters should be generally compact. Pack so that stem ends do not damage crowns.

**Cooling** Hydro‐cool promptly, store at 32⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Sanitize with approved solution. Rinse thoroughly

**Cabbage**

**Packaging:** 25# in 1¹⁄₉ bushel box

**Harvesting & Grading**

Heads should be uniform in size in each case. Crisp, firm, compact heads should be easy to harvest and should not have loose leaves or be cracked open. At harvest, leave 1 to 2 wrapper leaves, which can have minimal insect damage. Do not ship cabbages that are full of worm excrement. Cut open some cabbage to check for internal problems. Stems should not be longer than ½”.

**Cooling** Store at 32⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Washing is not recommended.

**Cucumbers**

**Packaging:** 24 count in ½ bushel box

**Harvesting & Grading**

Harvest when dry, regardless of temperature. Fruit should be firm, glossy, crisp, and free from injury from sunscald, scarring, mosaic, and other diseases. Fruit is overripe when skin starts to yellow or seeds start to harden. Slicing cucumbers should be 7-9” long. Cucumbers within a case should be uniform in size.

**Cooling** Store at 50‐54⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Can be brush washed; if washing, sanitize and rinse.

**Green Beans (Yellow & Fillet)**

**Packaging:** 12# in ½ bushel box

**Harvesting & Grading**

Do not harvest when wet. Do not pick too young—pods should be well formed and straight. Bulging seeds and fibrous pods are too old and unacceptable. Beans should be free from soft rot and damage and not broken.

**Cooling** Put directly into the cooler or hydro‐cool. Store at 41 to 46⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Washing is not needed if beans are clean. If beans are hydro‐cooled they should be drained and as dry as possible.

**Fresh Herbs (Basil, Cilantro, Sage, Rosemary, Thyme, Tarragon)**

**Packaging:** 4 ounce bunches

**Harvesting & Grading**

Stems and leaves should be fresh and green without blemishes. Bunches should be banded with a twist-tie or rubber band in quantities of 4 ounces each.

**Cooling** Some herbs are damaged by cooling. Use appropriate methods for preserving freshness after harvest to keep the product from wilting.

**Cleaning** Herbs will spoil if left wet. We don’t see a need to sanitize. They can be rinsed if dirty and must then be dried. Stems can be placed in water in bunches. Wash and rinse according to this chart.

Special Basil note: Store at room temperature with stems in water and covered with a plastic bag. Under no circumstances should basil be lower than room temperature.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **HERB** | **WASH/SANITIZE** | **STORAGE TEMP.** |
| Basil | ----- | Room temperature |
| Sage | Yes | 32 o F |
| Rosemary | Yes | 32 o F |
| Thyme | Yes | 32 o F |
| Tarragon | Yes | 32 o F |
| Cilantro | Yes | 32 o F |

**Kale / Chard**

**Packaging:** 12, 8 oz. Bunches in ½ bushel box

**Harvesting & Grading**

A bunch is defined as 8 ounces of stems banded, with the stems uniform and at least 4” long. Leaves should not be limp, discolored or browning. Do not pick too young or too old.

**Cooling** Hydro‐cool; store at 32⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Wash via hydro‐cooling. Sanitize and rinse.

**Loose Greens (Including Baby Spinach)**

**Packaging:** 3# in ¾ bushel box, with bag liner closed loosely

**Harvesting & Grading**

**Loose leaf** - Pick small leaves, nothing over 3-4” long. Remove all damaged and imperfect leaves as well as foreign material, including insect damage, wilted or holey leaves, grasses and sticks. For all loose greens it is best to harvest them in the morning when it is cool and the sugar content is highest. A field knife should be used to harvest to prevent crushing the stem. Do not over‐pack by smashing greens. Pack loosely in boxes and bags to prevent leaf breakage.

**Head -** Cut when head if full (1/2-3/4 lb./head), leaves are 6-10" long, free of blemishes. Cut base of head with sharp field harvest knife. Load heads into harvest tote carefully to avoid leaf breakage. Keep out of sun and spray with water to reduce dehydrating.

**Cooling**  Loose leaves and full heads should be cooled to 32⁰ F as soon as possible after harvest.

**Cleaning** Handle greens carefully: Do not run water directly on greens at high‐pressure, as this will damage the leaves.

For loose leaves - Wash and rinse thoroughly. Sanitize. Rinse thoroughly. Spin Dry. Pack for storage /delivery.

For full heads - immerse gently in wash water, clean cut base, rinse to remove any foreign material collected among the leaves. Drain. Sanitize. Rinse. Drain and shake excess water off. Pack for storage /delivery.

**SANITIZING INSTRUCTIONS**

** - Any crop with this symbol requires sanitizing**

For background on sanitizing practices, View the short video at this link

See **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-K1DbOsKmEc** for a short video overview of sanitizer use.

North Iowa Fresh members use **Tsunami**, a product approved for organic production.

**For a supply of Tsunami**, contact NIF member Matt Brandenburg at 641/420-8051.

2014/2015 Cost is $29.71/gallon. Use is 2-6 oz Tsunami/100 gallons water.

Current supply is good through 2015 season.

**CAUTION:** Use only at appropriate dilution, store in a secure location, label accurately, protect from accidental ingestion, keep out of reach of children or pets, follow directions completely. Use proper protective gloves and goggles. Prevent from freezing

**Onions**

**Packaging:** 15# in ½ bushel box (Fresh Onions); 35# in 1 bushel box (cured)

**Harvesting & Grading**

Harvest mature bulbs with good firmness and compactness of fleshy scales. They should be free of mechanical damage, insect damage, decay, and sunscald or sprouting. Onions should be generally uniform in size in each bag. Medium onions are 2 – 3¼” in diameter and Large onions are 3¼” or greater. Onions for curing should not be picked before the tops begin to dry naturally.

**Cleaning** For fresh onions, wash, rinse, and trim off the roots and stem. After curing, trim roots and stems, and brush off before or after storing.

**To cure:** Field cure onions for 3‐5 days without rain, then put in a warm ventilated area at 68 – 86⁰ F.

**Cooling:** Long‐term storage is at 32⁰ F.

**Peppers**

**Packaging:** 15 peppers in ½ bushel box

**Harvesting & Grading**

Peppers should be free from injury caused by sunscald, decay, or insects; colored peppers should be at least 95% colored. They should be of similar size and variety when packed. Peppers should average 3-4 peppers/# and be 3-4 inches in diameter. Peppers should not have decay or injury from insects. Pick when dry.

**Cleaning** Wipe off if only dusty. If muddy, Spray wash and rinse and wipe to remove water spots.

**Cooling -** or cool immediately to no lower than 45⁰ F (Hydro‐cool if necessary), as they are subject to chilling injuries.

**Potatoes**

**Packaging:** 20# in ½ bushel box: 40# in 1 bushel box

**Harvesting & Grading**

Potatoes should be fairly well shaped, free from damage, firm, and fairly clean. Potatoes should be of similar characteristics and the size should be noted on the label. B size potatoes have a diameter of 1½–2¼”, Medium potatoes have a diameter of 2¼–3¼”, and Large potatoes have a diameter of 3–4¼”.Test some potatoes by cutting in half to ensure there are no internal defects; these sample potatoes should not be packed.

New potatoes are considered to be new when the skins are not well formed and the potato is not mature; this is any time from blossom formation until the vines begin to die back naturally. Washing and packaging should be done with care to ensure there is no damage to the potato due to the fragile skins.

**Cooling**

Potatoes that are to be kept in long‐term storage should be cured for 1 to 2 weeks at 68⁰ F. After curing, the temperature should be lowered gradually until the reaching 45–50⁰ F. By definition, new potatoes are not cured and should be stored immediately at 45–50⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Hand wash or brush wash if potato skins are tough enough.

**Radishes (Including Daikon)**

**Packaging** 12 bunches – ¾ bushel box, with bag liner; 1# bagged – ½ bushel box (Daikon)

**Harvesting & Grading**

Roots should be well formed, crisp and fresh. Target root size: 1-1.5" diameter for cherry belle types, 1.5-2" for Fresh Breakfast types. Roots should be free from defects, and not split.

Bunched radishes are 10 to a bunch and held together with a rubber band.

Each bunch needs to be generally uniform in size. Fresh eating radishes should only be topped if required on the purchase order. Daikon radishes are always topped.

**Cooling** Hydro‐cool; store at 32⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Barrel wash or spray to clean, sanitize and rinse.

**Raspberries and Blackberries**

**Packaging:** ½ Pints

**Harvesting & Grading**

Berries should be free of injury from decay and sunscald. They should be uniform in color, firm and not mushy or broken. When picking, the berry must come free easily from the plant and yet be firm and not mushy. There should be no mold or bugs on the berries.

**Cooling** Berries should be force air cooled to 34⁰ F as soon as possible after picking. They need to be stored at 32⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Berries should not be washed.

**Rhubarb**

**Packaging:** 10# in ½ bushel box

**Harvesting & Grading**

Pull or cut rhubarb stems at ground level. Trim leaves back to 1” or less from the stem. The stem should be at least 10 inches long.

**Cooling** Hydro‐cool or cool to 32⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Wash and rinse.

**Root Crops (Beets, Turnips, Carrots, Rutabagas, Parsnips)**

**Packaging:** 40# in 1 bushel boxes with bag liner

**Harvesting & Grading**

Tops should be well trimmed; the long root should be trimmed to no shorter than ½”. Roots should be fairly smooth and free from defects. Each case should be generally uniform in size:

* Beets and turnips, not less than 2” in diameter, (1–1½ ”for baby beets)
* Carrots should be ½–¾” at the shoulder and at least 5” long. Hairy carrots are bitter and should be culled.
* For parsnips the minimum diameter is 1½”.
* Rutabagas should not be smaller than 3” in diameter.

**Cooling** Store at 33–36⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Barrel wash or spray to clean and rinse. If they will be stored long term, parsnips and rutabagas should not be washed until after storage.

**Spinach (Full Size)**

**Packaging:** 3# in ¾ bushel box with bag liner

**Harvesting & Grading**

Remove all damaged and imperfect leaves as well as foreign material. These include insect damage, wilted or holey leaves, grasses and sticks. Stems should be no longer than 1” and there should be no coarse stems. Field heat should be removed as quickly as possible.

**Cooling** Hydro‐cool

** Cleaning** Wash and rinse thoroughly. Sanitize with approved solution. Rinse thoroughly. Spin Dry. Pack loosely in boxes and bags to prevent leaf breakage.

**Summer Squash** (Zucchini -green; Summer squash -yellow; Patty pan - green or yellow)

**Packaging:** 15lb in ½ bushel box, 3 deep in flat bottom boxes

**Harvesting & Grading**

Zucchini, yellow straightneck squash, and crookneck squash should be 5–9” long and not over‐ripe. Patty pan squash should be 3–5” in diameter. Baby squash are any summer squash that are 2–4” long. Cut the stems instead of breaking them off; wear clean cotton gloves and handle with care because of the delicate skins. The surface should be shiny, clean, and free of physical injury. Be sure to avoid stem damage when packing boxes. Squash should be uniform in size with in each case.

**Cooling** Store at 41–50⁰ F.

**Cleaning** If necessary, wipe off squash with a clean product towel.

**Tomatoes**

**Packaging:** 18# in Tomato box

**Harvesting & Grading**

Tomatoes should be 6-10 ounces for standard varieties and 8-16 ounces for heirloom varieties. Ripeness required varies by buyer. Retail customers will want the tomatoes that are ripe and fully red but still firm. Tomatoes should be picked without the stem, unless they are heirlooms, and put in boxes stem end down.

Tomatoes should not have splits. Do not pick over‐ripe cherry or grape tomatoes as they will split in shipping.

Number 1 tomatoes will be of the same variety type, mature (not overripe or soft), clean, well developed, and fairly smooth and well formed. They should be free from decay, freezing injury, sunscald, or damage from any other cause.

**Cooling** Store at 66–70⁰ F.

**Cleaning** If necessary, wipe off tomatoes with a clean product towel or clean cloth gloves.

**Winter Squash**

**Packaging:** 35# in 1¹⁄₉ bushel box; crates may be used for bulk orders

**Harvesting & Grading**

Cut squash with pruners and leave a short stem. Flesh should be fully colored with a bright yellow or orange base spot indicating maturity. Outer skin should be firm and resist puncture or thumbnail.

 Package to ensure stems do not bruise other squash. Squash can be sold immediately without curing, but should be cured for long storage.

**Cooling** Cooling is not necessary.

**To cure**, place in warm ventilated dry area, in temperatures from 85 to 95⁰ F for 8 to 10 days. Store at 50 to 55⁰ F.

**Cleaning** Wash, or wipe off with clean product towel, at time of shipment.