



Operational Handbook

2022 Policies & Procedures

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1. About TRACTOR Food & Farms (Toe River Aggregation Center Training Organization Regional, INC)

- a. Mission
 - i. Increase access to local food by empowering farmers and consumers alike, reconnecting people with agriculture for a healthier community, environment and economy.
- b. Origin
 - i. The origins of TRACTOR are rooted in the decline of the burley tobacco industry in Western NC. Tobacco was historically a vital cash crop and drove the local economy. Following the closure of the tobacco allotment system which virtually guaranteed a steady outlet for tobacco, the Yancey and Mitchell County Cooperative Extension offices assembled to consider vegetable and fruit crops that could be grown on relatively small plots to allow farmers to transition from tobacco. The goal was to keep farmland in production and secure the future of small family farms as profitable enterprises. Community forums were held on addressing this issue, which led to the commissioning of an independent feasibility study. The feasibility study found that transitioning into fruit and vegetable production was the most viable solution due to the types of equipment and practices that were already familiar to the farmers in the area. Eventually, TRACTOR was created as a 501c3 in early 2012 to assist local farmers to aggregate, store, market, and distribute their products as well as offer training on handling practices, food safety, quality standards, and packaging. Since its founding, TRACTOR has worked with over 200 farms and food producers. TRACTOR's mission initially focused solely on assisting farmers and preserving farmland, but over time has evolved to also address food insecurity, supply chain development, and the overall access of healthy and nutritious produce to Appalachian consumers.
- c. Programs
 - i. Farefield (Formerly the TRACTOR CSA and Clinical Referral Programs)
 - 1. TRACTOR creates a medley of locally grown fruits and vegetables sourced from its network of farmers and producers. Customers purchase shares at the beginning of the year which are delivered weekly to drop points across WNC. Along with paid subscriptions Farefield accepts Clinical and relief referrals from partner agencies, and

SNAP/EBT. This is TRACTOR's outlet for premium produce, and is an ideal outlet for specialty, value-added and small-market producers.

- ii. Healthy Harvest Program
 - 1. The Healthy Harvest Program connects farmers with food pantries across western North Carolina. The price point can be lower than Farefield, but the requirements for packing are less labor intensive, and greater volumes are accepted. While the program is designed to support growers familiar with delivering wholesale volumes, many smaller growers use it as an opportunity to scale-up their operations with low risk.
- iii. Wholesale Sales
 - 1. Wholesale contracts with TRACTOR are for growers who are experienced in meeting wholesale deadlines, volume requirements and product specifications. TRACTOR handles buyer identification, sales, invoicing, logistics and delivery of large volume harvests. Farmers who participate in this program are vetted and must sign a Non-Compete Agreement.
- iv. Shared Use Equipment Program
 - 1. The Shared Use Equipment Program offers growers access to TRACTOR's pool of agricultural equipment and trailers for rent at a minimal fee. Equipment includes, but is not limited to, irrigation pumps, plasticulture implements, transplanter, corn harvester, wagons and harvest bins. On-site training is available in partnership with your local North Carolina Cooperative Extension office.
- v. Land-Lease Program
 - 1. TRACTOR manages and facilitates the lease of over 30 acres of privately owned farmland in Yancey County. Farmers may apply for single-season property leases. Existing lessees earn the right of first refusal on an annual basis if the land has been properly maintained and used for food production. Please contact TRACTOR to request a contract.
- d. Who is TRACTOR?
 - i. Board of Directors
 - 1. The TRACTOR Board of Directors is made up of a network of community members, agricultural specialists, farmers, businessmen and women and other professionals across multiple counties who are dedicated to local agriculture and public health.
 - 2. List of Board of Directors as of January 2022:
 - a. Terry Moffitt Appointee from Mitchell County Commissioners
 - b. Chris Deyton, *Treasurer* Farmer - Yancey
 - c. Becky Wilson, *Secretary* Farmer - Yancey
 - d. Fox Gavin Farmer - Yancey - MHHS-FFA President
 - e. Isaac Deyton Farmer - Yancey - MHHS-FFA
 - f. Eve Kindley, *Chair* Mitchell County Cooperative Extension
 - g. Casara Logan, *Vice Chair* Member at Large
 - h. John Silver Member at Large
 - ii. Staff
 - 1. List of Staff as of January, 2022:
 - a. Dru Zucchini, Executive Director
 - b. Michael Graf, Associate Director
 - c. Becca Smith, Office Administrator
 - d. Sierra Bryant, Agricultural Programs Manager
 - e. Andrew Snavely, Community Programs Manager

- iii. Volunteers
 - 1. Providing competitive wages for labor contributed to TRACTOR's programming is critical to fulfilling our organization's strategic plan, specifically in regard to economic development. The livelihood of a skilled agricultural workforce is imperative to the success of a community food system. See TRACTOR's [Volunteer Policy](#) for more information on alternative ways to get involved.
- iv. Growers
 - 1. Since 2012, and as of November 2022, TRACTOR has worked with over 250 growers across the southern Appalachian region. Each operation is unique, and TRACTOR may assist growers regardless of scale, methodology, and/or experience. Over the years, we have developed a network of agricultural professionals which growers access to develop their skills, expand their operations, and gain confidence. We urge our growers to reach out to us with any issue or idea regarding agriculture or community health.
- e. Grower Information
 - i. Sales/Invoicing
 - 1. Records
 - a. By January 15th of each year, TRACTOR is able to provide growers with information necessary to receive agricultural tax credits, including purchases by grower, material costs and equipment rentals. This information is provided upon request.
 - 2. Customer Feedback
 - a. The TRACTOR staff communicates buyer and grower expectations and requirements to ensure smooth transactions prior to delivery.
 - ii. Payment
 - 1. Growers are paid bi-monthly.
 - a. The following procedures apply If growers have sold produce through TRACTOR outlets or programs:
 - i. If sold between the 11th-26th of month, checks are mailed on the 1st of the following month.
 - ii. If sold between the 27th-10th, checks are mailed on the 15th.
 - 2. TRACTOR is not responsible for checks lost in the mail due to change of address. A \$35 stop payment fee will be applied to reprocessed payments.
 - 3. Upon request, TRACTOR will hold checks for growers to pick up.
 - 4. Grower's must contact TRACTOR staff to indicate changes in contact information.
 - 5. If there is a discrepancy in payment, please contact staff to schedule a meeting. Be sure to maintain all copies of all invoices, receipts and inspection reports regarding your product.
 - iii. Delivery & Logistics
 - 1. TRACTOR operates and maintains refrigerated vehicles which are used to make deliveries to food pantries, Farefield dropoff locations, local stores, restaurants and wholesale warehouses. Staff coordinates delivery, organizes and loads product on the trucks, and comes prepared to unload product meeting the unique receiving needs of each location. Each delivery is an opportunity to retrieve reusable bins, totes, boxes, and bags, along with pick ups with area farmers. After delivery, staff records delivery data and relays any feedback shared en route to relevant programming channels.
 - iv. Marketing
 - 1. Social Media & Local Media

- a. TRACTOR staff maintains an online presence to promote local agriculture. TRACTOR is active on Facebook, but we also deliver an e-newsletter. When farm information is made available, staff regularly posts and repost profiles and stories involving our growers, which often result in walk-in and/or on-farm sales. The more you tell us, the better we can write your story.
 - b. TRACTOR is also regularly featured in local print media. You may not find your farm particularly interesting, but the community might. When filling out the Grower Profile Questionnaire, do not be shy, let us know when there is a story worth telling.
 - 2. Photo Release Agreement
 - a. Signing the TRACTOR Photo Release Agreement allows us to fully utilize these media outlets to grow your operation and our organization hand in hand. Your photo, and photos of your farm and produce are valuable marketing tools, and help us tell the story of community agriculture. All TRACTOR-owned media featuring you or your farm are available upon request for your own marketing endeavors.
 - 3. Walk-In and Call-In
 - a. TRACTOR is a food hub, so many customers walk in or call if they are looking for something specific. Regardless of whether you have our markets in mind for a particular product, let us know product availability so we can direct customers and buyers to your farm.
- v. Training & Assistance
 - 1. Crop Production & Planning
 - a. TRACTOR offers an annual growers meeting in the spring, for training and feedback for growers educational needs.
 - b. TRACTOR's Agricultural Programs Manager is available to assist growers in coordinating planting and harvest dates to line up with TRACTOR's available markets.
 - c. Depending on the methods and resources a grower plans to utilize, the Agricultural Programs Manager is available to connect that grower with suitable experienced growers and/or agricultural specialists in TRACTOR's network.
 - 2. Grading, Sorting, Packing
 - a. A specification guide will be provided with our annual grower application for review.
 - b. Upon request, TRACTOR staff is available to advise growers on grading, sorting and packing for any available market. These skills and methods can often be the difference between a good price and a bad price, as well as acceptance and rejection.
 - c. Packing parameters are subject to change based on consumer preferences.
 - 3. Food Safety
 - a. In the spring, TRACTOR holds a Food Safety Workshop where growers can obtain a Post Harvest Handling certification as well as help schedule a GAP Tier 1 training and certification with their respective NC Cooperative Extension.
 - b. Please direct food safety questions and concerns towards TRACTOR's Agricultural Programs Manager, who holds a Food Safety Alliance certification, and manages the warehouse to meet FSA standards.
 - 4. Agricultural Equipment

- a. TRACTOR's Shared Use Equipment Program offers a wide range of agricultural equipment for rent at a minimal cost. All TRACTOR growers may access this equipment, but those who participate in production planning hold priority when making equipment rental reservations.
 - b. Upon request, TRACTOR's Agricultural Programs Manager is available to make on site demonstrations of equipment use, repair, maintenance and safety procedures.
 - c. An Accident Waiver and deposit is required to use Shared Use Equipment.
 - 5. Facility Equipment
 - a. Upon request, TRACTOR staff is available to demonstrate and train member growers on all facility equipment and resources.
- vi. Required Documents
 - 1. The following documents must be held on file at the TRACTOR office:
 - a. Grower Profile Questionnaire
 - b. Accident Waiver and Release of Liability
 - c. Operating Policies Agreement
 - d. Release of Photograph Agreement
 - e. Copy of Product Liability Insurance (required)
 - f. Copy of Tax Exemption Card* (If held)
 - g. Non-Compete Agreement* (If participating in Wholesale Sales)
 - h. Wholesale Grower Application* (If participating in Wholesale Sales)
 - i. Land Lease Agreement* (If participating in Land Lease Program)
 - j. Copy of Pesticide License* (If participating in Land Lease Program)

2. Production Planning

- a. History
 - i. When TRACTOR launched in 2012, Production Planning meetings were held to anticipate the aggregation of produce from several growers to meet wholesale distribution requirements. Some of these product requirements included large volumes and consistency in size and variety. Historically, TRACTOR has found it difficult to convey and manage these requirements across multiple farm operations. On many occasions, TRACTOR would promise a wholesale distributor a high volume, high quality aggregate of produce, but upon delivery, Receiving and Inspection Reports would show inconsistencies in quality, size and amount. It has become increasingly clear that producing an identical product simultaneously across several farms, which are operating under different management systems, cannot meet wholesale expectations. It has also become clear that even when product is successfully aggregated and delivered, the wholesale process and market is often not economically sustainable for TRACTOR or the grower.
Farming is unpredictable, and subsequently, so are the markets. Nevertheless, through successful grant writing and a promising CSA program, TRACTOR has earned it's right to dictate and manage a market on improved terms for growers. When growers sit down for Production Planning in late winter/early spring, they will still see wholesale opportunities, but also an opportunity to keep their products in the community through three recently expanded programs with greater price points, more flexibility in grading/sorting and local destinations.
- b. Benefits of Production Planning
 - i. Program Access

1. TRACTOR has several programs which feed the community through which a grower can sell produce. Each program has predetermined sales values and limited resources. Therefore, a Production Planning meeting is recommended to growers to set expectations on volume, timing and quality. Of course, we recognize the unpredictability of fruit and vegetable crop production, and as long as a grower communicates the status of an expected crop, it will hold its place in our market.
2. Product Window Reservations
 - a. Production Planning offers growers Product Window Reservations (PWR). There are no guarantees in agricultural sales, but reserving a product window with TRACTOR is about as close as it gets. Each program calls for a particular product during a weekly window, and growers are granted reservations based on farm evaluations, experience and track record. The earlier a price can be agreed upon, the better for TRACTOR and the grower. TRACTOR will never reduce a previously agreed upon price based on market conditions, but may increase the price if there is competitive demand.
 - ii. Equipment Use
 - a. Because several TRACTOR programs rely on growers that have Product Window Reservations, those who participate in Production Planning receive priority when reserving shared use equipment.
 - iii. Scheduling
 1. Before March 1, it is highly recommended that all growers intending to sell through TRACTOR attend a production planning meeting or, at least, provide an availability list. Those who do attend are the first to see new and re-opened product windows.

3. Facility Operational Policies & Procedures

- a. Facility Use
 - i. For partners and farmers utilizing the shared warehouse space, please see our [Memorium of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) for more detailed information on the work-flow and expectations in the TRACTOR facility.
 - ii. Partners and farmers using the facility or facility equipment for activities beyond delivery, a signed MOU must be on file. These activities include, but are not limited to: packing, washing, processing, bagging, icing, sorting, grading, etc.
- b. TRACTOR Respect Policy
 - i. TRACTOR promotes ethical and respectful communication and has zero-tolerance for unwarranted negative criticism of staff, partners, volunteers, visitors, or farmers, including demeaning comments that refer to attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, gender, sexual orientaion, age, marital status, political belief, religion and mental or physical disability. Anyone engaging in conduct contrary to this policy may be asked to leave the facility.
- c. Main Entrance
 - i. The Main Entrance for the facility is to the left of the bay doors.
 - ii. Farmers & partners should enter and log product at the main entrance.
 - iii. Door codes for individual farmers and partners are provided annually.
- d. Logging Product
 - I. All product must be entered into the product log located on the receiving desk. This also applies to partner organizations bringing in donated product.
 - II. The log contains a line for:
 - a. origin of product

- b. product name
- c. quantity
- d. product destination
- e. Staff Entrance & Office Area
 - i. This area is a designated office area for TRACTOR staff and program partners. General conversation and loitering is not acceptable.
 - ii. When invited into this space, please be respectful and try to keep distractions to a minimum.
 - iii. Please enter and exit the facility through the main entrance, not through the office area
- f. Restrooms
 - i. A staff restroom and guest restroom are located in the NE corner of the facility.
- g. Shared Facility Equipment
 - i. Bins
 - 1. Reservations & Check Out
 - a. Bins can be checked out by filling out the Bin Checkout Log located on the clipboard next to the bay door.
 - b. Bins may be reserved and/or renewed by placing a call or email to TRACTOR staff.
 - c. Bins containing products which are held in the TRACTOR facility are considered returned.
 - d. Bin reservations are first come, first serve, and a reservation supersedes a renewal.
 - 2. Cleaning & Sanitization
 - a. If there are no clean bins, the farmer must clean and sanitize unwashed bins before use, with food grade bleach (5% mixed with municipal water), then rinse with clean water
 - 3. Storage
 - a. Do not overfill or round off bins with product unless you plan to grade and sort in the facility. Bins must be able to be stacked if necessary. We store or deliver bins where the height of the produce exceeds the height of the bin itself.
 - ii. Pallets, Carts & Jacks
 - 1. Unless in a bin, all products must be stored on a pallet or rack. No product may ever touch the bare floor.
 - 2. Available pallets are located in the northwest corner of the facility.
 - 3. Stack broken pallets outside by the loading dock next to the dumpster.
 - 4. Carts must be sanitized with food grade bleach (5% mixed with municipal water) and rinsed after each use.
 - 5. Do not leave product in coolers on carts or dolly.
 - 6. Do not leave pallet jacks in coolers.
 - 7. Carts and pallet jacks must be returned to the cart area after use. This area is located in front of Cooler 1.
 - iii. Washroom
 - 1. Call the TRACTOR office to reserve the washline.
 - 2. Notify staff of any equipment malfunctions or maintenance issues with the washline.
 - 3. Keep loose clothing and hair away from moving parts
 - 4. Washlines must be cleaned and sanitized after use or a \$100 cleaning fee will be issued.
 - 5. Lugs and foldable crates must be cleaned, sanitized, and left to dry after use. Do not stack unless fully dry.

- iv. Scales
 1. In order to operate scales, growers must gain approval from TRACTOR staff.
 2. Only TRACTOR staff can obtain an official weight of product.
 3. Scales are certified by the NCDA&CS
 4. Do not step on the scales.
 5. If moved to a new workstation, please return the scales to the original location after use.
- v. Forklift
 1. In order to operate a forklift, growers must be trained and certified by TRACTOR staff.
 2. TRACTOR staff must be notified of low propane levels after use.
- vi. Ice Machines
 1. Upon delivery, TRACTOR staff will notify you if your product needs to be iced.
- vii. Bagger
 1. Call ahead to reserve the potato/apple bagger.
 2. In order to operate the bagger, growers must be trained and certified by TRACTOR staff.
 3. Bagger requires frequent calibration to remain accurate or when desired stop-weight is changed; find TRACTOR staff to perform this task
- viii. Bagging Station
 1. Bagging stations must be thoroughly sanitized with sani-wipes before every use.
 2. If you change the configuration of the hanging bags to better suit your needs, please replace items after use.
 3. If you run out of bags, notify TRACTOR staff to retrieve new ones from the supply room.
 4. If wheeled to a new location, please return it after use.
- h. Facility Access
 - i. 24 hour, 7 day a week access is granted to member growers.
 - ii. Product may only be officially accepted during receiving hours.
 - iii. A door code to the main entrance is provided annually once membership is granted.
 - iv. All growers, workers, volunteers and guests must sign in upon arrival.
 - v. Exiting The Facility
 1. Turn off walk-in cooler lights and secure cooler doors.
 2. Lower all gates, lock the bay door and leave through the main entrance. Confirm the main entrance is locked upon exit.
 3. The facility is under 24-hour video surveillance. Please report any suspicious activity to staff or, if necessary, local law enforcement.
- i. Ordering
 - i. Three touch points prior to delivery:
 1. Grower contacts TRACTOR: Product availability call
 - a. Occurs 10-14 days from harvest
 2. TRACTOR contacts grower: Sales Order
 - a. Occurs on Thursdays from 8am-12pm.
 - b. Agreement on prices and volumes
 - c. Schedule Delivery
 3. Grower contacts TRACTOR: Delivery Schedule Confirmation
 - a. Occurs 1-2 business day prior to delivery
- j. Receiving

- i. TRACTORs receiving hours are Monday 8am-5pm and Tuesday 8am-12pm. Any other receiving times must be approved by the Agricultural Programs Manager.
- ii. Logging and labeling
 - 1. Upon arrival, growers must go to the receiving desk to request an inspection, obtain an invoice and log their product with a TRACTOR staff member present.
 - 2. All product containers must have a label that includes:
 - a. name of product
 - b. amount per container
 - c. date
 - d. grower number
 - e. temperature upon intake
 - 3. Product without labeling is subject to rejection.
- iii. Inspections
 - 1. Staff will provide an invoice, granting acceptance or rejection of product by the end of the next business day. Maintain your copy of the invoice.
 - 2. After hour deliveries must be approved by TRACTOR staff, and growers may find their invoices in the designated area or request a digital copy.
 - 3. An invoice will indicate whether the product passes inspection or is rejected.
 - 4. If product quality is questionable due to temperature upon intake, an invoice may be withheld until product quality can be verified. Growers may retrieve product that has not been invoiced upon request.
 - 5. If product is rejected, a detailed [Product Rejection Notice \(PRN\)](#) will be issued.
 - 6. If rejected, growers will be notified of rejection via PRN by the end of the following business day.
 - 7. If rejected, the grower is responsible for the removal of product from the facility. If the product is not removed within 48 hours, the grower will incur a holding fee of \$20 per pallet per day for up to 5 business days. If the product is still in the facility after this period, a \$100 disposal fee will be incurred. If a grower or vendor defaults on this fee, TRACTOR may temporarily or permanently suspend all purchases from that source or dock the fee from a future payment.
- k. Grading & Packing
 - i. When the order for your product is placed, TRACTOR staff will notify you of any grading and packing requirements and specifications.
 - ii. Grading and packing is reflected in pricing. In many cases, programs and buyers require specific instructions regarding grading and packing. If instructions are communicated and not followed, product will likely be rejected or reduced in value.
 - iii. For questions or concerns regarding your product, please contact the TRACTOR Agricultural Programs Manager. Although grading and sorting is the grower's responsibility, TRACTOR staff can greatly reduce confusion and increase value by assisting you in grading and packaging.
- l. Storage
 - i. When delivering within receiving hours, TRACTOR staff will arrange storage. Once your product is accepted and you receive an invoice, you will receive payment for that product.
 - ii. Product received during receiving hours which becomes lost or degraded in storage is not the responsibility of growers.
 - iii. Product without an official inspection and invoice, or without storage approval is not TRACTOR's responsibility and may be disposed of without notice.
- m. Food Waste

- i. Growers and partners working in the TRACTOR facility are responsible for the removal of their culled and graded-out produce on the warehouse floor. All culled produce must be placed in a compost bin and removed.
 - ii. Do not place biodegradable food waste in trash cans.
- n. "3 Strikes" Policy
 - i. A total of three warnings may be issued to growers and partners who have neglected operating procedures. A third warning will result in a termination of the vendor or partner relationship.
 - ii. [Warnings](#) may be issued with or without a PRN.
 - iii. At any time, TRACTOR maintains the right to terminate or suspend any vendor or partner relationship if the party fails to comply with these agreed upon operating policies.

4. Farefield Operational Policies & Procedures

- a. Production Planning
 - i. Product Window Reservations (PWR)
 1. A Product Window Reservation is not required to sell products through the CSA program, however those products held in a PWR take precedence.
 2. The sales opportunities through the TRACTOR CSA program are organized into weekly windows. Each week contains windows for various products which growers may reserve through the production planning process. For example, week 16 may have a window for 406 pints of Cherry Tomatoes, as well as a window for 500# of Sweet Corn. By attending a production plan meeting, and agreeing to grow these product volumes, a grower may then hold that window.
 3. During production planning, a grower may reserve a partial window in the event they are not at scale to produce the entire window volume, as long as they are able to produce at least half of the needed volume. For example, if the window calls for 10 Bu. Green Bell Peppers and the grower only anticipates a 5 BU harvest, they may reserve that and leave the remaining amount to be filled by another grower or operation.
 4. Production planning meetings are first come first serve, however window reservations are not. Window reservations are granted by TRACTOR Staff based on farm evaluations, experience and track record. Participating in production planning does not guarantee a Product Window Reservation.
 5. When a Product Window Reservation is granted, it is not a binding contract. If a grower's crop fails or is lost for any reason, the window will simply re-open for other growers. If a grower's crop is early or late, the product window may be rescheduled on their behalf if it does not conflict with established, on-time products. It is highly unusual for a product holding a PWR to not be accepted, even if it is early or late to arrive.
 6. When a product window reopens, it will first be revealed to growers who participated in production planning. Growers may also call for updates on product windows. After 24 hours, re-opened product windows will be advertised to the general public.
 - ii. Farm Visit and Crop Evaluation
 1. If a window is reserved, a TRACTOR staff member may visit the farm operation to evaluate the crop prior to the anticipated harvest. If the crop is found unfit for the CSA, these conditions may occur:
 - a. The crop may be reallocated to another program such as Healthy Harvest.
 - b. The grower may suggest an alternative crop for the same product window.

bins of cabbage and the grower only anticipates a 3 bin harvest, they may reserve that and leave the remaining amount to be filled by another grower or operation.

4. Production planning meetings are first come first serve, however window reservations are not. Window reservations are granted by TRACTOR Staff based on farm evaluations, experience and track record. Participating in production planning does not guarantee a Product Window Reservation.
 5. When a Product Window Reservation is granted, it is **not a binding contract**. If a grower's crop fails or is lost for any reason, the window will simply re-open for other growers. If a grower's crop is early or late, the product window may be rescheduled on their behalf if it does not conflict with established, on-time products.
- ii. Farm Visit and Crop Evaluation
 1. If a window is reserved, a TRACTOR staff member may visit the farm operation to evaluate the crop prior to the anticipated harvest. If the crop is found unfit for the Healthy Harvest, these conditions may occur:
 - a. The grower may suggest an alternative crop for the same product window.
 - b. The grower may lose the reservation and the product window will reopen.
 2. If the crop is found satisfactory, the grower will continue to the Ordering & Receiving phase.
 - b. Ordering & Receiving
 1. Three touch points prior to delivery:
 - a. Grower contacts TRACTOR: Product availability call or email
 - i. Occurs 10-14 days from harvest
 - b. TRACTOR contacts grower: Sales Order
 - i. Occurs 1 week from harvest
 - ii. Agreement on prices and volumes
 - iii. Schedule Delivery
 - c. Grower contacts TRACTOR: Delivery Confirmation
 - i. Occurs 1 business day prior to delivery
 2. If requested upon delivery coordination, TRACTOR staff will print labels for growers
 3. Invoicing
 - a. Staff will provide an invoice once product has been officially recorded. Maintain your copy of the invoice. It is the only official record guaranteeing payment other than a signed invoice from a TRACTOR employee.
 - b. Growers who are approved to deliver after hours may find their invoice in a designated area.
 - c. If a product is rejected, a Rejection Notice will be issued within 48 business hours.
 - d. If rejected, grower will be notified of rejection by their selected preferred method of communication by the end of the next business day.
 - e. If rejected, the grower is responsible for removing product from the facility. If the product is not removed within 48 hours, the grower will incur a holding fee of \$20 per pallet per day for up to 5 business days. If the product is still in the facility after this period, a \$100 disposal fee will be incurred in addition.
 - c. Product Specifications & Grading
 - i. TRACTOR uses the [following guidelines](#) when inspecting and grading product. Unless otherwise communicated, all product outside of these specifications may be rejected or repurposed upon inspection.

- ii. TRACTOR will reject produce that shows signs of deterioration or rot. TRACTOR's Food Safety Professional may be summoned to evaluate the product.
 - iii. The grower is responsible for any sorting and grading required to meet specifications
 - iv. Until a product is graded and sorted to the standards required by the program, it may not be purchased or sold.
- d. Storage
- i. If delivering during receiving hours, a TRACTOR staff member will handle product storage.
 - ii. If arriving after hours, store product in temperature appropriate coolers upon arrival. TRACTOR is not responsible for product until it has been inspected and purchased with an invoice record signed by a TRACTOR employee.
 - iii. Contact Agricultural Programs Manager for long term storage/curing options.
- e. Distribution
- i. Healthy Harvest orders and/or Farefield shares are delivered to pantries, according to communicated receiving needs on scheduled delivery days. Fairfield Pick-Up signs are available to Pick-Up Location partners to help direct Farefield clients to their shares. Reusable bins, totes, boxes, and bags from previous weeks are retrieved at the time of each delivery.

6. Wholesale Operational Policies & Procedures

- a. Production Planning
- i. Production Planning is fundamental to a successful wholesale deal. Most wholesale buyers have strict volume and quality specifications, and if they are not met (and sometimes even when they *are* met), inspectors reject the lot without hesitation or explanation. Production Planning for the Wholesale Program with TRACTOR greatly decreases the risk of the grower's crop being rejected by allowing the TRACTOR staff to communicate expectations with the buyer early in the process. For instance, if TRACTOR staff is aware that 2 acres of butternut squash was transplanted in July, and the grower can communicate the expected volume, TRACTOR staff can then discern a buyer's interest, price and specifications early on. If they are not interested, TRACTOR staff can begin identifying an alternative market for the product and TRACTOR's relationship with the buyer is not tarnished due to a product rejection.
 - ii. The most difficult part of Production Planning for the wholesale market is anticipating volumes. Even experienced growers can have difficulty knowing how productive a harvest will be. Nonetheless, they generally make a much closer estimate than an inexperienced grower. As a rule of thumb, if you cannot accurately estimate a crop volume within a 25% margin of error, the Wholesale Program is not recommended for sales through your farm.
- b. Application Process
- i. Growers who wish to participate in the Wholesale Program must apply first. [Applications](#) can be obtained by contacting the Agricultural Programs Manager or TRACTOR staff.
 - ii. Growers must produce evidence of their ability to produce a high volume, quality crop. This can be accomplished through the following procedures:
 1. Farm Visit
 - a. The Agricultural Programs Manager, other TRACTOR Staff and/or an NC Extension Agent/Technician will visit the farm operation to evaluate the prospect of wholesale production. Evaluations will be made based on crop capacity, available resources and food safety.
 2. Sales Records
 - a. A grower may use past sales receipts and invoices that indicate successful production of quality products sold at wholesale volumes.
 3. Recommendations

- a. A grower may collect recommendations from respected growers and buyers.
- c. Farm Visit and Crop Evaluation
 - i. If a grower's crop is destined for the wholesale market, a TRACTOR staff member may visit the farm operation to evaluate the crop prior to the anticipated harvest. If the crop is unfit for the Wholesale Program, these conditions may occur:
 - 1. TRACTOR staff may suggest an alternative market or reject the product on site.
 - 2. If the crop is satisfactory, the grower will continue to the Ordering & Receiving phase.
- d. Ordering & Receiving
 - i. Three touch points prior to delivery:
 - 1. Grower contacts TRACTOR: Product availability call
 - a. Occurs 10-14 days from harvest
 - 2. TRACTOR contacts grower: Sales Order
 - a. Occurs 1 week from harvest
 - b. Agreement on prices and volumes
 - c. Communicate grading, packing, and palletizing specifications provided by the buyer
 - d. Schedule Delivery
 - e. Coordinate storage
 - 3. Grower contacts TRACTOR: Delivery Confirmation
 - a. Occurs 1 business day prior to delivery
 - ii. Delivery
 - 1. Upon delivery, the grower is responsible for logging, and labeling, packing and palletizing their product according to TRACTOR's Operational Procedures and the specifications provided by the buyer. TRACTOR staff will record official weights. Afterwards an invoice will be provided. Some or all of these tasks may be completed in the TRACTOR facility.
 - 2. If a product is late and delivery to the buyer cannot be made in a timely manner, TRACTOR maintains the right to reject it outright.
 - iii. Product Specifications & Grading
 - 1. TRACTOR uses the [following guidelines](#) when inspecting and grading product. Unless otherwise communicated, all product outside of these specifications may be rejected or repurposed upon inspection.
 - 2. Grading specifications in the Wholesale Program are dictated by the buyer and communicated to the grower by TRACTOR staff.
 - 3. Until product is graded and sorted to the standards required by the buyer, the product can not be purchased or sold. If product is unfit for delivery to buyer due to defects, TRACTOR maintains the right to reject the product at any time.
 - iv. Packing
 - 1. Grading specifications in the Wholesale Program are dictated by the buyer and communicated to the grower by TRACTOR staff.
 - 2. Until product is appropriately packed to the standards required by the buyer, the product can not be sold. If product is unfit for delivery to buyer due to packaging, TRACTOR maintains the right to reject it outright at any time.
 - v. Inspection
 - 1. If the product is rejected by the buyer, TRACTOR is not responsible for disposal fees or any other costs surrounding the product's rejection.

2. TRACTOR's Wholesale Inspection occurs after growers have packaged and palletized the order for delivery. Although produce may be adequate in quality, TRACTOR maintains the right to reject an improperly packaged order.
3. TRACTOR Inspection
 - a. Upon arrival the Agricultural Programs Manager will provide an invoice. It is the only official record guaranteeing payment with the exception of the wholesale program.
 - b. Those who deliver after hours may find their invoice in a designated area, after official weights have been recorded.
 - c. If a product is rejected, a more detailed Rejection Notice will be issued.
 - d. Delivery and logging of product by grower does not guarantee acceptance or sale of product
 - e. If rejected, grower will be notified of rejection via their preferred method of communication found in their grower application by the end of the next business day.
 - f. If rejected, grower is responsible for removing product from the facility. If the product is not removed within 48 hours, the grower will incur a holding fee of \$20 per pallet per day for up to 5 business days. If the product is still in the facility after this period, a \$100 disposal fee will be incurred in addition.
 - g. TRACTOR maintains the right to terminate any membership if a member fails to comply with operating policies.
- e. Storage
 - i. When coordinating your drop a week prior or sooner, a TRACTOR staff member will arrange cooler space for your product and notify you regarding it's storage.

7. Partner Programs

- a. MOU
 - i. For partners using the facility or facility equipment for activities beyond delivery, [a signed MOU](#) is required to establish parameters of activities. These activities include, but are not limited to: packing, washing, processing, bagging, icing, sorting, grading, etc.

8. Shared Use Equipment Program Operational Policies and Procedures

- a. Reservations
 - i. Equipment use is for Grower Members. Non-members may utilize the program, but at an adjusted rate.
 - ii. Reservations are made by contacting the Agricultural Program Manager or TRACTOR staff.
 - iii. Shared Use Equipment may be reserved up to two weeks before the date of the rental.
 - iv. Reservations are first come first serve, although growers who participate in Production Planning and hold Product Windows take priority over equipment rentals.
 - v. TRACTOR maintains the right to refuse any rental reservation request.
- b. Pickup
 - i. Lessees may pick up equipment at the Bowditch Bottoms farm property, after confirming with the Agricultural Programs Manager.
 - ii. Lessees may request a renewal or extension of an equipment lease by contacting the Agricultural Programs Manager and obtaining approval via digital or written document.
- c. Returns
 - i. All equipment must be returned to the Bowditch Bottoms farm property on the scheduled return date. If a lessee fails to return equipment, a late fee of \$25/per day will be incurred. If

- equipment return is more than 5 business days past the agreed return date, a pickup fee of \$5 per mile will also be incurred.
 - ii. Lessees are responsible for securing the equipment and trailers upon return.
 - iii. Equipment must be returned in the condition in which it was released.
 - iv. If equipment is malfunctioning, damaged or lost, immediately contact the Agricultural Programs Manager or other TRACTOR staff.
 - v. If a lessee has damaged or neglected equipment beyond normal wear and tear, they will be held financially liable for the repair or replacement of affected equipment.
- d. Required Documents
- i. Shared Use Equipment Lease Agreement
 - ii. Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form
- e. Rates & Payment
- i. Member Growers are offered lower rates than growers who have not achieved a Member status (see 1.f.i for Member Status information)
 - ii. Rental rates for equipment are on a per business day basis
 - iii. Rates are adjusted annually.
 - iv. Payment is due upon pickup.

Equipment Rental Fees

Water Wheel Transplanter	\$50/day
Plastic Mulch Layer	\$50/day
Plastic Mulch Lifter	\$50/day
Plastic Mulch Spooler	\$50/day
Irrigation/Fertigation Trailers	\$25/day or \$200/mo
Corn Picker, OXBO CP100	\$100/day
Poly Planter/Seeder	\$50/day
John Deere 2 Row Corn Planter	\$50/day
JATCO J600 Cannon Sprayer	\$100/day
Washline	\$15/hr

9. Land Lease Program Operational Policies and Procedures

- a. Application
- i. Member growers may apply for agricultural land leases at two Yancey County locations, Bowditch Bottoms and Horton Creek Farm.
 - ii. Applications can be found in the Grower Packet or obtained by contacting the Agricultural Programs Manager.
- b. Leases
- i. The TRACTOR Board reviews the applications and approves all leases. A completed application does not guarantee a lease. Growers who participate in Production Planning are more likely to be accepted into the program.
 - ii. Once accepted, a lease including rates and expectations will be drafted for the lessee to review. The TRACTOR Land Lease is a legally binding contract.

- iii. TRACTOR maintains the right to reject any application to the Land Lease Program and/or terminate any lease as stated in the Lease Agreement.
- iv. TRACTOR has the right to reject product grown through the Land Lease Programs if adequate standards are not met.