

most farmers establish relatively rigid rules pertaining to minimum volumes, parking of vehicles, inspection of containers, and minimum age for children accompanying adults into the fields. Some farmers have adopted one or more of the following to facilitate supervision and crowd control: check-in stations, designated parking areas, checkout area between field and vehicles, a supervised play area for children, and transportation from check-in or parking areas to fields. Such measures add to farmers' cost of operations and must be recovered through higher product prices. Nevertheless, consumer prices for pick-your-own operations are usually the lowest among all direct-marketing methods. Consumers also benefit in being able to select fruits or vegetables that are, in their judgment, the freshest and best quality in the fields. Consumers do have to consider their added cost in time and transportation, and the inconvenience involved in this method.

Some products do not lend themselves to the pick-your-own method because some experience, skill, or strength are required to determine optimum maturity and to harvest the produce. Picking out ripe watermelon or mature sweet corn, for example, requires a fair amount of expertise; harvesting apples and cherries from a fully mature standard tree (nondwarf stock) requires both strength and skill to move and climb ladders.

Roadside stands or markets represent the retailing operation of a farmer-to-retail integrated operation for farm produce. The stand (market) consists of facilities to display and protect farm produce. When "stands" and "markets" are differentiated it is largely on the basis of the kind of facilities provided. In general, facilities for roadside markets are larger and more modern than roadside stands. The latter may offer only temporary shelter and minimum facilities for storing and displaying produce.

Some roadside markets have elaborate facilities, including refrigerated coolers for storing produce as well as refrigerated display cases. Such markets generally stay open a longer period of time and offer a wider array of products, including nonfood products, for customer convenience and to help spread the overhead costs of the facility. Operators of such markets frequently purchase part of their products from other farmers, as well as from conventional wholesale outlets.

Roadside stands are located adjacent to a public road. Some of the costs associated with conventional marketing are eliminated or materially reduced with this method, so farmer-operators can charge lower prices to consumers while at the same time enhancing their own income. The costs for transportation from the farm to shipping points, shipping containers, and handling charges of assemblers and wholesalers are eliminated. Additional economies may be obtained in the integrated operation from greater use of both family and hired labor, and other inputs among the various production and marketing components of the operation.