



Selling To Tourism and Hospitality Businesses

A Guide for Local Producers

Please order and pay for your meal at our food servery.

We will be pleased to serve your meal at your table.



April May

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June July

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August September

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Quality Regional Food:
 quality food with a specific
 geographical provenance
 produced and marketed locally

*Department for Environment,
 Food and Rural Affairs*



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide has been developed to help small and medium sized local food producers to sell their produce to businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector — principally hotels, restaurants and cafes, pubs, bed and breakfast accommodation, and attractions. It provides guidance and advice on who to sell to, how to find these buyers, and what they will require from you, the local producer. It also provides some examples of local producers who are successfully supplying the tourism and hospitality sector, and who to contact if you want to find out more about this expanding opportunity.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

This guide has been written in such a way that you can either read it from the beginning to the end like a book, or alternatively by “dipping in” to each of the various sections.



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WHAT IS INSIDE...

The Tourism and Hospitality Sector in the South East.....05

- Size of the Market 05
- Market Structure05

Routes to the Market Place08

- Three Main Routes 08
- Issues to Consider when Choosing the Route to Market09

What is Required to Supply the Market?10

- The Key Factors11
- Getting to Know You14

Opportunities: Who to Target And How to Do It15

- Independent In-House Operated Good Quality Pubs, Restaurants & Hotels16
- National or Regional Branded Pubs, Restaurants and Hotel Chains17
- Small Accommodation Establishments and Food Outlets18
- Outlets Tied to a Distributor19
- Regional and Local Wholesalers20
- 12 Tips For Selling to Tourism and Hospitality Businesses21

Case Studies22



The Place Camber Sands
and Paul Hodges
22



Selborne Arms and
Brocks Farm Shop
25



Shepherd Neame and
Sunnyside Farm
23



The Green Dragon and
The Cottage Bakers
26



The Nurse's Cottage
and Beaulieu Chocolates
24

Finding Out More27

- Some Recent Research27
- Where to Find Useful Information29

THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN THE SOUTH EAST

Size of the Market

There are over 21,000 tourism and hospitality businesses in the South East, of which around one half are accommodation establishments, with the remainder being restaurants, pubs, and a wide range of attractions. Each year, over £10 billion is spent at these places by domestic and international tourists, of which around £3 billion is on food and drink. Consequently this represents a market that is potentially of huge value to local producers.

Source: TSE 2005

Market Structure

The hospitality sector is made up of a wide variety of different businesses ranging from large hotels that are part of national or international chains, down to small independently run restaurants, pubs and cafés.

Hotels



Broadly speaking, hotels can be categorised as belonging to a chain, or being independent. Chains can be large or small. Some of the largest hotel chains in the UK include Whitbread (with its brands Travel Inn, Marriott and Premier Lodge) and InterContinental (brands include: Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn and InterContinental), whilst smaller chains include Malmaison (brands include: Hotel du Vin) and Macdonald Hotels. It is estimated that around 33% of all hotel rooms in the UK are part of a chain. Whilst independent hotels represent the remaining two-thirds, they are usually smaller in size, and tend to be owner managed.

Most hotels, whether chain or independent operate at least one restaurant for the sale of food and beverages to their guests as well as non-residents. The best opportunities for local producers are with the independent hotels as they are usually the most flexible buyers, although there are often opportunities with the smaller chains too.

Pubs



Rather like hotels, pubs can be categorised as belonging to a chain (they are owned by a brewery - these pubs can be either tied or managed) or independent (usually called free houses). There are some exceptions to this, such as the J D Wetherspoon pubs, which are not tied to a brewery but are in effect a chain of free houses. Food contributes about one quarter (25%) of income for the typical pub although this is only an average and revenues vary with each pub. Over one third of pubs now have either a separate restaurant room or an area of the pub which is devoted to table-service meals for part of the day. Rural pubs tend to rely more on revenue from the sale of food, with the average country pub taking 40% of its turnover from meals.

Opportunities for local producers tend to lie with free house and tied pubs that specialise in food. The landlords of these pubs usually make their own decisions with regards to where they buy from and what type of food they serve. In contrast, managed pubs are normally restricted to buying from certain suppliers. This does not necessarily rule them out, but may make it more difficult to make an initial sale.

Bed and Breakfast



Bed and breakfast accommodation is usually relatively small scale, with typically less than five rooms located within a private house. Some B&Bs offer evening meals, although this is unusual; consequently food and beverage purchases are normally limited to breakfast items.

Bed and breakfast accommodation establishments are often interested in serving local produce, although as they tend to be small they are not significant buyers of food and beverages.

Restaurants and Cafés



In terms of outlet numbers, several large groups dominate the restaurant and cafe sector. The Restaurant Group, which owns Caffè Uno, Garfunkels, Chiquitos, and Frankie & Benny, is the most significant. However, the sector is still characterised by a large number of independent operators working on a highly localised level. It is at this independent operator level that the best opportunities for local producers exist, as they are unlikely to have restrictive buying policies and often have flexible menus.

Attractions with Catering/Shop



The growth of catering outlets at visitor attractions has been significant in recent years, with more elaborate menus being offered in place of a simple range of snacks. In addition to catering facilities, many attractions also have gift shops that retail food and beverage items for consumption off the premises. These may have a “local” theme and include preserves, honey, and hand-made chocolates.

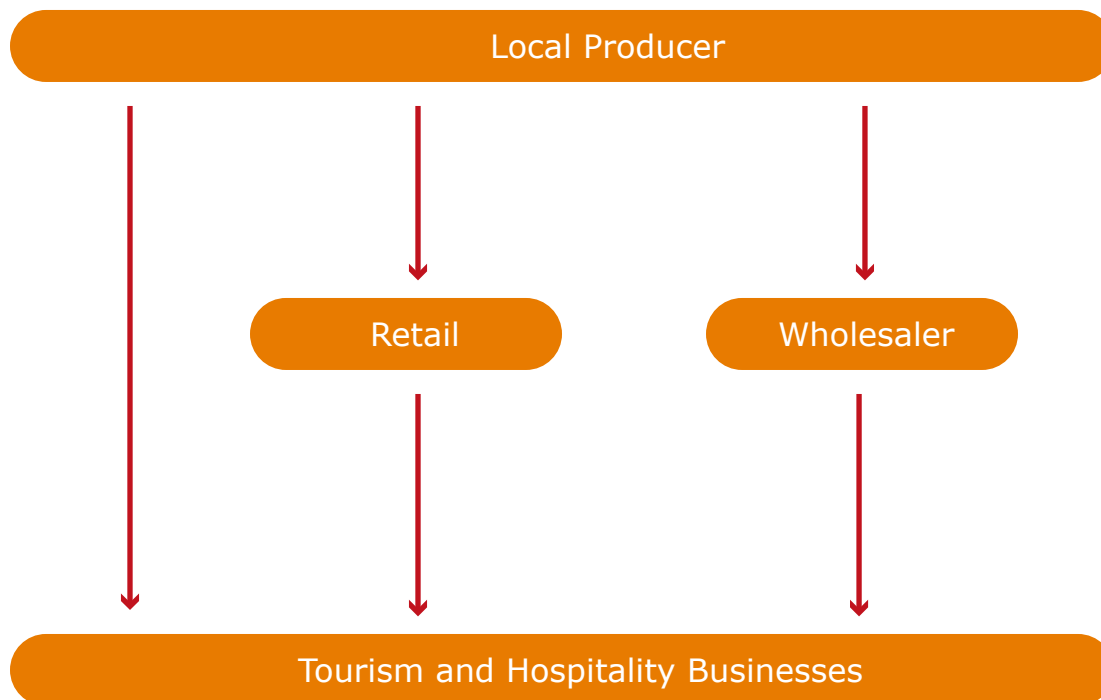
Opportunities at attractions vary considerably. Some strongly support local producers and encourage them to supply ingredients for their food and drinks, or for items in their shops. However others many contract their catering to a third party who may only buy from certain suppliers.

This guide mainly focuses on selling to independent hotels, restaurants and pubs, either by approaching them directly or via a food distributor (wholesaler). Opportunities for approaching some of the chain run establishments are briefly covered, although more information on this area of the catering sector can be found in the IGD guide “Understanding Foodservice Opportunities for Farmers and Small Food Producers”.

ROUTES TO THE MARKET PLACE

Three Main Routes

Local producers can choose between three main methods of supplying their product to the tourism and hospitality market, as shown below.



Direct Sale

This is the most obvious and flexible method to sell directly to the tourism and hospitality businesses. To sell direct requires a clear understanding of what these businesses require, who to approach and how to do it is needed. This guide will help answer these questions.

Retail

Not all local producers will wish to supply tourism and hospitality businesses. There may be a number of reasons for this, such as the volume of production not being large enough to satisfy the demand of a hotel or restaurant. The most obvious alternative for these producers is to target the retail trade. These could be in the form of farm shops, Farmers Markets, or high street retailers (e.g. local butchers and greengrocers).

Wholesalers

Wholesalers are a traditional part of the food supply chain, and they usually generate business through the publication and dissemination of large product lists to hotels, pubs and restaurants. Two of the largest wholesalers are Brakes and 3663 who deliver nationwide. There are also a large number of smaller wholesalers operating at a more regional and local level. Many of these regional and local wholesalers buy and sell local produce, and in the South East there are a number that specialise in local produce.



Issues to Consider when Choosing the Route to Market

Volume: consider the volume of your production, and match this with your markets. Assess whether you can satisfy demand. For example, a restaurant may want a large number of the same cut from an animal. You need to consider if you can supply this, and also what you will do with the remainder of the carcass. When selling to retailers, this issue is less likely to arise due to a smaller number and more varied cuts being sought.

Packaging: different buyers will require different types of packaging. For example, if you are selling to retailers, the product may need to be packaged and labelled in a way that is appropriate for the final consumer. Trade packaging for wholesale distributors or selling directly to the tourism and hospitality businesses can be more basic in appearance, although may have to conform to other guidelines that the buyer requests. These are discussed in the next section of the guide.

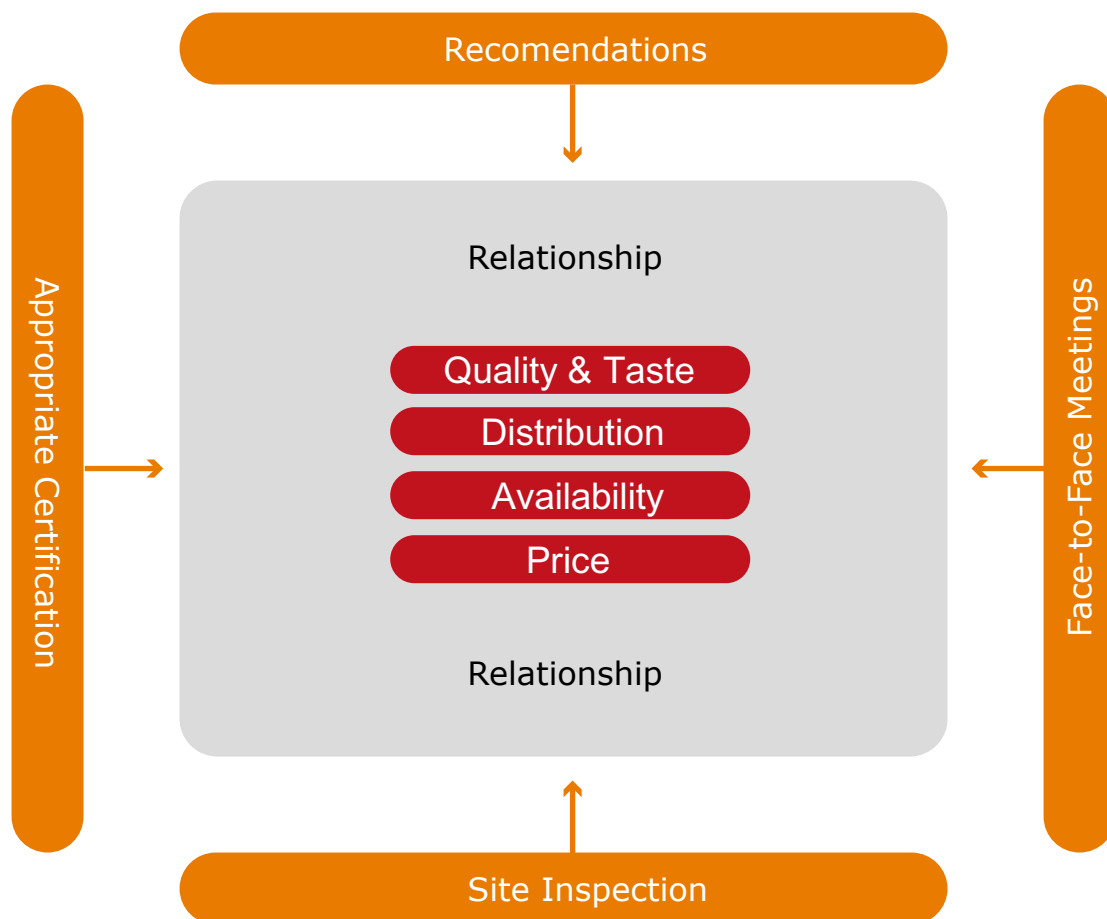
Delivery: you need to consider your delivery facilities. Delivery is essential when selling directly to tourism and hospitality businesses. However, it is less important when selling directly to wholesalers, as they will often be prepared to collect produce.

Marketing and Sales: think about the resources and skills you have available for marketing and selling your products. Different routes to the market will require different marketing and sales techniques. Selling directly to tourism and hospitality businesses will require a very personable approach, and developing relationships with buyers is extremely important. You will also need to have the capability to deliver your produce at relatively short notice and often to a number of buyers. Selling to retailers or wholesalers is normally less labour intensive and time consuming, and involves fewer meetings with the buyer. You could consider developing a partnership with another local producers (of the same or different product) if you feel that you do not have the time or skills to undertake your own marketing and sales. Partnerships can also help increase production volumes and delivery options.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO SUPPLY THE MARKET?

There are many things that you need to consider when supplying your products to the market. The most important of these is the development of a strong relationship with the buyer. Based on this, quality and taste of the product, distribution, availability, and price are all key attributes. To help you develop the relationship with the buyer, face-to-face meetings, personal recommendations, farm/site inspections and where appropriate, certification, should be sought.

The diagram below summarises how these key market requirements of quality, taste, distribution, availability and price all fit within a strong relationship with the buyer. The arrows indicate the best ways of building this relationship.



Note that depending on which route to the market you choose when selling your product - direct or via wholesalers/retail, some of these factors will be more important than others. This part of the guide will help prepare you, whichever route you choose.



The Key Factors

Relationship

Developing a good personal relationship with the buyer of your products is the most important aspect of selling to the tourism and hospitality trade. However the emphasis on relationship varies depending on your route to the market.

Selling direct: the relationship is an essential part of the sales transaction, and should be viewed as a partnership. The most successful relationships exist whereby the buyer will provide feedback to the producer thereby helping to improve and develop the product. Working together is the key to success.

Selling to wholesalers/retail: whilst the relationship is still important, it will not be as close as when selling direct. You will not be in contact with the chefs and proprietors of tourism and hospitality businesses, and therefore will not need to discuss how your product can be used to enhance their menus.

Quality and Taste

For most tourism and hospitality businesses, quality and taste are the most important attributes of local produce, and whether you are selling direct or via wholesalers/retail quality and taste remain of paramount importance.

Whilst some businesses may seek local produce in order to support local businesses and the nearby economy, they will only do so if the product is good — usually at least as good, but preferably better, than could be supplied from another producer outside of the locality. Quality and taste are also important attributes of a product because they usually override other attributes such as price. If the quality and taste of a product is good, buyers are often prepared to pay more. Note that most buyers are not concerned about whether a product is “organic” — quality, taste and methods of production that are based on good principles are more important.

Distribution

Distribution can be a problem for some local producers, either due to the lack of manpower or available transport, or lack of time - this is quite common as often resources are focussed on production not distribution. Your ability to distribute your produce will, to a large extent, determine your route to market.

Selling direct: most chefs or food purchasers do not have the time to collect produce, and therefore its timely delivery is essential. Linked to delivery is the need for an efficient ordering process that will enable the buyer to place an order at their convenience — most commonly this is at the end of an evening or in the morning for delivery within the next 24 hours. Distribution itself should be timely — late deliveries are unacceptable. The method used for distribution should be appropriate for the product, such as a refrigerated van for fish and meat products. Remember that when you sell direct, you are likely to be delivering to a number of different buyers.

Selling to wholesalers/retail: if you are likely to have difficulties delivering your produce, you should consider selling to a wholesaler or retailers. Wholesalers and retailers will often pick up produce, although this is not always the case. By dealing with wholesalers/retailers you are also more likely to be selling your produce to a smaller number of different buyers than if you were selling direct.

Availability

As with distribution, the availability of produce has different levels of importance depending on who you sell to.

Selling direct: whilst the availability of products is more important to some businesses than others, most have a menu that is fixed for a period of time (most commonly it is changed four times a year), and therefore they require the ingredients that enable them to serve the dishes on it. Even those food outlets that have a very flexible menu (with several “dishes of the day”) will still serve a number of fixed dishes. Therefore the level of menu flexibility is likely to determine the importance a buyer will attach to the availability of products. The most inflexible of these will be inclined to buy from a wholesale distributor to ensure they have the security of regular supply. Others might only buy local produce if there is a backup of a similar non-local product when the first line of supply cannot be maintained. If you are selling direct, make sure the availability of your produce will satisfy the business you intend to trade with.

Selling to wholesalers/retail: if you feel that you may not be able to satisfy the relatively strict ordering demands of tourism and hospitality businesses, you should consider selling to wholesalers or retailers. Wholesalers are able to act as a “buffer” between producers and the businesses they supply, and usually buy from a number of different producers. By doing this, they are able to maintain a consistent supply to their clients, and therefore afford you, the producer, with more flexibility in your production.

Price

Whilst price is obviously an important factor for businesses, as it will determine their final retail price to the consumer, for most buyers it is not as critical as quality and taste. However, price is a more important attribute when selling to wholesalers/retail than directly to tourism and hospitality businesses.

Selling direct: price is not of prime importance for many tourism and hospitality businesses, in particular the more upmarket food outlets and those specialising in local produce. However, prices **must** be competitive. If a better product can be sourced for less elsewhere, most buyers will be inclined to switch their supplier.

Selling to wholesalers/retail: when selling to wholesalers and retailers, price has a greater significance. These businesses are not able to “add value” to produce in the same way that restaurants do by creating dishes; instead their margins are determined by their ability to sell produce on at a competitive price. You should bear this in mind when discussing pricing structures with wholesalers or retailers.

Some things to consider when dealing with specific foods...

Whilst the key factors of relationship, quality and taste override specific requirements for most food products, buyers, whether they are tourism and hospitality businesses, wholesalers or retailers do require their products to be prepared or supplied in different ways. Discussions with the buyer are essential here, as they will provide the guidance that is required. However, the following notes should be used as guidance:

- Packaging is a personal preference, with some buyers preferring to receive meats vacuum packed, whilst others prefer all their cuts to be wrapped in butchers paper or greaseproof paper and tied with string. A flexible approach is therefore needed.
- Traceability is likely to be an important issue for buyers of meats and shellfish. Many tourism and hospitality businesses will want to know the source of the product, where it was slaughtered (for animals) and other related facts. Most of this documentation is required by law for producers of meats and therefore will not require the completion of additional paperwork.
- Portions are rather like packaging - different buyers have different requirements. Some chefs will want their meats cut and packaged to pre-specified weights, whilst others will prefer to make their own cuts.



Getting to Know You

Different tourism and hospitality businesses will require different things from their suppliers. As identified above, the establishment of a relationship built and based on trust is the most important requirement for most buyers. When getting to know your buyer, the following four points should be considered:

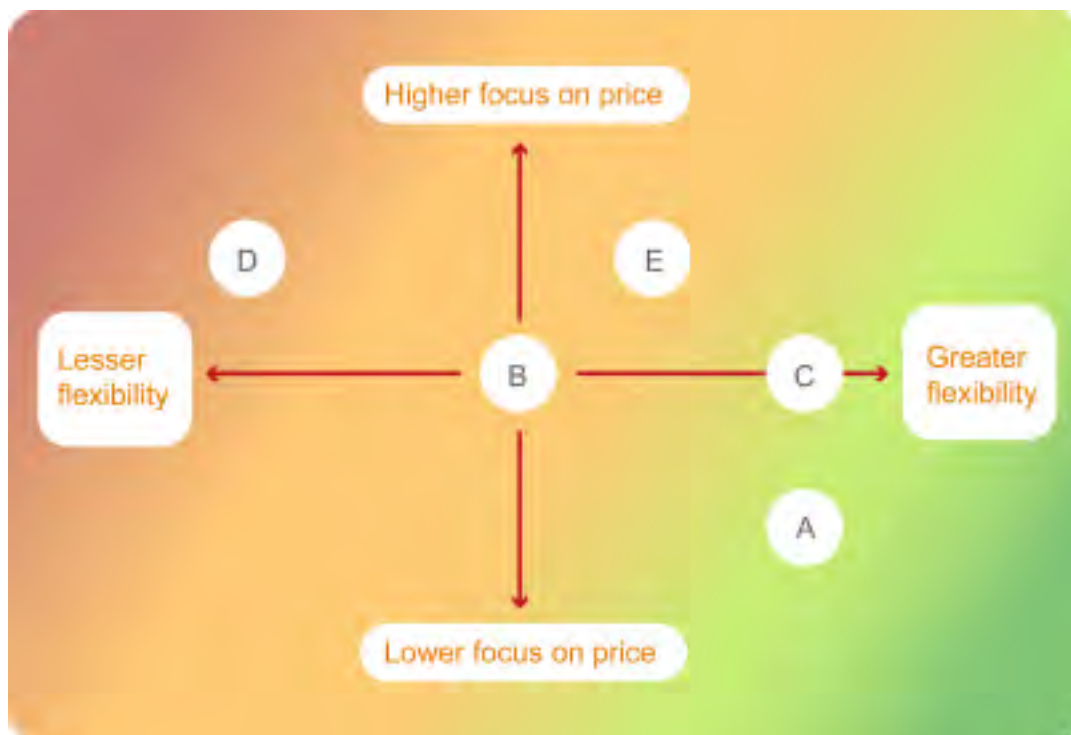
- Personal recommendations: recommendations from other buyers within the tourism and hospitality sector, or from other local producers who are trading with these businesses, are one of the most successful ways to market a product and win business.
- Face-to-face meetings: the buyers, and in particular the chefs, want to meet face-to-face with the producers — usually at their place of work. This is part of the relationship-building exercise and is a critical part of the process.
- Farm/site inspection: buyer inspection of the farm or site of production is essential. The majority of buyers will be able to satisfy most of their information needs through a site inspection.
- Certification: certification for most food products is not usually required by businesses sourcing local produce. However, there are exceptions, most commonly for meats, shellfish and eggs. You should ask the business you are selling to what type of certification they require to buy your product, and contact your Local Food Group if you need more information.

OPPORTUNITIES: WHO TO TARGET AND HOW TO DO IT

The large number of tourism and hospitality businesses operating in the South East can make the process of selecting potential buyers a difficult and bewildering one, and different food outlets will suit different local producers. This guide defines five broad categories of business, and has provided guidance on how to identify and target each.

- A. Independent in-house operated good quality pubs, restaurants & hotels**
- B. National/regional branded pubs, restaurants and hotel chains**
- C. Small accommodation establishments and food outlets**
- D. Outlets tied to a distributor**
- E. Regional and local wholesalers**

Whether you are selling directly to tourism and hospitality businesses, or to wholesalers and retailers, developing a personal relationship with the buyer, and ensuring the highest standards in quality and taste are paramount for success. The other variables, that is: flexibility (which includes both availability of the product and its distribution) and price are also important considerations. The diagram below shows how each of the five types of business tends to value flexibility and price.



The colours are used to indicate the level of opportunity, with those in the bottom right corner (green) offering the most realistic opportunities, and those in the top left corner the greatest challenges.

A. Independent In-House Operated Good Quality Pubs, Restaurants & Hotels

These may be individual businesses or part of small regional chains. Their customer base allows them to pay a bit more to smaller suppliers who can offer something special.

How to Identify Them

- Look at their menus, they usually describe dishes in detail and often mention the provenance of the ingredients. There may be a high local product component on their menu already. They also have regularly changing menus that reflect produce that is in season.
- Look at publications and websites such as the Good Pub Guide, Good Hotel Guide, and Charming Small Hotels Guide for hotels, restaurants and pubs that are likely to specialise in good quality cuisine.
- Carefully identify pubs, as they are either tied to a brewery or are free houses. Tied pubs can be managed or tenanted. Managed pubs buy most of their food supplies from distributors that are identified by their owning brewery, whilst tenanted pubs and free houses can select their own food suppliers. Breweries are usually happy to provide a list of their tenanted pubs to local suppliers.
- Don't necessarily exclude restaurants that are part of a chain, as some are keen supporters of local produce. For example National Trust actively seek local produce for inclusion in their menus.

Target Market?

Yes! These businesses offer some of the best opportunities for local producers, as often their chefs are knowledgeable and adaptable to changing products. They are also likely to be most flexible about varying availability of products.

Actions

- Identify potential hotels, restaurants and pubs in your area using your local knowledge, recommendations and directories.
- Visit them for a meal or to have a drink — get a feel for their product.
- Find out who the head chef or manager is and set up a meeting.
- Make sure you have all your facts at hand, especially prices
- Offer free samples to taste and try.
- Check that your production volumes and delivery capabilities can match those required by the business.
- If things are going well, invite your contact to come and visit you.

B. National/Regional Branded Pubs, Restaurants and Hotel Chains

Chains of managed pubs, restaurants and hotels may be more focussed on price; their biggest drawback is that they are likely to be locked into a food supply structure that a small supplier may find difficult to access. This may be for a number of reasons — for example they may make large orders, or prefer to deal with only a few suppliers.

How to Identify Them

- These outlets often have a brand name, or are managed pubs owned by a brewery. Managed pubs are less easy to identify as their name and appearance is unlikely to be different to tenanted pubs, although breweries are usually able to provide lists of their managed and tenanted properties.
- Branded pubs, restaurants and hotels usually appear in directories published by their brand organisation — these are normally available at outlets or via websites.
- Two possible alternatives are:
 - Some businesses allow their chefs or buyers to purchase a small amount of produce from non-recommended suppliers. This provides an ideal opportunity for local producers to sell items such as preserves or unusual products.
 - Some chains establish a list of approved suppliers for their businesses to order from. You should look into getting onto an approved list by approaching the Purchasing Director, Executive Chef, Catering Development Manager, or Brand Manager within the organisation.

Target market?

Yes! However selling may not be straightforward, although if you can become a preferred supplier then the rewards can be significant. One of the main drawbacks may be providing a consistent supply. These businesses often have fixed menus and therefore need a regular supply of a particular product. They are usually not as flexible as businesses in category A above.

Actions

- Identify potential businesses in your area using local knowledge and directories.
- Visit them for a meal or to have a drink — get a feel for their product.
- Find out who is responsible for purchasing. Remember that this decision may be made in another office for all outlets in the region or nationally.
- If it appears there are opportunities, try to set up a meeting.
- Find out the volume of produce and delivery requirements that are required, and ensure you can match these. Take samples and prices with you.

C. Small Accommodation Establishments and Food Outlets

These outlets are usually bed and breakfast providers with between one and five rooms, as well as small cafes and sandwich bars.

How to Identify Them

- Bed and breakfast accommodation is usually well documented in tourism guides for cities, towns and villages, as well as in other directories.
- Cafes or sandwich bars are often independently owned and operated, and can usually be found in directories of local businesses.

Target Market?

Possibly. However the volume of sales may be small and irregular to these businesses. Bed and breakfast accommodation usually only requires small quantities of meats, eggs and preserves. Cafes and sandwich bars vary, although are usually only small buyers. However there may be opportunities for suppliers who cannot generate the volume of produce demanded by restaurants and hotels.

Actions

- Identify potential bed and breakfast accommodation and cafes in your area based on your local knowledge and directories.
- Make personal visits to these establishments; alternatively call them by phone.
- If they appear interested, set up a meeting.
- Make sure you have all your facts ready and at hand regarding your product, especially prices; and take along samples.

D. Outlets Tied to a Distributor

Some pubs, restaurants, hotels and food outlets at visitor attractions have entered into agreements with contract caterers. In these instances there are few, if any, opportunities for supplying produce to them. Others have contracts or loyalties with wholesalers that prevent them, or make it difficult, to buy from any other supplier.

How to Identify Them

- Impossible without asking the organisation. The decision for catering is usually under the charge of the Purchasing Director, Executive Chef, Catering Development Manager, or Brand Manager.

Target Market?

No. Almost without exception there are no immediate opportunities here, although it may be possible to supply these businesses by selling to one of their wholesalers.

Actions

- Unless you have a good tip or some inside knowledge, don't waste your time pursuing these. Many other opportunities lie elsewhere!

E. Regional and Local Wholesalers

Regional and local wholesalers provide an alternative to selling directly to tourism and hospitality businesses. Wholesalers provide a link between you, the local producer, and the tourism and hospitality businesses, thereby taking care of the marketing and delivery of the product. There are two national wholesalers — Brakes and 3663 — which at present do not offer a solution for local producers, although this may change in the future. In the South East there is a wide range of regional and local wholesalers, some of these specialise in local produce.

How to Identify Them

- County food groups usually have lists of wholesalers who may be interested in handling your product. Some wholesalers work closely with the food groups, and use them to quality control and recommend the products they handle.

Target Market?

Yes. Especially for producers who prefer someone else to do their marketing and distribution for them. Some wholesalers even collect from local producers, although others prefer products to be delivered to their warehouse. The key to success is being able to fill a gap in the market — wholesalers will be more interested in products that they have in short supply, especially from other local producers. For you, the producer, there is the advantage of the wholesaler managing the demand of products from their buyers.

Actions

- Find out who your regional and local wholesalers are by contacting your local food group or looking in directories such as the Yellow Pages.
- Meet up with these wholesalers to assess the demand for your product. Make sure you are well prepared with details of production and especially prices.
- Before you make a final decision, also consider selling direct to tourism and hospitality businesses. You may also have the capability and capacity to sell to both!

12 Tips for Selling to Tourism and Hospitality Businesses

- There are a large number of tourism and hospitality businesses that do not know about local suppliers, or the benefits of including local produce on their menus. Most of these will already be buying produce from non-local suppliers and therefore may need considerable persuasion to switch suppliers. When talking to buyers, make sure you are well prepared.
- When contacting these businesses, timing is important - mealtimes are particularly busy and should be avoided. Try to make contact during the morning (before 11am) or during mid-afternoon.
- Make personal contact with the outlets you are marketing your product to, and offer samples for them to taste. Don't be afraid to talk about other clients you have, especially if they are high profile!
- Brochures describing your produce are preferred by many businesses as an initial way to find out about a product. However, they must look professional, use pictures if possible, include prices, and tell the story about your production methods. Include references or testimonials if you have them.
- Invite the chef or owner of the business to visit your farm or place of production. Show them how the production process works and impress them with your knowledge and attention to detail.
- Use Farmers' Markets to raise awareness of your product. Many restaurants use markets to find local produce.
- Word of mouth is one of the strongest methods of marketing. You will find that once you successfully supply to one outlet, others may approach you having had your product recommended to them.
- Provide information on provenance of your product, and offering promotional information about how to serve it can help.
- Be prepared to make regular deliveries, although this varies depending on the product. Some outlets have small kitchens or storage spaces, so require regular deliveries rather than receiving large but infrequent orders.
- Discuss payment arrangements. Many buyers are flexible and understand that local producers are not prepared to wait 90 days for payment. Many will pay cash on delivery for the first few orders to build up levels of trust and understanding.
- Investigate the possibility of establishing partnerships with other producers that complement your product. This may enable you to attract some of the bigger buyers.
- Contact your County Food Group for further information and assistance — it is their role to provide a support service to businesses involved in the food supply chain.

CASE STUDIES

the place
camber sands

**The Place Camber Sands —
Brasserie and Hotel
Camber, East Sussex**
www.theplacecamberssands.co.uk
and **Paul Hodges — Local Fisherman
Rye, East Sussex**

Background

The Place Camber Sands opened in April 2003. It is an 18-room hotel and brasserie located on the seafront facing the sand dunes that lie between the hotel and the beach, and on the western edge of Romney Marsh. The brasserie offers local and seasonal dishes that appeal to customers who like simple untainted food. The menu changes monthly and features fish caught in Rye Bay, lamb from Romney Marsh, and fruits, cheeses, salads and vegetables from local farms. The drinks list includes wines and juices from Kent and Sussex. The Place is featured in the Good Hotel Guide, Which? Guide to Good Hotels, Good Food Guide, and Michelin Guide.

Paul Hodges is a local fisherman based in Rye. He operates a high-tech catamaran fishing boat that can sail in all weathers, and specialises in the catch of non-threatened species and unusual fish by using selective fishing methods and only catching fish from mature stocks.

Development of the Relationship

The Place Camber Sands policy has always been to use and source high quality local produce. Rye Bay is renowned for its scallops and flat fish. Whilst looking for a good fisherman who could supply local produce, Paul Hodges approached The Place having realised the potential market for selling direct to the hotel and restaurant operators.

Current Supply Relationship

Paul Hodges has been supplying fish to The Place since 2003, and delivers his catch between three and four times a week, often during the weekend. He fillets the catch when required, and provides the chef with information about each type of fish and ideas about how it can be prepared. The Place serves a catch of the day and also adapts its menu to include the variety of fish that are brought in. Paul is also consulted each month on the main types of fish that he expects to catch during that period, and therefore to a certain extent he influences the menu at The Place.

Advice: from The Place

Local producers have to look for opportunities and find outlets, be they restaurants or retail that might be interested in their product. For restaurants it is difficult for chefs to find the time to seek out local producers irrespective of how keen they are to include local produce on their menus. It should also be noted that being local and offering "fresh" and "organic" produce does not automatically mean quality. Local producers must work at providing a quality product that will be attractive to the restaurant trade. Secondly, serving the needs of their customers - frequent deliveries, responding to enquiries, and offering advice are just as crucial as the products themselves.

Advice: from Paul Hodges

Provide tips and advice to the buyer to help them to value the product. Explain how the product is caught, and (if appropriate) how the techniques used improve its flavour and shelf life. Educate the buyer on unusual types of fish that are not common on menus, and by doing this it is possible to increase selling opportunities.

CASE STUDIES



Shepherd Neame – Brewers and Pub Owners

Kent and Sussex

www.shepherd-neame.co.uk

and

Sunnyside Farm – Producers of Beef and Lamb

Bethersden, Kent

Background

Shepherd Neame has an estate of around 370 pubs located across the South East, ranging from rural village pubs to suburban community pubs, and from food-focused destination houses and historic coaching inns to traditional community locals. Around 50 of these are Shepherd Neame managed pubs offering food and, in some cases, accommodation.

Sunnyside Farm is a local farm, run by Ray Thornby, rearing Kentish cattle and sheep in Bethersden just outside of Ashford.

Development of the Relationship

Ray buys barley from the Shepherd Neame Brewery in Faversham to supplement the feed required for his livestock. As part of this relationship, although not because of it, Shepherd Neame sought to buy beef and lamb from Sunnyside Farm.

Current Supply Relationship

To keep the ordering process to manageable levels for the 50 managed pubs, Shepherd Neame deals with only a select number of catering butchery suppliers. One of these is J. C. Rook and Sons, an established family business that has been trading in Kent for over 40 years. Shepherd Neame have requested that J. C. Rook and Sons buy Kentish meat from The Chitty Food Group based in Horndean who are supplied with cattle and sheep from Sunnyside farm and other farmers rearing cattle and sheep in Kent. Shepherd Neame has an annual contract with J.C. Rook and Sons to provide meat, and purchase prices are fixed for each quarter. This enables pub menu prices to be established for each three-month period.

Advice: from Shepherd Neame

Ensure that a constant supply of meat that is genuinely locally sourced with full traceability can be produced, so that the buyers are able to offer their customers a range of food suitable for their menus. Maintain a relationship with all parts of the chain and ensure that any problems such as a shortage of supply or demand is flagged up well in advance.

Advice: from Sunnyside Farm

Do all you can to help the caterer promote local produce. Promotional material such as photographs and traceability 'passports' all help to sell local produce to customers. Farm visits by chefs and catering managers provide them with more understanding and enthusiasm for your products.

CASE STUDIES



The Nurse's Cottage – Restaurant and Guest House

Sway, Lymington, Hampshire

www.nursescottage.co.uk

and

Beaulieu Chocolates – Handmade Chocolate Maker

Beaulieu Village, Hampshire

www.beaulieuchocolates.co.uk

Background

The Nurse's Cottage was originally purchased by the current owner in 1987. In 1992 it was opened as a bed and breakfast with evening meals and after a couple of years the restaurant also opened to non-residents due to popular demand. After considerable expansion in 2002, the restaurant now opens seven days a week and has won many awards.

Beaulieu Chocolates has been making hand made chocolates since 1982. In 1990 the company was purchased by Beaulieu Enterprises (part of the Montagu Estate) who continued to use the traditional methods. The wide range of chocolates are complimented by other delicacies including edible figurines and unique toasted almond New Forest Chocolate Bark.

Development of the Relationship

Tony Barnfield, the owner of the Nurse's Cottage, first approached Beaulieu Chocolates in 1992 for something to put on the menu as he was keen to support other local businesses. The Nurse's Cottage has used local produce from the outset and prefers to source local produce rather than buy from national suppliers.

Current Supply Relationship

Due to their popularity, the Nurse's Cottage not only provides Beaulieu Chocolates in the restaurant but also in their rooms, as well as selling small boxes to clients. On hearing that Tony Barnfield was not entirely happy with the after dinner mints he was providing (from another manufacturer) to guests, Beaulieu Chocolates developed a unique mint oval specially for the restaurant. Through the summer the Nurse's Cottage places an order for chocolates every 10-14 days, although orders are fewer during the winter.

Advice: from The Nurse's Cottage

Tony Barnfield believes that quality is paramount. Local producers must not only have a good product but they must present themselves well. They must be clean and efficient in production, as well as making the product look presentable with appropriate packaging. He believes that with competition from all around the world, local producers should provide products that compete on the world stage.

Advice: from Beaulieu Chocolates

Anne Smith, the manager of Beaulieu Chocolates since 1993, says that you can never feel too secure with your clients, as good clients can be lost through personnel changes. Thus, it is essential to maintain a good relationship with existing customers and never let them down, as well as continually approaching potential clients. She also feels that they are lucky that they have the Beaulieu name which customers already associate with quality.

CASE STUDIES

The Selborne Arms



**Selborne Arms — 17th Century Inn
Selborne, Hampshire**

and
**Brocks Farm Shop —
Producers of Beef and Lamb
Alton, Hampshire**

Background

The Selborne Arms is a 17th Century Inn situated in the centre of the small Hampshire village of Selborne. It is popular with locals, as well as visitors to the village and surrounding area. Current owners Nick and Hayley Carter strongly believe in using good, fresh, traceable produce from close to their own door and have given the menu a distinctly local flavour. As much food and drink as possible is sourced from local growers and suppliers.

Brocks Farm Shop is a traditional butchers shop with locally reared beef and lamb from the owner's own mixed farm. It is situated on the main street in Alton and also sells meats and produce that are supplied by other producers, some of whom are based locally.

Development of the Relationship

The Selborne Arms' interest in local food started when a local cider producer asked the owners to promote his produce in the pub. This event grew to include other interested local producers, and consequently raised awareness of growers and suppliers in the area. With their previous butcher closing down, the Selborne Arms was looking for another meat supplier, and heard about Brocks through Hampshire Fare, the County Food Group.

Current Supply Relationship

Brocks Farm has been supplying the Selborne Arms for over a year, mainly with beef, lamb and game. Orders are placed by answer phone each night, and Brocks deliver the next day, six days a week. Unusual items or items that are not purchased regularly will be ordered a few days in advance, with the Selborne Arms calling Brocks Farm during the day to discuss specific items if necessary.

Advice: from Selborne Arms

Local producers should make themselves known to their potential customers through as many means as they can, including their local food groups and other local networks. It is also important that producers, in particular those supplying products that have a high turnover, are able to supply consistently or to deliver when needed. The most important thing is to build up a relationship with your supplier so that you can work together to create a mutually beneficial supply.

Advice: from Brocks Farm

Anna Brock of Brocks Farm strongly recommends that producers should get their name into the marketplace by using as many different means of marketing as possible. In particular, using local networks, contacts, and events.

CASE STUDIES



**The Green Dragon – Dining pub
Haddenham, Buckinghamshire**

www.eatatthedragon.co.uk

and

**The Cottage Bakery – Bakers and
Patisserie**

Thame, Buckinghamshire

Background

The 350-year-old Green Dragon is situated in the peaceful village of Haddenham and has been owned by Pete and Sue Moffatt for over six years. The Pub prides itself on sourcing local produce and using local suppliers, and has won many awards including the Buckinghamshire Dining Pub of the year 2004 and 2005 (The Good Pub Guide) and have just been awarded a Michelin Bib Gourmand in the 2005 Michelin guide.

The Cottage Bakery in Thame combines tradition and innovation and is run by ex-Harrods' head baker, Jerome Dubois and Tom Jordan. They provide a combination of Continental croissants and patisserie, English breads and scones, as well as innovative new breads like Jerome's pear and stilton bread. As well as offering a take-away service with a range of sandwiches, rolls and baguettes, the Cottage Bakery can provide Celebration cakes and offers a wholesale supply service to local pubs and restaurants.

Development of the Relationship

The Pub prides itself on sourcing local produce and using local suppliers. When the current owners took over the pub six years ago they were keen on sourcing as much of their daily items as possible from businesses in the area. The Cottage Bakery produced good quality bread and patisseries and consequently was selected by the owners of The Green Dragon.

Current Supply Relationship

Fresh bread is delivered every morning to the Green Dragon following an order being placed towards the end of the evening. The current supply relationship is ongoing with the two businesses working closely together. The Cottage Bakery has a good understanding of what the Green Dragon is looking for and is currently developing new bread for the pub in order to give the customers a bit of variety. Many Green Dragon customers ask where the bread is from and then buy direct from the Cottage Bakery for their own homes.

Advice: from the Green Dragon

Sue Moffatt from the Green Dragon suggests it is that quality and consistency that people are looking for. Sometimes local producers offer sub-standard products and that is why their businesses fail to get off the ground. If local producers care about what they are supplying customers with, their businesses are likely to thrive.

Advice: from the Cottage Bakery

Tom Jordan from the Cottage Bakery believes that local producers must work closely together and support each other, particularly in view of competition from the supermarkets who can often beat local producers on price and convenience but not on quality. Quality therefore must be the key component. The Cottage Bakery has never advertised its products, but through word of mouth they have rapidly reached their full production capacity.

FINDING OUT MORE

Some Recent Research

To help raise awareness of the benefits of local produce when you are marketing and promoting your product, some facts and figures from recent research may help...

Restaurants and pubs can benefit from selling local produce as:

- it will attract new customers;
- the demand for quality, fresh, seasonal and regional produce is increasing, and customers are prepared to pay more for it;
- Food from Britain, the Regional Food Groups and Regional Development Agencies are all investing in media and other promotions to raise customer awareness of regional produce;
- opportunities to use regional foods in pubs to complement beer and wine sales, and to drive menu sales, are increasing.

Source: Les Routiers, British Hospitality Association, Restaurant Association

Locally sourced ingredients give the best opportunity for providing fresh, nutritious produce with known provenance. Cost savings can be made when sourcing seasonal produce and a greater contribution to the local economy results through supporting local farms and suppliers — and 'food miles' are reduced.

Source: Soil Association

7 out of 10 people are interested in buying local or regional food and overwhelmingly people said that they wanted food that is available for a limited period, or seasonal. Sixty-six per cent would buy British food that is seasonal as it is something "to look forward to" and a further 24 per cent think seasonal foods give them "better quality" or "better taste" at a certain time of year.

Source: Connecting Consumers with Farming and Farm Produce, IGD, 2005

Recent research on tourists' attitudes towards regional and local foods indicated that 72% of people have taken an interest in local food and drink on their most recent holiday or day out in England.

Source: Tourists' Attitudes Towards Regional and Local Foods — Enteleca Research & Consultancy Ltd

Over 20% of spending by overseas visitors to Britain is on food and drink related activities. Food and drink is an important issue in most people's choice of holiday destination, and overseas visitors are interested in trying the local food and drink offering and finding out more about it.

Source: VisitBritain

Local food businesses make a significant contribution to sustainable development, including:

- Economically: farm based local food businesses create one extra job compared to farm businesses selling into the traditional wholesale chain.
- Environmentally: local food enterprises are twice as likely to use traditional breeds and old varieties, and be involved in waste reduction practices.
- Socially: local food enterprises are twice as likely to have direct contact with their customers.

Source: FLAIR Report 2002 — The Local Food Sector: Its Size and Potential

Vegetables lose a large proportion of their nutrient content within a few days of being picked. Spinach stored at room temperature loses between 50 and 90 percent of its vitamin C within 24 hours of being picked. Produce that has travelled a long distance is therefore considerably more likely to lack nutrient content than local produce.

Source: based on research at Penn State University, USA

Regional food and drink is growing a 5% year on year, and retailers and caterers are well placed to reap the benefits of this consumer interest.

Source: Food from Britain

WHERE TO FIND USEFUL INFORMATION

Regional Food Group

South East Food Groups Partnership Henriette Reinders 01730 893724
www.sefgp.co.uk

County Food Groups

Taste of Sussex Hilary Knight 01444 259265
www.atasteofsussex.co.uk

Hampshire Fare Tim Brock 01962 845999
www.hampshirefare.co.uk

Produced in Kent Adam Ellis-Jones 01622 696953
www.producedinkent.co.uk

Surrey Food Link Wendy Neal-Smith 0208 5419364
www.surreyfoodlinks.co.uk

Oxfordshire Food Group
Buckinghamshire Food Group
Berkshire Food Group
Contact for all three groups: Tamara Schiopu 01865 484116
www.local-food.net

Tourism and Hospitality

A Taste of Country Life www.visitsoutheastengland.com
British Beer and Pub Association www.beerandpub.com
British Hospitality Association www.bha-online.org.uk
Campaign for Real Ale www.camra.org.uk
Department for Culture, Media and Sport www.culture.gov.uk
Distinctive Country Inns www.distinctivecountryinns.co.uk
English Tourist Board www.enjoyengland.co.uk
Good Hotel and Pub Guides www.goodguides.co.uk
Independent Family Brewers www.familybrewers.co.uk
Pub is the Hub www.pubisthehub.org.uk
Tourism South East www.tourismsoutheast.com
VisitBritain www.visitbritain.com

WHERE TO FIND USEFUL INFORMATION

Produce

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

www.defra.gov.uk

English Food and Farming Partnership

www.effp.com

Food and Local Agriculture Information Resource

www.localfood.org.uk

Food from Britain

www.foodfrombritain.com

Food Standards Agency

www.food.gov.uk

Guild of Fine Food Retailers

www.finefoodworld.co.uk

Institute of Grocery Distribution

www.igd.com

National Association of Farmers Markets

www.farmersmarkets.net

National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association

www.farma.org.uk

Sustain

www.sustainweb.org

The Soil Association

www.soilassociation.org

