Farm-to-Institution is the concept of having farmer producers sell direct to institutional buyers rather than selling through direct marketing channels or wholesale distributors.

Selling to institutional buyers opens up market channels for producers of all sizes, but there are three key questions a producer should first ask:

1. Do you know the costs of growing the specific crop?
2. Do you have experience growing the necessary volume needed for the specific institution?
3. Can you meet the quality standards of the institution?

In addition to honest reflection and assessment about the producer’s readiness to sell to institutions, the producer must also consider the needs of each institution. While requirements vary, the graphic below is a general summary of points to consider when working with institutions of various sizes.

### Things to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Institutions</th>
<th>Small-Sized Institutions</th>
<th>Medium-Sized Institutions</th>
<th>Large-Sized Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small, diverse</td>
<td><em>Preschools: Nursing homes; Charter Schools</em></td>
<td><em>Small, private hospitals: Many school districts; Retirement communities</em></td>
<td><em>Large hospitals: Colleges or universities; Large school districts; Large retirement communities</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volumes Needed by Institution</td>
<td>&lt;15 LBS - 200 LBS</td>
<td>&lt;15 LBS - 1000 LBS</td>
<td>&gt;1000 LBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Product</td>
<td>Can be varied</td>
<td>Varied to uniform</td>
<td>Uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>May have flexibility with drop times. Coordination to ensure overlap with appropriate party pivotal.</td>
<td>Required. Dark drops often okay. For high demand items, multiple deliveries per week may be required. May have specific instructions surrounding deliveries.</td>
<td>Coordination and promptness of delivery time pivotal. For high demand items, multiple deliveries per week may be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Do I Work With?</td>
<td>Kitchen Chef/Cook, Kitchen Manager</td>
<td>School Food Service Director, Produce Buyer, Kitchen Manager (various), Business Administrator</td>
<td>Institutional Chef, Food Service Director, Produce Buyer, Kitchen Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER:**
- Seasonality (product & demand)
- Contracting
- Flexibility on price
- How to establish a relationship
- Motivation of buyer
- Food safety standards required by buyer (ex. GAP certification)
- Storage is generally limited with exceptions
- At least a $1,000,000 liability insurance policy

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Are you interested in **Farm-to-Institution**?

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