WORK WITH LOCAL GROWERS

Local growers of all kinds, including farmers and community gardeners, can be a great source of fresh produce for food shelves, but they might not know that you accept fresh produce donations or have funds to purchase fresh produce.

What You Can Do Today

- Assess your storage to determine how much fresh produce you can safely store and distribute. Ask growers for tips on how to store their produce.
- Identify farmers and farmers markets near you: Minnesota Grown (http://minnesotagrown.com/member-directory/)
- Tell growers which types of produce you can best use and ask when and how to you can pick it up. If necessary, remind growers that you are unable to accept spoiled produce.
- Visit your local farmers markets. These are good venues for connecting with area farmers and can sometimes be a source of low-cost or donated produce once market hours have ended. Find volunteers to pick up available produce.
- Purchase a share of produce from a farmer in the winter or spring and receive installments throughout the harvesting season. This system is often called CSA (community supported agriculture).
- Start a gleaning partnership to collect remaining produce from fields and gardens after it's been harvested. Learn how to connect with growers (pp. 4–19), read key talking points directed to growers (pp. 20), and view a sample garden donation ad and calendar (pp. 38–40): Garden Gleaning: A Toolkit for Growers and Food Shelves (http://thefoodgroupmn.org/content/uploads/2015/12/the-garden-gleaning-toolkit_final.pdf)

How Extension Can Help

- Connect with a Master Gardener: extension.umn.edu/garden/master-gardener/contact/county/