



HOW TO PURCHASE AT THE NEW YORK STATE PRODUCE AUCTIONS



A produce auction is a wholesale market for regionally grown produce. Currently there are six produce auctions in New York State offering a wide variety of produce at competitive prices. This guide will provide basic instruction on the terminology of the auction, as well as how to purchase produce at these unique markets!

Growing New York's Agriculture and Food Economy
www.harvestny.cce.cornell.edu

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Terms

Consignor: A consignor sells produce at the produce auction.

Buyer: Anyone who buys at the auction. Note that many individuals are both consignors and buyers.

Order Buyer: An order buyer is a member of the auction house staff that will make produce purchases on behalf of others following the quantity and pricing specifications given by the buyer.

Step Number One:

Stop at the Produce Auction Office

Each produce auction will have an office on site. This is the one stop destination for all your questions and concerns regarding the produce auction. The office staff will be able to communicate all instructions and answer any questions regarding payment. Each auction runs a little bit differently so it is best to start here!

Step Number Two:

Get a number

While you are at the produce auction office you may also become an auction consignor and/or buyer. You'll need proof of identification. This gives you a permanent number that can be used to buy or sell produce at the auction. You will be given a card (that you can usually have reprinted any time you visit the auction) with your number on it. This number will be waved in front of the auctioneer to indicate that you would like to place a bid. Therefore, even on the hottest of summer days refrain from fanning yourself with your number!

Step Number Three:

Make a Bid

Depending on the auction, the produce will be arranged according to size of the lot brought in by the farmer. Large lots usually consist of four or more boxes and can be found on pallets or being pulled on wagons. The auction house prefers to sell the whole lot, but they have been known to break up the lot and the buyer will indicate how many units in the lot they would like to take. Smaller lots usually consist of less than four boxes, and again the whole lot can be purchased or the desired number of units in the lot.

It is best to come early, scope out the produce that you would like, and when the auctioneer gets to your item have your card ready. Flash the card at the price you like, and put the card down if the price is beyond the amount you wish to pay. If you are the highest bidder be sure to clearly display your auction card so that the clerk can take down your number. Keep track of your purchases on the back of your card. Remember the floor manager has the authority to make decisions regarding whether and how lots can be split.

If it is not possible for you to attend the auction, a produce order can be made with the order buyer. The order buyer is a paid member of the auction staff that will bid on produce for you for a fee. To talk to the order buyer stop by the produce auction office or call the auction.

Step Number Four:

Collecting Your Items

In terms of the large lot purchases they may need to be moved by small equipment. Generally the auction house states that the farmer is responsible for seeing that their produce goes into the hand of the purchaser. This is important as it prevents confusion over taking the wrong boxes. In terms of small lots, generally the buyer picks up the items and loads them into their chosen mode of transport. Again, each auction runs a little differently so it is best to clear this up at the auction house office.

Step Number Five:

Pay Your Bill

Before leaving the produce auction please go to the office and settle your bill. By keeping track of your purchases you can make sure that the office has all items accounted for. The bill must be settled before the auction ends or late fees will be assessed.

Step Number Five

Spread the Word

Keep track of the consignor number for the items that you purchased. This way you can communicate quality and future preferences to the farmer. The farmers want to maintain the highest quality possible to keep customers satisfied. If you are indeed satisfied make sure to spread the word to others, such as restaurants, grocery store and even friends!

If you have further questions please communicate them to the auction staff at the respective produce auction.

Happy Bidding