

# Marketing: The important step to make a living out of organic farming

Jason Hirtz, Owner/Farmer

Box Turtle Farm

Mount Vernon, MO



Box Turtle Farm began as a small CSA on a suburban lot outside of St. Louis.

We moved to Mount Vernon in 2011, and began actively selling at local farmers markets in 2013.

A photograph of a farmers market stall. A large black sign in the background reads "BOX TURTLE FARM" in white serif font, with a turtle logo to the left. Below the main text, "ANON," is partially visible. In the foreground, there are several crates of fresh produce, including large green leafy vegetables, artichokes, and red beets. To the right, a chalkboard lists prices for various items. A white text box is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

BOX TURTLE FARM

Farmers markets can be time-consuming and unpredictable (with enthusiasm variable from city to city).

A chalkboard with a green turtle logo in the top right corner. It lists various vegetables and their prices in white chalk. The items are arranged in two columns.

Artichokes - \$2	Turnips - \$1
or Bundle of minis - \$5	Radish - \$1
Beets - \$3	Spinach - \$2.50
Snow Peas - \$2.50	Kale - \$2.00
Zucchini - \$3	Collards - \$2.00
Leeks - \$3	Chard - \$2.00
Kale - \$3	

Farmers markets weren't working for us.

Grocery stores and restaurants proved to be our best outlets.

To compete with other local farms, we became USDA Certified Organic in 2013.



For the first time in 2016, we travelled outside our Springfield market to Kansas City

### Pros

- Provided an unlimited market
- Able to pick and choose customers and crops

### Cons

- It was far – too many long days and too much time on the road





2017

Determined to keep our sales local, we decided to invest heavily in our most wanted crop: salad.

Two things had to occur:

- Expand to year-round production
- Change our marketing strategy

In June, my wife quit her job, and we transitioned to farm full-time.



## Marketing Strategy

- Hire professional photographer
- Increase web presence including a website
- In-store signage
- Professional packaging

# BOX TURTLE FARM

USDA Organic since 2013



## ABOUT US



With a passion for growing the freshest, most delicious produce, we've been growing vegetables for over 20 years. In 2013, we became the first certified organic vegetable grower in the state of Michigan. We're proud to support our community, and we're committed to providing you with the highest quality produce.

As a result of growing under the sun, we use natural fertilizers and organic matter to keep our soil healthy. We use natural pest control methods to keep our crops safe and healthy.

We are proud to be a family-owned business. We're committed to providing you with the highest quality produce. We're committed to providing you with the highest quality produce.

### 0

#### OUR LOCATION

1000 E. BENTLEY ST.  
MOUNTAIN VIEW, MI 48150  
313.481.1111  
www.boxturtlefarm.com

# BOX TURTLE FARM



**LOCAL** Miles to Market: 34

**FAMILY-OWNED** Jason and Katie Hirtz

**CERTIFIED ORGANIC** since 2013.

Find us online at [www.boxturtlefarm.farm](http://www.boxturtlefarm.farm)  
and on Facebook.

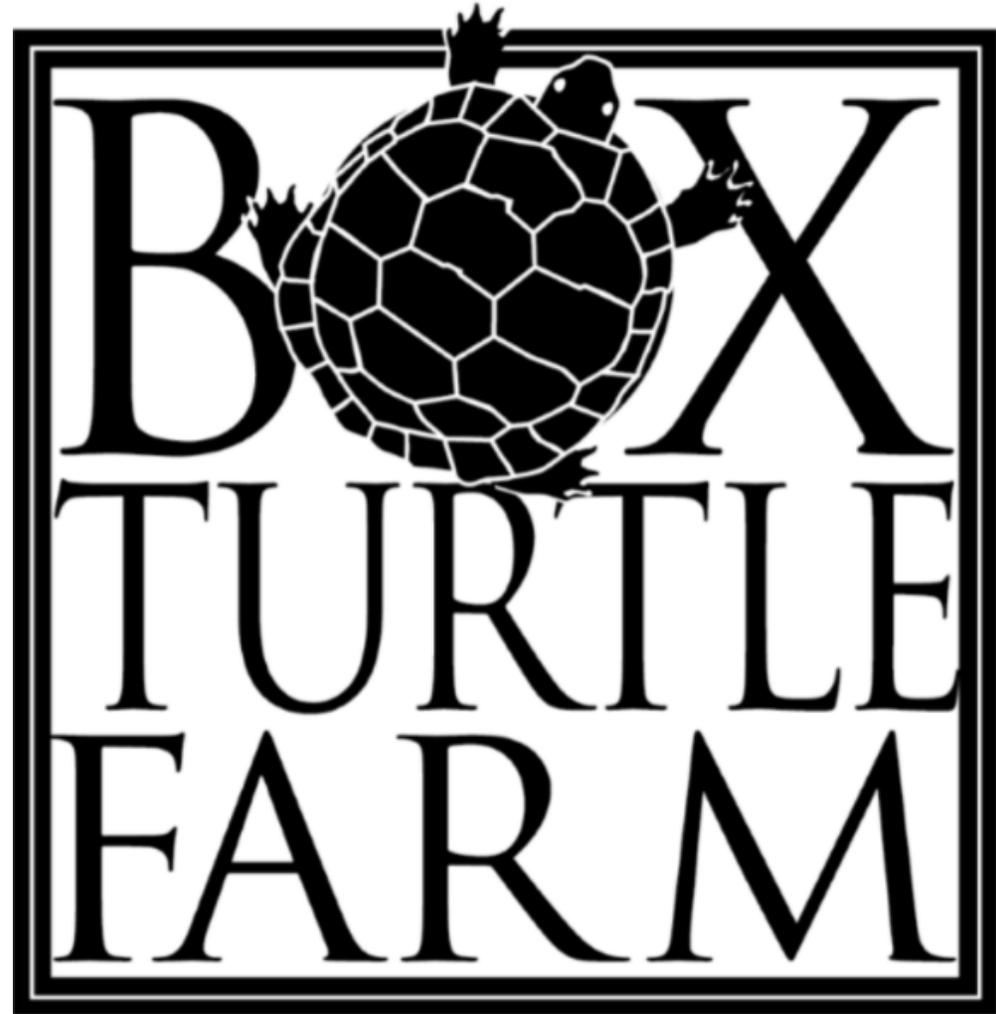


- Offer different mixes to manage inventory and supply
- Maintain professional packaging
  - Professional logo and labels
  - Heat sealed bags
  - Ingredient labels
  - PLUs or barcode



## Logos identify your brand

- Simple
- Memorable
- Versatile
- Timeless
- Appropriate





Enjoying your salad?  
Check out [www.boxturtlefarm.farm](http://www.boxturtlefarm.farm) or  
find us on Facebook for more info.  
Lot 004



## Packaging

Water-resistant front label: \$0.04

9x12 1.2 mil bags: \$0.05

Ingredient/Lot label: \$0.01

12" Impulse Sealer: \$40

Dymo Thermal Printer: \$65



**BOX TURTLE FARM**  
 Mount Vernon, Missouri  
 Certified Organic by ODAFF  
 100% Organic

**MaMa Jean's Greens**  
 SALAD MIX

5 oz wt (141 g)

Wash before enjoying.



**BOX TURTLE FARM**  
 Mount Vernon, Missouri  
 Certified Organic by ODAFF  
 100% Organic

**AvantGardener**

5 oz wt (141 g)

Wash before enjoying.



**BOX TURTLE FARM**  
 Mount Vernon, Missouri  
 Certified Organic by ODAFF  
 100% Organic

**Arugula**

5 oz wt (141 g)

Wash before enjoying.

# PLUs and Hangtags

- Most grocers require PLU codes be identified on each unit
- Hang tags are inexpensive and differentiate your products
- Some retailers may require a barcode (can purchase online)



# Salad Drives Sales

Our greens get us in the door.



Because customers know they can get a salad delivery from us regularly, they are more likely to also purchase other crops.

# Finding Customers

## Grocery Stores

- Check their website first for vendor applications
- Always follow up with the local produce manager

## Restaurants

- Show up during their slow time (cold calls are encouraged)
- Find out the chef's name before you arrive
- Name drop if you must
- If a chef is enthusiastic, ask them if they know anyone else

# Maintaining Customers

- Maintaining a year-round presence keeps us in weekly contact with managers
- They know when to expect shortages and when new products are coming
- Builds a customer base within the store; loyal customers will reach out
- Pass along free product as it's available; friendly workers actively promote for you.

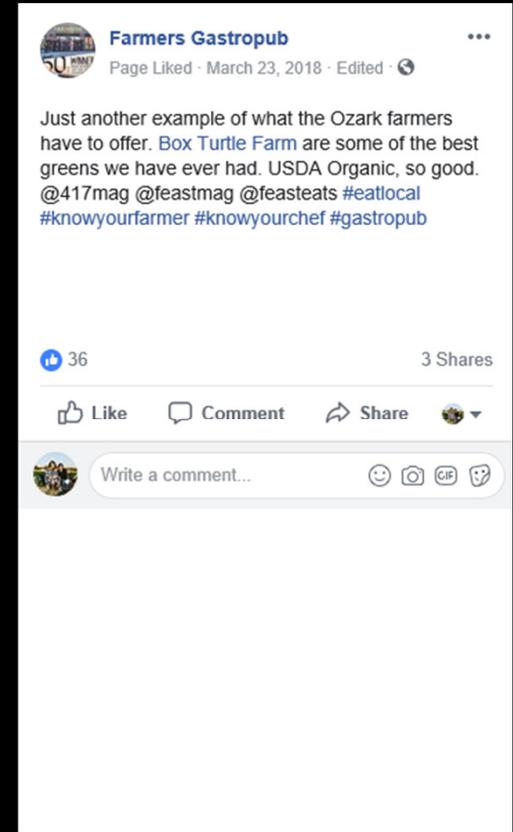


Let customers decide what you grow.

## Quality Sells!

It is easier to sell a product you believe in, and you can justify a higher price.

Over the last four years we've built a team of customers, eager to see us succeed.



# Pricing

## Grocers

- typically margin 30-50%
- pay different distributor prices based on quantity ordered

Example: salad pricing (clamshell)

- Big Box Store: \$12.00/case
- Natural Foods Chain Store: \$16.00/case
- Independent Retailer: \$17.00/case

## Restaurants

- we subtract our cost to package individual units



## What you shouldn't do...

- Don't be afraid to hear 10 rejections for every yes.
- Don't be afraid to trial new customers.
- Don't be afraid to leave. If sales are slow, investigate. If it's something you can change, do it; otherwise, leave.
- Don't waste your time trying to turn a bad customer into a good one.
- Don't try to push or dump product.

We've found grocery and restaurant delivery saves us time.  
Marketing is done in about 6 hours each week.

Limiting our product offering has simplified farm management.

# WHERE TO BUY

Happy to serve Southwest MO.

FIND US

