



## Cooperative Member & Vendor Application

Thank you for your interest in the Gorge Farmer Collective - a farmer-owned cooperative!

GFC is an online marketplace, established in 2020 to make locally farmed, fished, and foraged products more readily accessible to the Columbia Gorge community. Customers browse [GorgeFarmers.com](https://GorgeFarmers.com) each week, place their orders, and products are then boxed and delivered every Wednesday to drop-sites throughout the Gorge. With an ever-widening array of local products and the highest standards for quality and freshness, coupled with the convenience of multiple pick-up locations and our commitment to customer service, GFC provides a uniquely valuable experience to our community.

In 2021, the Collective became a *Cooperative*--a business equally owned and controlled by the very members whose needs it is created to serve. A co-op is a democratic and community-oriented organization. The members collaborate and manage the business according to their shared priorities, each with a single vote and an equal ownership share. Because there is no outside owner to take profit from our work, the costs of doing business can be kept as low as possible, translating to more money in our farmers' pockets. And when income exceeds expenses, the money left over can be returned to each member in proportion to their use of the service.

Then, in 2022, we hired a full-time Director to manage the daily operations and backend administrative duties involved in running and growing our business - with such an increase in capacity, we aim to streamline our regional food chain in a way that "lets farmers farm." We are in the midst of developing a commercial/wholesale buying program (set to launch in Spring of 2022), serving as a one-stop-shop for restaurants, schools, hospitals, and grocery retailers to easily access our products. For our producers, that means the ability to consolidate dozens of commercial accounts into one delivery and one payment - GFC will take care of distribution, invoicing, accounting, marketing, and customer relations.

If you're a farmer, rancher, or fisher in any of the Gorge's five counties, you're eligible to apply for Membership. If you're not, don't worry: other local producers may still participate in GFC as non-member Vendors, with full access to our service. We are looking forward to bringing more of our producer friends aboard this year, to further our Cooperative movement and realize the full potential of what we can achieve when working together.

**When you sign up to be part of the Cooperative you will enjoy the following benefits:**

- A user-friendly online marketplace sales platform, [GorgeFarmers.com](http://GorgeFarmers.com)
- Marketing and promotion by GFC of the website and its dynamic marketplace, including highlighting farmers, vendors, and products throughout the season
- Dynamic live inventory management software and extensive sales report options
- Documentation of sales and collection of sales proceeds
- Disbursement of net sales proceeds to farmers on a monthly basis
- Robust customer and producer support
- An easy opportunity to give back to the community- GFC will provide transport of aggregate donated product to the food bank weekly after pack
- Selling prices are set by each individual producer--a true, free-market economy that celebrates the diversity and abundance of the Gorge
- A collaborative approach to grow our local food system, together!

To help you get started, GFC will provide personalized onboarding guidance and other necessary materials, including videos from Local Food Marketplace and written instruction. Each member or vendor creates their own producer profile, adding products and corresponding selling units, and providing accurate (*not stock*) photos for each listed item.

**Retail Program Schedule**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			DAY 1 Sales Period Opens at 8 a.m.	DAY 2 *	DAY 3 *	DAY 4 Sales period closes at Midnight Picklist is emailed to producers
DAY 5 Detailed picklist directs harvest and packing for week	DAY 6	DAY 7 Producers deliver to aggregation site in morning. Pack team of coop members assembles orders. Orders are grouped by pickup location and distributed	Update product inventory online before 8 a.m. Week 2 begins Next Sales Period Opens again at 8 a.m.	*note sales progress throughout order window above Thur a.m- Sunday midnight, adjust inventory if product availability increases or decreases at any time sales are open		

Commercial / Wholesale schedule and details coming soon...

(you have the opportunity to help create / inform this new program in a way that works for you!)

**All GFC producers are required to:**

- Hold a current business license.
- Be legally permitted and hold all necessary licenses required to sell products at a wholesale level in both Oregon and Washington (while you own your product the entire way through our aggregation and distribution process, sales through GFC are currently regulated as those of a wholesaler/distributor; we are *not* regulated as direct-to-consumer like a farmers market).
- Represent only their own business, and materially participate in creating, growing or raising the products they offer for sale. Sale of second farm or business products is prohibited.
- Provide proof of business product liability insurance, with GFC named as additionally insured.
- Comply with current county, state and federal food safety requirements for all product categories, including necessary refrigeration infrastructure for storage of perishable items.
- Commit to offering product as outlined in our Product Standards & Quality Policy (p. 7-9)
- Package and label their product in appropriate format and quantity (i.e. bags of lettuce, bunches of beets for retail sales, etc.)
- Submit photos of their person and operations, and a business bio for marketing and promotion of the GFC site.
- Abide by all the terms, agreements, policies, and bylaws set forth by the Cooperative.

There are three ways to participate in the Gorge Farmer Collective (GFC)--as a *Cooperative Member*, *Participating Vendor*, or as a *Vendor*. These are contrasted below:

<b>Cooperative Member</b>	<b>Participating Vendor</b>	<b>Vendor</b>
Gorge farmers, ranchers, and fishers only are eligible to apply.	Any Gorge food producer may apply (including foragers, value-added food processors, bakers, etc.)	Any producer or business may apply; preference given to Gorge-based businesses.
Annual membership dues: \$45*	Annual application fee: \$45* ( <i>must reapply annually</i> )	Annual application fee: \$45* ( <i>must reapply annually</i> )
Owens a share in the Cooperative, is represented in decision making, entitled to vote at membership meetings, and eligible to run for a seat on the Board of Directors. Membership is acquired through a one-time, \$350* equity investment, refundable upon exit.	No ownership stake, no equity contribution requirement.	No ownership stake, no equity contribution requirement.
<b>15%</b> of sales retained by the Co-op to cover operating expenses. Combined net profits (at year end) may be distributed between all Members, in proportion to their use of the platform, as a patronage refund.	<b>15%</b> of sales retained by the Co-op to cover operating expenses.	<b>25%</b> of sales retained by the Co-op to cover operating expenses.
Commits to work 2** shifts per month, each month your business' products are listed for sale on the site.	Commits to work 2** shifts per month, each month your business' products are listed for sale on the site.	No work shift commitment. You simply enjoy the benefits of the GFC marketplace platform.

\*Scholarship opportunities and/or payment plans available for BIPOC producers, please inquire

\*\*Required amount of work shifts subject to change depending on need



# Member & Vendor Application - 2022

## Instructions for All Applicants

1. Please read the accompanying packet in its entirety.
2. Fill out the application section (pages 4-6), and initial the Product Standards & Quality Agreement (p. 7-9), the Membership Agreement (p. 10, applicable to Member applications only), and the Code of Conduct Agreement (p. 11). and send to [thecoop@gorgefarmers.com](mailto:thecoop@gorgefarmers.com), or include with your \$45 fee to: PO Box 162 Mosier OR 97040 (Your fee will be returned to you if your application is not approved.)
3. Upon acceptance, please submit proof of insurance with Gorge Farmer Collective named as additionally insured.
4. If you are approved for Membership, please submit your membership investment of \$350.
5. Please be prepared to submit a farm/business biography, and photographs to be used in promotional materials.
6. Be prepared to submit a copy of all licenses required by local, state, and federal agencies for the commercial sale of your products, as well as any certificates you hold (organic, etc.)
7. We will reach out to schedule an onboarding session with you. Then... welcome to GFC! May we all grow food and community, together.

### I am applying to be a:

<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Participating Vendor	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor
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## APPLICANT INFORMATION

Business Name:
Contact Name:
Mailing Address:
Farm Address, if different:
Email:
Phone:
Website:
Social media handles:

**BUSINESS INFORMATION**

Business Designation: Corp Sole Prop LLC 501c3 Other:

Years in business:

Sales Channels: Farmers Market CSA Produce Stand/ on farm pick up Direct to Restaurant Direct to Retail Wholesale distributors Grocery stores Institutions (schools, hospitals, etc.) Other:

For farmers: do you grow/raise/fish 100% of what you intend to sell through GFC?  
 Yes  No If not, please explain:

For value-added producers: please describe your sourcing practices for raw ingredients:

Please describe your production practices, and/or animal welfare practices for your business:

If you are a Farmer Processor or value-added producer, where do you process your products? Please clearly describe how your operation satisfies all applicable regulations, and attach any pertinent certification(s).

If your operation is third-party certified, please tell us for what and by whom, and provide a copy of your certificate.

Organic  Transitional  Salmon Safe  GAP/GHP  
 Certified Naturally Grown  IPM  USDA Inspected  WSDA/ODA Inspected  Others:

## PRODUCT INFORMATION

What kind of farmer or food producer are you? (select all that apply)

Vegetables Fruit Meat Dairy Eggs Fish Value-added Other:

Please elaborate on your product list, seasonal availability, and weekly capacity to sell through GFC. Products will be approved on an individual basis, so please be thorough; attach additional pages if necessary.

*\*If in the future you wish to sell products not approved via this application, you will need to seek approval from Management before your product is admitted to the website, and provide proof that new products are compliant with federal, state, county, and local jurisdiction requirements and/or licenses required to sell said new products commercially. Please plan ahead and be prepared to allow up to a month for new product approval.\**



## Product Standards & Quality Agreement - 2022

We pride ourselves in offering customers the highest quality, source-identified, honest, and safe local foods in the Gorge, picked and packed to order. The loyalty and satisfaction of our customers, and thus the viability of the Cooperative, depend on *all* our producers meeting the standards outlined in this agreement: keep in mind that the quality and integrity of an individual producer's products reflects on every other producer and the Cooperative as a whole. Additionally, responding to customer complaints takes time and resources which are better used elsewhere. Please read and agree to abide by our quality standards and policies below.

### Product Qualifications and Origin

Products sold through GFC must be created, grown, or raised by the first party producer; sale of second farm or business products is prohibited unless otherwise approved by Management / Board of Directors. Products for sale are approved on an individual basis via your application: if you wish to sell products not approved via your original application, you will need to seek approval from Management before your product is admitted to the website.

### Food Safety & Licensing Requirements

Product for sale must be stored properly and safely between harvest and pack, in compliance with food safety laws (see: [Food Safety Modernization Act / FSMA](#) for guidelines).

Sales through GFC are regulated at a wholesaler/distributor level, *not* as a direct-to-consumer farmers market. It is the producer's responsibility to ensure that all products are compliant with federal, state, county, and local jurisdiction requirements and/or licenses required to sell all products in a wholesale manner, and shall provide copies of documentation and proof of compliance to GFC. Please direct any questions regarding licensing requirements to your local Oregon or Washington Department of Agriculture agent. Note this means you may need to seek additional licenses in order to sell products such as eggs, baked goods, preserves, dried foods, foraged foods, plant starts, etc. through GFC.

### Presentation of Products for Sale

All products listed for sale on the website must include an original photograph (not stock photos) that accurately represents the product. Tips on taking satisfactory product photos can be found [here](#). The quantity unit of the product for sale must be communicated to the customer (e.g. one bunch, ½ lb, dozen, 28oz can, etc.). Products may only claim terms such as "organic" or "naturally grown" if the farm is properly certified as such and provides GFC with a copy of the certificate.

## Expectations of Delivered Product

- Washed and cleaned
- Properly ripe
  - Exception: if it is an industry standard that an item requires ripening before eating (storage pears, for example), please include that note in the product description on the website
- Reasonably free of insects, disease, environmental or other damage
- Provided in correct quantities, according to your Pick List
- Properly labeled with farm name, item and quantity, and any other labeling requirements per ODA / WSDA licensing.
- Packaged in a way that preserves product quality during pack, and from aggregation to distribution, i.e. ~8am until 6pm. Between pack and pickup, most\* products are stored in vented lugs, placed in properly refrigerated trailers, walk-ins, or reach-ins.
  - \*Note: meat is stored in a cooler with ice packs inside a refrigeration unit, flowers are stored in a bucket of water, and plant starts are stored separately in stackable totes.
  - Note: use of single-use plastic such as clamshells and plastic bags is discouraged unless absolutely necessary to preserve product quality
- Delivered in full and on time. Communicate with Management as soon as possible if you are unable to fulfill your total delivery or cannot deliver on time.
- Reflective of the image and description of the product as advertised on the website. All products listed for sale must include an original photograph that truthfully represents the product for sale.

## Protocol for Responding to Quality Issues & Customer Complaints

The following is an excerpt from our [Customer Service Policy](#), so you know what the customer expects in terms of quality:

**Damaged or Inedible Goods:** We are proud to offer the highest quality local foods in the Gorge, picked and packed to order. However, we know sometimes the unexpected happens- that's the nature of farming (and life)! In the off chance that your food reaches you in an unacceptable or unsatisfactory condition please let us know within 24 hours of pickup by sending an email to [thecoop@gorgefarmers.com](mailto:thecoop@gorgefarmers.com). We will happily credit your account for the lost goods. GFC reserves the right to request a photo of the product in question. Please note that customers are responsible for properly refrigerating and washing the product received; we will not issue credits for damages caused by improperly storing or failing to wash products before consumption. For food storage tips, [check out this website](#).

In the case that we must credit a customer's account for a product's failure to meet our quality standards, you will not be paid for that item; those funds will be transferred to the customer's account to provide their credit. If it should happen that we must credit a customer for your product, you will be notified in writing. Should the problem recur, you may be asked to submit a written plan outlining actions you will take to avoid the problem in the future, and you will be required to thoroughly re-inspect the product at check-in on pack day. A pattern of problems may result in a temporary or permanent suspension of a producer's access to the Collective's sales platform, after review by Management and/or the Board.



In the case that product is damaged during aggregation or transport by the fault of the Cooperative (e.g. a tomato is properly packed, but dropped at pack and splatters): you will receive payment for the item; the customer will not be charged for the item; the customer will receive the item if most is still intact (one apple is dropped and bruised, but most are okay) with a note stating there is no charge for the item. Items deemed unsalable will not be packed; and GFC will assume the cost of crediting the customer's account.

Upon arrival on pack day, a pack team member will check you in and together you will verify that all product is accounted for. If you are missing product at pack, please be prepared to have the remainder delivered to the pack site. If this isn't feasible, the customer will be advised of the shortfall and will not be charged for the missing item. You will not be paid for that item.

In the case that individual items are found to be of incorrect quantity or weight: if the customer's box will contain less than what they ordered, they will not be charged and will receive a note saying we are crediting them for the missing portion of the item. The producer will not be paid for that portion of their item. If the customer's box must be packed with a unit of product that is larger than what was ordered, the customer will be charged only for the correct amount and you will be paid only for the amount that was originally ordered.

GFC reserves the right to update this Product Quality Policy as need be.

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## Cooperative Membership Agreement - 2022

### Rights as a Member of the Cooperative

As a member of the Cooperative I am entitled to:

- Have one vote at annual and special all-Member meetings, and receive proper notice of meetings;
- Serve on a committee or run for a position on the board of directors;
- Participate in the Cooperative's operations and governance;
- Respectfully and productively raise concerns or issues within the Cooperative;
- Receive information about the Cooperative's financial status and other important processes or decisions (e.g. resolutions); and
- Receive patronage refunds in accordance with my use of the Cooperative, when allowable.

### Responsibilities as a Member of the Cooperative

As a member of the Cooperative I have a responsibility to:

- Participate in the governance of the Cooperative through attendance of general meetings, voting on decisions, asking questions, and serving on the Board or committees if so inclined;
- Support the mission, vision, and goals of the Cooperative;
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Cooperative (as determined by the Board);
- Support the Cooperative's operations by using its services or contributing to the delivery of services;
- Communicate and interact with my fellow Cooperative Members, Vendors, partner organizations, customers, and any paid/volunteer personnel in a respectful, productive manner in line with our Code of Conduct Agreement;
- Fulfill the allotted amount of work shift duties as determined by the Board or Directors;
- Learn more about the Cooperative's operations and organizational capacity; and
- Support the capitalization of the Cooperative by making an initial investment of \$350.

### Obligations of the Cooperative to its Members

As a member of the Cooperative, I understand that the Cooperative is obligated to:

- Provide notice of meetings and information on ways that I can participate in the Cooperative's governance;
- Maintain a transparent and efficient system of decision-making that is inclusive of the membership and supportive of the mission and vision of the Cooperative;
- Conduct business, through the board or staff, that is in the best interest of the Cooperative and its Members; and
- Use my financial contribution of \$350 effectively and responsibly, and redeem my initial membership payment in the event I leave the Cooperative.

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## Code of Conduct Agreement - 2022

### Code of Conduct

As a Member of the Cooperative, I agree to conduct my business regarding and relationship with the Cooperative, the Membership, Vendors, partner organizations, customers, and any paid/volunteer personnel in an ethical, respectful, and productive manner. Instances of harmful behavior including, but not limited to, bullying, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, deceit, slander, or not acting in the best interest of the Cooperative, are deemed unacceptable and counterproductive to the function of our Cooperative. Such actions will be resolved with intervention and/or disciplinary action, as outlined below.

**Grievance Submission & Disciplinary Action Protocol:** if first-offense, easily resolvable and less-important issues arise between a Member and any other party affiliated with the Cooperative, the Cooperative encourages said parties to attempt to resolve the matter privately and informally before submitting a formal grievance.

If this is not possible, or the matter is a continuing or second offense, the concerned party shall submit a written grievance to the Manager with as much detail of the incident(s) as possible, along with any applicable supporting evidence. (Grievances involving the Manager will be submitted directly to the Board of Directors.) At any stage, the accused party maintains a right to access all information in any grievances submitted against them and the right to present evidence to defend their actions. The Manager (or Board, if the grievance involves the Manager) will gather information from all involved parties and facilitate a conversation among all parties (enlisting the aid of a third party facilitator, if appropriate) in an attempt to resolve the situation with intervention.

For a third offense, or for any offense the Manager deems to require severe and immediate intervention, the grievance and information from all concerned parties will be brought before the Board of Directors for a hearing in which the defending party is encouraged to attend. Previous grievances, related or not, may be considered as evidence in such a hearing to determine appropriate corrective or disciplinary action. The Board may vote by majority to temporarily suspend the Member's access to the Cooperative sales platform, or revoke the Membership of the accused party if necessary. Termination of Membership is a matter not taken lightly, and will be entertained only as a last resort. The Board's decision may include eligibility for terminated Members to re-apply for Membership after a specified waiting period, at the discretion of the Board. Terminated Members will be reimbursed for their initial equity payment upon departure from the Cooperative.

(Termination of a Board member shall adhere to the protocol set forth in Section 7.6 of the Cooperative's bylaws.)

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