

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Ask Laura Newsletter Column
Authorship for August 2015 Newsletter: Laura Tourte, Farm Management Advisor

Q: I am a farmer and am thinking about adding prepared specialty foods to my business. How do I get started?

A: This is a large question with all sorts of considerations, especially if you are already a very busy farmer. First and foremost, I would recommend that you visit the UC Small Farm Program's Specialty Foods webpage:

http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/marketing/Specialty_Foods/

There you will find links to a number of presentations that were given at recent Starting a Successful Specialty Food Business workshops including:

- [Staying Safe and Legal: Food Safety and Regulations](#)
Linda J. Harris, Department of Food Science & Technology, UC Davis
- [Specialty Foods Marketing...What's It All About?](#)
Shermain Hardesty, UCD Agricultural and Resource Economics & UC Small Farm Program
- [Packaging & Labeling](#)
Shermain Hardesty, UCD Agricultural and Resource Economics & UC Small Farm Program
- [Financing Your Specialty Food Business](#)
Shermain Hardesty, UCD Agricultural and Resource Economics & UC Small Farm Program
- [Getting Your Product on the Shelf](#)
Sage Food Group
- [Process & Packaging Options](#)
Sage Food Group
- [Money Matters; Pricing for Profit](#)
Sage Food Group

These materials will assist you in understanding some of the basics and extremely helpful with thinking through the various aspects of starting a specialty foods business. The webpage also has links to the UC Food Safety website, Value-Added Products, and Cottage Foods.

You might also consider visiting the Specialty Foods Association website:

<https://www.specialtyfood.com/>. This organization also sponsors a "Fancy Food Show" each January in San Francisco.

Finally, here are two books that might be of interest: *Sell Your Specialty Food*, by Stephen F. Hall, and *Cooking up a Business* by Rachel Hofstetter.

Please let me know if you have additional questions: ljtourte@ucanr.edu or (831) 763-8005.