

## Wyoming Local Foods Markets: A State Tour

Expansion of Wyoming's Food Freedom Laws, since the original exemption passed in 2015, gives Wyoming food producers some of the best access to direct-to-consumer sales channels nationwide. This vantage point is having significant effects on small communities around Wyoming, with many new Local Foods Markets emerging over the past few years. These markets bolster the local economy by providing jobs and a consistent sales venue for local agricultural and value-added food producers. [The Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center's](#) Wyoming State Local Foods Coordinator, Jen Faulkner recently enjoyed visiting several such markets across Wyoming.

Faulkner visited two markets organized by producer Rebecca Bates of [Little Acres Farms](#). Bates collaborated with floral shop owner, Shelley Hill in Powell and print shop owner Cindy Asay in Lovell to utilize their existing market space to add locally produced foods to their store offerings.

Bates and the shop-owners expressed their delight in the community's positive response to the expansion of goods offered by these retail locations.



[Hillside Floral Shop](#) Powell, WY



[Wild Edge Screenprinting](#) Lovell, WY

A third northern Wyoming location utilizing an existing business to sell local foods is Newcastle's [Wildly Fresh Market](#) housed within Tracy Wildermuth's Wilder Graphic full-service print shop. This market offers largely shelf stable goods.



Wildly Fresh Market- Newcastle, Wyoming

Wyoming's Food Freedom Act (FFA) provides for the sale of most farm raised goods raised by a producer selling directly to the end-consumer without undergoing typical food certification and labeling requirements. Subsequent amendments to the 2015 FFA clarified that producers are allowed to have a "designated agent" sell goods on their behalf. This specification allows these local markets to sell farm goods on a consignment basis to customers within the state of Wyoming.

In addition to the Powell, Lovell, and Newcastle, northern Wyoming market locations, Gillette and Sheridan also have local foods consignment locations. Sheridan's market is [Cross E Dairy and Freedom Foods](#).



Cross E Dairy and Freedom Foods- Sheridan, WY

Gillette's market is [The Urban Basket](#). The Sheridan and Gillette markets are dedicated to Wyoming local foods and have desirable downtown locations with a great assortment of goods.



The Urban Basket- Gillette, WY

When asked what has been one of their biggest challenges, Urban Basket owners Candace and Kevin Crimm name inconsistencies that arise with the relaxed food safety laws. The Crimms state that they try to remain within the boundaries of the FFA and hope fellow producers and market fronts will make the same efforts so these privileges as well as fairness to producers are maintained.

Moving south in the state to the more centrally located markets, Faulkner visited two market locations in Casper. Although [Eat Wyoming](#) is largely an online farmer's market serving all of Wyoming, they do host

a storefront at their distribution center where customers can make walk-in purchases of local farm goods.

Casper's second market, owned by Maureen Cherry is [The Milk House Farmer's Market](#). This market showcases a great variety and volume of goods offered to local buyers.



The Milk House Market- Casper, WY

In Faulkner's home of Fremont County are an additional couple of significant local foods markets situated in downtown locations. [Fremont Local Market](#) of Riverton and [Meadowlark Market and Kitchen](#) of Lander were recently featured in [Getting local food on local plates: a look into Wyoming Food Freedom stores](#) by Hannah Habermann of Wyoming Public Radio.



Fremont Local Market- Riverton, WY (photos: Morgan Doyle)

Meadowlark Market of Lander is the only market Faulkner visited that hosts a shared use commercial kitchen. This feature has the potential to expand the market's utility by providing local producers and chefs with access to a commercial kitchen space as well as unique learning opportunities.

All the Wyoming local foods market owners and managers that Faulkner visited with on her tour expressed the support of their communities as one of the biggest joys in their endeavors. The more significant establishments also convene in their reports of continual growth in sales over time.

A common hardship voiced by the more established market owners was in their ability to recover from initial start-up costs. Reaching financial sustainability to a level where additional labor forces can be added is a state many of these markets have not yet reached, but feel they are on the trajectory to do so. These markets are a great asset to Wyoming's local communities and offer unique consistency to both the producers as a sales platform, as well as to the buyers seeking regular and diverse supplies of these local foods.