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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Carolina Farmers Give Thanks For Supporting Local

The Produce Box meets goal to buy 100% of farmer yield in 2015

RALEIGH, N.C. – November 11, 2015 – North Carolina farmers are getting a boost in business and profits from [The Produce Box](#), which has partnered with more than 50 farmers across the state of North Carolina since 2006. The boost comes during a time when most farmers hang up their tools for the season since winter can be tough to yield produce.

Through careful year-long planning and studying the history of member buying habits, The Produce Box has shown North Carolina farmers that there is a market for produce in the off-season, not just the peak season, among the thousands of members who order weekly from the company. While not every farmer wants to grow in the winter, expanding their buying season for local winter crops will help others who do grow them and benefit the local food system. The company also started a farm grant program, offering money to help farmers extend the growing season with winter crops and greenhouses.

“It takes a long time to develop a relationship with a grower for them to trust you. You have to be loyal and do what you say or you’ll never win them back,” said Kevin O’Connell, co-owner of The Produce Box. “Our farmers are paid when they walk in the door, not 30-60 days out like commercial groceries — a huge benefit to small farmers who begin each season in debt. They know that on any given Tuesday, if it’s raining or poor weather, they’re going to sell all they have to us and in an hour they’ll be back on their farm working. There’s no other option like that.”

James Taylor, age 30, of [JACAR Produce](#) grows exclusively for The Produce Box on his grandfather’s 30-acre farm in Johnston County. This year, he and his wife Cara were able to install a permanent irrigation system, expand their growing season and prolong their profits thanks to the consistent market that The Produce Box offers.

“Farmers who sell to grocery stores have to throw away 50% of their crops because they aren’t the perfect shape, size and color,” adds Taylor. “The Produce Box and their members understand that local and fresh is more important than how something looks. I’m glad to have people ordering my harvest who want to enjoy eating local and fresh.”

To keep farmers like James working year-round despite North Carolina’s fickle climate, The Produce Box is constantly educating its customers on what it takes to eat

seasonally. For many, that means trying vegetables they've never had before and sharing them with their families one or two products at a time.

"Everyone wins in this partnership," adds O'Connell. "Families get to enjoy fresh, local seasonal produce, local farmers increases sales, and the money stays in North Carolina to benefit our local economy. It's exactly why we started this company."

About The Produce Box

Founded in 2006, The Produce Box delivers farm-grown fresh fruit and vegetables as well as local meats and NC-produced specialty items to families, companies and community organizations across the state. The company has no contracts or long-term commitments and offers a wide variety of options for members to choose for weekly deliveries. Stay-at-home moms and dads act as coordinators in the neighborhoods they live in. TPB is proud to pay its 50 farm partners a sustainable price upon delivery (rather than 30-60 days out) to provide stability and support for these hard-working NC farmers. The Produce Box also partners with local schools and organizations like Backpack Buddies and Inter-Faith Food Shuttle to give back to the communities it serves.

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