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# 4 Tips for Homesteaders Ready to Monetize Their Farms or Bee-Keeping Enterprises

By Carrie Spencer

If you're like most homesteaders, self-sufficiency is the goal. It's extremely satisfying to stock your pantry with clean, nutritious food that you grew within sight of your kitchen window. At some point, however, you may find yourself ready to share your homesteading wealth with the rest of the world, or at least your local community.

Here are four things to keep in mind as you begin this exciting new venture.

## 1. Define Your Brand

It doesn't matter if you're selling farm-fresh eggs or small-batch [honey](#): You need a clear brand identity, and you need to apply it across all platforms. From Facebook to the signage on your farmers market stand, Iowa State University Extension explains that your brand should be [consistent and recognizable](#). This includes your:

- Logo
- Fonts & color scheme
- Packaging
- Print materials
- Web design
- Web content
- Advertising

The decisions you make [regarding your logo](#) or the tone of your promotional materials are informed by a myriad of things. Two of the most important are your purpose (what you grow and/or make and why), and what makes you different from your competitors. Having a firm understanding of who you are and why you're here is key to marketing your goods.

## 2. Take a Mindful Marketing Approach

In today's marketplace, more and more consumers support brands whose [values align with theirs](#). Maybe your beekeeping business makes the tastiest gluten-free mead this side of the Mississippi or your urban farm utilizes emerging [eco-friendly practices and tech](#). You need an angle, and it needs to be authentic.

To start your marketing plan, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who are your customers? Men? Women? Locals? Tourists? Teens? Seniors? If you already have customers, Jeff Bullas suggests using your best patrons as [models](#) for the type of clientele you want to attract.
- Why should Joe or Jane Shopper buy eggs, flowers or honey from you and not from somebody else? The answer to this question gets to the heart of your purpose.

## 3. Know Your Strengths

While many hobbyist farmers initially start raising crops, animals or bees in order to achieve autonomy, that wholly independent spirit needs to be set aside when monetization is involved. In other words, don't be afraid to ask for help. If [website design and maintenance](#) aren't your strong suits, for example, invest in the expertise of someone who can create an internet presence that is professional, functional and able to generate traffic and repeat customers.

You should also ensure a basic understanding of business essentials, such as handling payroll which includes making calculations for salaries and wages, managing employee information, and knowing how to tally taxes and benefits. But these are just some of the aspects involved in proper payroll calculations. And even if you're a solopreneur, you need to set aside funds for taxes, healthcare and retirement. The more you know about how to run your business, the better, as you can quickly get into trouble with the IRS if you make a mistake.

Resist the temptation to do it all. Think of it this way: If you're at the point where you want to sell your goods, you're probably a decent farmer or beekeeper. You may not simultaneously be an advertising or financial wiz, though, so trust someone else enough to help you.

## 4. Protect Your Assets

It's equally wise to protect your personal finances from your business interests. The simplest way to do this is to form a limited liability company. By doing so, you're establishing your business and yourself as two separate entities in the eyes of the law and lenders. If your company goes into debt, for example, a creditor cannot hold you personally liable; its issue is solely with your business and its assets.

Forming an LLC in [Hawaii](#) bestows other benefits to your farm as well, such as tax advantages, less paperwork to wade through and greater flexibility in general.

Monetizing your farm or beekeeping enterprise requires many of the same things you needed to start homesteading in the first place: namely, you need to put in the work. Invest a little time and effort in research and planning up front so you can enjoy the rewards of a well-run small business in the future.

***The [Hawai'i Beekeepers' Association](#) is dedicated to supporting and educating beekeepers and promoting natural beekeeping methods. [Become a member](#) today!***