



A community project of The Rotary Club of Hall 

MEDIA RELEASE

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Fresh from the farm, low food miles: Canberra's Farmers Market fresh produce still beating supermarket prices despite rising fuel costs

Fuel prices are hitting everyone right now. For the farmers and regional growers who load up their vehicles before dawn each week to supply Canberra's tables, rising transport costs are creating real pressure on their businesses and, in some cases, on the prices they need to charge. For the families and households already stretching a weekly grocery budget, the squeeze is being felt just as keenly on the other side of the transaction.

But by taking a closer look at the prices of fresh produce at Canberra's Capital Region Farmers Market, the picture is more encouraging than many might expect. Especially when coupled with the freshness and lower food miles.

"The [Capital Region Farmers Market](#) has carried out a direct price comparison between its stallholders and a local Woolworths, looking at common fresh fruit and vegetables. Across the board, Market prices were either cheaper or on-par with supermarket pricing, and in several cases, significantly cheaper, despite the cost pressures producers are facing," said Capital Region Farmers Market Manager, Sarah Power.

Sarah said the numbers challenge one of the most commonly held and persistent myths about shopping for fresh produce at a farmers market – that you can expect to pay a higher cost.

"It's a common misconception that farmers markets are more expensive than buying at supermarkets," Ms Power said. "However, we've proven this is more often than not incorrect, with many of our producers either on-par or cheaper than their supermarket alternatives.

"You can also get organic or chemical spray-free varieties much cheaper at the Market than their supermarket counterparts," Sarah continued.

Upon a closer look locally last week, cucumbers were priced at \$5 per kilogram at the Market, compared with \$6.90 at Woolworths. New season apples, including Gala and Pink Lady varieties, were \$5 per kilogram at the Market, against \$7.90 to \$8.90 per kilogram at Woolworths. Valencia oranges came in at \$7 for three kilograms direct from the grower, compared with \$8.90 per kilogram at Woolworths for USA imported oranges. Pontiac and organic Dutch Cream potatoes ranged from \$5 to \$6 per kilogram at the Market, with bulk pricing available at lower rates.

But price, Ms Power says, is only part of the story. What truly sets the Market apart from any supermarket shelf is the distance that produce has travelled, and the difference that makes to quality and freshness.

"Produce purchased from our Market is purchased directly from the farmer and is most often harvested on the Friday, then sold directly to you on the Saturday," she said.

"You are buying some of the freshest produce available in Canberra, with the lowest food miles of any retail option in the city. That's not something any supermarket can offer, regardless of its price tag."

While fuel costs mean some producers are facing hard choices about how far to travel, the Market's direct farm-to-consumer model means the supply chain is as short as it gets. Produce is not sitting in distribution centres or travelling across the country before it reaches the customer. In most cases, it has come straight from a regional property to EPIC in Mitchell, overnight.

For the many farmers who are travelling to Market in Canberra each week, the [Rotary Club of Hall](#) which runs the Markets, has just recently reduced Market stall fees by 25% to help all producers get through these challenging times amid the current fuel crisis.

"We're doing what we can to help our farmers further. And for families and households already managing a tight weekly budget, our combination of low cost, low food miles and genuine freshness makes a compelling case for making Saturday morning at the Market a regular part of life," concluded Sarah.

Capital Region Farmers Market is open most Saturday mornings year-round at Exhibition Park in Mitchell from 7am – 11.30am. For more information visit www.capitalregionfarmersmarket.com.au and keep up with the latest Market happenings on Facebook and Instagram

About the Capital Region Farmers Market

Canberra's original, biggest and best farmers market, CRFM has been running since 2004. It hosts around 100 stalls each Saturday and welcomes approximately 5,000 customers per week. A community project of the Rotary Club of Hall, funds generated

from the Market are directed back into community and humanitarian projects. Find out more at capitalregionfarmersmarket.com.au.

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