



Reko Online Farmers' Markets Increasing In Popularity

Farmers' market organisers say an increasing number of Australians are cutting out the middleman and buying direct from producers, with many embracing a novel concept from Finland connecting them directly to farmers via social media. The Reko market concept was developed in Finland over a decade ago and brought to Australia as a way for farmers to maintain their income during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are five separate markets in Queensland — four in Brisbane and one in the central Queensland seaside suburb of Yeppoon, east of Rockhampton.

Producers post what they have in stock in a social media group and customers comment on their post to order. Shoppers then pick up their orders from a night-time marketplace. "No-one else is getting any money," Reko organiser Anthony Sylvester said. "It's going straight from the consumer to the farmer or the producer and it's just very, very simple. We're dealing with a conscious consumer — somebody that actually cares about what they're eating. They care about how that thing is produced."

Getting a quality product

Producer Joel Price from Cap Coast Vegies said the Yeppoon market was held at night during the week, which empowered people with weekend commitments to shop for local produce. "People can come here on their way home from work and just drive straight through without getting out of the car and pick up whatever they've ordered," Mr. Price said.

Yeppoon parent Isabelle Durbridge said she had made purchases from the market almost every week since it began in 2022 because she wanted to feed her family in a more sustainable way.

Bianca Taryn launched online paddock-to-plate company Our Cow in 2019 and said there had been a 40 per cent increase in customers over the past few months. "It has shed a lot of light into the industry and what we face every day as farmers around price gouging and retail prices versus farm gate prices," she said. "So, roughly, our farmers are 20 to 30 per cent better off than what the normal commodity price is. If it can bring a better price to farmers for what they're doing, it will benefit us"

Safe, transparent, enjoyable

The Queensland parliamentary inquiry into supermarkets began in Bundaberg last month and arrived in Parliament House in Brisbane on Monday. It is partially a closed inquiry because farmers fear potential repercussions from major supermarkets.

Milton market coordinator Mark Powell said markets offered an experience that big retailers could not match. "I think whilst there's a lot of focus on the major retailers, people are looking for bargains and they're becoming more conscious of seasonal produce and buying in season," he said. "It's a very safe, transparent, enjoyable way to shop."

Producers say farmers markets also bring a sense of camaraderie to the industry, especially during challenging times.

Soil Lovers say: Farmers Markets Are Farmers Creating Communities With Their Buyers

Ref: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-05-16/farmers-market-boom-amid-price-supermarket-price-gouging-inquiry/103852438>