



MEDIA RELEASE

26 August 2009

Page 1 of 2

Community support for Farmers Markets grows according to results of new survey

It seems more Australians are looking to Farmers Markets for their weekly shopping outing, citing the quality of produce, opportunity to buy direct from the grower and supporting small business, as reasons for their choice. These insights have been revealed in survey of customers at one of Australia's largest genuine farmers markets in Canberra.

Canberra's Capital Region Farmers Market recently undertook its first comprehensive study to gain insights into the market, and the motivations of Canberrans who choose to visit the market. An online survey of more than 550 people as well as gate count surveys were conducted in May/June 2009 by Threesides Marketing and provide the first ever set of quantitative data on the Capital Region Farmers Market.

"More and more Australians are becoming aware of where their foods come from and want to build connections with local growers," said Tony Howard, Rotary Club of Hall and Capital Region Farmers Market spokesperson.

"In the current economic climate, people want to ensure the best decisions are being made as to how and where they spend their money on food items. Farmers Markets provide consumers with an opportunity to buy fresh produce, which can result in real health benefits, and to support local and regional farmers by buying their produce in difficult times," he continued.

"When asked the reasons why they visit the market, more than 70% of respondents rated the 'quality and shelf life of the products' as the most important reason. This was followed by the 'opportunity to buy directly from the grower' (61%); 'supporting small business owners and through them the local community' (58.7%); and 'knowing where the produce comes from' (52%)," said Mr Howard.

"Numbers of visitors are growing too. Gate counts have shown over 5000 people visiting each week even during the winter months – that's a big jump from when our market began with a mere 1000 visitors each week back in 2004.

"Almost half the survey respondents said they visit on a weekly basis. And they're spending well, with 15 per cent spending more than \$100 on each visit. This is great for our local growers and the community," he said.



MEDIA RELEASE

**26 August 2009
Page 2 of 2**

And it seems the trend in popularity for Farmers Market is growing nationally. The Australian Farmers Market Association (AFMA), an organisation which has created a framework for best-practice farmers markets operators, aims to exchange information, coordinate policy and promote grower-centric farmers markets across Australia.

According to AFMA, Farmers Markets provide a suitable environment for farmers and food producers to sell farm-origin and associated value-added processed food products directly to customers.

“There is definitely a real growth in popularity for these markets nationally. What we’re seeing is the public getting back to basics by taking quality farm-grown food back to their tables. Generally, farmers markets’ customers love supporting farmers and connecting with locally grown produce,” said Peter O’Clery – Growers Committee Representative at the Capital Region Farmers Market, and owner of Homeleigh Grove Olives in Hall.

“And numbers of similar markets are popping up all over the country. Information available from AFMA shows that in NSW and the ACT alone there are now 34 Farmers Markets ranging from city markets such as The Rocks Farmers Market, held every Friday and Saturday, to smaller regional markets such as the Mudgee Farmers Market, held monthly. With such choice and variety, it’s no wonder they’re becoming a well-liked option for consumers,” said Mr O’Clery.

The Capital Region Farmers Market in Canberra is a genuine farmers market with over 100 stalls offering a diverse range of fresh food and agricultural produce straight from the producer to the customer. It is held every Saturday morning at Exhibition Park from 8 am to 11 am.

All funds generated from the Market are fed back into regional communities and other projects chosen by the Rotary Club of Hall which founded the Market in 2004.

[ends]

For more information, images or to arrange an interview, please contact Lauren Griffiths, Threesides, 0417 409 264 , (02) 8581 1020 or lauren.griffiths@threesides.com.au

