

Kent Farmers' Market Month: Week 3



Farmers' Markets offer much better value than supermarkets

Kent Farmers' Market Association has released details of its latest shopping basket comparison which shows that farmers' markets offer much better value than supermarkets.

The comparison, undertaken as part of Kent Farmers' Market Month being held throughout June, looked at the cost of Sunday lunch for 6 people. It is based on roast topside of beef with roasted vegetables (potatoes, red onions and carrots), followed by strawberries and ice cream. It assumes common store cupboard items, such as oil/butter and ice cream, are already available.

	<u>Farmers' Market</u>	<u>Sainsbury</u>	<u>Waitrose</u>	<u>Tesco</u>
<u>COSTS</u>	<u>£20.55</u>	<u>£27.01</u>	<u>£31.11</u>	<u>£27.39</u>
% difference		+30%	+51%	+33%
Cost per person	£3.43	£4.50	£5.20	£4.56

The results not only expose the big price difference, but farmers' markets also offer higher quality meat. The beef in the example would have been either Aberdeen Angus or Sussex cattle, hung for over 21 days, as opposed to unspecific 'British beef' from the supermarkets, mostly certainly hung for fewer days.

Bob Taylor, Vice Chairman of Kent Farmers' Markets Association and long-time manager of Shipbourne Farmers' Markets where the comparison took place, explained why farmers' markets are not more expensive. "Our shoppers are buying direct from the people who make the food they sell, so there are no middlemen, overheads or shareholders, and the food has only travelled small distances, rather than being expensively air-freighted. However, it's hard to compare all products, because supermarkets can't offer many of the products we offer, like fish landed only the day before; handmade cakes and pies; cheese from artisan dairies, or unusual meat like wild venison, pigeon and rabbit. But we must be competitive, because Kent's network of markets is growing reflecting rising demand."

Benjamin Dent, chairman of Kent Farmers' Market Association, added that these findings complemented a report published by The Grocer magazine last month which found that since February the biggest four supermarkets had lowered 3,456 prices, but raised prices on over 4083 prices (excluding promotions). "Supermarkets spend a lot of money trying to

persuade us that they are cutting prices, but this reveals the truth. They give with one hand, but take more back with the other. Whereas farmers' markets offer honest, transparent pricing because shoppers are buying direct from people we trust because we know them - they come from our local community."

Notes to Editors

The comparison is based on prices at Shipbourne Farmers' Market on 5 June 2014 and those available online at each supermarket in w/b 2 June. The quantities for six people were:

- 1.5kg beef topside
- 1.5kg potatoes
- 1kg medium onions
- 400g carrots
- 1kg strawberries

Media enquiries, including requests for professional quality photos, to Howard Porter, howard@kfma.org.uk or phone 0759 059 3134.

There are 84 farmers' markets being held during June at 48 different locations. Shoppers can find details of all markets and special events being held as part of Farmers' Market Month at www.kentfarmersmarkets.org.uk or on Twitter via @KentFarmers.