

Local hero



Buying food that is locally produced is becoming a priority for shoppers who want to reduce their carbon footprint. In the first of a regular series highlighting local organic suppliers to our big cities, *Clean Food Organic* editor, **Malcolm McGuire**, discovers one organic producer who is working hard to keep Sydney customers satisfied.

The origins of what is now widespread international concern over the impact that food production has on climate change can be traced back to 1994 when British researcher Andrea Paxton published 'The Food Miles Report'. The booklet, which is no longer in print, outlined for the first time the social and environmental implications of the rapid rise in the distances that food products were being transported from the producer to consumers. The report states that as a direct result of the globalisation of trade, greenhouse gas emissions from food criss-crossing the world are a significant contributor to global warming. It

concluded that sourcing locally produced food was urgently required in order to halt the expected continued increase in CO₂ emissions. (See *Clean Food Organic* Vol. 3, 'The true cost of Food Miles').

In Australia, most food sold in supermarkets has travelled vast distances to reach its final destination. From the time it leaves the farm gate – headed to either a food processor or packer and then on to the huge distribution centres and wholesalers – until it reaches the supermarket, a product in an average shopping trolley would have travelled thousands of kilometres, in many cases having found its way back to nearby where it originated.

SHOPPING LOCAL

The supermarkets are unlikely to change their cost-efficient transportation systems leaving consumers who are looking to buy local products a little perplexed. FSANZ's *Country of Origin Labelling* standards has made buying Australian easier in some areas but it only applies to unpackaged fish, fruit, vegetables and pork. The standard does not apply to unpackaged cereals, meat other than pork, eggs, edible oils, dairy products, sugar and honey, vinegar and salt. Also there is no such thing as a 'state of origin' standard. Australia is a vast land mass and many 'local' food products are transported the length and breadth of the country, and