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{ FRESH THOUGHTS }

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 WRITTEN FOR AND BY MARKET MANAGERS, STALLHOLDERS, CONSUMERS' AND FM ZEALOTS

FARMERS' MARKET NZ CONFERENCE- this weekend in Blenheim.



For those living the "last minute lifestyle" there is still time to register for the Biennial Farmers Market Conference which is being held in Blenheim on this coming Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Go to www.farmersmarket.org.nz/documents/FMNZConference2008.pdf It could be one of the cleverest financial decisions you make as a small food producer. Taping into and making the most of this distribution channel will be a smart move over the next couple of years as people come to grips with the reality being touted as "peak food". As the conference only happens once every two years, do you want to wait that long to learn secrets and lessons offered by some of the hottest players in the international scene? You can guarantee your competitors will be there!

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IS THAT PETROLEUM IN MY FOOD?



That much used cliché "A Perfect Storm" seems to be gathering around food discussions lately. It's no wonder really. That supermarket potato is grown using petroleum based fertilisers, it's packaged in petroleum based plastics, freighted to wholesalers in petroleum based vehicles, at which point you get in your petroleum based car to go and buy it. Think it's expensive now? You ain't seen nothing yet! A local farmers market can provide an antidote to most or all of these "peak oil" issues. Organic growers don't use petroleum-based fertilisers, most stallholders stay away from plastic packaging, there are no wholesalers and you can use public transport or shop at your regional market, cutting down on the food miles your potato has travelled. Seriously, support your local farmers market now, the perfect storm clouds are on the horizon. Sue Kedgley will provide a insight to Peak Fuel at the FMNZ conference.

HOME GROWN INITIATIVE



Peak Oil has jump-started many community initiatives around the world, and it's great to see we have our own pioneers. Laurie Mitchell has set up www.HomeGrownMarket.co.nz which is described as a "Community Trade Me". It's a place where people can buy, swap, giveaway or sell their locally produced stuff. The idea originated after Laurie was faced with fruit left on the ground from the home orchard. In the spirit of community projects the website is 100% free for both users and advertisers. Already you can buy walnuts in Canterbury, swap organic apples and persimmons in Hawkes Bay, trade mandarins for avocados in the Bay of Plenty, barter olives for the knowledge of what to do with them or donate slugs to ducks in Papamoa!

IF YOU WANT TO USE THE NAME, YOU HAVE TO PLAY THE GAME



As Farmers Markets become more established in this part of the world, the issue of what is an authentic farmers market becomes more important. We only need to look over the ditch at a recent consumer magazine article about what constitutes a "real" farmers market. Consumers are becoming much more astute about whether they are being sold fresh fruit and vegetables from the growers themselves or a reseller pretending to be the farmer. Go to www.farmersmarkets.org.nz/press for more info. There is no doubt that FMNZ (Farmers Market NZ) want to make sure that *those who use the name, are playing the game*. The consumer wants to buy local food from the food producers themselves, we have to ensure that this is the experience we are giving them.

\$96,000 OF FUNDING FOR NZ FARMERS MARKETS



Buy Kiwi Made is a fund set up by the NZ government and administrated through the Economic Development agency. FMNZ applied for \$96,000 for the "The networking of Farmers Markets to promote to producers the benefits of selling local edible produce direct to the consumer in the local community. A nationwide media campaign to consumers on the benefits of buying and supporting local Farmers' Markets and NZ food producers". Our application has been successful, but in order to receive the funding we need the support of all New Zealand farmers' markets. We have sent details to all markets and managers and will be making a decision at the upcoming FMNZ conference. We believe the direct outcome of this funding will be more consumers supporting local producers and more customers at your farmers market each week. We also believe people will have a much better understanding of what a Farmers Market is compared to other types of markets and retailers. By working together we are a much more powerful voice.

MEMBERSHIP OF FMNZ - BENEFITS TO ALL MEMBERS



- Access to a wealth of experience and collated information
- Assistance to start up and grow your market or food business
- Promotion of your market/stall on FMNZ's website and books
- Benefit from FMNZ's work in raising the profile and awareness of FM's
- Networking opportunities with other markets and stallholders
- Access to market management and stallholders handbooks
- Cooperative purchasing of Market supplies

To add your news and events from your Farmers Market click here

[here](#)