

## Why Choosing Australian-Grown Produce Matters

When it comes to grocery shopping, selecting fresh produce is a decision that impacts more than just your meals. You're prioritising quality, safety, and sustainability by choosing Australian-grown fruits and vegetables. This month, we hear valuable insights from Catherine Velisha, the Director of VEG Education and Managing Director of Velisha Farms. She highlights the key advantages of locally grown produce, which we explore below. We have also connected with Teresa, a working mum from Tasmania, who shares her perspective on factors that influence her choices at the supermarket. Here are some points to consider when you're next shopping for fresh fruit and vegetables.

### Produce Quality

Australian fresh produce offers unparalleled quality and nutritional value, thanks to its quick journey from farm to shelf. Most Australian-grown fruits and vegetables are harvested and available in stores within 24 to 48 hours. Catherine explains: "Fresh is best. Choosing Australian produce means fresher and faster produce, with brighter, sweeter, and stronger flavours, longer storage life, and more vibrant colours."

In contrast, imported produce often faces transport delays and can spend weeks in transit. To maintain freshness, imported goods may be treated with preservatives and additional packaging, which can compromise nutritional value and taste. When you choose Australian produce, you're opting for food that is naturally fresh and packed with flavour.

### Food Safety and Traceability

Food safety is a critical consideration, and Australia sets the benchmark with some of the highest safety standards globally. Catherine highlights, "Our businesses are constantly audited by external parties, ensuring that our in-house quality teams perform at their best. When you choose Aussie produce, you're choosing safe food for your family."

On most glasshouse farms, produce can be traced back to the row it was picked from. This level of traceability is invaluable, ensuring consumers have access to safe and reliable food. Imported produce, on the other hand, may traverse multiple countries before reaching Australia, increasing the risk of supply chain issues and reducing the ability to trace its origins.

### Environmental Impact

By choosing locally grown produce, you're supporting a greener future. Imported fruits and vegetables inherit significant "food miles," which contribute to greater energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Catherine puts it simply: "Fruit and vegetables are the food that will save the world. Choosing Australian-grown produce means reducing transport emissions—no fruit or veg needs an overseas trip!"

Moreover, consumers are increasingly seeking a connection to the farms their food comes from. Buying Australian produce helps reduce transport emissions while supporting local farmers and businesses. It's a win-win for the environment and the economy.

### What Shoppers Consider

As a working mum with a busy schedule, Teresa emphasises the importance of convenience and quality when shopping for fresh produce. She shares, "Knowing that Australian-grown fruits and vegetables are fresher and reach the shelves faster gives me confidence that I'm providing the best for my family. Plus, supporting local farmers makes me feel like I'm contributing to our community and environment in a meaningful way."

### Make the Choice That Counts

Next time you're in the produce aisle, remember that choosing Australian-grown fruits and vegetables is a decision that benefits your family, the environment, and local communities. The advantages of buying locally are clear, from superior quality and safety to a reduced environmental footprint. Let's support Australian farmers and make sustainable choices for a healthier future.

