

Price comparison of Grow Lightly produce and local supermarket competitor.

Research highlights



Monash University Nutrition and Dietetic students, in partnership with the Open Food Network, conducted a price audit of Leongatha Woolworths and Grow Lightly food hub in April 2015. The cost and availability of a range of fruit and vegetables were compared.

Local food in Victoria

Public interest in regionally-focused food systems is growing in Victoria and around the world.¹

Discouraged by the unsustainable practices of the mainstream food industry, consumers are looking for environmentally conscious sources of fresh groceries.

Food hubs, like Grow Lightly, simplify the process of buying and selling local produce in a transparent manner. Close proximity of producers to consumers directly reduces the time that fruit and vegetables are transported and stored, resulting in a smaller carbon footprint and less nutrient degradation.²

Key barriers that consumers have identified to buying local food is price and availability.³ To improve environmental outcomes and food security in Victoria local food hubs must offer produce at a comparable range and cost to supermarkets.

The price audit

In April 2015, four Monash University students conducted a price comparison of a Grow Lightly product list and the same items from the local supermarket, Leongatha Woolworths. Organic supermarket produce was audited to match the Grow Lightly range which is exclusively organic. The cost of conventional supermarket items was used where organic products were not available.

1. Kickbush I. *The Food System: a prism of the present and future challenges for health promotion and sustainable development*. Health Promotion Switzerland; 2010.

2. Knezevic I, Landman, K, Blay-Palmer A, Nelson E (Eds.). *Models and best practices for building sustainable food systems in Ontario and beyond*. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Guelph, Ontario; 2013.

3. Khan F & Prior C. *Evaluating the urban consumer with regard to sourcing local food: a Heart of England study*. International Journal of Consumer Studies. Blackwell Publishing; 2010.

4. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Australia's health 2014: Australia's health series*. AIHW, Canberra; 2014.

5. Department of Health. *Victorian population health survey 2011-12, survey findings*. State Government of Victoria; 2014.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION AND THE HEALTH OF AUSTRALIANS

The availability of food directly impacts nutritional intake. The *2011 Victorian Population Health Survey*⁴ found:

6.1% of South Gippsland residents reported experiencing food insecurity compared to the state average of 4.6%.

Nutrition related diseases caused by obesity, high cholesterol and inadequate fruit and vegetable intake contribute to the greatest burden of disease in Victoria. The *Australia's Health 2014 Report*⁵ found in 2011-12:

92% of Australians do not eat enough vegetables and over half failed to meet fruit intake for good nutrition.

Key findings

Availability of organic produce

Out of the 38 items audited roughly a quarter (26%) were available in an organic variety at Woolworths.



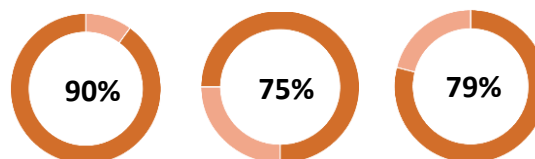
Figure 1. Price comparison of organic produce available at Grow Lightly and Woolworths.

There was diversity of produce from both retailers indicating that generally a wide range of fruits and vegetables could be sourced from Grow Lightly or Woolworths. There was a much higher percentage of organic items available from Grow Lightly.

Cost of comparison of produce

It was found that most of the organic fruit and vegetable items offered at Woolworths were more expensive than their conventional equivalent.

Grow Lightly offered a cheaper price than 90% of organic, three quarters (75%) of conventional and 79% of overall produce offered by Woolworths.



Over half (61%) of all the items audited were more than 25% cheaper from Grow Lightly. Only four items were notably cheaper (more than 25%) at Woolworths.

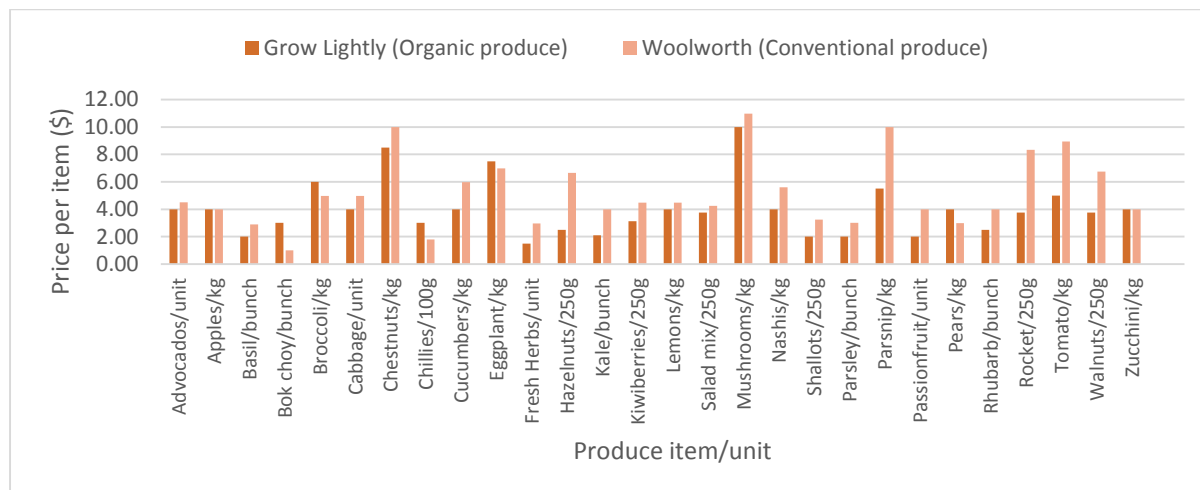


Figure 2. Price comparison of produce available organically at Grow Lightly and conventionally at Woolworths.

Conclusions

1. A wider range of organic produce is offered from Grow Lightly.
2. Fruits and vegetables from the food hub are usually significantly cheaper than produce from the local Woolworths.
3. It would be easier and more affordable to buy exclusively organic produce from Grow Lightly compared to local supermarkets.