

Fresh produce from local backyard to your door



Fresh produce fans – Oooby founder Peter Russell with David King and Gill Ellis of Oooby Tauranga, and Oooby's chief operating officer Daphne Gehrels.

Such is the popularity of an innovative online market delivering boxes of fresh, locally grown fruit and vegetables to Tauranga homes each week, there's a need for more growers to meet the demand.

"We already have a number of suppliers and a growing list of customers but want more growers so we can offer not only more produce, but more variety too," says Gill Ellis of Oooby Tauranga. Oooby, which is an acronym for Our Of Our Own Back Yards, was founded by Peter Russell of Waiheke, and in Tauranga is operated by Gill along with David King.

"Ideally, the new suppliers we want to attract will already have avocados, kiwifruit, olives or citrus, for example, that they sell commercially, which means they are an existing registered food business," says Gill.

Peter Russell has described Oooby as a little like a farmers' market online, and Gill says that's a good analogy, but the system is not a threat to farmers' markets.

"Many of our suppliers also attend farmers' markets but produce more than they can sell on a Saturday so are able to supplement their income thorough Oooby."

Most of the fruit and vegetables Oooby sells are grown organically, or without the use of sprays. Much comes from relatively small gardens and orchards, although some is from larger suppliers.

Seasonal food

"Each week growers let us know what's in season, and how much they have available for the coming week," says Gill.

"On that basis we put together the list of what will be in the boxes and send it to customers, who get a 'sneak peek' preview email.

"Based on customer requests, we have a 100 per cent accurate list of exactly how much of every product we will need.

"Confirmed orders go out to all suppliers so they know how much to deliver to the warehouse. That means no waste and they will be paid for exactly what they deliver, within a week of their invoice coming in."

David and Gill say the potential for growers is they can receive a guaranteed order on a regular basis for quality, spray-free or organic produce, and they get paid quickly and fairly. "We are hoping some people might be encouraged to again take up commercial

growing of vegetables on their existing orchards or farms, if they know there will be a reliable local buyer." Peter and a group of colleagues founded Oooby after becoming aware that the world is facing a food crisis and small-scale farmers are struggling to survive financially.

Food customers can trust

"The mega-scale, industrial type of food production worldwide is forcing the small-scale farmer out of production. Through Oooby we want to revive local food production and supply consumers with food they can trust, tell them who grew it, where it has come from and how it has been treated."

Peter says under conventional supply chain systems producers are paid around one-third or as little as one-fifth of the market value of their produce. "With Oooby producers are paid about half the retail value, and consumers are paying no more than they would in supermarkets with the added saving of deliveries to their door."

Gill says the concept appeals to her and David, and

they are enthusiastic about the response they are receiving from both customers and suppliers.

"We are keen to hear from more growers who want to be our suppliers, and also people who are prepared to be drop-off points for our boxes, as we can't deliver to every door in rural areas," says Gill.



LIFE STORY BOOKS

YOUR MEMORIES. YOUR STORY.

Do you want to record your parents' stories?

Have you ever thought of writing your memoirs?

Do you have an attic of family photos to sort and restore?

Imagine this printed in a beautiful book to preserve your family heritage for ever.

Let us do the work for you.

enquiries@lifestorybooks.co.nz 07 548 1937
www.lifestorybooks.co.nz