

## FOOD MILES/SUSTAINABILITY MARKET INTELLIGENCE

### October 2008 Quarterly Report

The growing importance of sustainability as a market driver in some of New Zealand's food and beverage (F&B) export markets has led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Trade and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, to prepare a quarterly report for business people highlighting trends and issues in key markets.

## ITALY

### IN SUM:

- Buy local/seasonal campaigns continue to gain strength in Italy, largely driven by farmers' associations, and building on the Slow Food movement.
- Food miles references in the media remain balanced and a University of Como study reminds consumers that buying local might not be as effective in reducing energy usage as the farmers' associations make out.

### CONSUMER TRENDS

#### *"Buy local"*

Local media is increasingly advocating consumption of locally produced, seasonal food as the most sustainable option for Italian consumers. This trend is consistent with the Slow Food movement, founded in Italy in 1989. An explicit goal of the Slow Food movement has been achieving a significant reduction in overall long-distance trade, and specifically the distance between food producers and consumers. Slow Food promotes the view that while long distance trade must always be an option, preference should be given to locally produced food. However, the Slow Food movement is aimed more at promoting healthy, traditional Italian, and eco-friendly lifestyles and consumption patterns than being against food imports.

#### *Food miles / life cycle analysis*

Media attention on food miles continues to occur in a balanced manner, perhaps because the issue was slow to gain traction in Italy in comparison to other European countries. A recent article in the weekly magazine *Espresso* referred to the UK experience on food miles, noting that the debate should take into account more than just the distance involved in exporting food. The article points out that the full production cycle or 'ecological footprint' of a product should be considered. New Zealand is referred to positively in the article as the only country, thanks to the 2006 Lincoln University report on food miles, that has bothered to undertake a more in-depth study.

A recent article in the daily newspaper *Repubblica* cites a study by an expert at the University of Como, Professor Bressanini, as showing that less energy is used to produce lamb on a New Zealand farm and ship it to Hamburg, than is used to produce it locally on small scale farms in Germany.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR ACTIVITY**

### *Zero kilometre consumption*

An initiative by Coldretti, one of Italy's largest farmers' associations, promoting the concept of "zero kilometre shopping" has been welcomed by Italian consumers concerned about rising food and food inputs prices. Coldretti claim that by buying from one of its farmers markets, consumers could reduce the cost of the family monthly food bill by one third. And by buying only locally-produced, in-season food, and by avoiding excess packaging, Coldretti claims that a family could reduce its annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by around 1,000kg.

Another Italian farmers' association, the Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori, has launched a number of "zero kilometre restaurants" (in total over 100 restaurants and 1,000 farms). These restaurants, characterised by a special logo, serve locally produced, organic food at a guaranteed 10 percent discount compared to other dishes on the menu.

However, controversy remains over how effective such "buy local" measures are in reducing energy usage. Professor Bressanini of the University of Como points out that buying food directly all in one place from the local supermarket is still less polluting than travelling to a number of different local shops and markets.

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