

The veggies are back but where are the customers?

15 SEPTEMBER 2022

Just a few short weeks ago, Australia's largest central markets, the Sydney Markets at Flemington, were struggling to meet consumer demand as devastating floods wiped out horticultural production on much of the east coast. Now the markets face a different problem. The veggies are back, but the customers are not.

Meegan George is the CEO of Freshmark, the industry body representing wholesalers, growers, retailers, and others in the fresh produce sector. She says shopping habits have shifted since the floods, but it's time to put fresh fruit and veggies back on the menu.

"It's a double whammy for fresh produce growers, wholesalers, grocers, providores – the entire fresh produce supply chain. First, they were dealt a huge blow when stock was simply washed away. Now fresh produce is back in huge volume, but it seems consumers have yet to get the memo. Walking through the markets this week I've seen towers of lettuce and other produce, but the stalls are much quieter than usual. Green grocers and providores are eager to restock their shelves, but they need the signal from consumers that they are ready to put the frozen veggies back in the freezer.

"We want to get the word out that not only is fresh produce back, the quality is exceptional and prices are dropping, with most lines in really abundant supply. If you've been missing fresh, nutritious, flavoursome and affordable produce, now's the time to head to your grocer, providore or come direct to Paddy's Markets.

"With the news that we're officially in another La Nina cycle, we don't know what the weather might deliver next, and while the markets will always be here able to respond quickly to changes in supply, there's really no better time than now to enjoy fresh produce."

IMAGE CAPTIONS:

IMG_0124.JPEG:

Meegan George, CEO, NSW Chamber of Fresh Produce Ltd (trading as Freshmark) on the market floor with Charlie Boustani, Director/Owner, Boustani Bros Pty Ltd.

IMG_0147.JPEG

Meegan George, CEO, NSW Chamber of Fresh Produce Ltd (trading as Freshmark) inspecting the leafy greens available from Harry Emmanoilidis, Head of Operations at Akropol Fruit & Vegetable Supplies Pty Ltd.

