

Floods won't hit food prices hard

Other states will sustain the fruit, vegetable and seafood market following QLD floods, experts say

Prices of fruit, vegetables and seafood will not increase dramatically as a result of the Queensland floods, industry experts say.

Fruit and vegetable retailer Harry Kapiris, from Kapiris brothers in Melbourne's Oakleigh, said the consumer panic that has arisen in recent days is unnecessary.

"We do get vegetables from Queensland, but Queensland does not supply to Victoria at this time of year; their season is well and truly finished," Mr Kapiris told Neos Kosmos.

Victoria will be mainly affected as a result of areas like Toowoomba, which have been hit by floods, not being able to supply to the Brisbane market.

"As a result of those areas being wiped out it will put pressure on local supply and will put upward pressure on the southern markets," Mr Kapiris said, adding that a lot of Victorian grown vegetable products go to Queensland.

At this time of year most of the vegetable products; lettuce, tomato, capsicum, zucchini and cucumber are all coming out of Victoria and New South Wales, according to Dennis Raft, from fruit and vegetable wholesaler, Dennis Hangar in Victoria.

"We'll have an abundance here, what will determine prices is how they will be sold up north. If local produce is dragged out of Victoria to compensate for what Queensland don't have there'll definitely be an increase," Mr Raft said.

Previous fruit and vegetable prices of \$3.50 a kilo could jump to \$4.50 or \$5 a kilo, he added.



Tomatoes and other ground vegetables will increase in price as a result of the Queensland floods.

"There will most likely be a general 30 to 40 percent increase on what vegetable and fruit prices have been for the last few years," Mr Raft said, adding "bananas will slide, pineapples will be hit pretty hard since Rockhampton, Mackay and Bundaberg produce a lot of pineapples and sweet potatoes will go through the roof".

In recent days lettuce prices went from between \$14 and \$16 to \$28, Mr Raft said, while mangoes and watermelons have also suffered.

Leafy ground crops will be more affected than crops coming off trees, so tomatoes, lettuce, carrots and potatoes will be more expensive, Mr Raft said.

Even tomatoes from Goulburn Valley and Shepparton have been hit by rain.

"Crops have been hit; we're pulling tomatoes from

glasshouses in Western Australia and Adelaide, otherwise it'd be pretty devastating," Mr Raft said.

Produce from Queensland is generally grown between May and December, as this time of year is tropical in Queensland and crops are affected by tropical rains.

"Queensland relies on the south this time of year. Peaches, nectarines all go north from Victoria. We'll have a bit of hardship here, we've even had more rain in Victoria than usual, so it's a lot dearer than last year," Mr Raft said. "The price increases will probably last about a fortnight and then surface," he added.

Northern New South Wales have also been hit by the floods, Mr Raft said, as the farm of one of his suppliers in Swan Hill is completely underwater.

Meanwhile Melbourne's seafood prices will not be overly affected by the floods, an employee of Conways seafood in Footscray said. The employee, who wished to be named only as Terry, said Queensland will be affected to a degree as areas with farmed barramundi and farmed prawns will encounter problems.

"If floods have hit those spots it will be more to do with transport problems," Terry said, adding "none of the ports have been hit badly so I can't see it having a major affect".

In Queensland barramundi is farmed further north from the flood areas, while prawns are farmed further south and further north of the affected areas, Terry said. "A lot comes down by road transport, and that's cut off at the moment, but that's only a short term problem".

Article from Neos Kosmos

Floods damage people as well as properties

Greek Australian psychologist concerned about psychological traumas suffered by flood victims

The devastating floods sweeping across Queensland will create psychological damage as well as physical destruction, clinical psychologist Dr Michael Kyrios said.

"People need to understand there will be mental health consequences, they'll lose sleep, have ruminating thoughts, a re-experiencing of those particular events, so they do need to understand that and work that through," the Swinburne University psychology professor said.

It is important that programs and mental health services are made available for those affected by the disaster, but counselling is not always the answer, Dr Kyrios said.

"Sometimes you can go in too early and you don't allow people to work through what has happened. There are lessons to be learnt and issues we need to work through in our own minds about these sorts of events, so if you go in too early you can retard that particular process," he said.

Grief will be the first emotion people will be struck with, which will result from the loss of lives, belongings and homes, Dr Kyrios said. Some people will also experience trauma, he said.

"People had to leave behind grandparents in homes because they were disabled and the trauma of all that will obviously require quite a bit of working through," he said. "These sorts of events have a way of causing some sort of equilibrium in terms of how secure people feel in the world and that often has consequences down the line. If you trust that the world will look after you and that you can feel secure in the world then that has implications across a whole range of domains".

Sleep problems will also be an issue, Dr Kyrios said. "Once the floods have receded there's the big clean up and the adjustment that comes with that and often that's when grief really hits you because you realise what you've lost or what adjustments need to be

made," he said.

However, trauma also allows the opportunity for post traumatic growth, Dr Kyrios said. "It may bring families closer together, it obviously has brought communities and Australia closer together and we need to focus on that positive aspect of it, particularly moving forward over the next six or twelve months," he said.

Dr Kyrios said some people may de-

cide to leave the flood ravaged areas while others will choose to stay and fight it out.

"There's room for all sorts of reactions there, and that's the beauty of the human condition; there's no one reaction to every situation," he said. "We just need to be tolerant of all sorts of reactions and offer services that are appropriate to that broad range of reactions".



The trauma of dealing with the impact of the flood will have real human costs according to Dr Kyrios.