

How do you attract customers?

How do you attract customers who want free-range or organic poultry and eggs?

Unfortunately for those of us selling direct, customers who want to buy organic or free-range poultry, don't wear badges. So how do we get them to our farm gate, farmers market stall or farm shop? A good start is to find out what makes them tick. Then we can create simple, clear sales messages that will attract anyone who has these interests. You'll notice in this article, I've started with the customer, not your produce. This is important, you are not trying to attract other producers, you want to attract consumers.

As organic or free-range producers we understand very well the complexities involved in producing free range or organic poultry or eggs. Sometimes we really want to put this across to our customers. The first thing to realise is that your passions are not necessarily shared by your customers.

What do I mean by this?

The reasons we farm as we do, are not necessarily the reasons people buy from us? We may farm organically because we believe in the long term sustainability of our land; a customer may buy organic because their child has allergies. We may house birds outside because we know that it produces better eggs; the customer may buy free-range eggs because they feel sorry for chickens in battery cages.

Ask your customers

With so many possible reasons why people buy your produce, how do you come up with a simple, clear message to attract this group. There is no short cut. The only way to find out what most appeals to your customers, is to ask them. And I don't just mean a quick, "so why do you buy our produce". I mean, get one of your customers you know well, take them out for a coffee or a beer and sit down and listen as they tell you all about what they want when they buy organic eggs, free-range chicken etc. They will tell you what is important to them. This is what needs to go in your sales message.

Listen to your customers

Your job is to ask questions, listen and record what they say. You may think you know why this person buys from you, but they might surprise you. Then take another customer and another one and repeat this exercise. Only by really listening to our customers can we create sales messages that will attract new customers. You may think you don't have time, but if you make time to do this, you will be ahead of many other businesses who don't bother to listen to their customers.

About the author

Juliet Fay is a partner in The Welsh Poultry Centre and a marketing adviser to farm based businesses selling direct to the public. She offers marketing advice, practical marketing support using e-newsletters, social media and more traditional forms of promotion and is available to deliver presentations and workshops on marketing and writing for the web.