

Britain's favourite fresh produce magazine since 1895



By Martyn Fisher

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## Farmdrop to partner with Growing Underground

London-based 'green' produce delivery service is rapidly expanding, but not losing sight of its original mission



Salad grown in a disused tube station will be supplied by Farmdrop

**T**he Growing Underground venture in a disused London tube station is to start supplying Farmdrop.

The innovative project, which uses the latest hydroponic systems and LED technology to grow salad crops, is based underground near Clapham North, and will begin providing Farmdrop - a 'green' food delivery service - with its produce when it starts trading this summer.

Thirty-seven suppliers are currently operating using the Farmdrop network, which gives London consumers access to a virtual market that sources 75 per cent of its produce inside the M25, delivers some food from field to doorstep on the same day, and pays farmers and producers 70-80 per cent on the retail price of their produce.

Ben Patten, who runs Farmdrop, said:

"Farmdrop.co.uk is rapidly bringing field-fresh produce to the doorsteps of London homes, restoring the days of the City's streets filled with the sounds of street traders. Asparagus, wild garlic, globe artichokes and rhubarb fresh from local fields are among the hundreds of local foods available for delivery.

"In London the City's streets have names like Poultry, Cornhill, Old Fish Street, Bread Street, Honey Lane and Milk Street because that's what they were originally for. Cheapside in its market heyday was home to 400 produce stalls. What we're essentially doing is recreating ancient produce market trading for London by using 21st century planning tools and e-commerce technology."

He added: "Historically, Londoners benefitted for easy access to fresh produce – and ironically we've lost that due to 'progress'. Markets have been

priced out of the City's central areas, with the exception of one or two places, and that means that most of us are reliant on the supermarket food chain. This also means that we're very short of genuinely fresh produce in London."

Farmdrop operates hubs in London to which suppliers deliver four days a week. Most of that produce is shipped out to homes and other collection points throughout London on the same day via electric vans that the company claims create lower emissions than horses and carts.

The business plans to expand to other cities and towns, with two additional cities earmarked for launch in the next 18 months.

All suppliers will be local to those cities in line with the Farmdrop ethos.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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