

SE Local
HD **Take to skies to make most of Asia, Fox tells farmers**

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TRUCKING entrepreneur Lindsay Fox has urged Australian food producers to embrace airfreight and capitalise on the advantages of our timezone to reach Asian markets.

Speaking at a Tourism and Transport Forum conference in Canberra yesterday, the LinFox **Group** founder said Australia had to harness its three-hour time advantage to get fresh Australian produce on shelves in Asia at the same time fruit and vegetables are hitting supermarket shelves in Australia.

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"The fruit and vegetable market normally opens at nine at night, you could move that down to 6pm, you could **buy** from 6pm to 9pm, load all your goods, and have it all ready to go in an aeroplane, and ship it off at nine at night into either Singapore or Malaysia, Thailand or even **Hong Kong**."

Mr Fox said eastern Australia's advantage of being three hours ahead of Asia and relatively short flight times meant customers across Asia could have fresh fruit, vegetables and **dairy** foods at almost the same time as Australians.

"You can get there by six the following morning, transfer that into a cross-stocking operation, and have what you **buy** in your supermarket today, equally as fresh as the produce we are moving out of Australia to those locations."

Mr Fox said with **milk** selling for \$8 a bottle in **China** farmers would have access to new markets, with more than 99 per cent of the potential customers in the region living outside Australia.

"In doing all of these things all we do is create a market for our farmers," he said.

"Within 12 hours by air we cover 3.4 **billion** people and we need to exploit every aspect of that all the time."

The chief executive of the vegetable growers' body Ausveg, Richard Mulcahy, said Australian fruit and vegetable producers were already working in markets that operate effectively 24 hours a day, and often dealt directly with vegetable importers and buyers in Asia.

However he said: "There may be greater scope for initiatives like those outlined by Mr Fox, and Australian vegetable growers must embrace airfreight networks to deliver our world-class produce to Asia with speed and efficiency."

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