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Farm shops takes on mighty Tesco

EMMA KNIGHTS

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Pablo Dimoglou taking on Tesco

People wanting to save some money on their food shopping bills usually head for the supermarkets, tempted by the retail giants' widely advertised discounts.

But a Norfolk farm shop is championing the cause of the small shops and hopes to beat one supermarket chain at its own game by undercutting the prices of many of the products in the Dereham branch of Tesco.

Yaxham Waters Farm Shop has started doing a daily price check at Tesco and has spread the word about how much cheaper the Yaxham shop often is compared to its supermarket rival by distributing about 2,500 leaflets throughout Yaxham, Mattishall, East Tuddenham and Welborne.

On Saturday some of the price checks revealed that an iceberg lettuce cost 85p at the Yaxham shop compared to £1.18 at Tesco, a lemon cost 15p compared to 30p at the supermarket, and 1kg of bananas cost 88p compared to 95p at Tesco.

Pablo Dimoglou, who owns the farm shop with Timothy Hay, said since he began doing the daily price checks in December the amount of people shopping a Yaxham Waters has trebled.

He said his price checks also show if Tesco is cheaper for some products because he wants his checks to be fair and accurate, for example on Saturday the farm shop was charging £1.53 for 1kg of parsnips while Tesco was charging £1.50 for 1kg.

He said: "People have had in their minds for the past 15 years that supermarkets are the cheapest place to get food and we want to change this. We feel a lot of smaller shops are avoided by people because people think they are going to get charged a lot, but we are concentrating on keeping the margins very, very tight so that, for example, instead of having a box of carrots sitting there for days we can sell it quickly because it is a very good price. We realise it is difficult economic times

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He said the shop, part of a larger project including a coffee shop, holiday lodge and caravan park, was not trying to be a supermarket but wanted to encourage shoppers to support local farmers and businesses by visiting the farm shop first and then fill in the gaps in their shopping list by going to a supermarket.

Mr Dimoglou, who opened the farm shop in August, said he had also started a free Monday afternoon delivery service for people living in the area.

A spokesman for Tesco said: “Clearly the winners here will be the customers across the area. It is good to have healthy competition.”

How Yaxham Waters Farm Shop prices compared to the Dereham branch of Tesco on Saturday:

Whole cucumber: Yaxham 69p (Tesco 78p)

One lemon: Yaxham 15p (Tesco 30p)

1kg of bananas: Yaxham 88p (Tesco 95p)

1kg of parsnips: Yaxham £1.53 (Tesco £1.50)

1kg of onions: Yaxham 92p (Tesco 88p)

4pts of East Anglian milk: Yaxham £1.49 (Tesco £1.53)

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