

# THE CHECKOUT



## FLOCKING IN FOR ORGANIC

RHIAN DEUTROM

When farmer Adrian Tiller got fed up with not being paid enough to make farming worthwhile, he and his daughter Amy decided to go straight to the consumer.

A year on, the pair (below) has made a success of their commercial venture with their butcher shop Sherwood Rd Organic Meats, only just keeping up with demand for organic products in the western suburbs.

Fourth-generation farmer Mr Tiller, 69, and his family produce certified organic lamb and cattle on two southwest Queensland properties spanning 23,000ha.

Mr Tiller decided to eliminate chemicals from his farming practices after he became sick from using herbicides and insecticides.



"We went organic seven years ago and we're extremely pleased that we did," Mr Tiller said.

"It's very satisfying to be able to produce a product naturally without having to use any chemicals and fertilisers."

Along with lamb and beef, Sherwood Rd Organic Meats stocks hogget, mutton and goat direct from the Tillers' farms, and delivers to homes in the area.

"I'm dead against factory farming where you lock up animals and cart food to them from hundreds of miles away," Mr Tiller said. "It seems unnatural to me."

Store manager Amy said her family had always been interested in delivering produce directly from paddock to plate.

"The whole reason we got into this was to bring our own stock direct to the consumer so we can talk to families in the shop and teach them about what they're buying," Ms Tiller said.

"We get people, who haven't heard our story before, pick up a leg of lamb and when I tell them it comes from my family's farm, their faces light up".

The Tillers also supply pork and poultry from two other farming families, adding to the grassroots marketplace. "They are wonderful, ethical farmers and we tell our customers their story as well," Ms Tiller said.

For Mr Tiller, contributing to a healthier and wiser community was the best reward.

"I'm positive that all our customers get satisfaction in knowing the origin of the animals and their link with the land," he said.