

At thirty years of age, my wife and I are having our first child. We both have good jobs, come from middle class whole pakeha families, and have been given every opportunity to be successful at life. Certainly, we have had more opportunity than most kiwis.

And yet, when we go to the supermarket, we are forced to choose our purchases entirely based on what we can afford this week. We have not been able to purchase a capsicum, a zucchini, tomatoes, or lemons for years. Mushrooms and kumara are a real delicacy. Kiwi fruit are worshiped when we have them. I don't think we have had beef since 2019. Chicken is our staple meat, since it's the one thing that hasn't skyrocketed in price. Milk is no longer affordable for us. When almond milk is the cheaper option you know you have messed up.

Despite this cautiousness and budgeting, we almost always spend over \$200 on groceries a week. This is a significant amount of our after-tax, after-rent money.

I want to contrast this with our food bill when we lived in Italy, Europe. We would normally spend about 70 euros per weekly shop. The most expensive products were those which did not come from Italy. Fresh produce and pasta were cheap and plentiful. In our suburb we had four different supermarkets, all owned by different companies.

The duopoly of foreign owned supermarkets and the greed of fat cat exporters like Fonterra and Zespri is ruining our country. I worry for the future of my child. I worry that with one wage, we will be unable to purchase any fresh healthy produce at all. I worry that prices will continue to rise, whereas wages will continue to stagnate.

The time for government intervention is now. For what is the role of government if not to ensure its people can eat, and don't have to choose between eating healthy food or heating their homes?