

Meat and veg vending machines do roaring trade in coronavirus crisis

Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Choose the best definition.

A vending machine is ...

1. a machine that grows things for you to eat.
2. a machine that you can buy things from.
3. a machine that keeps food cool and fresh.

b. What do vending machines sell?

2 Key words

Match the key words with the definitions. Then find them in the article to read them in context. The paragraph numbers will help you.

entrepreneurs

lockdown

hygienic

profit

benefit

1. a time when people are told to stay at home either most or all of the time _____ (para 1)
2. people who start new businesses with new ideas _____ (para 3)
3. an advantage _____ (para 3)
4. money that you make after selling things _____ (para 3)
5. clean and not likely to cause illness or disease _____ (para 5)

gear

produce

harvest

pests

shipping containers

6. fruit, vegetables and other things that farmers grow _____ (para 7)
7. very large metal boxes that can easily be transported on boats and trucks _____ (para 8)
8. clothes and other things that you can wear _____ (para 9)
9. insects or small animals that damage plants or supplies of food _____ (para 9)
10. the time when the food that you have grown is collected _____ (para 10)

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18 April, 2020

- 1 Meat from a vending machine and salads grown in car parks – British food producers are finding new ways to sell their food during lockdown.
- 2 Many UK farmers had problems because of the coronavirus crisis, even though people want to buy fresh food.
- 3 But some farmers and food entrepreneurs are finding different ways to be successful. The environmental benefits – and the profits – may encourage more people to copy them.
- 4 In 2018, Neil Stephen, from Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, bought self-service vending machines that can sell everything from farmhouse cheese and shortbread to joints of meat, whole chickens and fresh fruit and vegetables.
- 5 Now Stephen's idea has become a success. People like the hygienic system where the food is packed and kept in the cool vending machine, behind glass doors. They put in the number, pay by card, and the windows open for them to collect the food.
- 6 Sales at his Thorneybank Farm Shop have increased by five times, Stephen reports. "We were rushed off our feet. It's worked really well."
- 7 The shop sells produce from neighbouring farmers, too. Asparagus and strawberries come from six miles away and eggs and dairy from three miles down the road. The farmers can make a bigger profit than they would selling to a big supermarket. The shop is on social media, and shoppers come from nearby towns and the city of Aberdeen, which is only about 30 miles away.
- 8 Sebastien Sainsbury has a London-based company called Crate to Plate. He grows lettuce and other leafy greens in air-conditioned shipping containers under heat lamps.
- 9 The containers seem more like laboratories than farms. Workers wear protective gear to stop pests getting in. This means that the company does not need to use pesticides, insecticides and herbicides on their lettuce, kale, pak choi and herbs. And they use 96% less water than in fields.
- 10 Once all of the units are open and working, there could be 12 harvests a year, producing 15 to 18 tonnes of green vegetables.
- 11 Sainsbury believes this is the future of fresh produce for Londoners. "Younger people want to know where their food comes from, how fresh it is, what's in it. This coronavirus crisis is an opportunity for us all to learn more about what we eat."

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3 Comprehension check

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct any that are false.

1. Thorneybank Farm Shop sells farm produce from vending machines.
2. Neil Stephen bought vending machines when the coronavirus crisis started.
3. He only sells produce from his own farm.
4. His customers like the new way of buying because it is clean and safe.
5. He is making less money in his shop now than he did in 2019.
6. The vegetables are grown in a laboratory.
7. Crate to Plate grows vegetables using heat lamps.
8. This system uses less water than normal farming.
9. Crate to Plate uses pesticides and other chemicals to control pests.
10. People like the system because they want to know where their vegetables come from.

4 Using the key words

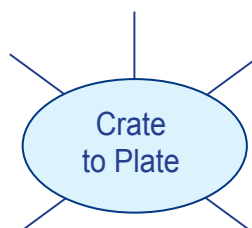
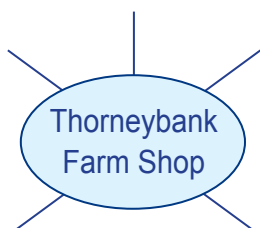
a. Use key words from task 2 to complete the sentences.

1. Our company's _____ in the first half of 2020 is 40% less than in 2019.
2. Due to the hot weather, the _____ is going to be early this year.
3. The cotton growers had a big problem with _____ last year.
4. Local farmers come to the market each day to sell their eggs and other _____.
5. People had to stay at home for many weeks during the _____ in 2020.

b. Decide which key words you would like to learn, and write a sentence for each one.

5 Food produce

Find the names of five food items sold by Thorneybank Farm Shop and Crate to Plate. Add them to the word wheels.



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6 Discussion

- What food do you buy from vending machines?
- Have you changed the way you buy food in the last five or ten years? If so, how?
 - o Do you go shopping more or less often?
 - o Do you buy more online?
 - o Do you buy more or less local or organic produce?