

Home > Industries > [Retail](#)

Tue 5 May 2020 09:15 AM

UAE organic food firms report Covid-19-related demand spikes of 300-400%

Some organic food companies have seen home deliveries triple as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic



Greenheart is now conducting 100 to 110 deliveries each day, mostly of food that is harvested every morning by 5 am to leave the farm for delivery by 8 am.

Suppliers of organic produce in the UAE have seen delivery sales spike as much as 300 to 400 percent as residents become increasingly health conscious amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to industry insiders.

Among the companies that has seen a significant surge in online sales and deliveries is Greenheart Organic farms, which operates a farm in Sharjah and a main sales and distribution outlet in Dubai.

In an interview with *Arabian Business*, Greenheart's founder, Elena Kinane, said that the company has seen home deliveries go up significantly, even while wholesale sales to restaurants and hotels plummeted since the beginning of lockdown restrictions across the UAE.

"Deliveries have more than tripled, over three-fold," she said. "There was a shift. While hotels and restaurants closed down, the produce that was allocated to them really went into home delivery."

Fresh deliveries

According to Kinane, Greenheart is now conducting 100 to 110 deliveries each day, mostly of food that is harvested every morning by 5am to leave the farm for delivery by 8am.

Kinane added that even though restaurants restrictions have eased – with restaurants now able to seat 30 percent of their occupancy – she believes it is unlikely demand for premium organic produce will rise in the sector in the short-term.

"They'll choose more lower-end prices. We offer premium products, in terms of quality. I'm not sure when they'd start ordering from us again," she said. "I don't think that will come back anytime soon."

She said that demand from individuals, however, will likely remain elevated, even as some consumers return to physical shopping at food outlets as restrictions ease.

"I think there will be customers who continue to order from us in the long-term, but there will definitely be people who go back to the supermarket," she said.

Dairy surge

Similarly, Koita Milk, a Dubai-headquartered firm that specialises in organic, lactose-free and non-dairy milk has seen online orders surge since the pandemic began spreading.

"There was a huge shift. Across Koita.com, Amazon, Kibsons, Choithrams and Carrefour online, online sales have probably grown 300 to 400 percent" the company's CEO and founder, Mustafa Koita said. "People are forward buying. They're concerned about food supply."

Koita – which is primarily sold in grocery stores – also saw physical sales shoot up.

"Pretty much everything shut down, except those grocery stores. 70 percent of my business is retail, so that saw a demand surge."

Looking to the future, Koita said he believes that demand will remain elevated as a result of consumers being increasingly health conscious in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Even though the restaurants are open right now, people are not going out. A percentage of those new customers we'll certainly retain. I also think that even before regulatory changes happen, people will still continue to consume in the same pattern for quite a long time," he said.

"[Things like] coronavirus, which is a health issue, will always spur or act as a catalyst for people to improve their diet," Koita added. "The first thing people look at is diet and exercise."



➔ **Arabian Business magazine: Read the latest edition online**