

# Here comes alfalfa . . .

BY JOY REGAN

**A**LFAFA sprout grower Ashley Berrysmith plans to make his product a common vegetable here — and replace lettuces with it.

Berrysmith, a vegetarian, began growing the plant in his backyard eight years ago because he could not buy it anywhere.

Today he is managing director of Sun Sprouts Ltd, operating from an Avondale building and growing and selling around 30,000 punnets of alfalfa sprouts a week.

He says he hopes to improve on this in the next few years, and make alfalfa sprouts an accepted food throughout New Zealand.

Berrysmith also wants to produce a high-quality vegetable that will replace the lettuce.

Alfalfa sprouts, he says, are convenient, healthy and delicious and would make an excellent replacement for lettuce.

Berrysmith says American growers are also trying to promote their sprouts as an alternative to lettuce, and are hoping to get them into hamburgers.

Berrysmith started selling his sprouts in health food shops, but now markets most of his produce through supermarkets and greengrocers.

Before their entry into supermarkets, alfalfa sprouts were considered "rabbit food", said Berrysmith.

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Ashley Berrysmith with some of his alfalfa sprouts.