



## FOUR SEASONS AGRICULTURE ON KANGAROO ISLAND

**The heart, and the strength, of Kangaroo Island's agriculture is the family farm. Unlike many rural areas, Kangaroo Island is attracting back its qualified young people to carry on the family business with new ideas and innovative ways – traditional farming meets high tech.**

On Kangaroo Island, protected wilderness stands side by side with productive farms. Patches of bush mingle with fields of grain, paddocks for sheep and cattle, free-range chickens, and small pockets of vines, olives and figs. Farmers manage and protect creek-line vegetation to keep the water clean and the paddocks sheltered.

The island's Mediterranean climate, with warm dry summers and cool wet winters, is ideal for crops and livestock. Its southern latitude and moderating ocean currents make for a temperate, generally frost-free climate where flavour and character can develop in their own good time.

The mainstay of island agriculture is sheep: two-thirds of island farmers produce wool in an environment made for fine wool production. More than half a million sheep are bred on the island for wool or prime lamb for the table and over 23,000 hectares are devoted to cropping of GMO-free canola, cereals, pulses, and specialist crops. Two egg producers are the real free-range deal, roaming over pasture year round. Cattle, pigs, poultry, bees and a smattering of specialist livestock add to the diversity.

Kangaroo Island marron is highly prized for its delicate taste and the Parndana school campus farms freshwater barramundi. In the clean, clear surrounding seas commercial fishers catch King George Whiting, crayfish, abalone and oysters as fresh and clean as the waters they come from. Abalone and oysters are farmed in the coastal waters of Kangaroo Island.

Farmers understand the increasing global demand for pure, clean, traceable goods. Kangaroo Island's 'stress-free' produce, in tune with nature, is here to deliver. Isolation keeps foxes, rabbits and many other destructive pests and diseases at bay, as does the island's bee sanctuary status. The seed potatoes grown at the western reaches are prized by mainland growers for their disease-free properties with Kangaroo Island gazetted as a quarantine Protected Production Area in 2000.

Bushfires on Kangaroo Island over the 2019-2020 summer burnt around 200,000 hectares of land – almost half the island. Whilst those fires were devastating for our agricultural industries and our community, the island's aptitude for resilience and recovery has been truly remarkable. Kangaroo Island's sheep industry is starting to rebuild after the fires wiped out more than 50,000 of its flock, almost 10 percent of the island's sheep numbers. Crops have been resown and pastures renovated bringing the agricultural landscapes back to life.

The island's farming history is showcased at the Parndana Museum, which features the Soldier Settler Scheme, and at the Hope Cottage National Trust (Kingscote) and Penneshaw Maritime and Folk museums. Spend some time here learning of the pioneering spirit of the island's settlers.

In any season, farm gate outlets and cellar doors are ready to welcome you. Share in their stories and sample produce such as honey, marron, wine, beer, fresh seafood and poultry products. The Authentic KI brand has been developed by our passionate farmers and producers to help our visitors know what has been grown and made here. The Trust mark is managed locally by islanders and products or businesses bearing the Authentic Kangaroo Island or Proudly Kangaroo Island mark come with an assurance that they represent the quality, values and unique points of difference that Kangaroo Island brings.

Look out for authentic Kangaroo Island products both here and when you return home, produce can be found at a number of retail outlets on the mainland as well as through our local business' online stores.

The island's agricultural landscapes can be stunning and worthy of a photograph or two, look for autumn sunsets and paddocks bursting with freshly cut rolls of hay. Remember to pull off the road completely in a safe location if you are seeking to capture those memorable scenes.

As you travel across the island's rural landscapes you are likely to encounter a local farmer moving machinery or stock. If you're travelling near an agricultural vehicle, or mob of sheep or cattle, please be patient, reduce your speed, maintain a safe following distance of two seconds or more, and only overtake if it is safe to do so. If an oversized agricultural vehicle or mob of animals is approaching you from the opposite direction, you may need to pull over safely to let them pass.

## Autumn

- Early rains fill dams and renew pastures.
- Seed potato harvest begins.
- Tractor lights guide farmers working through the night to seed canola and cereal crops.
- Grape harvest is in full swing and wineries crush grapes to begin wine-making.

## Winter

- Crops break through the soil and begin their climb towards the sun.
- Rains transform dry paddocks into lush green blankets of crops and pastures.
- Farm dams fill and overflow.
- Olive pickers strip the black fruit from trees in orchards and growing wild.
- New-born lambs stay close to their mothers.
- Kangaroo Island oysters are at their plump and succulent best.

## Spring

- Canola's bright yellow blooms contrasting with verdant pastures beckon the photographer.
- Lambs grow and gambol in farm fields, venturing away from mum.
- Round hay bales dot fields as farmers harvest pasture to store for the leaner summer months.
- Sheep move into shearing sheds and emerge trimmed and white. Trucks appear from country lanes, taking stock to prime lamb markets.
- Honey farmers collect fresh liquid gold from hives in flowering fields and native vegetation.
- Paddocks of flowering broad beans grow tall and strong.
- Plump new-season oysters are available – featuring on restaurant menus.

## Summer

- Harvesters ply the fields reaping cereals and canola. Huge centre pivots water seedling potatoes in the warm ground.
- The next cycle of life begins with rams joining flocks in paddocks.
- Lines of sheep follow feed carts through the paddocks.
- Fragrant fresh figs are found at farmers' markets.
- Eucalyptus oil is distilled from harvested leaves of narrow-leaf mallee trees.
- Freshly pressed olive oil appears on shelves and at markets.
- Marron farmers pluck the plump crustaceans from dams for the perfect summer meal.
- Native fruits ripen and add a distinctive Island flavour to chutneys and jams.