

The history of wheat production in australia



Wheat is one of the most important food sources for humans.

For thousands of years we have grown, milled and baked wheat, transforming it into countless types of foods. It is grown on almost every continent in the world, and is the worlds most cultivated plant. Originating in the Middle East and becoming more popular as people migrated, wheat has become of the most important plant staples today. It is also one of the most popular staples because it is versatile.

It can be made into flour or flaked, and even its by-products can be used as building materials. Wheat requires a specific temperature and a certain soil composition to grow successfully, and only a few regions are suitable. Most parts of Australia have the wrong climate for wheat to grow, or the wrong soil composition. It was originally planted in the Sydney Botanical Gardens, and surrounding regions, as this was the only known regions at the time of the settlement of the First Fleet. Today, however, it is planted all along the south coast of Australia, in Victoria, New South Wales, and the southern most parts of Western Australia and Queensland.

The origins of wheat in Australia date back to 1789, with the arrival of the First Fleet from England. It was planted by James Ruse, a convict who upon arrival to Australia applied to Governor Arthur Phillip for land, and was granted an allotment at Parramatta. He proved himself industrious, and showed it was possible to grow adequate amounts of food to provide for a family on what land was available. Having successfully completed this, Ruse received an additional grant of 30 acres along the Hawkesbury River, and grew both wheat and maize successfully. Other crops of wheat, planted in

drier regions, were not successful at first and it took farmers many years to calculate exactly where they could grow wheat the most successfully.

During the 19th century, wheat farms were set up at all the convicts farms, however they lived off the wheat they grew and did not trade or export. The wheat industry's expansion was greatly prompted by World Wars 1 & 2. Wheat was a suitable, long lasting staple plant food that could be made into flour, which was an easy and versatile ration for soldiers to carry in their packs. Another event which prompted the wheat industry expansion was the vastly growing population, and large numbers of immigrants arriving after the 1950's. Since 1901, the population of Australia has more than tripled, creating a need for larger scale food production, to satisfy the needs of the growing population. Changes in technology have also greatly contributed to the expansion of the wheat industry, with the introduction of computerised systems and automated machinery. This meant fewer people were needed to run a farm, while still continuing to maintain the food needs of the community.

It also greatly changed the way wheat was farmed. Wheat has been farmed in many different ways, and using many different tools. In the early days of wheat farming, scythes and sickles were used. This was time consuming, however, and could only allow a farmer to harvest approximately 2 acres per day. Wheat seeds also had to be sown by hand, or animals such as donkeys used to pull carts and barrows. This changed in 1831 with the invention of the mechanical reaper which allowed a farmer to harvest crops 4 times as fast, or approximately 8 acres per day. This greatly increased wheat production.

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Wheat production today though is very different from what it was 200 years ago. The wheat production industry has become far more technologically advanced and mechanised, allowing for an increase in both population and demand. Complex machinery, such as header harvesters, beaters, or combine harvesters is used, saving time, and allowing more wheat to be produced in a certain amount of time and to be more cost-efficient. There are many different types of wheat grown and produced in Australia today. There are four main classes of wheat, ranging from few to many sub varieties each. The first class, bread wheat, includes over 40 species of wheat all with a higher gluten and protein content than other species of wheat. This makes it useful for making highly elastic bread dough, and therefore good breads.

The second class, hard wheat, is best used in foods such as flat breads, and Chinese steamed noodles, for it has a low protein content, making it ideal for non-rising doughs. Another class of wheat produced in Australia is the feed wheats, which include around 10 species. Feed wheats are a group of wheats specially engineered and grown to be ideal food for livestock. This means a higher protein and gluten content, as well as good digestibility once eaten and good binding into pellet forms. The last class of wheat, durum wheat, is the most processed out of the four classes.

Durum wheat is specially grown to have high water absorption and high levels of stable yellow pigment. With new varieties, attractive prices, and strong grower interest, Australia is becoming a significant player in the international wheat market. There are many products produced from wheat today. Many food products can be made from wheat, including bread, flour, <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-of-wheat-production-in-australia/>

wheat bran, or processed into semolina, pasta or noodles. In the late 1800??
™s, flaked wheat became the first breakfast cereal when boiled wheat was left to dry, and became flaked when processed.

Wheat is also a major ingredient in foods such as porridge, biscuits and cakes. However, many non-food products can be made with wheat as well. Straw can be used as a construction material in roofs, houses, and other buildings, as well as for woven hats and baskets.

Gluten, a wheat derivative, is used in the medicinal industry for making capsules and in paper-producing facilities is used to coat paper. Wheat germ, another derivative from wheat, can be used in facial creams as it is a highly concentrated source of vitamin E. The future for wheat production in Australia is positive. It is likely that as the world's population grows, there will be an increasing demand for wheat as a staple food. The Australian Wheat Industry will thus have an important role in helping to feed this changing population. Australia currently exports 80% of its wheat, and all Australian wheat is marketed overseas by the Australian Wheat Board.

Australia markets wheat of high quality, being clean, dry and insect-free. These marketing features have been fundamental to the success of Australian wheat overseas. Australian wheat is shipped to more than 40 countries - mostly in Asia and the Middle East. Major markets include China, Egypt, Japan, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea. By world standards, Australia is a relatively small producer, accounting for only 3% of annual world production. With the large percentage of wheat Australia exports though, it contributes approximately 10 to 15 % of world trade for wheat,

making it the fourth largest exporter after the United States, Canada, and the European Union. The future of the wheat industry also depends on environmental and plant sciences.

By sustaining and protecting our environment, we can produce higher quality crops with better yield. By 2030, the increasing population will present the challenge to be able to feed an extra 2 billion people from the same amount of land and water that is available now. This challenge has been considered by CSIRO scientists, who have been working on new breeds of staple crops that can grow with less water, and are continuing to make breakthroughs.

The potential of these crops to enhance food and feed needs, and increase profitability, is the reason why Australia's wheat farmers plant more and more wheat each year. Wheat has been eaten as a plant staple for thousands of years and has greatly changed in the way it is harvested and produced. It can be grown on almost every continent in the world, and is the only plant staple that containing enough gluten to produce a raised loaf of bread. Wheat comes in many forms, both food and non-food related products, which makes it very economically friendly with not much waste products associated with growing and producing it. As the population continues to increase and demands for food increase, wheat will have an important role in helping to feed the people of the world.