

The Good Food Learning Resource

Seasons in Scotland



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to download the rest
of this resource!

In the school garden:

Sow 

mustard
cress
parsley (indoors)

Harvest

leeks
lettuce
parsnips
swedes



Other Jobs 

Prepare soil

Add compost if conditions allow

Keep over-wintering crops protected from frost

Cut autumn raspberry canes to the ground

Choose crops for the year ahead and order seeds

Reduce your waste!



Give your vegetables a good clean but don't peel them. Many of the valuable nutrients in vegetables, like parsnips, are just below the skin and peeling means these are removed. If you do peel them, the vegetable skins can be roasted in the oven to make healthy crisps or salad toppings – simply add spices and olive oil and roast in the oven till crispy.

JANUARY

January is often the coldest month of the year so be patient and don't plant any seeds outside. This is a good month to plan what you want to grow in the year ahead. On farms, the weather conditions dictate that much of the livestock is indoors and only the hardiest of crops will survive the frosts and snow. Carrots still in the ground need to have a blanket of straw over the top of them to insulate them from the frost.

Did you know?

Milk and dairy foods like cheese and yoghurt are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals and provide most of our calcium. This group is particularly important for growing children and is essential for healthy teeth and bones.

Choose reduced or lower fat options where possible and aim to have some milk and dairy food every day.

 WINTER

What's in season?

British Parsnips

British parsnips are available in the shops for 11 months of the year, with the new season crop available from July.

Frosts enhance the sweet flavour of the root vegetable. The frost does not damage the crop, but parsnips are often covered with a layer of straw to ensure they can continue to be picked even when the ground is frozen.

Before planting parsnips, farmers need to ensure the soil is free from stones and any lumps which can lead to forking and parsnips which have odd shapes. Parsnips are prone to disease, so once a crop has been grown in a field the same field will not be planted with parsnips for 7-10 years.

Parsnips often require irrigation to ensure the best quality roots are produced.



On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Potato grading takes place – this is where the stored potatoes are sorted into different sizes ready for transport from the cold store to the shop floor.



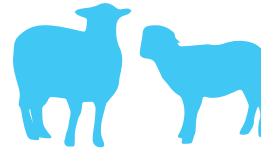
Winter vegetables are being harvested: beetroot, swedes, parsnips, leeks and carrots.

Farm Fact!

When livestock are inside farmers work hard to keep the sheds clean to ensure that the animals are happy and to reduce the incidence of disease.

Parsnip & Apple Soup

Livestock



Some farmers have sheep that give birth to lambs in January. Due to the cold weather, the sheep may be brought indoors to lamb. The sheep that are lambing later in the year are scanned in January to find out how many lambs they are expecting.

They are then separated into groups so that they can be fed the correct amount of food. The indoor areas need to be kept clean and the lambing pens are kept dry and clean to ensure disease is minimised.

With the colder weather this month, extra feed is provided to livestock to ensure they stay in peak condition.

Cattle are kept indoors and fed silage, turnips and concentrates. They are indoors as there is not enough grass growth in the colder months to sustain cattle diets. With livestock indoors, there is the daily task of ensuring the cattle dung from cattle courts is cleared.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- 4 parsnips, chopped
- 1 Bramley apple, chopped
- 1 vegetable stock cube

- 1 tablespoon clear honey
- 2 tablespoons single cream
- ground black pepper



Seafood

Mussel farming is a highly sustainable way to produce high quality protein for human consumption, and the result is delicious!

Mussels are grown on ropes in lochs on the west coast and islands of Scotland.

They are filter feeders and take all the food they need directly from the sea.

Mussels may be eaten all year round, but are at their best from August to April.



Method

Gently fry the onion and garlic in olive oil for 5 minutes then add the parsnips and apple. Fry for a further 5 minutes, stirring to prevent browning.

Make up the vegetable stock with 600ml boiling water.

Add the vegetable stock. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes until the vegetables are tender.

Blend the soup until smooth. Stir in the honey and single cream.

Season the soup with black pepper. Serve piping hot.

In the school garden:

Sow 

(indoors)

broad beans

peas

radish

chit potatoes

Harvest

leeks

lettuce

parsnips

swedes



other jobs 

Prepare soil

Add compost if conditions allow

Cut autumn raspberries to ground

Warm soil ahead of sowings with fleece or plastic

Continue to plant bare-rooted fruit trees and bushes

FEBRUARY

The temperature can start to rise this month (depending on where you are in the country) and some early plantings can take place under cover. This is the month where you can get all your planning finished and your seeds ordered. Where you are in Scotland has a big impact on what you do and when you do it, and the further north you are, the longer the frosts last. Down on the farm it's all about feeding and keeping the livestock in good condition.

Reduce your waste!



Use all of the vegetable in your cooking. The only bits to remove are the tops.

With vegetables like leeks, make sure you use the whole leek and not just the white part of the stem – it is all edible.

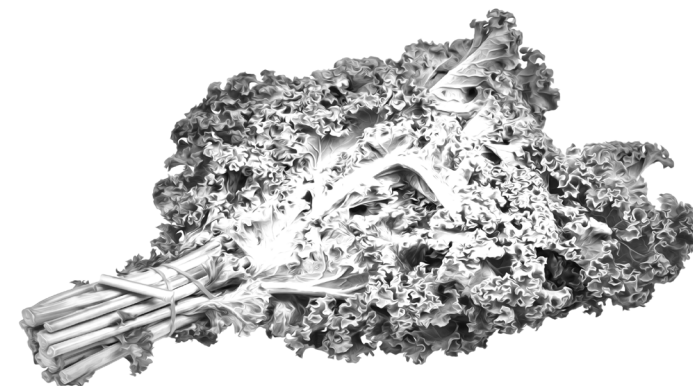
Did you know?

You can replace salt with herbs, spices, lemon juice, garlic or vinegar to season food in cooking.

 WINTER

What's in season?

Kale



The majority of kale grown in Scotland is a crop for livestock rather than for human consumption.

The kale is fed to sheep over the winter months as it is frost tolerant and a good source of forage.

Kale is an excellent source of vitamins K, A and C and folate and the kale sold for human consumption in Scotland comes primarily from Lincolnshire.

Kale is a member of the brassica family which includes cabbages and turnips and the leaves can be harvested from the plants more than once.

On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Potato grading takes place – this is where the stored potatoes are sorted into different sizes ready for transport from the cold store to the shop floor.

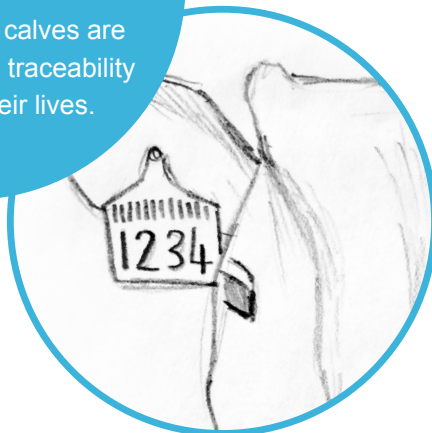
Depending on the weather, some farmers might start spreading manure. There are strict guidelines on manure spreading to prevent any manure being spread on frozen ground and running into water courses.

Ploughing begins for crops that will be sown in springtime.

Winter vegetables are being harvested: beetroot, swedes, parsnips, leeks, carrots, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage and broccoli.

Farm Fact!

New lambs and calves are tagged to ensure traceability throughout their lives.



Livestock

Sheep with lambs will be turned out into the fields and the last of the early lambers finish.

The sheep that are lambing later in the year are scanned to find out how many lambs they are expecting. They are then separated into groups so that they can be fed the correct amount of food.

With the colder weather this month, extra feed is provided to livestock to ensure they stay in peak condition.

Cattle are kept indoors and fed silage, turnips and concentrates.

They are indoors as there is not enough grass growth in the colder months to sustain cattle diets. With livestock indoors, there is the daily task of ensuring the cattle dung from cattle courts is cleared.

Whilst sheep are indoors for lambing, the indoor areas need to be kept clean and the lambing pens are kept dry and clean to ensure disease is minimised.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.



Seafood

King and Queen Scallops are dredged from the seabed around the coast of Scotland and are also collected by divers, who obtain a premium for their grit-free catch.

Scallops live on the seabed and are filter feeders.

King scallops can take 4-5 years to reach the minimum size of 100mm.

The peak season for scallops is September through to March.



Kale Crisps

Ingredients

- 1 bunch of kale
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Method

Preheat an oven to 175°C. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper.

Cut the kale into bite-sized pieces. Remove the larger, thicker pieces of stem as they will not cook in the short time the crisps are in the oven.

Bake for 3-5 minutes until the edges brown but are not burnt. Half way through cooking take the tray out and turn the kale over to ensure the crisps are crispy but do not burn.

Serve immediately – kale crisps do not store.

In the school garden:

Sow  → Harvest 

wheat
garlic & onions (suited to spring planting)
broad beans
leeks
peas
radish
spinach
lettuce
carrots
potatoes
tomatoes
parsnips

salads (if protected)
leeks
chard

other Jobs 

Dig soil and add compost if conditions allow

Support peas with pea sticks

Reduce your waste!



Making a salad? Only add dressing to the salad you are eating, then you can keep any spare salad till the following day.

Wilted salad can also be used in soups and casseroles just like spinach. If your lettuce looks a bit limp it can be revived by putting it in iced water for 30 minutes.

MARCH

The days are getting longer and the temperatures are increasing. Don't be tempted to plant too early as the weather can still turn frosty, which will kill your baby plants. With longer days there is more sunlight, resulting in more growth. The grass starts growing in March in warmer areas which means spring is on its way.

Did you know?

International School Meals Day takes place on the first Thursday of March each year, so why not get involved?

 SPRING

What's in season?

Purple Sprouting Broccoli



Purple sprouting broccoli comes into season in late February to early/mid April and is best when young and tender.

The purple flower heads are what gives this plant its name and all parts of the plant can be eaten.

Steaming or using in stir fries is the best way to use this vegetable as these methods lock in the nutrients and help retain the purple colour.

The plant is a member of the brassica family and is grown from a small black seed.

On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Cereals (oats, wheat and barley) that were planted last autumn/winter may be top dressed (have fertiliser applied). This provides the nutrients they require to get growing as the temperature warms up. Where required, crops are sprayed with fungicides/pesticides.



Before ploughing, manure may be spread. There are strict guidelines on manure spreading to prevent any manure being spread on frozen ground and running into water courses.

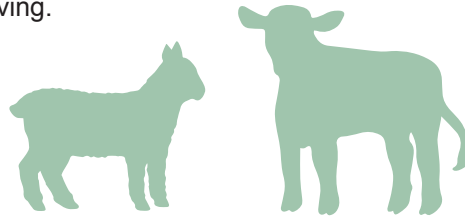
Ploughing takes place and spring barley, oats and, to a lesser extent, spring oilseed rape are planted.

Potato grading takes place – this is where the stored potatoes are sorted into different sizes ready for transport from the cold store to the shop floor.

Winter vegetables (beetroot, swedes, parsnips, leeks and carrots) are being harvested and peas and beans are being planted. If the weather is good, fertiliser is spread on fields for silage and on fields due to take newly lambled sheep in the coming months to promote grass growth.

Livestock

March is a busy month with spring lambing and calving.



Sheep and cows are often brought indoors to lamb and calve respectively, so they can be watched, fed and watered easily before being turned out.

Some hardy breeds of sheep/cows are lambled/calved outdoors.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Farm Fact!

If cows are put outside too early they can poach the ground. This means their cloven feet break up the ground and a grassy field turns into a mud bath.

Seafood

Scottish-farmed salmon has protected name status (PGI Protected Geographical Indication) which ensures that salmon farmed in other countries cannot be passed off as Scottish.

Scotland is the largest farmed salmon producer in the EU and the fourth largest in the world.

The fast flowing waters in Scottish lochs produce a high quality product.



Seasonal Sides

Ingredients

purple sprouting broccoli
rapeseed oil
garlic
ginger

Method

Prepare the broccoli by chopping into small, similar size pieces.

Heat the pan or wok, add a little rapeseed oil and stir fry the garlic and ginger for 30 seconds before adding the broccoli and stir-frying for a further two minutes.

Add a dressing or soy sauce to taste and serve with rice or noodles.

In the school garden:

Sow  → Harvest 

wheat
garlic & onions (suited to spring planting)
broad beans
leeks
peas
radish
spinach
lettuce
carrots
potatoes
tomatoes
parsnips

salads
spinach
leeks
final parsnips

other Jobs 

Prepare seed beds for sowing, mulch around plants with compost

Put in supports for climbing plants such as beans and peas

Grow carrots under fleece to protect from carrot fly

Reduce your waste!



Can't manage all your pizza in one sitting? Homemade pizza freezes well so you can save it for another meal.

Leftover mushrooms or meat also make great pizza toppings.

APRIL

April is the month when the planting season really gets underway - but look out for late frosts which can undo all your hard work. If you have a greenhouse make sure you give the glass a clean so that there is plenty light getting in. You can also make use of cold frames and window sills to get some of the more tender crops started. This is the month when livestock that have been indoors for the winter are turned out.

Did you know?

We should consume 6-8 glasses of fluids each day. Water is recommended. However, water, milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

 SPRING

What's in season?

Herbs



Growing your own herbs in school is easy.

You will be able to harvest these for use throughout the year and it also works out significantly cheaper to grow your own.

Scotland does have a few commercial herb growers so look out for the 'grown in Scotland' logo if you opt to buy herbs.

On the farm:

Planting & Growing

As the threat of frosts may have passed and the soil warms up, the planting of early and main crop potatoes begins.

April is the month when spring arable crops are sown – spring barley and oats (and some spring oilseed rape).

Autumn/ winter sown crops are top dressed (fertilised) and sprayed to help prevent diseases.

Potato grading takes place – this is where the stored potatoes are sorted into different sizes ready for transport from the cold store to the shop floor.

The last of the winter vegetables are being harvested – beetroot, swedes, parsnips, leeks and carrots. Vegetables like peas, beans and carrots are planted.

Glasshouse tomatoes see their first harvest at the end of the month.

Farm Fact!

Grass only starts growing when the temperature gets above 5°C.

Friendship

Pizza

Ingredients

For the base:

225g strong plain flour
1 x 7g sachet easy-bake (microfine) yeast
1 tablespoon olive oil
150ml warm water

For the topping:

300g cherry tomatoes - cooked to a pulp in

a little olive oil, skins removed if desired

1 garlic clove - peeled and crushed

250 - 300g spinach leaves - stalks removed and lightly steamed

½ red pepper - de-seeded, chopped and

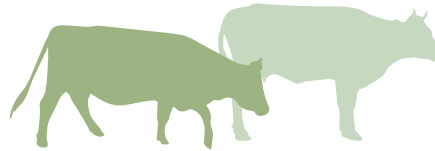
lightly cooked in olive oil

100 - 150g Mozzarella cheese - sliced or torn

2 tomatoes - thinly sliced

basil leaves - torn

Livestock



As the weather warms up, the grass starts growing and, towards the end of the month, indoor cattle go outdoors.

The sheep that are lambing later in the year are scanned to find out how many lambs they are expecting. They are then separated into groups so that they can be fed the correct amount of food. Indoor lambing is ongoing. April is the start of the lambing season on many upland farms, who need to wait a bit longer for the warmer weather.

Cows are now calving indoors and outdoors, weather permitting. With livestock indoors, there is the daily task of ensuring the dung is cleared and clean straw put down.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year. Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Seafood

Hake is a delicately flavoured white fish species that can be used as an alternative to cod and haddock. It is popular in fish and chip shops, but a great deal of the catch is exported, particularly to Spain. Scottish fishermen are keen to see more eaten locally.



Method

Put the flour and yeast in the mixing bowl. Add the water and oil and mix to a soft dough with a wooden spoon.

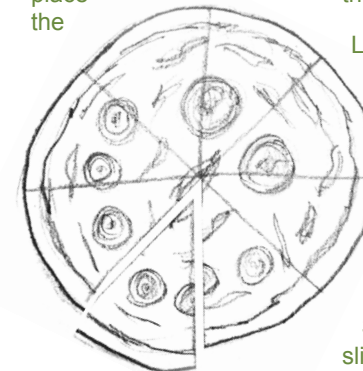
Knead the dough until smooth. Roll it out to a 20-25cm round, then place the

dough round on the baking tray. Heat the oven to 220°C/ Gas 7.

Spread the cooked cherry tomatoes over the dough. Scatter the garlic over the tomatoes, then scatter the remaining toppings over the dough.

Leave the pizza to stand for 5-10 minutes. Bake for 15-20 minutes until the cheese has melted and, when lifted with a spatula, you can see that the pizza base has cooked.

Serve warm, cut into slices.



In the school garden:

Sow 

radish
French beans
lettuce
carrots
tomatoes

Harvest 

radish
broad beans
carrots
lettuce and other
salads
spinach

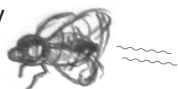
Reduce
your
waste!



other
Jobs 

Mulch plants with
compost and keep
well-watered

Keep carrots
covered with
fleece to protect
from carrot fly



MAY

Depending
on where in
Scotland you are, May
is when you start to get the
first of this year's crops. Fast-
growing vegetables like salads and
radishes are ready to harvest. If
you opt for successional planting
then you can have a steady
supply of produce, rather
than having a glut all
at once.

Did you know?

Starchy foods are an important part of a healthy
diet, and every school lunch should contain at
least one serving of starchy food.

 SPRING

What's in season?

Potatoes



Scotland has the ideal climate for growing potatoes.

Potatoes grown for human consumption are called
'ware' potatoes.

As well as growing ware potatoes, we also grow
seed potatoes.

Scotland produces most of the seed potatoes for
the UK potato industry and is the leading country in
exporting seed potatoes.

Potatoes are classified according to when they are
harvested. The early potatoes come first, followed
by the main crop and then the late potatoes.

There are many different potato varieties on the
market, developed for different culinary uses.

There are waxy, fluffy and smooth potatoes. Waxy
new potatoes are ideal for potato salads.

On the farm:

Planting & Growing

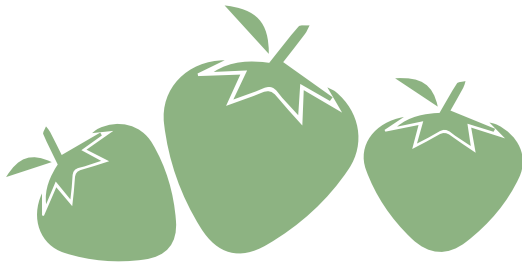
Farming is very weather-dependant and some farmers will still be planting potatoes if April was a cold month.

Come the middle/end of May the first cut of silage is taken from fields.

To make silage the grass is cut, wilted and then fermented (pickled) either by wrapping the grass in plastic or storing in a pit.

The silage pit is topped with black plastic to keep the heat in and allow bacteria to start the fermentation process.

May also sees the start of the soft fruit season for fruit grown in polytunnels.



Vegetables like peas, beans and carrots are planted.



Livestock

Cattle are turned out to grass and, for some farms, the calving season begins.

There is still lambing going on, particularly on upland farms.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Farm Fact!

Farmers disinfect their grain stores to kill all the bugs in preparation for the upcoming harvest.



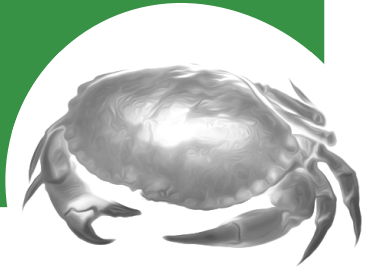
Seafood

Brown Crab are caught in baited pots and creels all around the Scottish coast and make a tasty meal.

Large male crabs can reach up to 2kg in size.

Crabs grow by moulting their shells and everyone knows that they scuttle along sideways!

Brown crab is under appreciated in the UK and much of the catch is exported to Spain, France and Italy.



Beetroot & Potato Salad

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- juice of ½ lemon
- 1 tablespoon fresh chives – chopped
- ground black pepper
- 400g new potatoes – boiled in their skins and cooled
- 4 medium-sized beetroot – boiled, cooled, skinned and diced
- ½ cucumber – peeled and diced

Method

In a small bowl combine the olive oil with the lemon juice. Add ⅔ of the chopped chives. Season with pepper.

Cut the cooked potatoes in half and place in a mixing bowl.

Add the diced cucumber and beetroot to the potato in the bowl.

Drizzle the dressing over the mixture and garnish with the remaining chopped chives.

In the school garden:

Sow 

peas
carrots

Harvest 

radish
French beans
broad beans
peas
onion
garlic
carrots
spinach
early potatoes
lettuce and other
salads
strawberries

other
Jobs 

Tender plants started indoors, such as French beans, pumpkins, squash and tomatoes should be planted out

Mulch plants with compost and keep well-watered

Keep carrots covered with fleece to protect from carrot fly

Reduce your waste! 



Grated carrots can be used in all sorts of recipes. If you have some carrots that need to be eaten, grate them, sauté with some raisins and add to your porridge. A great start to the day!

JUNE

Summer is here and we need to make sure that plants are kept well watered and protected from diseases. Some carrot farmers trap carrot flies and spray if they reach certain densities. On a smaller scale in the garden you can companion plant. This is where you plant species which do well together like tomatoes and marigolds with one masking the smell of the other and helping to deter pests. Mint works well with carrots, but keep it in a tub otherwise it will take over your whole bed.

Did you know?

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. Growing your own is ideal as you can eat them immediately, which means they contain more vitamins than food which has been stored or transported. Carrot 'spaghetti' can be made with a spiraliser, a colourful addition to your dinner plate.

 SUMMER

What's in season?

Carrots



There are a number of carrot producers in Scotland who grow on well-drained sandy soils.

Carrot seeds are tiny and are planted using precision technology. Once the seedlings start to grow, the main issue is carrot fly which the farmer needs to monitor closely and spray, if required.

Carrots can be harvested as green tops, which are young carrots with the leaves still attached, or they can be kept in the ground for longer and sold when they reach full size. Those grown to full size have the tops removed and the harvested carrots are cleaned before making their way to the consumer.

Carrots are damaged by frost so those not harvested before the frost arrives are covered in straw (a process called strawing up) to protect them.

On the farm:

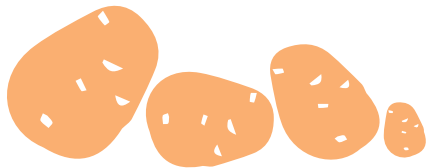
Planting & Growing

Silage is taken from fields and some farmers are onto their second silage cut.

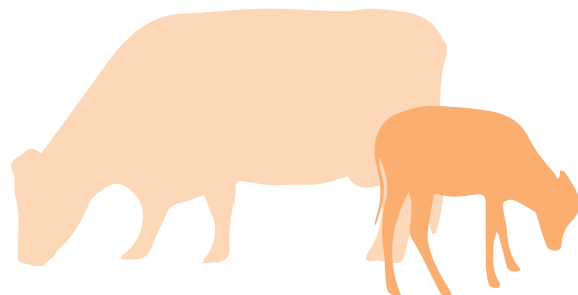
The soft fruit harvest is underway with strawberries and raspberries being harvested.



If the weather is good and crops are growing well the pea and bean harvest begins.



Farmers are also harvesting early potatoes.



Livestock

Livestock outside need regular checking. As an example, in the warmer months sheep can sometimes roll on their backs to scratch and are unable to get back on their feet.

Farmers need to check for these sheep and roll them back onto their feet before gases build up in their stomach, which can kill them.

Sheep shearing begins. The wool is taken off the sheep and the worst of the dirt and dags (dung) are removed before the wool is rolled up and bagged for later collection. Lambs are separated from their mothers – this is called speaning.

Fertiliser is spread on the fields for silage – either dung/slurry or chemical fertiliser which contains nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) (NPK).

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Farm Fact!

Dairy cows need to have a calf to produce milk and so calve throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Seafood

The main season for the European **Lobster** runs from June to November, although they are caught all year-round.

Lobsters are traditionally caught in baited pots and creels and can be kept alive in holding tanks until required for market. They are very popular at Christmas in France.

Lobsters are blue/black in colour when caught and take on a red colouration when cooked.



Pulled Pork Lettuce Cups with Coleslaw

Ingredients

2 tbsp Specially Selected Pork - pulled (you can slow cook your own SSP shoulder or ask your butcher)

baby gem lettuce leaves - one per cup

For the coleslaw:

half white cabbage, finely chopped

4 carrots, grated

1 red onion, finely sliced

175g/6oz mayonnaise



salt and black pepper

1 lime, juice only & 1 tbsp soy sauce

Method

Mix all coleslaw ingredients together and then place a spoonful of pork onto the lettuce cup, followed by a spoonful of coleslaw.

In the school garden:

Sow  Harvest 

peas

lettuce

other
Jobs 

Mulch plants with
compost and keep
well-watered

Keep carrots covered
with fleece to protect
from carrot fly

radish

French beans

broad beans

peas

onion

garlic

carrots

spinach

early potatoes

lettuce and other
salads

tomatoes

strawberries

Reduce
your
waste!



In July, it can be hot in the kitchen.

Try to store your fruit in the fridge and it can last up to 2 weeks longer. This includes all fruits except bananas and pineapple, they are best left in the fruit bowl. Bananas can be frozen and made into dairy free ice cream. Leftover juice and fruit can also be made into low fat ice lollies.

JULY

July is the start of the soft fruit season and you can help your strawberries by keeping them well watered and protected from birds. Reflective material such as old broken CDs make excellent bird deterrents. Slugs and snails are a problem that you have to live with, but getting rid of any dead leaves and removing hiding places in the winter months all helps with this come harvest time.

Did you know?

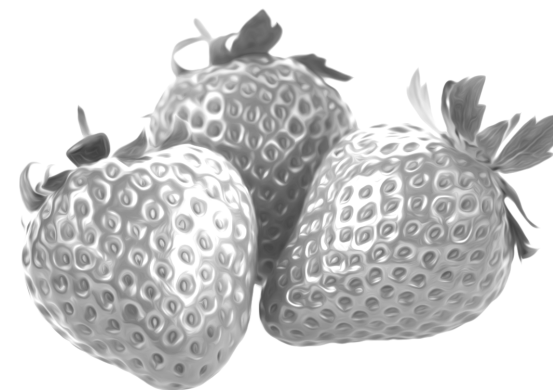
Free sugars should not exceed 5% of total dietary energy intake. For 7-10 year olds this is no more than 24g per day (6 sugar cubes) and from 11 years upwards that is no more than 30g per day or 7 sugar cubes. 'No added sugar' or 'unsweetened' terms refer to added sugar or sweeteners – they may still contain natural sugars.

Naturally occurring sugars in food such as fruit and milk are not added, and don't need to be reduced: it is food containing added sugars that we should keep an eye on.

 SUMMER

What's in season?

Soft Fruit



The soft fruit industry in Scotland produces strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, blackcurrants and blueberries.

These may be grown in polytunnels to extend the season of the fruits. The fruits are picked by hand which makes it a labour intensive industry.

Strawberries are grown on platforms at waist height to aid with the picking of the fruit.

In polytunnel systems, mobile beehives are brought in to ensure that the flowers in the tunnels are pollinated and fruits are produced.

On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Farmers make silage. To make silage, the grass is cut, wilted and then fermented (pickled) either by wrapping the grass in plastic or storing in a pit.

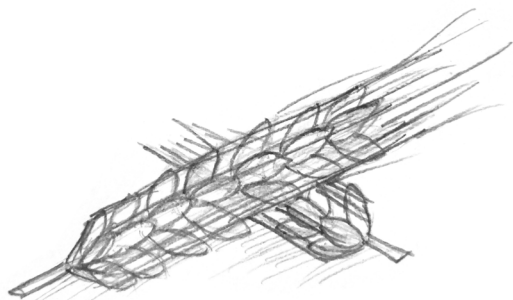
The silage pit is topped with black plastic to keep the heat in and allow bacteria to start the fermentation process.

The silage is needed to feed livestock over the winter.

As the sun shines there is also the window to make hay.

To make hay the farmer needs the sun to dry the grass for several days.

The dried grass is then baled and used to feed livestock in the winter.



Weather permitting there may be some early harvesting of winter barley and oil seed rape.

The soft fruit season sees strawberries, raspberries and other soft fruit being picked.

Peas and potatoes are harvested.

Livestock

Sheep shearing begins. The wool is taken off the sheep and the worst of the dirt and dags (dung) are removed before the wool is rolled up and bagged for later collection.

Later born lambs are separated from their mothers (called speaning).

Beef cows are calving.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Farm Fact!

Shearing is often carried out by contractors that work around Scotland, moving from south to north with the weather.

Shearers can shear several thousand sheep every week and often head to Australia and New Zealand so they can be employed throughout the year.



Seafood

Plaice is a popular flatfish that is easily recognised from its green/brown skin and red spots, which are brightest when the fish is fresh.

There is a healthy stock in the North Sea, from where the fish are landed into ports such as Peterhead, which is the largest whitefish port in Europe.



Strawberry Smoothie

Ingredients

- 500g strawberries
- zest and juice of 1 orange
- 200g plain yoghurt (not set) - chilled
- 1 tablespoon clear honey
- ice cubes (optional)
- juice of 1 lemon
- 4 strawberries and 4 orange slices (for decoration)

Method

Put all the ingredients, except for the ice cubes and the strawberries and orange slices for decoration, into the blender.

Whizz the ingredients in the blender until smooth, then pour into the serving glasses.

With a sharp knife, slit the strawberry and orange slices so that they sit on the rim of each glass.

Add the ice cubes, if using, and serve immediately.

In the school garden:



Sow → Harvest

With the school holidays, you will only have the end of the month to plant. You could do some windowsill sowing and plan what you might want to get planted over the winter, garlic for example.



Keep your plants well watered. Add some comfrey juice or worm juice from the bottom of a wormery (if you have one) to your water for some extra nutrients to help ensure the plants keep growing.

Reduce your waste! ↪



Use your freezer effectively and store your fresh herbs in there. Chives can be chopped and basil broken off straight from the freezer into the dish you're cooking.

Harvest

wheat
radish
French beans
broad beans
peas
onion
garlic
carrots
spinach
main crop potatoes
lettuce and other salads
tomatoes
soft fruit



AUGUST

August often has some of the warmest days but the end of summer is approaching and we are into harvest time. We can still continue planting but consider what you plant and how long it is going to take to reach maturity. There is a window between August and the end of the year for fast growing crops.

Did you know?

Meat is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals, particularly iron. Non-meat sources of protein include peas, beans, lentils and nuts.

The iron found in meat is absorbed well by the body, and meat has the extra advantage of helping with the absorption of iron from vegetables and cereals.



SUMMER

What's in season?



Scotch Beef PGI

Beef from animals born and reared on assured Scottish farms carries the Scotch Beef PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) logo. Scotch Beef PGI is sourced from farms that meet stringent criteria regarding animal welfare, feeds and natural production methods.



A typical Scotch Beef PGI farming system involves suckler cows (beef breeds farmed to produce beef rather than milk) farmed on low input grassland.

Specially Selected Pork

Specially Selected Pork is the brand representing product from the Quality Meat Scotland Assurance Scheme and



around 95% of pigs in Scotland are covered by the scheme. Specially Selected Pork is sourced from farms with the highest levels of animal health and welfare and implement modern professional farming practices.

On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Depending on the weather, spring barley and winter wheat are harvested. After harvesting, the ground may be left until the following year to plough or it may be ploughed the same year and replanted.

Sowing of winter oilseed rape takes place and the crop will be top dressed (fertilised) to help get the plants off to a good start before winter sets in.

Silage continues to be made. Some farmers are on their third cut of the year. To make silage, the grass is cut, wilted and then fermented (pickled) either by wrapping the grass in plastic or storing in a pit. The silage pit is topped with black plastic to keep the heat in and allow bacteria to start the fermentation process. The silage is needed to feed livestock over the winter.

As the sun shines, there is also the window to make hay. To make hay the farmer needs the sun to dry the grass for several days. The dried grass is then baled and used to feed livestock in the winter.

Harvesting cereal crops gives the farmer two useful products: the grain which is stored for feeding animals and/or the straw (dried plant stems) which is baled and used as bedding in the winter months.

Strawberries, raspberries and other soft fruit are harvested. Potato grading takes place – this is where the stored potatoes are sorted into different sizes ready for transport from the cold store to the shop floor.

Livestock

Lambs born early in the year are sent to market. Some farms start breeding in August. The tups (males) are added to the females (ewes).

Beef cows are calving and may be brought indoors.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Farm Fact!

Winter cereals are planted towards the end of the year and grow a little before becoming dormant for the winter. They then resume growing the next year.

Ingredients

For the meat sauce:
500g lean minced Scotch Beef (or minced turkey or minced chicken)
1 large onion - peeled and finely chopped
1 large carrot - peeled and coarsely grated
2 garlic cloves - crushed
1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes
3 tablespoons tomato purée
1 teaspoon dried oregano

200g dried lasagne sheets
ground black pepper
For the white sauce:
50g plain flour
50g butter/spread
600ml milk
ground black pepper
75g grated Parmesan cheese (or grated Cheddar cheese)

Method

Put the meat, onion, carrot and garlic into the large pan and cook them over a medium heat. Stir for about 5 minutes or until the meat is no longer pink.

Add the tomatoes, tomato purée, oregano and seasoning. Bring the mixture to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes.

Make the white sauce by putting the milk, butter and flour into the small saucepan. Place over a medium heat and whisk briskly until the sauce

boils and thickens. Continue to heat for a further minute (whisking continuously). Remove from the heat. Heat the oven to 190°C/Gas mark 5.

Place a layer of meat, then lasagne sheets followed by white sauce into an oven-proof dish. Continue to layer but finishing with white sauce on top.

Sprinkle the sauce with the grated cheese and bake for 20 - 25 minutes until bubbling and golden-brown.

Seafood

Cod is a very popular species that has suffered from overfishing in the North Sea in the past, but is now recovering well thanks to careful management. North Sea cod is now ready to undergo Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) assessment as a sustainable stock.

This versatile fish is excellent cooked in a variety of ways, and is the second most popular species (behind haddock) served in Scottish fish and chip shops.



In the school garden:

Sow  Harvest

radish
spinach
lettuce

French beans
carrots
leeks
onions
peas
main crop potatoes
radish
spinach
chard
lettuce
garlic tomatoes
raspberries
wheat

other Jobs 

Prepare soil, add compost

Protect crops from frost

Pot up strawberry runners



Reduce your waste!



Meat can be an expensive product so make sure you don't waste it. Once you get it home divide it up into portions. Only keep out what you are going to use in the next few days. The rest can be frozen in portion sized pots and taken out as and when required.

SEPTEMBER

Autumn is here and the day length is shortening. Keep this in mind when you are planting. Depending on where you are in Scotland, there is the chance for another harvest. You can let some plants go to seed if you want to collect your own (provided they are not hybrid plants) and this is when you can separate strawberry runners to give you some new plants. Harvest time is here and farmers are hoping for good weather to both ripen and dry their crops.

Did you know?

Fibre is an important part of our diet and adults should be consuming 30g per day. For children, the recommended intakes are 15g/day for 2-5 year olds, 20g/day for children aged 5-11 and 25g for children aged 11-16.

You can increase the fibre in your diet by making some simple adjustments to your diet, for example replace white bread with brown or wholemeal and replace white pasta with brown pasta.

 AUTUMN

What's in season?

Venison



There are four species of deer living in Scotland: fallow, roe, red and sika.

Deer are farmed, as well as being harvested from the wild.

Deer living in the wild have no natural predators and so their numbers need to be controlled through culling. This culling helps ensure healthy populations and limits the damage the deer cause through grazing on saplings/trees.

Venison is a healthy low fat meat and is stocked in all major supermarkets in Scotland.

The demand for the product is increasing and at present any shortfall in meeting the demand is made up through importing venison from New Zealand.

On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Harvesting cereals with a combine harvester is ongoing.

After harvesting, the ground may be left until the following year to plough or it may be ploughed the same year and replanted.

After ploughing, winter cereals are planted and maybe top dressed (fertilised) to get the seeds off to a good start.

After harvesting a cereal crop, the farmer has two useful products: the grain, which is stored for feed or sold and the straw (dried plant stems) which is baled and used as bedding in the winter months.

Strawberries raspberries, potatoes and other vegetables, like carrots, are harvested.

September is also the start of the apple harvest.

Farm Fact!

Animal welfare is important to farmers and large animal vets are regularly called when animals are ill to make sure they are kept in peak condition. The Scottish SPCA also inspect farms to ensure animal welfare standards are being maintained.

Livestock

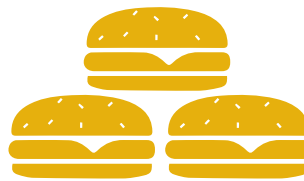
Lambs are sent to market. The breeding season for sheep (tupping) begins on lower ground (tups/rams don't go out till November on hill farms as they don't want lambs till later in the year). There are many big tup sales held, with farmers looking to buy new male stock for the breeding season.

Beef cows are calving and bulls get put in with the cows for early calves next year.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Burgers



Ingredients

400g lean Scotch Beef PGI mince

small red onion, finely chopped

2 tbsp chopped herbs such as parsley, chives, marjoram

4 ciabatta buns, (olive ones are very good)

For caramelised onions:

3 medium red onions, peeled and thinly sliced

25g unsalted butter/spread

2 tbsp olive oil

pinch of salt

pinch of sugar

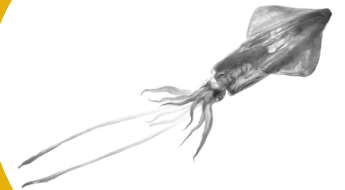
To serve:

mixed baby salad leaves

Seafood

Squid is sometimes referred to as an ink fish, because of its ability to squirt ink when in danger. It has a set of arms or tentacles, just like the octopus and cuttlefish. In restaurants, squid is often served fried as calamari.

There is an important and growing fishery for squid in Scotland, especially in the Moray firth and along the east coast. Available all year round, it is most abundant from March to October.



Method

Fry the onions in the oil and butter over a gentle heat until transparent and soft (6 minutes).

Sprinkle on the salt and sugar and continue cooking, stirring from time to time until golden and sticky and beginning to crisp at the edges. Set aside.

Mix together all the burger ingredients and season. Mixing them with your hands makes it easier. Shape into four burgers about 10cm in diameter.

Light the BBQ or heat the grill to its hottest setting and cook the burgers until the mince is browned all the way through.

Pop the split ciabatta buns under the grill to warm a little.

Load up the buns with a handful of salad leaves, a couple of tomato slices, a burger and a tangle of onions.

In the school garden:

Sow 

peas

broad beans

hardy winter lettuce

green manure

other
Jobs 

Protect crops from frost

Mulch bare soil

Order strawberry runners

Prepare soil and add compost

Harvest 

French beans

carrots

leeks

peas

main crop potatoes

radish

spinach

chard

lettuce

tomatoes

raspberries

Reduce
your
waste! 

A top tip for revamping your leftover meat is to turn it into patties – add potato and shape, coat with egg, flour and breadcrumbs – and fry in a little rapeseed oil.

OCTOBER

The soil you plant your crops in plays a vital role in ensuring a good yield come harvest time. Take the time to identify the type of soil you are growing in. October is a great month to incorporate compost for next year's crops. Farmers will be ploughing their fields whilst you will be digging over with a garden spade, but adding the extra organic matter that compost provides makes all the difference to the structure of your soil as well as the nutrients available for plant growth.

Did you know?

There are many ways in which food can be prepared. Frying adds extra fat, so use minimal oil and opt for rapeseed oil or olive oil rather than butter or lard. Grilling, baking, poaching or microwaving are good methods of cooking which don't add any extra fat to your meal.

 AUTUMN

What's in season?

Scotch Lamb

Scotch Lamb PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) is a versatile meat from roasts to steaks, casseroles and kebabs.

Lamb is available all year round, but since Scotch Lamb PGI is a natural product, it is seasonal.

Scotch Lamb PGI is most plentiful between August and April. Spring and late season lambs are equally delicious but you will notice a difference in taste between the 2 seasons.

Spring lamb comes from the lambs born in the spring time and is available to buy come autumn time. Spring lamb has a subtle taste and rosy colour.

Darker meat comes from late season lamb which is available from January through until the end of April. There may also be variation in colour and flavour depending on the breed of lamb. Late season lamb goes well with winter produce like root vegetables.



On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Harvesting cereals with a combine harvester is ongoing.

After harvesting the ground may be left until the following year to plough or it may be ploughed the same year and replanted.

The ground is ploughed, seeded and fertilised to get the seeds off to a good start.

After harvest, the farmer stores the grain and the straw (dried plant stems) is baled and used as bedding in the winter months.

Harvest strawberries, raspberries and other soft fruit.

Potatoes and other vegetables, like carrots, are harvested.

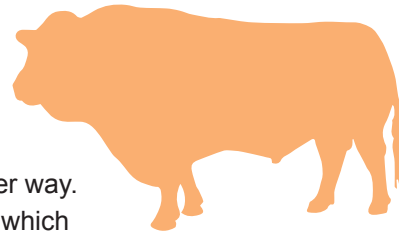
Apple harvest is ongoing.

Potato grading takes place – this is where the stored potatoes are sorted into different sizes ready for transport from the cold store to the shop floor.

Farm Fact!

After ploughing, the soil is cultivated further to break the soil down into a fine seed bed before planting seeds.

Livestock



The tugging (sheep) and bulging (cows) seasons are well under way. Bull sales take place, which involves preparing stock for sale as breeders look to purchase new bulls for the breeding season.

Depending on the weather, cows may be brought indoors to prevent them damaging the grass and soil. Beef cows and calves are weaned (separated).

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Scotch Lamb Samosas

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 pack filo pastry | 200g Scotch Lamb PGI mince |
| 2 onions - chopped and fried until golden | 100ml water |
| 2 garlic cloves - peeled and crushed | 200g garden peas - fresh or frozen |
| 2 chillies - chopped | 2 tablespoons fresh coriander - chopped |
| 1 teaspoon each of ground cumin, coriander, turmeric and garam masala | 2 tablespoons rapeseed oil |

Seafood

Razor Clams are gathered by hand from the sandy seabed where they live.

These shellfish are between 10 – 20cm in length and make a delicious meal when steamed open.

They are largely unappreciated in the UK except in specialist seafood restaurants, but are in great demand for export to France, Spain and Italy.

They are also popular with the Chinese community.



Method

Put the golden onions in a pan. Add the garlic and chillies. Slowly fry for 2 minutes.

Add the spices and fry for 5 - 6 minutes on a low heat. Add the lamb and cook, stirring until lightly browned.

Add the peas and water. Cook for 15 minutes until the mixture is fairly dry. Leave to cool. Add the chopped coriander.

Heat the oven to 200°C / Gas 6.

Cut or fold a sheet of filo pastry into a rectangle 8 - 10cm wide. Brush with a little oil. Place a dessert spoon of the filling at the end of the strip closest to you. Fold over in triangles sealing the end with oil.

Place on a baking sheet. Repeat until pastry and filling are used up. Brush each samosa with oil. Bake for 10 - 20 minutes until golden-brown.

In the school garden:

Sow 

garlic

broad beans

strawberry runners

Harvest

lettuce (if protected)

leeks

carrots

spinach



other Jobs 

Dig soil and, if conditions allow, plant fruit

Cut autumn raspberry canes to ground level

Collect leaves to make leaf compost

NOVEMBER

Anything you are planting in the soil now needs to be able to survive over the winter months.

The idea of winter planting is to get the seed off to a head start for the following year. However, if there is a lot of winter rain, seeds may start to rot and/or be eaten by pests. This means it is a good idea to plant both winter and spring seeds. Farmers follow a similar model having winter and spring varieties of the main cereals - wheat and barley.

 AUTUMN

What's in season?

Apples



Reduce your waste!



Keep the skins on your apples as they contain fibre. Bruised apples do not need to be thrown out. Simply cut out the bruised section and use the rest of the apple.

Don't forget to keep your bananas separate from other fruit. Bananas make other fruit ripen quicker, which can be great in the case of an avocado but not if you want to keep your apples fresh.

Did you know?

When fruit is juiced or blended, sugars are released from the cells of the fruit which can cause damage to teeth. This is why you should try to limit fruit juice to mealtimes.

Scotland is not known for commercially producing apples, however there are a number of small orchards scattered throughout Scotland and many fruit trees are found in gardens and grounds.

The majority of apples produced in the UK come from fruit farms in Hereford and Kent.

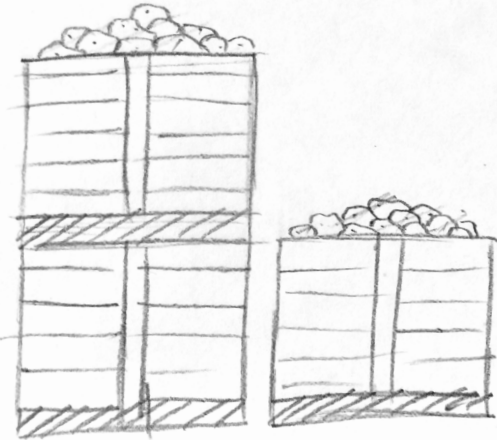
Once the apples are harvested, those not sold immediately are kept in storage and released into the market over time.

This means it is possible to eat British apples for most of the year.

On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Potato grading takes place – this is where the stored potatoes are sorted into different sizes ready for transport from the cold store to the shop floor.



Harvesting of vegetables like carrots, turnips, swedes, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts.



Vegetable harvesting may involve machines and/or manual labour.

Livestock

Livestock is brought in for the winter where required.

With livestock indoors, there are the daily tasks of cleaning and feeding.

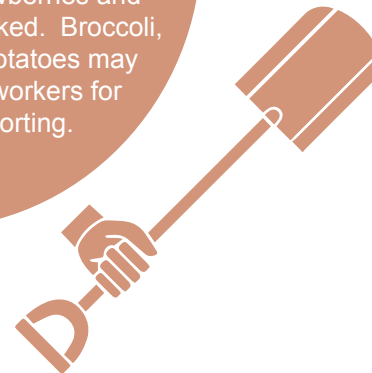
The tupping (breeding) season begins for sheep on higher ground, where later lambing helps to avoid bad weather.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Farm Fact!

Seasonal work is available in Scotland year-round, but the busiest time of year is between May and September. This is when soft fruits like strawberries and raspberries need to be picked. Broccoli, carrots, tomatoes and potatoes may also require seasonal workers for hand picking and sorting.



Seafood

Mackerel is a highly valuable pelagic fish that is caught by a fleet of just 26 large vessels in Scotland.

There are two key seasons for mackerel: January – February and June – November.

Mackerel are oil-rich fish, and one of the highest in Omega 3, which is also known as 'super fish oil'.



Method

Heat the oven to **200°C/ Gas 6**. Place the flour, butter and caster sugar in a mixing bowl. Cut and rub in the butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

Peel, core and thinly slice the apples and layer in a 1.8 litre oven-proof dish along with the blackberries.

Sprinkle the crumble mixture evenly over the apples and blackberries. Sprinkle with demerara sugar.

Bake for 45 minutes until golden-brown and the apples are soft.

Apple & Blackberry Crumble

Ingredients

- 200g plain flour
- 100g butter
- 75g caster sugar
- 600g cooking apples
- 150g blackberries
- 25g demerara sugar

In the school garden:

Sow 

mustard
cress (indoors)

Harvest 

leeks

chard

other

Jobs 

Dig soil if conditions allow

Plant fruit

Cut autumn raspberry canes to ground level

Collect leaves to make leaf compost

DECEMBER

Indoor

planting can

still work and the hardy winter vegetables can still be harvested. Over winter, the frost plays an important role in breaking down the soil and plays a part in killing off soil borne diseases. Farmers often leave a 'stubble' of plants such as cereal crop roots on the fields over winter to prevent soil being washed away by any winter rains. This also helps farm birds by providing a source of food over the winter.

 WINTER

What's in season?

Leeks



Reduce
your
waste!



Harvest only what you need from the garden and leave the rest in the ground. Make sure you harvest all your vegetables that will be damaged by the frost, in good time.

Successional sowing of vegetables helps ensure a year round supply.

Did you know?

Two portions of fish should be consumed each week, of which one portion should be an oily fish (a good source of omega 3). The top five species consumed are mackerel, prawns, haddock, cod and monkfish but there are many more species to choose from.

Leeks are grown in Scotland and are in season from November through to April.

The seeds are either sown directly into the soil or propagated indoors and planted out as small plants.

They have a long growing season but are tolerant of frosts so can be harvested throughout the winter.

The leek is very versatile and can be eaten raw in salads, fried, or made into delicious hot dishes such as soups and stews.

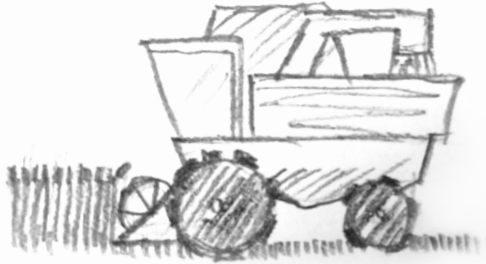
On the farm:

Planting & Growing

Potato grading takes place – this is where the stored potatoes are sorted into different sizes ready for transport from the cold store to the shop floor.

Harvesting of vegetables like carrots, turnips, swedes, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts takes place now.

Vegetable harvesting may involve machines and/or manual labour.



Farm Fact!

The winter months provide the opportunity for farmers to undertake machinery maintenance. There is a requirement for skilled mechanics to ensure equipment is kept in good working order. This covers a wide range of equipment from onboard computers through to maintaining feeding wagons.

Livestock

Livestock is brought in for the winter where required and beef herds are calving.

With livestock indoors there are the daily tasks of cleaning and feeding.

The tupping (breeding) season begins for sheep on higher ground where later lambing helps to avoid bad weather.

The sheep that are lambing early in the year are scanned to find out how many lambs they are expecting.

They are then separated into groups so that they can be fed the correct amount of food.

Those carrying more than one lamb will require a different diet to those expecting a single lamb.

On the dairy farm, milk is produced year-round, so calving and milking happen throughout the year.

Pig farming may be done either indoors or outdoors. The two main stages of pig production are breeding and finishing, these will happen throughout the year.

Seafood

Farmed **Scottish Trout** are grown in fresh water and are considerably smaller than sea water trout.

This fish is high in Omega 3 and vitamin D and is growing in popularity as an export product – particularly when it is sea-grown.

It has a light pink flesh and a delicate flavour.



Smoked Haddock, Pea and Leek Fishcakes

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons sunflower oil
- 400g potatoes - peeled, boiled and mashed
- 200g smoked un-dyed haddock - skinned, steamed and flaked
- 100g mushy peas - drained
- 1 leek - thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons mint jelly
- 25g fresh breadcrumbs
- 75g breadcrumbs - dried slowly in the oven
- 1 egg - beaten
- black pepper

Method

Pour the sunflower oil into the frying pan and add the sliced leeks. Cook over a medium heat until soft but not brown.

Heat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. In a mixing bowl, combine the mashed potato, flaked fish, cooled leeks, peas, mint jelly, 25g fresh breadcrumbs and pepper. Using a fork, thoroughly mix the ingredients.

Divide the mixture into 8 even-sized pieces and shape into rounds approximately 2cm thick.

Dip each fishcake into the beaten egg and coat in breadcrumbs.

Place on a greased baking tray and bake for 15 minutes until golden-brown.



The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET)

RHET aims to provide the opportunity for every child in Scotland to learn about food, farming and the countryside and to create a wider understanding of the environmental, economic and social realities of rural Scotland.

This is achieved through providing farm visits for schools, classroom speaker talks by volunteer farmers, providing free educational resource materials for schools, teacher training opportunities and delivering the Royal Highland Show education programme.

www.rhet.org.uk



Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) undertakes a wide range of health and education work which aims to communicate the important role of red meat in a healthy diet. This includes many school activities such as free healthy eating sessions, cooking demonstrations and the QMS Meat Voucher Scheme.

www.qmscotland.co.uk

Thanks also to the following organisations for providing content:

