

EMU FARMING

A

NEW AND EXCITING

INDUSTRY

EMU FARMING IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ALTERNATIVE/ADDITIONAL FARMING PRACTICES.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY FARMING.

EMUS ARE ADAPTABLE TO MOST CLIMATIC CONDITIONS.

EMU PRODUCTS TO REVOLUTIONISE THE COSMETIC AND FASHION INDUSTRIES.

THE BEST REMEDIES ARE FOUND IN NATURE.

THE EMU

The emu, *Dromaius novaehollandiae*, is the world's second largest living bird (only the ostrich is larger), and is native to Australia. Reaching a height of up to 2 metres, an adult bird can weigh over 50kg. Although flightless, the emu has very powerful legs, enabling it to run long distances, at up to 50km an hour, covering more than 2 metres in a stride. It can also kick forcefully, and many a drover's dog has met its end chasing emus.

EMU FARMING

In the 1970's, an Aboriginal group in Western Australia were given permission to capture 400 birds from the wild and experiment with breeding and the tanning of emu skins. In 1987, birds from this foundation stock were used to establish the present commercial emu farming industry. Since then the industry has grown rapidly throughout Australia.

Because the emu is a native species, only farm-bred or captive stock can be farmed.

Emus can be farmed in many different climatic and environmental conditions, provided that the industry's Code of Practice standards are met. They have no diseases common to the species, and being softfooted they have minimal impact on the soil.

Farmed emus will need to be fed correct rations set for optimum growing and breeding, usually in the form of pellets and grains.

A breeding pair will produce up to 40 eggs, which are collected and hatched in an incubator. The chicks are then reared in sheltered pens under lights, and must be shedded nightly until 3 months old.

At around 14 months the birds can be slaughtered and processed to yield a variety of products.

LEATHER

Emu skin is soft and supple, characterized by a raised area around the feather follicles which gives a pleasing dotted pattern. The body leather is used for clothing, boots, bags and wallets, as well as being a wonderful medium for crafts. The leather from the legs is striking in its almost reptilian appearance, and is sought after for belts, watch-bands, and features on clothing and accessories.

MEAT

The emu meat contains less than 0.05% cholesterol, and is already a proven consumer favourite in Europe. Dark red and tender, it has a pleasant gamey flavour and can be used in a variety of dishes. The flavour and tenderness of the meat is best enhanced by not over cooking it.

Try the following recipes!

EMU STIRFRY (Serves 4)

400g Emu Meat
1 large onion, sliced
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tbspn sugar
1/2 tbspns brown vinegar
1/2 cup oyster sauce
1 tspn chilli sauce, or to taste
125g snow peas
1 red capsicum, sliced
sesame oil
soy sauce

METHOD

1. Slice meat thinly, sprinkle with a little sesame oil and soy sauce.
2. Fry onion and capsicum until soft, then remove.
3. Lightly heat snow peas, remove.
4. Add meat, gently fry, remove.
5. Add garlic, sugar, chilli sauce and vinegar. Bring to the boil and add oyster sauce.
6. Add all ingredients, fry lightly.

Serve with boiled noodles.

EMU FILLET WITH QUANDONG CHILLI GLAZE (Serves 5)

5 x 200g pieces of emu fillet
25g dried quandongs
20g sugar
100 ml port wine
25ml red wine vinegar
2 hot chillies, sliced
250g strong veal stock or demi-glaze

METHOD

Simmer quandongs (native peaches) and sugar in 125ml of water for four or five minutes and allow to cool in liquid, In another pan, reduce port and vinegar until syrupy. Add quandongs to the liquid, chillies and stock. Simmer and reduce a little.

Cook emu fillets rare to medium rare over a charcoal grill. Serve with the sauce.

For an optional garnish use a piece of steamed hok choy (Chinese leaf vegetable).

Courtesy Andrew Fielke, Red Ochre Grill.

CHAR GRILLED EMU (Serves one)

180 g Emu Meat

MARINADE

1/4 cup red wine
1/2 tsp cracked black pepper
1/2 tsp coriander
1/2 tsp cumin

METHOD

1. Place all marinade ingredients together and add meat.

2. Marinate for 30 minutes or overnight.
3. To cook, place in a hot pan or chargrill. Do not over cook. Slice and serve.

OIL

Emu oil has been used for thousands of years by the Aborigines, and its remarkable qualities are now being scientifically acclaimed. The oil is extremely fine, making it exceptionally penetrating, and is used in treatments for muscular and joint ailments, as well as cosmetics and skin care products.

EGGS

The eggs have a distinctive dark green granulated surface. They are very attractive when carved, or made into ornaments and jewellery items. The Aborigines have eaten the eggs for years, and they were a nutritious addition to the diets of the early white settlers. Many shearers cooks would still welcome these giant equivalents to a dozen hen eggs for the morning's scrambled eggs!

THE S.A. EMU FARMERS ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed in 1992, and has had a rapid growth in membership. It is actively engaged in exploring slaughtering and processing avenues, as well as researching products and establishing markets. Its members have access to up-to-date information on farming and transporting techniques.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Specific information on all aspects of emu breeding, farming, and product marketing can be obtained through the South Australian Emu Farmers Association.

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