

## Feeding the Pioneer Settlers

### Read the text and create a graphic timeline.

Mothers of pioneer families often had to make meals from very little. All too often if food was insufficient, mother did without. So far as possible, food was home-grown. Flour was ground from wheat by a hand-mill. Family food might include vegetables, perhaps eggs. Occasionally, a sheep or pig was killed. Rabbits or kangaroos might vary the diet. If tea supplies ran out, bread was sometimes charred, with hot water poured over the crumbs. Henry Lawson wrote that as a boy he had bread and treacle, or bread and dripping, tea and perhaps pumpkin pie.

In 1877, Ann Currie, at Lardner near Drouin, made cheese and butter. She grew vegetables and fruit. Among her fruits were apples, melons, gooseberries, currants, strawberries, pumpkins and cucumbers. She exchanged what she did not need with neighbours and sold butter and cheese to shops in Drouin. The Bussell family at Cattle Chosen near Busselton in Western Australia sold butter, cheese and potatoes at the Swan River settlement (Perth) and to American whaling ships in Geopraphe Bay.

Men working hard in bush camps ate bread and jam, bread and honey and bread and dripping. They rarely had fresh meat as squatters would not sell it. Golden syrup or treacle was often eaten if jam cost too much. Old Ned Edwards of Baradine in New South Wales said wild goat was 'awful'. It tasted of gum leaves. The men cooked salt meat, potatoes and pumpkin with water in a camp oven, and piled more coals on the lid. Damper, their usual bread, was cooked in another camp oven. They mixed flour, salt, cream of tartar and bicarbonate of soda with water on a shovel or sheet of bark. The dough was dusted with flour, then put in a camp oven and baked for half an hour. Before camp ovens came into use the damper was cooked in hot ashes.

Many pioneers had a poor diet, lacking fresh food. Flies and lack of cleanliness caused illness, and people had to live under difficult conditions.

### How has food production changed?

Compare Australia's Pioneer population with current population figures and think about the importance of having enough food and fibre for everyone that is safe and good to eat. Discuss Food Security.

Design and make a graphic timeline showing how technology has developed on farms to demonstrate how farming has changed over time from self-sufficiency to feeding the nation.

You can choose one industry, such as dairy or grain to investigate. Start with noting the livestock that arrived with First Fleet and/or the first garden at Sydney Cove. Along the way, note advances in machinery, technology, scientific inventions and change in farm size. You may also want to look at changes in transport, processing and packaging to show your understanding of changing technology in farming.