



Three-field system: barley year

This year, this field is in “barley year” under the three-field system. The picture on the right illustrates the three years of the three-field system. The farmer usually sows barley in the last week of April and harvests in the last week of August. Today’s crop farming in Karum is similar to crop farming in the 19th century, but is much quicker and simpler thanks to modern implements.

SOWING PAST AND PRESENT

In the past, the farmer sowed the field by hand. Today the farmer uses a manure spreader to sow the barley in a similar way.

After sowing, the barley is turned down into the earth. In the 19th century, it was done with an “ard” (or scratch plough). This implement scratched furrows in the ground with the help of a pointed, iron-clad wooden wedge. The ard was pulled by oxen or horses. Today the farmer uses a tractor to pull a field tiller, which does the same job on the soil as the blade of the ard.

HARVESTING PAST AND PRESENT

Farmers in the 19th century harvested with scythes that cut off the straws at the ground. Then they threshed the barley by hand using a wooden implement called a flail to separate the chaff. Threshing was carried out in autumn and winter. Today, the farmer uses a motor powered combine harvester that cuts and threshes at the same time.

AFTER-GRAZING

After barley year came the fallow year, when the soil rested. Sometimes the farmers used the transition period for after-grazing. The cattle were then allowed to graze on the waste left after the harvest.

BEER AND FOOD

Barley was used above all for beer brewing and Öland barley was known to be particularly good. Öland barley had buyers in many towns, and it was even exported to England. Barley was also used for food, for example barley meal porridge, and for animal fodder.

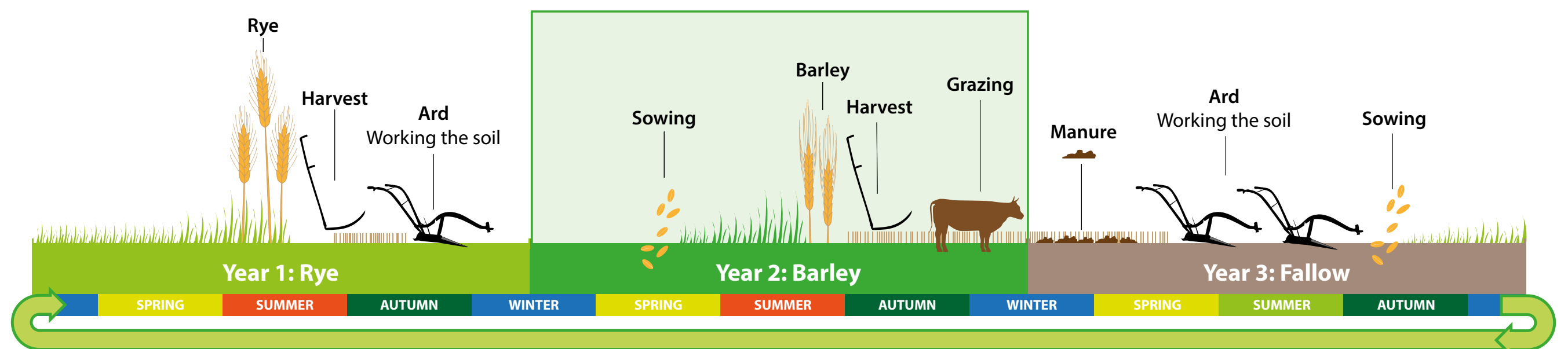


Illustration: The County Administrative Board in Kalmar County.



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Today the farmer uses a tractor with a manure spreader to sow. The manure spreader contains barley or rye which is thrown out in the same way as when farmers sowed by hand. The soil has been prepared with a field tiller and looks just as tufty as it did in the past.



Photo: Kalmar County Museum photo library.

The photo is not from Karum, but it shows sowing in 1920 on a field owned by the brothers Karl and Viktor Johansson. One of the brothers has a basket of seeds and is taking a fistful to cast it out on the field. The boy holding the horses’ reins has been driving the tiller to break up the soil before sowing.



Länsstyrelsen
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