



# Three-field system: rye year

This year, the field is in “rye year” in the three-field system. The picture on the right illustrates the three years of the three-field system. The farmer sows rye in the autumn before rye year and often harvests it in early August. The rye grown in Karum today is the ancient species called Gotland Rye.

## GOTLAND RYE

The rye that is grown here in Karum is an ancient species which is not used in modern farming. Old species are called heritage grains. On Öland the heritage grains Högby Rye and Öland Rye were widespread in the 19th century. Unfortunately they became extinct and today the heritage grain Gotland Rye from Gotland is used. It thrives just as well on Öland since the climate and soil are similar.

About 10 ha of Gotland Rye is grown every year. The area is roughly as big as 20 football pitches. As far as we know, there is nowhere else in Sweden where as much Gotland Rye is grown as in Karum.

## THE ADVANTAGE OF HERITAGE GRAINS

Heritage grains often contain more nutrition, minerals and antioxidants than modern grains. Gotland Rye has a longer stem than modern types of rye and it is more resistant to drought and disease.

## TASTY RYE FLOUR

Just like today, rye flour was used a lot for food. Above all, women baked bread, also using rye to make gruel and porridge. A knob of butter made it extra delicious.

At the Kvarnkullen information centre closer to the village you will find flipcharts with field weeds and other flowers in Karum – don't miss that!

If you are here in the summer you can see two field weeds, Corncockle and Rye Brome, in bloom on the rye fields. Both weeds are rare because their seeds are easy to remove in today's modern farming. Corncockle and Rye Brome also find it difficult to self-sow. It serves them well to be sown together with rye in autumn, when their seeds sprout best.

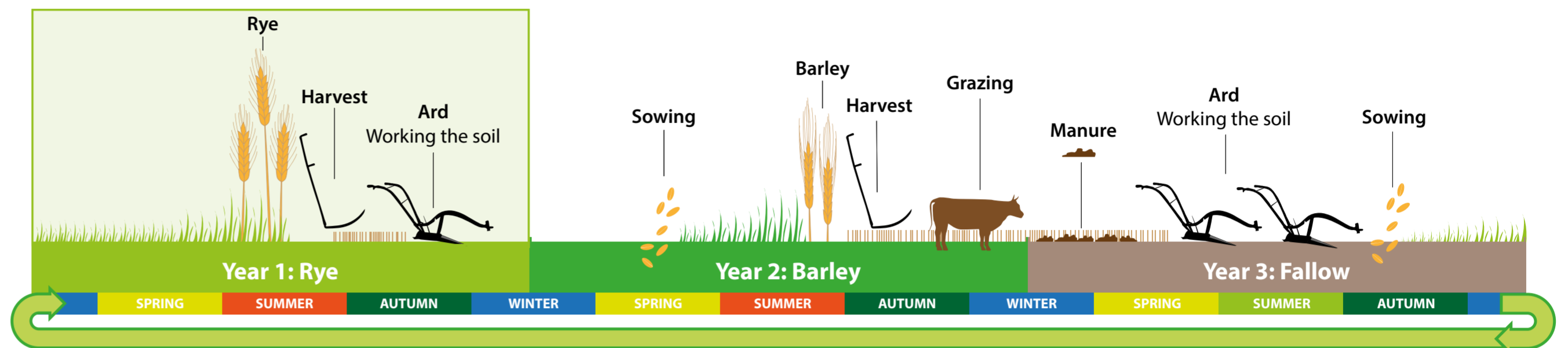


Illustration: The County Administrative Board in Kalmar County.



Corncockle, *Agrostemma githago*.  
Illustrations: Emma Tannert.

Rye Brome, *Bromus secalinus*.



Today the rye in Karum is harvested with modern machines.



The photo from 1920 shows the rye harvest in Vedby, not far from Karum. The men cut the rye with scythes – the tools they are holding in their hands. The sharp blade of the scythe cut the straws near the ground. The women collected the rye and tied it in sheaves.



Länsstyrelsen  
Kalmar län