



## A quiet revolution in Australian chicken farming

On their home farm “Kildare” just out of Tenterfield NSW, the Sommerlad family personally manage their exclusive heritage table poultry strains, and breed and develop Australia’s award-winning Sommerlad chicken.

### A genetic project that began with a passion for animal welfare

Today, all large Australian chicken farms (including free-range, organic or RSPCA approved), rear the same fast growing meat chicken strains: Ross and Cobb. These strains, also known as broilers, are developed overseas specifically for intensive production, and do not cope as well outdoors as the hardier table poultry strains did before them.

Seeking more appropriate genetics and a fundamental welfare change, Michael Sommerlad, founding director of Sommerlad Poultry returned to Australia’s original table poultry breeds: including the Australian Game, Light Sussex, Croad Langshan and Plymouth Rock to develop slower growing meat chickens specifically suited to Australian pasture rearing conditions.

Sommerlad chickens boast a range of superior, high welfare characteristics. These include active foraging behaviour, balanced body conformation, strong legs, heat-resistance and improved natural resistance to diseases endemic to Australian poultry flocks.

It’s a large investment to breed and develop alternative meat chicken strains, however the Sommerlads believe that family farmers are the keepers of traditional farming knowledge and genetic diversity in plants and animals, which can be easily lost to intensive agribusiness.

**At a time when nearly all chicken farmed and eaten in our country comes from the same genetic stock, Sommerlad represents a quiet revolution in Australian chicken farming.**

Sommerlad Poultry were awarded ‘Outstanding Innovation’ at the 2015 Delicious Produce Awards.

### Artisan Production

To help reconnect people to their local farmer and food source, the Sommerlads’ work with a dedicated group of family farmers throughout Australia who are authorised to grow out their day-old chicks.

Each Sommerlad Authorised Farmer hand rears the birds in small flocks, using traditional pasture rearing methods as an integral and sustainable part of their whole farm plan.

You will notice subtle differences in each farmer’s finished table birds, influenced by their soil type and native pasture species, as well as their local feed sources and processing method. These differences are something to be celebrated as they represent artisan poultry farming.

For the official list of Sommerlad Authorised Farmers please visit:  
[www.sommerladpoultry.com.au](http://www.sommerladpoultry.com.au)  
[www.facebook.com/sommerladpoultry](https://www.facebook.com/sommerladpoultry)  
Instagram @sommerladpoultry



## Premium Poultry

### Flavour and Texture

Sommerlad chickens have an inherently slow growth rate which allows their organs, muscles, and bones to grow in harmony and gives them time to develop nutrient dense meat with outstanding texture and flavour. Between 10 and 14 weeks of age they are selected for the table.

### Skin

The skin colour can vary depending on the bird's heritage genetics. The colour becomes deeper with age, outdoor pasture rearing, and whole grain feeding. In the kitchen Sommerlad chickens are known for their strong skin which offers exceptional handling quality and a superb crispness once cooked.

### Coloured Feathers

Sommerlad chickens boast an elegantly hued plumage. Occasionally signs of feathers may show on your processed chicken. The birds are more mature when processed, and their feathers have a strong hold on their body. Each bird is 'hand-finished' before packaging, but every last sign of their ruff is not removed, as this is part of your guarantee of provenance.

### Body Shape

Sommerlad chickens customarily have a more elongated body, well developed legs, and larger, stronger bones which are perfect for making nutritious stock. This is in stark contrast to Ross and Cobb meat chickens which have short, immature legs compared to their large quantity of breast meat.

### Cooking Tips

Low and slow roasting perfectly complements Sommerlad chickens, and further cooking tips and recipes are available from each farmer.

### Traceability and Provenance

The wing bands on Sommerlad chickens allow the traceability of each bird's breeding heritage and identifies the farmer who reared them. These can be left in during the cooking process, and you can quote the number should you like to offer your valuable feedback.

### Point of Sale Information and Promotion

Point-of-sale items are available upon request to help you and your staff inform and educate your customers. Short, in-house training and tasting sessions are also available by arrangement.

### To the Restaurateur

As you would for a fine wine, Sommerlad farmers request that you acknowledge their farm as well as the breed of chicken on your menu and promotional platforms, for example: "Grassland Poultry Sommerlad Chicken". Occasionally there may be unavoidable and unforeseen reasons why a supply arrangement cannot be met. If this incidence should happen we understand you may not be able to remove references. However, we hope that you would preserve your integrity and the integrity of Sommerlad chicken, by offering your customers a clear explanation regarding any alternative chicken and the reasons why.



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