




# Amplifying Stories of Agroecology Practices and Principles

Jonai Farms and  
Meatsmiths







*Jonai Farms and Meatsmiths is a family farm located on unceded Dja Dja Wurrung country, Central Highlands, Victoria. The Jonai family (Tammi, Stuart, Oscar, Antigone & Atticus Jonas) grew tired of choosing between saving the world and savouring it, so they figured out a way to do both. In May 2011, they left behind the suburbs of Melbourne and turned their lives upside down, embarking on a journey across America to learn from ethical farmers. They returned home with the ambition to create a beacon farm where food sovereignty and degrowth are enacted, demonstrating that it is possible to nurture the land, care for animals, support the community, and grow food in a way that respects the environment, and honours both past and future generations.*


*It all starts with land and the recognition that Jonai Farms holds title to unceded sovereign Djaara land. Adopting a decolonial stance, they have a rent-free landsharing agreement with Tumpinyeri Growers to share resources, labour, and community, while actively working to break down power imbalances and foster equitable relationships through integrated small-scale enterprises.*

*Next comes their commitment to self-sufficiency, with everything produced either in-house or in close synergy with the local community. In 2013, Jonai Farms became the first in Australia to crowdfund the construction of a licensed butcher's shop on the farm. A year later, they repeated this success to build a licensed curing room and commercial kitchen. This allowed them to produce farmstead cured meats, charcuterie, bone stocks, and lard-based soaps, creating a full nose-to-tail, zero-waste offering—all crafted locally and independently from external corporate structures.*

*A key element of their vision is the practice of degrowth, woven through a deeply localised, solidarity-based economy. Their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model exemplifies this, where risks and rewards are shared between producers and consumers. Prices are set based on use-value, ensuring affordability while covering living costs, with an emphasis on sufficiency, mindful consumption, and equitable resource distribution. This approach not only fosters resilience but strengthens community connections, aligning with the broader goals of food sovereignty and social equity.*

*In doing so, Jonai Farms is not just a farm, but a living example of a future where small-scale, integrated local economies form the foundation of a more just and sustainable food system. With every step, they continue to challenge the status quo, proving that it is possible to live in harmony with the land, the community, and future generations.*





***"Starting with our feet on the ground and taking strength from our mutual obligations of care with Country, we are collectivising, organising, and acting to mend relations between soil and society, healing the rift at the core of the ecological, social, cultural and economic crises of our times."***

**Tammi Jonas, co-custodian of the farm**



# Foreword

Welcome to our project, where we strive to bring the 13 Principles of Agroecology to life for farmers and policymakers alike. Given that accessible information on this topic is limited, we are excited to present visually engaging leaflets which speak directly to you. Through captivating visuals and real-world examples, we aim to illustrate how these principles can be practically applied in various agricultural settings.

We have interviewed farmers who are already implementing these principles, and we are eager to share their stories with you. Our goal is to build an informative and inspirational case study repository that not only raises awareness but also fosters a deeper understanding of agroecology.

By focusing on easy-to-digest visuals and practical insights, we hope to make learning about and adopting agroecological practices both enjoyable and impactful for everyone involved in agriculture.

## The 13 Principles of Agroecology

- Overview of the High-Level Panel of Experts' (HLPE) 13 Agroecology Principles.





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# Jonai Farms and Meatsmiths



2025



Jonai Farms and Meatsmiths is a family farm located on unceded Dja Dja Wurrung country, Central Highlands, Victoria.

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Utilised agricultural area in hectares 28.5

Occupational status Full-time

Number of people working on the farm 7 people (4 family members)

Agricultural certifications Community accreditation through radical transparency - anyone from the community is welcome to visit the farm.

Farming activities Horticulture (open air)  
Livestock farming

Type of crops Pigs, cattle, layer chickens  
Wide range of cultivars: garlic, leafy greens, radishes, zucchini, sunflower shoots, cucumbers, brassicas.

# Agroecological integration

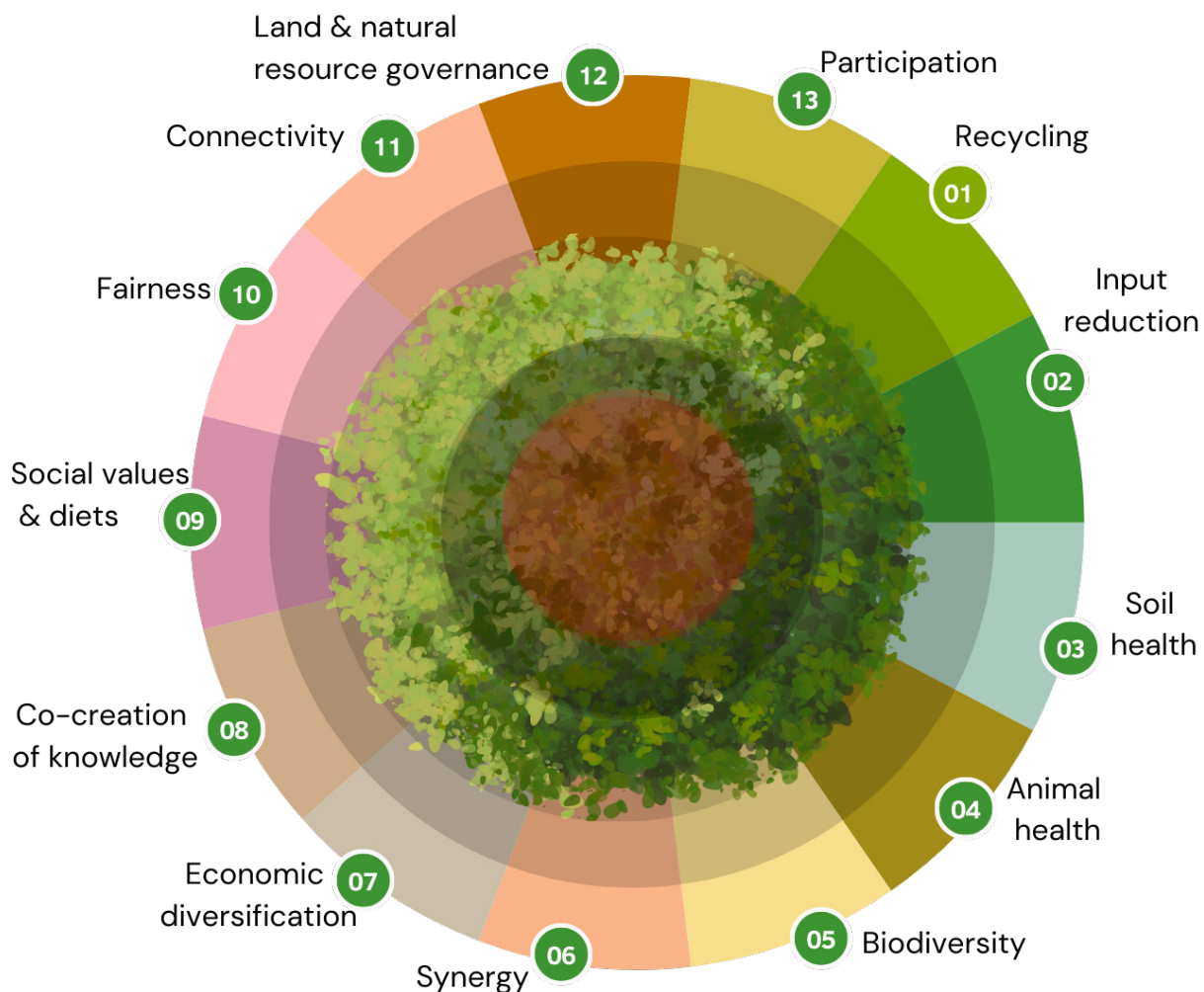
Agroecological integration corresponds to the degree of alignment of a farm with each of the 13 Principles of Agroecology, based on the Agroecology Assessment Framework. It can be understood as the boundaries within which agroecological farming operates, with a minimum of four core principles to be met: co-creation of knowledge, social values and diets, fairness, and participation.

The agroecology principles encompass ecological, socio-cultural, technological, economic and political dimensions, aiming to ensure that agricultural

activities do not degrade natural resources, disrupt ecosystems, or compromise food security and community wellbeing. By operating within these limits, agroecology aims to create a harmonious balance between farming, people and nature.

In this case study, agroecological integration is based on farmers' self-assessment of how ascale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating no alignment and 5 indicating a strong alignment. Note that some principles might not be applicable.

*Jonai Farms scored highest on all principles.*

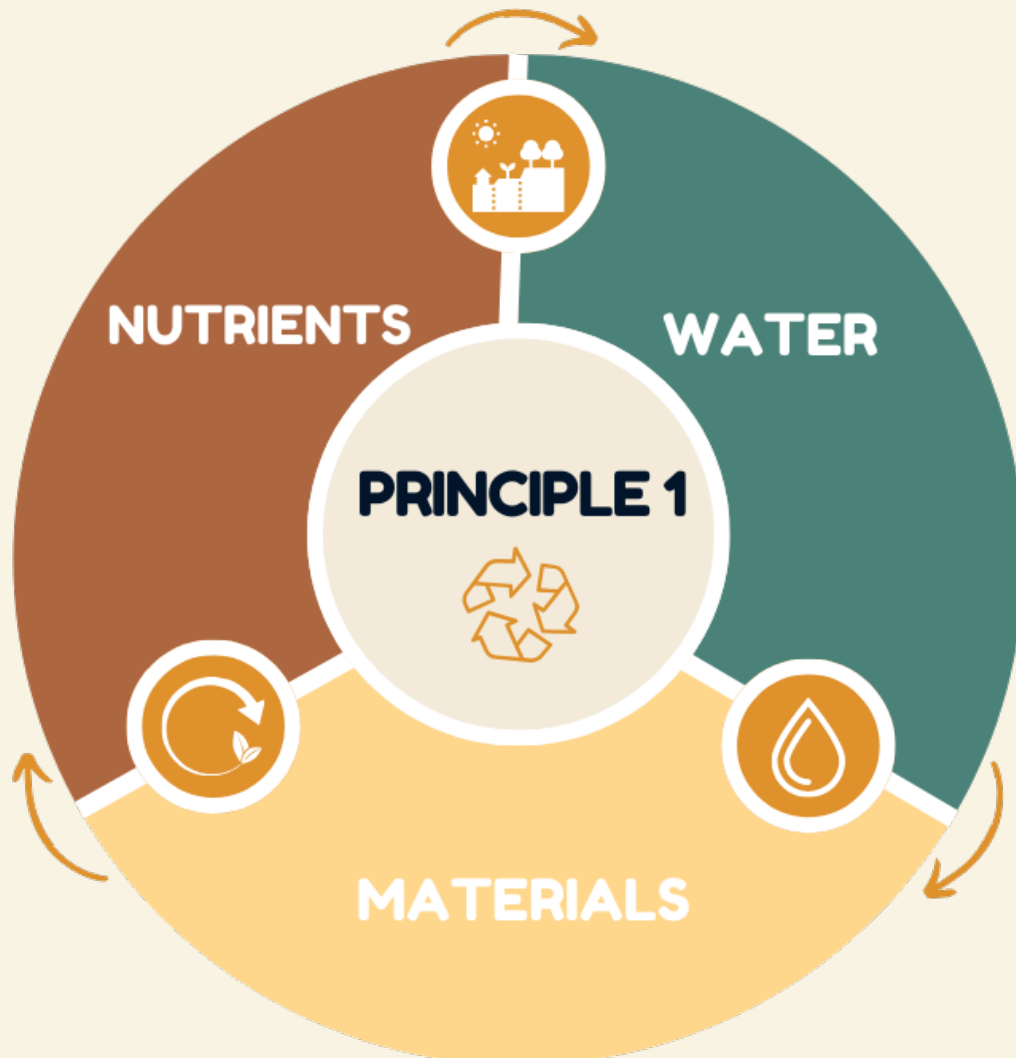




## Principles

# Principle 1 – Recycling

Preferentially use local renewable resources and close as far as possible resource cycles of nutrients and biomass.



The farm actively works to close nutrient cycles at all levels and prioritises the use of second-hand and reusable materials,

following the principle of not purchasing new items.



Dry toilet – humanure.



Compost bin.

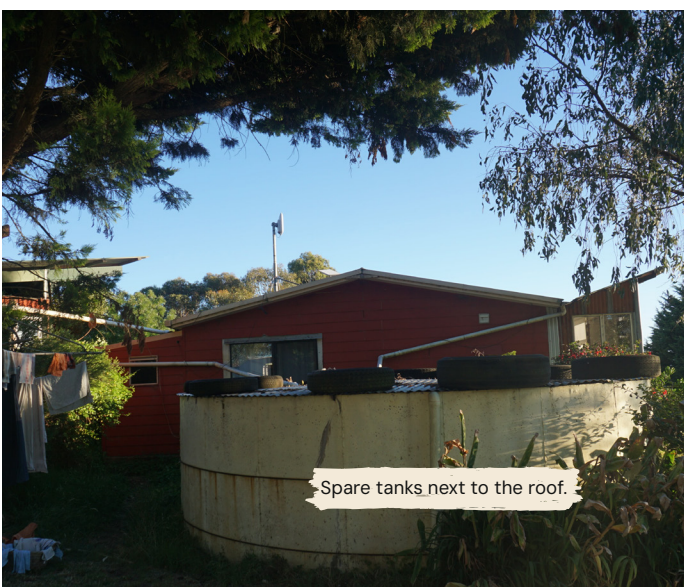
**Nutrients.** Nutrient cycles are closed by recycling butchering surpluses (skin, gristle, and bones), fallen tree material (leaves, branches, twigs) from the local council, and leaves from the Tumpinyeri Growers' market garden. All are composted in a solar-powered drum made from secondhand materials, with the compost used to fertilise garden beds and humanure applied to shelterbelt trees.



Green house built using recycled materials.

**Materials.** Packaging is either reusable, compostable, or minimised. Christmas hams are sent in cloth bags for reuse, and paper is used for outer packaging. Due to the supplier discontinuing compostable Cryovac bags, plastic Cryovac bags are now being used in the boning room, as no alternative is currently available.

**Water.** The farm recycles greywater to irrigate tree crops and collects rainwater from every roof, storing it for drinking, washing, and other needs.



Spare tanks next to the roof.



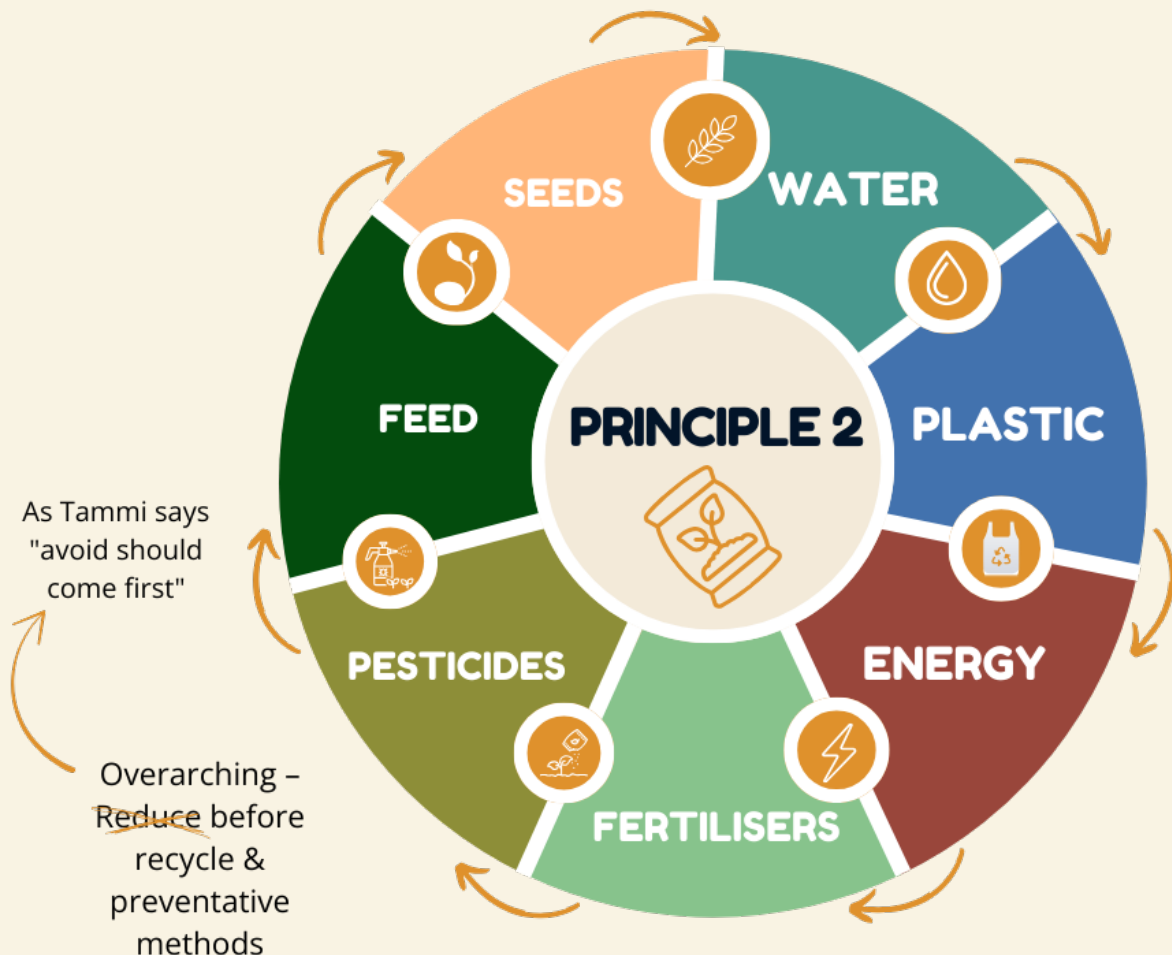
Rainwater harvesting from the roof.



## Principles

# Principle 2 – Input reduction

Reduce or eliminate dependency on purchased inputs and increase self-sufficiency.



Dependence on purchased inputs is minimised, and self-sufficiency is strengthened by utilising resources available on the farm or in the local area. Animal feed is sourced from local businesses that

would otherwise dispose of it as waste. This approach reduces the farm's reliance on external inputs and promotes a system in which resources are recirculated, benefiting all involved.



Solar panels.



Veggie oil from cafés.



Electric motorbike.

2025

**Energy.** Energy use is avoided and reduced to its maximum through key guiding principles:

- Energy from waste: most farm vehicles run on waste vegetable oil from local cafes and restaurants.
- On-site production of renewable energy: solar panels supply most of the farm's energy needs, including powering irrigation pumps, the composting drum, and refrigeration in the boning room.
- Passive solar design: every newly built structure on the farm has been constructed to optimise solar orientation.
- Minimise use: energy consumption is kept to a minimum by using appliances as little as possible, while vehicle use is minimised by driving only when absolutely necessary and maximising each trip's utility.

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**Water.** The farm's policy is not to use water unless needed (e.g., limit showers and using greywater). Water needs are reduced by selecting drought-tolerant crops and enhancing soil carbon to retain moisture.

**Seeds.** Seeds are saved and exchanged both on the farm and with other local farmers.



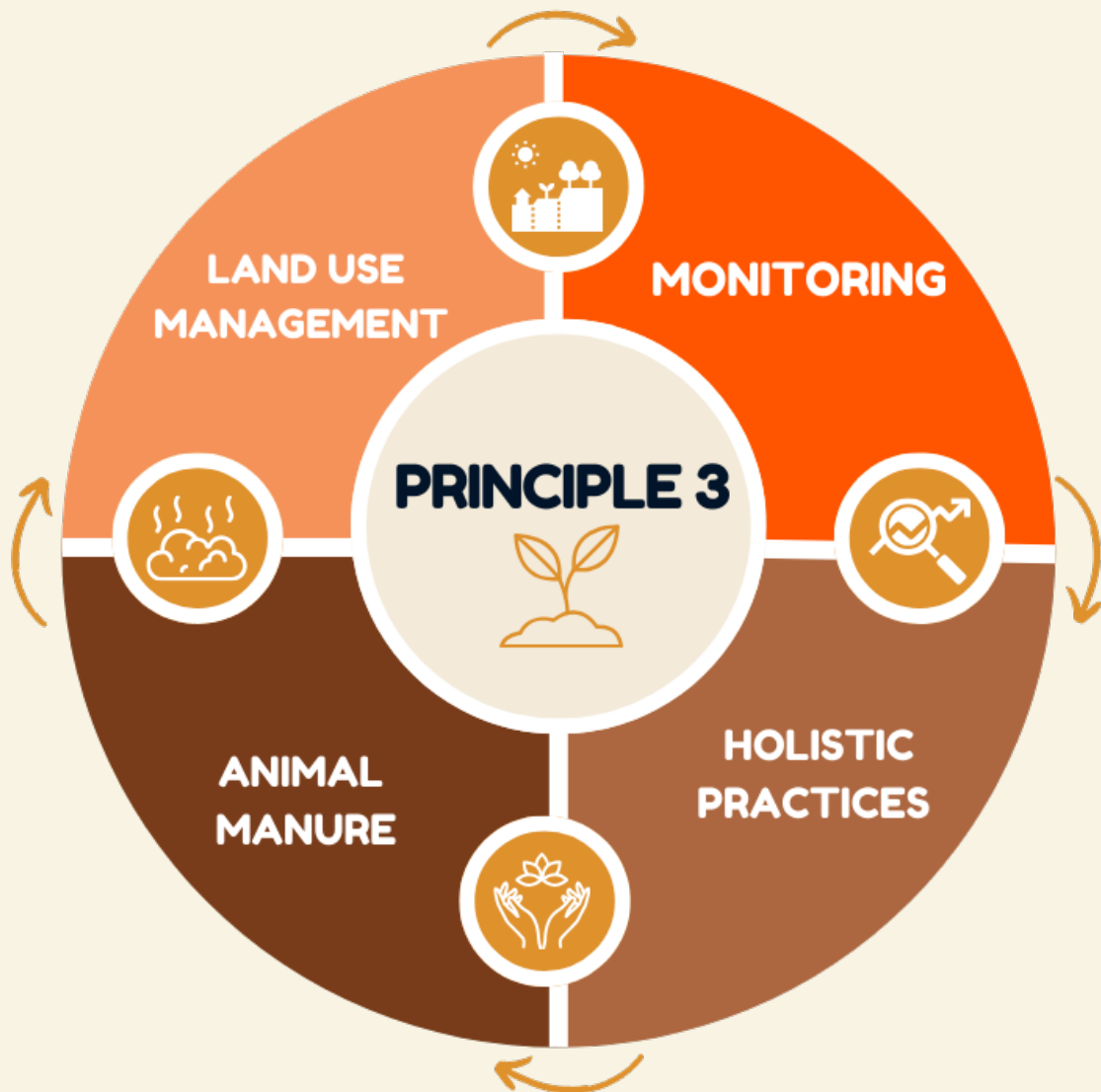
Truck running on veggie oil from cafés (Photo by Benj Binks).



## Principles

# Principle 3 – Soil health

Secure and enhance soil health and functioning for improved plant growth, particularly by managing organic matter and enhancing soil biological activity.



Holistic approaches are used to improve soil health, prevent land degradation and erosion, with a strong focus on understanding the land and soil. By assessing soil health during

daily walks looking for visual signs, the farm can evaluate and adjust practices as needed, allowing for quick adjustments.



Carbon sequestration through high fiber pig-feed from brewery.

**Monitoring.** Monitoring activities rely on visual indicators like bare soil patches and deep litter between grass strands. If bare patches appear, pigs are moved to a new area. The buildup of organic material supports the formation of humus layers (a dark, nutrient-rich substance called humus), which improve soil structure and help prevent erosion.

**Holistic practices.** The farm uses a holistic approach to soil health, enhancing vitality and promoting carbon sequestration. Pigs on a high-fiber diet sequester carbon in the soil through their manure, enriching it with organic matter. Green manure, straw on garden beds, and biofertilisers also support soil health and climate resilience.

**Land use management.** Soil erosion is prevented by ensuring animals are kept in areas that suit the landscape. For example, pigs are kept off steep hills to avoid the risk of erosion.



Use of second-hand tarp to break down green manure.



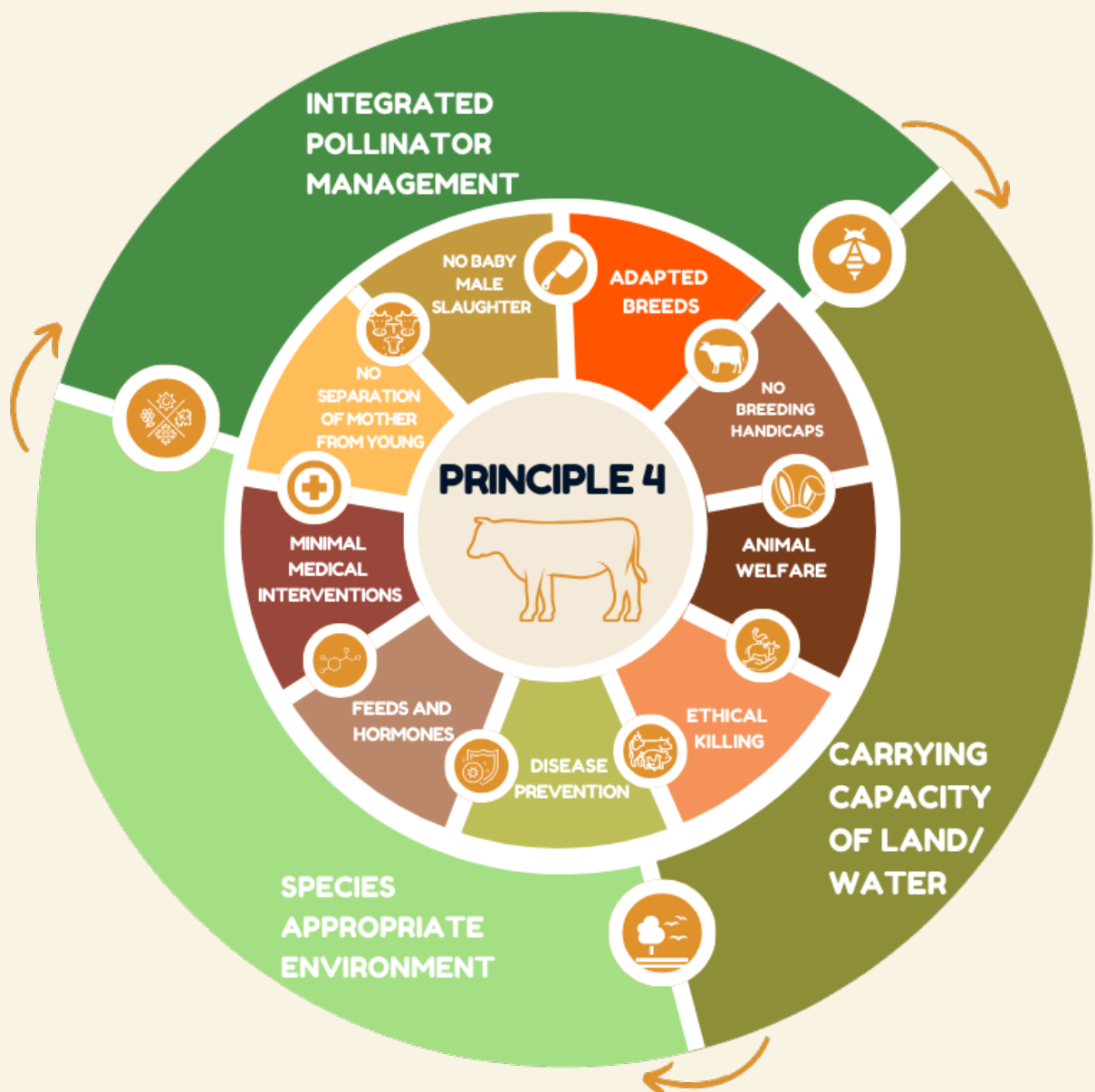
Resting paddock after discovery of bare patches.



## Principles

# Principle 4 – Animal health

Ensure animal health and welfare.



Holistic approaches are used to promote both physical and emotional health of the animals. Various measures are taken to ensure and improve animal health on the

farm, including using natural remedies to treat diseases and applying practices that enhance pig welfare, such as nurturing their social life by always keeping sows in pairs.



**Adapted breeds.** The farm raises heritage-breed Large Black pigs, known for their hardiness and suitability for outdoor living, alongside a variety of heritage and modern cattle on pasture.



**Ethical killing.** An on-farm abattoir is being built to avoid dependency on Australia's largest meat processor JBS Foods. This facility will claim the last stage of food production, ensuring ethical slaughter through immediate stunning, eliminating transport, and avoiding unfamiliar environments for the animals.

**Animal welfare.** Shade on the farm is limited, making it challenging to provide adequate cover for the pigs. In response, trees were planted, and second-hand trampolines were repurposed to create shaded areas.



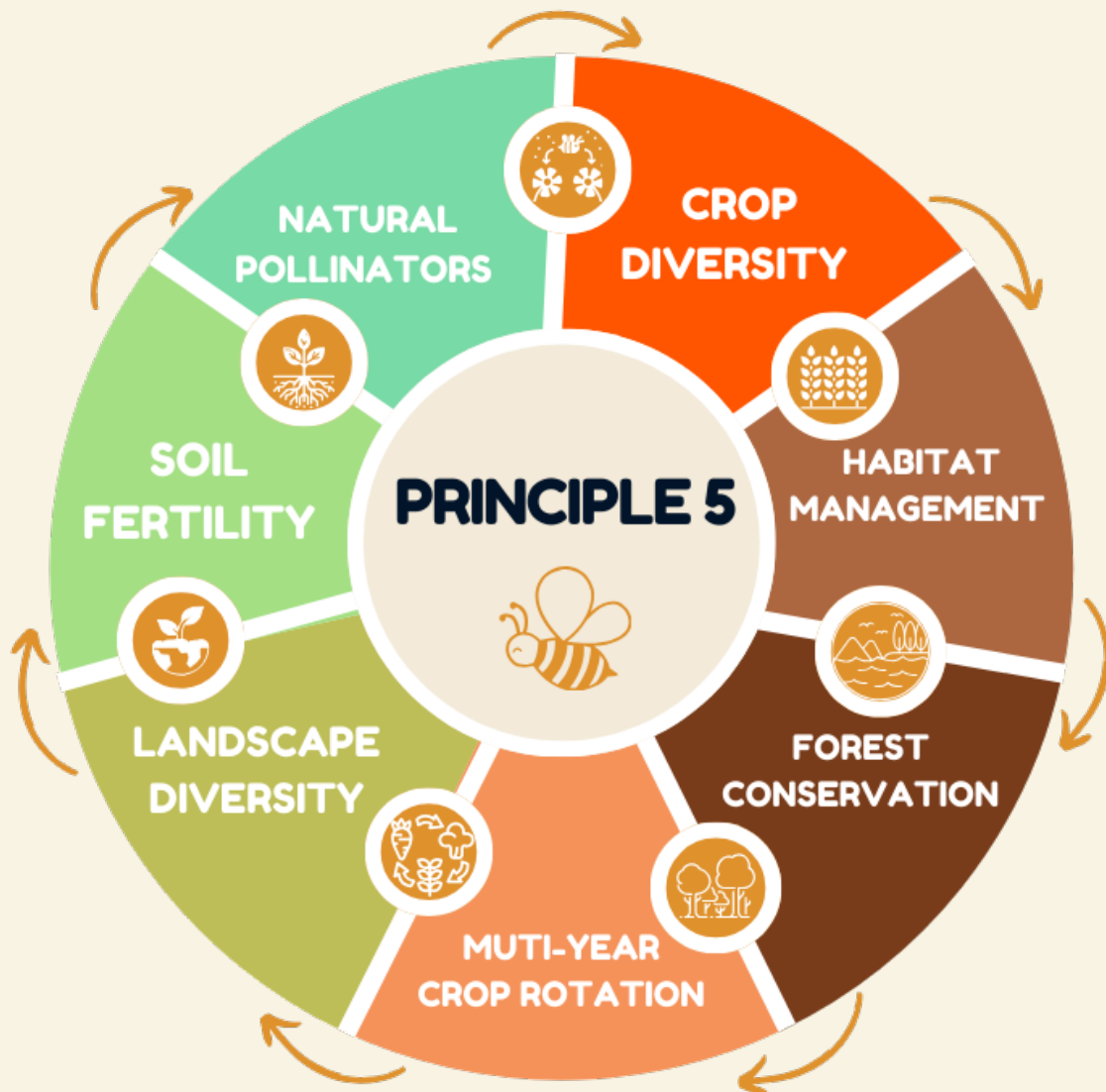
**Carrying capacity of land/water.** The number of sows raised on the farm was reduced from 14 to 9 to minimise environmental impact. With a larger herd, maintaining good ground cover became challenging, so the decision was to decrease the number of sows despite the trade-off of reduced meat sales.





# Principle 5 – Biodiversity

**Maintain and enhance diversity of species, functional diversity and genetic resources and thereby maintain overall agroecosystem biodiversity in time and space at field, farm and landscape scales.**



Biodiversity is crucial for the farm, and in addition to the work being done at the farm level, Tammi has actively participated in Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meetings for the past 6-7 years. At the

farm, habitat management is based on the principle that conservation and food production can coexist, with efforts focused on creating synergies where both can thrive.



Pollinator management – attracting pollinators to greenhouse.

**Crop diversity.** Crop diversity is enhanced by introducing both indigenous local crops and native crops. These crops bring multiple benefits to ecosystems:

- Blackwoods fix nitrogen and make a good nurse tree for oaks which the pigs feed from.
- Bottle brushes and callistemons support local bird life, offering protection from predators.

**Habitat management.** Habitat management includes shelterbelts of native and exotic trees, planted to prevent soil erosion, act as windbreaks, and create wildlife corridors. Efforts also focus on frog habitats for pest control, which have attracted snakes that now help regulate rodent populations.



Shelter belt.



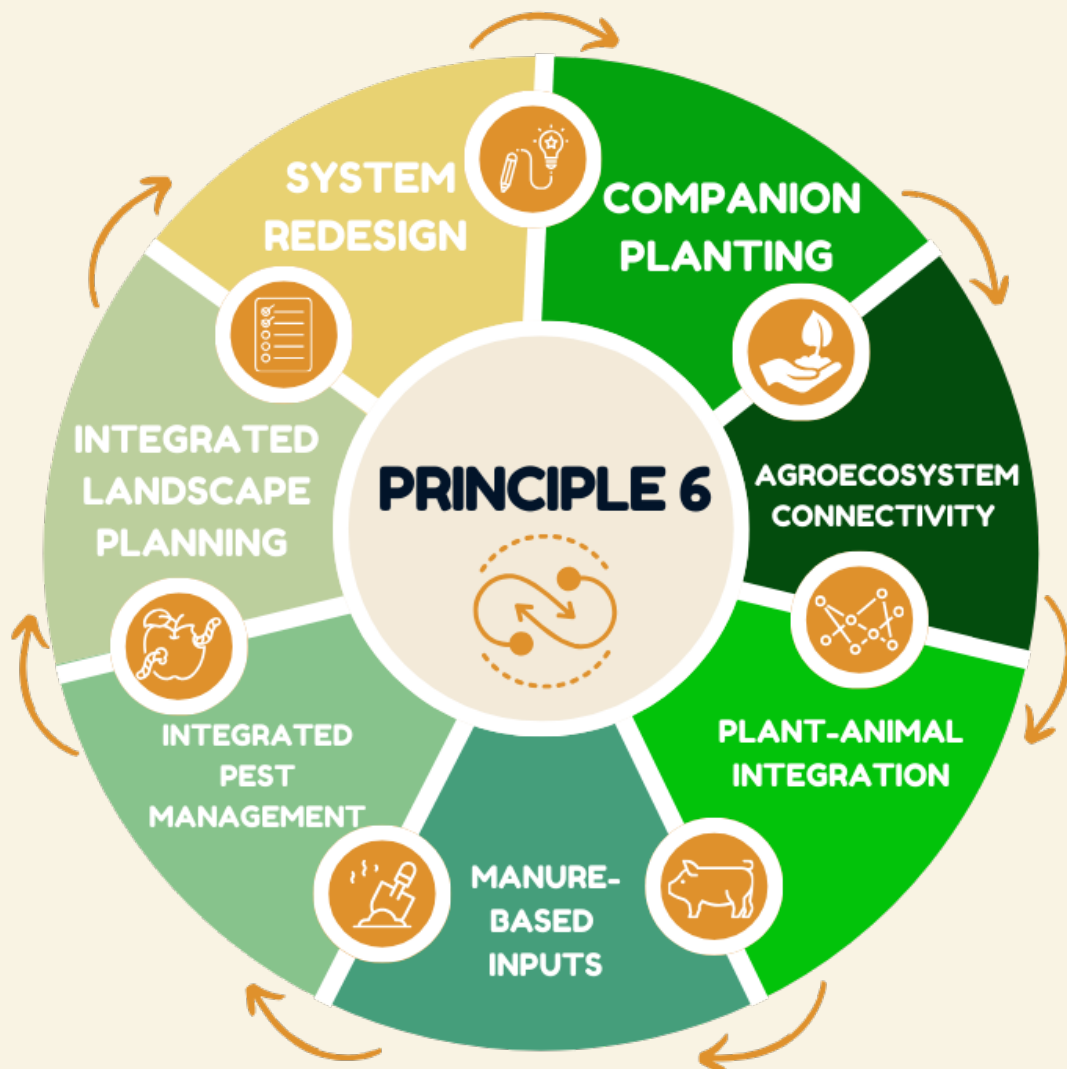
Kangaroos visiting.

**Forest conservation.** Conservation of forest fragments is done as an integral part of food production. Since moving to the farm, over 5,000 trees have been planted. The farm includes areas dedicated to thickets, shelterbelts, and individual paddock trees, combining native and exotic species for timber, nuts and fruits.



# Principle 6 – Synergy

Enhance positive ecological interaction, synergy, integration and complementarity among the elements of agroecosystems (animals, crops, trees, soil and water).



At the farm, synergies are sought at all levels, such as sharing land with Tumpinyeri Growers to balance net fertility producers (meat producers) with net fertility users (market gardeners). This approach also extends to human connections—

Tammi and her family prioritise strong relationships with those who eat their food, like sending jokes with monthly orders to a family they consider 'farm family'—selling food through a deeply connected, relational system.



Cow Wynny and her calf Ember.

**Plant-animal integration.** Holistic planned grazing is practised on the farm, where cattle are moved based on the season and availability. Grazing frequency ranges from once a day to once a week, depending on conditions, and paddock size is adjusted according to grazing duration. This approach prevents overgrazing, reduces parasitic infections, and allows native perennial grasses, such as kangaroo grass, to re-emerge after being suppressed by annual rye for years.

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**Companion planting.** The farm practices several examples of companion planting:

- The Three Sisters: an indigenous practice traditionally combining maize, pumpkin (replaced here by zucchini) and beans. Beans fix nitrogen, maize provides support and zucchini covers the ground to retain moisture.
- Basil and tomatoes: basil repels pests, while tomatoes provide shade and enhance basil's growth.
- Potatoes and sunflowers: sunflowers provide shade to the potatoes and attract beneficial insects for biological pest control.

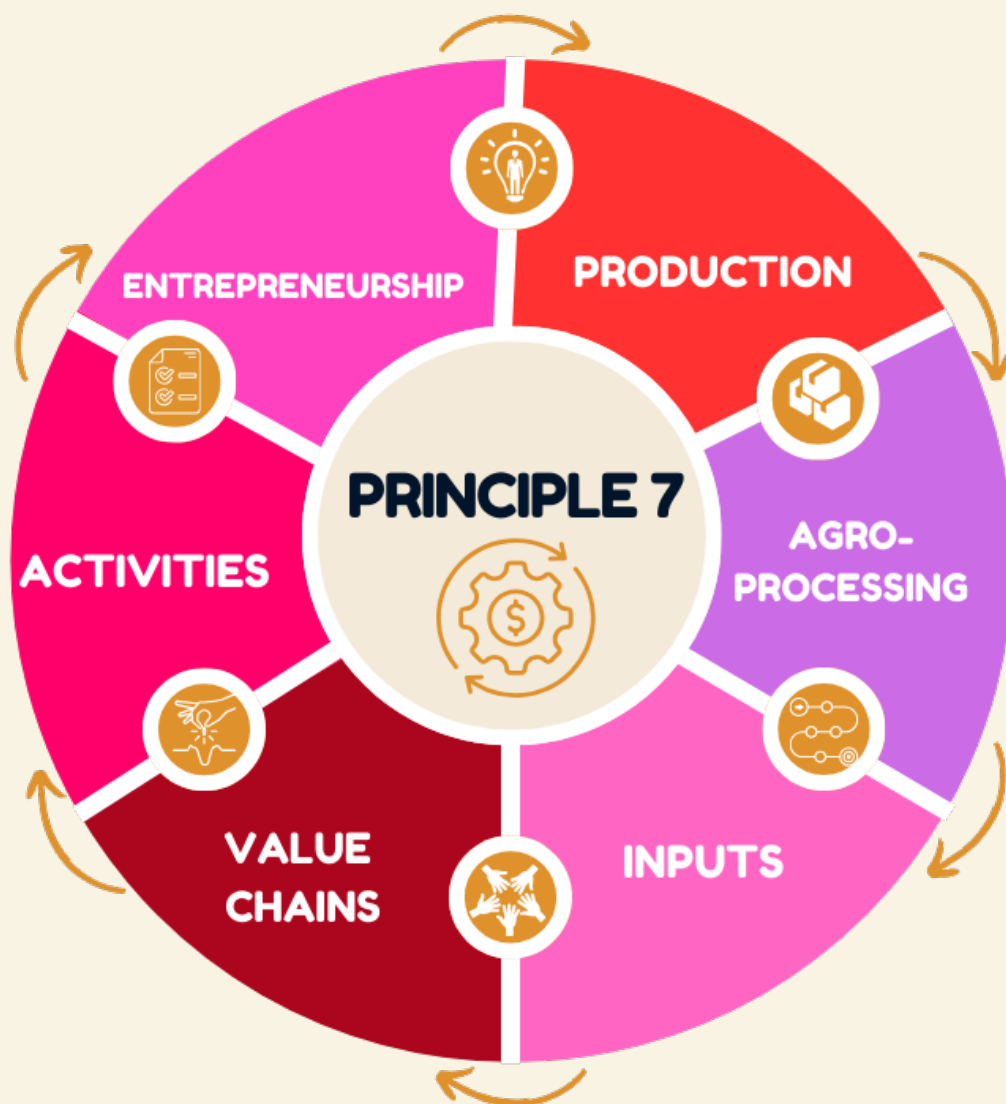


Animal paddocks for holistic grazing.



# Principle 7 – Economic diversification

Diversify on-farm incomes by ensuring that small-scale farmers have greater financial independence and value addition opportunities while enabling them to respond to demand from consumers.



Economic diversification is key to the farm's financial sustainability, achieved by selling a wide range of meat products, with all surplus yield being used. The farm's CSA, with 80 households

and a 20-year waiting list, provides secure income and fosters an economy of solidarity, ensuring long-term financial stability.



Community space.



Community space.

2025

**Production.** The farm produces a variety of meats, including fresh cuts, small goods, and charcuterie. All surplus animal yields are utilized: lard and tallow for soap, pig trotters, ears, and tails as pet treats, and bones for bone broth. The farm already produces pâté de tête, and once the abattoir is operational, they plan to sell offal and use intestines for sausage casings. Cattle hides may also be tanned for sale.

**Agro-processing.** Currently, the meat is cut in a sharing boning room with other local farmers. The future abattoir, 'The Meat Collective at Jonai', will be an incorporated association with voting members reliant on meat sales and non-voting members not. This structure ensures decisions are made by those most impacted, reflecting their vision of 'an anti-capitalist abattoir'.

**Activities.** The farm hosts a variety of activities, including workshops on butchery, cooking, and salami-making days. A volunteer residency programme, running for over 10 years and with around 75 participants, prioritises BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) and queer candidates. The farm also welcomes school groups, offering children the chance to experience hands-on farming.



Soap from fat.

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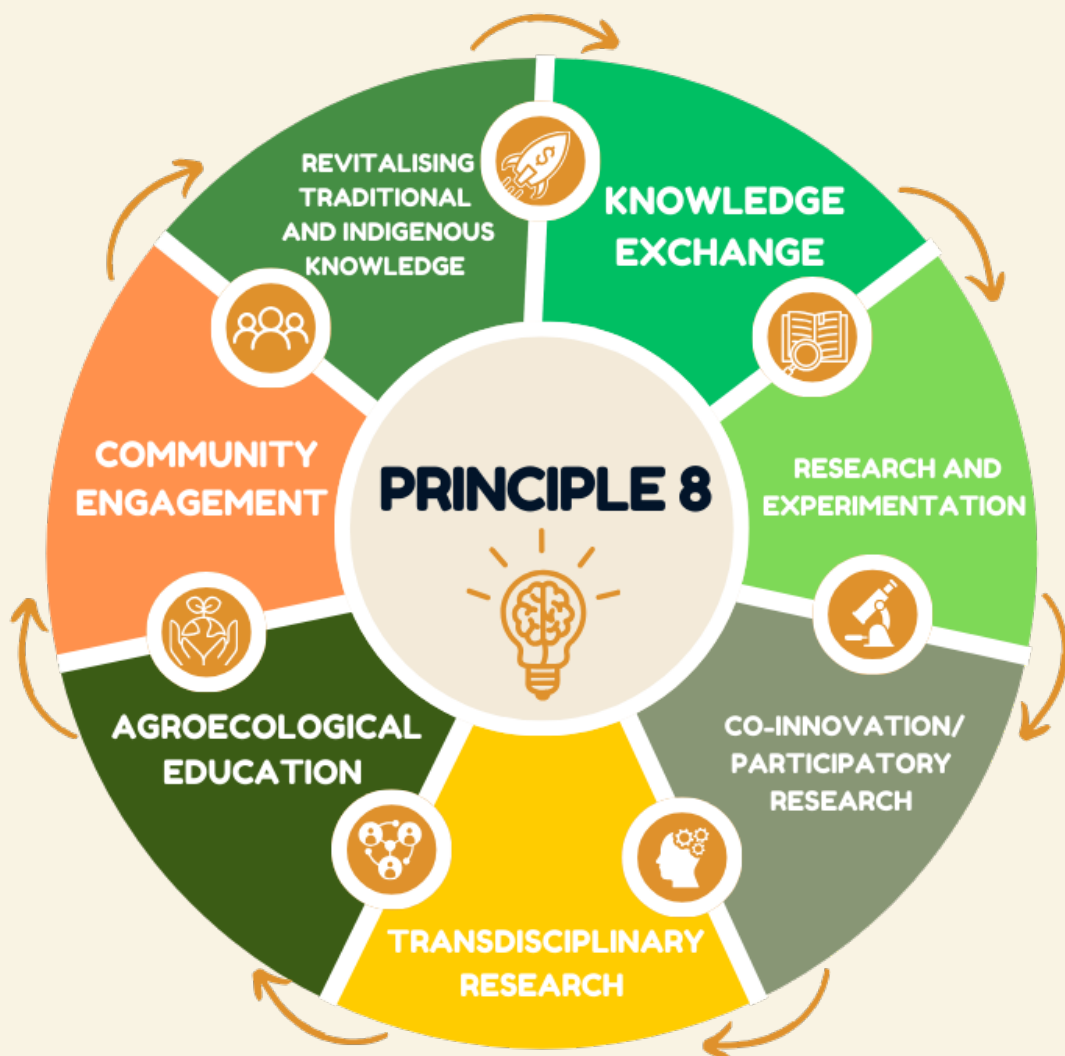
Farm workshop.



## Principles

# Principle 8 – Co-creation of knowledge

Enhance co-creation and horizontal sharing of knowledge including local and scientific innovation, especially through farmer-to-farmer exchange.



Co-creation of knowledge is essential at Jonai Farms, driven by a two-way learning process with the local farming community. This builds agency and fosters systemic change through collective learning. Knowledge about best practices is not for monetisation, but to be

shared widely, empowering others to adopt agroecological methods. In this way, the farm strengthens its own practices while contributing to a broader movement of mutual support and shared progress.



Meet preparation for *La Matanza* (the Killing).

**Knowledge exchange.** Agroecology dialogues are held at the farm, free of charge, providing a space for mutual learning among local farmers, including those transitioning to agroecology. Rather than a unilateral imparting of knowledge, these sessions foster two-way exchanges, building connections and networks that empower participants to continue their agroecological journeys together.



Agroecology Dialogue farm visit.



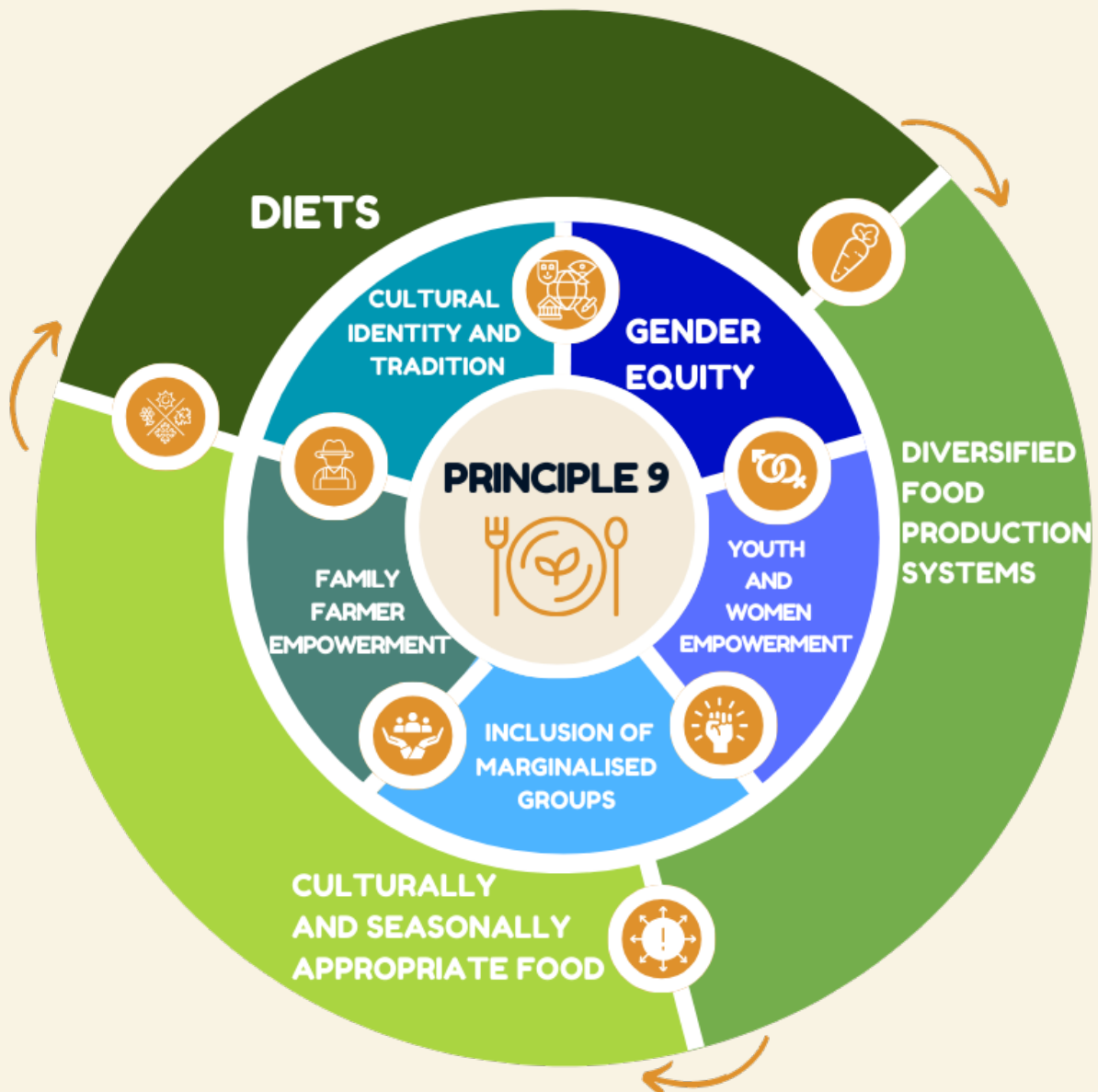
Agroecology Dialogue Day.

**Agroecological education.** The farm participates in the Agroecological Roadshow, an initiative by the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA) that takes agroecology to the public. The roadshow aims to inspire a broader community to embrace agroecology and lead their own dialogues across the country.



## Principle 9 – Social values & diets

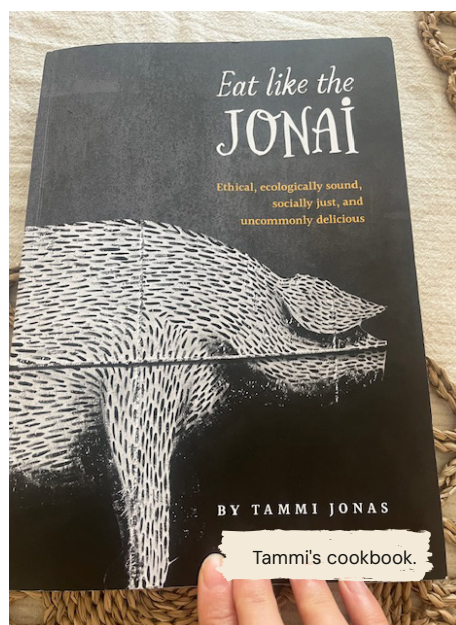
Build food systems based on the culture, identity, tradition, social and gender equity of local communities that provide healthy, diversified, seasonally and culturally appropriate diets.



The farm is guided by strong values and a commitment to transforming the food system, advocating for alternative models and food sovereignty. At its heart, the farm's work—

through farming, community engagement, and advocacy—is rooted in solidarity, promoting equity, social justice, and collective action for a more inclusive food system.

**Social values.** The farm upholds strong social values by promoting alternative food systems, equity and inclusion, supporting youth, women, LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and peasants. This is reflected in the high representation of young people, women, and queer individuals as farm hands and head 'meat grrls' in the boning room.



**Diets.** The farm is actively advocating for everyone's rights to culturally and seasonally appropriate, nutritious food.

- Engages in social media campaigns and political advocacy through AFSA.
- Published a cookbook, providing information on what a healthy, socially just and ecologically sound diversified diet looks like.
- Tailors meat processing to accommodate various cultural diets and preferences.
- Advocates for universal basic income, recognising that not everyone can afford locally produced food.



Participation in the La Via Campesina Women's Articulation Event, Hosted by the Korean Government.



## Principles

# Principle 10 – Fairness

Support dignified and robust livelihoods for all actors engaged in food systems, especially small-scale food producers, based on fair trade, fair employment and fair treatment of intellectual property rights.



Tammi and her family advocate for moving away from transactional economies, promoting fairer, more equitable exchanges based on mutual support rather than trade. They encourage relationships that prioritise needs

and capacities, ensuring fair treatment for all. At the farm, they first grow what they need, barter for what they cannot produce, and buy only as a last resort.



Breadmaking on the farm.



Home grown maize for polenta.

**Prices.** Prices are not set according to market value but based on what it costs Tammi's family to produce the food and live off the food they grow. Their approach prioritises the food's use value over its market worth, making their products more affordable.



Interns and workers in the boning room.

**Social vulnerability.** Through the CSA model, the risks and rewards of farming are shared with longstanding members, embodying a solidarity based economy. Just as CSA customers accept the variability in the food they receive, Tammi and her family support customers facing hardship by providing free food as a buffer until they are able to secure new employment.

**Trade.** The farm operates on principles of reciprocity, mutual aid, and barter. For example, they have developed a local bartering system with Tumpinyeri Growers, where vegetables are exchanged for meat. The two farms also share land, creating a balance between net fertility producers (from pig manure) and net fertility users (market gardeners).



Tumpinyeri Growers Market garden.



# Principle 11 – Connectivity

Ensure proximity and confidence between producers and consumers through promotion of fair and short distribution networks and by re-embedding food systems into local economies.



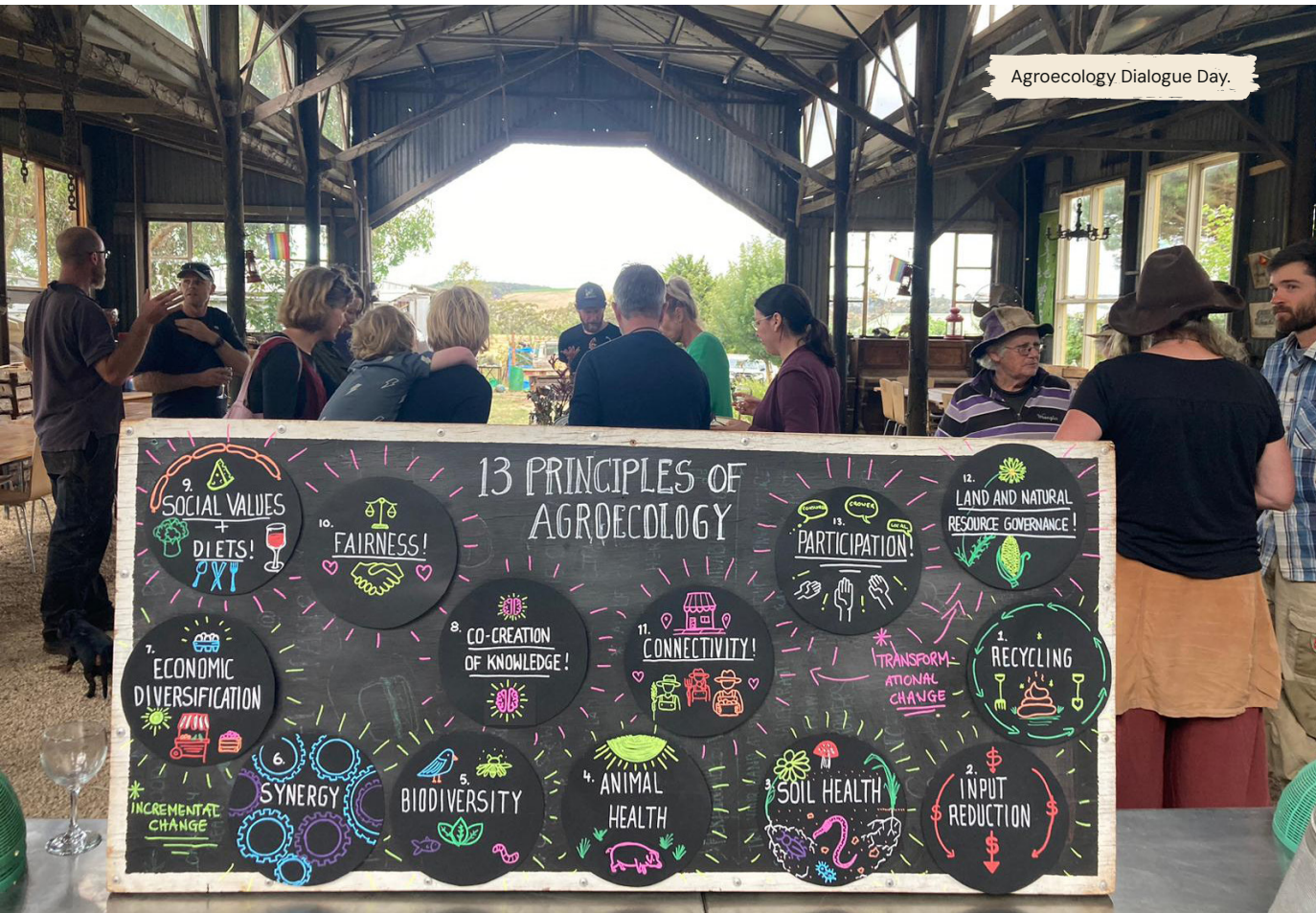
Tammi and her family strive to be producers closely connected to those who consume their food. This commitment extends to building relationships with the traditional custodians of the land on which the farm is located. As

such, Ngarrindjeri and Narungga man Josh of Tumpinyeri Growers seek permission from the Djaara – the traditional custodians – to grow and sell indigenous, local crops.

**Consumers and producer connections.** The farm sells food through a solidarity-based relationship with CSA members, emphasising direct producer-consumer connections. Practising radical transparency, they welcome anyone to observe their production methods, with certification coming from the community, not external authorities. Events like the Agroecological Roadshow and AFSA's Food Sovereignty Convergence further strengthen these connections, providing platforms for farmers and eaters to meet.



**Seasonal and regional demand.** Through its close relationship with CSA customers and the wider community, the farm actively promotes the benefits of buying local, seasonally appropriate food, using their blog, AFSA work, cookbook, and seasonal growing practices as key tools for education.





## Principle 12– Land and natural resource governance

Strengthen institutional arrangements to improve, including the recognition and support of family farmers, smallholders and peasant food producers as sustainable managers of natural and genetic resources.



The farm supports smallholder farmers by sharing knowledge on infrastructure, collectivisation, bureaucratic processes, and guiding them through government

documentation. It also provides a strong example of how land tenure can be maintained while respecting traditional and customary land rights.



Volunteers at an event to establish the Legal Defense Fund.



Speed dating for land sharing.

**Smallholder rights.** The farm helps smallholders gain more control over their land and farming practices. For example, Tammi shares her experience in building an abattoir, navigating bureaucratic processes, and understanding government documents, helping smallholders thrive independently. This is especially important as corporate abattoirs close across Australia, threatening farmers' livelihoods and eaters' access to ethically grown food.

**Enabling policy environments.** Tammi and her family engage with local councils and, through AFSA, at state and federal levels to support small-scale farmers. Their commitment to governance at all levels helps protect farmers' rights to fair livelihoods and access to sustainable, nutritious food.

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Marching in the streets of Bilbao, Spain – La Vía Campesina.

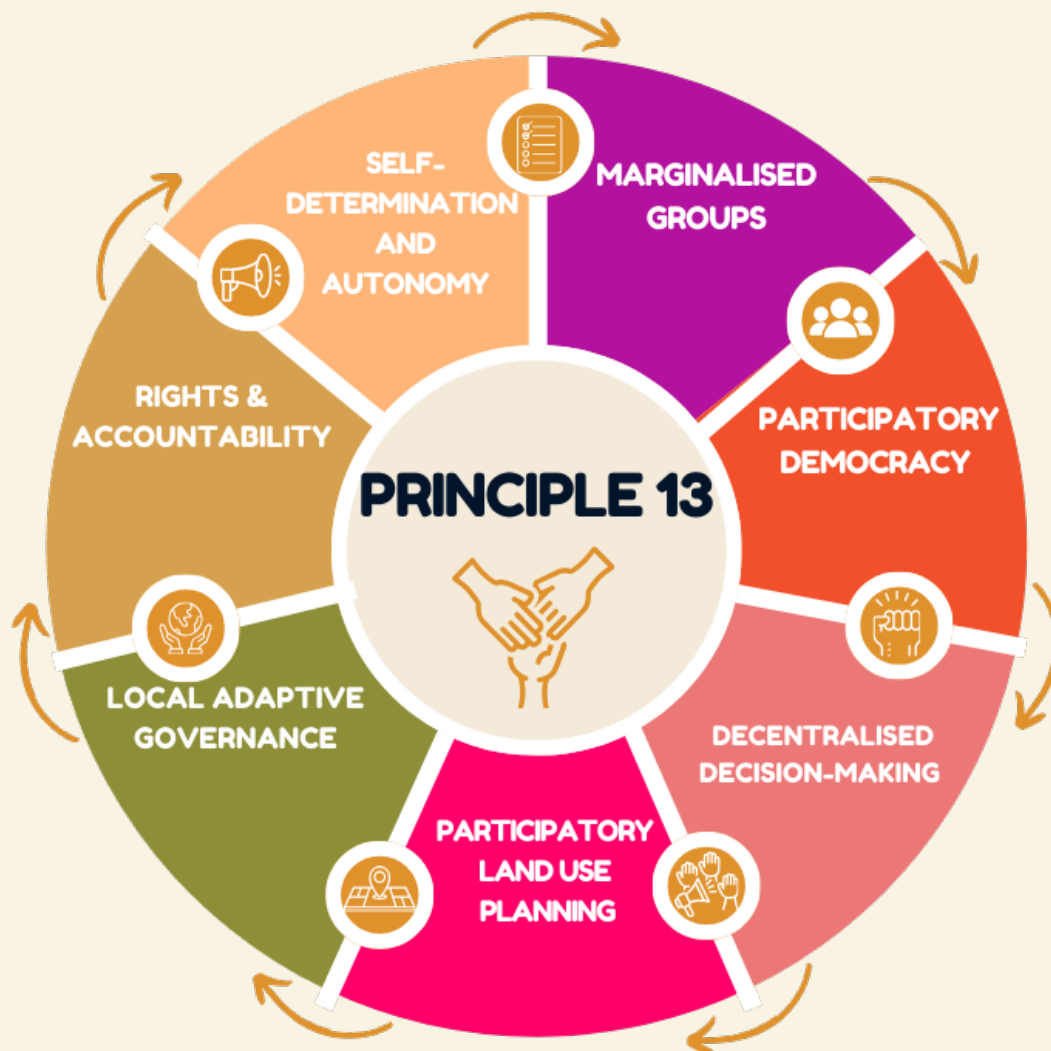


IPC representation at the FAO Regional Conference in Fiji.



## Principle 13 – Participation

Encourage social organisation and greater participation in decision-making by food producers and consumers to support decentralised governance and local adaptive management of agricultural and food systems.



The farm actively engages in and promotes social organisation among farmers and their communities. Through AFSA, they contribute to broader food sovereignty efforts and help

shape food policies, all while advocating for practices that prioritise First Peoples' rights and perspectives.



Speech at the UN Commission on Genetic Diversity for Food and Agriculture.

**Participatory democracy.** The farm proactively advocates for and enacts participatory democracy both at the farm level and globally.

- Engaging CSA members: Considering their preferences in decisions about what the farm produces.
- AFSA: As a member of La Via Campesina, AFSA respects the autonomy of its members while allowing them to collectively organise, engage in solidarity actions, and advance food sovereignty globally, supporting participatory democracy on the global level.
- People's Food Plan: The People's Food Plan is an open-source, collaborative document that guides AFSA's advocacy and informs government policies for systemic change in Australia's food system.



FAO Regional Meeting on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Malaysia.



Women's meeting at the Nyéléni Global Forum.

**Rights & accountability.** Tammi advocates for AFSA on various issues, including a campaign for legislative changes and funding to support small-scale farmers in building micro-abattoirs in response to facility closures. Her efforts have earned her recognition as a smallholder rights advocate, and state government representatives now consult her on relevant policies and legislation.









This leaflet has been collaboratively produced by the following contributors:

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