

mayonnaise. Slowly add the vegetable oil. It will get very thick. Have a close look and when you can no longer see any whole eggs it will have taken as much oil as it can without 'breaking.' If it separates, start again with a little more roe. The mixture at this stage should be so thick that you can invert the bowl without it dropping out. Now add a little cold water and the texture will change from thick and oily to a light, almost moussey lusciousness.²



A REFLECTION ON FOOD IN AUSTRALIA 2019-2020

NAVIGATING DROUGHT, CONFLAGRATION AND PANDEMIC

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Two thousand and nineteen and 2020 have seen waves of adversity roll across Australia, with severe drought followed by a series of catastrophic bushfires and then the COVID-19 pandemic, the latter of which is continuing on into 2021. The following is a reflection on what these difficult conditions have meant for a range of culinary matters in Australia, with a focus on food systems and food security. It draws on personal experience from the perspective of life on a small sheep-wool farm in Guyra on the rural Northern Tablelands in the New England region of northern New South Wales. The farm lies 35 kilometres west of the small town of Guyra which is itself located 200 kilometres inland from the coast (the nearest seaside settlements are Urunga and Coffs Harbour), 500 kilometres north-west of Sydney and 425 kilometres south of Brisbane. Guyra sits high on the ridge of the Great Dividing Range, at 1,330 metres above sea level, and has a population of just under 2,000. The farm's elevation is some 1,200 metres. The area usually has mild summers and very cold winters with many frosty nights falling below zero and annual snowfalls not uncommon. Major industries of the area include the production of fine wool and lamb, beef cattle, tomatoes and potatoes. Local streams are stocked with trout and there are a number of national parks nearby. Once a service centre for grazing industries, with a

² Before flying to New Zealand, I realised that I could not bring over my own, home-made, salted roe (*Tarama*) due to quarantine restrictions. I made lots of inquiries to see if I could get some in Auckland when I landed, without success, but Australian quarantine assured me that if the *tarama* was in a commercial tin, correctly labelled, it would pass customs.