



Tora Aasland, welcomed the audience. She is now County Governor of Rogaland. In the 90ies she were leading the national work for "Into the courtyard" in Norway.

For a long period agriculture has been an important instrument for sustaining the viability of rural areas in Norway. During the last decades the multifunctional role of agriculture has become more important. This has led to bottom up initiatives for a wide range of health, social and educational activities on farms. The idea is a win-win situation, combining well-being for the users, optional services for local governments, and increased income for the farmer family. To promote further development, the Governor stressed the essential role of research, guidance and educational programmes, to ensure quality at all levels.

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Jan Hassink, Wageningen, gave us an overview of Farming for Health across Europe, based upon a new book he has been editing.

Hassink found three main types of initiatives: 1) Animal related therapy, education activities, 2) Horticulture and landscapes, and 3) Green care. The types dominate in various countries. A common characteristic is that the initiatives often are initiated by farmers, and mainly by farmer's wife. There is diversity both in target groups, in terminology and in financial structures.

Numbers from the Netherlands show that it is a myth that Green Care is only for small scale farms. There is more paid labour at GC farms compared to conventional farming, and in Netherlands 26% are biological farms among GC farms. Norway and Netherlands have the highest number of GC arms; more than 500 each country. Still this is less than 1% of the total number. This shows that GC farming is both in countries with small farms (like Norway), and in countries with larger farms (like the Netherlands).

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Reidar Almås, Centre for Rural Research, addressed the aspect of the multifunctional agriculture. In addition to nine well known dimensions characterising multifunctional agriculture, Almås added the 10th: to

contribute to the quality of life in the population.

In a historical perspective, Norwegian agricultural policy has included more soft issues by the time. And as a non EU-member diversification and Green services is part of our alternative strategy. In a European perspective Green Services meet the need of the population for safe food and concerns for high social costs.

Green Care meets many challenges of our community; a need for pluralisation, for innovation, for tailor-made services, and for reintegration and revitalisation of agriculture into society. It represents re-feminisation of agriculture, when the farm is "changing gender". Anyway Green services are an element in modernisation of agriculture. The question is whether GC is developing the welfare system, or is it a backlash? What will happen with institutionalisation of farms, if the farmer disappears?

Almås sees rural exodus is a threat to the balance between town and countryside. Rural people have a responsibility to create their own jobs. His foresight is that in 2020 there may be more service producing farmers than conventional farmers.

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Rachel Hine, University of Essex, applied research findings for the development of the National Care Farming Initiative in the UK.

Within research it is quite new to relate nature to our physical and emotional health and well-being. As we are being aware that diet and physical activities have changed dramatically over the last decades, research shows a growing interest in how nature and social capital are influencing our health. Among others it is found that healthy communities have higher levels of social capital: We are healthier if we have links to other people.

Hine's interest is Green Exercise. This includes all types of engagement in nature, from viewing, to incidental exposure and active participation. An experiment showed improved self esteem for all participants, not depending on type and length of activity. This implies that whatever it is, if we are exposed to nature, it is good for us. This is no surprise, but as Hine points out, it is not a part of planning agenda or health agenda.

The national Care Farming Initiative in UK, is a care farming network. The idea is that agriculture gives much more than food, but not enough attention is paid to the positive side effects, such as landscape, services to wild life, genetic material, social capital, - and health services.

Block 1: Answers to questions from the audience:

- ✓ Almås: When you care for people, you use all the competence you have from caring for animals. You must make them cope.
- ✓ Aasland: We must have respect for the health professionals in the public system. Farmers need supervising, and clients need high quality care.



Thomas van Elsen, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, Witzenhausen, addressed the **benefits of Care farms for nature and landscape development**, based upon a study of organic and social farms in Germany. The study included organic school farms, senior citizens that want to be active, kindergartens etc. A questionnaire showed that landscaping is a topic on most of the farms, and that half of the farmers estimate social farms as especially suitable for activities in field of landscape. The reason is that landscape care need many helping hands. Social agriculture provides experiences for children, allows the extensive care for biotopes, and allows the use of hedgerows for dietary fodder which is good for the cows. Care farms use nature as a “tool” to “heal “ people. , and can also contribute to healthy landscapes.

The combination of social farming and the care for landscapes is one of the aims of PETRARCA, which work for sustainable development of landscapes. There exists a free book with German cases. Elsen concludes that combining Farming for health with Farming for healthy landscapes is a task for the future.

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Gunnar Tellnes, University of Oslo, discussed **Green care from a medical view**.

His starting point is that urbanisation is a challenge to rural areas, to farmers, and also to health of the

population. Tellnes therefore sees a need for Green Care. Such services meet The Local Authorities Health Care Act,

who includes environmental issues and nature, but is not fully developed.

Green Care can inspire people for rehabilitation, increase participant’s own empowerment, and motivate work ability. Physical activity is better than pills to strenghten people for the future. Vocational rehabilitation is important since work means a social network and an income.

Based upon the “NaCuHeal concept” Tellnes has a vision for GC: To increase the population’s participation in health promoting Nature – Culture – Health activities & groups, may be an important public health goal.

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Simon Oosting, Wageningen University and Research Centre presented a study of **Green Care farming from the farmer’s perspective**.

The objective was to study effects of care activities on farming. Oosting found that since start of GC the number of animals have increased at the 14 case farms. Also investments and farm production had increased. Some developed from a hobby farm. They changed breed, started canteen and introduced new activities at the farm. Most have groups of clients, only 2-3 days a week. Groups are better paid per care taker.

In the view of farmer’s wives the small scale, the social imbedding and the flexibility are positive aspects of GC, while lack of privacy is a major negative aspect.

Also the client’s perception was studied. They considered the farmer and the day rythm as most important characteristics of Green Care. This differs to the farmer, that focused on working with plants. Both groups value the elements of social contact and useful work.

Block 2: Answers to questions from the audience

- ✓ Oosting: Compared to conventional farms, the increase in livestock at GC farms were lower in the same period.
- ✓ Tellnes: “Green prescription” has existed in Norway for a few years. It prescribes physical activities, both activities in nature and fitness studios.



Bente Berget, Norwegian University of Life Science, presented results from a **study of Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)** for humans with mental disorders, using farm animals.

This is a study of observed effects on long term psychiatric patients, from an animal intervention. Clients with various diagnoses were participating in work with the animals.

Berget studied the scores of anxiety, of depression, coping strategies and quality of life score, and registered positive effects on self-efficacy, both during the intervention, and even more in the post-treatment period. From the experiences farmers and therapists believed that AAT with farm animals could contribute positively to therapy to a large extent. It can also contribute to increased skills in interactions with other humans.

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Paula Diana Relf, Virginia Tech. University, gave a lecture on **gardens in health care**.

Healing and therapeutic gardens are the most rapidly growing part of agriculture in USA today. It has a theoretical basis of

Biophilia: Love of living things. Still restoration and healing gardens have a long history in our landscapes. A variety of terms are in use, such as restorative gardens, healing/therapeutic landscapes, etc.

Relf sees a shift in the idea of landscape planning, towards meeting the needs of the people who are using it, focusing on restorative qualities. Hospitals and others create roof terraces, meditation gardens etc. Healing landscapes are designed for the use of everybody, used by the patients, the staff and visitors. It should contain green vegetation, flowers and water, not only sculptures. Therapeutic gardens are used by physical therapists to increase the health of the users. Horticultural Therapy Gardens are meant for the patients to maintain the garden.

Basic guidelines are: Both staff and patients should be involved throughout the design process. The garden should

be easy to comprehend and navigate. The garden should provide a sense of security and familiarity. It should provide wild life, and promote understanding of self through the understanding the life cycles of plants.



Erling Krogh, Norwegian University of Life Science, presented **the farm as a pedagogical resource, and it's importance for health and well-being of pupils.**

The development of the Identity Society was Krogh's starting point. Our reflexive identity is inspired by travelling, higher education etc. Due to new technology we use our voice, sight and fingertips to earn a living. Still we are people in bodies, and need to learn from practical experiences.

The farm as a pedagogical resource has been developing in Norway since 1995. School children are able to visit the farm, many times during the school years. Krogh finds that the success are due to the following core principles:

- Each project developed by farmer and teacher together.
- Sharing a common vision
- Practical implementation
- Experimental learning
- Close advisory work.
- Different approaches for various age groups.

This is not only for people with special needs, but for all the pupils. They use their creativity, they participate in work, meet animals, learn cooperation, and are proud of their work.

Block 3: Answers to questions from the audience

- ✓ Berget: Some of my figures show a negative development for the control group compared to the test group. This is partly due to drop outs. Control group and test group were chosen by random; we do not know why their base line was different.
- ✓ Berget: The farmers got no special training before the intervention. They had no information about the patients before hand. They were only allowed to take the patients to participate in activities with the farm animals.

DURING THE DAY WE HAVE BEEN....

- ... networking
- ... testing the restoration corner
- singing
- ... hanging up posters
- ... visited the parks of Stavanger

