





# Animal Welfare in organic husbandry

Development of control measures on Animal Welfare in organic farming.

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# Preface

## Animal Welfare in organic production.

The Nordic strategy for sustainable development is focusing on environmental treats to our common environment. Focus needs to be maintained on the amount of agricultural fertilizers, chemicals and industrial pollution which are used on our land and make their way into our water. We have to take care of the landscape and avoiding pollution of nature by GMO. These ideals form the basic principles of organic agriculture. The use of synthetic fertilizers, chemical pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and many environmental pollutants is banned or else tightly regulated and controlled within Organic Farming. Genetically Modified Organisms and technology is banned from Organic Agriculture.

In organic agriculture the animals have an important position in a balanced relationship between crop, soil and animal. We grow grass and by that reduce the loss of soil by erosion. The herbivorous eat grass and supply the products and natural fertilizers for other plants. The use of animals as grazers to keep the landscape open and clear has strong advantage to humans for agriculture.

A question is however whether their place in the cycle compromise with their welfare because they are just a part of this balanced relationship between crop, soil and animal.

Today's standards for organic production focus on the importance of animal welfare, allowing consumers of organic products to expect high standards of animal welfare from organic production. However the following questions remain:

- Are the welfare parameters in the regulations correct and specific enough?
- Is sufficient emphasis placed on these parameters?
- Is the control system for organic production (certification) able to verify that the welfare of animals is maintained?

Organic farms are inspected by the control bodies (CB) at least once a year, often more. Control bodies check that the regulations are followed with available space, admittance to pasture, free range, and feeding etc. as are defined in the standards. The inspectors sometimes find it difficult to approve that the animal welfare is good enough based on these evaluations. They simply miss a tool to help them documenting, reporting and verifying that the animal welfare is good.

Debio, the Norwegian certifier of organic production, have together with the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture decided to make an effort to improve the control in cooperation with the other control bodies in the Nordic –Baltic Countries. The following countries have participated in this project; Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. Fortunately costs with the meetings were funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. All work is done by each control body in addition to the regular work they have to do. Scientists from all over Europe have also given contributions to the work with enthusiasm.

The aim of this project is to give the inspectors of organic husbandry a tool to be used on inspections so as to remove any doubt whether the welfare is good or not and thus helping control bodies document the animal welfare on organic farms.

Another aim for the project is to make manuals for the inspectors, mutual in all the Nordic-Baltic countries so that the understanding of good animal welfare is the same in all of our countries. This will help achieve equivalence in animals' welfare for all organic farmers in this region.

# Summary 1

The aim of the project is to develop a uniform control system for the evaluation of animal welfare in organic farming in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The intention is to develop a system with parameters and criteria to be used as a help for the inspector to evaluate the animal welfare. The project involves coordination with existing systems in organic and conventional agricultural production, training of inspectors and then trial testing the system at a number of farms.

The developed control system will ultimately end up as a proposal for a system that can enable us to conduct an objective evaluation of the welfare for many of the usual species of livestock in the Nordic and Baltic countries. This will in return be used as basic criteria for organic livestock certificates.

The intention is to develop the system with dual purpose so that the system can be used to evaluate animal welfare on both conventional and organic farms. The result and the conclusion of an inspection can entail that the farm needs to be followed up by consultative institutions.

Prior to the end of this project an evaluation of the control system was carried out. It was conducted after two seasons with a number of inspections.

## Results:

### *Horses:*

- There is a draft available. However the discussion of the parameters used having them scientifically based is missing. This is due to the fact that there are little research available. There is a great interest in a further development of this draft and the use of it in an evaluation / certification of horse centers.

### *Dairy cattle:*

- A control system for milking cows has been developed. The conclusion being that the scheme works well. It has been taken into use by other control bodies as a help documenting animal welfare. In Denmark it is used as a basis evaluating approval or not of organic dairy production. The Health Service for Cattle in Norway has also been interested in using this system on conventional farms.

*Poultry:*

- A control system for poultry is also available. Trials show that the control system works well and gives a good control of poultry welfare.

*Pigs:* .

- There is sufficient information available to expand and develop the systems and criteria for pig production, but due to a lack of human resources, sufficient systems has not yet been developed

*Sheep and goats:*

- In the work with development of a system for sheep and goats it has been revealed that there is very little basic research available on welfare parameters for these species. As a part of this project a report has been made on needs for future research as regards sheep welfare.
- The trend of increasing flock size of sheep may increase welfare problems and needs to be addressed.
- There has been developed a draft system in the project. It's based on work from control bodies in Estonia and Iceland. With the help of scientists from Europe, the parameters are evaluated and put into a control scheme. Further development of this scheme will be done. It is suggested to cooperate with scientists from Norway, UK and Iceland.
- 

*Networking:*

- A network for developing the control of organic production is established regarding animal welfare. This is a network between control bodies with linking to the scientists. This basis is fundamental trying to achieve the same standard of animal welfare in the Nordic-Baltic countries. This basis is also important trying to influence the EU regulations.
- The project has succeeded in establishing a workgroup on animal welfare among the control bodies in the Nordic- Baltic Countries.
- The project has managed to get animal welfare on the timetable at the Nordic- Baltic meetings for control bodies.
- All countries agree to use the results in their inspections as far as possible, and by establishing the working groups we can make improving animal welfare in organic farming a continuous process among our countries.

*Research:*

- EU is running a project on animal welfare handling poultry, pigs and cattle. **Horses, sheep and goats** are not handled in that project. There is a great demand for a scientific basis on welfare parameters for these species.

*Training:*

- To be able to give the animals the best welfare, it is basic to know how animals “think” and react in different situations. Short courses in training farmers and inspectors in animal welfare should be obligatory in each country.
- Plans of large scale conversion to organic sheep farming, such as in Norway, need special attention. In Norway this fact is linked to the need for better training of farmers. The same should also be done in other countries.

*Future progress:*

- The work should be continued with a testing program where the systems and manuals could go through a further development.



# Chapter 1. Introduction.

## 1.1. Scope

*Organic farming is politically an important issue for all the Nordic / Baltic countries.*

There is a common agreement and understanding among the Nordic and Baltic countries that environmentally friendly organic farming must develop proportionally with the market and consumer demands of organic products. For the consumer the ethos as to the welfare of livestock is one of several important criteria to be used in the decision to purchase organic food. In order to satisfy and maintain these expectations it's important to reveal possible challenges to the welfare of livestock. This will have dual advantage in developing tools for Control Bodies to monitor and evaluate this correctly, while also maintaining consumer confidence. In addition such a system will enable inspectors to highlight challenges and non compliances in the production systems, so that remedial action can be taken, and monitored to ensure that standards are raised.

Good livestock welfare is just as important in conventional farming and with this project the aim is to build a system to "evaluate" livestock welfare, which also can be used in conventional production.

An important reason why organic farming is a priority in the Nordic – Baltic region is that the organic production system is sustainable. Knowledge from organic production can be transferred to conventional production and therefore also be a contribution making our agriculture more sustainable in general.

Results from the project can be important in the development of standards for organic husbandry in the EU. The system can also be used to further increase the welfare trough a follow up by veterinarians and advisory institutions.

*Organic farming is area of priority in the Nordic strategy for sustainable development.*

The Nordic council of ministers meeting at Greenland in august 2002 concluded that the corporation in the organic sector between the Nordic countries should be strengthened.

The Nordic Council of Ministers declared that organic farming is an important contribution to sustainable agriculture, environment and more freedom of choice for the consumer. It was emphasized that it was desir-

able with more cooperation in the organic sector among the Nordic / Baltic countries. As a result of this declaration, a seminar was arranged about the Nordic corporation at Hamar in Norway with participants from the authorities and control bodies.

This project is a direct follow-up from the network of organic control bodies and as stated in the report from the “Hamar meeting”<sup>1</sup> (see article 4.2.2. ballpoint 4) that raised the issue of better and more effective control procedures. It was also stressed that it should be developed methods to secure the quality of the control and inspection routines based on hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) including methods for certification of groups.

At the Nordic Council of Ministers meeting in Tallinn in Estonia in November 2003, it was also concluded that the cooperation on organic farming in the Nordic / Baltic countries should be strengthened. It was pointed out that the area of marketing, counselling and regulations/control were important areas to cooperate on.

## 1.2. Chronology of the project activities

### *1<sup>th</sup> meeting*<sup>2</sup>

The project group had its first meeting at Fokhol near Hamar in Norway May 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> 2004

Items for the meeting in May were:

- **1. Presentation of control systems as regards animal welfare in the participating countries.** Prior to the agenda for this meeting each country was requested to collect information on how the evaluation and control of animal welfare was performed in the participating countries. These results were presented at the meeting and countries that had sent apologies and not been able to attend physically, submitted information which was presented by the secretary.
- **2. It was decided what animal husbandry it was relevant to deal with.** It was concluded that animal welfare was a common point and relevant for all countries to address.
- **3. Finally the tasks were divided among the countries** participating in the project.

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<sup>1</sup> Report from Hamar Meeting in Norway is available

<sup>2</sup> Minutes from meeting 1 is available

*2<sup>Th</sup> meeting*<sup>3</sup>

The second meeting was arranged together with the Nordic –Baltic Meeting for control bodies in Druskininkai in Lithuania September 25<sup>th</sup> 2004. The project group discussed the drafts on control systems so far, and a plan for work to be done before the next meeting was made.

*3<sup>Th</sup> meeting*<sup>4</sup>

The last meeting with all participants so far was arranged together with the Nordic- Baltic meeting for control bodies at Gala in Norway on September 9<sup>th</sup> 2005.

The drafts of control systems on goats, sheep and milking cows were presented. They had been tested at a number of farms and the results were presented.

*Workshop to evaluate animal welfare parameters for sheep*<sup>5</sup>

The controlbodies working with sheep in this project had a meeting in Estonia in October 2006. The project had so far revealed that there are too little scientifically based parameters to be used on sheep. The aim of the workshop was to evaluate the parameters available and discuss other possible parameters that can be used. Invited scientists from Estonia, France, Iceland, Norway, Scotland and Sweden lined up possibilities and challenges in the future work establishing an assessment for animal welfare on sheep.

*4<sup>Th</sup> meeting.*<sup>6</sup>

The last meeting was arranged at Reykjavik on Iceland November 8<sup>Th</sup> – 9<sup>Th</sup> 2007. At this meeting we were updated on the use of the results from our project. The focus of the rest of the meeting was on horses and sheep. A welfare evaluation for horses was presented. In addition further work on sheep system was discussed.

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<sup>3</sup> Minutes from meeting 2 is available.

<sup>4</sup> A minute from meeting 3 is available.

<sup>5</sup> A minute from workshop in Estonia is available.

<sup>6</sup> A minute from meeting in Iceland is available.



### 1.3. Readers guide to the Content of the Report

In the following chapters the reader will find:

- *Chapter 2:* Overview of control system as regards animal welfare in Nordic Baltic Countries. This chapter will present the information on control systems in the participating countries that was presented at the first meeting at Hamar.
- *Chapter 3:* Animal welfare parameters. This chapter will present the different parameters that can be used in a control system and drafts for such systems. These results were discussed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Lithuania.
- *Chapter 4:* Drafts to be used in evaluation of animal welfare. In this chapter the drafts will be presented.
- *Chapter 5:* Results. This chapter will present the results at the end of the project period.
- *Chapter 6:* Conclusions. This chapter will present the policy related conclusions from the project.

# Chapter 2: Overview of control systems as regards animal welfare in Nordic and Baltic Countries

In the following chapter you will find a presentation of the control system regarding animal welfare in organic production in the participating countries.

## 2.1. Denmark: Introduction to the Danish Plant Directorate welfare system

In Denmark the control is based strictly on the EU regulation 2092/91 as a minimum regulation and national regulations in addition.

The inspection is performed by the Danish Plant Directorate.

The inspectors have ordinary education in agriculture. They are in addition trained in inspection of organic production by working together with experienced inspectors.

Inspections are performed during the whole year. In the summertime there are mainly performed outdoor inspections and in the wintertime indoor.

There are 10% unannounced inspections with focus on beddings and medication.

Problems in organic husbandry today:

- Many farmers are part time farmers and not at home at day giving problems for the inspectors.
- There are some problems now on health and welfare with poultry and calves.

The Danish state control has developed a control measure on poultry. This system is used as a help to the inspector to evaluate the animal welfare in the particular stock if there is any doubt of the welfare.

The inspection system is risk based.

This system has now been used for 3 years and the inspectors have gained good experience with it.

## 2.2. Estonia: The organic production and control system in Estonia.

In Estonia the standard is a national standard equal to the EU regulation 2092/91.

The inspection is performed by a National Inspection Body and is based on this standard.

Inspectors are trained to inspect both animal and plant production.

There will be a need for more specialized inspectors in the future.

The inspection is today performed according to minimum EU regulation 2092/91 only.

If non-conformities to the regulation are revealed, a correction within a certain time is required from the producer, or the producer is excluded from the organic control system.

The primary difficulties in organic husbandry today are:

- Keeping livestock tethered,
- minimum surface areas for indoor housing are too small,
- insufficient bedding material,
- overuse of treatments for parasites in sheep and horses
- shortage of eco-mineral feed on the Estonian market,
- castration of stallions

## 2.3. Iceland: Control system as regards welfare in organic animal husbandry

Iceland has adopted in full the EU regulation 2092/91 on organic agriculture.

The inspection is performed by Vottunarstofan TÚN which is a private control body. It inspects and certifies organic agriculture and processing in Iceland.

Livestock inspections are allocated to specially trained inspectors who are qualified to inspect animals and livestock production (persons with background in veterinary practice and environmental health and hygiene inspections).

Annual inspections involve reporting separately on each category of livestock on each farm (i.e. separate sheets on cattle, horses, sheep, poultry, and pigs).

Apart from the questions of identification, origins, feeding and veterinary practices, the following welfare aspects are specifically monitored during inspections:

- access to open areas and grazing land,
- access to outdoor areas and roaming during period of winter-housing,
- quality of housing regarding typical weather conditions,
- air-conditioning, daylight and hygiene in animal buildings,
- quantity and type of bedding materials,
- type of floors (how much solid and how much and where it can be slatted),
- floor area per animal,
- stocking rate (livestock units per unit of grazing land),
- welfare aspects regarding sufficient feeding and water supply,
- natural feeding of new-born/young animals

Inspectors are expected to examine each of those factors and report on any non-conformity observed, with a clear reference to the relevant standard.

## 2.4. Latvia: The Latvian control of husbandry.

In Latvia there is a national standard for the organic production equal to the EU regulation 2092/91, and the inspection is performed by private organisations as is *Vides kvalitāte*.

However all farms are also inspected by an official veterinary inspector. This includes both conventional and organic farms. The inspector uses a general check list and look at

- cleanliness of territory,
- capacity of slurry containers,
- material of buildings,
- technical equipments,
- space,
- climate,
- correct feed and feeding time according to the species,
- use of medicines and cases of infectious diseases

### *The organic control.*

More than 4000 farms are organic and many are interested in conversion into organic production.

The areas are small, in average 10 ha a farm, 2/3 of the farms have animals.

Most of the farms have dairy cows, but there are also some poultry, pigs, and goat farms.

25 goat farms are organic.

All farms have veterinary inspection as mentioned above. In addition they have an inspection of the organic production.

The organic inspection is focusing on animal welfare. In this work a special check list is used by the inspector.

The inspection will result in an acceptance or exclusion from the control system according to the EU regulation.

## 2.5. Lithuania: The Lithuanian control system.

The standard is based on a national standard equal to the EU regulation 2092/91.

EKOAGROS which is a private control body is running the control on behalf of the authorities. They are 20 employees (2004).

In Lithuania there is a large increase in number of organic farms and processors. There are 1170 farms with 42000 ha which represents 1.3 % of total agricultural land. Of the certified organic husbandry 50 % is milk production, 25 % beef and 10 % horses. The rest is made up of other species including aquaculture species. There is an increasing organic aquaculture production.

## 2.6. Norway: The Norwegian control system of organic production.

The regulation on organic production is based on the EU regulation 2092/91 where some rules on livestock are stronger than the EU regulation. The organic standards come in addition to other regulations that the farmers have to fulfill.

Debio, which is a private control body has been delegated to run the control on behalf of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority.

Norway has 2800 organic farms, and 2/3 of these have animals.

Debio use a checklist in their work.

Debio perform winter inspections focusing on livestock in a number of farms and pay specific attention to housing, medication, and conversion of animals brought into the farm.

Debio carry out 5 % unannounced inspections. But the authorities want to raise this level to 10 %. In these inspections the inspectors are controlling one item e.g.: parallel production, feed for the animals, animal welfare.

Debio have developed a risk-based inspection schedule where specific high risk factors are monitored and changed each time a farm is inspected, and is specific to the conditions of that farm.

If poor animal welfare is found, or suspected the national authorities are informed.

A primary area of focus in Norway is the tethering of cattle. Tethering is only permitted if the animals twice a week have access to outdoor hedged areas in winter. If these conditions are not met, organic certification is not granted.

## 2.6. Sweden: The KRAV control system

In Sweden the standard for organic production is handled by KRAV. The authorities are only controlling that the standards are levelling or higher than the EU regulation 2092/91.

The inspection is now performed by Aranea AB which is a company owned by KRAV and by Smak AB.

Aranea have 2 inspections per year on farms with livestock, one of these is for animal inspection during winter.

They educate inspectors together with advisors in animal production. In this way they are able to evaluate dirty animals and claws in the same way.

Aranea has developed many different checklists which the inspectors are using in their work.





# Chapter 3: Animal welfare parameters.

## 3.1. Guidelines;

At the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting the draft parameters were discussed. Vonne Lund<sup>7</sup> in the reference group is an experienced scientist several years working experience in animal welfare. She had previously submitted guidelines for evaluation of the parameters:

- It must be remembered that this process will guarantee the production methods.
- Are the parameters in line with organic philosophy?
- Do the parameters correctly measure what they are supposed to be measuring?
- Are the parameters consistent and provide reliable information :
  - - Over a period of time (about the overall situation on the farm not only on the day of inspection).
    - Between control visits (different inspectors will perform the test).
    - Among farms (fair comparison)?
- Can they be reliably controlled (e.g. registrations of mortality and treatments, are done by the farmer himself)?
- Do the parameters measure controls which will be meaningful to the farmer?
- Can the parameters be conveyed to the consumers in an understandable way?
- Animal based parameters (e.g. how much have they been eating (weight gain, body condition) instead of how much feed is available).
- What is acceptable welfare?

### *Natural life*

- Is it possible to have species specific behaviour?
- Is it possible to live in an environment offering key features of natural habitat?
- *Feed* available- is it according to physiological requirements.
- Good health

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<sup>7</sup> Vonne Lund, Agr.dr. scientist; National Veterinary Institute in Norway.

- How to registrate parameters?  
Some animal based parameters are difficult to measure during a inspection and thus require a reliable recording system recording information over a period of time, for example mortality of lambs, the number of stillborn lambs or lambs delivered from farm. An important question here is how to create reliable systems for parameters the farmer is to register when there is no possibility of control?

### 3.2. Classification of parameters:

The parameters can be grouped into three main groups.<sup>8</sup>

#### 3.2.1. *Stockmanship / management*

The people working with the herd are decisive for the animal welfare. They observe and interact with individual animals- to varying degrees, depending on the species and the production system- and intervene in critical situations. In all these ways the humans influence the lives of the animals in their households. They are influenced by their knowledge, experience, ethical values and practical judgement. Some people seem to have a natural gift for immediately perceiving and responding adequately to the different needs signalled by the animals, thus creating optimal conditions for both the individual animal and the herd as a whole. For the rest, this skill needs to be analyzed and put into words, and then practised.

Questions about training and/or education of the farmer in animal husbandry gives an impression about how trained the farmer is in handling animals.

Further questioning can give information about feeding, use of pasture, etc.

It can also give information about daily management and handling of animals. Examples:

- Regular evaluation of body condition?
- Clawes
- Milking routine

By testing the human-animal-relationship we can get an evaluation of the perception between the animal and the farmer.

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<sup>8</sup> Mette Vaarst et al. CAB international 2004. Animal Health and Welfare in Organic Agriculture. Lise Grøva .The Norwegian Centre for Ecological Agriculture

### 3.2.2. Resource based parameters

In this group we evaluate the environmental surroundings animals have to live in (housing conditions).

Do the housing conditions comply with the EU-regulation for organic farming, and the national regulations?

Differences in health disorders or abnormal behaviour patterns of animals can often be explained by examining information about the housing condition of the specific animals.

Draft parameters:

- *Information about surface areas*
- For indoor housing and outdoor exercise areas (M<sup>2</sup>/head) cubicles, floor, bedding etc.
- *Rising behaviour*
- Sufficient spaces to stand naturally, lie down easily, turn around and groom themselves
- Rising is a frequent behaviour in dairy cows. If the cow is prevented from normal rising behaviour it may lead to injuries. Similarly if dairy cattle seem to have any difficulties in rising, this may indicate that rising causes discomfort and may be an indication of injury. Abnormal rising behaviour can indicate too small cubicles, or possible injuries of the animals.
- *Skin lesions* Indicate insufficient environment, e.g. too small cubicles.
- *Lameness* Indicate bad housing conditions, i. a. dirty and/or slippery floors.
- *Environment.* An objective evaluation of cleanliness of the cubicles and walking areas is difficult, but if the cubicles etc. are unacceptable dirty, do a more thorough registration of gas concentration, ventilation, relative air circulation etc
- *Dirty animals.* Another way of evaluating the housing conditions is to evaluate how dirty the animals are. It is necessary to define what is dirty and what is acceptable. There are methods available to help in the evaluation.
- *Pasture.* Get information about the areas used for grazing. Is there access to water, shelter, and salt .Be aware of overgrazing, erosion caused by path ways, compacting of ground near a water point or feed area?

### 3.2.3. *Animal based parameters.*

To get an evaluation of the actual animal welfare it is important to include animal based assessment in the inspection of the farms.

Animal health (or lack thereof) is considered to be an important welfare indicator. Often disease is linked with pain, discomfort and stress for the animals. Especially, acute painful diseases and long-term chronic ailments have an effect on animal welfare. In addition to a visual assessment during the farm visits, information from health records is available for the different species and can be used. Norway, for example, has The Norwegian Cattle Health Recording System.

- *Health record.* Look at e.g. mastitis cases/100 cows/year, lameness cases/100cows/year etc.: allow some evaluation of the health and welfare status over time.
- *Body condition* An evaluation of the bodycondition is an established system for many species. It can give us an objective evaluation of the feeding of the animals on the farm. We have of course have to consider the number of animals evaluated,differences pending on race,/ size of animal etc.
- *Claws / Hoves* Record if the animal has longer claws than normal. The claws condition can also be evaluated by looking at the rising behaviour
- *Dirty animals* See comments under housing conditions. It can also tell us something about the management (trimming and cleaning the animals?).
- *Skin lesions.* See comments under housing conditions.
- *Lameness.* See comments under housing conditions.
- *Manure.* Very wet manure can indicate parasitic problems and maybe insufficient feeding.

# Chapter 4: Drafts to be used in evaluation of animal welfare

Listed in alphabetical order:

## 4.1. Goats<sup>9</sup>

The Latvian control has developed a control scheme with parameters that can be used. However, as with sheep there is little scientific research on welfare parameters. The possibility of combining a system for both sheep and goats was discussed, but it was decided that goats and sheep are sufficiently different to require the development of separate schemes

## 4.2. Horses<sup>10</sup>



Ekoagros in Lithuania has developed a control system for horses. Due to the fact that there is little research on parameters for horse welfare, it is necessary to evaluate the draft together with scientists to verify that the best parameters available today are used. There is a great interest in developing this draft and using it in control and certification of horse centers.

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<sup>9</sup> The parameter scheme is available as download.

<sup>10</sup> The draft for horses is available as download.

### 4.3. Milking Cows<sup>11</sup>

Debio the Norwegian control body for organic production has together with NORSØK developed a system for dairy cows. This system has now been tested on a number of farms and seems to work well. Other control bodies have also been using this system as a help in documenting animal welfare. In Denmark it is used as a basis evaluating approval or not of organic dairy production. The Norwegian Health Service for Cattle is interested in using this assessment for conventional husbandry.

### 4.4. Pigs

KRAV, the Swedish control body has been working with pigs. Much documentation as checklist etc. is available. Due to workload and study leave this system is not quite fully developed.

### 4.5. Poultry<sup>12</sup>

The Dansih Control has established a control system for poultry. This is tested and seems to work well as a documentation and help of improving animal welfare in organic flocks.

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<sup>11</sup> The system with manual is available as download.

<sup>12</sup> The poultry system is available as download.

#### 4.6. Sheep<sup>13</sup>

Estonia and Iceland have systems for controlling the welfare in sheep flocks. However a scientific basis is lacking due to insufficient research conducted into this species. Probably because people assume they have a good welfare because it is an extensive production. On a workshop with controlbodies and scientists working with sheep, we achieved to find parameters which can be used. This might however change as we get more basic knowledge to these species. The results are put into a scheme similar to the dairy cow scheme. The system and manuals need further development to be a tool. This work is in progress, because there is interest in taking such a control scheme into practice.



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<sup>13</sup> The sheep system will soon be available as download.



# Chapter 5: Results in the project

## 5.1. Horses:

- There is a draft available. However the discussion of the parameters used having them scientifically based is missing. This is primarily due to a lack of research available. There is a great interest in a further development of this draft and the use of it in an evaluation / certification of horse centers

## 5.2. Dairy cows:

- A control system for milking cows has been developed in Norway. After a test on a number of organic farms in Norway, the conclusion is that the scheme works well. It has been taken into use by other control bodies as a help documenting animal welfare. In Denmark it is used as a basis evaluating approval or not of organic production. The Health Service for Cattle in Norway has also been interested in using this system on conventional farms.

## 5.3. Poultry:

- A control system for poultry is also available. This is tested in a number of organic flocks in Denmark and works well giving a good control of poultry welfare.

## 5.4. Pigs:

- There is much information available, but due to workload for persons in the project there still is some development to be done.

### 5.5. Sheep and goats:

- Very little research into the parameters for welfare of these two species has been concluded. As a part of this project a report has been made on needs for future research as regards sheep welfare.
- The trend of increasing flock size of sheep which may increase welfare problems and needs to be addressed.
- A draft system has been developed. It's based on work from control bodies in Estonia and Iceland. With the help of scientists from Europe, the parameters are evaluated and put into a control scheme. Further development is in progress. This process is suggested to be cooperation between scientists from Norway, UK and Iceland.

### 5.6. Networking:

- A network for developing the control of organic production is established regarding animal welfare. This is a network extends between control bodies and to scientists in various participating countries. This basis is fundamental trying to achieve the same standard of animal welfare in the Nordic-Baltic countries. This basis is also important trying to influence the EU regulations.
- We have succeeded in establishing a workgroup on animal welfare among the control bodies in the Nordic- Baltic Countries.
- We have managed to get animal welfare on the agenda at the Nordic-Baltic meetings for control bodies.
- All countries agree in using the results in their inspections as far as possible, and by establishing the working groups we can make improving animal welfare in organic farming a continuous process among our countries.

### 5.7. Research:

- EU is running a project on animal welfare- (welfarequalitynet.) handling poultry, pigs and cattle. *Horses, sheep and goats* are not handled here. There is a great demand for a scientific basis on welfare parameters also for these species.

### 5.8. Training:

- To be able to give the animals the best welfare, it is basic to know how animals “think” and react in different situations and under different conditions. Short courses in training farmers and inspectors in animal welfare should be obligatory in each country.
- The plans of large scale conversion to organic sheep farming, such as in Norway, need special attention. In Norway this is linked to the request for better training of farmers. The same should also be done in other countries.

### 5.9. Future progress;

- This project should be continued with a testing program where the system could go through a further development.



# Chapter 6: Conclusions

## Policy related results and possibilities

In the report the participants give the following recommendations:

- The use of control schemes should be a basis securing that the products are produced with equal levels regarding animal welfare in our countries. This will prevent trading of certified organic / conventional products produced with different levels of animal welfare on the same market without the customer being able to discover it. In Denmark the checklist for dairy cows is already used as a requirement which organic dairy producers must fulfil.
- Such procedures and standards should be equal in countries trading such products between them. They should form the basis for improving animal welfare in our countries.
- The use of control schemes and procedures enable us to document the animal welfare under different management.
- It was discovered that there is a lack of scientifically based welfare parameters for some species i.e. sheep and horses.
- Demand for training of persons handling animals. Every person handling animals should be trained in animal behaviour to avoid stress and dangerous situations both for persons and animals. This is very important today as we see an increasingly growth in herd size entailing new ways of herd management.



# Sammendrag.

Målsettingen for prosjektet er å utvikle et enhetlig kontrollsystem for vurdering av dyrevelferd i økologisk landbruk i de Nordisk – Baltiske land. Intensjonen er å utvikle et system med parametere og kriterier for dyrevelferd til hjelp for inspektørene under inspeksjon av økologiske gårdsbruk.

Prosjektet involverer koordinering med eksisterende systemer i økologisk og konvensjonell landbruksproduksjon, opplæring av inspektører og utprøving av systemet på et antall gårder.

De utviklede vurderingssystemer vil ende opp som et forslag til kontrollsystem som gjør oss i stand til å forta en objektiv vurdering av dyrevelferd. Systemet vil også danne en felles basis i de Nordisk- Baltiske landene, slik at vurdering av dyrevelferden blir lik i Norden og Baltikum. Disse vurderingene vil igjen kunne danne basis for godkjenning av økologisk dyrehold.

Systemet er ellers utformet slik at det også kan benyttes for konvensjonelt husdyrhold. Forhold som avdekkes som uakseptable under inspeksjonen vil også medføre at det er nødvendig med oppfølging fra rådgivende institusjoner. I Norge arbeides det med å få til et samarbeid med Helse-tjenesten for Storfe som oppfølging i besetninger med melkeku.

Før avslutningen av prosjektet ble det utført en evaluering av kontrollsystemet. Denne ble utført etter en sesong med et antall inspeksjoner.

Resultater:

## *Hest :*

Det er utviklet et utkast. Imidlertid mangler diskusjonen vedrørende den vitenskapelige basis for parameterene som er benyttet. Det er stor interesse for å utvikle dette systemet videre til bruk i sertifisering av hestesentre.

## *Melkeku:*

Det er laget et system for kontroll av dyrevelferd i besetninger med melkeku. Systemet er testet ut i Norge og konklusjonen er at skjemaet fungerer bra. Det er tatt i bruk av andre kontroll instanser som en hjelp til å dokumentere dyrevelferden. I Danmark er listen brukt som krav for å få godkjent produksjonen som økologisk .Helse-tjenesten for storfe i Norge har vist interesse for å benytte systemet i sitt arbeid.

*Fjørfe :*

Det er utviklet et kontrollsystem for fjørfe. Dette er testet i flere danske besetninger og fungerer bra og gir en god kontroll med dyrevelferden hos fjørfe.

*Småfe :*

- I arbeidet med utvikling av system for sau og geit, er det avdekket at det er utført lite grunnforskning på parametere for dyrevelferd for disse artene. Det er derfor som en del av dette prosjektet laget en rapport om behov for forskning på disse artene.
- Trenden mot økende størrelse på besetningene kan medføre problemer for dyrevelferden og må gis større fokus.
- Det er utviklet et utkast til kontroll av dyrevelferd i dette prosjektet. Det er basert på arbeid utført av Estland og Island. Ved hjelp av forskere fra Europa er disse parametere evaluert og satt inn i et kontrollskjema. Utvikling av dette skjemaet er under videre arbeid da det er stor interesse for å benytte dette i kontrollen. Det er forslått å utføre dette i samarbeid medforskere fra Norge, Island og Storbritannia.

*Svin :*

Det er mye informasjon tilgjengelig, men grunnet arbeidsbelastning og studiepermisjon er det fortsatt noe arbeid som gjenstår.

*Nettverk:*

- Det er utviklet et nettverk for å utvikle kontrollen av økologisk produksjon med hensyn på dyrevelferd. Dette er et nettverk som også omfatter forskermiljø. Dette er et nødvendig fundament for å prøve å oppnå den samme standard for dyrevelferd i de Nordisk-Baltiske land. Denne basis er også viktig for å påvirke bestemmelser i EU.
- Vi har lykket med å etablere en arbeidsgruppe i dyrevelferd mellom kontrollorganer i de Nordiske og Baltiske land.
- Vi har lykket med å plassere dyrevelferd på agendaen for de Nordisk – Baltiske møter for kontrollorganer.
- Alle land er interesserte i å bruke resultatene ved sine inspeksjoner så langt det er mulig. Ved å etablere arbeidsgrupper kan vi gjøre forbedring av dyrevelferd til en aktiv prosess i våre land.

*Forskning:*

- EU har et prosjekt for dyrevelferd som omhandler svin, storfe og fjørfe. Hest, geit og sau er imidlertid ikke medinndratt i dette prosjektet. Det er et stort behov for å utvikle parametere også for disse arter.

*Opplæring:*

- For å være i stand til å gi dyra den beste velferden, er det nødvendig med basalkunnskap om hvordan dyra tenker og reagerer i ulike situasjoner. Det bør derfor være obligatorisk for alle som håndterer husdyr å ha en opplæring i etologi.
- Planer om storstilt omlegging av saueproduksjon til økologisk drift slik som i Norge krever spesiell oppmerksomhet. Dette følges i Norge opp med krav om utdanning i dyrevelferd for gårdbrukere. Lignende krav bør også stilles i andre land.

*Videre utvikling:*

Arbeidet som er påbegynt bør videreføres med videre utprøving og forbedring av alle systemer.



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