



Herfjell Mountain Farm

Monday, August 14 - Mountain farming and dairying (M2)

Facts

Category: Mountain farm/summer mountain dairy

Location: Gausdal Vestfjell, Oppland County

Production: 54 dairy cows on pasture land

Year established/operational: 1977/1986

Size of the farm: Approximately 60 hectares, of which 6.3 hectares are cultivated land

Site and buildings

The Herfjell mountain farm was established in 1977. The farm buildings were constructed during the first years thereafter. The cow barn is organised as a free-stall barn. On the grazing land, a rough weather barn is available, providing shelter for the cows in bad weather. The area around Herfjell is one of the finest areas in Gausdal Vestfjell, located close to the Kittilbu Rough Grazing Museum.

Modern mountain farming

Farming in Norway has been through extensive modernisation in the last part of the 20th century. Large farms with larger livestock herds have been established as new and modern equipment have increased the efficiency of farming. This development also results in a growing need for fodder. Large modern farms, often organised as cooperatives, are increasingly utilizing the mountains as pastureland. A cooperative mountain farm has many advantages for the farmer. Such joint ventures often provide more flexible working hours, more time for holidays, access to more land and a social working environment.

Management of the farm

Originally, the Herfjell mountain farm was owned by six farmers in Gausdal. Today, the farm is a cooperative summer farm with four partners, having equal rights to the surrounding Crown lands. From the State Forest, the farm leases 53 hectares of grazingland free of charge for 40 years. Before the farm could be put into operation, lots of work had to be done in connection with clearing forest ground, draining, fencing and road construction. To a large extent, this work was done as voluntary communal work.

The cattle are moved to the farm around Midsummer, and the farm is in use until late September. At Herfjell, 6.3 hectares of the area are cultivated land, used to produce forage grass. In addition to rough grazing, the livestock are fed grass from the lowland farms.

The mountain farm consists of four equal partners. Each partner has the right to have 15 milk cows on the mountain farm. The four partners are:

Farmer and teacher Arne Martin Jacobsen (55) runs a farm with his wife Dagbjørg (55), who also works as a teacher besides farming. They have a herd of approximately 15 cows, with a milk quota of 88,400 litres.

Farmer Sigurd Reiten (34) is the manager/foreman at the Herfjell mountain farm. Sigurd runs a farm, organised as a corporate farm with his wife. Besides farming, Sigurd's wife works as a sociologist at Granheim lung hospital in Gausdal. They have recently built a new cow barn for loose housing, and have a herd of approximately 25 cows and a milk quota of 130,000 litres.

Farmer Petter Haugland (61) has been a partner at the Herfjell cooperative mountain farm since the beginning. Petter runs the farm with his wife Eva (58), who works as a nurse besides farming. They have a herd of nearly 12 cows in a tie-stall barn. They have milk quota of 66,000 litres.

Farmer Oddbjørn Skogen (54) runs a farm with his wife Gerd Ingrid (52). Gerd Ingrid works as a consultant in NAV-administration. They have a milk quota of 84,500 litres.

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