

Smestad Farm

Tuesday, August 15 - Modern developments in the dairy sector (T1)

Facts

Category: Traditional farm

Location: Gjerdrum, Akershus County

Production: Milk, meat and grain production

Milk quota Smestad/cooperative farm: 416,000/185,000 litres cow milk

Size of the farm: 30 hectares. Land from four neighbouring farms is also leased. Total land disposable is 100 hectares, of which 60 ha are used for grass production and 40 ha for production of oats, wheat and peas.

Site and buildings

The Smestad farm is surrounded by a beautiful cultural landscape near Romeriksåsen. The farm provides conference rooms and overnight accommodation for its guests. The house for accommodation and conferences was built in 1959.

Management of the farm

Smestad farm has organised their milk production through a cooperative farm with three partners 30 kilometres north of Oslo. The farm produces milk, meat and grain. The cooperative has a total milk quota of 416.000 litres, with an average milk yield of 8500 kg per year produced by approximately 50 Norwegian Red Cattle cows. In 2004 the cow barn was rebuilt and the cooperation invested in an Automatic Milk System from DeLaval. Total investments were NOK 6.2 million. The new cow barn is organised as a free-stall barn, with a separate stall for robot milking through a guided cow traffic system. The milk cows move in and out as they prefer, eating and milking in the summer period. In 2004, the Smestad cooperative constructed a new cow barn with three farmers/milk quotas.

At Smestad farm you can experience a farmhouse holiday and learn about farming, go hiking, visit and pat the animals or just relax in the beautiful landscape. Visitors can also hire conference rooms and overnight accommodation in the peaceful atmosphere of the countryside. On the farm's hay loft, private parties are arranged with food from the farm.

Ole Kristian (41) and Randi (37) Skallerud and their sons Kristian (17) and Fredrik (14), Brita (40) Skallerud and Øivind (46) Bogstad and their children Marthe (16), Jorunn (15) and Kersti (13) will present the farm. The former farmers, Laila and Oddvar Skallerud (mother and father of Brita and Ole Kristian) will also participate at the excursion.

New trends in agriculture

A current trend in Norwegian agriculture is the development of cooperative farms. These have had an expansive growth the last years. At the end of 2005, 1441 cooperative farms were registered, consisting of 3362 former farms. Today there are approximately 16,000 dairy farms left in Norway. This implies that more than 20 % of the dairy farms are cooperative enterprises. Such cooperatives provide more flexibility for vacations, possibilities for other work besides farming and a reduced risk and capital input for each partner. Recent studies indicate that the cooperative trend continues, especially among younger farmers.

The livestock population in Norway has become concentrated on fewer, but larger holdings. Since 1995 the number of holdings keeping dairy cows has dropped by 40 per cent. At the same time there has been more efficient breeding, improved dairy management and increased milk production. Today, the number of dairy cows in Norway is approximately 270,000. The average dairy cow herd numbered 17.6 cows in January 2006.

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