

FREE-RANGE PIG HUSBANDRY SYSTEMS

CASE STUDY FARM_NO_03

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Picture 1. The hub with huts, feeding area, water source, and a mud bath. Foto: B. Blomstrand

History of the farm

The farm_NO_03 is located in the south-eastern part of Norway, an area characterised by a humid continental climate with cold, snowy winters and mild, green summers. The region receives steady precipitation throughout the year, supporting lush forests and vibrant vegetation, especially in the warmer months. Thanks to its fertile

surroundings and ample rainfall, the landscape is especially verdant and scenic during late spring and summer.

The farm has been operated organically since 1989. The current farmers took over in 2017 and have run the farm by regenerative principles with the help of seasonal workers. The farm comprises 67.5 hectares of fully cultivated land and 5.2 hectares of forest. They raise grass-fed Angus beef cattle (172) and 900 free-range laying hens in mobile houses, in addition to pigs. The farmers also maintain a small vegetable production.

Animal welfare in conjunction with regenerative farming and environmentally sound solutions are the highest priorities for the farmers.

Pig rearing

As the farmers do not yet have breeding sows, grower pigs are purchased from other organic pig farms. Since organic raised piglets are difficult to source in Norway, it can be challenging to maintain their organic certification.

The pig area is designed as a central hub including all vital functions such as feed, water, sleeping areas (insulated huts with straw) and mud bath (Pic. 2). Grazing areas extend outward from the hub like spokes. This makes it easy to rotate pastures and preventing overgrazing. Each pig has access approximately 500 m². The hub is relocated

every 2-3 years, and the grazing areas are rotated every five days.

All pigs are kept outdoors year-round on arable land (not in the forest areas) to ensure optimal use of their manure as fertiliser. The insulation in the huts helps minimising condensation inside the huts during winter and keeps the temperature down during summer. The temperature in the huts is at comfortable levels for the pigs even during cold winters.

The animals are fenced with a single electric fence consisting of one wire.

Environmental aspects

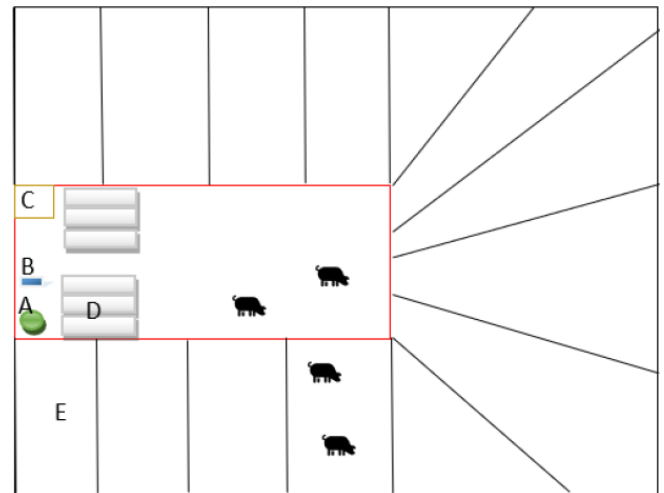
The hub is placed in a safe distance to the nearest watercourse, therefore the risk of runoff considered low. Furthermore, the use of regenerative farming methods allows soil and plants to rest in order to avoid excessive strain on the soil and soil life, which again helps prevent runoff.

Market

According to the farmers, the most challenging aspect of being an organic farmer is marketing and selling the products. They market their products directly to end users and restaurants in the central Oslo area. Additionally, they have a collaboration with Kolonihagen (a marketing company of organic products). Lastly, products are sold from a store at the farm and via social media platforms.

Antiparasitic treatment and vaccinations

The farmer does not treat the pigs with any antiparasitic drugs. The piglets are vaccinated by the seller before arrival but are not routinely treated or vaccinated routinely on the farm.



Picture 2. Illustration of an operational setup with a hub. The red rectangle presents the central hub with the concentrate feed dispenser (A), drinking trough (B), sick pen (C), and huts (D). From this hub, grazing areas (represented by E) can be rotated as needed to prevent overgrazing and support pasture regeneration.

Health and welfare

According to the farmers, health issues are generally few. However, they have experienced an increased rate of arthritis in some isolated groups. Overall, the pigs are considered to be in good health by the farmers. The occurrence of cannibalism and aggression varies between groups but is generally low. The farmers have experienced that piglets arriving with a low body condition score are the most aggressive.



Picture 3. Finisher pigs on the pasture reaching out from the hub (to the right). Photo: B. Blomstrand

Table 1. Farm statistics

Farm category	Information
Breed	Organic TN70/Yorkshire/Hampshire/Duroc piglets (hard to come by)
Number of sows	0 (no breeding sows on the farm)
No. slaughtered animals per year (2023)	84
Full-time equivalent	4-5
Other species	172 Angus beef cattle, 900 laying hens
Feed	Free access to concentrate, roughage, and pasture
Average annual farrowings per sow	N/A
Mutilations	Very few to none
General health	Good
Weaning age	N/A
Slaughter weight	95 kg (6 months old)
Area per grower pig	500 m ²

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