



# FREE-RANGE PIG HUSBANDRY SYSTEMS

CASE STUDY FARM\_NO\_04

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*Picture 1. Free-roaming finisher pigs resting in the straw bale shelter. Foto: B. Blomstrand*

## History of the farm

The farm\_NO\_04 is located in the south-eastern part of Norway, a region 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 during 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 after regenerative principles since 2017, with the help of both seasonal and permanent employees. The farmers do not keep breeding sows, and in 2023, they were unable to source organic piglets. As a result, since 2024, they could not market their pork as organic.

Covering 31 hectares of fully cultivated land and 600 hectares of forest, the farmers raise sheep in addition to pigs. Furthermore, they grow peas, fava beans, spelt, emmer wheat, slash-and-burn rye, and fully cultivated grassland.

In 2018, the farmers build an on-farm abattoir, allowing them to slaughter their animals with minimal stress. Their ambition is to become world leading in climate-conscious and animal welfare practices, and they proudly market their animals as “happy pigs”.

## Pig rearing

The piglets arrive at the farm at three months of age. At arrival, the pigs are introduced to a small area, which is gradually expanded as they grow. Grazing areas are rotated after each season, and previously used pastures are not re-

used for pigs for the next two years. The animals are fenced with a single electric fence consisting of two wires.

All pigs are kept outdoors year-round, primarily on arable land, with access to forest and the local lake. They have huts filled with straw for shelter. In addition, the farmer built a shelter out of straw bales, covered with logs and a tarpaulin. These shelters help the pigs maintain a comfortable temperature, even during cold winters.

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## Environmental aspects

The pigs have access to watercourses, which act as a water source and cooling medium during summer. The area can become quite muddy during periods with heavy precipitation. The placement of the huts is particularly important, as pigs tend to defecate close to the huts and this is where there will be the highest risk for runoff. However, the farmers observe minimal runoff into nearby streams or rivers.

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## Market

The most challenging aspect of being non-conventional farmers is marketing and selling the products according to the farmer. They have developed their own brand: the animals are slaughtered stress-free on-farm. The products are sold directly to end-users and restaurants in the Oslo/Drammen region.

### Antiparasitic treatment and vaccinations

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



*Picture 2. Resting finisher pig hiding in the straw. Photo: B. Blomstrand*

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## Health and welfare

According to the farmer, health issues are generally uncommon. Upon arrival, the pigs engage in some pushing and shoving as they establish social hierarchy, but injuries are minimal and typically limited to a few bite marks and scratches. However, the breed used is not particularly well adapted to an outdoor lifestyle involving extensive physical activity, and some animals eventually develop back, hip, or joint pain over time.





Picture 3. Resting finisher pigs, autumn. Photo: B. Blomstrand

Table 1. Farm statistics

Farm category	Information
Breed	TN70/Yorkshire/Duroc
Number of sows	0
No. slaughtered animals per year (2023)	225
Full-time equivalent	2-3
Other species	Sheep
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	100 kg
Area per grower pig	>200 m <sup>2</sup>

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