

Rural tourism – return to the farm perspective

Niels Chr. Nielsen, Marie-Kathrine Aae Nissen and Flemming Just

Danish Centre for Rural Research, University of Southern Denmark, Esbjerg

ncn@sam.sdu.dk, nissen@sam.sdu.dk, fj@sam.sdu.dk

Abstract

Several studies have pointed to tourism as a tool for economic development and a means for keeping the population in rural areas. Typically areas suffering from decline in agriculture and general socio-economic trends. The general view seems to be that, many rural areas are inevitably moving towards a post-productive state, and that a possible adaption is diversification of economic activity and “multifunctional land use”, with tourism and recreation among the functions. In the tourism and rural (sociology) literature, the community perspective has been dominant, along with a focus on innovation, i.e. development of new tourism products, preferably based on natural, human and social resources found within the rural district.

However, in an ongoing study, carried out for the Danish Food Industry Agency, we shift focus (back) towards the development potential for farms wanting to diversify their business, and their possibilities for economic support and, just as important, advice from the agricultural associations’ consultancy structure as well as from national and regional tourism development bodies, and possibly networks for rural/farm/green tourism operators. We do this assuming that a number of barriers and structural shortcomings exist that must be overcome before the full potential of rural tourism in Denmark can be realized. These assumptions are being tested through collection and analysis of relevant statistical data, interviews with experts at national and regional level and with stakeholders in tourism and rural development at municipal and local level. Cases demonstrating successful moves into farm-based tourism are also collected.

We propose a stronger emphasis on entrepreneurship and on the links between the individual farm and their professional networks, and expect to be able to point out specific policy actions and areas where support should be focused.

Keywords: farm tourism, agrotourism, rural, Denmark, diversification, Multifunctionality, innovation.

Introduction

Following structural changes in European agriculture and related industries, with resultant socio-economic effects, tourism has been proposed as a tool for economic development and a means for keeping the population in rural areas, see for instance Evans and Ilbury (1989), Lane (1994), Bramwell (1994), Marsden et al (2002). This applies in particular to areas suffering from decline in agriculture and general socio-economic trends where, to paraphrase Hall et al (2009), tourism is seen as the last resort. The general view seems to be that, many rural areas are inevitably moving towards a post-productive state, and that a possible adaptation is diversification of economic activity and “multifunctional land use” (Wilson 2008, Mander et al 2007, Knickel et al 2004), with tourism and recreation among such functions, and welfare and quality of life as more important resources (Liburd and Derkzen 2009, Hjalager 2004) and economic activity generated or maintained by second home owners (Kjeldsen et al 2009). However, it is not always clear if this diversification is to take place within the boundaries of the individual farm or at village or community level. In the tourism and rural studies literature (the latter typically with a socio-economic perspective), the community perspective has been dominant, see for instance George et al (2009), Moscardo (2008), along with a focus on innovation, i.e. development of new tourism products, preferably based on natural, human and social resources found within the rural district. Also the concept of *terroir*, founded in landscape and physical resources, related to development of origin-labelled food products (see for instance Beer et al 2002), and part of the touristic brand of regions as Toscana, Crete and Provence. Finally, analysis of actor-networks has gained attention (also) in tourism research, with the focus on associations between actors and non-human entities, in order to understand and possibly improve the use of all kinds of resources within a given destination (Paget et al 2010, Callon 1986). Similar approaches have been taken by Saxena (2005) looking at learning and cross-sector collaboration in the framework of a national park, and by Hall and Mitchell (2002) in a study of the intricate linkages between tourism and cuisine in Australia and New Zealand, countries not normally associated with gastronomic quality.

The extent of agrotourism is typically described at national level as either the percentage of farms engaging in “touristic” activities or by the percentage of the “tourist industry” made up by farm holidays etc. These numbers are hardly found in any of the official statistics, neither on tourism nor agriculture. This also leads to some problems with both “data mining” from national registers and with sampling for surveys of the field, as described below. The extent and effects of rural tourism are often described by taking the most detailed regional tourism statistics and segmenting the data for rural vs. urban regions.

However, as we focus on the phenomenon of farm based tourism, we have come to realize the importance of data where agrotourism stands out clearly as a separate category – and then realized the scarcity and relatively low quality of such data at any level.

Concerning terminology, we recognize that a number of definitions are used, and that none of them can claim to precisely cover the relevant enterprises, as lots of grey zones exist. However, some definitions are more operational and practical than others. For instance, in Italy, agrotourism is defined by law as *“accommodation and hospitality activities carried out by farmers..., through the utilization of their own farms **in connection with** the activities of the cultivation of the land, of forestry, and of the raising of animals”* (from Privitera 2009, our emphasis). However, Italy is the only country in the European Union that has specific laws defining and regulating agrotourism, so in other countries these enterprises have to be “found” and counted either in tourism or agricultural statistics as described above – or through trade or interest organizations. In a recent review of research and theory building within rural tourism and more specifically farm or agriculture based tourism activities, Philip et al (2009b) present an overview of the terms being used, where it becomes evident that Agritourism, Farm Tourism, Farm-based tourism, Agrotourism, and even Vacation Farms are being used to describe different aspects of rural tourism, almost freely interchanging. They propose a typology of five classes of Agritourism, based on three discriminators:

- Whether or not the product is based on a “working farm”;
- The nature of contact between tourists and agricultural activity;
- The degree of authenticity in the tourist’s experience.

This typology has been used for setting up the sampling frame for in-depth interviews with tourism providers in five separate geographic entities in Scotland (Philip et al 2009a), where it seems to have been useful in making sure that a sufficiently broad range of different enterprises would be covered. We, however, find the use of the concept of “authenticity” is challenging, at least at the current state of the survey and have not directly used the proposed typology. Still, it is of analytical value, as also reflected in some of the statements that we have recorded from the providers of agrotourism, who point to the importance of meeting the visitors on equal terms and *“showing the farm as it is”*.

The challenge, in our view, is not so much to create an all-encompassing definition of agrotourism, but rather to create classifications and typologies that are practically useful in segmentation for data collection and subsequent analysis, and possibly for directing recommendations and support based on

the findings of the projects/investigations, thus allowing for more precise policy recommendations (and perhaps even allowing us to more precisely predict the expected outcome of the supportive measures).

In this paper we take a closer look at the extent and the characteristics of farm based tourism in Denmark, reporting from an ongoing study and present some preliminary results and a few recommendations that we expect to have confirmed by subsequent in-depth analysis of our data. We mostly use the term *agrotourism* to distinguish from the broader field of rural tourism, but also the term farm-based tourism, when it is thought important to distinguish from similar activities taking place elsewhere in the rural realm. See also Figure 1 below, with an attempt to “map” some of the different elements of tourism and experience economy from a rural perspective. Special attention will be given to the potential for innovation of offers and development of markets and brands, along with looking at the institutional frameworks for innovation processes, in line with the observation made by Hjalager (2002) that *“For the purpose of future policy-making, the insight into the dynamics of innovation in tourism is much too scanty”*.

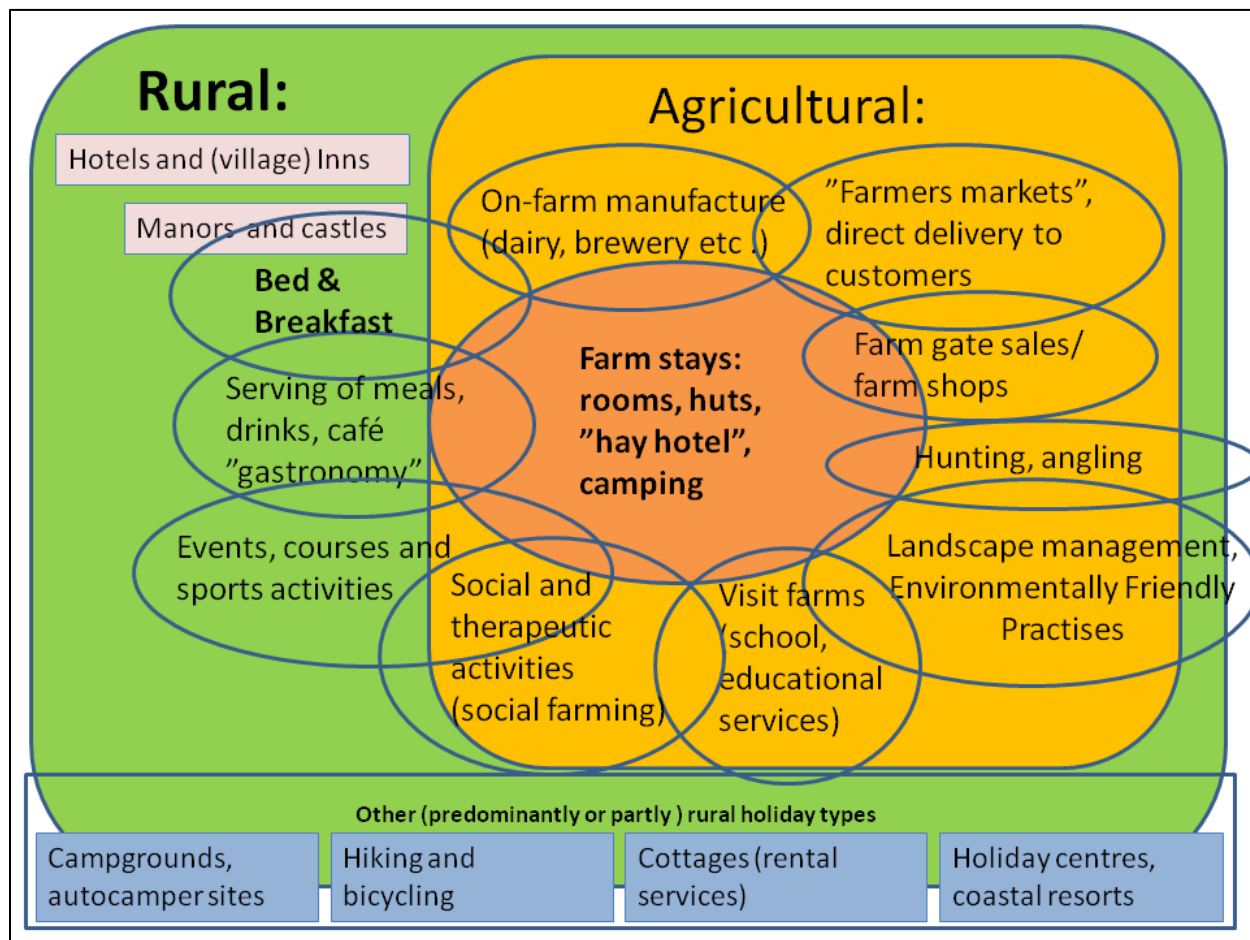


Figure 1 Agricultural tourism or agrotourism seen as subset of rural tourism, from a Danish perspective with focus on farm stays. Inspired by Figure 4 in Marsden et al 2002: Pathways to a sustainable rural economy, Small and Medium Enterprises, and informed by our literature review and interviews.

Innovation in agrotourism

Our starting point on the long road to evidence based policy recommendations is recognizing the need to understand the dynamics of innovation – or lack of same - in Danish agrotourism today. Clearly, a substantial challenge lies in finding ways to develop the business and actually create jobs, or at least make it possible to maintain a reasonable income at the farm? For instance, even when Gössling and Mattsson (2002) in their overview of Swedish farm tourism conclude that farm tourism can be seen as sustainable and beneficial to rural areas, they admit that the economic impact is negligible, that less than one percent of all farms are involved, and that the direct contribution to income is minor. This might change if new and supplementary products are developed. Innovation and entrepreneurship is

surely in demand, but as shown below there are different types or aspects of innovation, some more relevant to rural tourism than others.

During the last few decades, innovation has developed from a relatively unknown, technical term to a phrase that is used daily, with a number of meanings, depending on the political or economical agenda. Innovation is now part in the vocabulary of human resource managers, social scientists, politicians and not least the media, with a number of possible meanings and interpretations. The main reason for promoting and supporting innovation is that it helps provide income and profit that can assure access to new resources, improved competitiveness for companies and industrial sectors, and in the end improved welfare for societies. Innovation is often part of a process of changing economy from supply- to demand driven, notwithstanding the productive level of the economy (Drucker 2002). In line with the above, we here define innovation as *“a economic or social rather than a technical term”* and *“as changing the yield of resources or in demand terms rather than in supply terms, that is, as changing the value and satisfaction obtained from resources by the consumer”* (Drucker 2002). Innovation is therefore dependent on economic as well as social changes in internal and external factors. Internal factors are: Disagreements and structural changes in markets and industries – or even within the individual company. External factors have to do with changes in demography, changes in moods and perception related to the products/brands and the meaning ascribed to them by the public/the consumers, and finally the possible creation of new skills and knowledge (Drucker 2002). In the framework of the current project, we will assume that innovation mostly takes place on the background of *industrial* and *market related* changes. We are mostly looking for Niche innovations, as defined by Hjalager (2002), in her elaboration of the Abernathy and Clark model, see Figure 2 below. Innovation however must go hand in hand with entrepreneurship and management, as described by McGehee and Kline (2008).

When mentioning “the industry” in this paper we are actually dealing with two very different sectors, one within the service realm: tourism and one within primary production: agriculture of which the farms are at least supposed to have their place. Both sectors are struggling with decreasing profit rates and Danish agriculture is in a continuous process of structural change, generally towards fewer, larger and more specialized production units, while Danish tourism has seen a decrease in the total number of visitors. Innovation thus have high priority in both sectors, with agriculture looking for means of diversification (in particular for smaller farms not turning to bulk production of milk or pork) and tourism

looking for alternatives to the perhaps outdated offers of summer cottages, camp grounds and Copenhagen city breaks.

Therefore a creative combination of resources from the two sectors might potentially offer great advantages for rural areas. Agriculture might contribute: authenticity, experiences, “exotic” places and direct connection with a possible niche market through the organizations and marketing channels that are already in place. Tourism on the other hand might contribute professionalism, experience with (training) hospitality, marketing (abroad), and integration with the relevant aspects of the “Denmark” brand (green, sustainable). Almost any entrepreneurial effort in Danish agrotourism will involve a high degree of innovation, as it must face the challenge of endowing some existing resource, namely the farm buildings, activities, surroundings with enhanced potential for creating wealth.

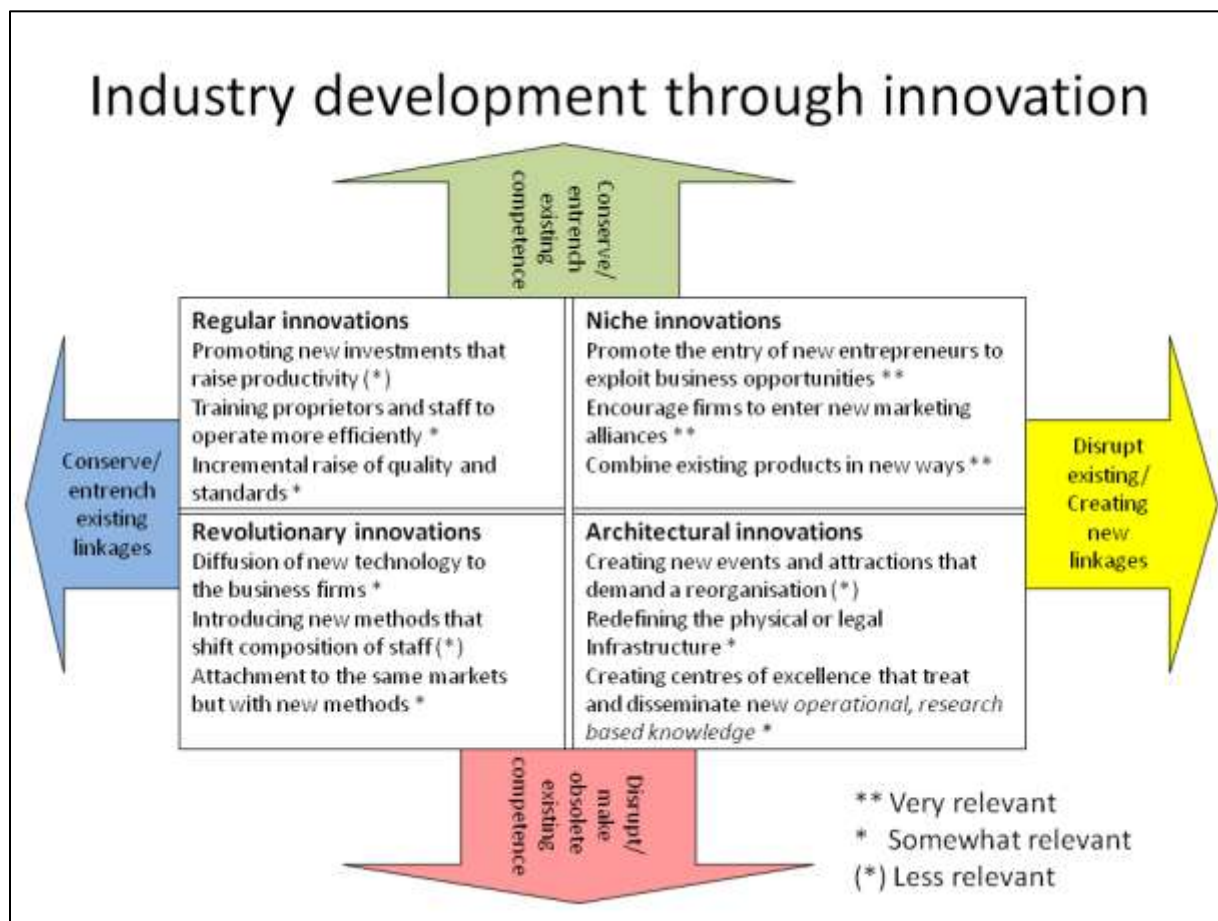


Figure 2 The Abernathy and Clark (1985) model, modified by Hjalager(2002) to apply to the tourism sector, with our assessment of the relevance of the various innovation initiatives.

The current study

The study, which forms the basis for this paper was commissioned by the Danish Food Industry Agency (FødevarerErhverv) to take place during the year 2010, starting in May 2010, and is expected to be concluded by the end of the year. The Center for Rural Research is contributing to the Center for Tourism, Innovation and Culture, a research group at the SDU university campus in Esbjerg, and it was therefore thought possible to conduct a cross-disciplinary study with focus on rural and agricultural issues as well as on issues concerning tourism business and the particular challenges related to innovation in/of tourism products.

Mapping the field

The term “bondegårdsferie”, which literally translates to “farm holiday” has been around at least since 1970 (Den Danske Ordbog 2010), used interchanging with the term “landboferie”, which translates more or less to “rural holiday” or “peasant holiday”. It should therefore be possible to request and search textual and quantitative information on the field, but that proved to be harder than expected.

The number of agricultural enterprises (or just farms) in Denmark is steadily declining. During the last 50 years the total number of farming units has gone down by 75 %. Today, there are around 42,000 farms, a number expected to decline further to 29,000 by 2015. Of those, only a third, or 9,700 will be full-time enterprises, with the possibility of having employees. With a new law for agriculture, in force since April 2010, almost all restrictions have been removed on farm size, area relative to the amount of animals, residence requirements or ownership. By the year 2015, the average full-time farmer is expected to manage an area of 220 hectares. Numbers above taken from Kjems and Bertelsen (2010).

Contrary to the detailed and reliable data available for describing and analyzing agriculture, statistics describing agrotourism in Denmark is scattered, indirect and in most cases not very reliable. According to Statistics Denmark, in 2007 there was 466 farms involved in agrotourism (the Danish term: Landboturisme), meaning places actually providing accommodation – as other activities like farm shops and riding schools are listed separately (and counting to 1,214 and 317 respectively). These numbers are based on self-reporting by the farmers as part of nationwide surveys, where participation is obligatory. Thus we can assume that in 2007, around one percent of the Danish farms were engaged in some form of agrotourism, a proportion that is not likely to have changed much. The association “Landsforeningen for Landboturisme”, LfL (National Association for Agri-Tourism) was founded in 1988, and published the first catalogue in 1989 (see Landsforeningen 2010). The initiative came from farmers active in their

associations, and ever since there have been close relations with the political and the advisory system (Lorenzen 2010), see also Figure 4 below. Today the LfL has around 130 members, publishes a catalogue in 35,000 copies, and maintains a web site with links to the member enterprises (for which they pay a given fee), but does not offer a central booking service.



Figure 3 Authorized sign for use by members of the National Association for Agri-Tourism.

Seen in an international context, the number of farms involved in agrotourism in Denmark is relatively low, in particular compared with the UK, European and in particular Norway and Iceland. Table 1, below is intended to present and summarize the extent of agrotourism in the Nordic countries, based on rapid internet-research. Especially the number for UK seems quite low, but note that non-farm Bed & Breakfast providers are not included.

| Country | Organization | Web site | Members |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Denmark | Landsforeningen for Landboturisme | www.bondegaardsferie.dk/ | ~ 130 |
| Sweden | Bo på Lantgård | www.bopalantgard.org/ | > 300 |
| Norway | Norske Bygdeturisme | www.norsk-bygdeturisme.no/ | > 500 |
| Finland | Countryholidays | www.lomarengas.fi/ | ~ 30 |
| Iceland | Icelandic Farm Holidays | www.farmholidays.is/ | < 140 |
| U.K. | Farm Stay | http://www.farmstay.co.uk/ | > 1200 |
| Germany | die Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft (DLG) | www.landtourismus.de | ~1200 |
| France | Bienvenue à la ferme | http://www.bienvenue-a-la-ferme.com/ | ~5200 |
| Italy | Agriturst / confagricoltura (farmers association) | http://agriturist.it/uk/ | ~1600 |

Table 1 Dominant member-owned/non-profit organization or network for farm tourism suppliers in Nordic countries and selected European countries. Note that the proportion of the agrotourism farms that are in the

leading organization will vary between countries. Extracts from official agricultural statistics will probably show a different pattern, so this table is only indicative on the order of magnitude of agrotourism.

There are some regional differences in the distribution of providers of agrotourism and Denmark, which is also reflected in the distribution of income from this type of activity. According to an analysis by the national tourism development organization (VisitDenmark 2009, table 3), only 41 mio. DKK was spent on farm holidays in 2006, accounting for less than 1 *per mille* of the total 72.7 billion spent by Danes and foreigners on all kinds of touristic activities. When looking at the forms of stay used by Danes vacationing in Denmark (VisitDenmark 2008, figure 3-4), around 1 per cent use Bed & Breakfast OR Farm stays. Between the five administrative regions, the highest expenditures on tourism are found in the Copenhagen metropolitan area, with 40.82 % of the total amount. Then follows region Southern Denmark (Southern Jutland and Funen): 19.95%, Midtjylland: 16.67%, Nordjylland: 12.31% and Sjælland (Zealand): 10.23%. Looking specifically at the geographical distribution of the relatively small expenditure on agrotourism, it appears that most is spent in Midtjylland: 29.27%, followed by Syddanmark: 24.39%.

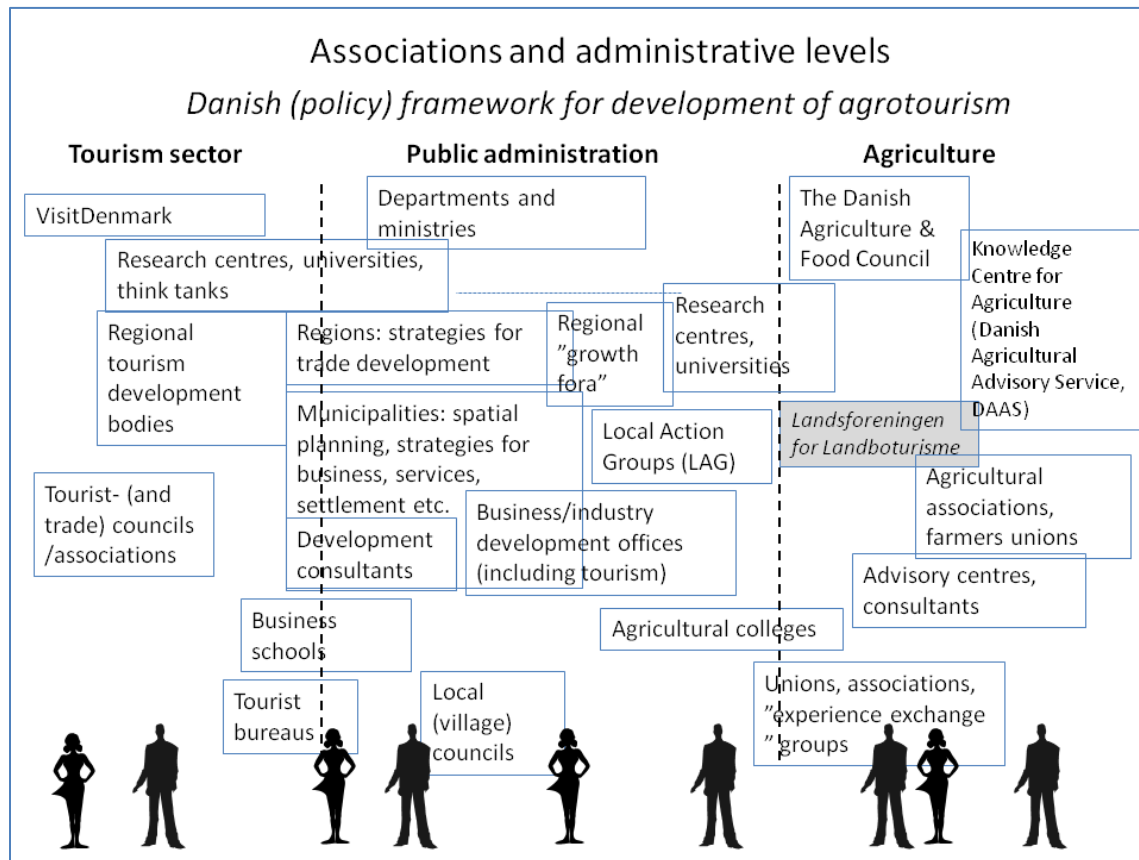


Figure 4 A hierarchical “mind map” approach to understanding the framework for innovation in Danish agrotourism, iteratively used for planning interviews and adjusted according to collected information.

Interviews and on-line survey

In order to assure broad coverage, both geographic and concerning organizational levels for the survey, we chose to make interviews at the regional level *and* to focus on one municipality within each of the non-metropolitan regions. These municipalities have in common that they are relatively periphery located, have a above-average employment in agriculture and food preparation, and that also tourism is relatively important. They have between 45,000 and 60,000 inhabitants. Two municipalities, Thisted in Nordjylland and Ringkøbing-Skjern in Midtjylland have long coastlines with the North Sea, while Faaborg-Midtfyn in Syddanmark and Lolland in region Sjælland have long coastlines with the Baltic Sea and several small islands. At the regional level, we would use an open approach to decide whether to interview somebody in the regional administration OR in the tourism development body, as this was known to vary between the regions, and not completely settled after the administrative reform taking effect from 2006-7. At the municipal level, we would talk to officials working with rural and/or tourism development, typically termed consultants.

We further sought for the agricultural organizations that best covered the selected municipalities, and identified the consultants there who were closest to tourism and experience economy issues.

The purpose of these interviews were to find out if and how if the respective organizations saw any potential for development of agrotourism in their area, if they saw a role for themselves in promoting innovation in agrotourism, and how they experienced the interest in agrotourism from the farmers and their organizations. We also asked about current agrotourism activity and ongoing projects to further investment and innovation.

After the initial literature survey and internal discussions, an interview-guide was compiled, with some differences in the number and formulation of the questions asked to the different levels/interest organizations. The interview form can best be described as semi-structured, as it was found important getting through the above mentioned subjects, but as the same time we would make sure not to miss any additional information, on themes that we had not gotten onto paper (yet). The possible the interviews were conducted face-to-face, some though had to be made by telephone. The interviews outlined above were carried out between June and August 2010, and are still in the process of transcription.

With the supporting structures covered by the interviews described here and background statistics and documents, we also wanted to improve the sparse and often anecdotic knowledge about the service providers and (potential) entrepreneurs in Danish agrotourism. We therefore contacted four agrotourism enterprises in each municipality, in order to ask questions covering the same issues as described above, but on a more practical level, with emphasis on learning about experiences with being a start-up tourism enterprise, networking and professional support – or lack of same – and the influence of those factors on successful operations. All these interviews were conducted during visits to the farms. Only a few of these have yet been transcribed.

Recognizing that the results might be very biased by selection of respondents, we also designed an on-line questionnaire, using the SurveyXact software, in order to reach a broader group of farms and service providers (with limited manpower and within a short time-frame). Given that this could be seen as a chance to “profile” the people behind agrotourism in Denmark and their places and businesses, more questions about farm size, income levels, educational background and income etc. were included, thus more quantitative data. All members of the association for rural tourism (Landsforeningen..) were contacted by e-mail with link to the questions. Further, the agricultural associations that we had by then

been in touch with agreed to inform their members of the surveys through either their usual newsletter or information mails. The structure of the questions is shown in the Appendix. The on-line survey is still ongoing, as an initially low response rate have led to us contacting those who had not responded yet.

In order to make the collected information useful, a metamatrix analysis will be conducted, once all interviews have been transcribed, allowing us to code for responses to the issues of interest. See Appendix 1: Interview guide for municipality level, and Appendix 2: Interview guide for farmers/service providers. The structure of the online-survey, where JUMP-commands are possible is shown in Appendix 3.

Results this far

The main findings from our interviews with representatives of the supporting(?) structure surrounding farm tourism enterprises in Denmark are summarized in this section.

Some significant statements from regional tourism development bodies and project managers in municipalities and regions:

- The largest potential for agrotourism is near other activities that can attract tourists. All types of respondents expressed this opinion. Also nature, parks and similar mentioned, along with routes for hiking, cycling.
- Attractiveness is important; visitors also want quality and perceived value-for-money on a farm holiday or agrotourism stay.
- Preferably there should be animals and nature, in order for the “rural idyll” to stand out clearly.
- Quality and origin-labeled food products are mentioned when the informants were asked about innovation in rural tourism, and seen as very central for connecting towns and countryside, turning consumers into visitors or vice versa.
- Compared to agrotourism, there is larger demand for active holidays involving for instance windsurfing or other water sports (Ringkøbing-Skjern). Also food producers and wind and other energy (experimental, case Lolland) plants are being turned into attractions in their own right.
- The primary group of Danish visitors are families with children and 50+ couples from town, wanting to get into the countryside and enjoy quiet, beautiful surroundings.
- There’s only little will to or plans for direct support of agrotourism from politicians. Still, some respondents see a potential and says they will “consider” developing the field in strategic contexts. Also, it is generally noted that municipalities and regions in their present form are so

new that they haven't had time to look carefully at their tourism situation and formulate strategies yet. This includes re-considering participation in regional development, branding, marketing cooperation, forging new alliances.

- Manor houses and large farms can act as "locomotives" for tourism development in rural areas, they typically have special food products, events organized.
- Places with no agricultural activity or only hobby farming might be more attractive for tourism development, as there are less obnoxious smells (normally a problem with pig farms), less dirt.

Some significant statements from advisors, strategists at the agricultural organizations were:

- Engaging in the tourism sector is a demanding task – it should be done 110% or not at all. Though tempting, it's not just something to do with a few spare rooms after the kids have moved away from home.
- The "average farm" does not exist! Instead some types can be identified: farms with (almost industrial) bulk production; farms with widespread "concern structure" typically with activities in more places (multifunctional); farms with niche production, diversifying or supplementing with tasting, food preparation courses and perhaps accommodation; part time or hobby farmers wanting to have a little supplementary income. They need different types of advice and support.
- When asked about possible future developments and perceived demand from visitors, open farms and farm visits were mentioned, stressing the importance of getting people out to "meet the farmer". Also the interest of many farmers in showing and explaining their properties and ways of production were mentioned.
- Bank and building societies have become less willing to finance development in rural, peripheral areas, alternative sources of financing would be welcomed.
- Hunting and angling are mentioned as activities naturally combined with farm stays. Proximity to nature is stated as a clear advantage, also an advantage of being near for instance the national park in Thy (Thisted municipality). Quote: *"There must be something more around.."* (advisor, Vestjysk Landboforening, Ringkøbing).
- There is a large and growing group of people who want to see and experience what it is like being and living on a farm, and their demands should be met.

Finally some significant statements from the service providers, farmers:

- They have to promote their business in a number of places, through different catalogues and websites, there's not one central service that suffices.
- Access to close-knit networks with agrotourism providers in same situation are important, also in the local area for practical collaboration, for instance by referring guests to each other when all rooms are occupied.
- Farm shops were mentioned a number of times, as a complementary activity.
- Regulations are making it hard, particularly for preparation of food.
- Fees for being in catalogues and on website are seen as a serious barrier, as the expenses are high relative to the possible income.
- It is not seen as realistic to hire employees for service functions in relation to agritourism, if somebody should be hired, it could be a pensioner, schoolgirl in need of a bit of extra money.
- Directs contact is normally with farmers associations and the association for Rural Holidays (Landsforeningen for Landboturisme), not with municipalities or regional tourism development organizations.

It turned out to be difficult to ask directly about multifunctionality, and issues relating to post-productivist landscapes (following Wilson 2008, Knickel et al 2004), as these terms are not part of the farmers' daily vocabulary. Much in the same way, it proved difficult to ask directly about innovation – a concept that is, also in our experience hard to handle.

Discussion, further work and some conclusions

Writing this paper has been a great opportunity to take stock of the results this far from the project. The area of intersection between Danish agriculture, tourism and rural research (and with that the entire discourse on rural development) has been partly charted. Already some of our working hypotheses have been confirmed, others rejected, and new ones emerged, in practice by adjusting the “mental maps” shown in Figure 1 and 4 above. Just as could be expected in this kind of exploratory research. We are not yet in the position to come up with well-founded recommendations, but find it relevant to use a SWOT approach to outline a status and possible ways forward.

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| INTERNAL | <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agricultural, economic advisory system in place and functioning; - Large building mass, recently also empty farmhouses; - Willingness to pursue innovations and new business fields - “Fireballs”, “movers and shakers”, locomotives (key persons, businesses) driving innovation in all parts of Denmark. | <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory system focusing mainly on food (bulk) production; - Properties being bought up by farmers with focus on production, not refurbishing; - Low or no involvement in tourism/experience economy from the majority of farmers; - Only few “real new jobs” to be expected, but can the necessary competences be found with current staff/family assistance? |
| EXTERNAL | <p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trend towards holidays for relaxation, “quality time” with children; - Trend towards need for involvement, learning, authenticity during holidays; - Awareness of local (quality) food products; - Awareness of (need for) multifunctionality and economic diversification in rural/peripheral areas; - Various development projects by municipalities, regions, “growth forum”, support from EU CAP; - National- and nature parks being established in recent years. | <p><u>Threats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declining number of visitors in Danish tourism in general, providers holding on to safe, well known products; - Agrotourism not seen or recognized as part of the tourism sector; - Lack of coordination of development projects; - Rigid regulations (in particular about serving meals) without regard for special circumstances of agrotourism, 12 person limit; - No direct subventions, tax deduction etc. - None or insignificant research & development in field. General guidelines for entrepreneurs and innovation tools not always relevant. |

Table 2 SWOT approach to overview of situation for innovations in and development/expansion of agrotourism in Denmark. Subject to change following analysis of online-survey and metamatrix inspection of interviews.

The literature review and the interviews have underlined that it takes two to tango, so it is indeed important that the products, which are developed and marketed, do meet the expectations of the visitors. However, only to a certain degree, as images of rural idyll might sell in the first place, but damage the credibility of the products. This is part of the challenge of selling authenticity – staging performances of traditional agriculture; we do not expect Danish holiday makers to accept that, and cannot be sure that foreign visitors will either.

The supply side tends to get most attention, also in this survey, with assumptions on the demand side being based on what is generally known about the holiday making population. Still, once the hosts or providers of agrotourism are identified, remains the challenge of describing the guests, or those in demand of a farm holiday. Probably the most reliable information can be gained from consumer surveys, as used by Grimm (2009) and by Blekesaune et al (2010). We have more or less unconsciously

assumed that main market segments are relatively well-off and well-educated families with pre-teenager children, looking for activities, and older couples, “empty nesters” looking for peace and quiet, possibly also gastronomic experiences or learning. Consumer surveys, with questions formulated directly for improving our understanding of the market for agrotourism, in a Danish or Nordic context, might change such a simplistic view.

Concerning the perspective used in this study, we have tried to look at a narrow field rather than a broad one, and addressed the farms/farmers and their professional networks rather than community/countryside/society. We justify doing so, as innovation requires focus, so before farm buildings get refurbished and international (or web-based) marketing campaigns get launched, it is important to be clear about what kinds of products that should be developed for and marketed to which target groups.

We cannot expect to see a booming industry anytime soon, nothing like the Danish wind energy cluster jumping up. Still, it is worth investing in the development of agritourism, especially through the promotion of product- and organizational innovation. Every successful new agrotourism enterprise contributes to improved quality of life for the provider(s), better town-countryside relations and a positive contribution to the package of offers available within a given area or around a given destination.

References

- Beer, Sean, J. Edwards, C. Fernandes, F. Sampaio (2002): Regional food cultures: integral to the rural tourism product? Chapter 12, pp. 207-223 in *Tourism and Gastronomy*, eds. A.M. Hjalager and G. Richards. Routledge, London.
- Blekesaune Arild, B. Brandth, M.S. Haugen (2010): Visitors to Farm Tourism Enterprises in Norway. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, vol. 10, no. 1, pages 54-73.
- Bramwell, Bill (1994): Rural Tourism and Sustainable Rural Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, vol 2. Pp. 1-6.
- Callon, Michel (1986): Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay. In: J. Law: *Power, action and belief: a new sociology of knowledge?* London, Routledge, pp.196-223.
- Drucker, Peter F. (2002): The discipline of Innovation. *Harvard Business Review*, reprint from 1985 original, pages 95-102. Available at <http://hbr.org/product/discipline-of-innovation-hbr-classic/an/R0208F-PDF-ENG>
- Evans, N. J., & Ilbery, B. W. (1989). A conceptual framework for investigating farm based

accommodation and tourism in Britain. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 5, 257–266.

George, E.W., Mair, H. and Reid, D.G. (2009): Rural Tourism Development – Localism and Cultural Change. Channel View Publications, Bristol.

Grimm, Bente (2009): Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof und Urlaub auf dem Lande. Studie für das Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz auf der Basis der Reiseanalyse 2008. N.I.T. Kiel. Available at: http://www.bmelv.de/DE/Landwirtschaft/Laendliche-Raeume/Urlaub-Bauernhof/urlaub-bauernhof_node.html as of September 2010.

Gössling, Stefan and S. Mattsson (2002): Farm Tourism in Sweden: Structure, Growth and Characteristics. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, vol. 2, no. 1, pages 17-30.

Hall, C.M. and R. Mitchell (2002): The changing nature of the relationship between cuisine and tourism in Australia and New Zealand: from fusion cuisine to food networks. Chapter 11, pp. 186-206 in *Tourism and Gastronomy*, eds. A.M. Hjalager and G. Richards. Routledge, London.

Hall, C.M., D. Müller, J. Saarinen (2009): Rural tourism: Tourism as the Last Resort? Chapter 5 in *Nordic Tourism, Issues and Cases*, Channel View Publications, Bristol.

Hjalager, Anne-Mette (1997): Innovation patterns in sustainable tourism; An analytical typology. *Tourism Management*, vol 18, nr. 1, pages 35-41.

Hjalager, Anne-Mette (2002): Repairing innovation defectiveness in tourism, *Tourism Management*, vol 23, nr. 5, pages 465-474.

Hjalager, Anne-Mette, (2004): Sustainable leisure life modes and rural welfare economy, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 6, nr. 3, pages 177-188.

Kjeldsen, Chris, Kromann, D.S., Nielsen, N.C. og Just, F. (2009): *Dobbeltbosætning/sekundære boliger - en undersøgelse af mulige veje til udvikling i Vejen og Langeland kommuner*. IFUL rapport 12, april 2009.

Kjems, Malte and S.R. Bertelsen (2010): Danmarks landskabsværdier under hårdt pres (Danish landscape values under pressure). *Ugebladet Mandag Morgen* 19, 13. May 2010, pages 19-25.

Knickel, K., H. Renting & J.D. van der Ploeg (2004): Multifunctionality in European agriculture. In: Brouwer, F. (ed.) *Sustaining agriculture and the rural economy: Governance, policy and Multifunctionality*. Edward Elgar Publishing Inc., 81-103.

Landsforeningen for Landboturisme (2010): Facts on the National Association and Agri-Tourism. Web site: <http://www.bondegaardsferie.dk/uknationalassociation>

Lane, Bernard (1994): What is rural tourism? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* vol. 2, nr. 1, siderne 7-21.

Lorenzen, Silke (2010): Personal communication with the secretary of Landsforeningen for Landboturisme, Sep. 1. 2010.

Liburd, Janne J. og P. Derkzen (2009): Emic perspectives on quality of life: The case of the Danish Wadden Sea Festival. *Tourism and Hospitality Research* Vol. 9, 2, 132–146.

Mander, Ülo, Wiggering, H., Helming, K. (2007): *Multifunctional land use: meeting future demands for landscape goods and services*. Springer.

McGehee, N., Kline, C.S. (2008): Entrepreneurship and the Rural Tourism Industry: a Primer. Chapter 10, pages 123- 141 in Moscardo (2008).

Moscardo, G. (2008), red.: *Building Community Capacity for Tourism Development*. CAB International, Wallingford.

N.C. Nielsen, M.-K. Aa. Nissen, F. Just: Rural Tourism – Paper prepared for the 19th Nordic Symposium in Tourism and Hospitality Research, September 2010 Akureyri, Iceland

- Paget, E., et al. (2010): A tourism innovation case. *Annals of Tourism Research* vol. 37 no. 3, pp.828-847.
- Philip, Sharon, Blackstock, K., Hunter, C. (2009a): What is agritourism? Perspectives from five types of agritourism provider. Paper for the ESRS congress, Vaasa, Finland 17-21 August 2009, WG 1.6 Tourism in a rural setting. 18 pages.
- Philip, Sharon, Hunter, C., Blackstock, K. (2009b): A typology for defining agritourism. *Tourism Management*, in press, 5 sider. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.08.001>
- Privitera, Donnatella (2009): FACTORS OF DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETITIVENESS: THE CASE OF ORGANIC-AGRITOURISM. Paper prepared for presentation at the 113th EAAE Seminar, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia December 9-11, 2009. Accessed Sept. 2010 at <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/57347/2/Privitera%20Donatella%20cover.pdf>
- Russell, Roslyn, Faulkner, B. (1999): Movers and shakers: chaos makers in tourism development. *Tourism Management* 20, pp. 411-423.
- Saxena, Gunjan (2005): Relationships, networks and the learning regions: case evidence from the Peak District National Park. *Tourism Management* vol. 26, pp. 277-289.
- VisitDenmark(2008): Danskernes ferier i Danmark – i og uden for højsæsonen (the Danes' holidays in Denmark, inside and outside the peak season). A report in the business knowledge series. Available at: <http://www.e-pages.dk/visitdenmark/295/>
- VisitDenmark(2009): Turismens økonomiske betydning i Danmark i 2006 (the economic importance of tourism in Denmark 2006). Available at: <http://www.visitdenmark.com/NR/ronlyres/C02BACBD-8424-45FC-881C-EEDBE7D2F2C8/0/Turismensoekonomiskebetydning2006revudg.pdf>

Appendix 1:

Interview guide for municipality "tourism experts"

Personal information

Name:

Current job description:

Work and organization:

How does the municipality support innovation within tourism and experience economy?

What do you, as municipality currently do in order to develop tourism within your area?

How much priority has hitherto been given to the tourism field in the municipality?

Current and previous initiatives and plans:

How many resources are you currently using for tourism development in general?

Which forms of tourism development have been successful until now?

How have earlier initiatives and investments in the tourism field been communicated to the citizens?

What kind of plans do the municipality administration have for the tourism field, in particular in connection with the physical planning process or possible strategic development- or master plans?

How do you see the development of "peripheral Denmark", and the possible contribution of tourism to that end?

Possibilities for developing farms into experience economy enterprises:

Do you see tourism as contributing to the development of the rural parts of the municipality?

Which options do you see for innovation of rural tourism within the municipality?

Do you have the impression, that farmers are interested in developing their farms into tourist sites?

If yes, how involved is the municipality in that process?

Which initiatives, relating to agrotourism, would you imagine to have the biggest impact with the potential visitors?

Are you doing anything to inform about alternative holiday types in the area, in order to expand or broaden the “palette” of touristic offers?

Appendix 2:

Interview guide for service providers in agrotourism

First some questions about your own enterprise and situation

- For how long have you been offering farm holidays?
- Why did you take it up in the first place?
- How did you get started?
- Did you get some help to get started, and from what side?
- How has your “business” developed since then?
- What is the capacity today, measure in rooms and beds (perhaps also dining visitors)?
- What can the customers/visitors expect from a visit at your place?
- Taking part in farm work. Is that in demand from your visitors’ side?
- Does a particular group or type of people visit your place?
- Marketing of what you have to offer? Own web-site, advertisements of touristic offers in newspapers, magazines and/or taking part in common brochures, internet-portals or other efforts?
- What is your yearly income from agrotourism? (if you want to answer this, otherwise:) how much does the income from tourism mean relative to income from agricultural and perhaps other activities (jobs outside farm) ?
- Who manages the farm, respectively the tourist enterprise in this family?

- Do you have anyone employed in relation to the agrotourism activity (for cleaning, cooking and similar) ? Could you imagine hiring (more) employees at the later stage?
- Which other destinations, attractions and holiday forms do you see as the biggest competitors?
- Do you see possibilities for cooperation with others offering touristic experiences and accommodation nearby, or is such cooperation already taking place?

Then a few questions on the tourism business and rural areas in general..

- Do you see (further) development of agrotourism as an option for creating economic development and jobs in the “periphery of Denmark”?
- What do you think is most needed for agrotourism to develop?
 - Can you point to political or administrative restrictions that are hindering development of agrotourism?
 - Is there a need for support, either directly economic, for marketing or for education/courses?

Appendix 3: design for implementation in SurveyXact

On-line questionnaire on Agrotourism

For Danish farmers

