



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategy

Green care

National strategy





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Preface

The health and care services sector faces great challenges. Combined with the need for alternative educational and occupational training arenas, these challenges highlight the appropriateness of further developing welfare services on farms.

Green care is the term used in Norway for welfare services that use farms as arenas for education, child and youth services, occupational training, health and care services. Currently, 1,100 farms in Norway offer services for mental health problems, addiction, truancy, dementia, occupational training, and integration.

We need new ways of meeting current and future challenges. Green care can be one of these ways.

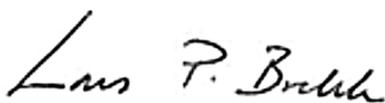
The national Green care strategy has been prepared to ensure a positive development in important areas such as quality assurance, research, and the future division of roles and responsibilities.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development have prepared the strategy. A working group with members from the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, the Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute, the Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation, and Innovation Norway have participated in developing the plan. The Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security have been part of a reference group for the work on the plan. A number of workshops and dialogue meetings have been held.

In parallel with the work on the strategy plan, the Green care partners in the agricultural sector have agreed on a definition of Green care and on a new approval system for farms that want to participate in the Green care scheme.

We want to thank everyone who has contributed to this exciting process, and we look forward to our ongoing collaboration on Green care.

Oslo, 20 February 2012



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1 Green care

Definition:

“Green care” refers to individually adapted and quality-assured welfare services on farms. The services shall stimulate coping skills, development and well-being.

Farms are properties that are used for farming, forestry or gardens. The activities offered in the Green care service relate to the farm and its daily life and operations.

Service areas:

- *Child and youth services and education:* general pedagogy, special needs education, leisure, etc.
- *Work:* occupational training
- *Health and care services:* addiction, disability, mental health, dementia, etc.

Additionally, integration services are offered for immigrants and refugees. Green care also offers correctional and crime prevention services. In the future, it is expected that more services will be developed that are adapted to the needs of various user groups.

Parties:

- *User:* a person who receives and/or participates in Green care services
- *Purchaser:* the entity that is responsible for ordering the service and that is responsible for the services offered to the user
- *Provider:* the farmer responsible for producing an approved and quality-assured service arena

Originally, different terms were used for the farm's welfare services, such as Green care, The farm as a pedagogical resource, and Living school. “Into the courtyard” (Inn på tunet) is now becoming the term of choice in Norway, while it still will be termed “Green care” in English. Other countries use terms such as Green Care, Care Farming, Farms for schools, Social Farming or Farming for health.



Children and a calf. Photo: Kari Myklebust

2 Goals

The strategy sets the following goals for Green care:

To develop quality-assured and socially beneficial welfare services on farms.

The unique aspect of Green care is that it uses the farm as an arena for welfare services. The farms have physical facilities that lend themselves to a diversity of activities, and also have surroundings that can provide the users with positive stimuli and experiences.

The services target a wide spectrum of sectors, including child and family protection, nursery schools and kindergartens, compulsory school, upper secondary school, adult education, after-school care, occupational training, outdoor and physical activities, adapted services for mental health, addiction, psychiatry, and services for the elderly and dementia patients.

The authorities for each sector are responsible for regulations and quality assurance within their service areas.

The agricultural sector shall contribute to the development and quality assurance of the farms through dialogues with the sectors. The agricultural sector must also contribute to documentation and research on the welfare services.

Green care shall develop socially beneficial welfare services using farms as service arenas. The basis for developing farms as arenas for welfare services is that farm resources can strengthen the handling of society's welfare tasks. These can be met either by having the services satisfy current quality standards with an increased opportunity for bespoke services for each individual or user, or by providing the stipulated quality in a more efficient manner.



The forest and uncultivated land enable varied work tasks. Photo: Mette Finnes

3 Modern service delivery

3.1 Progress

The systematic work on Green care began in the mid-1990s, and a number of parties have participated in and contributed to this work:

The *Living School project (1996-2000)* was created by the Agricultural University of Norway (now UMB) with funding from the (then) Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs; the Ministry of the Environment; the (then) Ministry of Agriculture; and the (then) Ministry of Health and Social Services. The project has been continued through the *The farm as a pedagogical resource* project, which has included continuing education courses at UMB and other university colleges across the country.

The national project "*Grønn omsorg - bruk av gården som ressurs for opplærings-, helse- og sosialsektoren (2000-2002)*" ("Green care: the use of farms as resources for the educational, health and social services sectors [2000-2002]") was financed by the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The main tasks of the project were national network development, the organisation of conferences and courses, the stimulation of research and development, and the development of quality assurance systems and collaboration models.

Green work is an occupational training service on farms organised by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) for people with mental health problems, including addictions. The first Green work measure was established in 2004. It was organised by the "Vilje Viser Vei" ("Willpower Shows the Way") programme on work and mental health. The "Vilje Viser Vei" project has ended, but the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration has continued Green work as one of a number of occupational rehabilitation schemes for people with mental health problems.

The Norwegian Centre for Dementia Research implemented projects in five county councils that offered services to people living with dementia (2001-2004). As part of the follow-up to the Dementia Plan 2015, a number of county councils have expanded their farm-based services for people with dementia.

The Green care action plan was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in 2007. Innovation Norway had prepared the plan in collaboration with the Expert collaboration on Green care. The Action plan had five focus areas: Establishing collaborations between farmers and the public sector, research and documentation, quality assurance and development, competence development and network. Most of the points of the action plan have been completed, and the focus area measures have been continued through the agricultural agreement, county action plans, local authority projects, and research and educational projects.

The *Kunnskapsstatus og forskningsbehov for Inn på tunet* ("Status of knowledge and research needs for Green care") (2008) report was prepared by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) on commission from the Research Council of Norway, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, Innovation Norway, and the Norwegian Agricultural Authority. It provides a thorough review of the field in Norwegian, Nordic and international contexts.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development are behind the *Green care promotion 2010-2012* initiative. NOK 18 million (to be distributed over three years) has been allocated to projects organised by the community councils. The goal of the initiative is to increase community councils' ownership of and competency in Green care services. To date, 64 community councils have participated.

The County governors are responsible for facilitating and developing Green care. This work has been taking place in broad interdisciplinary partnerships, which have included the health, care, school and agricultural sectors. A survey conducted by the County governors in January 2011 shows that numerous Green care activities are being undertaken in most counties.

The further development of Green care is assisted by the growing focus on welfare services that are located in users' local communities and based on a broad spectrum of community resources. This emerges from the strategies in *Report No. 25 (2005-2006) Care Plan 2015*, in which active care and partnerships with local communities and families are important parts of the strategies. *NOU 2011:11 Innovasjon i omsorg* ("Innovation in care services") mentions Green care, especially when discussing new ways of solving future care challenges.

3.2 Scope and services

The Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation have started the work on quality assurance of Green care farms. In this context, the County governors surveyed approximately 1,100 farms providing Green care services during the autumn of 2011.

In the 2010 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Norway registered 873 Green care farms. Figure 3.1 shows the county distribution of the 873 Green care farms included in the Statistics Norway 2010 Census of Agriculture.

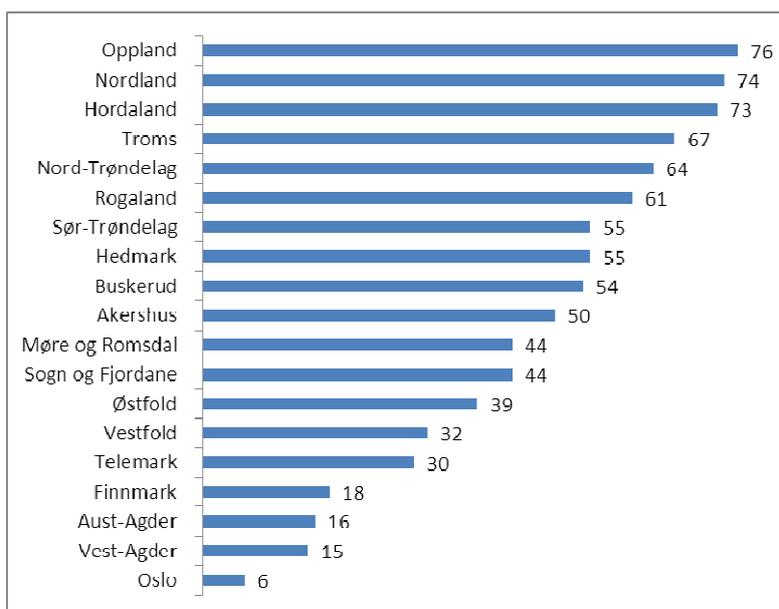


Figure 3.1 Green care farms per county, 2010. Total number 873
Source: Statistics Norway, Census of Agriculture 2010

In a 2009 survey, the Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute registered 13 types of services offering a total of 152 services in the five counties surveyed (Oslo and Akershus, Rogaland, Sør Trøndelag and Vestfold). Table 3.1 below shows the number of services distributed by type and county. The greatest share of Green care services are within school and day care services for people with psychiatric disorders. Together, these two categories constitute approximately 40 percent of the services offered.

Table 3.1 Types and incidence of services in four counties

Green care services	Sør- Trøndelag	Vestfold	Akershus/ Oslo	Rogaland	Total
Elderly/dementia/early stage of dementia	5	5	1	1	12
Nursery school	7	1	3	2	13
School/alternative school (primary, secondary, or upper secondary)	16	2	7	6	31
After-school care	3	2	1	2	8
Day care for addicts	5	0	1	3	9
Pedagogical services for adults	0	0	1	0	1
Day care services for people with physical disabilities	8	0	0	2	10
Day care services for people with developmental disabilities	7	1	0	5	13
Day care services for people with psychiatric disorders	14	7	4	5	30
Services under NAV's areas of responsibility	8	1	2	5	16
Other (describe):	6	2	0	1	9
Total	79	21	20	32	152

Source: NILF

3.3 Current political framework and foundation for Green care services

The Government's ambitions for Green care are detailed in its Political platform 2009-2013, in which it stipulates a focus on increased production of goods and services in the agricultural sector. This includes Green care. *Report No. 9 (2011-2012) Landbruks- og matpolitikken* ("Agricultural and food policy") emphasises the importance of an increased focus on rural industries, and highlights Green care as a potential service offer to many sectors.

Report No. 25 (2008-2009) Lokal vekstkraft og framtidstru, om distrikts- og regionalpolitikken ("Local growth and faith in the future: on district and regional policies") states that the role of the local communities as developers of society is to be strengthened and be better utilised for increased value creation. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development sees Green care as a tool in its overarching strategy for attractive local communities. Green care can contribute to local business development and to the development of good local services.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food's policy in this area has previously been detailed in the *Strategi for næringsutvikling «Ta landet i bruk!»* ("Strategy for business development: 'Make use of the country!'") (2007-2009) and the *Handlingsplan for Inn på tunet* ("Action plan for Green care") (2007–2009). In line with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's *Strategi for forskning og forskningsbasert innovasjon* ("Strategy for research and research-based innovation") (2007-2012), the facilitation of continued growth and development of agriculture-based services in, for example, the health, education, occupational training, and care sectors, will be prioritised.

Green care has been a central part of the *samarbeidsavtalen mellom Landbruks- og matdepartementet og KS om landbruks- og næringsutvikling* ("collaboration agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities on agricultural and business development") (2010-2012), and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities has been involved in several important Green care development processes.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development collaborate on the three-year Green care promotion initiative 2010-2012.

Green care is also a prioritised focus area in the *regional business strategies*. These strategies guide county priorities regarding economic tools that aim to facilitate initiatives on agricultural properties. In collaboration with the regional partnerships, the County governors play active roles in the facilitation and development of Green care. Green care is also a topic in county plans and other regional plans. Several counties (e.g. Hordaland, Finnmark, and North Trøndelag) have made their own *action plans* for Green care. In the County governors' survey of January 2011, we see that at the regional and local levels, the Green care plans are largely based on plans and strategies in the agricultural sector. *Green care is mentioned in the agricultural, business and care plans of several community councils*



A proud milkmaid, Photo: Kari Myklebust

4 Green care today: partners, knowledge, quality assurance and communication

4.1 Partners

A number of authorities, organisations and businesses currently contribute to the work on Green care. The most important of these are listed below.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has the overarching responsibility for allocations made by Parliament on the National Budget and through the agricultural agreement. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food develops policy and enables the implementation of policies.

The county council leaders are important partners in the development of the Green care business area. This includes work on everything from the development of regional business strategies and follow-up of national agricultural policies, to advising those who provide and request services.

The counties are responsible for recruitment, equality and competency in the agricultural sector. The counties are also responsible for regional development and business development in general. The counties are responsible for upper secondary schools and agricultural education at the upper secondary level. A number of Green care course and educational offerings have been developed in collaboration with the upper secondary schools.

The local authorities, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs purchase Green care services. The local authorities also provide front-line services for business development for Innovation Norway.

Innovation Norway manages the rural development allocations that target business development, central development funds, and funds allocated as part of the Green care promotion initiative.

The Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation is responsible for developing and implementing quality assurance systems and approval schemes related to the use of farms as arenas for Green care services. The Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation has its own Green care *expert group*. The expert group consists of members from the Norwegian Farmers' Union, the Norwegian Farmers' and Smallholders' Union, the Norwegian farmers' association for HSE services, the county council leaders, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, Innovation Norway, and Gjensidige. An observer from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is also part of the group.

The Research Council of Norway and the Norwegian Agricultural Authority administer research funding and are therefore important partners in the development of Green care.

The agricultural sector organisations, the Norwegian Farmers' Union and the Norwegian Farmers' and Smallholders' Union, play an important role in mobilising farmers to participate in Green care, and in the work on developing Green care as a

service offered to diverse user groups. The organisations collaborate with the county council leaders and Innovation Norway. Both organisations have their own *committees on Green care*.

Provider networks have been established in many counties. In Nordland county, an organisation that promotes farm tourism for children and youth, Gårdsferie Nord BA, has been in existence for many years. Such organisations also exist in Trøndelag, Oslo and Akershus. In Hedmark, Rogaland and Hordaland, interest organisations have been created to attend to the professional and social networks among providers.



Interaction between people and animals is an important part of Green care

Photo: Lars Sletne

4.2 Development of knowledge basis and competencies

The Green care initiative is to be knowledge-based. Funding from the Research Council of Norway and research funding allocated through the agricultural agreement contribute to the development of the knowledge base. Furthermore, currently there is a relatively wide range of competency development programmes offered at different levels. There is considerable need for further development and strengthening of the knowledge base and competencies in the field.

It is important to document positive effects in order for Green care and measures such as animal-assisted therapy, therapeutic horticulture (gardening), and pedagogical measures on farms to become fully legitimate and accepted by the health, education, work and welfare authorities, and by medical and pedagogical personnel.

The *Kunnskapsstatus og forskningsbehov for Inn på tunet* ("Status of knowledge and research needs for Green care") report that was prepared in 2008 points to challenges regarding the knowledge-base for Green care. Analyses of the possibilities - broadly

conceived - are necessary. These must include all agricultural resources, including forestry and other nature-based resources, buildings, plants, animals and people.

Research on Green care quickly faces methodological challenges related to non-standard measures and diverse user groups, which requires the research to also be theoretically based. It is important to clarify the target groups, structure and scope of the measures, as well as the effects that may be achieved for mental and physical health, occupational abilities, coping skills, learning, cognitive functions and quality of life. There is also a need for knowledge on how the various farm resources can provide psychological rejuvenation. Furthermore, there is a need for evaluations of the economic conditions for Green care services in communities and health authorities.

A number of important research projects have been conducted, and these have contributed to our knowledge base. The research projects include:

- *Grønn omsorg med husdyr i landbruket for mennesker med psykiske lidelser ("Green care for people with psychiatric disorders using animals on farms"). UMB (2003–2006).*
- *Green care: Effects of animals and plants on the farm in a therapeutic process for people with psychiatric diseases. UMB (2006-2010).* (a NOK 7 million project that led to two doctoral degrees).
- *Grønn omsorg – fleksibel spesialisering, eller tradisjonelt mangesysleri? ("Green care: flexible specialisation or traditional multitasking?") Centre for Rural Research (2003–2006)*
- *Konkurransedyktig arena for moderne velferdstjenester: Inn på tunet-økonomien sett fra kommunene: ("Competitive arena for modern welfare services: The economics of Green care services from the communities' viewpoint").* In 2012, the Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute published a study of the economic assessments of Green care made by the community councils.
- *Du må så før du høster - om arbeidsmarkedstiltak på gårdsbruk for mennesker, med psykiske lidelser. ("You must sow before you reap: on occupational schemes on farms for people with psychiatric disorders")* Centre for Rural Research, report 02/05

A number of studies are currently being conducted within an approximately NOK 13 million framework for 2010-2013.

- *Grønne tiltak for mennesker som er ute av arbeidslivet ("Green schemes for people outside the labour force").* The project is a collaboration between UMB, the University of Oslo, Wageningen University (the Netherlands), the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, and representatives from the agricultural sector.
- *Fremme psykisk helse ved hjelp av recovery/bedrings-orientert grønn omsorgstjenester ("Promoting mental health using recovery-oriented Green care services")* is currently being implemented by Hedmark University College in collaboration with University of Helsinki, the University of Teacher Education Central Switzerland (PHZ) and Stockholm University.

Selected research results:

Physical contact with animals increases oxytocin secretion, which reduces stress and has a positive effect on social interaction, attachment and the formation of relationships. Studies of pets have shown that both the dog and its owner displayed increased oxytocin secretion as a result of positive interactions, and that the secretion was at its highest when the owner had a close relationship with the dog (Odendaal & Meinjes 2003; Nagasawa et al. 2008; Handlin 2011).

For people with psychiatric disorders, interventions using farm animals lead to an increased faith in their own sense of mastery. The most significant improvement relates to complex and challenging work tasks such as milking, feeding and moving animals. Interventions with farm animals must therefore include a variety of activities and work tasks adapted to each user (Berget et.al. 2007, 2008; Pedersen et al. 2011).

For people with psychiatric disorders, interventions with farm animals leads to reduced anxiety and depression (Berget et.al. 2011; Pedersen 2011). The studies show that the effects were greatest after the completion of the intervention (three and six months after the intervention ended). This shows that it takes time before the effect of the intervention manifests itself. Interviews with Green care users who were clinically depressed showed that they found the experience of being an ordinary colleague to be the most important part of the intervention that used farm animals. Interviewees thought that the support and guidance from the farmer was very important. Participation in an ordinary work situation that was flexible and adaptable to their day-to-day health was also an important factor in their satisfaction with the intervention (Pedersen 2011).

A survey of 1,100 doctors and psychologists regarding their knowledge, experience and attitude to animal-assisted interventions (AAI) for people with psychiatric disorders showed that the treatment providers had limited knowledge and experience of AAI. Two-thirds were motivated to learn more, and 90% believed that the use of AAI should increase in psychiatric treatment in Norway (Berget and Grepperud 2011).

The primary reason that communities choose to use Green care services is that they see a need to diversify their services and to provide greater individual adaptability. The services are seen as competitive with regard to quality and cost. A review of a selection of services shows that well-known costs dominate, primarily for staff. Whether the service is on a farm or in an alternative institution, the cost therefore often depends on the number of users and the utilisation of available spaces. Transport costs may also play a role. (Ivar Pettersen and Kjersti Nordskog. NILF 2012)

The profitability for the farmers is reviewed in the Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute's annual operations surveys of agriculture and forestry. The first survey was published in 2007: Inn på tunet. Nasjonal og regional organisering. Gårdbrukerens økonomi og erfaring, ("Green care. National and regional organisation. The farmers' finances and experience". NILF memorandum 2007–8, Kristin Stokke and Siv Karin Paulsen Rye). In 2011, an article was published online about the profitability of supplemental businesses. The article showed that the income per hour in Green care businesses is equivalent to the most profitable of supplemental farm businesses (approximately NOK 200 an hour). There has been some income growth in recent years. However, the figures are unreliable due to the small sample size. (Siv Karin Paulsen Rye and Torbjørn Haukås, 2011.)

Knowledge about Green care must be developed and disseminated. Today, a number of courses and competency development services have been developed for Green care. Many of the courses target farmers who want to provide a service. Courses have been developed at the upper secondary and university college levels. Several regional university colleges offer courses. UMB has developed a Master's degree in public health science in which animal-assisted therapy is one of the disciplinary areas on offer.

In recent years, County governors, county farmers' unions, and other parties have developed and implemented a number of different courses of various durations. These have included start-up courses, quality assurance courses, and professional courses in the field of Green care.

After a quality assurance standard was developed for farms as arenas for Green care services ("Agricultural Quality System no. 11: Green care"), the Norwegian farmers' association for HSE services developed an introductory course for this standard. This course is offered to all Green care providers and purchasers nationwide. Innovation Norway supports the course.

4.3 Quality assurance and approval

To develop the Green care service and to ensure legitimacy and predictability, it has been necessary to work on standardisation and quality assurance. In 2010, a *quality assurance system* was therefore established for farms as arenas for Green care services. The development was undertaken in collaboration between the agreement partners in the agricultural sectors, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, the insurance industry, the Norwegian farmers' association for HSE services, and the Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation.

The standard was developed as an Agricultural Quality System standard, and it is included in the list of Agricultural Quality System subsidiary standards as standard no. 11, Green care. It has been decided that the Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation shall operate and further develop the standard. The standard came into use in 2011.

A dedicated *approval system* for Green care starts in 2012. All farms that want to participate in the Green care system must gain approval based on the Green care quality assurance system. The Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation operates the system.

Green care services must be designed based on requirements stipulated by the purchaser for the services, and must comply with professional/sector-based legislation and guidelines. All Green care service offerings must have a system for the documentation and monitoring of quality.

Approval scheme organised by the Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation. Description of routine:

- 1. The provider contacts the Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation to be approved as a Green care provider*
- 2. The Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation informs the potential provider about approval requirements. The definition of Green care is an important part of this information.*
- 3. The Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation selects an auditor to conduct the "approval audit".*
- 4. The auditor follows regular auditing procedures and completes the Green care audit. This audit results in a report that is submitted to the provider and to the Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation.*
- 5. If the auditing report is "blank", or in other words shows no deviations, the Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation approves the provider as a "Green care farmer". The approval is thus complete, and the farmer may use the Green care logo and sell his or her services. However, if deviations are identified, the farm cannot be approved and the procedure continues.*
- 6. The provider is told which deviations have been identified, and must correct these before s/he can be approved. If the provider thinks this will be too complicated/costly, the procedure stops and the provider is not approved. If the provider wishes to correct the deviations, an agreement is made regarding the schedule for corrections and when a new approval audit can be conducted.*
- 7. The Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation identifies an auditor for a new approval audit (generally the same auditor as for the first audit). The procedure proceeds from step 4.*



Approved Green care farms can use the logo

4.4 Communication

The work on building the Green care brand includes developing a label and quality assurance system, and marketing the scheme.

In 2011, considerable progress was made on the creation of a label. The text-based label "Green care" has been registered with the Norwegian Industrial Property Office. The registration includes stipulations of the requirements that must be met before the "Green care" label can be used. For example, it is a requirement that Agricultural Quality System standard 11 is used, and that an agreement has been made between the provider

and the purchaser on the provision of Green care services. It is also a requirement that the farm is audited at least every other year.

A new Green care logo has been designed. It was approved in October 2011. The logo has been submitted to the Norwegian Industrial Property Office for approval. The requirements for the use of the logo and text-based label will be adjusted to include a requirement for approval.

Furthermore, in 2011 a Green care design guide was prepared for both the logo and the text-based label. The goal is for the provider to find it easy to download logos, images and other design elements from a homepage. This will enable us to have a shared design in all materials that are developed by providers and others.

It also means that we have come quite far in the work on the Green care brand. However, extensive information dissemination and marketing of the scheme remains necessary. The further development must take place in close collaboration between providers, users and customers, and must involve researchers and expert communities.

4.5 International collaboration

The use of farms and nature as arenas for health and welfare services is common across Europe. In recent years, a number of research and advising networks that focus on this topic have developed.

There is great variation in how the services are organised. To a large extent, the Nordic countries have the same welfare model, and a natural collaboration has developed between Norway, Sweden and Finland in particular. There have been a number of Interreg collaborations between Norway and Sweden. Norway has now initiated further Nordic collaboration through the Nordic Council of Ministers.

In Sweden, the Federation of Swedish Farmers has initiated work on developing Green care and Green rehabilitation. Green care refers to care services on farms, and Green rehabilitation is a service that targets people on long-term sick leave. In Finland, a national organisation for Green care was created in 2010.

Farming for health is a network for practitioners, purchasers of Green care services, and researchers in countries in Europe and in the USA. The network contributes to the exchange of knowledge and experiences of the services internationally, for example through conferences.

COST Action 866 (Green care in agriculture) and *COST Action E39* (Forests, Trees and Human Health and Wellbeing) were two European research networks, funded within the framework of the European Foundation/EU's framework programme, of which Norway is a member. Norway has chaired COST Action 866 (see www.umb.no/greencare).



Illustration: The Royal Norwegian Society for Development

5 Challenges

Below, we present six challenges we face in achieving the target of developing quality assured and socially beneficial welfare services located on farms.

5.1 Identify the opportunities to use farms as service arenas

Welfare services offered on farms must comply with existing regulations and quality standards, and be based in well-established professional communities. Even though Green care services are well founded, it is challenging to introduce farms as service arenas. For example, it might be challenging to find room within existing regulations and quality standards to use farms as service arenas. In other cases, procurement regulations may make it difficult for the farmer and service procurer to develop good solutions. Regulations, professional standards and professional attitudes to new actors may all pose challenges to the use of new service arenas.

That private businesses are involved might also pose challenges. Norwegian farms are owned and operated by private, family-owned businesses. Any uncritical introduction of private business into the Norwegian welfare sector will be met with scepticism. A good dialogue between the agricultural sector and the public welfare sector is therefore necessary. Experience shows that such dialogues are possible. For example, the public welfare sector has initiated and supported the creation of projects such as Living School and Green care.

In the work on the national strategy, a survey has been conducted on how various Ministries view the potential contained in the Green care approach. Representatives of affected Ministries report positive experiences with the use of Green care as part of the suite of welfare services, for example in the health and educational sectors. However, Ministry representatives also report uncertainty.

This uncertainty is about the content of the services, and their value and usability within the current political framework and regulations. The Green care services are currently being developed – as are their quality assurance and approval systems – and it is natural that questions are posed about how the services can be developed within each sector. Documentation of the value of the services, both financially and for the users; understandings of the regulations; quality assurance; and approval schemes require knowledge development and good communication. These are necessary if Green care is to have a broad social and welfare policy foundation.

5.2 Documenting quality

Green care services shall, according to their definition, be quality assured. Quality assurance requires documentation. As discussed in the previous chapter, a quality assurance system and approval scheme has been developed for Green care providers. The goal is that purchasers and users have complete confidence in the quality of the services offered. Furthermore, the requirements and standards will be more easily accessible to the providers.

The quality assurance for the services must be based on established service standards and quality requirements. Ensuring a professional basis and clearly defined roles for the provider's quality assurance and approval system is one of the strategic challenges the Green care system faces. Having a system of quality documentation and monitoring, for both the location and the services offered, is a requirement for all Green care initiatives.

5.3 Clarify social benefits

The background for the national focus on Green care is the need to solve one of our greatest social challenges: individually tailored, high quality and sufficient welfare services.

A credible Green care system presumes a clear, documented social benefit to using the farm as a service arena. Public documents from a number of expert authorities and research results provide a good basis for concluding that Green care services have social benefits. However, it is an expansive topic, our knowledge and documentation are incomplete, and there is significant need for communication.

Proper documentation can require significant resources. Social benefits must be broadly interpreted, and cannot only be seen in terms of e.g. a budget advantage for the purchaser of the services. The effects for service users and their networks, for the finances of the service purchaser, for the requirements and quality in the welfare sector in general, and for the labour market and businesses, will all be relevant to the assessment.

5.4 Priorities

The welfare sector includes a diversity of services with strong professional traditions and established requirements regarding quality and implementation. The requirements

for knowledge, documented social benefits, and quality assurance systems place high demands on the work on Green care services in the times ahead.

The national facilitation of Green care cannot easily reach all sectors simultaneously. It is necessary that the work that is done in relation to specific sectors is sound and provides well-documented results before services in other sectors are developed further. It is therefore necessary to prioritise between sectors and service areas. The expansion of Green care services must be based on good experiences; working methods that are further developed; and a more far-reaching understanding of the scheme among central authorities, local purchasers, professional staff and users.

5.5 Strengthen the dialogue

Providers and purchasers must collaborate on documenting the social benefits of Green care and on creating a mutual acceptance of sufficient quality assurance. The development of Green care therefore requires a good dialogue between partners that have both common and, to some extent, conflicting interests. The starting point is that the providers of the farm as a service arena, the purchaser of the services, and the users have a common interest in using the farm resources whenever these strengthen the services offered. Conflicts of interest should be clear. There are diverse interests related to the long-term nature of the commitments made, the conditions for the use of farm resources, the risk of changing budget frameworks, and the farm's development requirements.

Dialogues must be based on clear common goals and an openness regarding each partner's interests and needs. The dialogues must provide the basis for a partnership that actualises the idea of improved access to quality-assured and socially beneficial welfare services.

5.6 Long-term relationships

One of the results from the exchange of experiences between service providers and county councils is that the relationship between providers and service purchasers often is short-term. Multi-year contracts are exceptions; generally, contracts have short periods of notice or are only valid for one year. Such short-term relationships provide little room for competency improvements, developments of good dialogues, and long-term service development based on experience. The parties must expect to make investments in physical facilities, knowledge and forms of collaboration. One of our strategic challenges is to extend relationships from short-term to more long-term agreements.



Illustration: The Royal Norwegian Society for Development

6 Prioritised, long-term and dialogue-based: National Green care strategy

The strategy reflects choices and priorities that are to clarify the basis for the design of an action plan, including the distribution of roles and responsibilities, quality assurance requirements, etc. In other words, the strategy provides the most important guidelines for work on Green care. This includes *what* the Green care farms must provide within current standards for the provision of welfare services, the prioritisation of *service areas*, and *how* the works is to be conducted.

Some of the most important guidelines are provided in the definition and goal for the focus on Green care. The definition and goal stipulate that quality assurance and social benefits form the premises for Green care. Within these premises, the focus must build on five guidelines: (1) Prioritisation of select service sectors, (2) dialogue between the purchaser and provider, (3) long-term relationships, and (5) social benefits.

6.1 Prioritising select service sectors

The work on the development of farms as arenas for social service provision shall target various sectors in a step-by-step process. The aim is to achieve good results and extensive trust regarding quality and resource use in select service areas before expanding Green care to other service sectors. In this way, it is possible to work closely with relevant professional communities and purchasers, and gain experience of the

users' and providers' quality systems in certain areas, before applying these experiences and working methods to new service areas.

The selection of prioritised service areas will be made during different periods of the follow-up to this strategy. The selection will be made in collaboration with the relevant Ministries.

6.2 Dialogue-based service development

The development of farms as service arenas must take place in dialogue with professional communities, skilled purchasers, and motivated providers. The goal is to focus the work in each provider/purchaser relationship on specific social benefits based on a mutual understanding of the parties' framework conditions and individual goals.

User interests must be represented in this dialogue. Service development must occur in close collaboration with users because the users have competencies and experiences that are important to the service development, and because the users have the right to set premises for the design and evaluation of the services. The dialogue is also a prerequisite for the development of social benefits and quality assurance.

6.3 Long-term relationships

Socially beneficial arenas for quality-assured welfare services cannot be created and shut down on a short-term basis without risking harm to the user, purchaser and provider.

Durable and socially beneficial services require long-term measures, learning and adaptation. In many cases, it is necessary to modify facilities and gain new skills in the utilisation of the arena, both for the purchaser and provider. Not least, it is necessary to provide the users with a certainty that the service will continue to be available, and that the basis for their experience and learning will not be changed in ways that lead to uncertainty and rootlessness or alienate the user in relation to the welfare services s/he is dependent on.

Both the provider and purchaser must gain skills in the use of quality assurance systems, documentation and reporting.

A general criterion for measures under the national strategy for Green care services is that the purchaser and provider aim to establish long-term relationships that form the basis for long-term investments in facilities as well as skills, learning and development.

The services and information/communication work must aim to meet the needs of the purchaser and users, while also taking the interests and needs of the provider into consideration. Today, a large number of actors provide Green care services. To ensure that the work is efficient, it is important to clarify roles and functions. Creating forums/networks where the various parties can meet is also important.

6.4 Quality-assured services

According to their definition, Green care services shall be quality assured. The quality assurance must build on a clear division of roles and responsibilities. Quality assurance means first, that the quality of services is documented based on criteria based in law, regulations, and professional practises for the service in question. Second, it means that

the service arena is quality assured. Using farms as quality-assured service arenas involves requirements regarding the documentation of the management of the unique, farm-related characteristics related to e.g. animal husbandry, managing food resources, environment qualities, the working environment, etc. The agricultural sector's new approval scheme for Green care is central to this process.

The quality assurance work will partly be based in the professions and founded in the organisation of the purchaser of the services, and partly relate to farms or agriculture. The work on quality assurance will depend on close interaction between professional communities in the welfare sector and the agricultural sector's quality assurance body.

Quality assurance systems are not static. They must be adapted to social developments. It is therefore important to continuously develop the quality assurance systems and the approval scheme. The goal is to maintain the most user-friendly system possible at all times, while simultaneously complying with the requirements imposed by the authorities and by contractual requirements that have been agreed between the purchaser and seller. The systems must also be designed based on clear and unambiguous division of roles and responsibilities between the purchaser and provider.

6.5 Socially beneficial services

The goal of the Green care initiative is to develop socially beneficial welfare services using farms as service arenas. The basis for developing farms as service arenas is that farm resources strengthen the handling of society's welfare tasks, whether because the services satisfy existing quality standards with increased possibility for bespoke programmes for individual users, or because the stipulated quality can be provided more efficiently.

Social benefits include placing the users at the centre. The users' needs, well-being, sense of mastery and learning make farms attractive arenas for providing welfare services (cf. the definition in paragraph 1). The "user" concept includes members of the close social network of each individual. In many cases, the user benefit will include increased quality of life related to the service user's social relations.

Social benefits can be documented through research and evaluation of the services. The work can include the effect the services have on the users, evaluations of resource use compared to results achieved in alternative solutions, etc. There must be a clear goal that social benefits are documented. A plan should therefore be made for research and evaluation of the measures. The work on the services that are considered to have the greatest potential should be prioritised, but room should also be made for the evaluation of other services.



Illustration: *The Royal Norwegian Society for Development*

7 From strategy to action

The national strategy guides the work on the action plan on measures within the five selected strategy areas: Quality assurance, social benefits, prioritised service areas, dialogue-based service development, and long-term relationships.

The action plan will consist of measures to be continued, measures to be strengthened, and measures to be implemented.

7.1 Continuation of measures

Many relevant focus areas are already seeing a lot of activity. The work on assuring the quality of the farms has made substantial progress, is well organised and has a clear division of roles and responsibilities. The work on disseminating information on the quality assurance system, regulations, etc. is well under way.

The knowledge production and dissemination about Green care services is ongoing, with both research and competency development being attended to and having clear divisions of roles and responsibilities.

7.2 Measures that must be further developed and strengthened

Some important parts of the action plan will involve measures that have been implemented but for which the strategy should be further strengthened and developed. These are areas that are currently being managed both centrally and locally, but for which the strategy necessitates revision or strengthening. These areas include:

- Prioritised efforts in research and knowledge development: Further develop the disciplinary basis for quality norms, documented social benefits, basis for dialogue with purchasers and users, etc. in prioritised areas. It is important to assure quality and ensure acceptance of the services in some select areas before work continues in other areas.
- Interaction with purchasers: Several measures require close cooperation between purchasers such as the communities, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, etc. Ensuring long-term relationships, communication plans, clarification of roles and further development of measures that involve the users, require measures that are developed in cooperation with the purchasers. The collaboration with e.g. the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities will be central to the development of the action plan.

7.3 Need for new measures

The development of comprehensive plans will be necessary, both to ensure a long-term basis for the Green care services and to strengthen external communication about Green care.

The economic situation within communities can easily lead to short-term approaches to the relationship with the Green care providers. Securing a long-term vision for competency building and relationship development is challenging. To some extent, this task depends on good communication that contributes to understandings of the need to invest and the value of long-term commitments on both sides of the contractual relationship.

The figure below illustrates the structure of an action plan in line with the strategy. The strategic guidelines are at the top of the figure, and the possible focus areas are shown in the margin at the left.

The following focus areas are outlined in the figure:

- (1) knowledge, especially research;
- (2) competency development/training, etc.;
- (3) communication, for example related to quality assurance systems; dialogue between providers and purchasers;
- (4) coordination, roles, responsibilities: clarifying the division of tasks and decision-making authority within the national focus on Green care;
- (5) regulations in which quality assurance and approval schemes are central;
- (6) economic measures, primarily looking at the use of agricultural funds under schemes such as the Green care promotion initiative and rural development funds.

The figure provides a preliminary summary of already implemented focus areas, areas in need of strengthening, and new focus areas, and will form the basis for further developing the action plan.



Green care provides good experiences and useful activities. Photo: Mette Finnes

Illustration of action plan with strategic guidelines and focus areas

Continued
 Strengthened
 To be developed
 Limited applicability

Strategy → Focus area ↓	Quality assured	Socially beneficial	Priority	Dialogue-based	Long-term
Knowledge	Developed quality assurance system Approval scheme	Research and education focus	Research and education are prioritised but needs to be prioritised further	Attended to regionally. Further measures will be developed	Develop a comprehensive plan in collaboration with the purchaser, user groups and providers of service arenas
Competence building	Part of the focus on quality assurance and approval	Limited applicability	Limited applicability	Measures must be developed	Measures must be developed
Communication	Part of the focus on quality assurance and approval	Measures must be developed	Priorities must have a firm basis in central authorities and among various interested communities	Measures must be developed	Measures must be developed
Coordination, roles, responsibilities	Part of the focus on quality assurance and approval	Mainly resolved: Managed via allocations and priorities made by the Research Council of Norway	Limited applicability	To be clarified in conversation with purchasing bodies	Part of a comprehensive plan for long-term commitments
Regulations	Part of the focus on quality assurance and approval	Limited applicability	Limited applicability	Limited applicability	Limited applicability
Grants and support	Part of the focus on quality assurance and approval	See knowledge	See knowledge	Consideration of whether to extend the Green care promotion initiative	Review of criteria for funding under the Green care promotion initiative

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