Increased Arctic Beef Production

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Background

– Shortage of 10 000 tons of beef meat in Norway (Animalia, 2015)

– 50% of the Norwegian land area has a potential as culture- and rangeland pastures (Rekdal, 2013)

– Suckler cow production must increase from 40 000 to 80 000 heads (Ekspertgruppen, 2013; Hageberg et al., 2014)

– European beef production is pasture-based (Varela et al., 2004)

– Harsh Arctic climate → Indoor housing during winter

– High labour costs → Total costs in Norwegian beef production are linked to farm buildings and mechanization
Aim

To develop scientific based recommendations for functional and simple management systems for beef production in the Arctic region

Today I will focus on pasture utilization
Material and methods

– Twelve ‘top league’ beef farms in northern Norway (66-70 °N) selected:
  a) Specialized bull rearing operation (1)
  b) Combined dairy production/beef production (2)
  c) Suckler cows/finishing calves (3)
  d) Suckler cows/selling calves (6)

– Farm visits and interviews
– Questionnaire to 144 farms
Results - farm visits

– Why starting beef production?
  – Nine of twelve farmers started beef production in order to utilize the farm’s resources and to keep the farm in good condition

– Utilization of pasture?
  – Operations with suckler cows utilized both improved and rangeland pastures
  – The specialized bull farm and the combined dairy/beef producers had little focus on grazing

– Limitations and success factors?
The importance of pasture in four different types of beef production systems. Numbers are given in % of total number of respondents.
Conclusions

- Large potential for increased beef production in the northern parts of Norway based on rangeland pastures
- Time of calving and choice of breed are highly significant for an optimal utilization of pasture in the Arctic region
- Fencing and conflicts with tourists/neighbouring property owners are the two major limiting factors to a wider use of pasture
- Steer production might prove to be an important contributor for future utilization of rangeland pastures
Thanks for your attention!