

European Federation of City Farms European City Farms Conference in Oslo

15-19 September 2004

*EFCF and Norske 4H cooperated with the Norwegian Forum of City Farms (FNG) to organise the fifteenth EFCF-conference. The main theme was **Farm adventures and health**. About 80 participants from Italy, Belgium, Australia, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK and Norway attended the conference.*

All the participants stayed at the youth hostel Haraldsheim just outside Oslo, where they received a warm welcome on a rainy day in the Norwegian capital. It's always nice to meet old EFCF-friends from all over Europe, and to have the possibility to meet new city farm people as well. Heidi Tønnesen, Board member of the FNG and Ole Cato Lie, Chairman of the National Board of Norske 4H, opened the conference. Lie informed about the Norwegian 4H organisation, and the importance of democracy and the 4H-clubs.

Marc De Staercke, chairman of the EFCF, impressed the audience with a small welcome speech in Norwegian! Marc talked about the city farms as an important link between the rural and the urban life. –The city farms are well tested, and are more needed in society today than ever before. He was also referring to the United Nation's plans for a sustainable development, and spoke highly of the city farms as an arena for educating for sustainable agriculture. – People who are using time and effort at a city farm, are investing in the sustainable development of the world, concluded the chairman.

Angela Melchionda from Italy presented the next conference which will be arranged by Cascina Falchera in Turin in September 2005.

City farms in Australia

Chris Byrne presented the city farms in Australia by showing a lot of nice slides. He connected the development of the farms to the history of Australia. He told us about Australia today where more than 90 % of the population are now living in cities. Some of the farms are based in the industrial agriculture, and a lot of the farms are organic. In addition to visits from schools and kindergartens, the city farms are involved in health, nature, culture, GMO, local seeds and topics about the indigenous people. Special training courses based on the knowledge of the Aborigines about nature, health and environmental questions, has made the city farms a place of great social importance for a young and rootless generation. Chris also spoke about festivals, allotments, assimilation of different nationalities and activities for disabled children as important for the city farms to be important places for social changes.

Day one

The Museum of agriculture and the University of agriculture

On a beautiful sunny autumn day, the EFCF- participants visited The Museum of Agriculture and the University of Agriculture just outside Oslo. We had a nice guided tour of the Museum. Ida Wesseltun and Vegard Lie told us about the school program, the purpose being to establish contact between schools and agriculture. The Museum has several programs that teach the children about agriculture today and in the past. The pupils take part in doing woodwork, feeding animals, hay-drying rack and harvesting, both new and old fashions and

traditions. Norwegian rural traditions are also part of the program, such as Midsummer's children's wedding where the children make their own wedding crowns.

Dag Guttormsen gave a guided tour of the gardens and houses of the University of Agriculture. The University was built in 1854, and today there are about 3000 students, and approximately 100 foreign students. The farm is quite big by Norwegian standards, with some 300 milking cows. Dag Guttormsen informed the visitors about a Norwegian agriculture where GMO and hormones are banned. A slideshow about the development of the cultural landscape concluded our visit. After this a very nice lunch with local, traditional food was served.

Conference-

Farm adventures and health

Lars Sevatdal presented the conference program. He also told us a bit of his experiences of using agriculture and nature to prevent and heal traumas in refugees- and psychiatric issues. Lars Martin Julseth, Director of Agriculture at the County Governor, made the official opening and presented the official agriculture policy where food security, maintaining settlement in rural areas, and cultural landscaping have been important topics.

Secretary General of Norske 4H, Jon Vollset, presented Norske 4H (www.n4h.no) and informed about the 4H-clubs, training, democracy and our international obligations and cooperations. Heidi Tønnesen, FNG-board member, presented the Forum and the network between the Norwegian city farms, numbering about 30 farms today. www.n4h.no (Organisasjon/ 4H-gård)

Hilde Rohde is a city farm worker with special interests in organic agriculture. Hilde has developed her own training project for organic agriculture and has made use of cartoons to tell the children about photosynthesis and the life of plants. www.viok.info. (see attachment in English).

Erling Krogh presented *Levande skule (The Living School)* with a great sense of humour when visualising the way farmers in Norway wear their caps! Erling is in charge of a project where farms are a part of the education and farmers are teachers. *The Living School* is a cooperative project between the Agricultural University and the National Gardening Society. The idea is to give pupils an opportunity to experience contact with nature through the cultivation of their immediate environment. For many farmers this has been a positive change. Children appreciate using the farms as a part of their education, the farmers are content to have a better economy and to be appreciated for their skills, and the teachers are happy because they say “living school” is the best way of teaching the children! Some children have even chosen an agricultural education after taking part in *The Living School*. You can read more about Levande skule in English at <http://org.nlh.no/LevandeSkule/eng/index.html>

Solveig Skogs from the Farmers Union, Bondelaget, gave us information about the Union's Open Farm program and the cooperation between Bondelaget and primary schools, known as *Den grønne skolen (The Green School)*. Solveig's information is attached to this report. More information about Bondelaget at www.bondelaget.no

Anita Panman informed about Green Care, in Norway known as *Inn på tunet*, a forum where more and more farmers offer activities for schools and the health- and social sector. Anita told us that 40% of these farmers are educated as social workers or teachers, besides their agricultural knowledge. The users, the customers and the farmers were all presented as winners in a cooperation such as this one. Anita stressed also the importance of making good, written agreements between the farmers and the customers with special needs. Read more about Green Care at www.innpaattunet.no

Svein Holo ended the conference by showing beautiful slides from an Open Farm arrangement at the Royal Norwegian Farm, Skaugum.

After the conference we were tourists in Oslo, visiting pubs with expensive beer, nice food, fresh air and not very crowded. Our visitors bought Norwegian sweaters and little signs with the traditional moose!

Day 2

Visits to the NaKuHel- centre and Hauger farm

Another foggy and rainy day in Oslo! But the participants were well dressed, and had a good time at the Nature, Culture and Health centre. The centre is based upon the fact that everyone needs these three aspects to stay healthy and strong as a person of the society today. The centre offers activities for school children and other various users of the centre. The idea is to make people see possibilities and to see themselves with a positive view. The centre is also an important place for social meetings for the village people who want to be creative in the nature, culture and health so as to achieve a better environment and a better quality of life. Viljar Aasan, teacher from the village school, presented his cooperation with the centre. His motto was that all the pupils had to succeed in something, and if you can teach something in the open, you should move your school class outdoors. All the schools in Norway decide how much of the teaching is to be done out in the open. www.nakuhel.no

A group of young singers came to entertain the EFCE-participants with songs from our famous songwriter Alf Prøysen. Lene, Martine and Siri from the group Måltrosten sang several songs, and Lisbeth Nygaard played the guitar and told us about the life of Alf Prøysen. The NaKuHel centre served a very tasty lunch in their greenhouse. We enjoyed the meal, the grapes, tomatoes and hens, while the rain poured down outside!

Hauger farm

The rest of the day was spent with Astrid Lindstad and her family at Hauger farm. The farm is a 4H-farm and cooperates with schools in the region. Hilde Rohde and some pupils took us to the fields and showed us what they had learned about organic agriculture and vegetable growing. Astrid and some other pupils showed us old faction dances and how the wool, flowers and cones were used in the education. Astrid's husband Helge told about the Christmas activity for families to spend the day at the farm, picking and chopping their own Christmas tree, and eating a campfire meal out in the forest.

EFCE's creative members, Alisa from Rotterdam and Armando from Turin, entertained all of us by making a very special *jumping in the straw show* in Astrid's barn! Neighbours served coffee, tea and delicious cakes, and we all forgot about the rainy day! Nearly all of the EFCE-members climbed to the top of the small mountain Vardåsen. The trip was a bit stiff, a bit wet, windy and wild, but finally all of us reached the top! On our way down we were told stories about the Norwegian trolls. We relaxed with a beer while Astrid's children, Milda and Martha, held a horse and pony show for an exhausted audience. As it got dark, the hosts made a bonfire and served a beautiful outdoor dinner. Oliver from Germany served some mushrooms he picked at Vardåsen. The rain stopped, and a very pleasant time followed in the darkness with friends, nice food and singing. The participants liked the stay at Hauger farm a lot because here they could see and understand what the city farms in Norway offered the children, and how different small and big farms could appear. You can see pictures and read more about Hauger farm at www.hauger-gard.no

Day 3

City farms in Oslo

Farewell dinner

Last day and not raining! We visited Kampen økologisk barnebondegård (Kampen Organic Children's Farm). Heidi Tønnesen, who works at Kampen, told us about this small city farm in the centre of Oslo. We walked around looking at the animals, gardens, compost area and rabbit-jumping (which the Dutch people think is not good animal welfare) We were also offered a tour with the Norwegian Fjord Horse and wagon. The rain started again, and all the Italians hid under the roof so as to enjoy their coffee and waffles. The Norwegian city farm workers, Astrid and Finn Arne, taught the foreigners the rules of horseshoe-throwing. Norway and Belgium were quits until William made a horseshoe stand upside-down, and smashed the Norwegians! The very professional Italians smashed the Englishmen, and Chris from Australia and Miguel from Spain finished the game by dancing, throwing horseshoes and stepping at the same time! By now we hope horseshoe-throwing is popular in all of Europe!

Visiting Oslo

Two local guides joined the buses to tell us all about Oslo. This was very good, because the fog was by now very thick and it was not easy to see the city for ourselves. We visited the Viking Museum, a very popular visit. The Vigeland sculpture park is always nice, and people are fascinated by all the beautiful nude sculptures and the history of Gustav Vigeland's life. www.vigeland.museum.no Finally we drove up to the ski-jumping area at Holmenkollen, which was a very strange experience because of all the fog. (You have to visit <http://www.skiforeningen.no/hk/tourist/skimus.htm> to see what we missed!)

In the evening we had a very short visit to and information about Lindeberg 4H-farm. We ended the EFCF-conference with an official dinner for all the participants. The dinner was held at the old library in Fetsund outside Oslo. The guests and Norwegians appreciated the salmon, the creamed rice, nice music, dancing, speeches and entertainment. The buses took us back to the youth hostel in the middle of the night. Most of us met again on a beautiful sunny Sunday morning. We saw a lot of happy faces calling "See you in Turin" as they left for the airport...

Thanks a lot for spending your time with us in Oslo!

*Ingeborg Tangeraas
On behalf of Norske 4H*