Horses as Driving Forces for Settlement, Occupation and Quality of life

Le Puy en Velay 29-11-2011

Cathrine Fodstad Hedmark County Council
Some words about the area

- The practice is located in 8 municipalities in the Mountain region
- Røros and Tynset are regional centers with 2500 inhabitants each
- The whole region has a population of 23,000
- Aim is to become 25,000 in 2020
  - A region with stable work marked, good services, schools, kinder gardens
  - 5 h drive to Oslo, 3 h drive to Trondheim
  - Stable climate
  - Fabulous mountain riding terrain
  - Large grazing areas, vibrant agriculture
What was the problem?

Migration to central areas has been a trend for 20 years. Today 56% of the population lives in large city areas.

Policies against depopulation in mountain areas

Negative birthrate is equaled by migration
What did we do?

- Make the Montain Region of Norway the ultimate horse destination for experiences and settlement
  - Arrange a yearly land leading horse festival
  - Develop a regional website
  - Facilitate traveling by horse
  - Enchase horse related occupations
  - Facilitate equestrian living areas, riding arenas/halls
  - Facilitate Storsteigen Agricultural College as a center for horse related courses and education
  - Attract/keep women in the region
How long?

- Iniciated 2006
- Started in 2008
- Financed until 2012

Policies against depopulation in mountain areas
Who got involved?

- Started as a private initiative with the formation of the organization Hesteriket
  - Project idea
  - Project description
- Supported by Hedmark County Council, Hedmark County and municipalities
- Project owner; Mountain Region of Norway
- Cooperating with the Interreg project Scandinavian Heartland
How did we do?

- **Hestival with Star-ride has become a yearly event**
  - Has attracted 2000 visitors and 200 riders
  - Promotes the region

- **Riding and driving paths have been mapped**
  - With places to stay for horse and rider
  - Up and coming Bed and Box website

- **Website Hesteriket.no is welcoming horse-people, spreading news**

- **6 different high quality riding-products has been developed for the international marked (Interreg)**

- **Study trip and seminar with local offices and land owners concerning equestrian living areas and riding hall (Interreg)**
  - Initiated a committee that is working with financing a regional riding hall and solutions for equestrian living areas

- **Storsteigen as center for courses and education**
  - Has hosted the Hestival 3 times
  - We have, through Interreg contact with top competence on horse tourism development
  - Could lead to a national/international education/course on horse tourism?

- **Survey about horse as lifestyle and occupation in the Mountain Region**
How much did it cost?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Euro</th>
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<td>122 000 Euro</td>
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Some efforts planned in the project has been arranged through Interreg
Does it work?

- Mapping of newcomers has revealed
  - 60 horse settlers the last 6 years
  - 8 new horse businesses
  - 15 (8+7) new employees connected to the sector
- Results of our survey indicates that
  - Our efforts attract/hold women in the region
  - Our region houses many horses
  - There is a big demand for a regional riding hall

82% women

55% migrants

40% has horse as business
75% are run by migrants

980 horses
7 horses p/horseperson
Problems?

- **Finances**
  - To little finances/resources to be able to work well on all areas
  - Wasted time on financing the project (results before financing)
  - The Interreg project Scandinavian Heartland has made us able to fulfill activities on all areas

- **Little faith**
  - Among the public: Why favor the horse sector, is this region only for those with special interests?
  - Among the horse people: We are not that outstanding

- **Many partners involved**
  - Different opinions among the horse people
  - Few opinions from the financial partners

- **Cooperation with Hesteriket organization**
  - Lots of ideas unclear borders, who leads the project?
  - Easy access to the target group through the organization
  - Lots of volunteering
How does it contribute to the ec diversification?

- To facilitate a region as a horse region is new in Norway
  - Exists in Sweden; Heby, Falkenberg and Gagnef
  - Study trip to Falkenberg led to the formation of Hesteriket
- Hestival with Star-Ride is a new concept in Norway
  - There are horse shows but not where you can bring your own horse, Norwegian ide exported to Sweden
- Bed and Box site is new in Norway
  - We got the idea on a study trip to Sweden
- International horse riding holidays is new in Norway
  - Until now only riding holidays for the national marked policies against depopulation in mountain areas
Single initiative/Strategy?

- National strategies
  - 11 different strategies to keep population in rural areas
  - One strategy is providing small farms for sale and hire (Buskerud county)
- Regional Move Here Campaign 2001-2011
  - Promotion campaign for the Mountain Region
  - Promotion cooperation stranded as the demand for small horse farms was greater than the access
  - Cooperated on seminar about Equestrian living and a movie profiling settlers
- We are hoping efforts toward the horse sector will be accepted as a strategy to enhance settlement and economic growth in rural areas
- That a regional riding hall and equestrian living areas will be supported locally and nationally
Transferability

- Great transferability to other areas
  - Many people have interests that fits well with a rural lifestyle: hunting, horse-riding, sled-dogging, farming.
  - Rural regions has advantages compared to cities regarding lifestyle living
- This trend attracts migrants from urban areas
  - Often well situated
  - Does not have rural roots
  - Move to the most suitable place
  - Preferably where there are attractions/facilities/others with the same interest
- Facilities and suitable homes are necessary to get full effect
Thank you very much for your attention, see you in Røros?
Policies against depopulation in mountain areas

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7 ansatte 8 bedrifter