European Network for Rural Development

# Flowering meadows at Endrup

EAFRD-funded projects

## DENMARK

Biodiversity's restoration, preservation & enhancement

**Location**
Varde

**Programming period**
2014 – 2020

**Priority**
P4 – Ecosystems management

**Measure**
M04: Investments in physical assets

**Funding (EUR)**
Total budget 37 584
RDP contribution 34 760
Other (Danish Nature Fund) 2 824

**Project duration**
2017 – 2019

**Project promoter**
Varde Municipality

**Contact**
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**Website**
n/a

**Promoting extensive grazing in a communal area to enhance biodiversity in and around a Natura 2000 designated area.**

## Summary

An area of 17 ha of communal land, half of which is designated as a Natura 2000 site, was converted to support extensive grazing. This type of land management, designed to protect and expand the valuable habitats of plants and insects, will also create a new local supply chain for quality meat.


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The project area was cleared of unwanted vegetation and then fenced with outer and inner fences. The necessary infrastructure was established (water access for the animals, drinking vessels, electricity, gang ways etc.) to support extensive grazing, before finally, allowing the Dexter and Galloway breeds of cattle to be released.

## Results

A total of 42 ha were prepared for extensive management. A part of the total area is a Natura 2000 protected site.

Biodiversity has improved in the intervention area.

The project has boosted local interest in nature.

A local short value chain has been established for the meat from the small Irish Dexter cattle breed.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The lack of flexibility in the EU payments system makes it difficult for the municipalities to be involved in projects on Natura 2000 sites. Projects in Natura 2000 sites are difficult to describe with 100% accuracy in the application phase compared with the real circumstances found in the implementation of the project.
- ❑ The monitoring of results, when it comes to increased biodiversity, is difficult and expensive for the municipalities to accomplish. Thus, there is a need for additional financial resources to map the increase in the number of plants and insects, which are a result of the supported project.

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## Context

The project area is found in the Sneum Å and Holsted Å areas. It covers a total area of 16.86 ha, of which 8.45 ha (50.12%) is a designated Natura 2000 site. The project area is categorised as a habitat type with 7 230 Alkaline fens and 6 230 species-rich Nardus grassland. Within the project area meadow-plum, may-cucumber, heart grass, meadow sorrel, devil bite and many star species can be found.

The project was partly necessary to expand the habitat, and partly to ensure better conditions, for the existing parts of the habitat in the project area. Extensive grazing of the area helps keep nature open, create new habitats, and promote a diverse composition of vegetation species, insects and other animals in the area.

Prior to the project the site was in good condition. Thus, the project expects that over time there will be a significant expansion of the plant species associated with specific habitat types, as well as an expansion of insect wildlife and areas with grazing animals.

## Objectives

The objective of this project was to support the necessary work to protect and expand the biodiversity of the intervention area.

## Activities

Initially, the project holders cleared the project area of unwanted growth of willow, redwood, birch, etc.

The project area was then fenced so that extensively grazing cattle breeds could move from place to place on very wet grounds. Fencing was installed around 2.81 ha. On 570 metres they used one stringed fence and 800 metres with two stringed fences. Another 16.86 ha were fenced using 1 500 metres of single stringed fences and 2 600 metres with two stringed fences. In total 3 171.43 metres of outside fences were installed and 800 metres of inner fences.

Four cattle bridges were constructed, as the area has many deep ditches, where grazing animals cannot pass without a walkway. Other infrastructure installed included a water pump with solar cells, 100 metres of cable for electricity, two sets of batteries and anti-theft protection gear, along with frost-proof drinking vessels.

As soon as the preparation and infrastructure works were completed, Dexter and Galloway cattle breeds were introduced in the area. These breeds of cattle can survive on the low forage value which is typical of such natural areas.

The sustainable grazing of this type of terrain can only be achieved if several landowners join forces. This is because it is necessary to include dry and higher altitude areas in the project area, where the animals can rest and dry themselves.

The maintenance is the responsibility of the two municipalities involved in the project. After five years, the maintenance will be transferred to the landowners who use the area for their cattle.

## Main results

Eight farmers participated in the project and one of them contributed the Dexter and Galloway cattle to graze the land.

In total, 42 ha were prepared for extensive management, part of which is a Natura 2000 site.

Biodiversity has improved in the intervention area.

The project has boosted local interest in nature.

A local short value chain has been created for the meat from the small Irish Dexter cattle breed.

## Key lessons

The lack of flexibility in the EU payments system makes it difficult for the municipalities to be involved in projects on Natura 2000 sites. Projects on Natura 2000 sites are difficult to describe with 100% accuracy in the application phase compared with the real circumstances found in the implementation of the project. As an example, drilling for water was budgeted to 7 metres in depth, but after drilling for 20 metres no water was found, and so the drilling had to stop. The cost of the drilling for the 13 metres from 7 to 20 metres had to be paid for by the partners and an alternative solution had to be identified at the beneficiaries' own cost.

The monitoring of results, when it comes to increased biodiversity, is difficult and expensive for the municipalities to accomplish. Thus, there is a need for additional financial resources to map the increase in the number of plants and insects, which are a result of the project. The clearing and grazing of the area were also benefits from the project.

### Additional sources of information

n/a

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