

## Birthesminde

Increasing a pig farm's profitability, investing in organic production, animal welfare and environmental sustainability.

### EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Midtsjælland, Isefjord, Denmark

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P6 – Social inclusion and local development

**Focus Area:** Local development

**Measures:** M19 – LEADER CLLD

<b>Funding:</b>	Total budget	1 000 000 (DKK)
	RDP support	100 465 (EUR)
	Private/own	600 000 (DKK)

**Timeframe:** 10.2019 to 10.2022

**Project promoter:** Birthesminde

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- The new premises provide a unique space for the processing of high-quality Danish charcuterie and the development of specialties.
- Because of the new business model and new facilities, the farm was able to increase its focus on recycling and thus increase its sustainability.
- One new job was created.



Birthesminde

## Summary

Birthesminde is an old established family farm in Denmark. In 2015, it re-established itself as an innovative small farm focusing on the organic production of pigs with the aim of producing meat of the highest quality while maintaining the highest standards of animal welfare and sustainability. The farm has around 200 pigs on 18 hectares of forests and meadows. While this volume is not profitable, a higher number would have negative effects on the sustainability of the farm. There was a clear need to review the business model and the possibility of creating added value in different ways. By focusing on the re-integration of expensive production processes back into the farm and by utilising the farm's wider potential more effectively, Birthesminde improved its profitability. The farm created a new processing facility, a new farm shop with café. In addition, it provides new training activities and increased its collaboration with local businesses.

## Project results

- With the new on-farm facilities, the farm can now offer guests, business partners and clients hospitality on-site, organise educational courses, run events for children and offer excursion destinations.

## Key lessons and recommendations

- It is challenging to secure local sales in and to attract visitors to farms. It is therefore important that any initiatives aimed at increasing farms' turnover are assisted with specific support to develop their marketing activities.

## Context

The farm Birthesminde is run by the Bojsen family, who have owned the farm for over 50 years. Today, the estate accommodates four generations that live and work together. In 2015, Birthesminde converted into a small innovative farm focusing on the organic production of pigs. The goal was to produce meat of the highest quality and - at the same time - to strive for the highest standards in animal welfare and sustainability. In the production process, emphasis is placed on storytelling, transparency and honesty, and there is a focus on old traditions and craftsmanship which is tied to a new and innovative approach.

Around 200 pigs live on the farm. They live in woodland from birth to slaughter. They grow half as fast as other pigs nurtured for slaughter production. While primary production was implemented as intended, more needed to be done to put the farm on a profitable footing. A new business model was needed to gain improved economic sustainability. One of the main business ideas was to raise the awareness of people,



including tourists, about modern and sustainable animal production in agriculture. By opening the doors to the farm, guests could learn and experience why sustainably produced meat is more expensive than meat from conventional farms.

## Objectives

The aim of this LEADER project was to develop additional on-farm activities to better exploit and utilise the potential of the farm and its surroundings. An additional ambition was to bring back and re-integrate some of the expensive aspects of meat production, such as slaughtering and processing. This meant that the farm owner would not only reduce production costs and the selling price of the meat but would also have more control over the entire production process. It was anticipated that this increased control would also enable Birtheminde farm to engage better with any distribution aspects of the business. In addition, the aspiration was to develop training opportunities associated with the production.

## Activities

**The project involved the following activities:**

- Building new processing facilities:
  - Renovating the farm's old pig barn.
  - Establishing a new processing room.
  - Creating a farm shop with an attractive view across a beautiful landscape.
- Developing the local supply chain and cooperation with other local producers and businesses:
  - The farm joined a local food cluster that facilitates cooperation to make individual products more sustainable and more profitable. For example, the pigs are now fed leftovers from the local beer and gin producers, (surplus) gourmet bread from the organic baker, etc.
  - In the forest, the pigs eat virtually everything except the berries that are necessary to produce the local gin. Through the improved collaboration, these berries are now picked by the local gin producer.
  - In the new farm shop, Birtheminde's own products are sold, but also other local products are displayed, promoted and sold.

## Main results

- With the new on-farm facilities, the farm can now offer guests, business partners and clients hospitality on-site, organise educational courses, run events for children and offer destinations for excursions.

- In the new premises, a unique space was created for the processing of high-quality Danish charcuterie and the development of specialties. This is done in close collaboration with the local chefs. Birtheminde farm succeeded in establishing itself as a high-quality pork producer and delivers directly to leading restaurants. In addition, new collaborations with some of the country's best chefs have been developed. With the new facilities, Birtheminde can open the doors to the country's best chefs, who can help develop specialist, local products.
- Because of the new business model and new facilities, the farm was able to increase its focus on recycling and thus increase its sustainability. In addition, the farm has employed a butcher specialising in pork processing, with a focus on old traditions as well as sustainable production.



Birtheminde

## Key lessons and recommendations

- Although Birtheminde is known among Michelin chefs and the best-known restaurants in the country, it has been challenging to secure local sales and to attract visitors to the cafe and farm shop on a daily basis. It is therefore important that any new initiatives aimed at increasing turnover are assisted with specific support to develop their marketing activities. Through this, the visibility of their new initiatives can be improved.



Funded by  
the European Union