

Sweden – innovation example 4

HÄLSINGESTINTAN – A MOBILE ABATTOIR

County Administrative Board of Dalmland

www.lansstyrelsen.se/vastragotaland/

- **Location:** Järvsö, Hälsingland, Sweden
- **HNV system:** Livestock
- **Scale of operation:** National in Sweden
- **Timespan:** Hälsingestintan was founded in 1999 as a reaction to the poor range of meat in Swedish food stores
- **Keys to success:** They have been successful in integrating their overall vision of animal ethics and quality meat, with managing technological and juridical challenges for mobile abattoir, as well as issues related to traceability of products and marketing solutions for customers.



Figure 1 Source: <https://www.halsingestintan.se/>

Problems addressed by this example

The new focus on "ethical" meat and the unique concept of traceability for consumers down to farm and single animal level offers many opportunities to also include the biodiversity provided by HNV-lands in the concept.

Story in a nutshell

As Europe's first mobile abattoir for fully grown cattle, Hälsingestintan offers an on-farm slaughtering. The process of starting up the initiative was motivated by a wish to provide consumers with "ethical" meat, where the animals have suffered minimal stress during slaughter. The company has a strong focus on meat quality, something that is improved by the low-stress slaughter. This interest in meat quality also means that the company are interested in slaughtering and buying meat from farms with grass fed animals. The company has a few contracted farms in the learning area, and the initiative is helping to strengthen the pasture based cattle production, even though it is not specifically directed towards animals bred on HNV-pastures.

What does Hälsingestintan - a mobile abattoir, achieve for HNV farming?

- This concept was not originally developed to specifically support HNV-farming, the focus was on ethics and quality meat, but it can easily be used and adapted with a stronger HNV-focus.
- Could easily serve as an example of traceability and marketing.



Figure 2



Achievements

The mobile abattoir were presented in 2014 by Hälsingestintan in cooperation with animal scientists and veterinary surgeons, and the business started the following year. The company has grown, and the abattoir is now going on full capacity. Hälsingestintans investment in mobile slaughter of adult cattle is the first in Europe. The design is completely autonomous, with its own electricity, its own water and own heating. The company has a handful contracted farms in the learning area, and the interest seems to continue to rise among farmers and consumers. It has been on the forefront both when it comes to mobile slaughter of adult animals, as well as applying new technologies for increased traceability.



Figure 3

Economics of HNV farming

Data is not available on the economic impact for HNV farms.

Maintaining or improving HNV values

So far the results on HNV-land are uncertain, since the main focus of the innovation is on animal welfare and meat quality. However, the potential to include a HNV perspective is promising.

How does Hälsingestintan - a mobile abattoir, respond to the HNV LINK innovation themes?

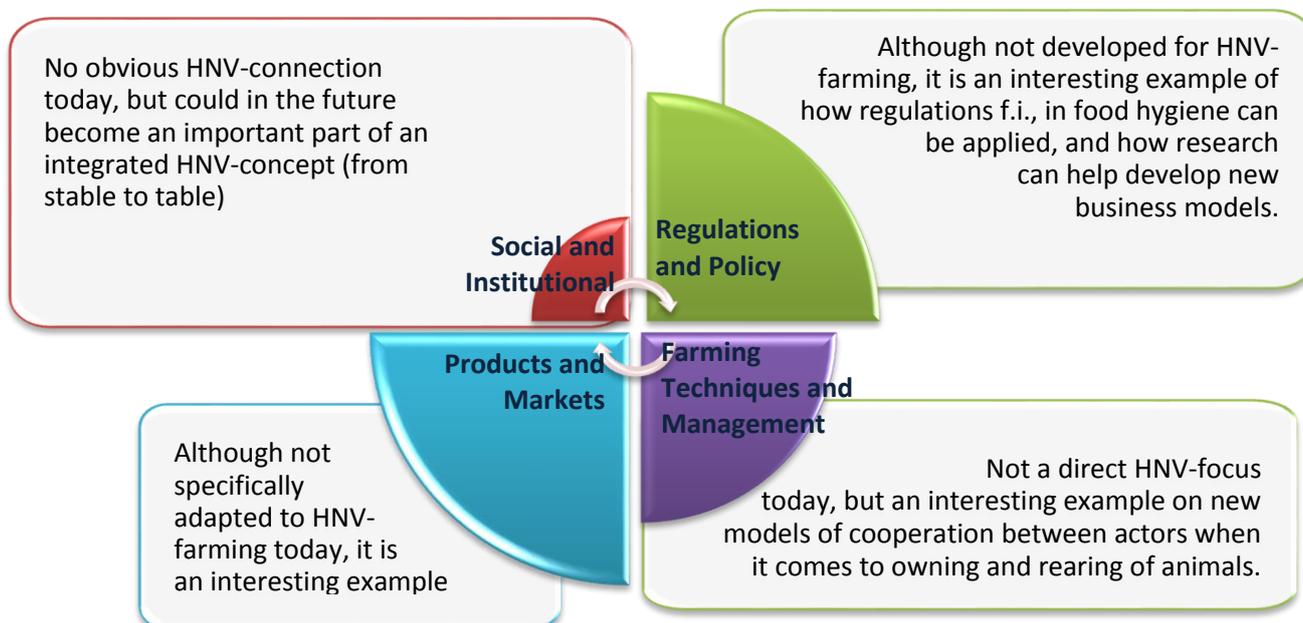


Figure 4 Shows how this innovation addresses the four themes of the HNV-Link innovation framework.

One issue that many Swedish producers struggle with is traceability. As a consumer you might want to be sure that the meat you buy comes from animals that actually has grazed in areas with high HNV-qualities. Hälsingestintan has solved the challenge by using modern technologies enabling the consumers to know the origin, quality, breed, and age of the meat they buy. In short this is how the labelling it works:

1. The animals are equipped with electronic transponders (RFID technology) in the ears when they are born. The tags have a unique ID-code that can be linked to the animal's birthday, breed, farm, etc. via a database. This provides a secured identity as well as a number of logistical benefits during the animal's growth and handling. For example, it is possible to register weight development and possible medical treatments.
2. At the slaughter, each animal ID is reported in the database. The information is then added with slaughter inspection results, such as classification and weight. Whether the animals are labeled electronically or not, they are labeled at the slaughter, when the animal's ID information is transferred to a bar code label that accompanies the hanging ring.
3. When the animal bodies are to be cut, the barcode is read off. When the details are packed for delivery to store, the information accompanies the label that is pasted on the detail in the form of a QR code.
4. On each meat packet, there is direct information about the sex, age, breed, and from which farm it comes. In addition, each tray has its unique QR code that can be read by using a smartphone. When scanning, you get detailed information about the farm and the animal, recipes for cooking and information about Hälsingestintan. (See picture p. 28.)

This kind of solutions regarding traceability might be interesting to look at for existing and future HNV-products.

The process that made it happen and critical factors for success

- The company had a vision of being able to deliver “ethically meat” slaughtered in a new way. From that vision emerged the idea of a mobile abattoir.
- Moving from idea to realisation the company has cooperated closely with researchers in animal welfare, and food hygiene, and been in constant dialogue with relevant authorities.
- Another important factor has been the big interest in the Swedish society for animal welfare issues.



Figure 5



Figure 6 Source: <https://www.halsingestintan.se/>

We have not had the opportunity to investigate in detail the emergence and development process behind this innovation, nor the critical success factors.

Lessons learnt from this innovation example, and its potential replication

- This innovation shows that complex challenges in both technical and legal issues can be managed if relevant stakeholders get involved in a constructive process.
- There are good possibilities for other countries to use similar solutions, and the concept has already been introduced in France.



Figure 7 Source: <https://www.helsingstintan.se/>



Figure 8

The company introducing this innovation in the learning area has a strong focus on animal welfare and food quality, and so far the ecological perspective has been secondary. There is however many possibilities in using similar types of solutions, such as the traceability and the mobile abattoir solution in initiatives that are more focused on HNV-conservation and biodiversity. Adapted towards a focus on the HNV-qualities of farming, this could be an important tool in building awareness about biodiversity and landscape ecology among consumers and distributors.

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