

# **NØK Congress July 27 – 30, 2008**

**Theme "Välståndande kor och brukare"**

**Expected future law requirements and  
regulations in Denmark re the keeping of  
cattle**

***By Henrik Nygaard***



## **Why law requires**

- **The Ethical Council for Animals (refers to Ministry of Justice) reports about cattle welfare**
- **The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (interest organization) has requested the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences to do a report on cattle welfare**
- **We expect a Bill to be presented to the Danish Parliament**
- **EU portends a report on cattle welfare**
- **We already have law inquiries on pigs, horses, and poultry**



## **Problem formulation of The Ethical Council for Animals (I)**

- **Required space** – this includes degree of coverage/space requirements and no of animals per group
- **Floors** – this includes design and choice of coat
- **Boxes for calving and sick animals**
- **Time for separation of cow and calf**
- **Cubicles** – this includes numbers, dimensions and surface
- **Eating spaces**



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## **Problem formulation of The Ethical Council for Animals (II)**

- **Use of barns with tied-up animals**
- **"Better environment"** – for instance the possibility to perform care of the skin
- **Possibilities for grazing**
- **Methods of feeding milk in order to meet the calf's requirements for suckling**
- **Hof trimming** – this includes a claim of education
- **Management** – this includes inspection of the animals, barn technology etc.



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## Process of working

- In 2007 the Minister of Justice formed a working group
- The group hands a biological, technical and economical report to the minister by the end of 2008
- We expect Parliament to begin the reading of the Bill early 2009
- We expect a law from early 2010



## Members of the working group

The Ministry of Justice appoints the chairman

Besides the following are appointed:

- 1 member recommended by The Danish Veterinary Association
- 1 member recommended by Danish Animal Welfare Society
- 1 member recommended by Danish Cattle Federation
- 1 member recommended by Danish Agricultural Council
- 1 member recommended by The Ethical Council for Animals
- 1 member recommended by The Special Council concerning Animal Welfare
- 1 member recommended by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries (DJF)
- 1 member recommended by the the Ministry of Family and Consumption Affairs
- 1 member from the Ministry of Justice



## **Minister of Justice's working group - eight preliminary themes**

- **The physical frames**
- **Breeding and feeding**
- **Milking**
- **Grazing and exercise**
- **Cow/calf relations**
- **Calves**
- **Young stock**
- **Management and education**



## **The physical frames**

### **More stringent requirements on:**

- **Cubicles**
- **Alleys**
- **Calving sections**
- **Hospitals**





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## Feeding

**More stringent requirements on:**

- **Feeding**
- **No of cows per eating space**

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## Milking

**More stringent requirements on :**

- **Holding area**
- **Waiting time**

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## Breeding

- **No stringent requirements**
- **An obligation to incorporate new knowledge on health and welfare into the total merit index**

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## Cow/calf – calf/calf

**More stringent requirements on:**

- **Calving preparations**
- **Time together**





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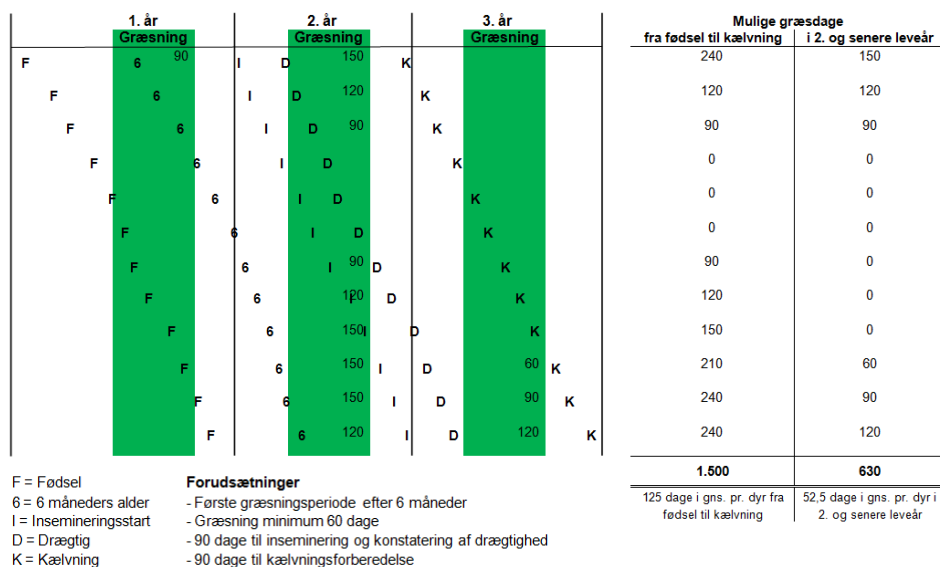
# Young stock

More stringent requirements on:

- Resting areas
- Alleys
- Feeding
- Grazing



## Age at calving: 24 months



## Distribution of calvings

Kælvningernes procentvise fordeling over året i 2006

Måned	1. kælvning					2. kælvning				
	RDM	SDM	JER	DRH	KRY	RDM	SDM	JER	DRH	KRY
Januar	9,5	9,3	8,5	9,4	8,1	8,4	8,2	8,0	7,5	7,8
Februar	8,6	8,1	7,2	8,0	7,7	7,4	7,0	6,8	6,9	6,9
Marts	7,9	7,9	7,6	7,6	8,1	8,9	8,2	7,9	9,1	8,0
April	6,7	6,6	7,1	6,6	6,8	7,6	7,2	7,1	7,6	7,0
Maj	6,4	6,8	7,2	5,3	7,5	7,8	8,0	8,1	8,0	8,0
Juni	5,5	6,2	7,3	6,6	7,1	7,5	7,9	7,9	7,4	7,8
Juli	6,9	7,4	8,3	6,2	7,9	8,3	8,8	9,1	9,6	9,4
August	8,9	9,0	9,5	7,6	10,0	8,8	9,1	9,4	9,3	9,2
September	11,4	10,0	10,1	11,5	9,3	8,5	8,6	8,6	7,6	8,6
Oktober	9,4	9,8	9,5	11,0	9,5	8,8	8,8	9,1	8,5	8,7
November	9,2	9,5	8,8	10,6	8,8	8,8	9,0	9,1	9,5	9,2
December	9,6	9,6	8,9	9,8	9,2	9,2	9,4	9,1	8,9	9,7
Antal kælvninger	15.868	142.249	22.092	2.086	14.357	26.152	233.318	42.464	3.457	29.161

## **Grazing/exercise**

**There is a majority in favour of  
the freedom of choosing**

**More stringent requirements on:**

- **Physical conditions on pasture**

## **Bill re cattle on pasture, 2006 to be passed by the Danish Parliament**

**The Parliament dictates the government to carry  
out necessary changes of laws and orders to  
ensure that all cattle older than three months are  
on pasture during the summer months.**

**Furthermore the cattle must be let outside the  
barn and be exercised every day when not on  
pasture**

## The Council of Europe's proposals

- Animals should have access to do exercise to the open, and – when possible – be let on pasture
- Cows and heifers should have access to pasture at a minimum of 90 days every year
- Tied up cows and heifers must do exercise every day



## Grazing and facts about grazing

- Grass feed will change the characteristics of milk – primarily in a positive way. The cows need not necessarily be on pasture to be offered grass
- Cows on pasture is no guarantee for more welfare (behaviour, health, and physiology)



## Grazing

- Access to intake of 4-7 kg dry matter per cow per day – or 20-35 per cent of the ration
- Intake of minimum 1 kg dry matter per hour
- 0.3-0.4 hectares of grass near the barn (soil quality and shape of land)

## Danish investigations

- 3,050 conventional herds
- Ecological herds and herds with poor health registrations are not included
- 75 per cent of the herds applied grazing
- 50 per cent loose housing and 50 per cent tied-up barns
- The cows were let on pasture in 86 per cent of the herds with tied-up barns
- The cows were let on pasture in 67 per cent of the herds with loose housing barns



## Take home messages

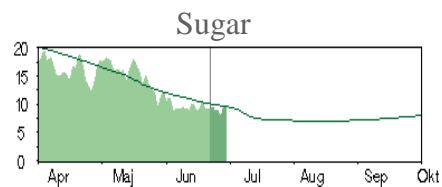
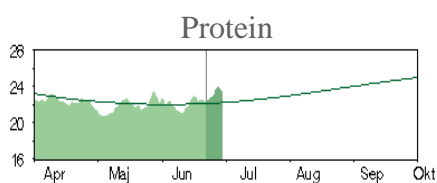
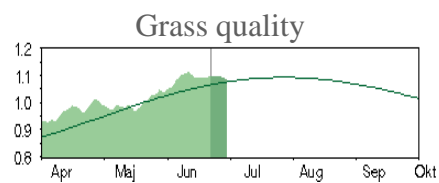
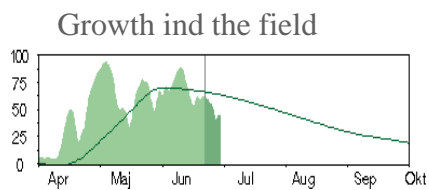
- Grass apparently provide a number of advantages (statistically significant, though often at a low level)
- Results depend very much on barn conditions, local conditions etc.
- Disadvantages of cows on pasture have not really been investigated
- Source of error: The farmers had chosen their production system in advance



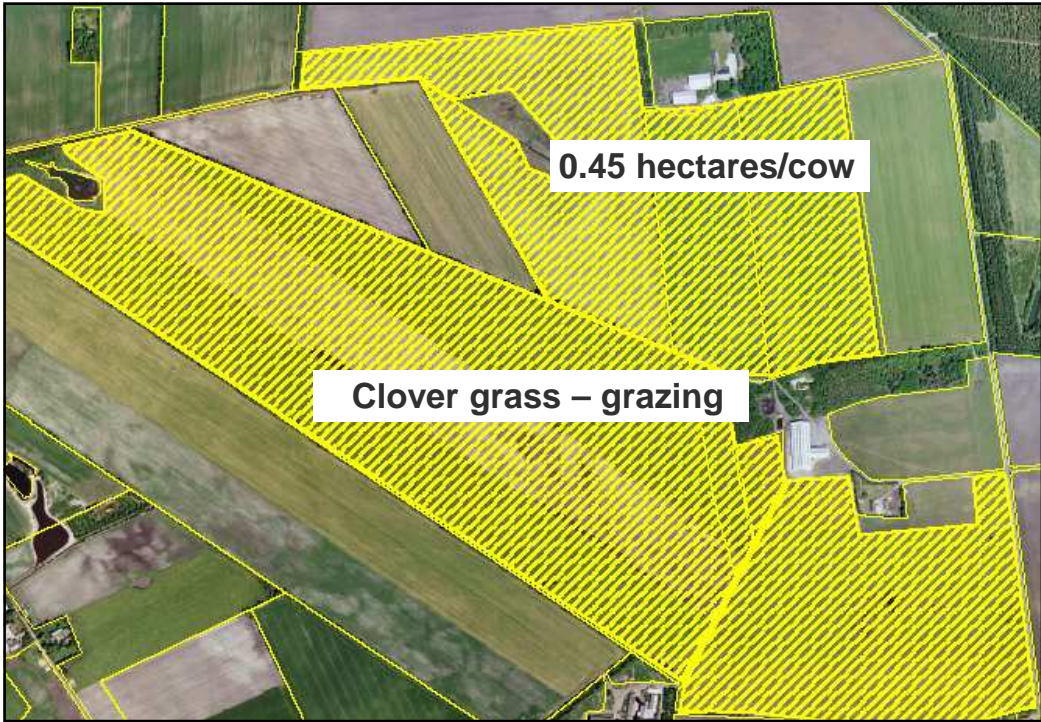
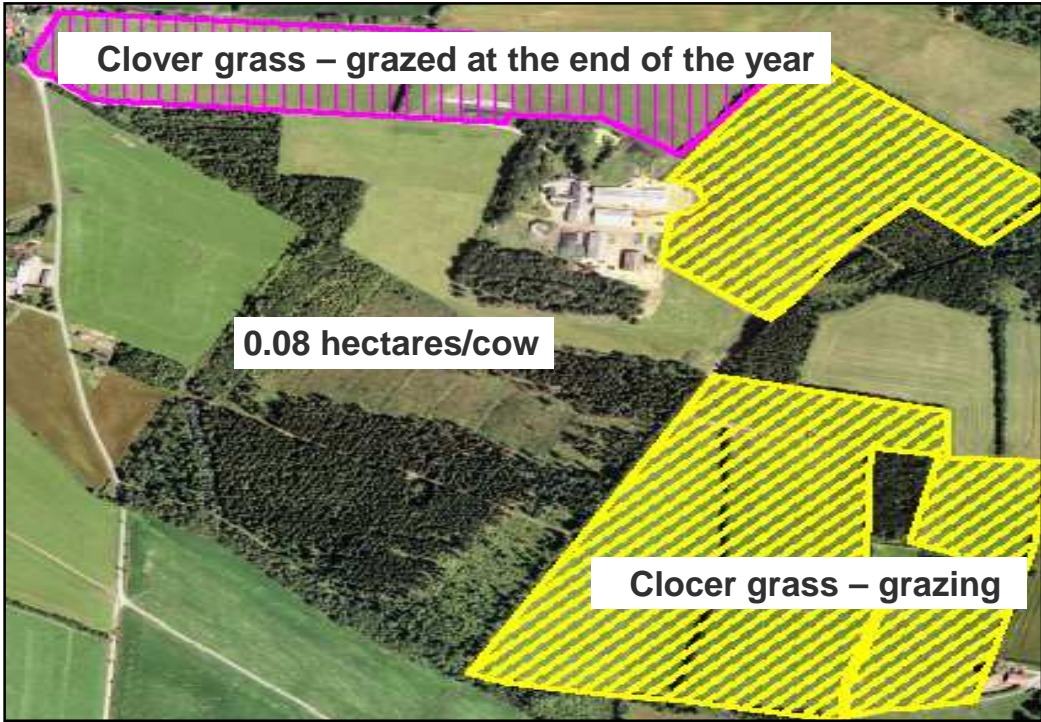
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## Seasonal variations of grass and the field are large



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**Walking passages  
– in actual fact an issue!**



**The ideal solution**

## Indicator control

More stringent requirements on:

- Advice and action plans for
  - Mortality
  - Abnormalities discovered at the slaughterhouse
  - Feet problems
  - Somatic cell count
- Simple, objective registrations

## Public surveillance and control concepts

5 per cent risk based spot check/supervision

12 compulsory visits re health advice

Control on welfare

Self-checking

Compulsary registration / indicators

Milk and beef production

# **Temporary arrangements**

**A dynamic model focusing on  
"steadfastness" and economy**