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Summer Mountain Farming in Norway: Attendance Factors Among '*Seter*' Farmers

Synneve Øien Frøyen

Msc Agroecology

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Supervisor: Geir Hofgaard Lieblein



Photo: private

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Abstract

Summer mountain farming (*seterdrift*) in Norway is a transhumance practice in great decline. Being an extensive farming practice it relies on out-field resources in mountain areas and landscape areas and has been practiced for centuries. *Seterdrift* creates values on many levels, such as continuing traditions and knowledge, and caring for an open and living cultural landscape, high in biodiversity. This study has investigated and identified attendance factors among *seter* farmers. Seven main factors were identified: 1. The *seter* is important for the farming system by contributing with important resources and animal welfare; 2. Farmers work as stewards for the landscape and traditions; 3. Farmers create societal values through dissemination of agriculture, food production, culture and traditions on the *seter*; 4. The *seter* is its own lifestyle that creates work that for farmers feel meaningful and creates work pride; 5. On the *seter* a distinctive closeness to nature and livestock is experienced; 6. Recreation and well-being is experienced on the *seter*, in nature and in the work; 7. The attachment to the *seter* as a place is strong and emotional, created through good experiences and childhood memories. What was found is that farmers have a strong attachment to their *seter*, as a place and as a farming practice. The *seter* creates an environment where farmers thrive and feel motivated, and much is connected to all good experiences and closer relationships with the livestock, nature and people.

Samandrag (Norwegian)

Det dei siste fem ti-åra har ein sett sterk nedgang i seterdrifta i Noreg. Ei drift som er sterkt avhengig av utmarksressursar i forskjellige fjell-og landskapsområder. Seterdrifta skapar verdiar på forskjellige plan, frå bere vidare tradisjonar og kunnskap til å bevare eit opent kulturlandskap med eit levande biomangfald. Denne studia har undersøkt og identifisert nærleiksfaktorar hjå seterbrukarar. Sju hovudfaktorar har vorte identifisert: 1. Setra er viktig for gardssystemet ved å vere eit ressurs-og driftsgrunnlag og ein skapar av dyrevelferd; 2. Gjennom seterdrifta verkar bønder som forvaltarar av landskapet og tradisjonar; 3. Bønder skapar samfunnsverdi gjennom formidling av jordbruk, matproduksjon, kultur og tradisjonar på setra; 4. Setra er ein eigen livsstil og genererer arbeid som for bønder kjennest meiningsfullt og skapar yrkesstoltheit; 5. På setra opplevast ein særskild nærleik til naturen og husdyr; 6. Ei oppleving av rekreasjon og trivsel skjer på setra, i både natur og arbeid; 7. Tilknytinga til setra som stad er sterk og kjensleladd, denne vert skapt gjennom gode opplevingar, barndomsminner. Ein har funne at bønder har ei sterk tilknyting til setra si, baa som stad og som ei driftsform. Setra skaper eit godt miljø for bøndene, der mykje er tilknytt høg trivsel og gode opplevingar med husdyr, naturen og menneske.

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Preface

I was standing there with my first self-made brown cheese in my hands. Proud? Yes! I had been spending the whole day from seven in the morning to six in the evening cooking this cheese. Stirred and stirred, burned a tree's worth of wood and last but not least; sweated. I watched it closely so it didn't stop boiling or the other way, boil over. A dance between fire, milk and time. A handcraft and a tradition. History. So, in the end I was standing there with something that used to be 80 litres of fresh milk, but now a compact, hard square only 10% of the size – it was not milk anymore, but a sweet, salty and caramel tasting brown cheese, 'brunost'. From Dagros, Staslin, Litago and the rest of the herd. From cows that had wandered the valley and the mountains, eating grass, leaves and herbs for several weeks. A herd that we had run after, called for and spent several hours looking for. This herd, that together with nature and ourselves had created this cheese, all the way back from when it was grass, herbs and leaves.

This is how I remember my first real traditional experience of 'seterdrift'¹. Two years later, on a different summer mountain farm, a 'seter', I focused on observing the phenomenon, as part of my master's thesis. Over the course of six weeks, together with five cows, a calf, five hens, a rooster and three goats in an overgrown cultural landscape. I worked hard to milk cows and goats by hand, make cheese and other dairy products. I cleared pastures overgrown with shrubs and bushes and experienced nature in a different way than before. Some days I worked with others, some days I spent alone. I shared the tradition and history with tourists and had conversations with local people and former 'budeier'² that used to work in the area. Through these weeks I observed and reflected on the phenomenon of 'seterdrift'. I tried to understand it, see challenges, opportunities and feel the experience of it. I tried to understand what is so special about the phenomenon and why people are choosing to do this extensive, traditional, and labour intense farming practice in a world driven mostly on modern technology and solutions.

¹ 'Seterdrift' is the Norwegian name for the practice of summer mountain farming. A summer mountain farm is a 'seter'.

² 'Budeie' is the Norwegian name for the milkmaids that work on the 'seter' farms.

Introduction

- Synneve: What does your ‘*seter*’ mean to you?
- Unni: What it means to me? Where shall I start? It really means *everything*.
- Synneve: Yes?
- Unni: Yes, for me to come to the ‘*støl*’³, it is....it all falls into place. It’s very hard, I’m up at three in the morning, starting to milk when it is four in the morning. In the evenings, when I am tired, I wait for the clock to turn eight, so I have an excuse to go to bed. But to be on the ‘*støl*’, it is not just a job, it is a lifestyle. And it is a lifestyle that I cannot see myself quitting.
- Synneve: No?
- Unni: Because it is so good. It is just *so* good.

These words provide insight into the personal thoughts of the farmer Unni when talking about what her ‘*støl*’ means to her. Without saying specifically what makes her feel so much about her *seter*, it presents a deep attachment to it. Being hard work and long hours, the practice is also a lifestyle, and creates good feelings that have strong impacts on the continuation of the practice. Farmers practicing ‘*seterdrift*’ today are few compared to how many they were. Earlier, most farms had one or more ‘*seter*’ farms active during the summers, but after a great decline in the last century, this type of practice is rare today.

Historically, the moving of animals and humans from the farm for periods of time has been a practice of great importance all over the world. For hundreds and thousands of years, livestock animals have grazed in pastures in mountains, highlands and other outfields. The presence of the grazing livestock in these areas have created ecosystem types and habitats for an abundance of species and shaped much of the open landscapes we have today (Bele et al., 2019; Pykälä, 2000; Tunon

³ ‘*Støl*’ is a different name for ‘*seter*’, mostly used in the areas in and around Vestland, Hallingdal, Valdres and parts of the south.

et al., 2019). In Europe we find practices, often referred to as transhumance, such as the mountain farming in the Alps and the Pyrenees, '*fäbod*' in Sweden, the shepherd practices in Greece, Italy and Romania, '*brañeo*' in Spain and '*Seterdrift*' in Norway (Bele et al., 2013; Bindi, 2020; Bunce et al., 2004; Daugstad et al., 2014; Eriksson, 2011). The main motivation for these practices was to use pastures in outfields due to limited resources on the farmland. Today, there is a lower dependence on these resources and a great decline is seen (Bunce et al., 2004; MacDonald et al., 2000; Stensgaard, 2019). Many reasons for this decline are grounded in the modernisation and great intensification of agricultural practices and farming systems in the last century (Bezák & Mitchley, 2014; Bunce et al., 2004; Dong et al., 2011). Since the Green Revolution, technical improvements such as fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery, and low prices in concentrate feed and transport have increased productivity in agriculture (Bratberg, 2018). In addition, abandonment of farms and farmland is a growing phenomenon. In Norway 30% of dairy farmers have abandoned their practice since 2013, this is almost one dairy farm every day (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2021b; Aase, 2021). Though the number of farms has decreased, the number of animals has not (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2021a). Farms are bigger today with larger livestock herds. Such farming systems are less fit for older practices such as '*seterdrift*', which was adapted to smaller farming systems with fewer animals.

As a practice existing for thousands of years, outfield grazing has created nature types and a cultural landscape high in biodiversity and important functions to ecosystems. The use of livestock in outfield areas has shown to play a significant role in keeping the cultural landscape open, and provides habitats for an abundance of species and multiple functions of great importance to the ecosystems in these areas (Bele et al., 2018; O'rourke et al., 2016; Pykälä, 2000). The reduction of livestock movements in pastures and outfields are now leading to changes in the landscape and show negative effects on the ecosystems and the diversity of species (Bezák & Mitchley, 2014; Bunce et al., 2004; Pykälä, 2000; Sidiropoulou et al., 2015). Through studies it is seen that areas abandoned of grazing livestock contains less plant diversity than in areas where the grazing is continued, as well as more regrowth of trees and scrubs, leading to loss of pastures and grazing resources for food production (Bezák & Mitchley, 2014; Sidiropoulou et al., 2015). The paper of Bele et al. (2018) entails a study of the benefits of localized food production for a sustainable agriculture, including a focus on the effect it has on biodiversity. Studying summer farms ('*seter*' farms) in Norway and Sweden, they found that these practices provide many benefits for nature and biodiversity, as well as providing a different food quality and important ecological knowledge from farmers (Bele et al., 2018). Farmers have earlier stated that they are more interested in producing food, than care for and manage the landscape (Kvakkestad et al., 2015), but Bele et al. (2018) emphasised that both tasks can go hand in hand

and «the one need not preclude the other», as an active *'seter'* practice will provide management of the landscape.

In 1850 it was said to be over 50 000 active *'seter'* (summer mountain farms) in Norway, but after a great decline, especially the last fifty years, there were less than 1000 *'seter'* farms still in use in 2019 (Bele et al., 2019; Bungler & Haarsaker, 2020). As a low intensity and extensive farming system, transhumance and *'seterdrift'* will presumably face a near extinction if the trends continue as today. There are several important factors why farmers have abandoned their *'seter'* practice. According to Fylkesmannen i Hordaland (2012), the most important of such factors are economic concerns, social and family situation, increased farm size, concentrate calving for autumn to have summer vacation, lack of access to sufficient out-field resources and lack of a *'seterdrift'* community

From the report of Bungler and Haarsaker (2020), where *'seter'* farmers participated in a questionnaire to map out the current situation of the *'seterdrift'* in Norway, 19 farmers responded that they had already abandoned their practice. These 19 people were given follow up questions for why they had quit, the answers where all distributed over the following alternatives:

1. Too labour intensive
2. Increasing farm animal number after new farm operational system investments leading to,
3. Not enough space on the *'seter'* and a need for investing in new production systems on the *'seter'*.

The abandonment of the transhumance practices like *'seterdrift'* are not only creating ecological issues, but also threatening cultural values such as traditions and knowledge connected to the practice (Bele et al., 2019; Liechti & Biber, 2016; Tunon et al., 2019). These traditions are often based on knowledge passed on from person to person and through generations, as it is a practical and tacit knowledge. A research report titled *[Biological Cultural Heritage as a Sustainable Creator of Value]* by Tunón et al (2019), sums up a project about what the use of summer farming and transhumance can provide culturally, ecologically, and socially. In addition to sustaining ecological services and biodiversity, the project focuses on the importance of transhumance and summer farming for ecological and traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and food quality. As the report emphasises, a knowledge of expertise has been built up from participatory approaches for centuries. This has created the best prerequisites and practices for summer mountain farming, going from one generation to another, acquiring knowledge of how to process commodities and understanding the nature around the farm. Further, the report states that; “The best ways to protect this knowledge concerning both the cultural landscape and the summer mountain farming is to stay on using and keep the traditional ways of farming alive and also include

adjustments needed from a modern society” (p.5). Keeping this knowledge alive is then a crucial point of why summer mountain farming is needed, knowledge of an irreplaceable kind that will take many years, if not centuries to build up again.

In Norway, the butter that is produced on summer farms has achieved a protected title due to their characteristic taste, colour and content (Matloven, 2019). Anyone with butter production on their *‘seter’* can use this title on their product to promote these products’ uniqueness if all criteria are followed. Livestock grazing in out-fields in mountain and highland areas has shown to give dairy products of a different quality, where the sensorial and nutritional value is higher than in products based on diets of concentrates and cultivated grassland (Bele et al., 2018; Collomb et al., 2002).



Figure 1: Abandoned mountain farms such as this are seen everywhere in ‘seter’ areas in Norway today. Photo: Private

Favourable fatty acids and antioxidants have been found with higher amounts in the milk products of summer mountain farming than from “regular” farming due to the animals grazing in areas with an abundance of species and very little to no concentrate in the feed. A difference in quality is also seen in meat products from sheep grazing out-field resources as seen with milk products (Ådnøy et al., 2005). The importance of origin and the way livestock have been grazing seems to be of great interest among consumers as well, as the attitude towards the meat from livestock grazing in mountain pastures is more positive than from the lowlands (Hersleth et al., 2012).

We know that *‘seterdrift’* and other practices of transhumance are in decline and greatly affecting ecosystems, the landscape, and grazing resources, as well as traditions and cultural heritage. Research has often focused on the ecological values, traditions and cultural heritage, and reasons and effects of the decline in *‘seterdrift’*. All of which are of great importance, however, less research is done in the farmer’s perspective and connections to *‘seterdrift’* as a phenomenon and the factors that contribute to the continuation of the practice. Transhumance practices create relationships between people, animals and ecosystems, but less research is seen from the people’s perspective, especially the farmers’ attachment to the place and practice. Daugstad et al. (2014) studied summer mountain farmers in Norway and Spain, where the focus was to look at how the farmers view the summer

farming systems and landscape, as well as the value of nature protection. They found that in both areas economic motivation and access to grazing grounds were the main motivation for the practice. They also tried to investigate the term ‘good farmers’, where farmers from both countries related to this. However, farmers in Norway fell more within this definition as the appreciation of heritage and environmental aspects of the system is higher in Norway compared to Spain, where it is more looked down upon.

Studies have been conducted in the field of place attachment among farmers and their practice and their land. Place attachment amongst farmers was emphasised as important for the landscape use and continuation of the practice (Daugstad et al., 2014; Quinn & Halfacre, 2014). Hinojosa et al. (2016) investigated the place connection amongst mountain farmers as a factor for farm permanence. They could state that farmers in mountain areas feel a stronger connection to the farm and the area than the ones further down in the land. Psychological and social factors bound to connection to place can explain if farmers choose to use their land and practice or not. This makes it difficult to find out *why* land abandonment is low in high-mountain areas. If place attachment is an important factor for farmers in choosing to continue or discontinue their farming practice and/or leave their land, and mountain farmers feel a greater connection to their land and farm, *why* do mountain farmers feel connected to their farmland and how does this impact their decision to stay or leave? Looking at how farmers create a relationship with their farm, Quinn and Halfacre (2014) investigated place attachment among farmers and how they manage their landscape and food systems. When interviewing farmers about their complex relationship with the land, they found that farmers act as both a caretaker of the land and receive care from their land. This security from the land was found through recreation in both work and leisure. In provision of security *for* their land a holistic consideration was seen. This focused on the well-being of their farming system in a long-term perspective, including animal-welfare and land management, and provided farmers with a higher purpose, increasing their connection to land, animals, and the community. In that way, Quinn and Halfacre (2014) illustrate the importance of place attachment in landscape management and indicate how a positive connection to the practice or place promotes a continuation of the practice as well as good land management.

Research Question

- What are the attendance factors among summer mountain farmers in Norway?

The number of farmers practicing ‘*seterdrift*’ in Norway is low and declining. Despite this strong decline, some farmers continue the practice of ‘*seterdrift*’. This

study investigate into positive factors of permanence and attendance, to help explain why some choose to stay, rather than why they leave.

Quinn and Halfacre (2014) asked in their research; ‘What is happening on farms that creates in farmers such a deep place attachment to their land?’, and ‘What actions are occurring; the specific cognitive, emotional and physical events that lead to attachment? They found that specific experiences are stronger when it comes to place attachment rather than time in a location and childhood memories. Positive experiences through recreation on the land, both with nature and people strengthened the place attachment. To dig further into my research question, the following sub-questions are presented:

- What is happening on the ‘seter’ that creates among farmers a connection to it as a place and a practice?
- What experiences and factors lead to farmers feeling an attachment to the place?

The overall aim of my work will investigate and seek the positive attendance factors (*‘nærleiksfaktorar’* in Norwegian) among *‘seter’* farmers in relation to their *‘seter’* farm.

Methodology

This is a study of the phenomenon of *'seterdrift'*, summer mountain farming, in Norway. This a transhumance practice referred to as practices of periodically moving livestock and parts of the household between permanent pastures to utilize grazing resources (Blench, 2001). Transhumance practices are seen as low intensive systems tied to extensive agriculture and the use of outfield resources, providing many favourable services to the environment (Nori & Gemini, 2011). In Norway we find two types of transhumance systems; the reindeer farmers of *Sapmi* in the north of the country and the *'seterdrift'*. *'Seterdrift'* is a seasonal movement set to summertime. The livestock is moved from the permanent farm to a summer mountain farm (the *'seter'*) with parts of the household to graze in the outfield and summer pastures to save the home fields for food crops and winter fodder (Reinton, 1955). This is a practice found all over the country and is a way to relieve the limited resources used for crop production in the lower laying lands using outfield resources instead (Stensgaard, 2017).

Methods

This study was done with qualitative methods, rooted in phenomenology and systems thinking. My aim was to identify attendance factors among summer mountain farmers by looking at and trying to understand their lived experience related to their summer mountain farm. The research work was divided into three phases, and consisted of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and content analysis, see table 1.

Table 1: The three phases of the research work.

Phase 1 - Introductory	Phase 2 – Continuous	Phase 3 - Analytical
Participant observation	Semi-structured interviews	Qualitative content analysis

I applied a phenomenological approach, studying a rich phenomenon; summer mountain farming in Norway; *'seterdrift'*. Phenomenology can be explained as a study of how things or a phenomenon is understood from the experiences of the subjects' point of view (Smith, 2013). Through how phenomena are experienced through the senses (how they are seen, heard, smelled and so on), it provides a personal experience and understanding of the situation.

Phase one – Participant observation

In the summer of 2020, I explored '*seterdrift*' through participant observation while I was working on a '*seter*' for a period of six weeks in the small mountain range of Synnfjell in Innlandet. The goal of the observation was to get an understanding of the phenomenon of the practice '*seterdrift*' in Norway. Looking at the supporting and hindering factors affecting the practice as well as developing a personal understanding and experience of the phenomenon. Throughout the six weeks, I wrote in my reflection diary every day. I used this writing as a tool for daily reflection as well as a way to pull myself out of the situation so that I could look at it objectively. To guide the reflection, the following questions were asked:

- What exactly did I see? What happened? What did I experience?
- What did I feel and think about this?
- What did I learn from this?

Throughout the observation, I also emphasised the following questions to investigate the phenomenon further:

- What characterizes the phenomenon?
- What is preventing the evolution of the status quo?
- What is maintaining the status quo?
- What can be done to strengthen the supporting and weaken the hindering factors of the phenomenon?

Based on my multiple observations and daily reflections, I made a rich picture of the mountain farm after the six weeks. I used the rich picture as a tool to get an overview of the current situation and all its complexity and messiness (Armson, 2011). The rich picture was made to understand the situation better, based on my personal experiences. I drew and painted things and experiences I observed as being part of the '*seter*' system. The picture can be seen in figure 16 on page iii in the appendices.

Phase 2 – Interviews

The data collection was done through semi-structured interviews. I chose to do semi-structured interviews as they follow an interview guide, but also opens up for new topics and themes to emerge during the interview (Bernard, 2017). Open ended questions were used to encourage farmers to answer more freely, based on their personal experiences and thoughts. The interviews were conducted through November and December 2020. A recorder was used during the interviews, and then manually transcribed to text. The interview guide can be found in the appendices on page x in table 5. Topics covered during interviews were:

- The **history** of the 'seter'
- Place attachment to the 'seter'
- Physical and emotional factors
- **Achievements** on the 'seter'
- The **future** of the 'seter'

The informants were sampled purposively, where the following criteria had to be met: the farmers were to have a mountain farm in practice, with production of milk, either delivered to the dairy or processed on the 'seter'. The informant farmers were found through contacts in the 'seter' community in Norway, as well as articles in the national organization of 'seterdrift'; Seterkultur. I focused on finding farmers spreading in age, type of farming practice and location. Additionally if the milk was processed into dairy products on the farm or delivered directly to the dairy cooperative Tine. The goal of the interviews was to get farmers to talk about their summer mountain farm and the experiences they have there.



Figure 2: The southern part of Norway, the red dots show the locations and interview numbers. The map of Norway is downloaded from Kartverket.no

The interviews were between 35 and 60 minutes. Two interviews were video-calls, while the other seven were on the farmers' farms, often with a cup of coffee and something sweet. Five counties were covered during the interviews; Vestland, Trøndelag, Innlandet and Vestfold & Telemark. From the nine interviews, ten people participated, eight women and two men. The age varied from early in the 30's to early 60's. Four of the participants had cows, four had goats and one had both cows and goats on their 'seter'. The number of cows on the 'seter' varied from four to around 30. The number of goats varied from 35 to 120. Additionally many of the participants would bring other animals to their 'seter', like pigs and chickens. Some of them also had sheep roaming freely in the mountains and outfields until autumn. Information about each farmer and their 'seter' can be seen in table 2, information regarding the interviews can be found in table 3.

Table 2: An overview over the farmers and their 'seter' practice

Farmers (Pseudonyms)	Age group	Nr. of seter	Animals on the seter	Type	Products	Length of season
Sivert & Mona	60-70	2	4 cows, a horse and calves	Full processing on 'seter'	White traditional cheese, sour cream	8-9 weeks, 20th of July to mid-September-
Emma	30-40	1	12 cows, lambs, chickens	Delivers to Tine and local cheese factory	Milk	8 weeks, June to August/September
Elna	50-60	1	8 cows and pigs	Full processing on 'seter'	Sour cream, butter, trad. local cheese	5-6 weeks, the summer vacation
Anny	50-60	2	76 goats	Full processing on 'seter'	Trad. white cheese and brown cheese	July to August, 2 months
Unni	50-60	2	120 goats	Delivers to Tine and processing of milk	Brown cheese and trad. white cheese, and milk	4 months, May to end of September
Hallvard	60-70	1	9 cows	Delivers to Tine	Milk	4 months, Midsummer to mid-October
Monica	40-50	1	28 cows, pigs, lambs and calves	Delivers to Tine	Milk	9-10 weeks, Midsummer to end of August,
Marie	30-40	1	25 goats and 5 cows	Full processing on 'seter'	White cheese and brown cheese, sour cream	10 weeks, 10 th of July to end of September
Agnes	50-60	1	100 goats, pigs, rabbits and chickens	Full processing on 'seter'	Brown cheese, sour cream	14 weeks, 10 th of June to 25th of September

Table 3: Information over the interviews including date, place and interview length

Interview #	Code names	Date	Place	Length
1	Sivert og Mona	05.nov.20	Home farm, Valdres	1 hour
2	Emma	09.nov.20	Video call, Hemsedal	50 min
3	Elna	10.nov.20	Home farm, Hovet	59 min
4	Anny	12.nov.20	Home farm, Aurland	1 hour 6 min
5	Unni	13.nov.20	Home farm, Undredal	36 min
6	Hallvard	17.nov.20	Home farm, Røros	1 hour 18 min
7	Monica	18.nov.20	Home farm, Tynset	38 min
8	Marie	19.nov.20	Home farm, Rennebu	39 min
9	Agnes	16.des.20	Video call, Tinn	1 hour 10 min

Interview 1 - Sivert & Mona

Their farm comes with two *'seter'* farms. The first, called “Heimstølen”, lies closest to their farm. This is where they move in the beginning of the season. This time includes a lot of work with hay harvest in addition to milking cows and cheese making. In August they move to “Langstølen”, furthest away from their farm, they stay there for a month until returning to “Heimstølen” for a couple of weeks, before going back home. They bring with them four cows of the old heritage breed *'dølafe'*, four calves and a horse. In addition to collecting hay they grow black currant berries. Their dairy production is traditional *'seter'* cheese, butter and sour cream from the milk they milk by hand. Their farming practice relies on more traditional farming techniques like ploughing fields by horse and milking cows by hand. Mona makes cheese every other day. With four cows, nothing is delivered to the dairy.

I arrive at their farm in Valdres an afternoon in November on a sunny and clear day. Walking up a steep mud road I arrive by an old wood house next to a barn. By the door wooden skis are placed by the wall. I knock on the door, but no one answers so I go inside to knock on the door in the hallway, a voice answers and I open the door to greet the farmers Sivert and Mona. They invite me in and the smell of fire and apples greets me into their kitchen. Milk buckets are placed on the old black stove in the corner. They serve me some homemade apple juice and welcome me into a small room next to the kitchen where the fireplace is lit. “We have an ox-calf coming in 15 minutes”, says Mona. It is the new genetic contribution to their herd, Sivert can tell. I say that is fine and we start the interview. After 15-20 minutes we pause the interview for them to attend to the arriving ox. While talking about both their *'seter'* they get filled with joy and memories of great times, hard work and closeness to nature. During the interview a cat jumps onto my lap and starts purring. The wife finds a sewing kit and takes off her sock to mend it. When I stop the recorder I ask if I can buy some cheese. Mona gives me a taste of their cheese and takes out a piece to cut from. A cheese from this season on the *'seter'*. She cut out a piece for me to buy. While packing the

cheese in paper, she says “It is a proudness in this, cheesemaking of unpasteurized milk, it is a handcraft”.

Interview 2 - Emma

Emma is a woman in her thirties and runs the ‘seter’ connected to her family farm in Hemsedal. She took over the farm in 2018 with her husband, after several years in Oslo. At home, they have 26 dairy cows, chickens, sheep and calves. They have invested in a milking robot on their farm, but use regular milking machines on their ‘seter’. When the family move to the ‘seter’ in June together with the older generation, they bring with them 12 of the cows for milking and chickens and calves. The rest of the cows graze on a mountain pasture and the sheep is let into the mountain to graze until autumn. They stay on the ‘seter’ for 8-9 weeks before moving back home in September. The milk they produce is collected by the dairy truck to Tine and also some is delivered to a local cheese producer. I call Emma on video call on a Monday morning, she is a smiling and young woman and show great enthusiasm about *‘seterdrift’*.

Interview 3 – Elna

Elna has practiced ‘seterdrift’ since she was a little girl and learned all traditional dairy production on the ‘seter’ from her mother and grandparents. The ‘seter’ has been in her family for hundreds of years. She inherited the family dairy farm, but stopped farming several years ago. Today she rents animals from her neighbour to have on her ‘seter’. This is a tradition she cannot stop, it is in her blood and the way she is and where she is supposed to be. On the ‘seter’ she has 8 cows and some pigs she sees as her best friends for the season. She produces several traditional cheeses from the area, in addition to butter and sour cream. On the ‘seter’ she also runs a café where she sells her products and other traditional dishes, while sharing traditions and ‘seter’ culture to the guests.

I am welcomed by herself and her husband when I arrive at their farm. She welcomes me into the living room, the whole house smells of bread baking in the oven. A cat wanders the house and comes to join us. There are traditional cookies and cakes on a plate and tea and coffee is served. The view from the living room shows the village surrounded by hills and mountains and the sun is slowly disappearing behind them. The weather is frosty, and crisp, the first “wintery” day. The atmosphere is calm. During the interview, a clock rings, signalling that the bread need turning. A second time, saying they are done. She is passionate about summer mountain farming, and gets emotional when talking about it. She has a lot to say and says it with so much enthusiasm and joy.

Interview 4 – Anny

With 76 goats, Anny produces several types of traditional cheeses, like brown cheese and unsalted ‘seter’-cheese. She learned the tradition from her parents-in-

laws and focuses on sharing as much knowledge to younger generations as she can. They also have two summer mountain farms. The first, closest to the farm, has a café and welcomes tourists all season. The other, situated into the mountain, is used for a couple of weeks, where the whole family gathers for a small vacation.

For my interview, I arrive at a steep hill, after driving on a narrow road with many turns here and there. The farm is situated on the side of a mountain, with larger mountains surrounding it. There's a great view to the fjord. This is a goat farm, situated in the Sognefjord in Western Norway. When I arrive at the farm house Anny comes out from the house to greet me, accompanied by their dog. The interview will be outside, due to the pandemic, so Anny shows me some seats in the garden, next to some fruit trees. It is a windy and chilly day, but warm for November. I can hear goats roaming in the barn. She offers me chocolate and coffee, as well as a cheese tasting later on. During the interview she talks about her summer mountain farm with so many details of the days there and the appreciation of having good employees.

Interview 5 – Unni

Unni has a long and strong connection to her '*seter*' and is the fourth generation running it after 130 years in the family. She has worked there since she was a small girl, the summer of 2020 was her 47th season on the '*seter*' working as a '*budeie*'. To her farm there are two '*seter*' farms which she moves to with the 120 goats at different times in the seasons. She delivers the milk from the '*seter*' situated closer to her farm, where she also drives back and forth from home. On the other, "Langhusa", she makes stays for as long as they are there, making cheese, both brown and white. "Langhusa" is her favourite place to be.

For my interview with Unni, I walk down the only road to a very small village in a tiny arm of the Sognefjord. This fjord and village is a part of UNESCO heritage, the farms are small and very close to each other and literally in the centre of town. She welcomes me from her balcony when I approach the farm. I walk into the house and up the stairs to meet her in her living room where the TV is on in the background. She offers me coffee and immediately starts telling me about her '*seter*', the history and the traditions attached to it and how she started her "career" as a '*budeie*'. She talks with such strong emotion to it and shows a great attachment to her '*seter*'.

Interview 6 – Hallvard

After spending his summers on the '*seter*' as a youth with his grandparents, Hallvard took over the '*seter*' with the wish of continuing what he had learned from them. Hallvard's focus is to farm on the premises of nature and the animals. He identifies himself strongly with the practice, and his '*seterdrift*' is the main event of the year for him and his family. During the season there is a lot of work with

hay harvesting for winter fodder. This is done in the traditional way, using scythes (*ljå*) and drying the hay on fence rows, called *hesjing* in Norwegian. Hallvard has focused on having animals adapted to the outfield grazing and has the old Norwegian heritage breed “Rørosku” (also known as Sidet Trønder- og Nordlandsfe, STN). He says he is the only seter in active use in the area and is delivering organic milk from his *seter* to the dairy Tine. His seter traces back all the way to the 14th century after archeological finds from viking settlements in the area.

I knock on his door on a cold and windy afternoon, it's just starting to snow. His farm is located in the highlands outside Røros. He and his dog welcome me into their kitchen. I sit down on the bench by the table and he offers me coffee from a mocha pot and some traditional *lefse* made by his daughter in law. We talk a bit about why I am there and what connections I have to *seterdrift*, before I introduce my first questions. He shows great enthusiasm when talking about his *seter* and is not a man of few words. During the interview, his dog seeks company and climbs into the seat next to me, while Hallvard tells me about all his good memories of his *seter*. He calls himself a *setergubbe* (can roughly be translated to *seter* man) and says this is where he wants to be, the rest of the year on the main farm is just warming up and preparing for the *seter* season.

Interview 7 – Monica

Monica started summer mountain farming 10 years ago with her husband. This is a place for them and their four sons to enjoy their summer and let the cows utilize otherwise unused resources. They also grow grass crops for feed on the in-fields of the seter and the cows graze on a large out-field pasture that they have fenced to keep the animals nearby. This was a former community-*seter* where several farmers had their animals together in the summer, therefore it has equipment in the milking barn for managing many cows at the same time, Monica and her family have a large capacity during the summer and have around 30 milking cows as well as lambs, two pigs and heifers.

The day of our interview, the temperature has decreased by a lot creating supercooled rain. The roads are glazed and when I finally manage to arrive at the farm, after a slippery ride, I am warmly welcomed into the kitchen. It's lunch time and I am offered coffee and pancakes. A small dog comes over to greet me. I have been here before, this was my first experience with *seterdrift*, as I worked as a volunteer for 10 days at their *seter* 5 years ago. Monica says *seterdrift* is one of the most important things you can do as a farmer and has developed great fondness in being on the *seter* after their 10 years in the practice.

Interview 8 – Marie

Marie runs the 'seter' together with her sister in the mountain area of Trollheimen. Her older sister took over the family farm with dairy cows and the 'seter' connected to it, so together with her husband she runs a farm with dairy goats that spends the summer there together with her sister's cows. They make brown cheese, white 'seter'-cheese and sour cream. They run a small cheese factory full-time the rest of the year. As a summer mountain farmer, Marie sees herself as a steward of the landscape and this is of great importance as to why she wants to practice 'seterdrift'.

The day of the interview it has snowed so much during the night that I cannot get my car out. The landscape is all white and it's a real winter wonderland. I am supposed to meet her at their cheese factory, which is not too far away so I decide to walk. Calling to say I will be a bit delayed, Marie offers to pick me up and drive back to her farm, since she overslept and missed breakfast. She just finished the milking shift. The farm is an old farm she and her husband bought not many years ago. We pass the barn on the walk to the house, I can hear goats roam and jump around. She welcomes me into their blue painted kitchen. Her husband is home and greets me before he lights the fire in the oven. She offers me some bread and cheese, made on the 'seter' this summer, and many warm cups of coffee. After the interview I get to see into the goats barn. Marie then drives me to their cheese factory, where I get a little tour. One of my friends is working there so I am welcomed to participate in some cheesemaking, which I gladly join in on.

Interview 9 – Agnes

Making her award-winning brown cheese, Agnes and her 100 goats spend the whole season from June to September on the 'seter'. They have pigs, chickens and rabbits in addition to the goats. On the farm they also have cattle grazing in the fields surrounding the farm, as they do not have resources enough for the cows to be on the 'seter'.

It is a snowy December day at Agnes' farm in Telemark when we meet on video call. She starts by saying hello and turns her camera to show me the beautiful snowy view of the farm and the surrounding landscape, "*It's like a Disney movie*" she says. She also shows me some of the cows that are outside, taking some air. I start asking if she can tell me about her 'seter', or 'staule' as they call it in this area. She can talk a lot about this, from the economic parts to the old history and the way she learned the tradition from her mother and relatives. The internet connection is not so stable so we have a few difficulties, but we quickly get back on track.

Phase three - Analysis

The content analysis focused on bringing forth the attendance factors from personal experiences among the farmers regarding their summer mountain farm. In this study, the qualitative content analysis was applied to analyse the semi-structured interviews. From the transcript, quotes were isolated into meaning units, then condensed and coded to form sub-categories and categories. An example on how this was done can be found below in table 4.

Table 4: Example of how the Qualitative content analysis was conducted from Meaning unit to category.

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code	Sub-category	Category
Everything up there. I am proud that I could continue the tradition that I learned when I was young from my grandparents. That...yes, that is what I am most proud of, that I continue the 'seter'-tradition.	I am proud of everything there, that I could continue the 'seter'-tradition I learned from my grandparents, that is what I am most proud of.	Pride in continuing the 'seter'-traditions	Continuing seter traditions	Keeping traditions alive
Yes, but if you deliver milk from the 'seter, then it's the world's finest. Out-field pastures, you don't get any better milk than on out-field pastures, no. And it's very well paid. In the summer. Yes, and it's fat and protein rich, to it's just a plus all of this in the wallet, if you want to think about that too.	If you deliver milk from the 'seter', it's the finest milk in the world. Out-field pastures, you will not get a better milk than from that, no. And it pays good in the summer, it's fat and protein-rich, so it's only a plus in the wallet, if you want to think about that too.	The milk on out-field pastures is of high quality	Quality milk on out-field pastures	Work pride

Categories and sub-categories from each individual analysis were then made into individual mind maps as seen in figure 4 and 5. Here they were translated into English from Norwegian. Main categories were transferred into a common mind map, as a way to combine all individual maps. The categories were then aggregated and condensed into fewer main categories, with a focus on not losing any content. For instance; Steward of the landscape and Keeping traditions alive where merged into Stewardship of traditions and landscape; Community & Society and Joy of Dissemination were merged into Societal Value. All sub-categories were put under their categories and the same procedure was done to them; overlapping sub-categories were merged and similar ones were aggregated into common sub-categories.

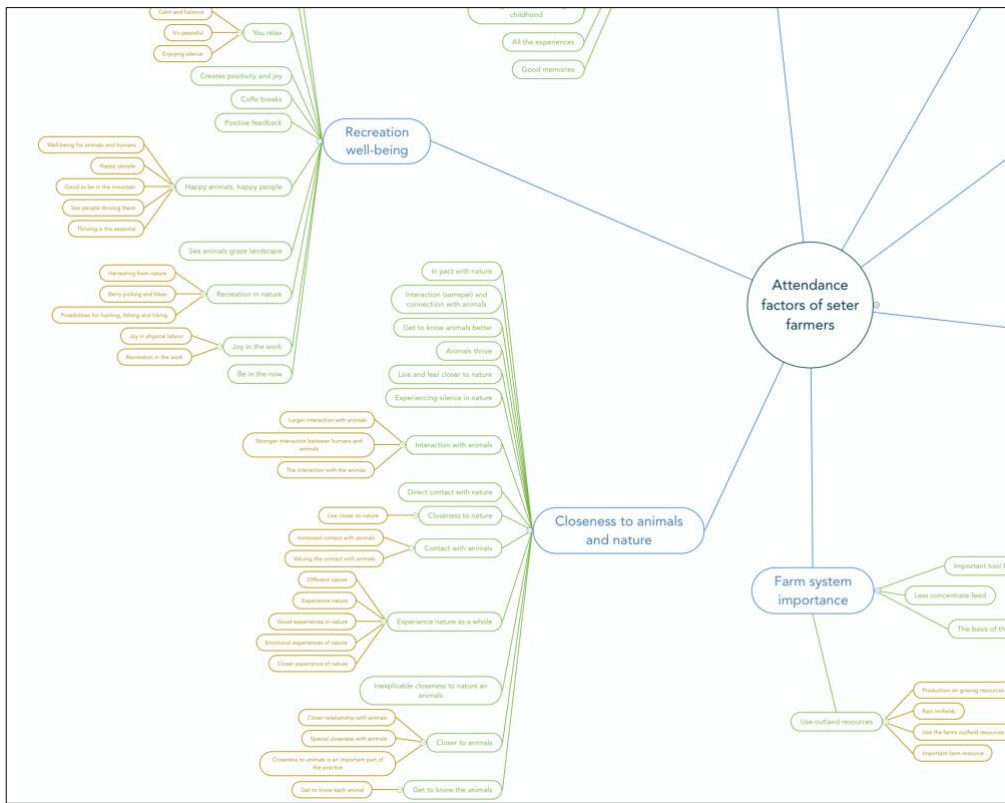


Figure 3: Categories and sub-categories from all farmers collected into one. The orange boxes are correlating sub-categories put into the same sub-category. This is before they are merged and simplified into fewer sub-categories.

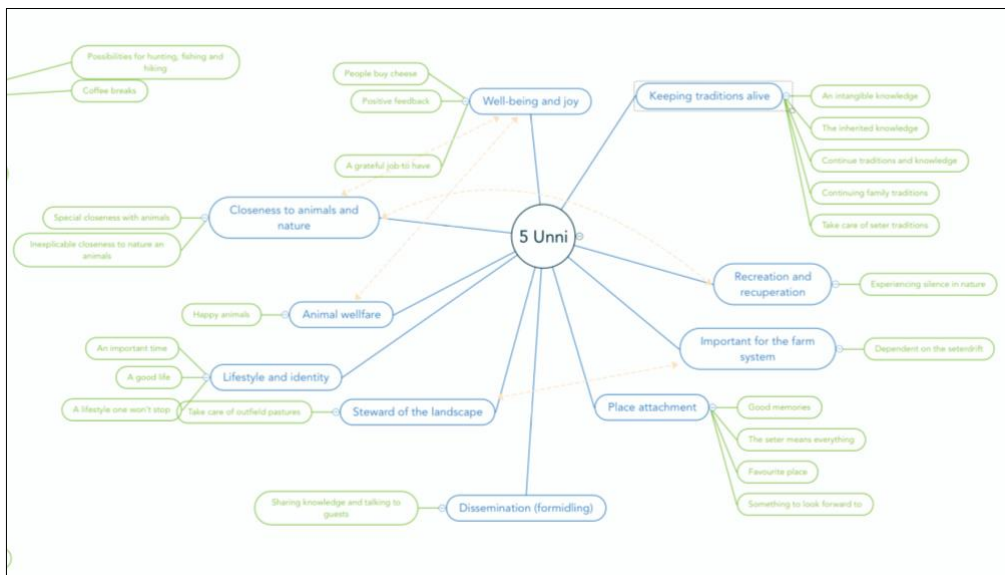


Figure 4: Categories and sub-categories of the farmer Unni before being put together with the rest, as seen in the next figure.

Results

Seven main factors were identified from the analysis of the interviews and describes the attendance factors among 'seter' farmers: Farming system importance, societal values, stewardship of traditions and landscape, lifestyle and work, closeness to livestock and nature, recreation and well-being, and place attachment. In figure 5 these factors are illustrated along with their interconnections.

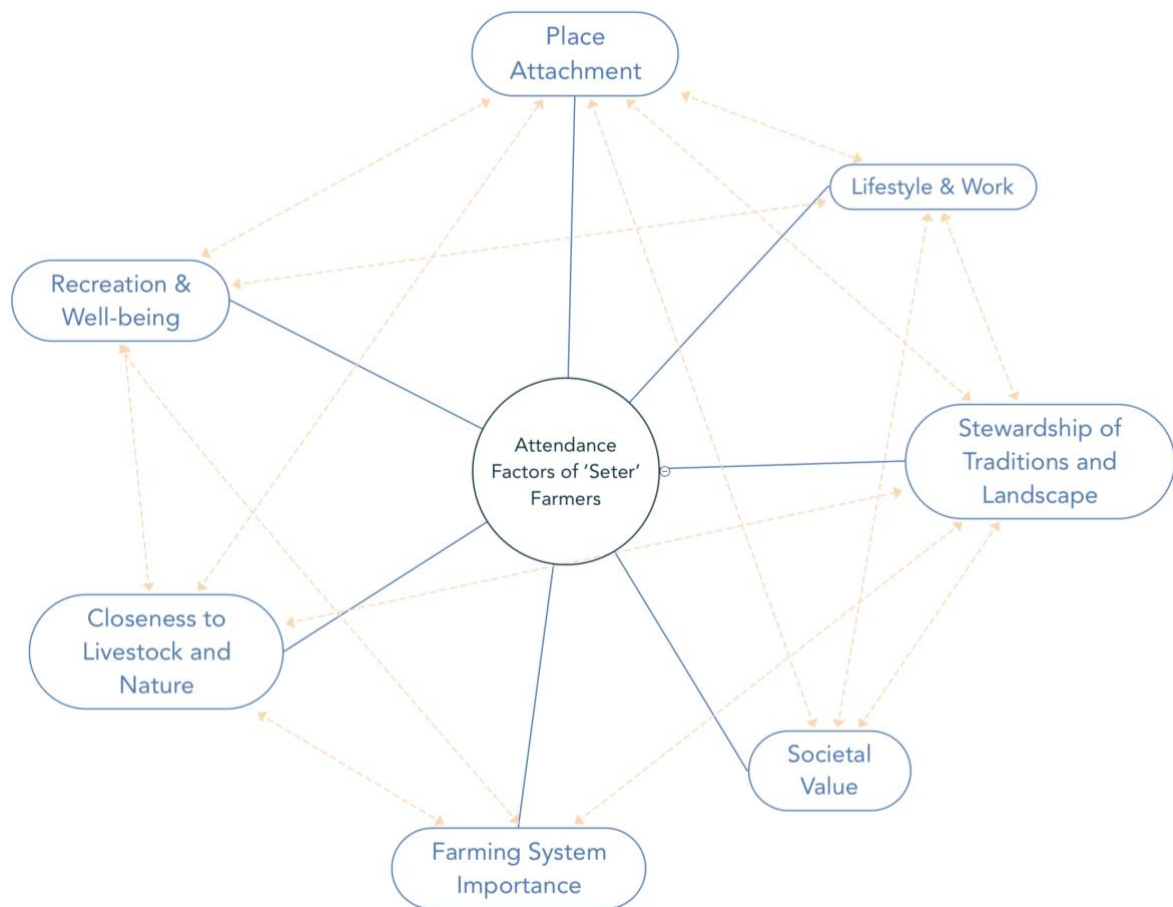


Figure 5: An overview of attendance factors among 'seter' farmers and how they are interconnected.

The factors can be parted in internal and external factors. The internal factors are: Lifestyle and work, closeness to livestock and nature, recreation and well-being, and place attachment. These factors are more important to the farmers emotionally and personally as they concern the farmers' individual experiences and values. The internal factors can work as answers to "What is important for me?". The external factors are; societal value, stewardship of traditions and landscape, and farming system importance. These factors have importance for others, such as society, nature, landscape and farming systems, and answers the

question “what is important for others?”. The factor of farming system importance is an external factor, though it moves to the internal side of the group, as part of it is grounded in farmers own values.

Farming system importance

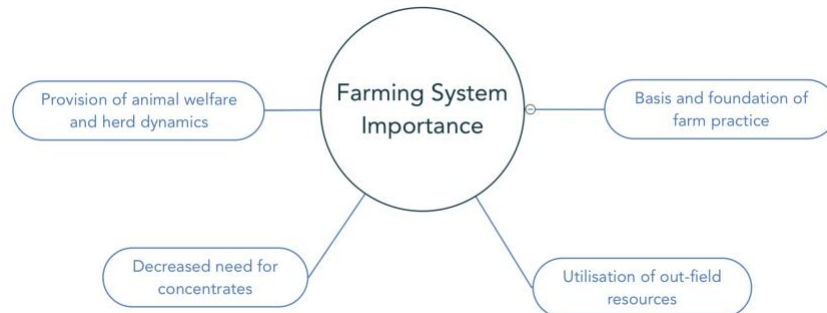


Figure 6: Sub-factors of Farming System Importance

Farmers expressed that the *'seter'* practice plays a significant role in the farming system. The feed resources provided by the *'seter'* practice represents a foundation and basis for the farming operations and the practice of livestock agriculture on the farm. This was emphasised by Agnes:

“It's a very important part of the farm and the way we farm and for the goats. As I said, if we did not have the 'seter', we could not have practiced goat husbandry, because there are no grazing areas here on the farm that are fit for goats”

Many farms have small infield resources, due to small farms sizes and mountainous landscapes. The movement of livestock to out-fields on the *'seter'* is a way to relieve infields on the home farm to be used for grass crop production, for silage or hay making, or other necessary crops. When the infields are limited, the dependence on *'seterdrift'* and out-field resources are crucial for the viability of the current farming practice, and said by Sivert:

“It is an important part of the farming system. We do not have more than 1,7 hectares at home and is not sufficient to provide enough feed for the animals. It is a very nice way, using the out-field areas and to utilise the resources in the mountains, you have to run a type of *'seterdrift'*.”

Farmers pointed out that having the livestock on the home farm required more use of concentrates. The use of out-fields as feed resources therefore enables lower levels of concentrate use, which was valued by farmers, such as Anny:

“When we are here, home on the farm, when the animals are outside during the day and inside during the night, they need more concentrates, but on the *'seter'*, they can find all their food themselves and then we can use less concentrates. That is a plus, it is less expenses and it feels right.”

In addition to appreciate the supply of good feed, farmers value the welfare aspect of grazing on out-field pastures, here the livestock are free to explore, learn and express their instincts. When the livestock move freely in pastures, they can find their own food, learn important abilities that have positive effects on the farming practice. This includes qualities such as being part of a herd and development of species specific instincts.

Several farmers expressed the *'seter'* practice as a more appropriate way of animal husbandry, being in the best interest for the livestock, and they appreciated its positive effect on the livestock as well as the farming practice:

“It is excellent terrain for goats on the *'seter'*, with deciduous forests, pleasant and lush, it is good feed, a fantastic pasture for the goats who loves herbs, leaves and lichens – not that much gras [...], also when they can get their own food in the out-field and choose whatever they like, the meat quality turn out really great.”
- Agnes

Stewardship of Traditions and Landscape



Figure 7: Sub-factors of Stewardship of Traditions and Landscape.

Marie described how being a farmer encompasses a stewardship responsibility as part of her occupation, and was an important factor for continuing her 'seter' practice:

“There's passion and a sort of duty in it, or a stewardship responsibility you feel. That if I don't do it, no one will, and many people will lose a great joy in the landscape, not least myself.”

In such a stewardship lies the preservation of the cultural landscape and this preservation was pointed out by farmers as essential for their grazing resources and farming practice. Their livestock impacts the landscape directly, as their grazing activities prevents regrowth of forest, as well as preserves ecosystem and biodiversity. One farmer expressed the importance of farming on nature's premises and that 'seterdrift' is one way to achieve this.

The farmers also felt responsible for the management of landscape, not only for their farming practice, but for everyone, as Emma expressed:

“I think it is really great, you get a feeling that it is not your place, but that you in a way manage the place, as a farmer and land owner I feel connected to society and in many ways that I manage the place for society. You feel that you are not only running the 'seter', but also the landscape, that you keep the vegetation down and hopefully contribute to water flowing in the streams.”



Figure 8: Young birch trees have been eaten by the goats and cows, nothing but naked sticks are left in the end. An example of the work livestock do to keep the landscape open. (Participant observation). Photo: private.

A highly important part of practicing *'seterdrift'* was the caretaking and continuation of traditions and knowledge. Farmers felt that it was valuable and important to continue what has been passed on from previous generations. For several farmers this was a key factor for continuing the *'seter'* practice.

Farmers that produced cheese and other dairy products on their *'seter'*, said the continuation of the family traditions were highly important for them, and by being tacit knowledge, the traditions are kept alive through practise, which meant much for Anny:

“For me it's both to keep the tradition and share the knowledge, keep the cheese making knowledge alive, and to do that we have to practise it, so that most people possible learn how to make cheese the old way. You can go to cheese making classes, read books, learn on Youtube and all that, but the traditions that are connected to 'seterdrift' and the cheese we make on the 'seter is a handcraft that needs to be learned that way. I have learned it from my husband's parents.”

Another farmer emphasised the value of a participatory approach:

“Learning how to make cheese, you need to train and practice, use all your senses, the ears, the eyes, the mouth, the nose, every sense need to be in it.” - Unni



Figure 9: Learning how to make cheese (here, “pultost”) from a person is a good and valuable way of learning a practical knowledge (participant observation). Photo: private.

Hallvard mentioned that *'seter'* traditions were not important to continue for him: “I have never thought about being a carrier of traditions, not at all, that has not been the goal for me”, but traditions are not exclusively about old cheese making traditions and farming techniques, it is also about continuing a heritage, and he continued later by saying:

“I learned a lot from the old ones and by looking at the animals that it had something to offer, the way they farmed, and if I were to take over the farm anytime, I wanted to do it the same way because I saw that it was good for the people and for the animals”.
– Hallvard

Societal Value

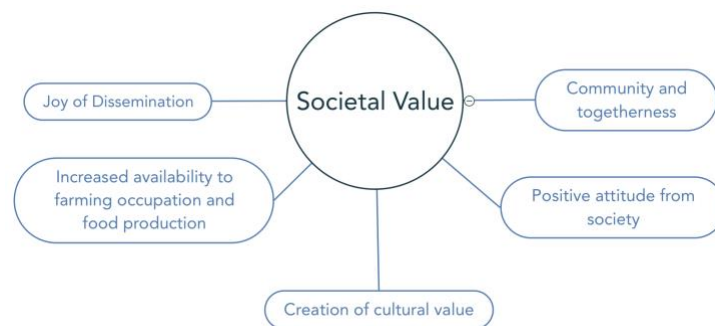


Figure 10: Sub-factors of Societal Value

Sharing the *'seter'* culture was an important part of the work for many farmers, and they appreciated the opportunity to share their seter experiences and culture through-dissemination, Mona expressed:

“The greatest joy is to share with others, show what you have done, in a way [...] It's very nice to share some of our life, but also show the animals, many have not experienced animals much and they appreciate to come here. It's very nice to have an activity that people can experience”

Such dissemination give people a glance into the life on the *'seter'* and a closer look at the farmers occupation, as well as agriculture and food production. This was expressed as meaningful for farmers, among them Anny:

“I think it is important to disseminate (*'formidle'*) the culture of *'seterdrift'*. People get to observe the dairy where we work, I have

made a double door so people can look into the dairy without entering. That is fun. We also give a small tour so people can see into the milking barn and we tell about the milking and the goats. We have a small window into the cheese storage, so they can see all the cheese. Then they get coffee and traditional pancakes. [...] It's part of the point, by doing this, very important. I think you get a completely different view on food production and a greater understanding of all the work behind it and I think it's important that people get an insight into Norwegian agriculture."

With the landscape management there is a preservation of a cultural value for society, and farmers such as Marie put emphasis on this: "You shape the landscape and people see it, even if not everyone reflects on the connections between us and the land, you see that people thrive in the landscape."

Farmers felt that they are met with more interest, positivity and joy on the *'seter'* than home on the farm. Marie pointed out: "It is one of the things you do as a farmer that maybe everyone can experience (as different from the rest). Many are critical towards what farmers do in general, but no-one is against *'seterdrift'*." The positive feedback and attitudes from people are meaningful and create among farmers a feeling of validation:

"When I tell about the life of summer mountain farming to groups and get the feedbacks that says; «This was real!», I have won the lottery. That they have get the feeling that what I say and do comes from the heart and is true, then I have done my job." – Elna

In addition to share culture and food production from the *'seter'*, it is also a place to gather people, and for farmers it was meaningful that people valued spending time on their *'seter'*:

"Doing things together is a great frame for a good experience or a good time together, and that strengthens one's belief that this is the right thing to do. I had three groups of guests on the *seter* this summer. They said it was the best week during their summer vacation. This is when you know it means something and is important to them." – Marie

The spirit of community and togetherness is alive on the *'seter'*, and is a place that people like to visit, people to come to join in on *'dugnad'*⁴ and team work, such as hay harvest, and for Hallvard this social time on the seter was the most meaningful:

“Everyone that joins in on the work there or all the people we meet, it's amazing. We know people from the Czech Republic that have come several times. There are no such places left like this. I have understood that in the last years, that it's special, it's a dying form of work.”

Lifestyle and work

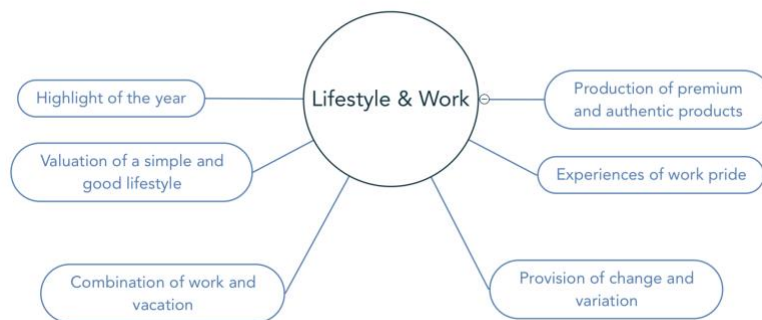


Figure 11: Sub-factors of Lifestyle and Work

Moving the farm practice to another place for a whole season is demanding. It is hard work and long hours, but it is also a highlight of the year for the farmers and expressed by many as a valued lifestyle:

“It's my life for two months of the year, plus the whole autumn when I work with the cheese. It's a lifestyle, not like an office job, it's not my job, but more my life, or it's both. It's wonderful!” – Anny

This time on the *'seter'* is for many farmers valued as a place for family vacation and quality time, and the *'seter'* lifestyle seems to work as a motivation for the farmers and some expressed it like a work-vacation. What generated this vacation feeling, was the variety and change from the home farm, with a smaller range of

⁴ *'Dugnad'* is a Norwegian word and phenomenon. Can be described as communal work or voluntary work often in local communities and on farms, a common meal is often shared after the day's work.

responsibilities and other things to do and experience; Many appreciated the simple life they have on the *seter*, such as Hallvard:

“It is like coming to another world, there is no TV, and the things you talk about is not Trump or politics or anything. That is gone, and what matters is to be fully present in the moment. I do not know how to explain it, [...] It is different when you come out there and it must be experienced.”

Several expressed the practice as one of the most important things you do as a farmer, as it provides services on many different levels for nature, society and the food system. When asked about what farmers were proud of on the *'seter'*, much was connected to work pride, achieved through various work activities and experiences on the *'seter'*. This included providing jobs by hiring *'budeier'*, make a business of it and continue the family heritage, as well as improve buildings and manage the land. For some farmers, work pride seemed to be experienced more on the *'seter'* than home on the farm:

“I am so proud and walk with a straight back when I am on the *'seter'*. The last years as a farmer I walked with my head down, very humble and reticent, but coming to the *'seter'*, my back straightens and I walk proudly. It was two different worlds on how you were looked at from the outside. To be a farmer on your farm, you always had to argue about the price of food and discuss and explain to people, on the *'seter'* it was never like that. Everyone thought it was fantastic that we practiced it and they were happy.”
- Elna

For many farmers, the work pride was presented in their dairy production, Hallvard said: “If you deliver milk from the *'seter'*, it's the finest milk in the world. You will not get better milk than from out-field pastures. As a milk rich in fat and proteins it also gives more money.” A *'seter'* farmer provides a product with a distinctive quality from the practice, characterized by local traditions and customs, expressed with great pride by Elna:

"I think about the white cheese, the *'kyost'*, I don't think many people make the original anymore. Most people make a cheese that is added something to, the *'kyost'* you don't add anything to, it becomes like that on the planks in my cellar, no one in the world the same as mine" – Elna

Such a production is based on local resources and traditions, and was something farmers felt they could stand for in line with their beliefs of a sustainable and proper food production.

Closeness to Livestock and Nature

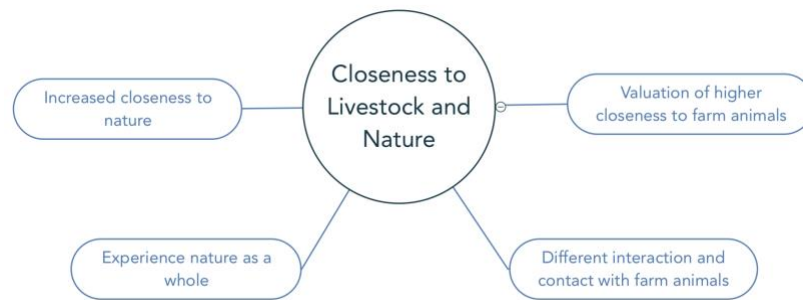


Figure 12: Sub-factors of Closeness to Livestock and Nature

Many farmers said they felt closer to their farm animals on their *'seter'* than home on the farm and for Unni this was cherished:

“When I come to the *'seter'* in the morning and I see the goats standing there and they see my car, they see it as a message that they can come, they come running and wants cuddles and are happy to see me, that means a lot to me, it's my life. [...] To be a *'budeie'* and have that closeness to nature and to the goats, in every way, it is not possible to explain, It is something special. You can ask old *'budeier'* that have been on the *'seter'* for sixty summers, what they look forward to, it is to have that close contact with the animals. It is something very special.”



Figure 13: Experience of closeness with the livestock on the *'seter'*. (participant observation). Photo: private.

This increased interaction strengthens the farmers relationship with their animals. This closeness was created through various interactions with the animals, and for Monica: “The nicest thing I know is to walk with the cows to the *‘seter’*, the feeling of walking first with the eager cows and lead the way, and the joy the cows show when going there. Being allowed to lead the herd, that's very special”.

The farmers pointed out that the animals’ personalities are expressed differently when they move freely in the landscape and interact with each other and nature. For Marie this relationship was different and closer due to the livestock’s greater impact in the daily life than the rest of the year:

“I really appreciate the interaction between people, animals and landscape on the *‘seter’*. Simply because the animals are closer and you have more time and since they are on the out-field pastures they come when they want and you always have to keep in mind what they do. When you go outside and the animals are by the fence they want attention, but at home you have to go inside the barn to meet them. Also, the animals are more present and impacting our lives more because if they are not back in the morning you have to put earth and sky in motion⁵ to find them.”

In addition to the experience closer relationships with the farm animals on the *‘seter’*, farmers also felt a stronger closeness to nature than at home. The *‘seter’* farms are often situated in mountain areas with less infrastructure and societal noise and conditions such as these creates a closer and stronger presence of nature for the farmers. Sivert found much gratitude in this close presence:

“In the mountain there is a fantastic view, in all directions, and every morning to come out when you are on your way to milk the cows, you see the summits and the sun is shining on a mountain and there is shadow on another, the colours change all the time. It's special, it's very emotional and very nice.” – Sivert

⁵ To put “earth and sky in motion” is a Norwegian idiom and means that you will put in all means to find what you are looking for

Recreation and Well-being



Figure 14: Sub-categories of Recreation & Well-being

As mentioned, ‘seter’ farms are situated where nature is more prominent and infrastructure and societal noises minor. Farmers felt gratitude for the peaceful and relaxing environment they find there, as it is a place to unplug and disconnect from external disturbances and societal pressures, providing a different frame for life and work, highly valued by farmers. They also appreciated the independence and feeling of freedom contributed by a smaller area of tasks, less responsibility and more time. Marie said: “it's kind of a childlike freedom, a feeling of freedom that is really strong”. Another farmer expressed this feeling of freedom created from the solitary life:

“Our kids can go free outside and hang with the animals, the feeling of freedom is really big. That you live in the middle of the mountains, that it is just us and the animals, that is really special.”
- Emma

The ‘seter’ practice includes much hard work, a recreational environment meant a great deal for the farmers’ well-being on the ‘seter’. The close presence of nature provided experiences such as berry picking, hiking, swimming in lakes and rivers, fishing and enjoying the landscape, highly valued by farmers. Unni said: “It was hard and tough labour, but good labour, and the good life outweighs the hard work”.

In addition to finding recreation in nature, several farmers mentioned labour activities on the ‘seter’ as a time out and break for their minds, in different ways:

“To milk the cows is my time alone, and with an audiobook to listen to, then I can disconnect. There is no phone reception there, so it is very quiet. I like that milking time very much.” - Monica

Farmers find such recreation and recuperation in small moments during the season on the *'seter'* and these had much significance for the well-being felt there, where coffee breaks was emphasised by several farmers as important. Elna expressed much value in this:

“It is to sit on the steps on the stairs in the mornings and have my coffee before I go to milk the cows, I have a holy half-hour no one dare to interrupt; I wake up and light the fire in the oven, make myself coffee and everyone is absent, that one I need.”

The practice provides much well-being for farmers, and some can be rooted in how well farm animals are thriving on the *'seter'*, as Unni said, “Coming out and see how happy the goats are when we travel to the *'støl'*, they run and know they are going there, it's dancing and jumping, you see the joy in them and then we become happy too”. A different environment created another atmosphere for the farm animals, not solely for farmers, and the positive effect it has on the farm animals induces good emotions on the farmers:

“When they are out in nature and how they express their joy, their sorrow, everything, is completely different than when they are inside. It is two different worlds, and that is what gives so much, when you see how they thrive, it is difficult to explain, but you see their joy is just glowing.” – Agnes

The *'seter'* is experienced as a creator of joy and positivity, and farmers communicated it being a place where you forget all negative emotions.

Place Attachment

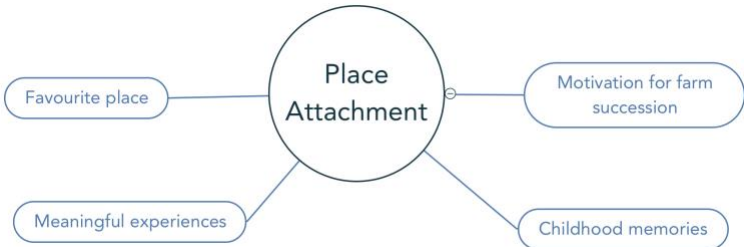


Figure 15: Sub-categories of Place Attachment

The *'seter'* as a place meant a lot to the farmers and they expressed strong emotion when talking about their *'seter'*, with difficulties explaining why, it was found a

deep attachment among all the farmers, both as a place and as a phenomenon, as for Elna:

“I almost shouldn't talk about it, it's where I have to be. To picture a summer where I am not on Fagerdalen (the 'seter'), what in the world should I do then?...I don't have a word for it, but I cannot think of doing something else during summer [...] To sit on the stairs in Fagerdalen and see my mountains, it cannot be better, no, it can't. The whole area is a beautiful area.”

Many farmers had a childhood connection to their *'seter'*, and all memories created through years had great importance for the farmers as part of their attachment and farmers even expressed it being their favourite place:

“To be on the *'støl'*, I don't know how to explain it, it's just good. It feels free and then I get to be on ”Langhusa”, which is my favourite place, because I have so many good childhood memories from there....I can't...this is something many have asked me about many times, but I can't explain it. No, it's just good.” – Unni

The 'seter' had for farmers an important role in the choice of farm succession, and said by emma: “The *'seter'* is, without exaggerating, almost the reason we took over the whole farm, because it's *so* nice to be on the *'seter'*”. Another farmer mentioned how the attachment is rooted strongly in identity:

“I can speak for myself, but also for my sister, and she says she would not have taken over the farm if not for the *'seter'*, she has a lot of her identity connected to it, and I would not have moved back home to the village if not for the attachments I have to the *'seter'*.”
– Marie

Nonetheless, a strong attachment to the *'seter'* was also felt from farmers without a childhood connection, Monica said: “None of us grew up with being on the 'seter', so that we were to become that fond of being on it, we were not prepared for.” Farmers also said the practice was important for feeling an attachment to it as a place, as the place would have a different value without the *'seter'* farm there, and as one farmer said, it was the concept that created an attachment for them, rather than the place itself.

Discussion

The identification of the attendance factors among 'seter' farmers have provided good insight in what connects farmers to their 'seter' practice. The interconnection between the seven factors suggests that the attachment is not created from one factor alone, but rather by the complexity of it. The '*seter*' is an important part of the farming system, where out-fields pastures in local semi-natural grasslands provides feed demanding little financial outputs, compared to the much import based concentrates. Such an approach reduces costs and feels right for the farmers, as they can utilise local resources that otherwise are left unused. However, the practice of '*seterdrift*' offers much more than economics for the farmers as former research stated (Daugstad et al., 2014), and facilitates an environment for thriving and recreation, both in work and leisure.

An important finding of the present study is the identified experience of work pride farmers find on the '*seter*'. This does not dismiss farmers feeling work pride on the home farm, but rather highlight the '*seter*' as a supportive working environment. The practice provides something different for the farmers and they feel they contribute with important and meaningful work in line with their beliefs of what is a good farming practice. Such pride is created through the farmers' care for landscape and traditions, which also take place through their production of dairy products, as such products are rooted in traditions and use of out-field resources. An authenticity and uniqueness is added to these products and it is emphasised by other studies of its premium quality and higher nutritional value (Bele et al., 2018; Matloven, 2019; Ådnøy et al., 2005). A provision of such products increase the value of the farming practice as farmers can provide something different to the food market.

An interesting finding is that farmers said they got purely positive feedback from people when working on the '*seter*', as opposed to the rest of their farming practice. Such appreciation creates for farmers a confirmation of doing something right. The '*seter*' also function as an arena for farmers to share their occupation and work. Through their dissemination of the practice, farmers allow for a reconnection between society and food production to happen, as a disconnection in this relationship is seen today, where people have less contact with how food is produced. A possible explanation for the positive feedback, can be that the '*seter*' is more accessible compared to the home farm, as it is often open for visits and tours. This is rewarding for farmers and further strengthens their feeling of work pride when receiving good feedback from visitors. For visitors, this creates a true experience of authenticity from the '*seter*' culture. Such experience can also be a reason for the appreciation and good feedbacks towards the '*seter*' farmers. Other studies have put emphasis on people's search for nostalgia and authenticity in such landscapes and farming practices (Kianicka et al., 2006). Leisure and recreation in

nature can be part of people's principal reason for visiting the 'seter', and seek out the 'seter' as part of their experience with nature and the landscape. The landscape management from the 'seter' practice care for the authenticity people look for in the landscape, which then can create a positive attitude towards the practice.

The 'seter' is a place where many emotional bonds are created, and another important finding is the increased closeness farmers feel for their farm animals and nature on the 'seter'. This interaction seems to work as a reinforcement for a thriving environment and is suggested as an important contributor to the farmers' attendance in the practice. Further, farmers expressed the importance of their experiences of recreation on the 'seter', such as coffee breaks and during milking time, as well as in the more present nature. Such experiences of recreation have high value for the farmers and is a substantial part of their well-being on the 'seter'. This well-being and good experiences create among the farmers an attachment to the 'seter' and its practice, and seems to outweigh much of the hard labour in the practice, which earlier is established as a main factor for abandonment in the practice (Bunger & Haarsaker, 2020; Fylkesmannen i Hordaland, 2012). It is not ruled out as a cause, being mentioned as important for farmers in this study also, but the good experiences and atmosphere have high value and seem to strengthen the attendance among the farmers. The closer relationship with nature also helped to create a recreational environment and provide other activities for the farmers, that increased feelings of freedom and recuperation. Many of these experiences create what farmers call a *good life* on the 'seter'. Through experiences in nature, interaction with people and livestock, work and leisure, the lifestyle on the 'seter' works as a motivation for the farming practice, and is something to look forward to the rest of the year.

The attachment to the 'seter' as a place is strong among the farmers and this study further supports that farmer's attachment to their land happens through specific experiences more than on childhood memories (Quinn & Halfacre, 2014). Though much of the attachment among farmers is rooted in childhood memories as well as have a role in the choice of farm succession. However, this is not a prerequisite, as not all farmers in the study had their childhood on a 'seter', such as Monica and her husband, a strong connection to the practice existed nonetheless. Thus a stronger attachment to the phenomenon is suggested, rather than the place and landscape. As the farmer Marie said, much of what connects her to the place is the concept and without the experiences connected to the 'seter' the place is *only* a beautiful landscape.

Results in this study also support the idea that farmers find security in the land as well as provide care for the land (Daugstad et al., 2014; Quinn & Halfacre, 2014). Through recreation in the landscape, increased interaction with farm animals and the 'seter' practice provide a secure and supportive environment for the farmers on

a personal level. The stewardship responsibility they feel is also in line with farmers' roles as both landscape managers and food producers (Bele et al., 2018). It is experienced in this study that farmers care much about being landscape managers, and is part of why the practice of *'seterdrift'* is important to continue for them, despite former research proposing farmers are mostly interested in being food producers (Kvakkestad et al., 2015). Farmers in this study found it rewarding to be able to manage the landscape for themselves and for society, and creates a feeling of affiliation and being part of something larger.

Much of the farmers attachment is connected to identity and farmers feel the practice is part of them in their occupation, but also as part of their lifestyle and who they are and what they believe in. This is a practice that for farmers embodies their values and their belief of what is a good farming system.

Methodological strengths and limitations

The methods in this study has opened up for understanding individual values and experiences among the *'seter'* farmers. As the data came directly from the source, there is However, through the analysis interpretations of the data much is based on the researchers understanding and comprehension of the content, therefore a different results might have come out from the same data if done by another researcher. Also, much of the unsaid, such as emotions and tone in the voice was of importance as it gave additional information about what was stated by the person.

My former experience with *'seterdrift'* and participant observation opened up for digging deep into the phenomenon. It helped creating a broad understanding that was positive to have when formulating interview questions and topics. However, this personal attachment may have coloured some of my attitude towards the practice as well as farmers' experiences. Allowing for agreeing and bonding over a common interest during interviews, this lead to some extent to understanding more than what was said, making some statements lack explanations and words that was important during analysis of the transcripts.

The data collection relied on semi-structured interviews conducted in the farmers occupational and home environment. The environment as part of the interview was understood as important when two interviews were done over video-call. The interviews on the farms provided a homely environment, providing extra information from things in the room or unexpected events, such as an arriving ox. The interviews on the farm also felt more like a conversation, whereas the video-call felt more like an interview and resulted in less spontaneous questions as well as feeling more rushed. However, video-call allowed for reaching out to otherwise unreachable farmers due to the ongoing pandemic.

It could also be argued further that my choice of 10 farmers for this study did not provide a large enough diversity of *'seter'* farmers. However, it did provide much data as well as an understanding of farmers' factors of attendance in *'seterdrift'*. Though the study covered to some extent a good amount geographical area, what is seen in the aftermath is that it would be interesting with higher number of farmers from outside the "epicentre" of *'seterdrift'*; Valdres and the surrounding areas. Areas such as north of Trondheim and south in the country could have provided other factors and reflections from farmers, as the practice is rarer there.

Conclusion

Few studies have investigated *'seter'* farmers relationships to their *'seter'* practice (Daugstad et al., 2014). The present study expose that more focus is needed on the individual levels in the phenomenon of *'seterdrift'*. As the aim of this study was to identify the attendance factors among *'seter'* farmers in Norway, by listening to the farmers it is understood that the *'seter'* is for many a place of high personal value where important experiences is created. They have made it clear that the *'seter'* indeed is not an outdated practice and only hard work but has much well-being and great experiences connected to it. This motivate the farmers, as such experiences are lesser from the rest of the farming practice.

The seven identified attendance factors have provided information explaining what is important in *'seterdrift'* for farmers personally. Through their stewardship of traditions and landscape and production of high quality milk products farmers show their care for both being food producers and managers of the landscape, agreeing with former studies (Bele et al., 2018). The study emphasises the importance of continuing the traditions and culture of *'seterdrift'*, as the traditions are important to practice to be kept alive (Tunon et al., 2019), farmers find much value in this, as well as work pride. The *'seter'* practice allows for farmers to have the farming practice they want; based on local resources from the out-fields and provide welfare for the farm animals. The time on the *'seter'* giver room for more interaction with the farm animals, creating a closer relationship, highly valued by farmers. The farmers have a chance to disseminate their occupation, food production and *'seter'* culture to people, that for farmers give validation and the feeling of doing important work. This interaction and sharing with people, makes *'seter'* a place for learning and can function as a way to reconnect what today is seen as a more disconnected relationship from society to food production and agriculture.

Farmers connect with their *'seter'* farms in somewhat similar ways as farmers connect with their main farm, through specific experiences (Quinn & Halfacre,

2014), but this study suggests an even stronger connection develops to the *'seter'*, as there are experiences the *'seter'* provides that the main farm does not. The *'seter'* practice seems to increase everything rooted in their farming practice and creates interactions and experiences farmers do not have anywhere else.

Further study could assess the consumers and tourists and how their attachment is around *'seterdrift'* and transhumance. Looking into their attitude towards food quality from these practices. Also, investigating how consumers can have better understanding and respect for farmers occupation and the work of producing food, by looking into the accessibility of *'seter'* farms and how people interact with them. More important, further research should look into how the attendance factors as well as place attachment can impact when next generation make the choice of farm succession. As much lies in the next generation if a further decline in *'seterdrift'* is to be prevented.

In conclusion, what can be said is that the *'seter'* provides important values for farmers, and still confirms that the practice provides great values for society and nature. The *'seter'* farmers' work of dissemination shows many possibilities when it comes to changing society's relationship with agriculture and food production in general. The attendance in the practice of *'seterdrift'* is based on much more than the important role the *'seter'* has in the farming system and for the farmers the *'seter'* creates work pride and function as a positive and motivating part of in their farming practice. The place creates an environment of well-being and thriving for farmers, as well as the livestock. For farmers the *'seter'* is part of their identity and is also in line with their beliefs of what is a good farming practice.

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Appendix 1 – Rich picture

A rich picture is a beginning point on the way to tackle a messy situation. As presented by Armson (2011), rich pictures “...attempt to capture everything you know about the messy situation without imposing any structure or analysis” (p.57). Being is a representation of the situation you are experiencing and includes also feelings and prejudices in addition to people, ideas, observations and connections (Armson, 2011).

From my participant observation, I drew a rich picture (figure 16, page iii) presenting everything I experienced, observed and felt during my observation period. The rich picture felt as a way I could get down all my experiences and see their connections and how all things have a part in the system. Without being systemised.

In the middle, the '*seter*' farm house is represented. Being an important part of the farm and the time there. This is where we slept, cooked, washed the dishes and made cheese, churned butter and separated the milk. It was also situated in the middle of the in-fields. The chimney is smoking, the only heating and source of energy for production is fire wood.

The hammer means that there is a lot of fixing and maintenance everywhere on the farm and during the time there. All the question marks are there because we had so many questions of what to do with things, how to fix a problem, how can we create a beautiful and functional '*seter*'? The light bulb comes in as many ideas are sprouting and brainstorming about what we can do on the farm and that we find good solutions to problems in the end. The money flying away is due to a lot of financial input into the farm, as it had been standing unused for 30 years, new investments had to be done everywhere.

The bacteria, seen on the left side of the house, are in a daily focus. An important factor to take into account when handling milk. At all times. Good fermentation bacteria but also bad bacteria, such as E.coli.

The eyes in the forest and the bucket emptied with the saying; "pass opp!" is symbolising the folklore still existing in the mountain farming community and on the mountain farm. There is a certain type of respect that comes with being on the mountain farms. This is respect for nature and creatures that will help you if you respect them. Small pranks and things may happen if you don't respect the courtesies.

The hen eating worm from the cow's faeces, is a sign of everything being connected and part of the system. The flies lays eggs in the muck, these are eaten by the hens, helping us to keep the level liveable as well as them getting.

The spade symbolises the volunteers joined and helped out. We do things together, and people from the "outside" wants to join in. Also creating a social community on the farm. It's its own social environment. Closer. You really get to know each other on the '*seter*'.

Nature is everywhere and close, seen as the branches, trees, flowers and birds. The mountain farm is taken over by nature, kind of melting in to it. This is also that there is so much you learn about the local flora and fauna and the local eco-systems when you live there. Trees and mountains symbolises that one is living in nature and have a closeness to nature on the '*seter*'. See the changes in nature and see the effect the animals have on nature. The herb and the branches become less and less leaves on as we get closer to the animals and production, this symbolises that the animals are eating away the regrowth and opening up the landscape again.

The water pipe: Getting water/water source directly into the cabin was a big moment. Water is the most important source, for hygiene, washing, cheese making, drinking etc. Getting water from the well was something you dread, so much work. Through this I learnt to appreciate water more. When the pipes was installed into the cabin, I have never felt such luxury and joy.

Bad reception and no internet, gives a break from society, being of the grid and the simple life creates a different atmosphere and clear mind. The radio was my only entertainment and

contact with the outer world. During the times I was alone, the NRK classic and jazz channel were listened to a lot during the day.

The clock is showing that time is not existing, you live throughout the day without thinking of time. Except for when you make cheese, time is then crucial, apparently. The only element that have a time is when the cows are being milked.

The arm flexing and the sore hands from milking by hand represents the hard work and physical labour that is experienced there every day. Though being hard, it's also rewarding, being a job that demands little thinking, it works as a pause, relieving worries and stress. The book symbolises the '*seter*' being an arena for learning. Learning about nature, farming, milk production, traditions and history. Also, sharing knowledge is part of this, sharing what we know to each other, being a good way of learning.

Appendix 2 – Reflection notes

These are excerpts from the reflection diary.

Plants are blooming and withering, new species blooms and withers. Blueberries ripens and are getting sweeter every day. Seeing how things grow, when they mature and when they wither. There is a greater closeness to nature and animals and the interactions between them and us.- July 2020

Producing your own cheese and yoghurt is very educational and valuable. You have the whole food chain from grass → milk → processing → to a product all in the same system; the 'seter'. Local commodities on local resources. Also we learn from each other here. Lea taught me to make cream cheese and cordial from birch leaves. I see the value of having the knowledge of producing from local resources like wild plants and herbs. – 13th of July, 2020

I learn to know the animals more and more every day. I understand more of how they use the landscape in their grazing. The goats work effectively on the small birches, they stand like ribbed birds some places. Some are all eaten. I see they like a varied diet. The chickens or the goats does not like to be outside in the rain at all. – 15th of July, 2020

This is a lifestyle, if only for a season you live here and the daily life is to be here and do what belongs. It's a quiet life, away from hustle and bustle. The days are moving forward and you only need to think about what's happening here and now – August 2020.

What is good about 'seterdrift' is that you use the outfields for food, keep alive the cultural landscape, keep traditions alive and brings food production closer to people (if people can visit your 'seter'). You are closer to nature and you are farming more on its premises. You learn things you wouldn't have other places, like making the dairy products from the area and see how nature and animals interact. You keep alive an important tradition and historical food traditions with the practice. – August, 2020

You can learn a lot about the animals by observing them and be together with them. When you have fewer animals, it is easier to get to know them and give them attention. It is cool than one can become “friends” with cows, and see their strong personalities. Ronja has is more “wild”, young and fierce, she will suddenly come running for the bucket with concentrate, she is also a bit bossy. Dagros is more like an old lady, slow and thoughtful, but suddenly she shows a more bossy side, but she loves to cuddle and enjoys company. Edelweiss is very shy and childlike, she will suddenly jump up and down and run down a small hill, just for fun. She is also very determined on where she is going, and likes to do her own thing.

It’s quite nice, even if you have a lot to do, time is not relevant, there is no pressure from time here. I think work is less tedious, you only do what you can, a new day will always arrive. You learn that you have all the time, you appreciate not being dependent on lime, the only fixed is milking, but that just gets the day started in the morning. – 13th of August, 2020

Appendix 3 – Multi-perspective analysis

After participant observation I did a multi-perspective analysis of the phenomenon of *'seterdrift'* in Norway, see figure 17. Looking at it from the perspectives of history, social/human, modern v. older times, economy and environment. This was to understand more of the system and structure components and issues connected to it.

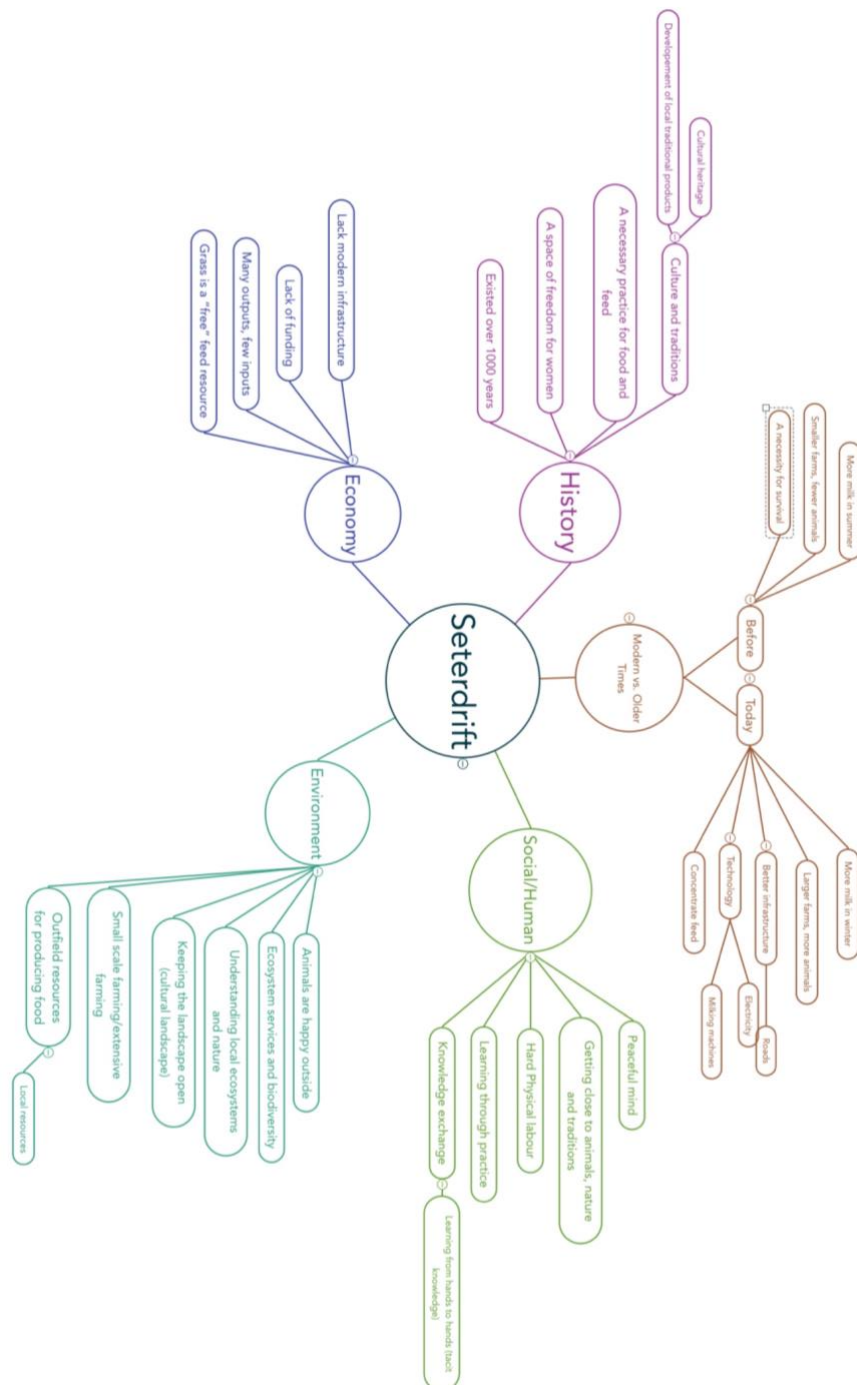


Figure 17: The multi-perspective analysis made after the participant observation.

Appendix 4 – Interview guide

Table 5: The interview guide (in Norwegian)

Forskingsspørsmål	Del-forskings-spørsmål	Tematiske kategoriar	Intervjuspørsmål	Oppfølgings-spørsmål		
Bakgrunnsinformasjon	Kva er historia til setra?	Historia til setra	Kan du fortelje litt om setra di? Historia	Kor lenge har de drive setra?		
			Kan du fortelje om området setra ligg i?			
		Seterdrifta <i>Kva skjer på setra?</i>	Kor lenge varar setersesongen?			
			Kven er på setra i sesongen?	Leiger de arbeidskraft utanfrå?		
			Kva produserer de?	Er familien aktiv i seterdrifta?		
			Fortel korleis ein «vanleg» dag på setra foregår?			
		Setra si rolle <i>Kva er rolla til seterdrifta i gardssystemet?</i>	Korleis påverkar seterdrifta resten av gardsdrifta?			
			Kva økonomiske støtte får de til seterdrifta?	Kor viktig er dette for drifta av setra?		
		Kva er «nærværsfaktorane» hjå seterbrukarar?	Korleis påverkar tilknyttinga til setra som stad valet i å drive?	Tilknytting til setra som stad	Kva betyr setra di for deg?	Kvifor er det viktig for deg at setra drivast?
					Opplev du livet på setra annleis enn heime?	Korleis er dette annleis enn elles?
Tilknytting til miljøet rundt setra	Kva er ditt forhold til området setra ligg i?			Trur du dette har innverknad på kvifor du vel å fortsetje seterdrifta?		
				Kva innverknader då?		
Sosial tilknytting til staden	Korleis opplever du sosiale livet på setra?			Korleis er dette i forhold til heime? (Er det annleis?)		
	Korleis tenkjer du dette har innverknad i valet ditt om å fortsetje å drive seter?					
Prestasjonar <i>Kva er seterbrukarar stolte</i>	Kva er du mest stolt over å ha fått til på setra?			Kvifor er du stolt av dette?		

	ved eiga seterdrift?	<i>over å ha oppnådd på setra si?</i>	Kan du hugse at du opplevde ei kjensle av mestring når du arbeidde på setra?	Kan du fortelje om dette Gir dette deg motivasjon til å fortsetje seterdrifta?
		Fysiske og emosjonelle faktorar	Kva set du mest pris på ved å drive seter?	
			Når du no etter ein setersesong tenkjer tilbake til tida på setra, kva er det du tenkjer på?	
			Kan du fortelje om opplevingar eller augeblikk på setra som gjorde deg glad?	Hugsar du kva det var som førte til dette? (Kan du hugse kva spesifikt som gjorde at du vart glad?)
	Om ein tenkjer framover, kva ser du fram til med å vere på setra att til			
	Kva tenkjer seterbrukarane om framtida for setra si?	Visjonar for framtida	Korleis ser du for deg setra di 10 år fram i tid?	
			Kva er det største ønsket du har for seterdrifta di for framtida? Korleis ønskjer du at setra di skal utvikle seg?	



Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Noregs miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Postboks 5003
NO-1432 Ås
Norway