

# ATT VARA MATPRODUCENT I JOKKMOKKS KOMMUN



## En rapport av Strukturm och Jokkmokk Matlandethuvudstad

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## SUMMARY

The town of Jokkmokk was selected as Sweden's 2014 *Matlandethuvudstad*, or Culinary Capital, by the Swedish government. Because of this honor, we chose to develop a study of food producers in Jokkmokks Kommun in order to understand their realities, aspirations, and challenges. Over forty interviews were conducted with local food producers, ranging from chefs, butchers and makers of jam to reindeer herders, mushroom and milk experts, berry pickers and fishermen.

We found that nearly all of those working with food chose their line of work because of passion: their passion for flavors and tastes, their passion for meeting and serving customers, their passion for being in the woods, on the lakes, or in the reindeer corral, or their passion to be a part of a cultural and familial practice. They chose this livelihood in order to make a living doing work they found meaningful. Many of them work other jobs in order to support themselves, but they consistently return to work with food. They express pleasure to be a part of Jokkmokk and its reputation as a clean and natural area, and they express pride, frustration and relief that they often work as their own boss, that they control their labor.

Many diverse challenges face these food producers. The most common include difficulties in getting financial support and loans, labor costs, shipping products, and reaching and attracting customers due to Jokkmokk's isolation. The more difficult to address challenges include the potential of a mine, which many perceive as a threat to Jokkmokk's reputation and landbase, and the perception that leaders are *hemmablind* and lack creative responses to contemporary issues facing Jokkmokk. As a researcher, an unmentioned challenge is the lines that are drawn and networks that are formed between people based on where they are from originally. Building an inclusive local food system and environment will require reaching out personally to everyone, *everyone*, who works with food and seeking to understand how they actually work with food.

Those working with food hope that Jokkmokk will continue to grow as a food destination and that other entrepreneurs will develop new products and new food tourism. With this growth and association of the name Jokkmokk with local foods, they hope that more businesses can stay open during the evening and weekend hours to meet the growing demand of new tourists.

They also hope that Jokkmokks kommun will consider purchasing local foods. Many, many food producers expressed this interest, and they especially wanted freshly-prepared and local foods served to school children. They understand the challenges of this demand, and they hope the kommun will look to other kommuns such as Åre for guidance.

This report is a collaboration between myself, Amanda Green, a doctoral student in Applied Anthropology at Oregon State University, Victoria Harnesk, the director of Jokkmokk Matlandethuvudstad, and Strukturum and its staff. Any mistakes or misrepresentations are my own. I was not able to reach and speak with many food produce. I welcome feedback and criticism in order to strengthen the content and direction of this report. I am very grateful to everyone who spoke with me.

Thank you,

Amanda S. Green

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## INTRODUCTION

Jokkmokk var året 2014 Matlandethuvudstad och därför bestämde vi oss att göra ett forskningsprojekt inom mat. År 2008 lanserade Landsbygdsdepartementet Sverige: det nya matlandet. Målet var att skapa fler jobb, öka exporten, och hållbar tillväxt runt omkring mat med fem olika fokusområden vilket inkluderar: primärproduktion, offentlig mat, förädlad mat, restauranger, och matturism. Målet av vårt projekt har varit att samla in information som kan användas av entreprenörer och kommunstyrelsen. Vi hoppas med detta att de kan förbättra matkulturen i Jokkmokk.

Vi beslutade oss för två forskningsmål. Först ville vi identifiera vilka resurser som fanns i kommunen. Vilka företag, privatpersoner och föreningar finns det som jobbar med mat? Vilka nätverk och samarbeten finns det mellan dem? Vilka primärprodukter finns? Sedan ville vi veta hur det är för matproducenterna. Vilka utmaningar och möjligheter finns?

Modellen vi använde i studien är baserad på en process som används i USA nuförtiden. Den kallas för Community Food Assessment. Det är en bra process för att starta en diskussion om livsmedelssystemet i en kommun.



Figure 1 Rapadalen in Sarek National Park

Målet med en Community Food Assessment är att berätta historien om ett samhälle eller område, och att engagera de som jobbar i området, att de också berättar historien. Resultatet är en rapport som redovisar både siffrorna om produktion och konsumtion tillsammans med upplevelser av matproducenterna och konsumenterna.

Huvudsyftet med forskning är att när man tittar på en kommuns livsmedelssystem går

man in på ett positivt sätt och inte ett negativt sätt. Dvs. att man letar efter resurser som redan finns och inte bara pratar om brister eller behov. Man letar efter en lösning i själva kommunen istället för utanför kommunen.

Amanda Green har intervjuat 41 personer. De kommer från olika platser men alla bor i Jokkmokks kommun nu. Det inkluderar människor med rötter i det samiska, svenska, thailändska, tyska, holländska, och iranska samhällena. Den inkluderar 14 män och 27 kvinnor. För mer än hälften, nästan 75 procent, var de ägare av sina egna företag. För hälften av hela gruppen är detta deras primära inkomst. Nästan alla håller med att man inte blir rik från dessa jobb men det var aldrig deras mål, vilket vi kommer att visa inom rapporten.

## THEMES

### WHAT IS GOOD WITHIN JOKKMOKK'S FOOD SYSTEM

"The name Jokkmokk is great!" Nearly everyone mentioned that the name Jokkmokk, and its association with clean water, land, plants and animals, was a positive part of their business. Many also agreed that Jokkmokk is *actually* clean, with water you can drink straight from the mountains, animals grazing on wild pasture, fish from clean lakes and rivers, and berries and plants from clean forests. Jokkmokk's wild food resources and tastes also inspire the work of many food producers.

Politically, many people found it easy to find and approach the appropriate people if and when they needed help. "Jokkmokk är inte så stort så det är bättre. Vill jag ha kontakt så kan jag. Vi är nära beslutsfattare, utvecklings kontoret, fastighetsansvariga." Others found that Strukturum was a very helpful organization, and the majority of food producers had received some sort of assistance from them such as networking, consulting or workshop help, though many had not, an issue that is discussed in each sector. Finally, many found that it was easy to live in Jokkmokk with a smaller income because it is less expensive to live in Jokkmokk.



Figure 2 Holiday Market in central Jokkmokk

Many of those who work with food have chosen this field because it gives them a flexible schedule and allows them to be creative. One person commented that running her business is difficult, however "Från ett långt perspektiv har företagen gjort mig mer kreativ. När jag var anställd fanns det dem som ledde mig. Men nu måste man vara uppfinningsrik, rådig, och självsäker." Another person who had previously worked in government commented, "Jag har jobbat innan Kommunen och det går till så här: Bara snurra, runt och runt. Det är som ett års cirkel och varje år måste man börja om från början.

Och även om du jobbar mer så blir det ändå samma resultat. Jobbar du mindre, då blir det inte heller någon ändring. Nu är det en utmaning, lite tävling mot sig själv. Du bestämmer själv. Det finns ingen chef."

***"Från ett långt perspektiv har företagen gjort mig mer kreativ. När jag var anställd fanns det dem som ledde mig. Men nu måste man vara uppfinningsrik, rådig, och självsäker."***



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## WHAT INSPIRES THEM?

Everyone has different reasons they choose to work with food. Nearly everyone stated that they work for the income, even if it is small. Some describe their work as a hobby, but it is so much more than a hobby. All of those who work with food express a passion for their work, whether because they love the region, the land and its resources, or they enjoy controlling their own labor. Listen to their voices as they describe the reasons they choose to work with food:

- ❖ *Jag blev inspirerad av mormor och har alltid ville jobba som kock*
- ❖ *Jag ser hur bra råvaror det finns i Jokkmokk och vill ändra livet lite och göra någonting annat*
- ❖ *Jag är uppvuxen med det. Det är viktigt att ta reda på vad som finns*
- ❖ *Jag vill bara samla! Det bor i mig att göra det*
- ❖ *Jag plockar för friskvård*
- ❖ *Jag gör det för att mina föräldrar har gjort det och jag vill fortsätta med traditionen*
- ❖ *Jag vill skapa ett jobb för mina barn, någonting för dem så att de kan stanna i Jokkmokk*
- ❖ *Att vara ute med renarna är allt jag vill göra*
- ❖ *Jag plockar för jag vill vara ute i naturen, i skogen*
- ❖ *Jag vill att de ska vara en konkurrens för dem som redan köper bär. Jag tyckte det var inte rätt att någon kunde tacka nej till min produkt. Jag hade ingen annan stans att sälja på!.*
- ❖ *Det känns bra att vara kapabel att leva i Jokkmokk och skapa sitt eget jobb*
- ❖ *Vi behövde lite mer när vi fick barn*
- ❖ *Jag bestämmer själv. Det finns ingen chef eller jag är chefen och jag kan tävla med mig själv och se förändringarna*
- ❖ *Jag tycker om att dela mina kunskaper med restauranger, med renägare.*
- ❖ *Jag vill sprida kunskap till alla, om Jokkmokk, om bär, om växter, om skogen.*
- ❖ *Jag ser mig själv som en kultur bärare.*
- ❖ *Det är så roligt! Jag fantiserar vad jag ska baka. Jag längtar efter att vakna på morgonen för att börja någonting nytt. Naturen har så mycket!*
- ❖ *Jag tycker det är roligt att vara själv på sjön. Och jag klarar mig inte på renkött*

## MAJOR CHALLENGES

Food producers are happy to work in Jokkmokk, but they face many challenges due to the remoteness of the location, the lack of external funding, and the potential threats of land loss in the region. Below are the common challenges that food producers brought up in interviews.

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## LOSS OF LAND TO MINING

The response to a possible mine in Jokkmokk were diverse. Some food producers thought a mine would increase the population which would in turn increase the number of customers and assist their business. Those few who supported the mine were concerned that Jokkmokk was emptying of people and they hoped that a mine could allow more youth to stay. More food producers did not support a mine. They believed the number of customers could increase, but they also did not wish for a mine to develop. The reasons they listed were: 1) the environmental consequences to the land; 2) the reduction in land that is



needed for food production; 3) disbelief that a mine would bring more inhabitants and customers; and 4) damage to the image of Jokkmokk as a clean and natural area.

***"What we sell is clean land, clean water. You can destroy that also. It's a label, a varumark, that you should care about. It takes 100 years to bring land back from a mine, or longer."***

A local butcher worried that they would have more customers but less productive land. "A mine, it's practical. There will be more people, maybe 20,000 more people. We'll sell more reindeer meat. Sweden's free lands are shrinking for everything, moose, reindeer, and so the open lands shrink. How does it help us if we have more customers but no raw materials, no ingredients? The smaller the land we have, the smaller reindeer herding will be. There are so many around the reindeer herding who would also be impacted."

A local food educator stated, "I want people to look at this fabulous area and how I use the food and wild herbs as a new connection. I have a big belief that we have so much value in our land that is destroyed by the forest and mining industries. They destroy this living thing. I wonder, what if you knew that there were things in your forest worth thousands of kronor? Would you use those things before you cut the forest down?"

Another butcher remained skeptical of a mining industry. "Maybe a mine will increase the number of restaurants, the number of people. But is it worth it? Maybe my children can work in the mine, but can we survive without it? Is it a mine or fish in Sapmi? There are other things one can focus on. Increase tourism."

Food producers understood the importance of development to the region, however, they were largely advocates of alternative forms of development, from tourism to further food production. They advocated finding alternative values in forested lands before they are logged or considering the renewable value of a fishing industry over a mining industry.



Figure 3 Akka in Stora Sjöfallet / Stuur Muorkke National Park

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## HEMMABLIND: A FAILURE OF IMAGINATION

Many food producers hinted that there was little imagination in Jokkmokk when it came to alternative industries to natural resource extraction such as mining, timber and hydropower. Many of these individuals believed that more businesses like their own would be the best way forward for Jokkmokk.

Many stated that people in Jokkmokk could be *hemmablind*, or blind to the values in front of them. One person criticized, "Kommunen tror att ett riktigt jobb är ett jobb som är destruktiv och som förstör. De

ser inte på matlagning, naturturism som riktiga jobb. Man är hemmablind. De tänker inte på hur vi kan skydda naturen och kulturen här och det är tråkig.”

A food producer who recently relocated to Jokkmokk agreed, “In Jokkmokk the kommun has a group for organizing, but it only wants mining. But it is tourism that can work in Jokkmokk. We have a great opportunity here. We can see it from the outside. It’s a local blindness. They are blind that they have a multibillion dollar tourism industry to tap into. People who are working in the kommun don’t know how to sell it. They can talk about Jokkmokk Winter Market all they like, but you can’t wait 408 years for the next big thing to happen here.”

***“We have a great opportunity here. We can see it from the outside. It’s a local blindness. They are blind that they have a multibillion dollar tourism industry to tap into.”***

Another producer advocated for many small businesses. “I think for Jokkmokk, I see the value in many small entrepreneurs rather than one big industry. That is where we are now. Vattenfall and the forest industries have been here historically and left. Now there is much more value to have many small companies than a big one that takes money away from Jokkmokk. They don’t live here. Some might work here. But it’s not a profit for us. I think the Kommun is building a luftslot, a castle of air, when they think a big company is a solution.”



Figure 4 Kvikkjokk Delta at Tarra River

This same person continues, “Small companies, cooperating together is equal to one big industry. Together, those working with food, with knowledge/IT, with experiences and tourism, can work together. There can be many of us who use the area without making big holes or gaps. There are ways

forward. It takes longer and it’s not as much money. But they want big money and fast. And we are a very poor Kommun. So I understand why they want big money, fast.”

***“Small companies, cooperating together is equal to one big industry. Together, those working with food, with knowledge/IT, with experiences and tourism, can work together. There can be many of us who use the area without making big holes or gaps. There are ways forward. It takes longer and it’s not as much money.”***

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## STARTING A BUSINESS

Getting start-up money was difficult for many individuals, and they emphasized that it was important to persevere, to not give up, when the banks first said no. "We thought it would be easy in the beginning because we have a lot of friends, and we thought, okay, they'll help us. And we went in there, and we said, okay, well we think we might need this and this. And we came out without very much money. Then we sat down with someone who is more of an expert. And she said, no, you don't *think* you need this, YOU NEED THIS. So we marched into that meeting the next time, and we had written up everything we needed to start this, including the renovations and the machines. And we said, we need this and this and this. And we came out much better the next time. So if you get no the first time, go back. Go back and ask again."

Another person who works with animals explained, "It's difficult to get money, and farming costs money. It costs a lot and has very little profit. There are no shortcuts. If you need a machine, you have to buy that machine. If Jokkmokk wants more primary production, they will have to be more active in supporting with money or leases to those who want to produce."

***"If you get no the first time, go back. Go back and ask again."***

These individuals point to two issues. First, those interested in developing a small food business must not take no for an answer, and they will likely be told "no" when they first ask for financial assistance. Second, a discussion may need to occur between banks, kommun officials, and small businesses regarding the need for financial assistance for new food entrepreneurs.

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## SHIPPING PRODUCTS

For nearly everyone who produced goods such as reindeer meat, jams, cheese etc., they shipped much of their product to other parts of Sweden. The cost and logistics of shipping are a major challenge because of Jokkmokk's location. Some producers choose to make customers pay for the cost of shipping, while others do not. It may be useful to have a discussion of the best ways to ship products to other parts of Sweden and the EU and if cooperation between businesses is a possibility.

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## MARKETING AND CONSULTING

Some food producers believed they still need some help to grow their businesses. Some suggested simply having a mentorship program would help where they could be connected with someone who could guide them through bureaucracy. Others stated they needed help and encouragement to use social media such as Twitter, Facebook and other formats for story-telling.

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## DESTINATION JOKKMOKK

Many smaller and seasonal businesses were frustrated with Jokkmokk's tourism office. They believed their business was too small to pay for a membership. One person stated, "Jag vill att Turist Byrån är öppen för alla, att man inte behöver betala för att bli med Destination Jokkmokk. Jag skulle behöva stå i butiken en hel månad för att betala för den [avgiften]. De glömmar bort små företag, de som kanske är

öppna bara några månader varje år.” Others expressed satisfaction with Destination Jokkmokk, particularly in 2014, as they found more tourists were coming to their businesses.

## CHANGES FOOD PRODUCERS HOPE FOR

### GROWING JOKKMOKK'S FOOD REPUTATION

Many individuals hoped there would be more food producers and local products to create more of a name for Jokkmokk. They also believed more tourists throughout the year would help (though they



Figure 5 Cloudbberries gathered along the Padjelantaleden

didn't want thousands and thousands of tourists). One producer suggested, "This is an exclusive area, with many resources. You can export that exclusive feeling with products, with food and handicrafts in a more organized way than what we do now." Others also hoped that a network of food producers could develop in order to advertise and work together.

### ATTRACTING TOURISTS

A major challenge to strengthening tourism is keeping businesses open during the weekend and having enough customers to make remaining open worth it. One boutique owner commented, "Jokkmokk, de kan leva på namnet men det är stängt överallt på helgerna. Det är bara vi som är öppna lördag och söndag. Min man säger att Jokkmokk älskar att vara stängt. För Jokkmokk är det bara Jokkmokks Marknad som existerar."

One suggestion is to move businesses outdoors during the summer months, like the town of Arvidsjaur. Another suggestion is to organize some sort of outdoor food event during the summer, where everyone who works with food could sell: "There could be live music. I think we need to

liven up the center of town. It's so sad when it's so dead. We need more places to meet and socialize."

Many agreed that a sign on the roundabout in Jokkmokk on E45 that indicated the local food producers and locations would be very helpful. The sign could also say that Jokkmokk was the 2014 Matlandethuvudstad. A Vuollerim producer noted that the signs in Vuollerim are outdated, and one sign is empty and impossible to reach. They hoped that the kommun would consider updating those signs.





Figure 6 Coffee prepared at Matlandet Conference.

## MORE AFFORDABLE AND LENIENT PERMITS

One person involved in organizing events for the Jokkmokk Winter Market hoped that the permits could cost less. If they cost less, they suggested, perhaps people would plan more events during other parts of the year. They stated, "It's difficult to organize fun events because it costs so much money. When I organize the music for the Jokkmokk's Market, I have to pay so much money to sell beer. Maybe more people would be willing to organize fun events if it were easier and didn't cost so much."

Another issue were the rules regarding cash register use and taxes. One person stated, "The winter market must have easier rules. When it is -30 and you are trying to work a cash register. Bad idea. With too much paper work and rules, no one sells and no tourists come."

## FOOD IN SCHOOLS AND ELDERLY HOMES

The most common change that food producers wished for was a change in the food served in Jokkmokk schools and elderly care homes. Many wished that the Kommun could learn from other regions about purchasing locally produced foods. For example, one person stated, "Jag tror att alla restauranger och kommunen skulle kunna använda sig av lokal producerad mat. Kommunen kan handla sin egen mat. Det blir svårt med EU regler. De är tvungna att göra anbud, till exempel, om Kommunen vill köpa lingonsylt då kanske de måste köpa Bobs lingonsylt som är gjort på halvt äpple istället för något som är dyrare. Vissa kommuner har köpt lokal producerat. De skulle bli bättre om man kunde köpa kött, renkött till exempel. Kommunen är den största köparen här." Many made a statement similar to this one: "Jag tycker det är synd att Jokkmokk som har så många resurser i mat och skog tar tillvara på för lite."

Some acknowledged the skills of the people who prepare the school and elderly care food, and they believed these individuals could meet these demands: "I wish they served good food in the schools. I'm so disappointed with the food in the schools. It doesn't have to cost a lot of money. I know those working in the kitchen, they know their work. They're trained and they can hire more people." Another person seconded this idea: "Jag tycker att skolan ska laga sin egen mat. De ska inte frakta och värma upp. Fisk ska se ut som fisk." They believed too that if Jokkmokk schools were known for their healthy, locally produced foods, perhaps more parents would be willing to move to the area and enroll their children in its schools.

***"Vi måste ändra grundlagen. Mat ska kosta. Skolmat måste kosta. Vi ger dålig mat till barnen nu och då blir de sjuka. De måste få bra mat men det är en kostnads fråga. Vi måste värdera mat och då kommer vi att få större omsättningar i ren och fiske och då vill flera producera mer mat."***



Figure 7 Students from the Sámi Elementary School prepare food at the Matlandet Conference

Others wished that people understood that good food was important and would simply cost more, for individuals and for the government. Some believed that if people paid more for food, then this would encourage more people to become involved in producing food: "Vi måste ändra grundlagen. Mat ska kosta. Skolmat måste kosta. Vi ger dålig mat till barnen nu och då blir de sjuka. De måste få bra mat men det är en kostnads

fråga. Vi måste värdera mat och då kommer vi att få större omsättningar i ren och fiske och då vill flera producera mer mat."

Finally, many spoke of the role of students, teachers and cooks when it comes to berries. Many remembered picking berries for school and they lamented that the schools don't do that anymore. When it was mentioned that the laws perhaps prevented them from picking their own berries, one person had this response: "Om läraren vill gå ut då ska man låta dem gå ut och plocka bär. Det har varit många duktiga lärare här som har varit ut med barnen. Varför ska alla köpa bär när det växer här. Varje elev kan plocka 4 eller 5 kilo av bär. Och sedan kan kockarna ta hand om detta! Om de inte får göra det då kan de komma hit och då ska jag ta hand om det! *Man ska inte säga det är olagligt! Det är bara en brist på fantasi!*"

***"Man ska inte säga det är olagligt! Det är bara en brist på fantasi!"***

# PLANTS

## METHODS

For this data, one individual was interviewed directly regarding plants, and three others who work with plants were observed in their work as educators.

## INTRODUCTION

Very few people work with plants in Jokkmokk, but use of wild plants is a growing industry throughout Sweden. In Jokkmokk those few individuals working with plants are responsible for growing local people's interest. Additionally, an increasing number of individuals are being educated about plants via the Samisk Mat och Kompetens Centrum, the Samernas reindeer herder trainings, and independent classes with plant experts. The industry around plants is primarily a knowledge and experience industry, rather than a production industry. Those knowledgeable in wild plants provide courses, presentations and guided tours to interested groups in Jokkmokk and throughout Sweden. The food production part of most of these businesses is quite small.



Figure 8 Fjällsyra or sorrel

The season for working directly with plants, offering guided tours and experience-based courses is largely limited to the late spring, summer and early fall. Indoor presentations occur throughout the year. Plant experts work independently and full-time. For the most part, they do not employ other individuals. One individual commented that she was trying to make her work full-time, and she is "positive we have the flavors, tastes and products to build on. I think what we have is interesting for other people, and maybe other countries as well. I know we have to step it up, but I'm not ready. I would need a partner to build the production side, someone who was more interested in production. I want to pick in my own peace."

Most of those working with plants learned their special knowledge from families and elders as they grew up. Others gained their knowledge from being on the land with friends and colleagues and in courses given by those individuals who have more traditional knowledge.

People working with plants use the buds, leaves, flowers, roots and berries. Plants typically harvested in Jokkmokk include angelica, mountain sorrel, birch leaves, spruce and pine tips, meadowsweet, blueberry leaves, rosenroot, skvatram, and sprängtica.

While many of the plants in Jokkmokk can be found throughout Sweden, they do have unique properties because they grow above the Arctic Circle. One plant expert commented, "Scientific reports show that berries and plants from up here have lots of value. They're higher in antioxidants and minerals than wild berries and plants from southern Sweden. They have a higher concentration of these





Figure 9 Angelica

antioxidants and minerals. They speculate it may be the shorter growing season and the midnight sun that makes them have a higher concentration.” The knowledge of the superior value of Arctic plants and berries is critical to the marketing of these products by plant specialists.

In addition to those individuals making a living from plants, many people gather these plants for their own domestic use. For example, one individual who owns reindeer, hunts moose, and fishes

explained, “I used to dry angelica, but I bought them from Viddernas for a few years. Now I try to candy them myself. I make a dried tea with kvänne and algjort (meadowsweet). I pick the flowers. I freeze the birch leaves fresh. It’s a medicine. It’s like a penicillin for the reindeer. Birch is cleansing. We make juobmo with fjällsyra, mountain sorrel.” Such accounts are typical for the region, but many people have limited time to gather plants and so they purchase goods from the region’s plant producers.

## GOALS AND PROFITS

The goal of most of these plant experts is to make a simple living by showcasing the diversity and value of plants from the region. All of them share a concern for maintaining a balance between educating the public and ensuring that the plants are not over-picked by that public.

One person explained that she has chosen to start a new career because wants to work with nature’s pantry, to use the natural tastes of her area, and to work with her hands. Another person explained that her interest in plants began because of their medicinal value for her own personal health. Finally, another specialist told me a story about her work to educate other industries about alternative values of the forest. She presented to Skogstyrelsen, and “I wanted to teach them the other values in the forest. I wanted them to taste the forest so I served them the pine and birch. I want to show them that the trees come back every year, that I am taking from places where I am not hurting the growth. I wanted them to get that.”

Rather than becoming big producers through the harvest and production of plant-based products, many plant experts have chosen to produce a small amount and add value by offering courses and presentations on these plants. For some of these plant experts, they hope to generate an appreciation and awareness of the area’s natural resources outside of timber, iron and water. During a presentation in Umeå, an audience member asks Greta Huuva how one can harvest the bark today because the timber industry doesn’t allow it. She agrees with the statement, explaining that “Today it’s harder. You have to talk to the landowner. And we should talk to the timber companies because you can see where

they don't use some of the resources." These and other statements point to a need for more communication between private landowners, timber companies, and plant specialists.

## COOPERATION

The few individuals working with plants have extensive cooperation networks. They work within tourism, providing seminars at hotels and museums in Jokkmokk, Sweden and throughout the world. They provide herbs to local restaurants, and in some cases, to restaurants throughout northern Europe.

Working with plants in Jokkmokk does not require much cooperation for sharing the land base (given the size of Jokkmokk and its low population density), but it does require much cooperation and respect for their work with the public. Most individuals choose not to work in a niche that someone else already occupies. One person explained, "We pickers in Jokkmokk have an unstated system. I know that certain things are another person's products. For example, I make something with salt and this other person makes something similar but not exactly the same with salt. We try not to take each other's products."



Figure 10 Meadowsweet or älgjort

## CHALLENGES

### REGULATING GATHERING

Those working with plants are primarily concerned about the potential over-harvesting of wild plants. Because of Sweden's Allemansrätten, or right of public access, plant specialists believe that other individuals may believe they simply have the right to take what they can from the land. If an industry in wild plants becomes quite large, the right of public access becomes a threat because large numbers of people will begin to over pick or pick the wrong plants.

In response, plant experts have formed a group. Their goal is to recognize approximately ten plants that can safely be harvested because of their abundance and their unique qualities. One plant expert commented, "If we identify those 10 plants, maybe that can help us, the network of pickers. We have a chance to steer the path of development in the way we want it to go. I think it's better to have 20 people with small companies than one big production company that vacuums it all up."

***"If we identify those 10 plants, maybe that can help us, the network of pickers. We have a chance to steer the path of development in the way we want it to go."***

# MOOSE

## METHODS

Eight moose hunters and two moose butchers were interviewed regarding the hunting and sale of moose. The hunters were all sameby members, thus the data does not represent all possible perspectives. The experiences and challenges of non-Sameby members should be included but were not due to a shortage of time and contacts.

## INTRODUCTION

Moose are hunted throughout Sweden. In the county of Jokkmokk, people may hunt moose on privately owned lands, state lands, and within the land of the five samebys. Moose hunting begins in September and continues into October. Sameby members tend to combine hunting moose with reindeer herding and fishing activities. All those who hunt report that they first hunt for their own domestic use. They sell the remaining meat to one of the slaughter or butcher facilities, primarily Svantes in Harads and Sapmi Ren och Vilt in Jokkmokk.

Some moose meat hunted in the region is for sale in restaurants and grocers in the region. For example, Saltoluokta Fjallstation purchases moose meat for its restaurant from Sapmi Ren och Vilt who buys moose from local hunters. These simple exchanges illustrate how a local food system network can be strengthened, perhaps with additional storytelling and marketing to customers.

## COOPERATION

People hunt as a team, including men and women, and share moose meat or profits from the sale of a moose. Hunters will get a moose and must deliver it to the butcher facility within two to five days depending on the weather. Hunters deliver the moose directly to the processing facility, which makes the work easier for butchers than working with reindeer (where butchers purchase reindeer live from herders or carcasses from slaughter facilities and must provide transport). Most of those interviewed agreed that they called around and sold their moose to the facility offering the best price, and the butcher facilities know that hunters operate this way as well. The hunters are paid directly by the butchers, between 40 to 60 kronor per kilo. The horns can also be sold for around 65 kronor per kilo, and these are usually sold directly by hunters to private customers.

## CHALLENGES

One of the challenges to building an economy based on moose hunting is the Guest Hunting Laws in Norrbotten. In Norrbotten, guest hunting is not allowed. In contrast, Västerbotten allows guest hunting. Such permissions can advance a tourism industry in moose hunting. If this situation is compared with the experience industries in plants (where most plant specialists also earn an income from selling their knowledge as well as their plant products), there are opportunities for growth. However, a group of interested individuals must consider the pros and cons of this approach and address policy makers. A key issue will be the conflicts between private landowners and sameby lands. This conflict is beyond the scope of this report, but it should be discussed before any steps are taken.

## REINDEER OWNERS AND HERDERS

### METHODS

Four full-time herders and nine reindeer owners were interviewed. Only two of Jokkmokk's five samebys are represented in this study, so the results do not represent all possible perspectives. Additional material from these samebys would strengthen the report.

### BEING A FULL TIME HERDER

Earning one's primary income from reindeer herding is unique in Jokkmokk. Most of those who own reindeer also have additional sources of income. Those who do work full-time report that they have made a decision to live simply in order to do what they love: work with the reindeer.

Reindeer owners and herders in Jokkmokk typically sell their reindeer to slaughterhouses and private customers during the fall and winter. At the fall and winter separations of reindeer, there are usually two or more buyers that include Sapmi Ren och Vilt, Svantes, and occasionally others. All herders expressed satisfaction selling to Svantes or Sapmi Ren och Vilt, though some expressed support for also developing a local slaughter facility.



Figure 11 Reindeer near Saltoluokta in June

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### SEASONS

One herder described their year as such: "In June and August I fish. In July there are meetings and the calf marking. In September there is the slaughter and moose hunt. The moose hunt is the 20 or 25th of September and goes until October 22nd. In November and December we take care of the reindeer and we continue to care for them separately in January, February, March and April when they begin to move back. In May I'm in the fjäll as they calf. It's nice to be in the fjäll then as it gets light."

They continued to describe the relationship of food to these seasons: "Every food has its own season. In September it's meat. In the spring it's smoked meat. In the summer it's dried meat and fresh fish. There's a suovas time. It used to be spring, but now it's all year."

There is a challenge to the seasonality of herding and income. One Sámi business consultant remarked that planning for the seasons can be very challenging for a herder. "Sedan är det en fråga om kapital och god kunskap. Hur kan man lagra renkött så det räcker året runt? Slakt händer under hösten och höst-vintern. Du måste slakta tillräckligt och sedan lagra stora mängder. Efterfrågan beror på marknaden. Ska renkött bara köpas en viss period eller ska det finnas ren hela året. Och det kostar pengar."

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## MONEY

One herder recounted this pattern of money expenditure and intake for their average year: "In the summer, we get money from selling fish, and in the fall we sell fish and are working for the sameby, from August to October we are working on the fences. From the autumn male reindeer slaughter, we get a little bit. We get more income in January and February and March. We have to plan and be frugal. We never feel rich and are sensitive to catastrophes. It means you worry. The cost of fodder, this year (2013-14), for example. With fodder you have more cost but you also have more control of the reindeer. We don't live with an overflow. We have not chosen this life to be rich. My freedom, I have it and calm and the freedom to control my time." Other full-time herders make similar comments, that in order to herd full time, they cannot want or have nice things.

Most of them have or continue to make full use of reindeer meat, fish, berries and plants from the mountains. They pick their own hjortron and catch their own fish in addition to raising and slaughtering their own reindeer and hunting their own moose. One person explained, "In September we take the matren (the household consumption reindeer) for the whole winter. It's the sarvs, the males who are the biggest. I try to use everything, blood for blood sausage. I sell the dried skin. The skin on the legs I sell for the bellings (for making the boots), but we do throw away the skull." Some adults struggle to make use of the entire animal like their parents and grandparents did. This is partly because their own children have acquired different tastes and partly because of the demand of their own busy schedules which limit the amount of time they can dedicate to processing more difficult parts of the animal such as skulls, intestines and hooves.

Many herders will complement their income from herding with other work, whether fishing, handicraft, tourism, and butchering, to name only a few. Most full-time herders have found ways to remain in the fjäll where they can monitor their reindeer in combination with other work. Some cooperate with STF and provide boat transportation across the rivers and lakes or snowmobile transportation into the mountains for hiking and skiing tourists. Some have cabins (stugas) that they rent to hiking and fishing tourists in the spring and summer, while others will sell fish, dried reindeer meat, gahku, Sámi handicraft and other goods to tourists.

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## COOPERATING

Nearly all of the reindeer herders and owners interviewed for this study are originally from Jokkmokk. This means that they have extensive cooperation networks and do not experience isolation in their work with reindeer and selling their reindeer, though some expressed isolation from larger Swedish society.

Some herders find that working in the sameby structure can be very frustrating, particularly when they compare Jokkmokk with other regions. Because so few people work as full-time herders, planning for many of the samebys requires telling people far in advance when events will happen, such as calf markings and slaughters. If the weather is bad (which it can be very bad in the fjäll), there is little flexibility. Thus events such as calf markings, where owners identify and mark the new calves for the year, can take place under less than optimal weather conditions.



## VALUE FOR SOCIETY AND THEMSELVES

Herders had different reactions to the perceived value of their work. Some believed that wider society appreciated what they do and the quality of their reindeer, while others expressed the opposite. For example, one herder stated that, "Generally with food, the state thinks it should be cheap. From a food perspective, we're like a farmer. They're not valued as a food producer. It's the same with cheap shoes." Another herder expressed ambivalence to the question of value: "I don't know what society thinks. I don't know many Swedes. I don't hang out with Swedes. It's not so often that we're here in Jokkmokk either."

***"I have not chosen this life to be rich. It's what I want to do, to put my energy into it. I want to be with the reindeer. That's what I want to do."***

Though many didn't experience being valued by society, they strongly valued the work themselves. One person explained, "I have not chosen this life to be rich. It's what I want to do, to put my energy into it. I want to be with the reindeer. That's what I want to do. I've thought, what can I combine with this. But I don't want another job. I value freedom." Another stated, "I can't do anything else. It's my biggest dream. School was just necessary. There was nothing else for me." And another: "We have our food. Why should I buy other food? That's why I keep doing this."

## CHANGES IN HERDING

One full-time reindeer herder remarked that herding, "It's not as physically demanding. In the past, there were no snowmobiles. Some people had cars. There was no truck transport. Now we have to have gasoline to move them down to Murjek. But they go by foot back up. It's not good for health with all these machines. We used to use skis, it was harder. Skis and a backpack. But with machines, with technology, it's economically demanding now. You need to sell more. It's money that decides." The increase in technology and machines has increased the cost of herding significantly, which entails that herders have to take on extra work to earn more income. A herder described this process, "It's worse for herders now. There's so much stress with climate change, the mine, forest logging, water pollution. Those periods of quiet (between working seasons) are now when you're supposed to work (at other jobs)."

When Sweden entered the EU, regulations shifted the way reindeer meat can be sold. Sale and slaughter of reindeer outdoors was no longer permitted, and many lament that they cannot sell at a small scale. One herder wished that they would be permitted to sell a small number of reindeer independently using an onsite veterinarian inspection. He states, "In Finland they follow the EU rules. They can slaughter though with a veterinarian inspection. If we had that we could sell 5, 6, 8 reindeer at a small scale, we could have the right to sell it. But to get the inspection you have to go to the slaughterhouse."



Figure 12 Reindeer calf at winter separation

Another change is that the focus of herding is now on the sale of calves. As one herder explained, "When we sell sarvs (uncastrated males), it's less money. It's better to sell calves than sarvs. I've experienced that. I saved sarvs for the fall, but they didn't show up. No one benefits from a sarv who stays in the mountains in the winter time. And we're supposed to live from this. I try to sell the vajas, the females, before they're too old and they're still good." Others explained that the new slaughter regulations forced a decline in the sarv slaughter, as it primarily took place in the mountains where the animals had better pastures. "Now they move the reindeer earlier. They take them all the way to Arvidsjaur to Grunnäs. They slaughter for Sapmi

Ren och Vilt and Utsi Ren. People used to slaughter outdoors but the new rules made it impossible. In the fjäll, there is still household slaughter, but it's more expensive with the helicopter. "

## CHALLENGES

### WOMEN

"It's hard to work alone, when I'm alone and have to slaughter and butcher myself. It's difficult. I usually can get help to put it down, but then I come home, and take it out. It's physically demanding. I want to be comfortable. So there's training of the body so there are no injuries." Reindeer herding is physically tough for all those involved, and women report having to maintain their health and strength in order to be able to do the hard work.

Women in male-female partnerships are often the ones who work outside the sameby and so are often distanced from herding even if they own reindeer. In addition, women have historically experienced discrimination in the sameby, often forced to give up their memberships when they marry a person in another sameby. Today, when couples are from different samebys, they sometimes face many tough decisions and can vacillate between the two samebys.

### DIFFERENT KNOWLEDGES

One butcher noted that sometimes herders don't know when they should sell their reindeer for slaughter. While they know when they want to slaughter their own reindeer to get the best quality for household consumption, they lack that knowledge for public sale. For butchers, this challenge can be



enjoyable for them as they get to answer questions posed by herders and provide training regarding meat classifications and prices.

One herder discussed how they learned about the slaughter, processing and classification of reindeer meat. Their knowledge



Figure 13 A male reindeer at the fall slaughter at Sirges Sameby

came primarily from home, but then they also attended a slaughter and butchering training in Harads, many years ago. The training allowed them to be a reindeer classifier, and when Jokkmokk had a mobile slaughter unit, they worked as a classifier. The training, “was really good for me. It was an internship. We’d learn how to hang them and take out the stomachs before the helicopter would come get them. We learned different techniques from the traditional, how to work with the industry, to be careful with hygiene, to hang the nicer cuts to let them ripen. With hanging, I used to think you didn’t need to hang, but now I hang because that’s what I’ve heard. I’m reading a book on slaughter. It shouldn’t freeze down so fast they’ve said. It should be a long chilling at -15 I learned at the course.”

As programs develop to train butchers and herders on meat qualities, the question has arisen if training should be in traditional or modern methods. A simple answer is both, according to one butcher: “Båda två tycker jag men det finns en brist hos primär producenterna. De har inga kunskaper om livsmedel. Vi har moderna metoder och de är viktiga för att inte förstöra smaken.”

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## LAND AND LAW

The encroachment of other industries on reindeer herding lands is likely (and has always been) the biggest challenge to reindeer herding. As one herder noted, “It’s all civilization that we have to fight against always: snowmobiles, traffic, hydropower, highways.” When asked what changes this herder would like to see, he responded, “I would like the feeding areas, to have them free and not worry about civilization. Tourism can be bad, the tourism snowmobiles in May, the roads built for tourists. They interfere with our work. As a tourist, you shouldn’t be noticed.” The herder argued that, “We should be able to say no from reindeer herders. We’re always on the losing side. There’s no chance there. The mineral laws that determine the laws are archaic, ålderdomlig.” These are decisions at the highest level of government, but they greatly impact the kind of local food system that Jokkmokk can develop.

A reindeer herder and independent researcher asked, “Would people keep coming up to the fjäll if there weren’t reindeer to work with there? I don’t think so. Sure the tourists will come, but people won’t come up to spend as much time as they do now.” The question points to the important link between reindeer herding and cultural practices that are connected to specific places in the fjäll. In Jokkmokk, this link is most apparent because of the designation of Jokkmokk’s fjäll as a World Heritage Site. Challenges to reindeer herding in the region are also challenges to the status of Lapponia and the continuation of cultural and economic practices on the land.

# REINDEER PROCESSORS

## METHODS

Four butcher-shop owners were interviewed from Jokkmokk, and two additional butchers who work outside Jokkmokks kommun were interviewed and observed at their work.

## INTRODUCTION

Reindeer, moose and fish butchers and processors are some of the most visible local food businesses and volunteers in Jokkmokks kommun. Not only do these businesses sell fish, reindeer and moose meat to locals and tourists alike, they are often found at local festivals and conferences, preparing food for crowds or representing and selling the iconic foods from the region. Many of them are happy to participate in these events because it puts their business name out in the public, but it can generate burnout in these individuals.

Some butchers buy, process and sell reindeer, moose and fish as well as some berries, while others focus almost exclusively on reindeer meat. Because there is no slaughter facility in Jokkmokk, butchers purchase reindeer from larger slaughterhouses such as the facility in Arvidsjaur. Alternatively, butchers also purchase live reindeer from local samebys and transport them down to Arvidsjaur to be slaughtered and brought back to Jokkmokk

Some butchers purchased their business and facility from its previous owners, while others started from scratch. Some received support from the Sametinget, without whom their business never would have started. Most received some consulting assistance from Strukturm and Sattje.

Many business owners have higher education and training in other fields (teaching, nursing, engineering) and so have chosen to work with reindeer butchering in addition to or rather than their fields of training. Some butchers learned how to slaughter and butcher reindeer from family members for personal or family use. Others received on-the-job training in slaughtering and butchering and/or they attended the reindeer herding course at the Samernas Utbildning Centrum in Jokkmokk where they acquired skills they brought with them to their own businesses. There is a general trend that can be described: these individuals learned first to slaughter and butcher from family members as they grew up. They then acquired more skills from the reindeer herder course and/or from working at slaughter facilities.

The reindeer butchering industry grew in Sweden, according to many who were interviewed, because of changes in the law in the 1990s. One butcher explained that the law forced them to decide whether or not to continue selling meat to the public, "Sedan kom en stor ändring. Allt kött skulle stämplas och behövde bli hanterade i ett godkänt slakteri. För att hantera vårt eget kött behövde vi sälja det till slakteriet. Vi tog våra renar till Karlstens i Gällivare. Vi skickade in det och sedan hämtade det dagen efter. De låg väldigt bra och nära. Lagen tvingades oss att välja. Förut sålde vi små mängder som var stämplat till privata kunder. På 80 och 90 talet sålde vi till äldre människor som köpte stora kvantiteter."

## VALUE



Figure 14. Reindeer hang ready to be processed into smaller cuts

Those who work as butchers and processors generally feel valued by the surrounding society, including the *Kommun* and *Strukturum*. One processor expressed that they have “good, positive feedback from everyone. From family, yes. Those who live here are happy on Christmas Eve that I’m here. I have no problems with the *Kommun*. They know who I am. I am passionate about food.”

Another butcher explained how they received help from *Strukturum* and the *Sametinget* when they considered building a reindeer butchering business: “Yes, it feels like they thought it was a good idea. We got support as well. We did a feasibility study with *Strukturum*. They did the calculations, and it felt positive. We didn’t have any money in the beginning. But you’ve got to pay, to inspect the building. The feasibility study helped economically with that. It was good.”

Another butcher explained that they enjoy their work because of the positive feedback they get from sharing knowledge with customers and others:

“It’s fun to sell when you’re sure about the quality of your product. I like to share my knowledge to the *delis* and restaurants on how you need to prepare the food.”

Butcher shop owners work like many in the food system: they take on extra work (combining processing with herding, teaching or tourism, to name a few examples) in order to support themselves fully. Or, they may rely on a spouse’s income for their livelihood. Most of the processors hoped that their own children would be able to take over their businesses, and they started their businesses in order to create a source of future income for their children.

## CUSTOMERS

Reindeer butchers find that their biggest customers are high-end grocers, restaurants, tourism businesses, and then private customers. These processors sell to restaurants and stores in *Jokkmokk*, as well as stores and restaurants in *Luleå*, *Umeå*, *Stockholm*, and *Jukkusjarvi*. Many processors also sell their meat directly to customers at markets and exhibition fairs in *Skelleftea*, *Piteå*, *Lycksele*, and *Huddinge* to name only a few. The *Jokkmokk* in *Huddinge* market has become a popular *Stockholm* venue for reindeer meat, and butchers often sell out of reindeer meat.

The internet has impacted meat sales. While one processor finds that most of their customers are from *Norrbottnen*, they are also selling more and more on the internet with internet and phone orders. They

describe this process, "They may meet us first when we're out on the road selling at a market. Then there are summer tourists in Jokmokk that will find us and call in an order later."

Butchers ship cold foods with Bussgods, while dried meats may be sent with the post office. It's expensive for customers who pay the shipping costs, and it can be tricky sometimes to get products to southern Sweden. There may not be freezer or cooling facilities. Because of these limitations, it can be difficult to sell meat online and over the phone unless it is through a distributor or wholesaler. With private customers, it can be difficult to ensure that the entire trip has freezer transport. With better transportation channels, butchers may be able to sell more and different kinds of products.

## CHANGES

Most butchers have noted a significant change in how people buy reindeer meat: "Twenty years ago you could sell a lot directly from the corral to those who lived in Jokkmokk. They took the whole carcass. There was no slaughterhouse, no butcher. Jokkmokk's inhabitants don't want to buy the whole body. Most want to buy finished pieces at the store. You can still buy a whole reindeer at the slaughterhouse, if you wanted to but few people do that anymore. They don't want to have ice chests, freezers. They want to buy when they want to have it, usually skav or smoked meat. "

Such changes are also remarked upon by an individual who has been involved in the industry for decades. This butcher commented, "Förut sålde vi små mängder som var stämplat till privat kunder. På 80 och 90 talet sålde vi till äldre människor som köpte stora kvantiteter. Idag köper människor så här mycket [han visar kanske två decimeter med sina händer]. Ren kött var billig på den tiden. Nu är det ett lyx kött. De räcker inte här. Folk äter mindre renkött. Jag läste en statistik att svenskarna äter 2 hekto ren kött per person."

Some worry that reindeer meat will become too expensive, making it difficult for most people to enjoy it. At the same time, they want the demand to grow so that the reindeer industry can continue to support reindeer owners, herders and butchers. One herder remarked that people purchase reindeer meat differently because of its high cost, but the cost could be controlled if more reindeer could thrive. "It doesn't have to be an exclusive meat. It shouldn't be exclusive. It's natural and wild and has many things you need. We need more reindeer meat out on the market to stabilize the price. There's the predator problem that stops us from getting more volume out. It costs the state to deal with predators. It costs with the remunerations to the samebys, to research, to guard. This should be a smaller cost and go towards producing meat instead, to give more of a balanced market for reindeer meat."

***"It doesn't have to be an exclusive meat. It shouldn't be exclusive. It's natural and wild and has many things you need. We need more reindeer meat out on the market to stabilize the price. There's the predator problem that stops us from getting more volume out. It costs the state to deal with predators. It costs with the remunerations to the samebys, to research, to guard. This should be a smaller cost and go towards producing meat instead, to give more of a balanced market for reindeer meat."***

Some also advocated that the public needs to recognize the real cost of food. "Med renar är det svårt att förändra folks syn och få dem att inse att de är nyttigt att äta bra mat och bra mat måste få kosta. De här handlar om livet! Man kan låta bli att köpa dyra mobil telefoner och istället köpa bra mat. De är kanske en Slow Food filosofi. Så utmaningen är att lära människor hur man äter bra."

## EMPLOYMENT

Butchering facilities offer a fair amount of employment. The employment is seasonal and temporary, as the need for labor increases and decreases based on the season. Most places employ one to two people year round, and they increase to five or six people working from November to January when the reindeer slaughter is at its highest. For all of the processors, it is family members who work first for them and primarily men (though not always). Processors look for flexible but knowledgeable and interested labor. When more people are needed, most processors hire temporary labor who don't depend on the work for their livelihood and know it's seasonal.

When hiring, processors look for "Those who can butcher and are used to it. The work can go fast. It has to go fast. One needs to have a tempo, a rhythm, for it. The meat can't hang in the freezer. They'll go bad." For younger people who want to work with butchers (including women), the processors find that they need more experience: "They need internships. We can't slow down for them. Internships are a definite need. We can't afford to take them in in our business." Reindeer butchers are working with perishable materials. The food must be handled when it's fresh, which means that there are hard seasons when butchers have a lot to do.

## CHALLENGES

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### PROFITS AND SUPPORTING REINDEER OWNERS

Most butchers did not make a profit when they first began and today it still takes a long time to convert the meat they sell into money. However, most of them find that they feel more secure about their financial stability today. Many butchers believed that others thought they were growing rich from their business, but they explained that this was not true. Many of them feel pressure to (and an incentive to) produce more products that might be more exclusive to get a higher price.

Another challenge is that most of the processors in Jokkmokk are quite small. To gain recognition in a big reindeer meat market, they cooperate with organizations like Renlycka. Renlycka may want to make members, who are some of the smallest meat producers in Sweden, pay for their membership. Most processors in Jokkmokk do not see this as a possibility, since their profits are so small.

Organizations like Renlycka want to work so that the reindeer owners get more money, but processors (who are also often reindeer owners) need to also increase their margins which means buying reindeer cheaper (or paying reindeer owners less). As the price of reindeer goes up, butchers initial costs go up. Some butchers stated that they pay more for their reindeer than other larger slaughter operations would. Small, local processors are in a no-win situation because they need to earn money to keep their business alive and they are also expected to help reindeer owners (who are often part of a tight-knit community and/or family of reindeer owners).



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## SLAUGHTER FACILITIES

Many people stated that the mobile slaughter unit, started about 20 years ago in Jokkmokk, came too early. Today, an enterprise like that would succeed because people are more interested in purchasing local foods. One person stated, "I sometimes worked a bit there. There was no solidarity. If they paid 50 ore less, they would sell somewhere else. The slaughter was too expensive. It would be nice to have since there are so many reindeer. It's 70 km to Svantes, 150 km to Arvidsjaur, 200 km to Grunnäs. With the slaughter bus you could slaughter at once. But it was hard to make it work. The water freezes. Where do you put the waste? Do you bury it or do you bring it down from the fjäll?"

Another herder remarked that a cooperative slaughter unit did not work, but one owned by an individual would work. "It needs to be owned by one person. To make it give money, to get a salary from it." Many individuals supported this approach or they advocated changing reindeer slaughter regulations to make an exception for small scale slaughter.



Figure 15 Reindeer sausages ready to be smoked

Many people expressed satisfaction with the regulation of the reindeer meat market began after Sweden entered the EU. For them, the regulations increased the value of reindeer meat because it guaranteed a good product for customers. At the same time, the same people expressed frustration that they couldn't slaughter on a small scale to sell to private customers. Some believed that finding a law that would allow for small scale slaughter would be best, while others argued for a local slaughter facility. "We can't sell these reindeer we slaughter ourselves. People can process moose, but they can't process reindeer. And why not?"

If we are going to decolonize our food system, we have to get a slaughter facility."

However, a slaughterhouse might compete with already existing processors who purchase reindeer from regional slaughterhouses. One business adviser raised the following questions: "Hur skulle ett slakteri se ut i dag utan att slå ut ben från Sapmi Ren och Vilt? Är det en modell? Vem äger lokalen? Vem tar risken för den? Har varje ett slakteri eller...?" Others raise similar questions: "A slaughterhouse should exist, but who will run it? How will the veterinarian work? There's Harads and Arvidsjaur, who need high volumes."

In addition, some of the smaller processors see the bigger processors as assets. Svantes, for example in Harads, is seen as good for the reindeer market. One butcher said, "They make a good name. It raises the quality for reindeer products. We're so small. We're not a competitor for them. We push prices up by having good high quality. We need him so reindeer meat is on the market. You wouldn't see reindeer meat in the market in Luleå without Svantes. The same with Polarica."

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## STORYTELLING AND REACHING CONSUMERS

Some businesses find that they don't have time to focus on marketing. One person explained, "We're selling the most expensive meat in Sweden. We need nice packaging and a nice way of presenting things. We need more storytelling. We need to develop that part of our business." However, they do not have the time and funds to dedicate to developing a marketing branch. Rather than sit in meetings, they confessed, they prefer to be producing. Others are conflicted about how reindeer meat should be presented. On the one hand, it is a natural and wild meat that contributes little to climate change and pollution. On the other hand, they remarked that truck and snowmobile transportation produce emissions. They questioned how herding should be marketed as a green industry.

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## STAYING LOCAL

Most butchers struggle with the demands of the peak season. Many of them are reindeer owners or herders themselves, so when their own sameby is marking or slaughtering, they are engaged in their personal herding rather than their butchering business. For example, one butcher explained, "People ask me, the herders ask me, do you want to buy from us? But I can't buy from them. I can't buy from my cousin because I'm also working with the reindeer at the time. If we could use our own reindeer that would be great, but it can't work that way yet. It's timing not volume" Many end up buying reindeer meat later in the season from nearby samebys.

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## AM I A REINDEER HERDER OR REINDEER BUTCHER?



Figure 16 An antler in Padielanta

One butcher who is also a herder pointed out an acute problem they face in their employment (and the identity that employment gives them). If they are a reindeer butcher, they have less time to be a reindeer herder. This is troubling because younger reindeer herders are needed and the butchering becomes a distraction from innovating in herding. A local business consultant explained, "Inte alla vill förädla renkött. Faktisk majoriteten kanske inte vill. Det är en livsstil för renskötare. De ser sig inte själva som slaktare. Men de finns de som vill gör det."

One butcher explained his personal situation and understanding of the balance between herding and butchering: "The problem is if I develop this butchering business, then I won't be working with the reindeer. The Sajtte project is bad for reindeer herding (rennärning). We should have competing companies for reindeer herders. The samebys need to have herding as their priority, they need to develop herding.

It's bad from a fifty year perspective. It distracts us from herding. I have cousins in Norway who work just with herding. On the 5th day they've been relaxing, they say, okay, now we'll find something to do. They have time to think. When you have time to think, you start to research, to innovate. This is what develops reindeer herding. In 50 years, you have these small innovations."



## RESTAURANTS, BOUTIQUES AND GROCERS

### METHODS

Six restaurant owners/chefs, four boutique store owners, and four individuals selling food to tourists along the hiking trails were interviewed. Because these businesses target very different customers and have very different needs and demands, they are separated out for discussion.

### RESTAURANT CUSTOMERS



Figure 17 The Julbord at Cafe Gasskas

Most restaurants in Jokkmokk rely primarily on the “dagens lunch” customers for their survival. Some restaurants also depend on special arrangements, such as catering events, cooperating with the Inlandsbanan, or visitors to STF lodges. For most restaurants, their customers differ by season. The winter is mainly local, while the summer is many more tourists. Most restaurants report that their customers are repeat customers. Even during the winter market, they have the same customers return each year.

Most of the restaurants focus on local foods during a limited part of the year, usually the Jokkmokk Winter Market and high summer. Most restaurants find they can sell more local food (such as Arctic char) to visiting tourists during the summer. Some restaurants find it difficult to attract customers who live in Jokkmokk using local food. They believe people from the area already have their own fish, moose and reindeer and are unwilling to pay for local, higher priced foods. Others find that they have attracted a small, niche customer base who are interested in local, healthy or made-from-scratch foods.

For restaurants who choose to focus on local foods, they state, “It feels fun, to try to highlight things from here, to be able to bring in things here. We want to, or rather, our customers expect, that we do things ourselves, and we want to meet their expectations.” It can be challenging to live up to those customers’ expectations every day, “They have certain thoughts when they come here and so we have to meet their thoughts of what we are and what we do. ”

### BOUTIQUE AND GROCER CUSTOMERS

Those running boutique and grocery stores in the region have very different customers depending on local attractions. In Jokkmokk, some stores find they have many local customers and some tourists for their bread and jam products. Near the ski resort, the grocer and bakery there have many tourist guests who ski during the weekends. During the summer, there are many day tourists from the coast who stop in, and there are also commuters who might live on the coast but work in Gällivare or have a cabin in the mountains nearby. The owners are surprised at how many people do stop and express surprise and pleasure at finding the place.

## FAMILY

Many people choose to work together, whether family members, friends or business partners. This strategy seems to make the work time more manageable. In some cases, neither person keeps track of the hours they work. They simply do the work. One pair of boutique owners remarked, "When there's two of you, it can be easier. I never would have done this without her. And when you work together, you can't keep a time card. We don't keep time cards."

While family members, including partners/spouses and children, may help with the restaurants and boutiques, most restaurant owners do not expect their children will take over the business when they retire. Their children may live in other parts of Sweden or have different jobs. In contrast, those selling food to tourists in the mountains do anticipate their children will take over some part of their business.

## TIME

For most restaurant and shop owners, the work is more than full-time during the high season, which is the summer for some, the winter for others, and the Jokkmokk Winter Market for nearly everyone. Some restaurant owners simply take very little time off, perhaps one day per week. During low seasons, others may take a second job, continuing to work as chefs or working in a different industry. Even during the low season, people who run shops may work many hours in order to keep their stores open.

## EMPLOYEES

Restaurants are one of the industries that employ more people, though the work tends to be temporary, part-time and seasonal. During high seasons, restaurants will hire an additional 1 to 5 full-time employees, but the duration of employment is very short (the Winter Market or a short summer). In most restaurants, extra people are hired for the summer, primarily as servers but also as cooks. The bigger restaurants, such as Saltoluokta Fjällstation, hire many more people for the winter, spring and summer seasons, and these individuals come from all over Sweden.

***"Jag vill ha någon som trivs, inte en som bara jobbar för pengarna. Du måste tycka om det. Om man inte tycker om jobbet då blir maten och upplevelsen dålig."***

Some restaurant owners commented that it can be difficult to find qualified employees, particularly those trained as chefs, but who have the flexibility of not needing full-time work all year. Many people echoed the same sentiment of this restaurant owner: "Jag vill ha någon som trivs, inte en som bara



Figure 18 Fresh bread at K&M Bageri

jobbar för pengarna. Du måste tycka om det. Om man inte tycker om jobbet då blir maten och upplevelsen dålig."

## COOPERATION

Restaurants and stores are critical for promoting local foods. Some boutiques will sell Jokkmokks korv, meat from Utsi Ren or Sapmi Ren och Vilt, C/O Gerd products, Jokkmokks bär, Skabrams ost. Many restaurants will also use these products, purchasing cuts of meat from butchers, using Skabrams ost, or purchasing fish, ptarmigan and berries from local hunters and gatherers. Many restaurant owners also purchase other supplies from the local grocery stores.

## MATLANDETHUVUDSTAD

For many restaurant owners, the designation Matlandethuvudstad did not impact the way they operate. For example, one restaurant owner explained that, "Det spelar ingen roll för mig. De finns många projekt här, och de inbjuder in bara deras släktingar. Vi är inte svenskar och de bjuder inte in oss." They also do not cooperate or feel networked with other restaurant owners in Jokkmokk. On the other hand, some restaurants (particularly those serving local food) did feel a positive impact from Matlandethuvudstad, though they state that it may be simply that Destination Jokkmokk is referring more tourists to their restaurant than before.

## WHY THEY WORK WITH FOOD



Figure 19 The counter at Viddernas Cafe

Those who work in restaurants often talk about their love of cooking for people and having people appreciate the work they put into the food. They also enjoy meeting new people from across the world through their work, who appreciate the food they make. Some of them care about what they and their families eat, and they bring that philosophy to their cooking.

One person stated, "It makes you feel so good when you get positive feedback from people. You shouldn't mix in too much into the food. You make it as good as you can. Now we know we can do

this. It's fun to work, fun to have good customers, who want to book a table and want to eat the food we make. And our prices are pretty good too, so that everyone can eat here. We want everyone to be able to come here. "

Others continue the work of previous generations, they work to keep traditions alive as one person stated, "I do it primarily because of my parents, to continue what they did. My parents opened this in 1970."

These restauranteurs also do work for the income. Even if it is small for all of them, it is important to their livelihoods. Some restaurants provide a full income for their owners, while other restaurants

require people to work other jobs. In one case, running the restaurant is a hobby for a retired couple. While the way they currently run their restaurant wouldn't be enough to live from, they believe that someone could open the restaurant the entire year and make enough perhaps. Others also choose to run their own business because of the independence and creativity it gives them.

## VALUE BY SOCIETY

People feel their work is valued by family and customers, and to a certain degree by Jokkmokk. Most restaurant and boutique owners believe people appreciate their skill and believe what they're doing is interesting. Many of them find that the positive feedback is increasing. As one person exclaimed, "It's always good to get positive feedback from people. You can never get enough of the positive because you always get criticism too." However, many experience that they are ignored or not valued by society at times as well.



Figure 20 Passengers on the Inlandsbanan stop at Fjällglimten

Two restauranteurs believed that customer values have changed: "I think people want to eat the food from up here. They want organic food. I think they're more aware of what they eat, and that's why we do get younger customers who decide to eat well. It's a choice. You don't have to buy a new snowmobile. You can choose better food instead."

## CHALLENGES

### STAYING OPEN

In the summer, most restaurants find there are enough customers for all the restaurants to make money. During the winter months, however, it can be difficult to have enough customers. Many restaurant owners choose to stay open only during the summer months and during special times such as the Winter Market. Others stay open for dinner or lunch only.

The top complaint of those working with tourists is that few restaurants are open in the evening that serve the local foods that tourists are seeking. Addressing this issue is critical to building Jokkmokk into a well-known tourist destination, however, several restaurant owners expressed that they were happy with the way their restaurant was currently run. They didn't want to get bigger or stay open longer, though they thought it was possible to grow their businesses if someone wanted to. Most of them understood the complaint and agreed that a restaurant serving local foods should be consistently open, but they didn't foresee changing their own business strategies. Thus the question remains, who will take on this role.

## TOO MANY RESTAURANTS?



Figure 21 A view over Saltoluokta Fjallstation

Another major challenge is saturation. As one restaurant owner explained, "Bara fundera på att Jokkmokk har ungefär 2000 våningar. Och hur många av dem äter ute? Vi har 16 stycken restauranger i Jokkmokk, och kanske 300 äter ut per dag. Delad mellan 16 restauranger, hur många får man i en dag? Det är inte bra. Vi har för många restauranger i Jokkmokk. Och första månad a kommer alla till den nya restaurangen och de andra restaurangerna förlorar kunder. Alla tycker det är

spännande at ha fler restaurang men det är inte bra. De tänker inte på vad händer för dig, restaurang ägaren och på hur många restauranger som redan finns. Vi konkurrerar med varandra, men de spelar ingen roll för dem, för politikerna i Jokkmokk. De tänker inte på oss." If Jokkmokk were able to increase the number of tourists, the saturation of the market would be less of an issue. However, the low seasons will likely continue to be difficult for many restaurants unless more people move to the area, which encourages them to limit their opening hours. These two challenges – saturation and limited open hours – feed directly into one another.



# HIKING TOURISTS AND FOOD

## METHODS

Informal discussions were held with six individuals who sell food such as smoked and fresh fish, gahku, dried reindeer meat, and other snacks to hikers along the Padjelanta and Kungsleden trails in the Lapponia World Heritage Site.

## INTRODUCTION

Some people have been selling food to tourists for twenty plus years, while others have only recently begun. They typically work for two months during the high summer when they are in the mountains for calf markings, though some extend their seasons into the spring and late summer. Many of them report that it is profitable to run their small cafes for tourists.



Figure 22 Smoked fish and gahku from Petsjaure

## CUSTOMERS

For those catering to tourists in the mountains, many of their customers might visit the mountain lodges at Saltoluokta, Kvikkjokk or Ritsem first and then visit their location for the day or during their hiking journey south or north along the Padjelanta or Kungsleden trails. These entrepreneurs combine the sale of food with cabin rentals and they are typically busy in the spring and summer. Their cabin rental customers are often repeat customers who stay a week to fish and enjoy the mountains. Many times, these businesses never know how many visitors they will have during a day, which can make planning difficult.

## COOPERATION

Many people cooperated with Lanstyrelsen or other organizations to begin their businesses, or they cooperate with STF to coordinate tourism activities. Some expressed that they feel left outside of cooperative networks such as Strukturm, the Kommun and Destination Jokkmokk. One person explained that they had little help from the Kommun, Strukturm as well as the Sametinget for the kind of work they do in Lapponia. She concluded, "If Sweden wants its urfolk (indigenous people) they have to support them so they can live from the land."

## CHALLENGES



Figure 23 Fish smoking at Kutjaure

Those serving food to tourists in the mountains have many logistical challenges. First, they often must transport products to the location, and transportation costs can be high. Coordinating needs can also be difficult, as they communicate with others via satellite phone which may not work. Regulations can be difficult if people wish to do more than serve smoked fish and gakh. To run something more like a restaurant, they would have to meet a number of requirements, such as running water, freezer and fridge capacity, none of

which are possible in the mountains where electricity is largely limited to solar and generator power.

***"If Sweden wants its urfolk (indigenous people), they have to support them so they can live from the land."***



# MUSHROOMS

## METHODS

Very few people work with mushrooms in Jokkmokk, so this section is based off of one interview with a local mushroom expert and comments from several other individuals who work with plants and mushrooms.

## INTRODUCTION

Dealing in wild mushrooms will be tricky. Each year the mushroom harvest will vary. For example, several years ago people tried to harvest a Japanese mushroom called matsutake in Vuollerim with the goal of flying them to Japan to sell. But that year, no mushrooms came in Vuollerim. Mushroom seasons vary, and in order to make a living picking and selling mushrooms, a person may need more than one leg to stand on or a partner with another income.

“Mushrooms are essential to good food,” expressed one person. “To have great reindeer and fish but no mushrooms? That doesn’t work!” According to the resident mushroom expert, if someone began harvesting and selling mushrooms, they would have no competition. To be first could be very good, and it isn’t expensive to live in Jokkmokk, so someone could manage on a smaller income. There are also fewer poisonous mushrooms in Jokkmokk compared with southern Sweden, so picking mushrooms is not as dangerous. One also can’t over pick the mushrooms, like plants, but they do need forests in order to grow. Picking mushrooms would take advantage of the forests that have been protected, and those people who live here could take advantage of them.



Figure 24 A porcini near Saltoluokta

## CHALLENGES

A major challenge to building a mushroom industry is that, except for a few people and organizations, there is little interest in mushrooms in this area and very little recent tradition in using edible mushrooms. Many debate whether mushrooms were part of the Sámi diet, with the consensus that certainly when people were short on food they would supplement with mushrooms. Interestingly, the mushroom that people do pick in the area is the morel, which is poisonous unless it is boiled at least twice. Those individuals who were interviewed who pick morels often laugh at this fact and report that they and their family members have eaten morels all their lives and have yet to suffer from it.



Figure 25 A bjorksoppa found along the Kungsleden

Jokkmokk's resident mushroom expert calls the region the "forgotten land" as people often drive through the forested region straight to the mountains. But he states, "There is a lot of biological diversity in this area." Local government may not understand that Jokkmokk is unique for its mushrooms and the many mushroom-interested people it attracts. For example, three years ago the Swedish Mycology Organization visited Jokkmokk but nobody from the Kommun came to greet the organization during their visit.

## OTHER PRODUCTS: MILK AND BISCUITS

Skabram produces Skabram's Ost, Kaffe Ost, and Yogurt. Generally, customers for these products are not primarily in Jokkmokks kommun, except for a few local places such as Viddernas Cafe, the Handverksbutik, and ICA. Café Gasskas, Ajtte, Hotel Jokkmokk and Saltoluokta also purchase small amounts of cheese to cook with each year. Instead, the cheese sells more to restaurants along the coast, Stockholm, and Malmo. About 70% of the product is sold through distributors and 30% is sold directly to restaurants or super markets, and most of the restaurants buy through distributors.

In 2014, the dairy provided some employment. Four to five people are working in the dairy. There are two people working full time at the farm in Vuollerim, and one person works fulltime in the dairy. Skabrams cheese is a good example of marketing based on Jokkmokk's name, according to its previous owner. It is also difficult to begin a business such as a dairy due to the high cost of machinery that is needed for milking and producing cheese: "It's difficult to get money and farming costs money. It costs a lot and has very little profit. There are no shortcuts. If you need a machine, you have to buy that machine. If Jokkmokk wants more primary production, they will have to be more active in supporting with money or leases to those who want to produce."

***"There are no shortcuts. If you need a machine, you have to buy that machine. If Jokkmokk wants more primary production, they will have to be more active in supporting with money or leases to those who want to produce."***

Two individuals started producing biscuits for sale in Jokkmokks kommun. There is great enthusiasm for their product. They have cooperative networks established with local berry processors and with business associations along the coast. However, they face many challenges. Like other small businesses, labor is their greatest issue, as they explained, "It's been a difficulty. The labor costs in Sweden are incredible. We wanted to put these in a café. The café owner asked me to come up with a price. The ingredients versus the labor costs were incredible. The cost of electricity didn't add much. It



Figure 26 A midsummer celebration in Jokkmokk

was all labor. It's labor intensive to scoop and lay out the cookies. They are easy to serve in a café. But the price of a biscuit ends up being more than a cake." Many other businesses, from butchers to restaurants, echoed this statement. The high cost of labor prevented them from experimenting with new products or increasing the size of their business.

# FISH

## METHODS

Three people who fish as part of their yearly income and four people who buy, sell and sometimes process or smoke fish were interviewed. Informal conversations also took place with four people who catch, smoke and sell fish for tourists.

## INTRODUCTION

The fishing industry in Jokkmokk has changed significantly over the past century. This is in part due to the construction of hydroelectric dams along the Lule Rivers that continue to shift fish populations, and it is due to increases in farmed fish. For most individuals in Jokkmokk, fishing and the sale of fish is not financially lucrative. It provides a small income for those who can live modestly. For many of those who have succeeded, selling fish was a way to extend their primary season selling reindeer and moose meat. Fish usually come in during the summer when the moose and reindeer activities are slower. This point is critical – fishing is one of many legs these individuals use to make a living. They emphasized that they needed all of these different jobs to survive.



Figure 27 Smoked fish on Saltoluokta's Easter buffet

Many interviewees explained that the technology has not changed that much for fishing over the past century. However, the presence of farmed fish has changed the industry and customers have different expectations. One family fishermen stated that they used to salt and layer fish, in tons. Today, they sell filets, vacuum packed, because that's what customers want. There is little to no demand for salted fish.

Today, most individuals who continue to fish are men. They learned to fish from their elders, whether direct family such as parents or parents-in-law. Some of them have taken trainings in hygiene and the handling of fish.

They catch Arctic char (röding), white fish (sik), örring (brown trout), perch (abborra) and pike (jädda). They can sell either to Rönnbacks, Sapmi Ren och Vilt, Bjorn Tunborg's, Karlgrens, Stenberg's Vilt, to local restaurants, to private customers or to tourists along the Padjelanta or Kungsleden. For members of local samebys, they fish in the lakes in and around the Laponia World Heritage Site (Suorva Dam, Vaisaluokta, Sitojaure, Kutjaure, Vastenjaure, Virihaure). Fiskflyg picks those fish up with their helicopters approximately two to three times a week. Fiskflyg in Porjus began as a fish purchasing business, as evidenced by its name, though today it concentrates more on the transportation of tourists and materials in Laponia and the surrounding region. The business Rönnbacks stores the fish at Stora Sjöfallet and sells them throughout northern Scandinavia and Finland.



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## PRICES AND CUSTOMERS

Fish prices vary by year and fish. Generally a good price for röding is 65 per kilo and for sik 35 kronor per kilo. These fish might sell at a grocery store later for 120 / kilo. When fish are flown out of the fjäll via helicopter, between 5 to 12 kronor per kilo goes to pay for transportation. People try to transport at least 50 to 100 kilos of fish to make the trip financially worthwhile for them.

Fish can be sold directly to private customers as well, and most individuals do little marketing to find private customers. As one person stated, "The fish sell themselves." Smoking and fileting fish is expensive for most individuals, so they prefer to sell fish fresh or frozen. For hiking tourists along the



Figure 28 Arctic char or röding

trail, it is more profitable to sell them fresh fish than smoked fish. Tourists usually want to buy fish, often salted and smoked but sometimes fresh, while they hike along the Kungsleden and Padjelantaleden. They sell the smoked fish for 60 kronor each and the fresh for 40 kronor each, others might sell smoked fish for 80 kronor each. One interviewee commented that they make good money on the fresh fish, but the smoked fish isn't worth it: "You only make 20 more kronor, and you have to do much more, put in an hour more of work for it."

For those who do sell fish and other foods to tourists, they typically spend the summers at homes on lakes in the mountains. Many offer accommodations to tourists and fishermen in addition to simple foods such as fish that they catch and smoke themselves, gahku that they prepare, and some packaged foods. Most of them keep generators for freezers to store the fish. Working with tourists offers herding families extra income during the summer months.

## DEVELOPING A LOCAL FISHING INDUSTRY

Are there enough fish in the waters of Jokkmokk? According to many fishermen that were interviewed, yes, there are enough fish but their numbers rise and fall each year depending on other factors (release of waters behind dams primarily). Store owners and fish processors have experienced a decrease in the number of available fish since the 1990s, and they continue to have trouble getting enough fish like Arctic char. However, everyone agrees that there is room for development, if someone wants to do it and is willing to put in hard work.

In order to develop a fish industry in Jokkmokk, several logistical issues must be addressed according to interviews. These include the transportation and freezer storage of fish that are caught in the fjäll. Hydropower has and continues to impact fish populations in unpredictable ways that may impact people's ability to earn a living. In addition, they believe one person with the appropriate training (rather than a sameby or cooperative group) must invest in the business and wish to earn an income.



One strong example comes from Sapmi Ren och Vilt who have developed their fish sales. With growing recognition that they buy fish, more people are delivering fish in the winter and summer seasons. They found that fish was easy to work with because their facilities were already certified and because fish only require packaging and no further processing.

#### WHY DO PEOPLE CONTINUE TO FISH?

Fishing is sometimes the primary income, or it offers some additional income to reindeer herding, for many people. Aside from the income, one interviewee explained that he enjoyed being alone on the lakes. Another person stated that he simply can't do anything else, and working with fish and reindeer was his biggest dream – there was nothing else for him but this. Many people fish for themselves, and they ask, why should I buy food if I can get good quality food from here?

One fisherman feels that people do appreciate the work he does, acknowledging the difficulty of fishing. However, he recognizes that there are only two people who fish now in his area and maybe five or six in the larger region. Other people expressed ambivalence about people's appreciation of their work. They believed most people in Sweden wanted cheap food, or they were unsure what Swedish people thought of their foods, particularly the foods of Sámi people.



Figure 29 Fish smoke inside a kåta for personal use

#### CHALLENGES:

Potentially, the biggest unforeseen challenge to developing a vibrant fishing industry in the region will be the retirement of the current generation of fishermen. Many of those I spoke with did not believe their children or other youth would take over. The youngest person fishing for a living is nearing retirement age. Younger people continue to fish with their elders, and they will continue to fish for their own use and for smaller sales, but few people will earn a living from fishing. In contrast, those businesses who are processing fish expect that the younger generation will take over their businesses (that often include the processing of reindeer and moose). These small family businesses are seen as ways to help children remain in Jokkmokk, but fishing for a living is not viewed with the same positive outlook.

A second challenge is regulations of wild caught fish. Some restaurants must follow guidelines set up by other organizations such as STF. In 2014 STF was using the World Wildlife Federation guidelines that indicate if a wild species is in danger. In this specific case, chefs are prevented from ordering specific species of wild caught fish and forced to buy the farmed species, even if the chefs believe that the local people wouldn't fish in the area if they didn't believe there were enough fish. Despite these guidelines,

Saltoluokta Fjällstation does purchase local fish and this is one of the clearest cases of a successful long-term partnership that provides a livable income for fishermen. If Jokkmokk is going to grow a fishing industry, it will be critical to consider the impact these listings might have on people's willingness to purchase wild caught fish.



Figure 30 A Fiskflyg helicopter used to transport people and fish into the mountains

Finally, stereotypes and suspicions of fishing activities are prevalent throughout Jokkmokk and should be openly addressed by those who are interested in developing a fishing industry. During interviews and in conversation, many generalizations about fishing in the Lapponia area were invoked. Some accused people who fish of putting too many nets in the lakes and emptying, or overfishing, them.

# BERRIES

## METHODS

Ten people who work directly in the berry industry were interviewed. These include berry pickers and buyers born in Sweden and Thailand, those who process berries into jams and other products, and those who sell berries and berry products.

## INTRODUCTION

Sweden's berry industry relies primarily on migrant labor coming from Asian countries, such as Thailand. In 2014, Migrationsverket received 3300 visa applications from Thailand, and in 2015, they received 4000 applications. Berry pickers from outside the EU who receive visa contracts have the right to a salary of 19,772 kronor for full-time work. However, the region of Jokkmokk has few contracted pickers and instead more free pickers.



Figure 31 Fall blueberries

In Jokkmokk, the pickers, buyers and processors are primarily women. More than half of them are not originally from Jokkmokk (coming from other parts of Sweden and other countries), though most of them have lived in Jokkmokk for over twenty years. For those who process berries, two of them have had training through Samernas Utbildning and/or Eldrimner, while a third person received training from high school.

In Jokkmokks kommun, people pick cloudberries, blueberries, lingonberries, crowberries and occasionally odon and raspberries. Cloudberries can be picked from midsummer to August, blueberries from late August to September, lingonberries in September, and crowberries from September until the snow arrives.

Many who work with berries and food in Jokkmokk state that the plants and berries are more nutritious above the Arctic Circle. For example, one person says, "Scientific reports show that berries and plants from up here have lots of value, they're higher in antioxidants and minerals than wild berries and plants from southern Sweden. They have a higher concentration of these antioxidants and minerals. They speculate it may be the shorter growing season and the midnight sun that makes them have a higher concentration. I'm not sure how big this difference is compared with the south, but I'm selling that idea." These studies are important to the marketing of Jokkmokk berry and plant products.

## BUYERS



Figure 32 Cloudberryes

In the town of Jokkmokk, there are three individuals who purchase a large quantity of berries from free pickers. There are also individuals in Porjus, Vuollerim and Kabdålis purchasing berries. These buyers are purchasing for other businesses that are processing or shipping berries closer to coastal towns such as Harads and Luleå. In general, most berries do not stay in Jokkmokk for processing. However, there are four smaller operations who purchase berries or pick their own berries for processing in Jokkmokk and nearby villages.

Family, friend and country-of-origin networks are very important for moving berries. Most buyers in Jokkmokk have some sort of relationship with the business they sell to nearer the coast, and the same is true for local processors who tend to receive offers of berries from friends who know they process berries.

To be a berry buyer, one needs infrastructure such as garages for storing berries and a connection with one of these larger buyers near the coast. Buyers typically receive the bins and other materials needed from the business they purchase for.

The businesses come every two to three days to pick up the berries from their local buyers.

## PICKERS

Many pickers will sell to the highest buyer, though, according to most individuals, the price for berries is relatively similar across buyers. The price can vary by a few kronor each day, but prices remain relatively stable during a season. Pickers also sell to those they have an established relationship with, whether familial or simply a friendship developed over the years. Picking and cleaning berries is often organized through family relationships. One individual who had been picking in Jokkmokk's woods for nearly 35 years reflected that previously she had been alone out in the woods. Today, there are more people picking and there are more people buying.

## SEASONAL

Each year the berry season is different. Many of those interviewed made statements similar to this one: "There are years with berries and years without berries." Consequently, berry pickers cannot rely on berries as a steady income every year. One interviewee stated that there were few berries this summer (2014), so they were not bothering to go out to pick. Prices can vary: a hotel in Jokkmokk purchased berries from Polarica for 440 kronor per kilogram during the cloudberry shortage a few years ago. In 2013, a very good cloudberry year, the same hotel purchased berries from local pickers in Gällivare and Porjus for approximately 110 kronor per kilo.



In 2014, berry pickers were being paid between 60 to 100 kronor per kilo for cloudberries. In 2012, they were being paid 120 kronor per kilo for cloudberries. The “normal” price per kilo is between 60-80 kronor per kilo for cloudberries. Blueberries typically get 10-12 kronor per kilogram, while lingon berries get 16-18 kronor per kilogram.

Buyers in Jokkmokk do not decide the purchasing price for berries. It is larger businesses who decide together. According to buyers, prices depend on how much is in storage for large processors like Polarica. Some interviewees stated that the price for berries dropped significantly following a recent labor scandal, from 120-150 to 60-100 kronor. In addition, following the scandal, visiting pickers were required to be paid a salary.

## TIME

Most individuals spend different amounts of time working with berries depending on the season. For those who are picking and buying berries, it is full time work only during the summer. Typically, these individuals balance two jobs during the summer, picking and/or buying berries when they are not at their primary job.

Those who are processing berries also work during the fall, winter and spring. The amount of time they spend at this work varies. For example, one individual states, “Jag säger att jag jobbar heltid även om jag jobbar lite mer eller mindre beroende på säsong.” Another person laughed at the question of how much time she spent at her work: “Hörde du. Det är ju så. När man har eget företag det är alltid heltid, tycker jag. Det är ingen precisera tid att man ska jobba.”



Figure 33 Lingonberries

***“Det är ju så. När man har eget företag det är alltid heltid, tycker jag.  
Det är ingen precisera tid att man ska jobba.”***

## WHY DO PEOPLE WORK WITH BERRIES

All those interviewed stated they picked berries because they enjoy being out in the woods, regardless of whether they are originally from Sweden or another country. For example, one person states, “Jag plockar på fritiden. Jag älskar att vara ute i skogen och det är bra att få betalt, så klart.” Another agreed, “Jag tycker det är trevlig att vara i skogen,” while another picker stated, “I do it in my free time, for leisure. If I’m free then I ask someone, shall we go out? I like being in the woods, and you make some money.”

Tradition is another important reason many people pick berries. One person stated, “Det måste du se att...jag är uppvuxen med det. Mina föräldrar tyckte att man måste ta reda på vad som finns.”



Buyers who were originally from Thailand emphasized the social aspect. One began their work because, "It's also nice to speak your first language, to see friends because you don't see them in winter." Another buyer from Thailand stated she began a relationship with a coastal buyer because, "She knows me, she can speak Thai. It's a nice social thing as well." When she originally began, a buyer stated, "We felt bad for them [pickers from Asia]. They got no pay. They get a salary now, like Swedes. 19,000 something is what they get."

However, individuals also understand their work as a buyer as a hobby. She states, "I sit here at my house and my friends come. It's for a limited time, but it's every day as long as there are berries. It's part time. The pay is really bad. It's a hobby. It's not a job. You make just a little money. It's not a normal job. And I sit here 3 to 4 hours every day. So it's not that much money. Maybe extra money for clothes, go to town, buy ice cream."

## PROFITS FOR PICKING



Figure 34 A carpet of darker crowberries and blueberry or bilberry

Regardless of country of origin, people stated that the money they earn is important but not essential to their yearly survival, as one person stated, "Jag gör det inte för att överleva. Jag har alltid haft ett annat jobb. Det här är en bonus med mina pengar. Jag har haft roligt med pengarna, köpt lyxiga saker. Jag köpte nya glasögon, reste. En lärare har inga pengar!"

Most of those interviewed stated that they did this work – picking, buying and processing – for other

reasons than the money. According to many of them, the extra income was a nice benefit, but there were many other benefits as well. For pickers, buyers and processors, the profits from their work with berries is just enough to live from or simply not enough. "One would never be rich from this work," stated one individual. On a good year, an average picker may earn several thousand kronor.

One picker understood the system this way: "Så nu ska jag tjäna pengar på bären. Han ska tjäna, Svantes [a processor in Harads] ska tjäna. Så om jag fick 18 kronor per kilo för mina blåbär (och det är ganska mycket), sedan säljer en man på torget i Göteborg det för 34 kronor per liter. Han också ska tjäna pengar. Och han säljer per liter men köper per kilo. Det blir ganska svårt."

Another picker explained, "Jag plockar inte för pengarnas skull. Man får ju inte betalt för vad man gör när man plockar bär. På en eftermiddag tjänar jag kanske 200 kronor. Jag kan plocka blåbär från klockan 12 till 18, så 6 timmar. Sedan tar det 2 eller 3 timmar att rensa. Och för det får man 200 kronor. Det är kanske bensin till bilen. Så det är inte för pengarna att jag plockar. Det är mer för friskvård. Det är bra att man har betalt och man känner ju nyttig när man plockar."

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## ADDING VALUE

Some pickers and buyers add value to their product by cleaning them and selling berries to private customers. One picker and buyer stated, "We also clean blueberries so they're ready to eat. It is a processing, or adding value of sorts. We got four times as much pay. Your time gets paid for. Its 40 kronor per kilo for cleaned and 10-12 kronor per kilo for uncleaned. It's difficult to compete with the berry industry. They have machines to clean them. They wash them and then have blowers to blow away all the debris."

## PROFITS FOR PROCESSING

For those working with berry processing, their profits are small. Most of them need a second income from a second job or income from a spouse or partner. When asked if they could live from their business, one person laughed: "Ja, om man inte har för stora behov. Man kan inte bli miljonär från det. Jag har ingen tid att expandera. Om jag gjorde det skulle jag behöva anställa folk och nu är de ett familje företag och jag gillar hur det är nu. Så länge man tycker det är kul kan man fortsätta."

Two processors explained that they would need to hire someone else if they wanted to increase their production. All processors are happy with their current level of production and do not wish to hire anyone else. For example, one processor wishes to focus on producing a high quality product. Another is happy to focus on the tourism side of her business rather than the production. "The best thing is to give information and have a small production. That way people can also bring home your products and share them with friends and family, a small taste. I personally am not aiming to become a big producer. I think it's also important to spread knowledge so more people can pick for themselves."

One berry processor believes that most of their customers come from outside Jokkmokk, while another believes most of the customers are from Jokkmokk. Their businesses target different customers. Some focus sales over the Internet or to boutiques along the coast or in southern Sweden, while others focus their sales on locals and tourists in Jokkmokk.

## VALUE OF THEIR WORK BY SOCIETY

There are very different opinions when it comes to the question of value. Some pickers and processors believe their work is valued by their family, friends and wider society. Others believe their work is considered odd by wider society but appreciated by their customers. For example, one berry picker responded, "Nej. Ja. Vad ska jag säga? De tycker att jag är dum för de förstår inte. De tror att jag går ut för att tjäna pengar. De som köper bär, de tycker att det är bra att jag plockar, såklart." Another picker found that people were becoming more appreciative of her work. She stated, "Men det är ett lokalt intresse, det är en trend. Så folk är lite avundsjuka på mig, att jag går ut och plockar så mycket."

Processors believe their work is valued by many, but because they are not making a large profit and are not employing other people, they feel their work is less valued by the Kommun and local business. For example, one processor responded to the question of whether people valued their work, "Ja, det tycker jag nog, med drivkraft lite grann. De kanske ser över axeln från kommuns perspektiv eftersom de vill visa att det kan bli lönsamt och att man kan anställa. Men jag trivs som det är. Det kanske blir trevligt att vara mer kraftig. Jag känner mig inte marginaliserat. Det gör jag inte. Men allting räknas i pengar i

samhället. Och en annan sak. Det känns viktigare, eller en enklare väg är att istället för att bli stor kan man bli lyxig.” Another processor responded that when it came to value, “Inte i själva samhället men av andra människor är jag [värderad]. För samhället finns vi inte. Jag upplever att alla våra kunder värderar oss. De säger, vilken tur! Nu får ni inte stänga affären. De tycker det är bra.”

***Det känns viktigare, eller en enklare väg är  
att istället för att bli stor kan man bli lyxig.***

## CHALLENGES AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT



Figure 35 A carpet of lingon and crow berries

Berry pickers and buyers in Jokkmokk do not plan on developing their own products from berries. They perceive it as a complicated undertaking with inspections and materials, and they have other jobs and incomes. Processors also do not plan on building their businesses beyond their current size. They enjoy their work as it is currently.

Jokkmokk's berry industry is small but strong and building recognition. Potential for more development exists, however, those who have built the industry and name recognition do not foresee getting bigger themselves. A discussion may be fruitful between berry processors and local buyers regarding building more berry-based businesses.

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## STEREOTYPES

Those interviewed from Sweden believed it was a good thing that people from Thailand (and other countries) were coming to pick berries. Otherwise, many stated, the berries would simply rot and not be used. One person explained, “Det är många som är arga på thailändare som kom hit och plockade. Jag tycker att, vem plockar om inte de? Vi gör det inte.” Another person stated, “På den tiden tyckte vi att de tog våra bär. Men nu tycker jag att det är

bara bra för folk från Jokkmokk plockar inte. Jag tycker det är bra. Vi skrattar med varandra, vi hälsar. Jag är ensam. Vi plockar inte tillsammans men vi kan vara på samma ställe. Jag har inget bekymmer med utlänningar.”

There are two ethnic stereotypes: People from Sweden are too lazy to pick effectively or to pick at all and people from Thailand pick efficiently. People born in Sweden believe they pick for the enjoyment and an extra small amount of money, while people coming from Thailand pick to earn money, and thus they are much more efficient pickers than themselves. Those interviewed also believe that few people

pick in Jokkmokk, which all those interviewed believe is unfortunate given the high unemployment. Others believe that Swedish residents are discouraged from picking because of taxes that people from other countries don't pay.

Facilitating conversations about these stereotypes and what the reality of the situation is would be important if someone in Jokkmokk chose to develop a larger berry purchasing or processing business. Understanding how people actually work –regardless of their ethnic identity or country of origin—is important. Based on these interviews, it appears that all individuals work for the enjoyment of picking and the extra income.

## METHODS

I USA måste all forskning gå igenom ett etiskt prov. Den här studien är godkänt av Oregon State Universitys IRB (Internal Review Board). Viktigaste för en forskare (jag) är att man måste visa att personerna som deltar i studien inte ska bli påverkade av studien på ett negativt sätt. Det innebär att de vet hur information ska användas, att de får tacka nej till studien, och att de ska vara anonyma så mycket som möjligt.

Jag frågade alla samma frågor men brist på tid (för alla matproducenterna har en sak gemensamt och det är att tiden inte räcker till) gjorde att inte alla hade tid att svara på alla frågor.

### INTERVJU FRÅGORNA

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1. Kan du berätta om hur du jobbar med mat?
2. Vilket livsmedel resurser använder du?
3. Var skaffar du dem?
4. Var eller till vem säljer du?
  1. Säljer de till människor i området, turister, eller en annan region?
5. Jobbar du heltid, deltid, eller någon annat?
  1. Om de jobbar deltid eller mindre, fråga om varför – finns det barriärer som begränsar din produktion?
6. Vilka säsonger jobbar du mest i?
7. Vilken utbildning har du?
8. Jobbar du för dig själv eller någon annan?
9. Varför gör du jobbet?
  1. Vad känner du om ditt jobb – stolthet, njutning, frustration?
  2. Tycker du att ditt företag eller yrke är värderad och förstått av din familj, vänner, samhälle, och land? Varför eller varför inte?
10. Samarbetar eller delar du med andra Jokkmokk företagare?
11. Vad är bra inom Jokkmokks livsmedelsystem?
12. Vilka utmaningar finns det när du jobbar med mat?
13. Vilken ändring skulle du vilja se i mat systemet?