

**CO-OPERATION IN
DANISH
AGRICULTURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649109371

Co-operation in Danish agriculture by Harald Faber & H. Hertel

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

HARALD FABER & H. HERTEL

**CO-OPERATION IN
DANISH
AGRICULTURE**

CO-OPERATION IN DANISH
AGRICULTURE

"Co-operation is a thing most excellent."—W. E. GLADSTONE.

870-85

CO-OPERATION IN DANISH AGRICULTURE

BY
HARALD FABER

AN ENGLISH ADAPTATION OF
"ANDELSBEVÆGELSEN I DANMARK"

BY
H. HERTEL

WITH A FOREWORD BY
E. J. RUSSELL, D.Sc., F.R.S.
DIRECTOR OF THE ROTHAMSTED EXPERIMENTAL STATION, HARPENDEN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
FOURTH AVENUE AND 30TH STREET, NEW YORK
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1918

All rights reserved.

FOREWORD

By E. J. RUSSELL, D.Sc., F.R.S.

IN the following pages Mr. Faber has taken the Danish text of Mr. Hertel's Report on the Development of the Co-operative movement in Danish Agriculture and put it into a form suitable for English readers. We have had several accounts before, notably those by Mr. Christopher Turnor, Levy, Wolff, and others, but none covering the same ground as this. Previous writers have described from without: they have visited Denmark, seen the wonderful results achieved by the Danish farmer, and on returning home have recorded their impressions. The present book deals with the movement from within: Mr. Hertel, through his intimate association with the Danish Central Co-operative Committee, and the Royal Danish Agricultural Society, has access to all the records of the movement, while Mr. Harald Faber not only knows Danish agriculture thoroughly, but is also well acquainted with English conditions. English experts have long since learnt to "ask Mr. Faber" whenever any question arose as to Danish agriculture; they will have in this book a valuable summary of the information he has been in the habit of giving them.

It would be difficult to find a more entrancing subject than the history of Danish agriculture between 1860 and 1912, roughly the period covered by the book. Up to the beginning of this period the story has been much the same as our own; there had been a steady improvement from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the culmination in the 'sixties.

The system had been essentially one of corn production; but in order to get the best results it had to be combined with live stock. It was in working out the combination that Danish agriculture took a line of its own which gradually led to complete differentiation from other European systems.

The English farmer had gone in for meat production. The Danish farmer, on the other hand, went in for dairy work. The choice was momentous, and we should like to know a little more fully exactly what determined it. Events have shown that it was emphatically the right choice, because dairy farming produces much more food per acre of ground than meat production, and it allows full scope for, indeed it necessitates, those co-operative methods of business and production which have since dominated Danish agriculture. We are proud to remember that Segeleke, the young Dane who played a prominent part in bringing about the change, first spent a year at Rothamsted, and then went straight from there to take up his work in Denmark. Co-operation came later. In 1882 Stilling Andersen founded the co-operative dairy at Hjeddning, which is usually regarded as the starting-point, though, as a matter-of-fact, a co-operative dairy had already been established in 1875.

The wisdom of the Danish choice was evident in the 'eighties and 'nineties when Europe was flooded with cheap agricultural produce, especially corn from the virgin countries of the New World and Australasia. Wheat fell to nearly half the price it had commanded in the 'sixties. English agriculture suffered a terrible set back, and did not begin to recover until about 1896. Danish agriculture, on the other hand, was able not only to weather the storm but even to make headway all the time. The improvement in dairying reacted on the arable farming: the export of butter rose from 10,300 tons per annum in the late 'seventies to 100,000 tons per annum before the War, and the yield of wheat rose from 30.9 to 36.5 bushels per acre.

Thus the Danish system has proved to be eminently suitable for the production of wheat from the land.

Herein lies the great importance of its lesson for us. Whatever may be the ending of the War, and whenever it comes, we may be absolutely confident that times of serious difficulty lie ahead. However much wise statesmanship may mitigate the effects of the destruction brought about by the War a time of stress will come as surely as night succeeds to day; the very word "Reconstruction," now on every one's

lips, shows that most people realize this. The new structure may be better or worse than the old, but the old one has been so much shaken that we shall have the labour and the pain of building a new one. Science may do much in giving us new methods; but in agriculture the determining factors are human, and experience shows that history alone gives the key to the human factor. If we know what men have done before in given circumstances, and how they did it, we know what they can do again.

This book, therefore, comes most opportunely. We all wish that the agricultural reconstruction necessitated by the War shall give us a better and a happier country life than we had before. Messrs. Faber and Hertel show by what means Denmark started out from a humbler beginning than, let us hope, we shall be called upon to start from, and ended with a degree of prosperity that we should be happy to attain. The book is not, so to speak, a picture, but rather a working model with complete diagrams. We are given a detailed account of the various societies, the points where they proved defective, how the defects were remedied, and what measure of final success was achieved.

In solving our own problem we shall not necessarily use the same model; we are more likely to follow our national bent and improvise or design one adapted to our own special conditions. But the Danish model here described has proved an extremely potent constructive implement, and we shall do well to study it closely.

The essential feature of the Danish method is co-operation. The prodigious effect that combination of effort by the whole body of producers can exert in increasing output, in cheapening cost of production, in improving the quality and value of the produce, and in ameliorating the lot of the labourer, are shown by the statistics abundantly scattered throughout the book. During the period when Danish agriculture was making great progress, British agriculture gained little or nothing in prosperity; it first declined and then rose, but probably not beyond its original starting point. The British method, in short, proved less capable of adaptation to new and adverse conditions than the Danish. Critics may argue

that the same methods would not apply here; that the British farmer is so confirmed an individualist and so imbued with the idea of running his own farm in his own way that he cannot co-operate with his neighbour. It may or may not be so; but it is imperative that we should do something, and if we discard the Danish model we must at least try to produce a better. The book stands as a record of good work well done.