

Norwegian Experiences after the Chernobyl Fallout and Perspectives for the EGRM Guidance

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Norway received significant fallout from the 1986 Chernobyl accident. Some of the traditional food production relies on the use of marginal resources, particularly unimproved forest and mountain pastures where transfer of fallout cesium to grazing animals may be considerably higher than in more intensive and industrialized agriculture. The consequences of the fallout were most dramatic for reindeer husbandry, which also form the basis for the culture and business of the indigenous Sami population in parts of the Norway. However, the consequences were also dramatic for farmers in the most contaminated areas. Due to the predicted long-lasting effects of the fallout, the government decided on various actions to support the affected population and their businesses, some of which are still in effect today, 34 years later. One of the actions was to increase the permissible level for radioactive cesium in traded reindeer meat to 6,000 Bq/kg. However, the reindeer herders themselves were recommended to use less contaminated meat in their households, and various measures were initiated to assist them in managing their situation. Although the most dramatic consequences in Norway were associated with food production in particularly vulnerable environments, much of the experiences refer to universal human needs and values. In planning and preparing for future nuclear emergency situations, we therefore recommend identifying groups of the population which may potentially be most affected by radioactive fallout (due e.g. to particular habits or occupation). For these groups, potential remediation strategies should be evaluated – including strategies where the population may play active roles themselves – with the aim of identifying priorities of various stakeholders and what strategies are most acceptable and preferable. People from the identified groups should be involved in these processes.

Keywords: *Chernobyl, Norway, reindeer, remediation, Sami*

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