

**Vg1 Restaurant- og matfag, Vg1 Naturbruk, Vg2 Landbruk og gartneri**

### **Local Food Production**

**John has just completed his first year course in Restaurant and Food Processing. Some years ago, John's mother inherited a pile of old America letters. When she realized that most of her ancestors emigrated to the USA in the 1880s, it sparked an interest in genealogy. She got in touch with descendants of the immigrants and Michelle and her teenage daughter, Deborah, from St. Paul, Minnesota, decided to visit John's family in Norway. Now John has been asked to give his American relatives a guided tour of farms that produce locally grown food.**

**Michelle:** Well, John, your mum told me that you are to be our guide today. You're going to show us some of the local food producers in the area, aren't you?

**John:** That's right. We have had project at school that focused on local and small-scale food production. Before the project I had no idea that we had so many food producers in this county. Some of them have been very successful, and there is great demand for their produce, especially among the restaurants recommended in the Michelin guide and by the star chefs.

**Deborah (interrupting):** Remember *The Grace* -that restaurant we visited in Chicago, Mum? It was awarded three Michelin stars, I think. They served some kind of fusion cuisine – you know, like Americans in general – a blend of everything – some Mediterranean, some Asian, some Latin American and Caribbean – and some Scandinavian. I think it is really interesting how food mirrors our culture and history.

**John:** I think that's fascinating, too. Local produce has restored some of the pride in traditional Norwegian cooking. Granny's old recipes have all of a sudden become "hot" and have blended in with more experimental cooking. Well, here we are at the farm... (*sounds from vehicle...arriving at a farm....*)

**Michelle (spotting the farm and gasping with admiration)** ....Oh, this is just amazing. I think these small farms clinging to the steep hillsides are so picturesque. But how do they survive, how do they make a living? We have

nothing like this in Minnesota, you know, just the large industrial farms.

**John:** Do you see the apple trees? The old family farm where our ancestors came from had an orchard with apple trees, remember?

**Deborah:** Oh, yes, I remember from the photo you showed us. It's so strange to think about my great-great-grandmother growing up on a farm like this. Did they eat a lot of apples, you think?

**John:** I think they had to exploit just about everything they produced. The climate is very favorable for growing apples here, and the trees do not need very much tending. Until recently, though, apples were a neglected fruit in Norwegian cooking. It was just an important ingredient in Granny's apple cake. That has changed a lot, fortunately. On this apple farm they produce cider and juice- in Norwegian we call it "most". Let's find out what you think of it? (*pouring from a bottle*)...Cheers – in Norwegian we say "skål"...

**Michelle:** Mmm...it has a very nice flavor to it, and it's sparkling – this is cider, isn't it?

**John:** That's right. Many farms have been closed down over the last decades, but I think enterprises like this might save our countryside. There is an increasing demand for locally grown and organic food nowadays. In Norway there's always the economic aspect, though. Ecological food production is very expensive.

**Michelle:** I know, it's the same all over. 40 years ago we had 100,000 farms in Minnesota, now we're down to 75,000. But I think young farmers are ready to invest in locally grown food, and the consumers are more concerned about how and where the food is produced, even if they have to pay more.

**John:** Maybe there is hope in the new generation? Our next destination is a goose and duck farm run by young people, which has earned an excellent reputation. If a restaurant has these ducks on its menu, it is considered a proof of quality.