

Black currant production in Norway

Nordic currant seminar 16.03.23



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Currants for industrial processing

- Almost only black currants
- Mechanical harvesting
- Mostly concentrated juice for drinks/syrup

Currants for fresh consumption

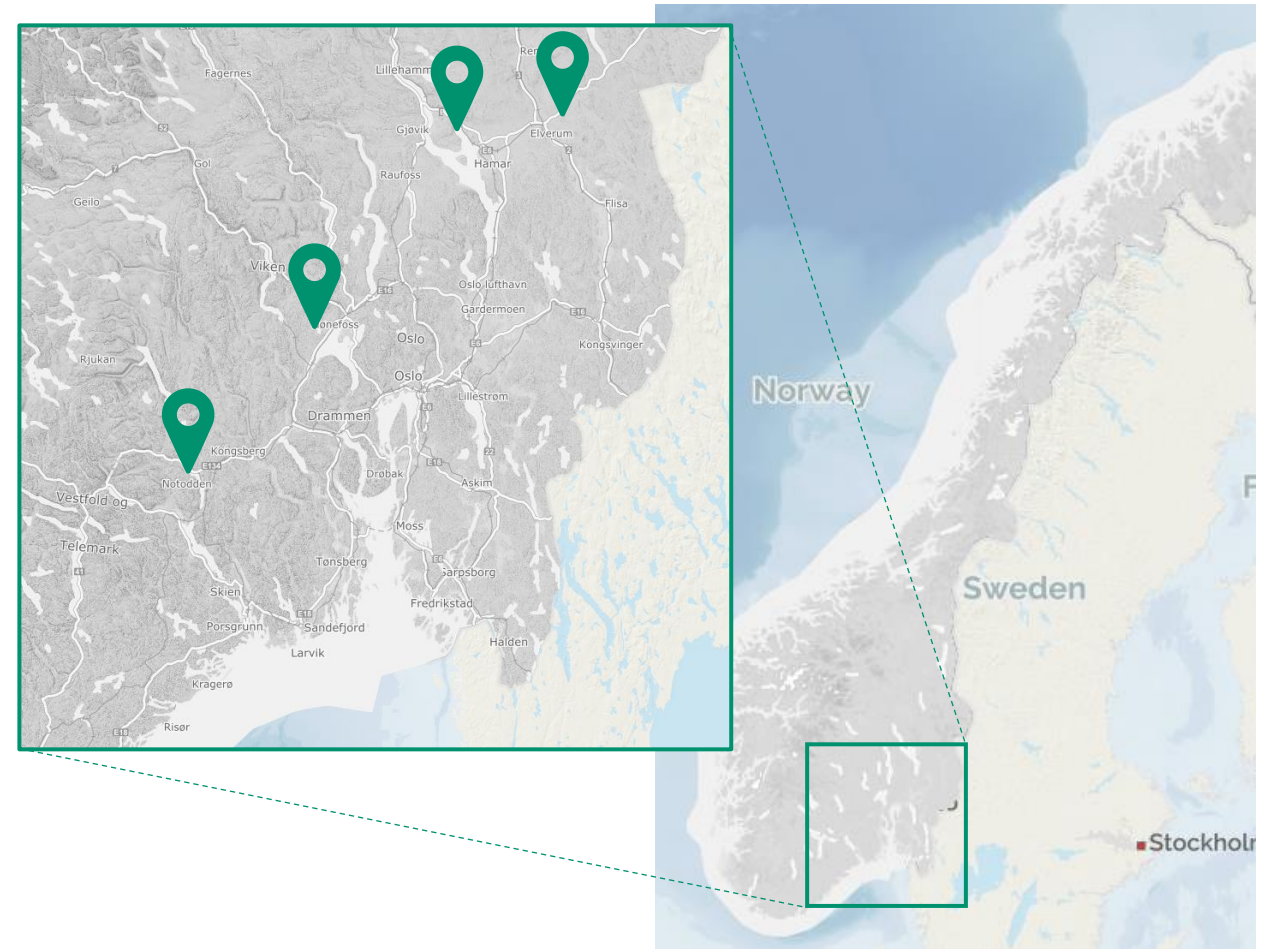
- Black currants, red currants and gooseberry
- Hand picked by grower or customer
- Farm shop/restaurants/grocery stores



Areas of black currant production for industry

- Viken – 318 ton (2020)
- Innlandet – 246 ton (2020)
- Telemark and Vestfold – 72 ton (2020)

- About 274 hectare in total (2020)
- About 4000-4500 kg pr ha on average



Organization

- Gartnerhallen – a Norwegian agricultural cooperative
 - 13 black currant growers – +/- 125 hectare in total
 - 6 red currant growers
 - 3 gooseberry growers
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ black currant for processing (Synnøve)
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ currants for fresh consumption (Bama)
- Coop - fresh consumption
- Other wholesalers



Processing

- Processing facilities
 - Askim
 - Hardanger
 - Røyse
 - + small local facilities
- The farmer sell berries to the concentrate producer -> concentrate producer supplies the processing industry.
- Some pay for processing at a factory and sell the products under their own label.



Propagation and planting

- Woody cuttings, «homemade» or from nursery
- Grow the cuttings in their own nursery
 - Covered beds
 - Plant after 2-3 years
- Plant directly in the field, often with biodegradable ground cover
- Spring after planting – cut down for better growth



Black currant varieties

- Important qualities
 - Vertical growth form
 - Disease and pest resistant
 - Cold hardy
 - Late blooming
 - High Brix
- **Main variety**
 - **Ben Tron**
- Varieties
 - Kristin, Sunniva, Hedda, Gjest
 - Ben Alder, Ben Nevis
 - Narve Viking, Ben Hope



Cropping system

- Planting distance 35-50 cm
- Row distance 3,5-4 meter
- Ground cover, bare soil, grass
- Some have drip irrigation
- Renewal of field by cutting all aboveground material every 7th year or if a lot of damage



Fertilization

- Based on soil and leaf analyses
- Normal fertilization
 - 8 kg N, 1,5 kg P and 8-9 kg K
- Fertilizing in early spring, early summer and end of august
 - Yara 12-4-18 micro
 - Patentkali – potassium (K)
 - Kalksalpeter/Calcium nitrate (N)
- Chlorine-free fertilizer



Frost damage

- Low winter temperatures
- Fluctuating temperatures during winter
- Sub-zero temperatures during flowering
- Increased problems with climate change?



Pests

- Gall mite (*Cecidophyopsis ribis*)
- Spider mites
- Aphids
- Currant shoot borer (*Lampronia capitella*)
- Leaf wasp larvae
- Butterfly larvae

- Lots of natural predators
- Sulphur against gall mite
- Some pesticides available



Disease

- Blackcurrant dieback (*Phomopsis ribicola*)
- Blackcurrant leaf spot (*Drepanopeziza ribis*)
- Rust (*Cronartium ribicola*)
- Gray mould (*Botrytis cinerea*)

- Red currant and gooseberry – Powdery mildew

- Choose «strong» varieties
- 2-3 sprayings with fungicide pr season



Challenges

- Changing climate
 - The industry needs «better» varieties
- More pests and diseases?

& opportunities?

- Increased popularity as a «health food»
- More interest in “pick-your-own” and local food

