The Experience of the Sami People in Norway following the Chernobyl Accident

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Reindeer husbandry as industry

• Meat production is the main income source.
• The only industry that are defined as Sami.
• Year round pasture, greater vulnerability to natural disasters
Reindeer husbandry as a cultural heritage

Definition of culture as term:

A term without objective criteria, but can be translated to thoughts, knowledge and skills people acquires as members of a society.

(Eriksen and Sørheim, 1994).
“Reindeer herding…”

It is..

- Not a job, but a life …
- Involves the whole family.
- Traditional-based learning “Learning through participation and own experiences”.

Practical solutions…
“Being affected by a disaster…”

- Lack of control over the situation.
- You have to trust that the information you receive is correct.
- New solutions enforced, that is not based on traditional knowledge and past experience.
"A new day…”

• The slaughter must be scheduled after the level of Bq. in reindeer.
• Products of reindeer fed with industry produced animal feed, is useless.
• The food that is located out in the wild is no longer "available".
• Basic foods must be obtained from the store..

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25 years after Chernobyl disaster

The cost of such a disaster has economic and human aspects as in the current situation is carried by the reindeer owners and their family's...
Some examples…

- Change of diet.
- Additional work in the form of feeding with industry produced animal food.
- Buy reindeer meat for consumption from less contaminated areas.
- The fear of consequences for future generations.
- The loss of traditional knowledge.
This is our earth and the ground that give us the food
"Reindeer farming as cultural tradition in southern Sapmi - also in the future?"