

## Reindeer Husbandry in Kuusamo

**Osmo Säkkinen** - Alakitka Reindeer Herding Co-operative

The reindeer husbandry in Kuusamo in south-eastern part of the reindeer area (see map in Filppa's lecture), was still extensively and almost entirely based on other occupations, e.g., agriculture and forestry, during the decade between 1970 and 1980. During this period «enclosure feeding» was initiated. Reindeer were taken into domestic care during the worst winter months; initially the calves and male animals in particular. Reindeer density is less than two per km<sup>2</sup>. Our method of reindeer husbandry in 1980 and subsequent years has been such that reindeer have been actively maintained during the (90–100) days of the winter months through additional or enclosure-type feeding. The animals have fared well under our method of upkeep. A clear indication of it is the high stabilised level (80%) of the percentage of calves as well as the continuous rise in the carcass weights of calves, now being 24–26 kg. A decisive factor affecting feeding is the fact that late winter grazing grounds - the horse-hair lichen forests - have been dynamically incorporated within the management of forests. Our system of reindeer husbandry has changed and continues to change in an increasingly professional direction; i.e., the animals are being relegated to professional reindeer herders.

One of the most significant problems today is the «explosive» growth of predator populations. The damages caused by predators, in particular by wolverines, bears and eagles, are substantial. The dilemma posed to the reindeer herding co-operatives of Kuusamo area is that of predators arriving and lingering from beyond the eastern frontier (Russia). Another problem relates to the lack of a reindeer abattoir network on the European Union level, which is missing from the entire southern reindeer management area.

We anticipate that, during the next few years, the so-called 'farm closure compensation' system, similar to the agrarian system, shall be brought into reindeer husbandry and increase the transfer to younger owners. At present, there are reindeer management plans being composed within our herding co-operatives for the decade beginning in the year 2000. In a decisive position, in considering the future, are the highest permissible numbers of live reindeer in respect to each herding co-operative, as set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The action plans of the co-operatives are to be established by reference to the present numbers of reindeer.

According to research, the situation of the grazing grounds is not so promising. The lichen reserves are sparse, whereas horse-hair lichen forests can still be found rather substantially, primarily in national and nature parks. Similarly, hair grass forests are plentiful from place to place.

In my view, the research on summer grazing grounds of the southern reindeer management area should also be ready before initiating the assessment of reindeer quantities. We believe our summer pasture circumstances to be favourable, indicated by the high carcass weights of calves as well as the high percentage of calves in general. We anticipate that this research shall also clarify the criteria which have led, in various locations, to the over-consumption of reindeer grazing grounds and whether the same is due to, for instance, agriculture, forestry and/or tourism.

1850  
1851  
1852  
1853  
1854  
1855  
1856  
1857  
1858  
1859  
1860  
1861  
1862  
1863  
1864  
1865  
1866  
1867  
1868  
1869  
1870  
1871  
1872  
1873  
1874  
1875  
1876  
1877  
1878  
1879  
1880  
1881  
1882  
1883  
1884  
1885  
1886  
1887  
1888  
1889  
1890  
1891  
1892  
1893  
1894  
1895  
1896  
1897  
1898  
1899  
1900