Abstracts

The starting point for the future of Danish agriculture: The sector's history from 1945 to 2026

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It is rightly said that life must be lived forwards, but can only be understood backwards, and history will therefore naturally play a central role in any form of research of the future. In relation to a discussion about the future of Danish agriculture, agricultural history is therefore absolutely necessary. And the history of Danish agriculture since the Second World War has been dramatic. We have gone from a labour-intensive agriculture with around two hundred thousand small family farms to an agriculture based on chemistry and capital and with fewer than six thousand full-time farms. Machines, artificial fertilizers and pesticides have made old virtues such as crop rotation redundant. But this has led to new problems with the environment and biodiversity. How dramatic and extensive the changes have been can be seen both from the bare numbers and from the literary descriptions of the human destinies in the sector.

Green transition without rupture? The animal export model in Danish agriculture from the cooperative movement to the present green transition

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Danish agriculture is widely expected to undergo a green transition. This article asks what production model is to be transformed, and whether current policy points to a structural break or to another adaptation of the existing model. We argue that Danish agriculture has since the late nineteenth century been organised around an animal-based, export-oriented production model. The model has repeatedly been reshaped through institutions, regulation, structural adjustment and technology, but its basic features have remained remarkably stable. We further argue that current green reforms appear less as a rupture than as a new political and technological adaptation of the same historical model.

The Ambivalent Future of Agriculture

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Based on 29 interviews, the article provides insight into conventional farmers' expectations for the future. There is a tragic dimension to these expectations: the developments they perceive as inevitable - and to which they themselves contribute in order to remain in the profession - are also developments they experience as eroding the very elements that bind them to life as farmers. Through a series of quotations, the article identifies three responses to these expectations for the future: phase-out, hesitation, and expansion. It further examines the ambivalence underlying each of these responses.

Green Transition Through Market-driven Sustainability?

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Market-based solutions play an increasingly important role in the green transition of agriculture and food systems. The article examines how carbon farming, ESG reporting, and nature credits translate environmental effects into economically measurable and potentially tradable units. The analysis shows that such instruments can both mobilize private capital and create new incentives for environmental improvements, but they also entail a particular governance logic in which what can be measured assumes a central role in defining sustainability. In particular, requirements for additionality, standardization, monitoring, reporting, and verification create challenges for documenting complex and long-term ecological effects. At the same time, administrative burdens and requirements for scale and standardization may limit the participation of smaller and more diversified farms. The article therefore argues that market-based instruments should not be assessed solely in terms of their ability to create economic incentives, but also in terms of which forms of farming and sustainability they make economically visible and attractive. Market-based solutions should thus be seen as a complement to regulation and public funding and developed in close alignment with broader climate, environmental, and nature objectives.

What should count in agriculture of the future?

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We argue that quantitative indicators, including CO_2e accounting, cannot by themselves chart the future of agriculture. They reveal environmental pressures and economic conditions while obscuring significant dimensions, including practical knowledge, care, power relations and socioecological relationships. When these indicators are made the basis of political decisions, transformation narrows to measurable harm reduction. Agroecology—also known in Danish as *naturnært landbrug* (nature-near farming)—is presented as a holistic framework. Its potential is articulated through landscape-making: farming as co-creation of habitats, relationships and

conditions of life. The related term *naturnærende* describes farming that both moves closer to nature and nourishes its diversity, richness and beauty. Quantitative indicators and qualitative assessments can form a transdisciplinary evidence base through which food, land and landscape become matters of common concern, and the future of agriculture a question of democratic provisioning. The perspective thus shifts from harm reduction to asking what forms of life and landscapes farming makes possible.

Diversity and resilience as key for vital and vibrant future agriculture with animals

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This article explores how Danish farming systems with livestock can develop ecological and social resilience, thereby helping to address interconnected systemic crises, including the loss of biodiversity, health and social life in rural areas, as well as food system challenges, and what roles different forms of diversity (from the genetic to the landscape level) play in this development. Drawing on Rosa's resonance theory, we analyse the development of animals, farming systems and landscapes through relationships in which people do not merely seek control but allow themselves to be affected and respond in turn. We outline Danish examples of diversified farming systems that have emerged through interaction with their local contexts and often appear as niches, potentially participating in collaborative networks and social movements. We highlight significant structural challenges and the need for institutional support to ensure that diversity can serve as a strategy for future farming in Denmark.

The Green Tripartite Agreement and Its Future Imaginaries of Danish Agriculture

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Few recent political agreements have shaped the future imaginaries of Danish agriculture as profoundly as the Green Tripartite Agreement. Drawing on an analysis of the agreement and its implementation framework, this article examines how visions of agricultural futures are translated into investment, regulation, and land-use changes. We show that the agreement establishes a future regime in which technological optimisation and spatial reorganisation are expected to reduce agriculture's climate and environmental impacts, while leaving its intensive, livestock-based, and export-oriented production model

largely unquestioned. Inspired by Bruno Latour's concept of black-boxing, we develop the notion of *black-box logic* to capture how political governance treats still-unstable connections between policy instruments and anticipated outcomes as though they were already settled. This logic enables political action based on expected future effects but may ultimately undermine the agreement's objectives and exacerbate some of the problems it seeks to address.

Faroese and Greenlandic autonomy and movement towards independence: What is Denmark's answer?

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The article raises the question of how the dominant Danish political discourse legitimises the Danish governments' approach to Faroese and Greenlandic autonomy. It also asks whether there are competing political discourses, and what they say about the government's freedom of action and possible changing patterns in this field. The article points out that there is a fundamental understanding that the Kingdom consists of three countries, which provides a broad framework for acceptance of Faroese and Greenlandic autonomy. At the same time, Faroese and Greenlandic challenges to the Constitution mean that the dominant Danish discourse comes under pressure. This gives increased strength to a competing discourse in the Folketing, which does not read the Constitution as a fixed framework for cooperation between the three countries.

From technology to welfare: On social science contributions to innovation

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With the launch of the SVM government's *Strategic Priorities for Research and Innovation 2026–2029* in October 2025, innovation moved high on the research policy agenda. At the same time, the University Act is facing a revision in which innovation will be placed on the same level as research and teaching. This raises the question of what we understand by innovation in the social sciences, and how innovation can be practiced in concrete terms.

Drawing on a brief review of the history of the concept of innovation since Joseph Schumpeter's book on economic development was published in 1911, we argue that the social sciences' primary contribution to innovation can be understood through two approaches to process. One concerns process understood as outcome, where innovation consists of changed procedures or practices, while the other focuses on process as course, referring to the orchestration of open and distributed innovation processes among multiple actors. We conclude that the social sciences can make a substantial contribution to innovation in the public sector in general and to welfare innovation in particular.