GUIDE FOR
EVALUATING ANIMAL WELFARE IN ANIMAL-BASED TOURISM IN FINLAND

Animal species: Reindeer
Guide for evaluating animal welfare in animal-based tourism in Finland

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Over the few last decades, tourism has experienced continued growth, becoming one of the most important sectors in Lapland and other northern regions of Finland. Animals have played a very important role in supporting this growth. Animal-based activities are not only very popular among tourists, but also one of the reasons for visiting northern Finland. Furthermore, animals such as sled dogs, reindeer, and Finnhorses have become an important branding element of Lapland and other tourism destinations in the North.

This document is one of four aiming to better guide the process of evaluating and communicating animal welfare in animal-based tourism activities in Finland. Their focus is on three main animal species: sled dogs, reindeer, and horses. The documents are highly relevant at a time when animal welfare in tourism is being pushed forward due to consumer demand. While many tourists feel that close interaction with animals is an exciting way of spending a holiday, they also have become more aware of the negative impacts that tourism can have on animals. As a result, animal welfare is becoming a critical criterion used by tour operators to select their suppliers.

The document at hand provides a group of specific themes and focused questions to evaluate the welfare of reindeer involved in tourism operations. In doing so, the document recognized the nature of reindeer as a semi-wild animal species with needs different to those of domestic animals. It also draws attention to the welfare of reindeer at the interface of two economic sectors: tourism and reindeer herding. The document aims to help animal-based tourism companies, destination marketing companies, tour operators, and other stakeholders to identify the issues that need to be considered to guarantee the welfare of reindeer working in tourism. Moreover, this document builds a solid foundation for the future development of animal welfare criteria for auditing systems, certification, or other similar assessment tools focusing on reindeer as a tourism working animal.

The themes and questions included in this document are the outcome of an action research process conducted in the project “Animals and responsible tourism: promoting business competitiveness through animal welfare”, which was funded by Business Finland under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In addition to public funding, 10% of the project budget was financed by 10 Finnish tourism companies: Lapland Safaris, Harriniva Hotels & Safaris, Ranua Wildlife Park, Arctic Reindeer, Arctic Husky Farm, Hetta Huskies, Lapland Husky Safaris, OFF-Piste Adventures, Polar Lights Tours, and Ruska Laukka. The project was implemented by the Multidimensional Tourism Institute (MTI), University of Lapland during the period 01.08.2016-31.07.2018.

In addition to the 10 companies co-financing the project, a wide range of animal welfare and responsible tourism experts took part in the action research process. The following experts were involved in the development of the document at hand: Vicki Brown (Responsible Travel), Mia Halmén (The Finnish Association for Fair Tourism), Tiina Kauppinen (Natural Resources Institute Finland, The Finnish Centre for Animal Welfare), Satu Raussi (Natural Resources Institute Finland, The Finnish Centre for Animal Welfare), Kati Pulli (Finnish Federation for Animal Welfare Associations), Anne Ollila (Reindeer Herders’ Association), and Meike Witt (Exploring Iceland).

The sister project “Animal Welfare in Tourism Services” (Lapland University of Applied Sciences and University of Lapland) contributed significantly to the development of this research by providing information on the welfare of reindeer. This information is based on interviews conducted with local reindeer tourism companies and the knowledge on reindeer welfare available among the experts from the Lapland University of Applied Sciences. The research process and document used also information available at: Reindeer Herders’ Association website https://paliskunnat.fi/reindeer-herders-association/ and Poroverkko’s (Reindeer Network) publications https://issuu.com/poroverkko/stacks (in Finnish). Considering that the document at hand should serve
as an easily readable guide to evaluate animal welfare instead of being an academic publication, no continuous reference to the aforementioned sources of information is made within the text. Indeed, the document represents a dialogue between the textual sources of information, the “Animal Welfare in Tourism Services” project’s empirical material and the research team’s conversations with reindeer tourism entrepreneurs and staff as well as participant observations conducted in reindeer tourism farms.

The project was implemented by The Multidimensional Tourism Institute (MTI) (Lapland University of Applied Sciences and University of Lapland) in joint cooperation with the School of Industry and Natural Resources (Lapland University of Applied Sciences) during the years 2016 and 2018. It is funded by the Finnish Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment under The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). This document was written and assembled by Researcher Tarja Salmela and Project Leader José Carlos García-Rosell, Multidimensional Tourism Institute, University of Lapland, Finland.
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1. Reindeer management

- What is the size of your company?
- How many reindeer do you have working in your tourism operations?
- How long have you been operating?
- What type of reindeer activities do you provide?

1.1 Containment areas

1.1.1 The enclosures (“aitaukset”)

- How large are the reindeer’s group enclosures?
  - Do they provide enough space for the reindeer to move around and get away from each other if they have to?
  - If the feeding takes place when the reindeer are loose together in the enclosure, does the enclosure provide enough space for every reindeer to eat at peace?
  - *Reindeer do not need shelter in winter, as they are used to a harsh climate. In the autumn, they grow a layer of fat under the skin, the fur is very thick and hairs are hollow, providing very good insulation in winter. Reindeer can manage in relatively low temperatures, if they have enough proper food.*

- What material is the ground of the enclosures? Sand, other?

- How is security and comfort of the reindeer taken into consideration when planning the enclosure(s)?
  - Are the enclosures free from possible dangers, such as big holes in the ground, spongy spots and sharp branches, anything that might cause damage to the reindeer?
  - Do the reindeer carry ropes when they spend time in their enclosures?
    - In which enclosures? In every enclosure, where the harnessed reindeer reside?
    - Is the enclosure organized and planned, so that there is no risk of the ropes getting stuck to trees and bushes and, in the worst case, string the reindeer up?
    - How is this planning and organizing done in practice?
  - What are the fences in the enclosures like? Are they safe to the reindeer, meaning that the reindeer cannot get stuck to the fences or otherwise hurt itself? For example, no sharp edges/narrow corners in the fences.
    - Are there differences between the compactness of the fences in enclosures where the calves, with their smaller size, reside?
  - Have you blocked the lower borders of the fences, so that the reindeer’s cloven hoofs won’t get stuck under the fence?
  - Are the enclosures designed, so that no other animal, tourist, or unauthorized person can access them without supervision?
  - How do you prevent accidents resulting from possible distress in the enclosure where reindeer are resting? For example, frightened reindeer that might run towards the fence and get seriously injured in case of emergency.
• Do you have separate enclosures for reindeer suffering from illness-going through a healing process/injured reindeer to enable the possibility of recovery?
  • In case you do not have separate enclosures, do you use poles or trees, where you tie the reindeer needed to be separated from others? Describe your choices made – why using poles and not enclosures? How do you ensure that the reindeer is able to move around, eat freely, and also to fulfill its socializing needs during recovery?

• Do you have multiple enclosures to divide the reindeer for social or dietary reasons?
  • What reasons do you have for dividing the reindeer into different enclosures?
  • How do you keep track of the reindeer that suit to the same enclosure? How do you share this information to all employees?
  • How do you deal with aggressive reindeer that cause trouble to other reindeer?

• Do the reindeer have the opportunity to rub their antlers on trees and branches when they are in enclosures?
  • Later in the autumn, reindeer rub the antlers against something hard, such as trees, to get the skin off. Hence, blood on the antlers is quite normal. Having trees and bushes inside the enclosure encourages the reindeer not to use the fences/possible nets for rubbing, which might lead to getting stuck on them.

• Who are allowed to enter the enclosures of the females in their calving season – both before and during calving? Do you restrict entrance to people other than the members of staff?

• Do the reindeer have the opportunity to withdraw from the sight of visitors, if needed? How is it made possible?

1.1.2 Poles and trees

• Do you tie the reindeer to poles or trees? Describe the purpose and practicalities of this procedure. *Reindeer are tied to poles as part of the training process of becoming used to people and the farm environment.*
  • Give specific information about the training process/familiarization to being tied to poles or trees.
  • Where do you actually place the reindeer in training and keep them tied to a pole or a tree on your premises? How do you plan the location of the pole/tree where they are tied?
  • Where do you actually place the reindeer, who have accustomed to being tied to a tree/pole and to customers walking by, taking pictures, etc., on your premises?
  • What reasons other than training are there to keep the reindeer tied to a pole or a tree? Are there specific reindeer that you keep tied to a pole/tree on a more constant basis? Why?

• Is there a maximum time that can be defined that you keep a reindeer tied to a pole or a tree?
  • during the training process to younger reindeer: at one continuous period (also define the length of the training process).
  • when the reindeer is already working and has gone through the training: at one continuous period.
  • If the maximum time is hard to define, explain the guidelines that you follow when tying the reindeer to a pole/tree.

• Alternatively, is there a particular hour that you can define when all the reindeer have been released from the pole/tree during the day?

• After the training has been completed, do you avoid keeping the reindeer tied to studs/stanchions/trees for any period longer than considered necessary?
  • This is to take into consideration the social nature of the reindeer and their need to wander around and socialize with other reindeer. When tied to a pole for an extended time, the reindeer does not have the ability for independent physical exercise and movement and to fulfill its species-specific needs.
• Whenever you keep the reindeer tied to a pole or a tree, have you ensured that:
  • Is the reindeer at risk of hurting itself on the pole/tree?
  • Is the environment clear of other poles or trees, so that the reindeer won’t circle itself around them and, in the worst case, string itself up?
  • Is the rope long enough to enable the reindeer to stretch its legs, walk around and lay down for resting?
    » What is the actual length of the rope for reindeer that have already become accustomed to being tied up?
    » Note! Have you ensured that, especially during training future tourism reindeer, the rope is short enough to prevent the young and inexperienced reindeer from breaking their necks, as they are not yet accustomed to being tied? What is the length of the rope used for young reindeer going through training?
  • Do the reindeer have free access to water or clean snow, and if this is not available in the immediate surroundings of the pole/tree, is the water manually brought to the reindeer?
    » Who takes care of bringing water to reindeer tied to poles/trees? Do you decide the person taking responsibility of this when planning the work schedules?
  • Is the pole/tree located in a place where other reindeer that roam freely in the surroundings cannot approach the tied reindeer?
    » If you keep the reindeer tied to poles/trees, for example for the purposes of training, one option is to build a fence around a larger area in which the reindeer are tied to the poles/trees but not approachable by reindeer roaming freely thus having the possibility of disturbing the tied reindeer. Do you use this kind of fencing with poles/trees?
  • Is the pole/tree approachable by tourists, other people apart from staff, or other animals without supervision?

• How long are the reindeer fully harnessed and ready to take customers for a ride? What is the maximum time of the reindeer being fully harnessed before releasing them again to their enclosures?

1.2 Habitat outside the enclosures

• Where do your reindeer live in the summer? Are all the reindeer released to the forest or are they kept in the enclosures?

• How do you deal with the high season of blood-sucking insects (“räkkä”) to enhance the comfort of the reindeer when they wonder around in the farm premises and not in the woods?
  • Have you built shelters (“rääkäsuojaat”)? Do they have a sand base or, if not, what material is it?
  • Where are they located? In the field where there is a lot of wind?
  • Do you have separate shelters for (a) reindeer in their first year (“vasa”) and female reindeer (“vaadin”) and (b) reindeer that have been taught to run with a sledge (“ajokas”)?
  • Do you use mosquito coils, for example, to help the reindeer cope with the insects?

• How do you ensure the availability of broad pasture areas for the reindeer?

• Do you keep track of the pastures and their condition (are they trite/lacking nutrition?) on a regular basis to ensure the reindeer are getting the nutrition they need and to arrange additional feeding? Do you keep track of the population in the pastures – to monitor if they are over-crowded?

• How do you deal with tourism reindeer getting accustomed to people and cars, and thus, becoming possibly more prone to car accidents during their holiday season?
1.3  Calving season and habitat

• How do you interact with the females in their calving season? As you know, the females are very sensitive to disturbance during calving, do you act with heightened sensitivity with the does while carrying out daily tasks? How do you minimize the possibility of stress for the female during the calving season? How do you make them aware that no threat is posed to their calves when you carry out feeding and watering, for example?
2. Records

• How do you keep record of your reindeer?
  • Reindeer have ear markings and tourism reindeer have their own ear tags ("piltta") with an individual number series self-evident for people working with reindeer, but many tourists are not aware of this identification system. Thus, providing information about this identification system is of value to customers and other parties interested in the matter.

• Do you have additional ways of keeping record of your reindeer?
  • This could include having additional information through photographs, name, sex, birth date, distinctive markings, other special characteristics, information about how the reindeer have progressed in sleigh rides and what the best place for this individual is in line ("raito").

• When does the ear tagging take place? Explain a little bit about the process and its duration.

• What happens to reindeer who are not working as official tourism reindeer anymore?
3. Reindeer health

3.1 Health records

- Do you keep a systematic health record of the reindeer, including:
  - year of birth
  - deworming records
  - weight (date of weighing and the weight) records
  - surgical procedure records
  - illnesses or injuries records
  - known and suspected drug allergies records
  - culling date, reason to cull?

3.2 De-wormer and castration

- Are the reindeer given a regular de-wormer? How often? Twice a year? When do you give it?
- Do you use a practicing veterinarian to do the castration for male reindeer that pull a sledge (“ajokas”), using analgesics and anesthesia?
  - In case you conduct the castration yourself, describe
    » the use of analgesics.
    » Who conducts the procedure? What kind of expertise does she/he need to conduct this procedure?

3.3 Veterinary check-ups

- Do you have regular check-ups with a practicing veterinarian to monitor the overall health of the reindeer?
  - How many times does a vet visit your company premises and check the reindeer?
- During the regular check-ups, do you go through the reindeer health records or medical log with the practicing veterinarian?
- What about visits on-demand? How many of them do you have on average on a yearly basis?
- Do you have an established veterinary-client patient relationship with a practicing veterinarian?
- Do you have regular dental care provided, including a routine examination of teeth and gums?

3.4 Grooming and nail care

- How do you organize the nail care of reindeer? How is it done in practice? Who performs it?

3.5 Other assessment of reindeer health

- Do only healthy and fit reindeer work? How do you ensure that no reindeer that is feeling ill or shows signs of fatigue is not put to work?
- How do you assess the health of reindeer in practice? Describe the ways you have learned to ‘read’ the reindeer and communicate with them.
  - As prey animals, reindeer are good at hiding their illness and malaise until the very last.
• Do all the members of the staff have the ability to assess the behavior of the reindeer? Does everybody know what it means when the reindeer lifts its tail, for example? *When reindeer escape, they lift their tails and show the white side of it. The other reindeer follow these, and the herd stays together.* *See other notions related to this in ‘Staff’.*

• Do you pay attention to the reindeer fur on a constant basis to evaluate a sufficient amount of minerals that the reindeer are getting?

• Do you monitor the functioning of the reindeer stomachs on a daily basis by observing reindeer manure (is it firm, loose)?

• Do you keep track of the weight loss, hydration, condition of the feet, behavior, attitude, and willingness to work of the reindeer? How, please explain?

• In case of large reindeer farms, do you have a well-organized system, where the responsibility of keeping track of particular reindeer is shared between selected members of the staff?

• Do you systematically follow the reindeer mental welfare and their motivation to work? Changes in behavior? What do you do to correct the situation?

• How do you monitor the risk of infectious diseases carried by customers and other farm visitors that might pose a threat to the health of reindeer? How do you prepare for this risk?
  • *The risk of infectious diseases could be reduced by restricting the visits of customers wearing their own clothing near the reindeer enclosures and other areas where the reindeer spend their time, eat, etc.*

### 3.6 Stress-related health practices

• How do you spot signs of stress in the reindeer?

• What kinds of effort do you put in practice to minimize threat, harassment, fear, tension, and excessive strain as causes of stress for reindeer?
  • *Stress is a crucial issue that needs to be taken seriously in maintaining reindeer health, as excessive stress makes the reindeer sensitive to illness.*

• When you identify signs of stress with one or more reindeer, do you provide them a proper rest period? The availability of fresh water and a proper amount of energy? How long are these rest periods, and how do you possibly modify the feeding?

• How do you calm down a heated reindeer after handling? Do you, for example, use water for the reindeer’s fur to help the reindeer cool off?

• Do you always handle the reindeer gently and calmly to avoid any excessive stress caused by the handling?

• How do you stimulate the mental health of the reindeer?

• Do you use alternative methods to catch reindeer other than *suopunki* (for those unaware of this word, “suopunki” is a type of lasso used to catch a reindeer)?
  • *Suopunki might cause excessive stress to the reindeer as well as pain to the reindeer’s antlers during summer and blood antler period.*
  • *Do you, for example, use collars and ropes attached to the reindeer when they roam in their enclosure to enable a more stress-free capture?*
  • *In case of medical surgeries, one option is to catch the reindeer foot in a trap – a method in which heightened attention must be paid to ensure that the trap is not causing any damage or pain to the reindeer.*
3.7 Accidents and sickness (see also 9.2. Accident plan)

- Do you have a protocol in place in case of accidents? Who is responsible for evaluating the need for a veterinarian? Do you have a written protocol that can be followed by your staff?

- Do you have a plan for how to get a reindeer back to the farm, if an accident happens outside the farm?

- Do you carry appropriate tools for use in cutting and removing lines or other equipment in an emergency while working with reindeer at all times?

- Do you record (in written form) every accident and close call?

- Do you record (in written form) the actions taken to fix/improve things that have been partly the cause of the accident?

- How do you deal with situations where a reindeer catches an infectious disease?
  - Do you separate the reindeer from one other and customers in a separate enclosure?
  - How do you ensure that the excrements of the infected reindeer will not transmit through the staff's shoes to other reindeer while feeding?
    » One option is to use distinct feeding shoes by the staff feeding the reindeer in its individual enclosure.

- Do you always consult a practicing veterinarian in cases of infectious disease for advice on treatment? Or do you have situations where you are able to react to these types of situations yourself?

- Do you have a person responsible for checking on the sick/injured reindeer during the day/night?
4. Feeding and watering

4.1 Feeding

- What food do you provide to the reindeer? Hay, fodder, what else? What is the basic food and what kinds of extra food do you feed to the reindeer? How do you guarantee the provision of albumen to the reindeer?

- What are the summer pastures of the reindeer like in your area? Do they include swamps, downy birches, fields, logging areas? Are they rich in nutrition for the reindeer?

- Do you follow/imitate the natural provision of different nutrients in your feeding based on the yearly rhythm in the nature—such as cutting down the amount of albumen during autumn?

- Do you give selenium to the reindeer as an additional nutrient? How do you monitor its administration? Giving excessive amounts of selenium could lead to poisoning.

- How do you organize the individual feeding of the reindeer? How do you arrange the feeding, if the reindeer are in a herd comprising multiple reindeer?

- Do you divide food by scattering it along the fence? If this is the case, how do you manage aggressive and bossy reindeer that come and eat from every location?

- If you feed the reindeer from one location, how do you manage the rank order of the reindeer and ensure that each reindeer gets their food?

- Do you use stanchions (“tolppa”), where the reindeer are leashed during feeding? How do you manage its downsides, that is, the restriction of the movement of the reindeer in a small space? The restriction of socialization with other reindeer? (see also: 1. Containment Areas)

- Do you have food available at all times to allow the reindeer a natural way of eating?

- How do you take into consideration the different rhythms of eating and appetites of the reindeer? How do you make sure everybody gets their share, even the slowest ones or those that need their rest after work and before eating?

- Do you, for example, provide extra food to the reindeer directly in the enclosures during the highest tourism seasons, in addition to providing food for example with automates?

- What is the scheduling of feeding the reindeer like in your farm? When do you provide the food in the enclosures, automates, etc., or are they available to the reindeer all the time? When do you fill up the automates/feeding spots?

- How often do you clean the reindeer feeding area?

- How do you take into consideration the sensitive response of the reindeer to their fodder?
  - Slight changes in the fodder might cause serious damage to reindeer health such as intense diarrhea.

- Do you provide enough time for the reindeer to eat and ruminate, even during the busiest season?

- Do you have specific practices that guarantee the functioning of reindeer rumen?
  - For example, to feed the reindeer with lichen in good time first in the morning and to allow the reindeer to have enough time to eat and ruminate.
4.2 Watering

- Do you pay special attention to the need of fresh water for the reindeer, as they are kept in enclosures, are fed, and work with customers? Do they have fresh water or clean snow available at all times?

- How do you provide the water for the reindeer in practice? What if there is no snow available?

- How do you deal with freezing temperatures and access to water in winter? Do you use heated water containers to guarantee the availability of water in times of no snow?

- How often do you clean the water containers? How do you do it? Do you disinfect them?

- How often do you change fresh water in containers?

- How do you monitor your reindeer’s hydration status?

- How are the reindeer hydrated during the summer months?

- How is feeding and watering managed during possible overnight tours?

- How is feeding and watering managed during possible traveling/transportation?
5. Working conditions

5.1 Training

• What are the training stages that the reindeer go through to become a sled reindeer? Notice that only male reindeer are trained to pull sleds. The training lasts between 4 and 5 years.
  • At what age does a reindeer join the training?
  • How do the reindeer get used to human contact/presence/being tied to a pole/trees?
  • How do you reward the reindeer while training?
  • Do you use the ‘learn by example’ method with the young reindeer, allowing them to learn from experienced reindeer?
  • How do you take into consideration the individual needs and character of the reindeer when it comes to training practices?
  • At what age does a reindeer start pulling sleds with customers?
  • Do you use small tourist groups for the training purposes of inexperienced reindeer?
  • Who conducts the training in practice?
  • How do you guarantee a shared commitment in training with all members of the personnel?
  • How do you ensure that your training methods do not cause fear, distress, or pain to the reindeer?
  • What happens to the training process during your highest season (when you have to concentrate on the customers and reindeer that already work as tourism reindeer)?

• How do you start preparing the sled reindeer for the winter season?
  • When does the preparation actually start? How long does it last?
  • Do you provide a gentle start for the reindeer, acknowledging the decrease of muscle strength during off-season?
  • What do you do in practice with the reindeer once they start training after summer?
  • How do you guarantee that the reindeer get a soft start at the beginning of the season? Do you plan your customer flow accordingly?

• Do you also start easy with the reindeer when they come back from sick leaves/recovering from injury? Explain how you do this.

• How do you ensure the physical recovery from safaris and the maintenance of reindeer muscle strength?
  • Allowing the reindeer to move around independently in enclosures (in contrast to being tied to poles/trees) allows them to both socialize and to maintain their physical condition/recover from physical strain by their own means.

• If the reindeer are kept tied to poles/trees for longer periods during season, do you ensure that the reindeer regularly get a chance for physical movement other than merely pulling the sledges? How do you arrange this? What is this physical activity like?

5.2 Working hours

• How do you plan the working hours/days off/holidays of the reindeer?
  • How do you plan the working hours, so that the reindeer do not spend the whole day riding a short route with constantly changing customer groups?
• Do you have a protocol on paper or electronically to record the reindeer working schedules?
  • Who is responsible for the accuracy of the protocol?
  • Does it include information about injuries/sickness and recuperation days?

• How often do they have days off?
  • What does their day off mean in practice? What do they do on their free time?

• What is the maximum amount of work in days/hours of a reindeer to work in the busiest season?

• Do your reindeer have a chance to have a holiday during summer time? Are the reindeer kept in the farm or are they released into the forest?
  • Reindeer cannot sweat, so they have to pant, just like dogs. They may get too hot, if they have to pull or do other work in the summer.

• Do you refuse to work your reindeer in marginal conditions that might result in causing damage to their physical and mental wellbeing?

• How do you ensure that reindeer are not worked beyond their willingness, capability, or conditioning? More questions related to working hours as part of route planning in chapter 9.

5.3 Other work-related issues

• Do you recognize different personalities of the reindeer when it comes to the ways they work and pull sleighs? How do you take them into consideration in practice? Do you talk about them with the customers?

• How do you decide the length of the ropes while the reindeer are in line (“raito”)?
  • Do you use different lengths for different reindeer, based on their age and experience, for example? What types of issues related to security have to be taken into consideration with the ropes? Please explain.

• Do you remove the harnesses when the reindeer are not working? Do some parts of the gear stay on, such as the collar (“länget”)? Please explain.

• Do you ensure that reindeer are not pushed beyond their natural abilities by administering drugs or medications to enhance performance?

• Do you use analgesics and anti-inflammatories only under the direction of a practicing veterinarian?

5.4 Gear

• What gear do you use when working with reindeer? (“reet”, “ahkiot”, “kuljetuskalusto”, “länget” (valjaat), “(ajo)hihnat”, “aisat”…)

• How do you choose the harnesses, collars, and other equipment for the reindeer to ensure they are well-made and fitted? What characteristics do you consider important when it comes to the selection of your equipment?

• Are the harnesses fitted individually for each reindeer? How do you monitor the adjustment of the harnesses during the season, as the muscle strength and the size of the reindeer changes?

• Do you name the harnesses to enable every staff member to know which harness belongs to which reindeer? This is of great help to seasonal employees as well.
• Where do you store the gear?

• How do you monitor the condition of the gear? Do you do checkups regularly or have a specific plan to go through all the gear step by step? Is the information about the gear provided in written form for everybody to know and to be carefully monitored?

• Do you value a high standard of the gear when acknowledging that a bad harness, especially on a young reindeer, in the worst scenario might cause serious damage to the reindeer?

• How do you monitor that none of the equipment causes discomfort or injury?

• Do you have a service manual for the sleds?
6. Life span and economic planning

• Is there any planned breeding with your reindeer? Describe the practicalities. If breeding is planned, how do you select the breeding animals? For how long is the breeding female used?

• Do you make detailed calculations of the approximate amount of money needed to take care of each reindeer to plan your cash flow? Who performs the calculations?

• Do you calculate the balance between the retired/old reindeer that possibly stay in the farm after their active years and the need for young reindeer to be trained that allow you to make enough money to run your business?

• What happens to reindeer that come to an age at which they are not able to work as tourism reindeer anymore? What is this age?

• Do the reindeer stay with their herd/reindeer companions even if they do not join the rides anymore?

• Do you use ‘retired’ reindeer in tourism-related activities other than sledging?

• Do you let old tourism reindeer die naturally in the forest?

• Do you put down retired reindeer that are unable to work and suffer from illness?
  • How do you make the decision of when the reindeer is to be put down?
  • Who puts down the reindeer? Do these people have an appropriate level of competence for – and holding a certificate of such – euthanizing the animals without any avoidable pain, distress, or suffering (according to Council regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009, Article 21)?
7. **Staffing**

- Do you have a reindeer farm manager? Is s/he a professional?

- Do you have a line of command? Who is responsible for calling the veterinarian, organizing supervision of injured, sick reindeer, etc.?

- What kind of education does your staff have?

- What kind of training does the staff get while they are working/when they start working for your company?

- Do you include safety training in your staff training program? (see also sections 3.6. and 9.2.) Are all the new employees aware of the risks of the work conducted with the reindeer and the tourists?
  - *Remember that a staff member without proper skills and who is unaware of the risks involved in his/her work is a walking safety risk!*
  - Do you organize training days regularly to update the staff's information related to both security, safety, and reindeer welfare?

- Do you put the newcomers to work with the experienced staff members to learn everything about the reindeer and the ways of working in the farm?
  - *Bad familiarization with the reindeer and the processes might lead to dangerous situations in the farm!*

- Do you pay special attention to the feeding practicalities during the training of new staff?
  - *A wrong type of feeding might lead to the collapse of the fitness and work ability of the reindeer, it is crucial to introduce a new employee with clear guidance of which reindeer eats which type of food and how much they eat.*

- Do you pay special attention to the introduction of reindeer individuals and their special characteristics to the new staff members?
  - *For example, if the reindeer has a tendency to poke people and other reindeer with its antlers, it is important for the employee to know in order to enable education of the customers to be aware of this issue and to avoid dangerous situations.*

- Do you inform your staff clearly if some of the reindeer are not working at the moment? How do you do this? How do you ensure that every employee coming to work on different shifts knows this?
  - How do you handle situations where new employees do not know all reindeer by names, and thus, relying on a work schedule is not an option?

- Do you have certain areas of responsibility for the staff members to ensure that everything is taken care of and no mix-ups or misinterpretations of responsibilities is taking place?

- Do you use a particular kind of record of daily tasks and planning – what is about to take place during the day, what has been done during the day, what other observations have been made during the day?

- Do you have a particular record of the medical treatments of the reindeer and clear instructions of their treatment? (who gives medicine, when, how long is the medicine given, when did the treatment begin) Please explain.

- Do you have an open work culture for any questions that might arise both from the new staff members and the more experienced ones? How do you nurture this work culture based on openness and honesty?
• When do you usually allow your new personnel to work alone? How long do they work with experienced staff members to gain enough knowledge before working on their own?

• How well does your staff know reindeer ethology? Through what experience?
  • As reindeer nature is different from that of other domestic animals we are used to living and working with, a familiarity with reindeer ethology is crucial to be able to work with reindeer.

• How do you evaluate the competence of the staff to work with the reindeer? How do you ensure that the staff has the patience required to train reindeer?
  • Particularly the young reindeer, with whom a lot of perseverance is needed to avoid the possibility of any trauma and to enable good learning.

• Does your staff have the competence to identify signs of heat stress and other conditions that might pose a serious threat to the welfare of reindeer?

• Does the staff treat reindeer as individuals? For example, which reindeer likes to be petted or needs more privacy?

• Do you employ volunteers?
  • Where do they usually come from/what is their background?
  • What type of work do the volunteers do? How do you audit and monitor them?
  • Do you provide lodging and food for them? How long do they stay on average?

• Do you give your staff the possibility to speak openly and critically? Are they encouraged to speak up?

• Does your staff speak English?

• Does your staff have good knowledge of history, geology, cultural aspects (folk tales) of the area and trails? Good knowledge of reindeer herding and its traditions? Do you work actively at improving your staff’s skills in these matters?

• Does your staff share the same principals, for example, when it comes to talking calmly to the reindeer and not shouting?
8. Customer

8.1 Customer education

- Do you tell your customers about the reindeer, reindeer training, and reindeer herding? Do you tell the management?
  - Do you tell customers how reindeer cope with the cold and freezing weathers?
  - Do you tell customers how reindeer fur renews every spring?
    » During spring, the thick winter fur changes to summer fur. It comes off in big chunks and reveals the nice, smooth summer fur underneath. When the fur changes, reindeer look matted, but it is perfectly normal. The thicker winter fur starts to grow again in August.
  - Do you tell the customers about reindeer strong sense of smell? Do you educate them on how reindeer act in nature once they search for lichen?
  - Do you tell the customers about the special features of reindeer sense of sight?
  - What about the feature of extending their tongue to increase the evaporation surface, as well as the habit of reindeer rubbing their antlers on trees, causing blood on the antlers?
  - Do you tell the customers about the social nature of the reindeer – their need to live in a herd?
  - Do you talk about the importance of rumination to the reindeer?

- Do you allow customers to pet the reindeer (even though they often times dislike being petted)?

- In case reindeer can be petted, do you allow customers to do that before or after the ride?
  - Some farms have a practice that reindeer are not petted before, only after the ride. This is to ensure a smooth transfer to the sleighs and the start of the ride without unnecessary stress caused to the reindeer. This is a good practice, especially if there are new and/or young reindeer working with the customers.

- Do you take the customers on a tour of your premises and perhaps introduce them to the retired reindeer that might stay in the farm? Are the daily practices of the farm (e.g. preparation of food, giving of medication to the reindeer) visible to your customers?

- Is your customer allowed to all sites of your premises? Are there areas/times when customer visits are not allowed such as reindeer enclosures and the specific sites for reindeer in recovery or females in the calving season?

- Do you have a code of conduct for the customers? Do you tell them what is allowed and not allowed when interacting with the reindeer? Feeding reindeer should be absolutely prohibited.

- Do you have an information board about sick animals, treatment, working hours that is visible to the customers?

- Do you discuss safety?
  - Do you provide a ‘ride rope’ (“ajoköysi”) to the customers when they go on sleigh rides – attached to the reindeer *panka, underneath their chin? On what occasions do you provide this rope to the customers? Why do you provide it?
  - In case you provide this rope, do you tell them clearly that the rope is not to be pulled or wiggled aimlessly and carelessly?
  - Do you make it clear to the customers that using the rope in a wrongful manner with an alert reindeer, who is simultaneously sensitive, might lead to dangerous situations?
    » The reindeer might react and flee, which means that the reindeer might start running in full speed and be hard to stop!
• Do you inform customers about how to approach the reindeer?
  » *The reindeer are not to be approached from behind but calmly from the front. Anything that happens behind the reindeer might scare it and make it flee.*

• Do you explain that shouting, screaming, or running in the immediate presence of the reindeer should be avoided?

• Do you explain that standing or jumping in the sledge is prohibited, as it causes a serious threat both to the customer her/himself, to the reindeer, and other members of the tourist group?

• Do you explain that touching the reindeer’s head and especially the antlers is prohibited, as the reindeer feel discomfort upon touch of these parts of their bodies?
  » *This notion is also important due to the possible danger caused by a customer touching a reindeer’s antlers, as the reindeer might attempt to withdraw from the situation by shaking its head and, thus, might unwittingly hurt the customer.*
  » *When going in line (“raito”) with many reindeer following each other, the reindeer coming from behind might walk really close to the sledge at the front. They might even walk beside the sledge in the front or even rest their head on the back of the sledge. It is very important to educate customers that the policy no to touch the head and antlers is to be taken seriously in these situations, as the reindeer can shake its head and cause damage to the customers.*

• Do you explain that taking pictures with a flash might cause serious discomfort to the reindeer and should be avoided? *An important notion, especially during dark periods!*

• Do you make it clear to the customers that a reindeer does not act like a horse and, as such, is not responsive to being guided in the same manner (especially if the customer does not know what s/he is doing!)?

• Do you provide information about the correct usage of the rope in case of the reindeer stopping during the ride? *This means that the customer must make clear, side-way movements with the rope, as the reindeer might not feel the rope but see movement beside/behind it and get back on the move.*

• Do you make it clear that the rope is not a break? *If the rope is being pulled, the reindeer might not stop but instead pull it back, which makes the movement of the reindeer much harder* (the customer is actually choking the reindeer!).

• Do you advise the customers what to do if the reindeer is running fast, and a curve on the route is approaching?

• When using reindeer in a ‘ring’ (*“rinki”*), do you only use experienced reindeer that are familiar with customers easily making mistakes while reining? Do you avoid using inexperienced and young reindeer in these types of activities?

8.2 Language

• How do you cope with language problems? How do you make sure that the customers get all information needed for the ride or visit to the farm?

• Do you use, for example, videos (subtitled in the customer group’s native language whenever possible) to share information about the animals and the activity about to take place, including practical instructions on how to behave with the animals?

• Do you teach and use hand gestures at the time of the activity and during preparation for the activity?

• Do you provide information boards for educating customers on how to behave when on your premises? Do the customers see them before entering/during the visit to the premises?

• Who makes the reservation for the tours? Do they have enough experience in asking preliminary information from the customers?
8.3 Planning of activities according to customer information

- How do you select the proper number of reindeer to work for an upcoming group of tourists? Do you usually get information about the number of adults and children coming to visit your farm?
  - When the customers book their safaris, do you ask the weights of the customers to make it even easier to organize the lines ("raidot") of the reindeer (which reindeer are to pull, selection of the reindeer)?

- Do you have a weight limit? What is the maximum number of people in one sleigh?

- Do you allow your customers to participate in tours under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

- Do your guides interact with customers in a straight and genuine way to guarantee animal welfare and customer safety in every situation, without exceptions?

- Do you handle and explain the causes of possible problems occurring in the presence of customers and the actions taken to deal with them directly on site whenever possible?
  - *Transparency empowers the customers by being aware of what is going on and, for example, in case of injury to an animal, what is going to happen, who is going to treat the animal, and when.*

8.4 Customer evaluation

- Do you have a questionnaire, where customers can rate the welfare of animals at your place?
  - If not, what type of tools do you have to get feedback?

- Do you have work sessions with your staff to improve matters that have been criticized?
9. Business and tour management

9.1 Planning and provision of tours and business

9.1.1 The content and length of reindeer sleigh rides

- What are the lengths of the rides?
  - What is the minimum length of your rides? And the maximum? Are they defined in distance or in time?
  - What are the actual travel distances that the reindeer pull the sleighs during these rides? How long do these rides last?

- For how long do the reindeer pull the sleigh on an ongoing basis before getting a break?
  - What do the reindeer do during the breaks?
  - Are they allowed to be resting in a peaceful area, without human contact/touch?

- Do you have a guiding principal of the minimum/maximum length of the ride that is based on reindeer welfare that you follow even when there would be a demand for shorter/longer tours?

- Do you provide overnight tours?
  - Where do the reindeer stay at night? What about the customers?
  - Does the environment ensure that the reindeer get a good rest?
  - Does the resting place have access to fresh water or clean snow?

- Do you offer possibilities for longer stays, where the customers participate in the everyday life in the farm, for example, for a week?
  - What do customers do in practice?
  - How are the customers monitored while working/spending time with the reindeer?

- Do you offer non-stop rides for the customers? Meaning, the reindeer pull for a short route (e.g. 400 meters) during the day every time customers come by?
  - Do you recognize the physical and mental strain pulling for shorter routes produce to the reindeer, especially in relation to the starting phase of the heavy load?
  - How do you deal with the challenge of the provision of short route pulling?
  - Do you change the reindeer doing the short route during the day? How often? How does the change happen in practice – meaning, how do you plan the change of the reindeer beforehand? Following a plan based on time-framing?
  - How many times do your reindeer go around a short ring (“jenga”) in one work shift, that is, before getting rest?
  - What is the maximum time for a reindeer to work in one shift?

- Between safari groups, where do the reindeer rest?
  - Are they tied to poles or trees?
  - Are they provided with lichen or other feed?
  - How long are the resting periods? Are they long enough to enable rumination?
9.1.2 Route planning

• How do you plan your routes? Describe the practicalities of planning. How do you take the capacity of the reindeer to pull the chosen route into consideration?

• Is there a possibility that snowmobiles use the same routes/drive in the immediate presence of the routes, causing possible danger to the reindeer and customers?
  • How do you guarantee the safety of the routes?

• Do your routes include any dangerous crossings, such as road, railway, or other kind of road crossings?
  • If they do, how do you guarantee that there is no risk of accidents taking place?

• In case you have planned, for example, a route with some risks involved which the experienced staff is able to handle, how do you guarantee that all members of the staff, including the seasonal staff, are able to deal with the risks and execute the activity without any fear of a possible accident caused by the acknowledged risks?

• If there are particular parts of the route that require special attention from the tourists (such as approaching a snowmobile route), do you tell the customers about it clearly?

• How do you check the conditions of the route? If there are trees and branches that might be of danger or a disadvantage for the reindeer and the sleighs? If the route is wide enough to allow a smooth pull?

• Do you use snowmobiles to prepare the routes in case of excess snow on the routes?

• Do you have a policy of not arranging any rides, if the weather sets excessive challenges to the reindeer and poses a risk to safety?

• Do the customers or guides drive the sleighs? Are there any exceptions/variation depending on the ride?

• Who makes sure that the sleds and reindeer are selected and prepared according to number of passengers, their weights, etc.?

• How do you ensure that the reindeer stick to the route when the customers are driving the sledges?

• Is your shortest route (where the customers might also drive the sleds) fenced?

• If the route is not fenced, have you had situations where the reindeer has run away from the route, to other areas of the farm, with the sled and the customers? How have you reacted to this?

9.1.3 Planning of sled rides: other notions related to reindeer welfare

• Do the reindeer pull the same routes during the whole season, or do you change the routes?
  • Do you change the routes every season, or do you keep familiar routes?
  • What are the guiding principles in choosing your ways of keeping/changing the routes?

• Do you harness the reindeer before the customers arrive to the site?
  • This is to avoid unnecessary stress posed to the reindeer, as the harnessing is done in a tranquil situation only in the presence of the staff working with the reindeer.

• How do you make sure that the ‘best’ reindeer are not the only ones to work, but that every reindeer participates in the rides?
• Who keeps record of the rides that the reindeer participate in?

• How do you ensure that the reindeer participate in different rides and not only the short ones, for example?

• Do you organize the working schedules of the reindeer, so that they do not get too used to working with the same reindeer teammates? This is in tandem with the education of junior reindeer.

• How do you prepare for possible competition and fighting among the reindeer on route (if the ropes are set too loose in line)?

• How do you take the physical efforts needed for the reindeer to start the pull into consideration? Do you plan the working schedule of the reindeer by recognizing the physical efforts required for working in a short ring (“jenga”), when the reindeer has to start again multiple times?

• How do you organize the lines of the reindeer (“raidot”)? How do you take the different strengths and weakness of the individual reindeer into consideration during planning? Please explain.

• Do you have a Plan B and C ready, if something does not work out within the team planned to pull in a selected tour?

• How do you ensure your cash flow during summer? Do you offer reindeer farm visits during summer? What are they like? How long do they last? What do the customers do in these tours?

• Is the activity adjusted according to weather (shorter, slower)?

• Do you cancel the tours due to snow conditions that might pose a threat/discomfort for the reindeer?

9.2 Accident plan

• Do all guides have valid First Aid certifications (should be renewed every 2 years) and first aid equipment? A very good course for Wilderness guides is this one: https://www.outwardbound.fi/kurssit-ja-koulutus/ammattilaiskurssit/

• Do you have a system for how a guide in a no-signal area could contact emergency services? Shoot up emergency flares, satellite phone, emergency beacon, one guide stays with the group while the other rides for help?

• Are all guides and helpers familiar with this plan?

• Do you have a backup plan in place to take care of an injured/sick reindeer? Transportation? Do you have it as a written document? Please explain.

• Do you have a backup plan in place, if the guide comes down with an illness during the activity? Do you have it as a written document? Please explain.

• Do you have a First Aid Kit for people and reindeer always at hand?

• Do you carry additional gear for cold protection, especially in longer rides, where an accident might lead to serious consequences?
9.3 Transportation of reindeer

• Do you only transport reindeer fit for transportation (unless they are transported to veterinary care), meaning that reindeer that display signs of shock, exhaustion, severe injury or illness, or females about to calve or recently calved are not transported?

• Do you take into consideration the blood antler phase ("verisarvivaihe") of the reindeer when it comes to reindeer transportation? How?
  • During this phase, the antlers are prone to pain and accidents, and special attention ought to be paid when handling the reindeer during early summer, August-September, and for castrated males, even later on.

• How exactly do you transport the reindeer?
  • Is the transportation space large enough for the reindeer to stand and lie down comfortably? Is it compact enough, so that the reindeer can have support from the walls of the carriage, for example?
  • How do you position the reindeer in the carriage/transportation space?
  • How do you choose reindeer to share the same carriage, so that there is no fighting during the transportation?

• Are the transportation vehicles well-constructed from durable materials and well-maintained?

• Do the containers have secure latches and locking devices to prevent the reindeer from escape? Are the containers securely attached to the transportation vehicle?

• Do the containers have adequate ventilation?

• How do you organize reindeer access to palatable and clean water during transportation? How do you organize the feeding of the reindeer during transportation?

• Do you remove your reindeer from the containers regularly during transportation to ensure they are in good condition and not in distress and provide them with feed, water, and time for elimination and stretching?