

Farm sales in Norway

Stig Erik Sørheim

Actis – Norwegian Policy Network on Alcohol and Drugs

Farm sales debate in Norway

- On the political agenda for a long time
- Broad political support
 - Agricultural policy
 - Regional policy
 - Minimal impact on alcohol policy (in itself)
- But: concern about possible conflict with the retail monopoly system and EU competition rules
 - Can you have a monopoly if you allow other sales channels?
 - Will farm sales favour national producers and discriminate against foreign products?

A complicating factor

- Norway is a member of the European Economic Area, but not an EU member
 - Many agricultural products were excluded from the EEA free-trade agreement to protect Norwegian food production
 - Wine and beer are covered by the EEA
 - But some traditional alcoholic beverages are not, eg. honey-based mead, ciders and some fruit wines

--> Legal distinction between different types of alcoholic beverages

Farm sales in Norway today

Locally produced alcohol under 4,7 percent only requires a municipal sales license

Since 2016, locally produced cider and mead between 4,7 and 22 % alcohol can be sold in farm stores (subject to the same rules and regulations that apply to all alcohol sales)

Locally produced wine and beer between 4,7 and 22% alcohol can only be sold through the wine monopoly.

The matter was settled for a couple of years....

Current debate

- Sweden's decision to introduce farm sales --> renewed interest in Norway 'if it 's possible in Sweden...'
- December 2024: Parliamentary majority asked the government to investigate the possibility of a similar system in Norway
- The Government commissioned a legal report on the issue
- Before last year's election, the Labour government said they wanted to introduce farm sales
 - Current rules "too rigid"
- Government commissioned legal report was presented in October 2025

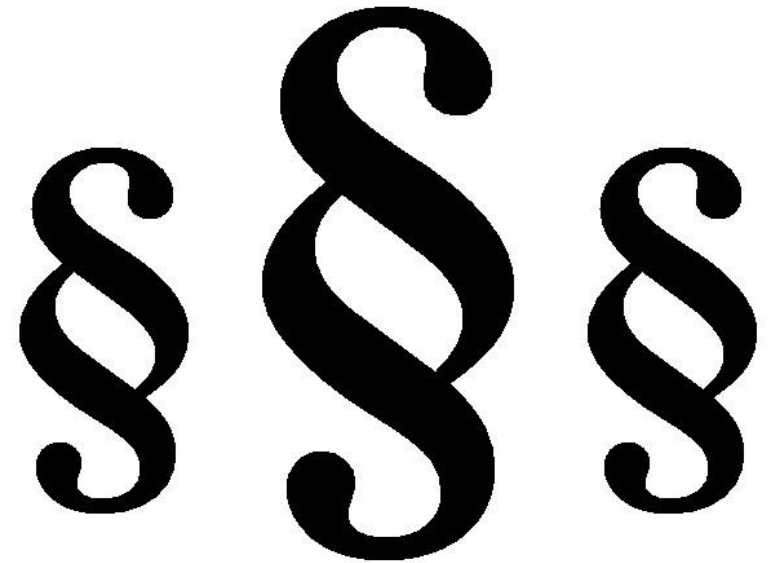
Åpner for mer alkoholsalg på gårder

Dagens alkoholregler er for rigide, mener statsminister Jonas Gahr Støre (Ap). Han vil myke opp reglene for utsalg på norske gårder.



Door half open

- Yes, farm sales is a restriction on free movement of goods
 - But can be justified by public health
- Easier to justify if there are clear criteria for the types of products and producers covered, and limits on production and sales volumes
- The new sales channel should not significantly increase access to alcohol
- Farm sales in itself not a significant liberalization, but if combined with other liberalizing policies it could make it more difficult to justify other control policies
- Uncertainty regarding EU case law --> even a restrictive model could be challenged
- Likely that the law could be reversed if challenged, but not certain
- Legal analysis would depend on the concrete proposal



Next steps

- The Government is currently considering the introduction of a Swedish model
- The existing Norwegian cider sales are a complicating factor
 - Different rules for ciders and wines?
 - Tightening rules for cider?
 - Loosening "the Swedish rules" for wines?
- Industry actors are lobbying regarding the details
 - Warn against the strict limitations in the Swedish model
- May 2026: Industry and agriculture committee in Parliament passed a recommendation to increase Norwegian exports that also included a paragraph on farm sales (surprise!)
 - Parliament asks the Government to present a bill to allow farm sales
 - Committee asks for sales quotas
 - Committee majority: 'Take note of the criticism of the Swedish model'



actis