

The oases in the deep fiords

From all corners of the world the human life in South Greenland is marked by unfriendly forces of nature. The sea areas surrounding the region with the coldest polar water and the enormous ice sheet, which cut down into the central part of the region, cools down the entire region.

But in the deep fiords we find agriculture and horticulture. The agriculture and horticulture in southern Greenland have developed over hundreds of years and are adapted to the special subarctic climate.

It is only when we travel in South Greenland that we seriously understand the size of the vast stretches of mountains and valleys, which characterizes the landscape of the region.

In this wilderness we find small green mosaics composed of grass fields in between the rocks. The hay from the grass is used as winter feed for the thousands of sheep and lambs wandering around in the mountains in the summer.

Preparation for harvesting hay on these small green fields is often started way back in the period between about 1000 to about 1450, when the Norse started their livestock. After the Norsemen had left their prehistoric farms a few hundred years passed before the agriculture again was developed in South Greenland. Since then the great effort to remove the surface of stones from the grass fields is continued, and today it is possible to use small machines to harvest the hay.

The farmers every year are struggling against the forces of nature.

Some years the drought threatens in the summer. The spring thaw threatens the small fields with flood from the surrounding mountains, and some places are plagued by the Foehn wind that blows large volumes of water dust over the fields, and the water dust coats everything with a layer of salt. The salt layer prevents the growth of the grass until the rain again has washed the salt away.



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