



Company Name

Frá haus að Hala – Butchery shop

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Frá haus að hala (From Head to Tail) is a butchery shop with meat processing and sale of fresh and frozen meat, located in the fishing village of Höfn in Hornafjörður, Iceland.

Pálmi Geir Sigurgeirsson (b. 1992) is the owner of this company

Frá haus að hala specialise in production of high-quality meat products from dairy cows that have completed their role as such, and wild game such as geese, ducks and reindeer.

A new and splendid option on the meat market!



WHAT WAS THE TRIGGER FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR ENTREPRENEURIAL IDEA?



I graduated as a chef in 2017 and moved back here in September 2017 and started working at Kaffihornið, the restaurant where I was working before I started my study and was there for a year. Then I got a job offer at Flatey, which is a restaurant located on a dairy farm and we start building up a butcher shop as well. The butcher shop was owned by the Owners of the dairy farm to start with, but I took that over in 2020.

So, I'm now the one that both work there and take all the risk. But the reason way I'm willing to take the risk is because my opinion is that the beef in Iceland is absolute shit and that is the reason why no restaurants in Iceland use Icelandic beef. So, I wanted to do something good, to make a difference and bring a different meet in to the market.

It is a passion of mine as a chef to be able to serve good quality meet. The reason I started working in Flatey was to open the butcher shop. When I was studying, I used to go into a farm called Valdastaðir near Reykjavík and helped them butcher the cows there. And when I was a kid, we used to buy whole lamb carcasses and we hunted reindeer and processed the meat.

So even though I'm nota a "butcher", I have in a way been in meat processing my whole life. It was clear in my mind that I did not want to live in the capital area, I like to live in remote areas where I have a lot of space and where I can hunt, fish and be my own boss. The butchery shop gives me that opportunity though I'm also currently working as a chef in a restaurant here.

HOW DOES THE BUSINESS HELP TO ADDRESS REGIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE OR SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES?



For a meat production *Frá haus að hala* is environmentally friendly. The little machinery that I have is run with green electricity and I only use dairy cows, old dairy cows that have served the purpose of making milk. I'm not using bulls that are only raised for their meat. So, I would think this is the most ecological friendly way of using meat if you're not a hunter.

The cows have served their purpose, they're milked for I don't know, four, five, six years and if they are not suited anymore for milking, like if they can't hold calves, or their teats are getting mangled or something, they are killed and they are usually sold off as minced meat or thrown away.

The dairy cows seem to hold fat a lot better than the young bulls, so that was like the main reason why we started the work, to use the dairy cows that just got thrown away.

I would say it's the best way to eat beef in an ecologically friendly way and they just grace and they eat the barley and the grass that is grown on the farm, which was in a way kind of a desert wasteland before it was cultivated.

And of cause, I use a lot of game like gees and ducks and stuff, they are wild animals that I hunt and use.



I go back to the past and the authentic way of doing things

Pálmi Geir
Owner

HOW IS YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE **INNOVATIVE**? WHAT GAP IN THE MARKETPLACE DOES IT FILL?



We has humans have been eating meat forever so you can't say anything in the meat business is innovative, like we have been doing this since before we became people, it is a simple and nice way to get a lot of energy dense foods for not a lot of work.

But maybe my work is innovative in the way that I'm only using dairy cows and I decided to do it here, not somewhere where I have a gigantic market, so there is something new

happening here, both the product itself and the location of it.

All the little machinery that I have is run with green electricity, but no technologies, this is a handcraft butchery shop.

So, the most innovation part is probably that I go back to the past and the authentic way of doing things.

WHERE DID YOU SOURCE THE MAIN **SUPPORT AND RESOURCES** (Eg. Grants And Other Support)?



- I got a few grants but nothing serious. Nobody wants to help a small company that doesn't make any money and I just took over. The owners of the dairy farm where I started, Skinney-Pinganes [also a fishing company], own the house and everything in the house, all the tools and stuff, except for knives and small things so, I just rent the house and I try to run everything, buy the the cattle and I try to run my company. But since I don't have any investments like houses or tools or cars or anything I can't get any loans so, it's yeah, it's tricky.
- The support from Skinney-Pinganes is super nice, I just pay a percentage of my income. So, it's super nice. For them it is a bit like a passion project, like wanting to keep a butcher shop in town. We can't get any fresh meat here except from the super marked Nettó and also, I sell them a lot of that mincemeat and goulash stuff for their boats and to their canteen in the fish factory. So that also helps me a lot and they want to get good quality meat locally to help support the town, so that is also I think a big part of why they support me.

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WHAT **ADVICE** DO YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE ACCESSED WHEN YOU STARTED?



Definitely more information about support systems. It's out there but you have to chase it.

But that's also a good thing because if you don't have the, like if you don't want it, you won't chase it, so I think it's kind of good also that we have these hula-hoops you have to jump through to get everything you need. Otherwise, we would just have a lot of entrepreneurs who are just taking money and maybe doing nothing, so I think that if people have a passion for something they will do everything to follow their passion.

But it would be nice to get a little bit more support from the banks. But then again if you have the idea and you're rolling along with it and you've taken up your time and done everything and started the company then, I was seeing more and more of these supports and stuff that you can get. I found it on the way just speaking to people in the same area and everyone is recommending; hey apply for this, applied for that. I like it like that, not too easy.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN **OBSTACLES OR BARRIERS** YOU ENCOUNTERED?



Getting loans to start your business.

It is not a given thing to find sponsors like Skinney-Pinganes who want to support their community and therefore are willing to support me. The banks they only want to give money to people that have collateral, like if you don't have a house worth maybe 30 million, they won't give you anything because they can't get anything off you if you fail to pay.

It was also a hard work getting permission to start. I used to have a permit from MAST [Icelandic Food and veterinary Authority] for butchering, but then when I started, because I wanted to have a butcher shop that would sell straight to people, not just to companies, it got complicated. I went over to Public Health Authority, and they have so strange rules, I needed to do some changes on the housing, and it costed a lot to adapt to these rules.

There has also been a bit of a stigma in Iceland around dairy cows, we only want the young bulls. We're the only country in the world I think, that raises bulls to one and a half, or two years old and they're tiny and skinny and not very good meat. So it takes time to teach Icelanders to value the meat from the milking cows.





HOW SUCCESSFUL HAS IT BEEN?

I got to look at the success now in that way that I can pay all my bills, I don't need a loan I can do kind of what I want too, but of course it would be nicer too maybe get my income up to a million a week not a million a month. That would be a lot nicer but then I would again need a lot more meat to roll through the store and that like, I need big coolers for that and then I need money to buy that, so it's yeah, it's kind of walking on thin ice.

I always get I knew ideas and sometimes I follow that idea and sometimes I don't and usually grow tired of my ideas in a year. So, I have no idea, no idea, just open for everything. I haven't paid myself penny salary yet, it's just unpaid work to keep the shop going but I earn enough so I can pay the bills for the company but not a lot more.

But then of course it takes time to get to get a big market here but I'm selling to three restaurants and like Skinny-Pinganes, the canteen there and then the locals are also becoming more aware that I have good fresh meat and specially during the summer months during the barbecue season and then over Christmas I sell a lot more than like now in the autumn.

But this autumn I'm going to take a lot of sheep because people seem to buy sheep and lamb meat in the autumn so I'm going to do some of that. And last year in the autumn I just did reindeer, and I didn't even do them in my own butcher shop, I just was a contractor in another butcher shop, butchering reindeer and that's where the big money is, in the game.



WAS SUCCESS A RESULT OF INDIVIDUAL WORK OR COLLABORATION (OR BOTH)?

Of course, it is collaboration.

Skinney-Pinganes kind of pushed me along and they got everything ready, or we got everything ready together.

The reason why people come and buy meat is because of word of mouth, people like the meat so they come back, and they tell their friends.

I've never made any kind of commercials or anything, except tell people when it's open on

Facebook and they seem to come, and it just works. Of course, like *Úps* restaurant, they buy all their minced meat from me for their burgers and that's a big help and the restaurant *Birki* buy their meat for their tartare and that's also a great help and also, they tell the people if they ask about the meat, that it is from me and that helps me a lot.

So, it has all been about collaboration, both the start and then the operation of the business.