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Facts about Swedish Agriculture

The structure of agriculture

Sweden is one of the largest countries in Europe, in terms of area. About half the area is covered by forest. Mountains, marshes and lakes together cover approximately one third. The cultivated area is some 2,7 million hectares. This is about 6,5 per cent of Sweden's total land area.

In spite of its northerly location, Sweden enjoys a favourable climate. However, agriculture faces very different conditions in the north compared to the south. The growing season is almost 100 days longer in the southern province of Skåne compared to Norrland in the north.

Structural change in agriculture has in the last 50 years resulted in a sharp decline in the number of farms, and at the same time the farms have grown larger. Farmers have made large investments in machinery and become more and more specialised in areas like cereals, dairy or the rearing of pigs and bovine animals.

Employment in agriculture

In 2007, agriculture employed 177 600 people, both full-time and part-time. That figure includes both

Facts about Sweden	
Length, north-south	1 572 km
Population 30 September 2008	9 242 595
Population density	22 people/km ²
Average temperature, Lund	9,4 degrees C
Average temperature, Karesuando	-0.2 degrees C

agriculture and horticulture, as well as maintenance of farm buildings, machinery and other assets.

The number of people actively involved in agriculture increased by 10 000 people from 2003 to 2007. However, converted to full-time, employment declined from 70 600 to 65 400 people in those four years. Agriculture provides approximately 1,5 per cent of total employment in Sweden.

The number of women in agricultural enterprises is increasing. In 2007, 40 per cent of all people in agriculture were women.

Most farms are family businesses in which the family itself does most of the work and combines farming with employment in other activities.

One third of all enterprises are so-called combination enterprises, which means that they combine income from farming with income from related activities. This includes for instance forestry or contracting. It is also increasingly common for farming to be combined with tourism.

Production value of agriculture
The production value of agriculture is calculated



Number of farms with at least 2 hectares of arable land, by arable area							
Hectares	1961	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002	2007
2,1–10,0	141 652	73 539	44 722	36 352	25 894	23 575	23 100
10,1–50,0	83 672	71 354	59 874	47 546	34 794	31 298	30 691
50,1–	7 596	10 471	13 286	15 361	16 110	16 077	18 006
Total	232 920	155 364	117 882	99 259	76 798	70 950	71 797

in the Economic Accounts for Agriculture. The calculations are done in the same way in all EU Member States.

In 2007, Swedish value of production was not quite SEK 47 billion. This was evenly distributed between livestock and crops, which were worth some SEK 200 billion each. The remaining value of production is made up mostly by agricultural services. Value of production includes direct support targeted towards individual products.

Agriculture in national accounts

In 2005, value of production was SEK 40 billion. That year, agriculture made up only 0,5 per cent of Swedish Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This share has been declining steadily since the mid 1980s.

Distribution of area

Sweden's land area is 41,1 million hectares, excluding large lakes and watercourses. Of this total, 2,7 million hectares (6,5 per cent) are arable land, 23 million hectares (56 per cent) are forest, and 0,5 million hectares (1,2 per cent) are pasture.

Direct support to agriculture in EAA, SEK million	
	2007
Single payment scheme	6 078
Livestock aid	323
Compensation to less favoured areas	711
National support to northern Sweden	259
Environmental support	2 543
Total	9 593

Consumption and trade

Swedes drink less and less milk. Consumption of milk, yoghurt and similar products declined by 25 per cent during a period of 20 years starting in 1980, and the trend continues. In 2006, Swedes consumed on average 136 litres of liquid milk products per capita. Five years before, per capita consumption was 144 litres, and 185 litres in 1980.

During the period from 1980 to 2006, meat consumption increased by some 33 per cent, and the increase in flour and grouts was 12 per cent. Consumption of ware potatoes in 2006 was the same as 25 years before.

Agricultural trade is increasing

Sweden's exports and imports both increased from 2005 to 2007. Sweden exported agro-food products

worth SEK 41,5 billion in 2007. This is an increase by seven per cent or SEK 2,7 billion. In that same year we imported agro-food products for SEK 76 billion. This is an increase by eight per cent, or SEK 5,6 billion.

Cereals and cereal products are the largest export products

Cereals and cereal products represent one third of the increase in Swedish exports. The rest is made up of beverages, processed food, and dairy products and eggs.

If one looks at processed food only – primarily beverages, bread and pastry, various food preparations, and chocolate – one finds that Sweden in 2007 exported goods worth SEK 16,5 billion. This is an increase by nine per cent compared to 2006. Furthermore,



exports increased more than imports. This means that our deficit in trade in processed products declined.

EU is the largest market

The main part, 63 per cent, of Swedish agro-food exports go to other European countries, and most of it to Nordic countries. The largest individual markets for Swedish exports are Denmark, Finland, Norway and the US. Three years ago the US was the most important market, but due to a deteriorating exchange rate, values have decreased by four per cent.

Total consumption of certain foods, kg or litres per capita and year		
	2002	2006
Flour and grouts	73,6	71,6
– Wheat flour	55,8	52,5
Meats	79,7	85,6
– Beef	24,4	25,9
– Pig meat	36,0	38,7
– Poultry meat	14,8	16,2
Milk, yoghurt etc.	144,5	136,3
Cream	10,3	9,9
Cheese	17,6	18,2
Fats and oils	16,1	16,4
Eggs	11,3	12,3
Ware potatoes	83,6	83,6
Vegetables, fresh and frozen	52,1	60,9
Vegetables, processed	13,3	14,8
Fruits and berries, fresh and frozen	56,7	64,7
Fruits and berries, processed	41,7	41,2
Sugar and syrup	41,3	41,8
Coffee and tea	7,9	8,3

Approximately 65 per cent of Swedish agro-food imports come from EU Member States. Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany are the countries we import the most from. Among non-EU countries, Norway is the main source of our imports. From 1999 to 2007, value of imports increased the most for fish and fish products, fruit and vegetables, and meat and meat products.

Imports and exports of agro-food products, SEK million, 2007		
	Import	Export
Live animals	207	178
Meat and meat products	8 325	1 852
Dairy products and eggs	4 953	3 050
Fish, crustaceans and molluscs	16 832	11 053
Cereals and cereal products	4 167	5 312
Fruit and vegetables	15 668	2 493
Sugar and sugar confectionary	1 886	891
Coffee, tea and cocoa	5 204	2 842
Animal feed	2 258	530
Processed foods	5 052	5 012
Tobacco and tobacco products	1 163	362
Oilseeds	559	77
Oils and fats	3 004	1 203
Total	76 237	40 907

Production

Crops

Swedish crop production is dominated by cereals, mostly barley, oats and wheat, as well as by grassland. Some 40 per cent of arable land is sown to cereals. Yields vary much between different areas. Yields are the largest in the plain districts in the south, and the northern fields yield the least per hectare.

Different climate conditions also explain crop distribution. In the north, crop production mostly comprises forage and coarse grains. Bread grain is mostly grown in the plain districts of south and central Sweden. Oilseed production, mostly rapeseed and colza, is also located in the southern and central areas. Potatoes are grown in all of Sweden, whereas sugar beets are only grown in the southernmost parts.

Crop production, total harvest, 1 000 tonnes	
	2007
Cereals, total	5 057
– Wheat	2 256
– Rye	137
– Barley	1 439
– Oats	890
– Other	335
Grassland (including regrowth)	4 154
Ware potatoes	535
Starch potatoes	254
Oilseeds	229
Sugar beet	2 138



Horticulture

Fruit, vegetables, berries and decorative plants are cultivated professionally both outdoors and in greenhouses, mostly in the south of Sweden. In 2005 horticultural production took place at 2 600 enterprises in Sweden. Three quarters of those enterprises had open air cultivation on 12 560 hectares. 1 000 enterprises had greenhouse cultivation on a total area of 300 hectares.

Arable area by crop, 1000 hectares	
	2007
Cereals, total	990
– Wheat	362
– Rye	25
– Barley	327
– Oats	318
– Other	69
Leguminous crops	29
Oilseeds	92
Grassland	1 128
Potatoes	28
Sugar beet	41
Fallow land	281
Other uses	58
Total arable area	2 648

Harvested quantities of certain greenhouse products		
	2002	2007
Tomatoes	22 800	16 400
Cucumbers	22 900	31 300
Herbs	22 600	22 900
Potted lettuce	15 000	14 200

Carrots and iceberg lettuce are the most important vegetables, as regards cultivated area. Spinach and parsnip increased the most, by area, from 2002 to 2005.

Harvested quantities of certain open air products, tonnes		
	2002	2007
Cauliflower	4 900	3 100
Cucumber	12 300	7 000
Iceberg lettuce	23 400	26 600
Onion	23 200	34 900
Carrot	84 800	89 400
Cabbage	13 400	15 200
Leek	2 600	3 100
Apple	18 000	21 000
Strawberry	9 800	13 300

Cultivation of certain greenhouse products, m ²		
	2002	2007
Tomatoes	542 100	493 100
Cucumbers	605 900	744 600
Herbs	53 300	73 900
Potted lettuce	70 800	57 800

Cultivation of certain open air products, hectares		
	2002	2007
Cauliflower	316	206
Cucumber	279	145
Iceberg lettuce	1 092	1 118
Onion	805	1 018
Carrot	1 820	1 804
Cabbage	385	394
Leek	99	121
Apple	1 334	1 363
Strawberry	2 209	1 843



Animal products

In 2007 there were some 1,5 million bovine animals in Sweden, of which 369 000 were dairy cows. These dairy cows produce about 3 million litres of milk. The number of dairy holdings has almost been halved since the early 1990s, and the number of dairy cows has declined by more than 20 per cent. At the same time, average yield per cow has increased strongly.

The decline in milk production has opened the door to specialised beef production. Approximately 186 000 suckler cows were used in this kind of production in 2007, which is twice as many as in the beginning of the 1980s. However, most beef and veal still come from cows and calves in dairy production.

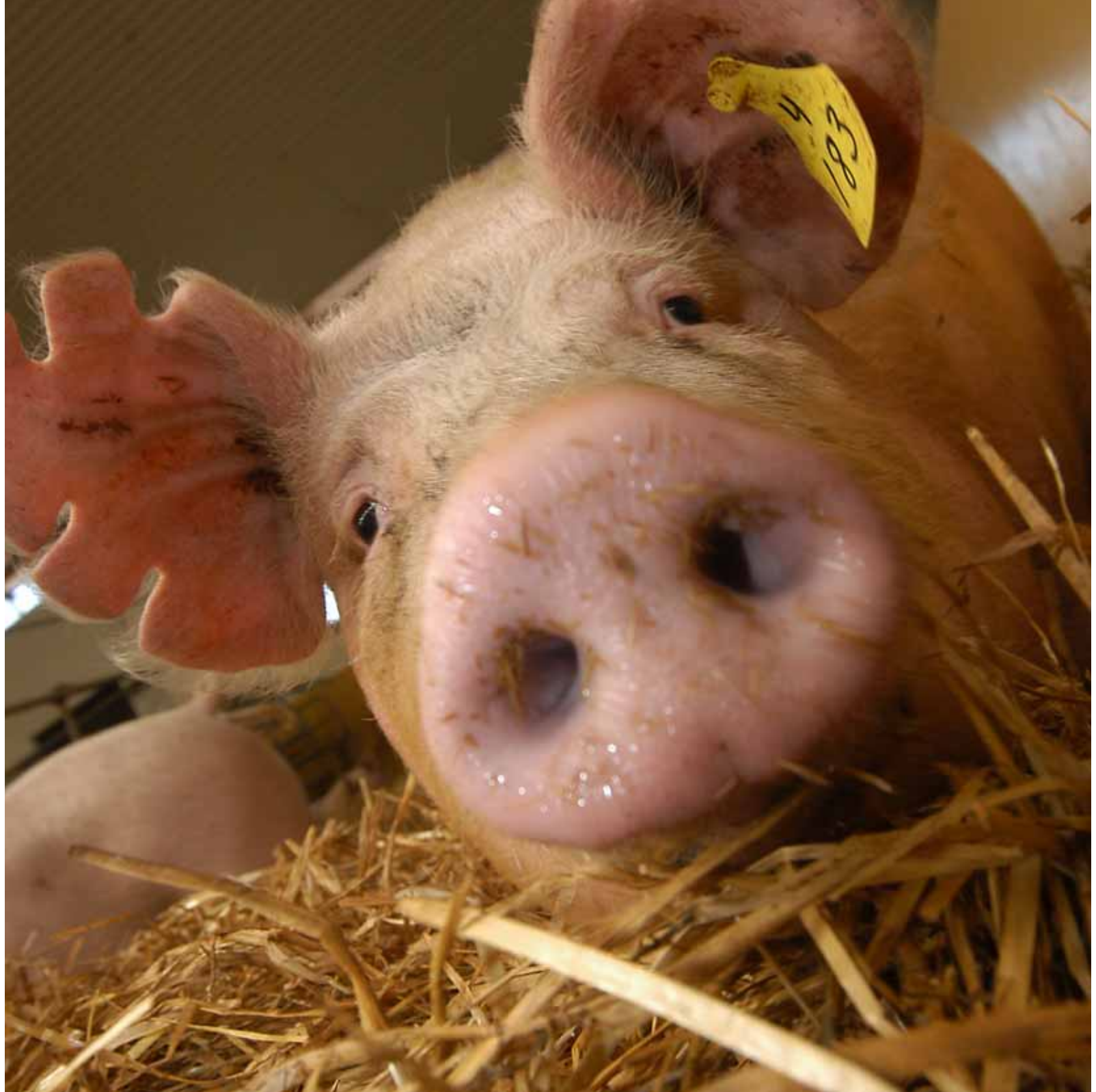
In 2007 there were some 2 300 pigmeat producers in Sweden. Since 1990 the number of pigmeat-producing companies has declined by more than 80 per cent. Most holdings have more than 500 animals.

The number of hens in Swedish farming increased strongly from 1980 to 1990. Then followed a small decline, but from 2006 to 2007 the trend turned upwards again. In 2007 there were more than 7 million hens and chickens in Sweden. Also in this sector, rationalisation and specialisation lead to larger holdings.

Livestock numbers, 1 000 head	
	2007
Dairy cows	370
Suckler cows	186
Total cows	556
Heifers, bulls and steers older than one year	516
Calves younger than one year	489
Total bovine animals	1 560
Ewes and rams	242
Lambs	267
Total sheep and lambs	509
Boars	2
Sows	179
Other pigs, over 20 kg	1 015
Other pigs, below 20 kg	479
Total pigs	1 675
Hens	5 327
Chicken of laying hens	1 753
Total hens and chickens	7 080

Dairy production, 1 000 tonnes	
	2007
Milk delivered to dairies	2 986
Milk for consumption	926
Cream for consumption	94
Milk powder	55
Cheese	109
Butter	21

Production of animals for slaughter and other animal products, 1 000 tonnes	
	2007
Adult cattle	133,7
Horses	0,9
Sheep and lambs	4,5
Pigs	265,6
Poultry	97,8





Organic production

Organic production means cultivation and livestock husbandry that strive towards a high degree of self-sufficiency. Both plant nutrients and feed mostly come from local and renewable resources. Mineral fertilizers and chemical plant protection products must not be used, and are replaced by other measures.

Organic production is a means used in our efforts to reach some of the national environmental objectives, and is also a step towards sustainable development of agriculture. The Government's aim is that certified organic production is to comprise at least 20 per cent of Sweden's arable land in 2010. The Government also wants certified organic production of milk, eggs and meat from ruminants to increase significantly, and certified organic production of pig and poultry meat to increase strongly.

The EU has minimum rules about what constitutes organic production. Food may only be sold as organic if its production is inspected and approved by an inspection body.

Area of organic production of certain crops		
	2001	2006
Cereals	42 346	49 989
Leguminous crops	5 168	7 737
Oilseeds	1 273	3 279
Arable grassland	64 482	77 563

Organic production is increasing

In 2006 the organic arable area was 180 000 hectares; five years earlier it was 154 600 hectares. This is an increase from 5,7 to 6,8 per cent of total arable area.

Organic livestock husbandry is also increasing. This is true for, for instance, the number of dairy cows, suckler cows and chickens for slaughter.

Area of organic cultivation of certain horticultural products		
	2001	2006
Onion	38	39
Carrot	178	155
Beet	41	25
Cabbage	18	33
Berries	154	199
Fruit	51	88

Number of livestock certified by KRAV		
	2001	2006
Bovine animals	85 804	95 736
– Dairy cows	20 712	24 121
– Suckler cows	12 534	13 826
Sheep and lambs	37 818	33 938
Pigs	27 664	26 298
Poultry	204 913	415 206
– Laying hens	186 092	360 093
– Chickens for slaughter	17 920	55 075
Deer	133	562



Environmental concerns

The value of the agricultural landscape and of agricultural land for production of both biology and food is to be protected. At the same time, biodiversity and cultural heritage values are to be preserved and strengthened.

So it says under the heading A Varied Agricultural Land-scape, which is one of Sweden's environmental objectives. In 1999 the Parliament adopted 15 national environmental quality objectives, and one more has been added since then. These objectives describe the characteristics our natural and cultural environment must have in order for society to develop in an environmentally sustainable way.

Three of the objectives are of particular relevance to agriculture: A Varied Agricultural Landscape, Zero Eutrophication, and A Non-Toxic Environment. These objectives include the following:

- Biodiversity that has been created by long-term management is to be preserved.
- Small biotopes are to be preserved and also created in the plain districts.
- Nutrient leaching and use of chemical plant protection products shall be reduced in order to avoid health risks and to create good conditions for plant and animal life.

The objectives shall be reached through legislation, financial instruments, information, extension services, and training.

Agriculture is changing

One reason why the environmental objectives were laid down is that the changes in agriculture that have taken place in recent decades have harmful environmental effects. It is true that mineral fertilizers and plant protection products have yielded larger harvests, but their use have also caused increasing problems with plant nutrient leaching and other environmental hazards.

The fusion of parcels has caused small biotopes to disappear in our major agricultural areas. In other areas, farms have been abandoned and the land has reverted to forest.

Environmental issues in the EU

Environmental concerns also matter to the EU's common agricultural policy. For instance, funds are transferred from the single payment scheme to rural development, so that it can be channelled to environmental matters.

Agricultural authorities

The Ministry of Agriculture handles all matters concerning agriculture, fishery, horticulture, animal health, food, seed control, environmental concerns, hunting and game keeping that are to be determined at the Government level.

Major agricultural authorities

The Board of Agriculture is the Government's expert authority on agriculture, and is responsible for issues related to agriculture and horticulture. The Board is also the governing authority of the district veterinarians, and responsible for food preparedness.

Agricultural units at the County Administrative Boards handle various forms of agricultural support and are responsible for extension services and training in their regions.

The National Veterinary Institute (SVA) provides authorities and private individuals with expertise and service in matters of veterinary medicine. One task of the SVA is to investigate the origin, cause and spread of contagious animal diseases.

The National Food Administration shall actively further food safety, reliable food production and good nutritional habits, always with the consumers' best interest at heart. The Board monitors food quality and employs inspection veterinarians at slaughterhouses.

The Environmental Protection Agency handles issues concerning environmental protection and conservation. The Agency shall make sure that decisions on environmental policy are implemented, and works both long-term and proactively for sustainable development.

The National Board of Forestry is the monitoring authority for all Swedish forests, and shall make sure that the Government's forest policy is implemented. The authority strives to ensure that all our forests are maintained and cultivated, and also emphasises the forest's recreational values.

The Sami Parliament works for a thriving sami culture based on sustainable reindeer husbandry and other sami businesses. The Sami Parliament is both a public authority and a sami parliament elected by the sami people.

The National Chemicals Inspectorate (KemI) is the central monitoring authority and handles matters concerning health and environmental hazards related to chemical products. KemI is an authority subject to the Ministry of the Environment.



Political guidelines

Sweden is an EU Member State, and is therefore comprised by the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The goals of this policy are the following:

- increase agricultural productivity
- ensure farmers a reasonable standard of living
- stabilise markets in agricultural products, i.e. reduce the effects of variations in supply and demand
- ensure supply of agricultural products
- guarantee consumer access to agricultural products at reasonable prices.

In order to achieve these objectives, the EU has established a common market for agricultural products, allowing such products to flow freely between Member States. This common market is based on three principles:

- common prices: the EU guarantees a minimum price to farmers for certain products, irrespective of market prices
- community preference: goods produced within the EU shall be preferred to goods produced in non-EU countries
- common financing through a budget to which all Member States contribute.

EU reform process

In 2003 the EU carried out a considerable reform of its agricultural policy, in order to make it more adapted to the markets.

One of the changes was to replace several forms of agricultural support with one measure called the Single Payment Scheme. This means that farmers receive support based on how much land they maintain, instead of how much is produced on that land.

The general idea is that consumer demand shall guide production. The EU hopes that this change will result in lower surpluses for certain products. The farmer can receive the single payment for all farmland, i.e. both arable land and pastures, that he or she maintains and claims support for. In order to receive the full amount, the farmer must comply with requirements regarding i.a. the environment as well as animal health and welfare. This is referred to as cross compliance.

In order to obtain the single payment, the farmer must have so-called premium rights. Each premium right has a fixed value depending on the type of land and its geographical location.

Approximately 80 000 Swedish farms received some form of EU support in 2008. Total direct support to farmers amounted to SEK 10 billion in 2008. Some of the measures are financed by Sweden alone.

Political guidelines in Sweden

The overall goal of Swedish agricultural policy is to preserve and develop natural resources of rural areas in a sustainable way. The Swedish countryside shall be a good place to live and work.

One means to achieve our goals is the Rural Development Programme. This applies for seven years, 2007–2013, and has a budget of approximately SEK 35 billion. The Programme is financed by the Swedish Government and by the EU, about 50 per cent each.

The Rural Development Programme is to make it possible both to develop traditional Swedish agriculture and to promote new lines of business that further the environment and develop rural areas. Some examples include tourism, health care and food production.



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