

Lantmännen in debate articles in SvD and ATL about research and collaboration – for a stronger agriculture and country

In order to adapt cultivation to climate change and meet future needs for domestic food production, research and development are required – not least in plant breeding. This is important for Sweden's farmers, but ultimately it means societal benefits in the form of a stronger food supply and preparedness. But to succeed, greater knowledge, more collaboration and increased investments are required.

Lantmännen, together with other experts, writes about this and more in two debate articles. Read the verdict in its entirety at [Svenska Dagbladet](#) (Swedish) and [ATL](#) (Swedish), respectively, or as summaries below.

"Swedish food requires Swedish research" (SvD, 14 May)

Swedish food production requires plants adapted to our northern climate with cold winters and short growing seasons. Therefore, it is crucial that Sweden invests in its own research in plant breeding instead of relying on international knowledge. Plant breeding has historically been central to increased food production in Europe, and is key to meeting challenges such as climate change and geopolitical unrest.

Since 2018, SLU Grogrund, a Swedish knowledge centre for plant breeding, has been developing new crops in collaboration with the business community – with a focus on higher yields, climate adaptation, disease resistance and better taste. Among the 21 ongoing projects are, for example, more hardy potato varieties, Swedish-grown peas for plant-based protein and new apple varieties adapted for the whole country.

Despite the success, the business is threatened by uncertain funding. Research requires a long-term approach, and plant breeding has long lead times where continuity and expertise are crucial. To secure Sweden's food security, stable and long-term funding is needed, as well as a broad political consensus that Swedish plant research is vital – regardless of government. Without this, we risk losing both momentum and crucial knowledge.

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"Plant breeding creates growth and climate adaptation" (ATL, 6 May).

Plant breeding plays a crucial role in Swedish food production, sustainability and preparedness. Since 2000, 70 per cent of the increase in agricultural yields in Europe has come from plant breeding. To meet climate change, extreme weather and a growing need for food, crops adapted to Swedish conditions are required – something that cannot be solved by foreign research.

SLU Grogrund, which was started in 2018, is a national knowledge centre for plant breeding with a focus on food crops. Through collaboration between academia, industry and society, it

has quickly established effective working methods for putting research into practice. Long-term funding of at least SEK 50 million per year is now required to meet the needs of the future.

Three key areas are prioritised: climate adaptation through crops that can withstand extreme weather and plant diseases, the use of AI to speed up the breeding process, and increased domestic production of plant proteins to reduce import dependence. Currently, SLU Grogrund has a basic funding of SEK 35 million and SEK 10 million in temporary funds that will expire in 2025 – which threatens the stability of the operations.

To secure the future of Sweden's food supply, political consensus and continued investment in plant breeding are required. Sweden has the opportunity to become a leader in climate-smart agriculture – but the right investments are needed now.

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About Lantmännen

Lantmännen is an agricultural cooperative and Northern Europe's leader in agriculture, machinery, bioenergy and food products. Owned by 17,000 Swedish farmers, Lantmännen has 12,000 employees, operations in over 20 countries and an annual turnover of SEK 70 billion. With grain at the heart of the operations, Lantmännen refine arable land resources to make farming thrive. Some of Lantmännen's best-known food brands are AXA, Kungsörnen, Scan, GoGreen, FINN CRISP, Schulstad and Vaasan. The company is founded on the knowledge and values acquired through generations of farmers. By engaging in research, development and operations throughout the value chain, Lantmännen takes responsibility from field to fork. For more information: www.lantmannen.com