

The harvest was challenged by the weather – with large regional variations

When this year's harvest is in its final stages, it can be stated that the local variation has been extremely large, which means that the volume appears to be lower than forecasts made. The harvest outcome also shows very large regional variations. The changeable and extreme weather, with both floods and longer periods of drought, has had a negative impact on the Swedish harvest in many areas.

Last autumn was very wet, which meant poorer conditions for Sweden's farmers to establish a good autumn crop. Spring cultivation was also delayed by a lot of precipitation during the winter, according to statistics from SMHI, the amount of precipitation during the winter was twice as high in many areas compared to normal. The consequence was a shorter growing season for the spring-sown crops. During early summer, there was a lack of rain and periods of drought in parts of the country, which further made it difficult for the crops. After that, many were hit by local downpours.

"Farmers are used to the fact that the weather varies, but the extreme rain and drought are difficult to predict, and even more difficult to handle. They are also one of the reasons why yields have large local variations within the regions, and sometimes also within the municipalities," says Per Germundsson, Sales and Supply Manager at Lantmännen's grain unit.

The changeable weather makes it more difficult for farmers to carry out their efforts at exactly the right time.

"This year's outcome of the autumn-sown crops largely depends on when the farmers were able to carry out the autumn sowing before it started to rain continuously, and the same can be said about the outcome of the spring sowing. The importance of timing for sowing also applies to this year's autumn sowing, where we now see that the outcome of the winter rapeseed establishment varies greatly," says Per.

As for the quality of this year's grain, it is generally good. The outcome looks significantly better than it did last year, which was then severely affected by the rain during the harvest work. The cultivation of grass – grass for hay or silage – is important for Swedish dairy and beef producers and covers about half of the arable area. Here, the weather has favoured the cultivation, where both volume and quality have been very good.

Challenges and potential ahead

The changing climate affects harvests and thus also Sweden's food production and preparedness.

"The discussions about climate adaptation become particularly relevant when we see the weak trend for our Swedish harvests. In the short term, in order to meet the climate changes that have already taken place and that affect agriculture here and now, rapid measures and large investments in climate adaptation are needed. This requires investments from both market players and politicians," says Magnus Kagevik, President and CEO of Lantmännen.

The possibilities are many.

"The harvest is the basis for competitiveness and profitability in agriculture, and it is of great importance for Sweden's food production and livelihood that farmers are able to harvest even and large harvests of good quality. Half of all food consumed in Sweden is imported, and that is a subgrade for a country with such good conditions for producing good food. There is a great deal of untapped potential here," concludes Magnus Kagevik.

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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 18,000 Swedish farmers, we have 12,000 employees, operations in over 20 countries and an annual turnover of approximately SEK 70 billion. With grain at the heart of our operations, we refine arable land resources to make farming thrive. Some of our best-known food brands are AXA, Kungsörnen, Scan, GoGreen, FINN CRISP, Schulstad and Vaasan. Our company is founded on the knowledge and values acquired through generations of farmers. With research, development and operations throughout the value chain, together we take responsibility from field to fork. For more information: www.lantmannen.com