

Towards the 2021 harvest – spring sowing in full swing

Swedish farmers are now initiating the intensive work coupled with spring sowing while continuing to adapt to the challenges and consequences of the Covid-19 crisis. Large autumn sowing, export restrictions and strong global demand are factors that will affect this year's harvest. The prospects look good for a normal size harvest in Sweden, but as always, the actual harvest will ultimately depend on the weather.

Robust Swedish food supply

Last year, the Government classified the food sector as essential to society, and a prosperous Swedish agriculture constitutes a basic condition for the sector's existence. During the entire Covid-19 pandemic, food supply has worked very well in Sweden and farmers as well as Lantmännen are continuously working to ensure that the food value chain remains robust.

“Secure deliveries of seed and feed to farmers, and food to customers and consumers in and around Sweden and the world is a key issue for Lantmännen. We continuously strive to strengthen the grain value chain and create more robust flows and added values for both farmers and consumers, for example by investing billions in grain reception facilities, processing industries and export infrastructure. These are strategically important investments, not just for Lantmännen and Swedish farmers, but for the Swedish food supply and society in general,” says Per Olof Nyman, Group President and CEO at Lantmännen.

Export opportunities and high prices on grain

Swedish farmers are adapting their production to the market, linked to both price changes and trends, and have been able to match the fluctuations in demand that constantly occur. Weather aside, it is the decision-making, professional skill and choice of crops made by each individual farmer that are the biggest factors in achieving a good harvest.

“The spring sowing is smaller than normal this year. This is a trend we have seen for several years now, as there are several advantages of a large autumn sow. Proven not the least by last years record sized autumn sowing. Autumn sown crops are more robust and higher yielding than spring sown crops, which bodes well for a normal size harvest this summer. Farmers and Lantmännen have now done what we have been able to, based on our extensive expertise and it is now the weather that will determine the size and quality of the harvest,” says Johannes Åkerblom, Head of Plant Cultivation at Lantmännen.

Along with the size of the harvest, the price of grain is key to the profitability of Swedish agriculture. Grain is an international market and prices are generally higher than a year ago. This is primarily due to increased Chinese consumption and imports, but also to export restrictions from Russia, poorer weather in Latin America that mainly affects the harvest of soy and corn. In addition, there has been increased demand for vegetable oils from China, which affects the price of rapeseed, which in turn, is good for the Nordic countries.

“Although rapeseed has become difficult to grow in Europe, conditions are good for rapeseed cultivation in Sweden. The price of barley is higher than 12 months ago. However, when looking at this year's annual seed sales, interest in the oats seems to be stable until the 2021 harvest. It is interesting to note that there has never been as much autumn wheat sown as last year, which bodes well for the 2021 harvest,” Åkerblom adds.

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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 19,000 Swedish farmers, we have 10,000 employees, operations in over 20 countries and an annual turnover of SEK 45 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, Bonjour, Kungsörnen, GoGreen, GooH, 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