

Åsa Larsson awarded the 2021 Lantmännen “From field to fork”-scholarship

This year’s Lantmännen and Ultuna Student Union (ULS) “From field to fork-scholarship” goes to Åsa Larsson for her thesis that highlights the significant area of supplemental irrigation as a practice to increase productivity within agriculture, while also considering the sustainability parameter.

Lantmännen and Ultuna Student Union’s (ULS) “From field to fork-scholarship” 2021 is awarded to Åsa Larsson who recently got her agronomist degree at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). Åsa is awarded the scholarship for her thesis “Supplemental irrigation in spring cereals” where she evaluated the effects of supplemental irrigation by studying the soil water balance and yields.

”My interest for these questions awoke during the spring 2018 when I, during an exchange semester in Hohenheim, Germany read a course in irrigation systems. During the very same period, the draught was spreading across Europe and both spring cereals and leys were lost in many places. However, in southern Germany one was accustomed to droughts and thereby had systems in place to handle the phenomenon. And it was in that context the idea for my thesis came to be. To me, it was also important that my thesis would have a clear connection to agriculture in practice”, says this year’s stipendiary Åsa Larsson.

The scholarship was awarded on May 29 and the jury's motivation reads: “The scholarship holder’s master thesis elevates the current issue of water resource management linked to returns and limited resources. The thesis shows that early supplemental irrigation usually gave a higher yield per millimeter of water and these are important insights as supply and economy limit how much irrigation is possible, while high yields are essential. The Committee opine that the stipendiary, through her work, has made a strong contribution to increased knowledge - from field to fork - about how supplementary irrigation at the right time can increase productivity and thus the profitability of agriculture, in a sustainable and balanced way”.

“Åsa Larsson has made an immense and thorough job pinpointing a very pressing issue, as water shortage is one of the most common yield limiting factors. Therefore, it is of great importance that we update the knowledge base to fit the type of agriculture we have today, says Patric Myreliid, Group Strategy Director at Lantmännen.

“There is a strong need to continue the work regarding water supply systems that are both about supplementary irrigation and drainage. We see an innovation gap that needs to be filled in the future for us to be able to both increase productivity and effectiveness while also continue to further improve our long term sustainability work, says Peter Annas, Group R&D and Innovation Director at Lantmännen.

Åsa Larsson grew up on a dairy farm in Gästrikland and graduated as an agronomist in 2020 (master’s degree - soil science) from SLU. During her studies, Åsa was Academy Steward in 2019 with responsibility for professor installations and doctoral dissertations ceremonies. Today, Åsa works with follow-up and analysis of the Swedish implementation of the rural development programme at the Swedish Board of Agriculture.

The “From field to fork”-scholarship is awarded annually and is part of Lantmännen's collaboration with the students at SLU Ultuna and Ultuna Student Union. The scholarship aims to reward outstanding student work that contributes to developing Sweden's food production and Swedish agricultural companies in a profitable and sustainable way. The scholarship

committee consists of ULS's chairman, secretary, inspector and career & business contacts official, as well as two representatives from Lantmännen.

The thesis can be downloaded from: <https://stud.epsilon.slu.se/16688/>

For more information, please contact:

Patrik Myrelid, Group Strategy Director

Phone: +46 706 51 89 33

E-mail: patrik.myrelid@lantmannen.com

Lantmännen Press Office

Phone: +46 10 556 88 00

E-mail: press@lantmannen.com

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