

Towards the 2020 harvest – spring sowing in full swing in most parts of Sweden

National food supply is more important than ever this year. In midst of the coronavirus outbreak, Swedish farmers are working intensively with spring cultivation and have managed to adapt to some of the consequences of the new coronavirus. The prospects for a normal size Swedish harvest look good, but ultimately, as always, the actual harvest will depend on the weather.

Spring cultivation is essential to secure Sweden's food supply

The Swedish government recently classified the food sector as critical for society and Swedish agriculture is a fundamental part of this sector. During the coronavirus outbreak, the food supply has largely continued to function as it should in Sweden. In parallel with this, farmers are now working intensively on the critical spring cultivation, managing autumn sown crops, and preparing for the 2020 harvest.

“With our responsibility from field to fork, Lantmännen plays an important role in safeguarding the entire food value chain all the way from its members – Swedish farmers – to store shelves and consumers. Our number one priority is to protect our employees and during the coronavirus pandemic, the health of our personnel and their ability to go to work have been our focus. We can also confirm that, to date, we have largely been able to secure deliveries of food, seed and feed to our members, customers and consumers,” says Per Olof Nyman, Group President and CEO of Lantmännen.

Big demand for food from Swedish retailers, together with a wet winter in northern Europe, means that the Swedish harvest is more important than ever this year. Spring cultivation is in full swing in Sweden, with or without the coronavirus. This year's harvest will be significant in ensuring a good food supply in Sweden. “This year's spring cultivation will be smaller than normal, as a consequence of the large autumn sowing last year, which is positive for this year's harvest. Autumn sown crops are more robust and higher yielding than spring sown crops, which bodes well for a normal size harvest this summer. From now on, the weather will determine how much of the potential harvest will be realized,” says Johannes Åkerblom, Manager Arable Production at Lantmännen.

Swedish farmers sowing for more porridge and less beer this year

Weather aside, it is the skill and labor of each individual farmer and what they choose to sow, that are the biggest factors in achieving a good harvest. Swedish farmers have made the necessary changes, linked to price movements and trends, to better match changes in demand that are now being seen as a consequence of the coronavirus. Products such as flour and oats are now in big demand, as seen on store shelves in March. At the same time, the café and restaurant sector has faced a tougher time.

“For the 2020 harvest, Swedish farmers have chosen to grow more oats than in previous years. There is a big demand for oats and the price of oats is relatively high. Swedish farmers have also sown less barley, which seems to be a wise decision. The prevailing situation with cancelled events and fewer restaurant visits suggests that demand for barley for brewing beer will be reduced,” says Åkerblom.

Images are available at <https://www.lantmannen.com/newsroom/press-images/>.

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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 20,000 Swedish farmers, we have 10,000 employees, operations in over 20 countries and an annual turnover of SEK 50 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, Kungsörmen, 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