

## SWEDEN

# Farm's performance, restructuring and modernisation

### Location

Västmanland

### Programming period

2014 - 2020

### Priority

P2- Competitiveness

### Measure

M4 – Investments in physical  
assets

### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 734 659

EAFRD 48 336

National/regional 70 718

Private 615 605

### Project duration

2015 – 2019

### Project promoter

Johan Matsander

### Contact

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### Website

[www.farnaodlingar.se](http://www.farnaodlingar.se)

Previously uncultivated and overgrown agricultural land was restored and was used to set up a new competitive and sustainable business.

## Summary

Much of the land outside Färna village was overgrown and uncultivated before Johan started his business. With help from the RDP at the starting phase of his enterprise, he invested in equipment and machines to restore 30 ha of land. He planted rhubarb and black currant in 16 hectares of land connected to Färna Manor, and started selling raw and refined products to the local market in the county and the surrounding areas.



## Results

30 hectares of land are cultivated with 60 000 plants of black currant and 20 000 plants of rhubarb in production. Their products are sold in stores, cafés and restaurants in Västmanland county and neighbouring counties. Thanks to Färna Cultures, the fields outside Färna village are now green and contribute to the living cultural landscape.

Färna Cultures was awarded the Swedish 'Ullbagge-price' for its contribution to rural development.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The most important thing is for someone to look at their own interest areas. What do they want to do? The reason Johan started this business was that he had been doing this as a hobby, since he was a child. When starting and developing a competitive business, it must be something that brings joy.
- ❑ Things to consider for such cultivations is that sometimes there is a lack of knowledge about the necessary machinery and long transport distances can cause some damages to the plants.
- ❑ In order to create a profitable and sustainable business taking advice from others will be very helpful. Johan headed where there existed similar working cultures and did study trips to collect knowledge from others

## Context

The number of successful agricultural and gardening companies is decreasing, and the unemployment in Västmanland county in general is higher compared to other counties in Sweden.

Johan Mantsander enterprise is located on Färna Manor, owned by Gerald och Wenche Engström. The Engström family is both the land owner and co-financier of the investments. The land around the Färna Manor was hardly used before Johan started his business. Much of the former agricultural land in the area, was left uncultivated and overgrown, or planted with forest. This case is an important example of how it is possible to develop the countryside and achieve progress.

## Objectives

The overall objective of this project was to strengthen the competitiveness and profitability of a gardening and agriculture enterprise in Västmanland county, by helping it to adjust to the new conditions of the market. Specific objectives included:

- Invest in the necessary equipment in order to make the business competitive and profitable;
- To use and preserve the cultivated landscape;
- To increase food production in the county and local employment;
- To promote tourism and the cultural values in the area around Färna Manor;
- To introduce new Swedish quality products to the food market.

## Activities

Johan had to seek help from abroad to get the knowledge and advice, in order to get started and maintain the cultivation of black currant and rhubarb. Johan started to cultivate unused land. That meant he had to start with clearing brushwood, drain and irrigate the land before planting. In order to create good conditions for his cultivations he also started to keep bees. Financing was used to prepare the area, purchase equipment and plants, and maintain the cultures.

Färna Cultures now produces black currant drinks, rhubarb drinks, black currant christmas wine, black currant jam, rhubarb jam and rhubarb chutney.



## Main results

60 000 plants of black currant and 20 000 plants of rhubarb are used, and the products from them are sold in stores, cafés and restaurants in Västmanland county and a neighbouring counties. 30 hectares of land are cultivated.

Thanks to Färna Cultures, the fields outside Färna village are now green and contribute to the living cultural landscape. Even though the business is not yet in full production - it takes some years for the plants of rhubarb and black currant to reach their full potential, Färna Cultures seem to have good potential to become a competitive and profitable company.

*“The investment has created a competitive enterprise in an area where almost no agriculture enterprises are left. It creates job opportunities on the countryside, invigoration to the district and an open farmland.”*

County Administrative Board of Västmanland

When the crops reach its full potential, the business will be able to extend and get more employees.

In the future, the company aim to get its own refining facility in order to keep all the works inside the company, better plan the work and develop new products more easily.

The EU-funding to this investment also has effects for the local economy on a broader lever, according to Johan.

*“Other companies have been involved in develop this cultivation, and a cider mill refines the products according to my prescription. The EU-funding has effects on several enterprises and people working in the countryside in different ways”.*

Färna Cultures was awarded the Swedish “Ullbagge-price” for its contribution to rural development. Johan wants to highlight the importance of the EU-funding: *“EU-funding means - food production, countryside development and Ullbagge-price”*

### Key lessons

For Johan the most important thing is for someone to look at their own interest areas. What do they want to do? The reason he started this business was that he had been doing this, as a hobby, since he was a child. When starting and developing a competitive business, it must be something that brings joy.

In order to create a profitable and sustainable business taking advice from others will be very helpful. Johan headed where there existed similar working cultures and did study trips to collect knowledge from others



*"I got two main driving forces. Firstly, I really enjoy cultivating and refining local cultures into drinks. Secondly, I want to contribute to the production of good food in Sweden. We need to improve our self-efficiency when it comes to food."*

Johan Matsanders

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#### Additional sources of information

[www.farnaherrgard.se/mat-dryck/vara-bonder/farna-odlingar/?cookieChecked=true](http://www.farnaherrgard.se/mat-dryck/vara-bonder/farna-odlingar/?cookieChecked=true)