

## 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 Mansanders launched his business. With help from the RDP at the initial phase of the 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 surrounding areas.



## Results

A total of 30 hectares of land are cultivated with 60 000 black currant plants and 20 000 rhubarb plants in production. 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 consideration is to examine your interest and what you want to do. This business began as a hobby that started as a child. When starting and developing a competitive business, it must be something that brings joy.
- ❑ 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 is very helpful. Johan took study trips to areas with similar working cultures.

### Context

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

Johan Mansanders enterprise is located on Färna Manor, owned by Gerald och Wenche Engström. The Engström family is both the landowner 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 project is an important example of the feasibility of developing the countryside and achieving 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 were to:

- Invest in the necessary equipment in order to make the business competitive and profitable;
- Use and preserve the cultivated landscape;
- Increase food production in the county and local employment;
- Promote tourism and the cultural values in the area around Färna Manor;
- Introduce new Swedish quality products to the food market.

### Activities

Johan had to seek help from abroad to get the knowledge and advice needed to embark on the cultivation of black currant and rhubarb. He started to cultivate unused land, which meant the initial clearing of brushwood and the draining and irrigating of the land before planting. In order to create good conditions for his cultivations he also started to keep bees. The financing was used to purchase plants and equipment and to cultivate and maintain garden plants.

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

In the future, the business aims to add buildings for storage, handling and refining of crops, and storing the production equipment.



### Main results

Around 60 000 plants of black currant and 20 000 plants of rhubarb are cultivated, and the products from them are sold in stores, cafés and restaurants in Västmanland county and a neighbouring counties. Around 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 has a 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, and invigorates the area and maintains an open farmland.”*

County Administrative Board of Västmanland

When the crops reach their full potential, the business will be able to extend and take on more employees.

In the future, the company aims to acquire 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 for this investment also affects the local economy on a broader level, according to Johan.

*“Other companies have been involved in developing this cultivation, and a cider mill refines the products according to my instructions. The EU funding has an impact 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 highlights the importance of the EU funding: *“EU-funding means food production, countryside development and the Ullbagge-price.”*

### Key lessons

For Johan the most important thing is to examine yourself and find out what you want to do. The reason he started this business was that he had been growing fruit as a hobby since he was a child. When starting and developing a competitive business, it must be something that brings joy.



However, sometimes a lack of knowledge about the necessary machinery and the long transport distances can cause some damages to the plants.

In order to create a profitable and sustainable business taking advice from others is very helpful. Johan took study visits to areas with similar working cultures to learn from them.

*"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-sufficiency 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)