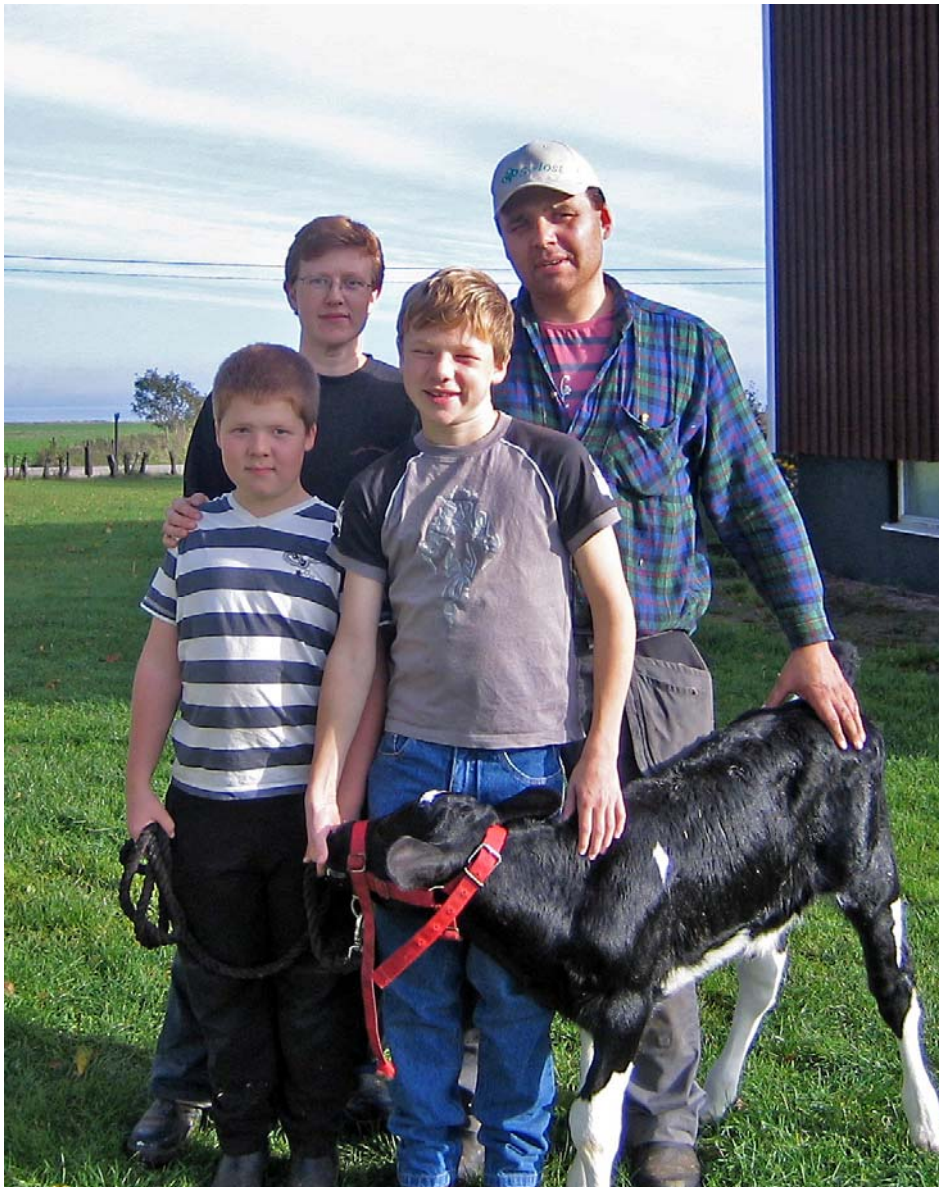


Roger Gustavsson, Farmer and Chairman of the board of the Federation of Swedish Farmers in the community of Mörbylånga.



Background

Roger Gustavsson, farmer, from Gräsgård, Öland (an island just outside the shore of the Swedish east coast)

Chairman of the board of the Federation of Swedish Farmers in the community of Mörbylånga.

Family: Married to Annika, father of two sons; John and Jimmy

Educated at the Agricultural upper secondary school – Ingelstorpsskolan

Roger's agricultural company

Roger is the third generation on the farm; he was born into a family with farming traditions going way back in history. The main property on the farm is an old vicarage, until 1993 it was lease hold of the Swedish Church.

The main production policy on the farm is milk production in a combination with meat production and crop farming. You can find totally about 240 animals on the farm, there are 80 dairy cows, a replacement of 80 animals and finally 80 steers and bulls. The replacement and steers are on a natural pasture during season whilst the dairy cows graze grassland.

Today the cultivated area measures to 170 hectare on the farm. The cultivated crop consists mostly of cultivated grassland, grain and rapeseed (colza). The crop farming is mainly used to feed the animals of the farm.

The property has a total of 220 hectares of pasture – of which 85 percent is Alvar grounds and 15 percent are coastal meadow. “Alvarland” is the name of the quite nutritionally poor pastures that are part of the Great Alvar of Öland. “Sea land” is the local name for the grazing land on the coastal meadows. The soil fertility on coastal meadows is generally much higher than the alvarland and can feed more animals. In the area where Roger has his land there’s - compared to other parts of the island – very little coastal meadow.



The replacement animals and the young animals which are let out for their first grazing season are kept on the better and more fertile pastures, while the steer is kept on the alvar land. In this way you can combine a satisfying growth of the young animals and getting the heifers in good condition for their first calving. However - it does take a bit longer for the steers to reach slaughter weight than it would have if they had been grazing the more nutritious pasture.



In order to optimize the company's economic outcome, on the basis of what the market is willing to pay for the products that come from farming and what the society is willing to pay for the access of an open – not overgrown – cultivated landscape with biodiversity, it is important for Roger to find a balance between the conditions of the pasture and demands to secure the necessarily growth of the animals.



History and traditions

Next to Roger's farm is Eketorp's borg situated, this is a prehistoric fortification, today restored and made in to a museum. Eketorp's history goes back to 300-400 years after Christ, the history of the fortification proves indeed there is a very, very long tradition of farming on Öland. During the earlier Iron age animal husbandry, crops farming and cultivating grass land began to cooperate. A more modern proof of the very long traditions of agriculture on Öland is the fact



that that in 2000 the Agricultural landscape of Southern Öland is on the World Heritage List. In the application in order to be part of the World Heritage List it was emphasized that this landscape has a long history of agriculture and constantly developing.

The land-use pattern of villages and field-systems has been the same for many, many generations. This is unique for this particular landscape.

However crops, buildings, animal and many other facts have changed and developed.

It is thanks to all these generations of farmers' hard work that made the appointment possible.

It was crucial that the farmers and landowners where positive to an application, otherwise there would not be any idea to send in the application Unesco demands that the local people are positive and engaged . The operating parts in this project were the Federation of Swedish Farmers, the community of Mörbylånga and the County Administration of Kalmar.

Landscape conservation, environmental compensation programme, Life, World Heritage

By new supporting efforts and progressive technical development, farming and food production went from deficit to a surplus. This was something that by all means influenced

politicians during a great deal of the 20th century. Due to the rationalizations in the structure of agriculture during the later part of the 20th century the use of pasture decreased. Profitability in pasture husbandry was low, less and less land was used in the production. This was a development that concerned all Sweden. However on the farms on Öland that were depending on grazing animals, it wasn't until the 1980s that the land was left to lie fallow. When this change was coming to the authorities attention a number of measures were taken in order to maintain the biological worth of the natural landscape. Foremost this was done to establish and to keep pasture husbandry. In order to conserve the nature landscape an agreement was signed between farmers and authorities on Öland in 1991 – (as well as in other parts of Sweden).

In 1995 Sweden became a state member of the European Union and the farmers in Öland got a possibility to get access to the environmental compensations programme. Mainly the managing of the alvar land and the coastal meadows. For the individual farmer this gave very important economic compensation since the payment for the production decrease a great deal when Sweden became a member country of the EU.

The environmental compensations have been of crucial importance for the positive development for the pasture on Öland.

The European Union have also rendered possibility to carry on two larger Life-project, and that made it possible to get large lands enclosed and bushes that threatened to overgrow the land removed. Wetland and open water have been recreated.

One must not forget that the essential fact to succeed in keeping the high nature values on Öland – the farmer and his (or her) grazing animals.

During the last few years we have reached a point where there is balance or rather a lack of food production. What effect might this have on the pasture husbandry? One can only guess! It is hard to tell what the future will bring ...

The next generation

It has been previously described in this statement – and which is also the theme for this whole meeting – that there is a very thin line between success and failure when it comes to maintain biodiversity.

A determining factor to be successful is that the farmers are being able to make a reasonable living out of their farm. Only then they can keep up the work with pasture husbandry and cultivate their land. Yet another very important fact that is especially seen on Öland is the individual farmer's knowledge and competence how he runs his company.

To learn in what way his particular land should be cultivated, what to grow – when to grow, on what pasture give the animals the best growth, the number of animals the different pastures can take and a whole lot more - better than anyone, better than the authorities- it is the landowner, the farmer who can tell you this. Very many of the farmers on Öland have this knowledge “in their genes...”



It is stimulating that authorities show a great interest of the values that farmers supply by their work, although it is very important that one can understand how the conditions for these values are created. It is also important to understand that the farm is in the hands of and depending on what is happening on the market. The special competence of authorities is very helpful and beneficial at many occasions, however if the farmer finds his right of ownership is at jeopardy, or he finds that in any other way his possibilities to run and develop his company are being undermined, he is in a negative state of negotiation.

Satisfying landscape conservation cannot be forced.

Once again the high nature values in the landscape of Öland is built on the farmers' urgent work and commitment, supported by reasonable decisions made by authorities – in right time- and a favourable market for agricultural products.

It is all about common sense combined with the demands and expectations from authorities.

General terms of care and cultivating of grasland, from the County Administration of Kalmar

- **Trees and bushes that might overgrow the land should be removed before the first year has ended. This vegetation should be kept off the land during the remaining period of support.**

Trees and bushes established because of weakened custom and not belonging to the traditional custom is to be considered to have overgrowing character. Meadow and grazing land is depended on rich day light and sun light and it is essential that the land is not shadowed. When land clearing is performed, sprigs and other residue should be removed or burnt at place. It is important to choose appropriate spots for this so the damage on the land and vegetation is minimized. It is not allowed to burn sprigs and residue within areas for ancient remains.

- **The land is to be cared for and cultivated annually so that no harmful or damaging accumulation of organic debris takes place.**

When accumulation of organic debris occurs on the land due to weakened custom the flora might change and the values the environmental support is supposed to protect might be lost.

- **Grazing land must annually be grazed.**

The flora and fauna which benefit from traditionally custom of land is depending on this. A lot of these species are adapted to grazing.

- **Prohibition of spreading chemical pesticides, fertilizing, manuring, liming, irrigation, unload rock or soil and other activities that might damage the valuable nature and heritage environments.**

Measurements to achieve a rise in productivity, such as fertilizing and manuring disadvantages the traditionally cultivated meadows and grazing lands. The vegetation on this land is accustomed to quite nutritionally poor soil. Other examples of what might effect nature- and heritage environment negatively are cultivating grassland, remaining sprigs, ditch cleaning (if masses are left behind) and transportation with heavy machinery and vehicles that might cause damage on the land.