

Organic agriculture in Sweden

Sweden is one of the “most organic” country in the world with around 16.9% of agricultural land in organic production (2015)¹ and 8.7% organic shares of the market (2016)³. There have been research programmes directed towards organic farming since 1992.

Farming and market

- Most common organic **crops** (2015):
 ley (around 200.000 ha), cereals (85.000 ha), legumes (11.500 ha), oil seeds (4.600 ha) and potatoes (1.200 ha).²
- **Animals** in organic production (2015):
 Around 20% of cattle and sheep, 15% of laying hens, 1% of broiler chickens and 2% of the pigs.²
- Fast **market** development last years, reaching 8.7 organic shares 2016.³
- **National goals** for organic recently set up by the government: 30% of the agricultural land and 60% of public food procurements organic by 2030.⁴

Problems and challenges

- More conversion to organic needed to provide the growing market with Swedish organic produce.
- Large-scale recirculation of nutrients and sustainable long-term plant nutrient supply.
- Plant protection, especially for fruit and vegetables.
- Increased cultivation of protein crops for feed and food.

Research

- Most agricultural **research** is carried out at SLU but relevant research also at several other universities and at RISE (Swedish Research Institutes). Field trials and demonstration projects are also runned by agricultural colleges and societies.
- EPOK – Centre for Organic Food and Farming at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) works with **collaboration, coordination and information** on organic agriculture research (www.slu.se/epok).
- Main research **funders**:
 The Research Council Formas, SLU EkoForsk and the Swedish Board of Agriculture have had targeted calls for organic production research. Swedish Farmers' Foundation for Agricultural Research and Ekhaga Foundation do also finance organic research. Total amount around 40 million SEK/year.
- Most of around 60 **ongoing projects**⁵ concern subjects within e.g. ecology and plant protection of organic cropping systems, turnover and recycling of plant nutrients and optimization of animal production systems.

References

- ¹ Willer, H. & Lernoud, J. (Eds.) 2017. The World of Organic Agriculture. Statistics and Emerging Trends. FiBL & IFOAM – Organics International. Frick and Bonn.
² Jordbruksverket. 2016. Jordbruksstatistisk sammanställning 2016.
³ Ekoweb. 2017. Ekologisk livsmedelsmarknad. Rapport om den ekologiska branschen sammanställd av Ekoweb.nu 26 januari 2017.
⁴ Regeringen 2017. En livsmedelsstrategi för Sverige – fler jobb och hållbar tillväxt i hela landet. Regeringens handlingsplan. Regeringskansliet Näringsdepartementet.
⁵ SLU. 2015. Swedish Research on Organic Food and Farming 2008–2015. Updated version – November 2015.