

# RURAL BEST



2013

## Facts about the Swedish Rural Network:

Is operating within the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and is aimed at strengthening the implementation.

Gathers authorities and organizations involved in the development of the Swedish countryside.

Is a forum for exchange of information, experiences and methods between stakeholders, authorities and experts at local, national and international levels.

Collects, analyzes and disseminates information about the situation on the countryside and the opportunities offered within the Rural Development Programme.

Is led by a steering group which allocates funds to activities within the network.

Is the Contact Point for Leader groups in Sweden.

All the texts in the booklet is written by Caroline Lagercrantz.



*The winners of the Rural Awards will be honoured with a wool-ram of cast iron. Price conveys weight and tradition but it is also playful with a game ball in glass. It is the late Swedish artist and multi active Peter Gadh who designed the prize.*



## **In 2009 the Swedish Rural Network**

arranged the first Rural Gala with the Wool-ram Award. The aim with the award was from the start, and still is, to show all the creativity and entrepreneurship there is to be found in rural areas, which

also contributes to fulfill the goals for the Swedish Rural Development Program.

In this brochure all the finalists for the seven categories in the 2013 award are presented. They represent the top of the line projects and investments to develop our Swedish rural areas.

The yearly Wool-ram Award for the best projects and investments in rural areas has during this, now ending, program period in a tangible way put forward and demonstrated all the fantastic projects carried out in the rural areas. Behind these ventures there are individuals, men and women, who believe in their ideas and the future of our rural areas.

This is the final Wool-ram Award ceremony during this program period. I hope there will be a continuation during the coming period 2014-2020, so we can continue to promote and show all the innovative entrepreneurs we have in our rural areas. It is a way to success to learn from good and inspiring examples.

I also want to say thank you to all members in the Swedish Rural Network who have contributed in an extraordinary way to the results we have achieved.

We are proud to present the finalists to the 2013 Wool-ram Award in this brochure. You are also invited to disseminate the knowledge and message about these good examples. We all need to contribute and cooperate to spread the message and also to fulfill the visions we have for a future with thriving rural areas in the whole of Sweden

Peter Melin

Chairman of the Swedish Rural Network Steering Committee





Photo: Lars Lundgren

More and more consumers want locally produced food. At the same time, competition gets tougher and more is demanded of the products. The LivsWäx association has successfully established the regional brand Lokal Mat (Local Food) and strengthened the position of their member companies, which have increased their turnover and created new jobs.

**Project name/name of company:** LivsWäX  
**Project owner(s):** Föreningen LivsWäX  
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0247-105 86  
**Project period:** January 2010–November 2012  
**Funds from the Rural Development Programme:** SEK 779 000  
**Website:** <http://www.lokal-mat.se/sv/>



# Cooperation strengthens local food

The association LivsWäx is made up of small and medium-sized food producers from the provinces of Dalarna, Gästrikland, and Hälsingland. The overarching objective of the project was to strengthen the position of the participating companies on the market. They market their products together under the common brand “Lokal Mat” (Local Food). Safety, tradition and pleasure are some of the key words symbolizing the LivsWäx member companies. Through this project, the association has become the leading brand in the region as regards locally produced food sold to retailers and to industrial households.

– Our ambition is that consumers realise that there are local options. In the most recent consumer poll, seven out of every ten persons said that they recognized the brand Lokal Mat, says project leader Rolf Lindquist.

LivsWäX is owned and run by the member companies themselves. project leader Rolf Lindquist considers his main task to be to find out what the members’ needs are, and to create value-added.

– The individual members are the ones who get results. If the association can contribute to that, that’s fine. The project shows that cooperation pays. In the last three years, member companies taken as a whole have increased their turnover and created 60 new jobs. Other regional sector associations do not have results like ours, Rolf Lindquist explains.

The needs of the member companies decide what the project will focus its efforts on. One effort has centred on training, to help companies to fulfil the tough certification requirements of the market. For small members, marketing is of particular importance. For larger members, skills acquisition of their staff is often a priority.

– It is vital that small and medium-sized food producers are part of a strong network. One factor of success is that large and small companies exchange experiences, and view each other as colleagues rather than as competitors, says Rolf Lindquist.



Photo: Lisbet Smolka Ringborg

Access to fibre-optic communications is one of the most important development issues in rural areas. In the town of Tomeilla, the persistent work of the local Community Council managed to get the local authorities interested and involved in the issue. Now, both an operator and a supplier are in place. This is more than anyone dared hope at the outset.

**Project name/name of company:** Strategisk planering – Fibernät för bredband på landsbygden (Strategic planning – fibre-optic communications on the countryside)

**Project owner(s):** Community Council in Tomelilla municipality

**Contact:** Erland Holmquist, Project Manager.  
Torgny Lundquist,  
Chairman of the Community Council

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070-548 05 29

**Project period:** July 2011–December 2013

**Funds from the Rural Development Programme:** SEK 878 000



# The Community Council got people involved

The Community Council, which is an umbrella organisation for the Village Councils in Tomelilla, has long wanted investments in fibre-optic communications. However, at the beginning the local authority was not interested. It is an expensive investment, and no other part had a commercial interest in expanding the communications network.

– We realised that it was up to us to get a project going if anything was going to happen. We presented the issue to civil servants and politicians at the local authority, and then we formed a working group, says Torgny Lundquist, Chairman of the Community Council.

The Community Council applied for support from the County Administrative Board and from the Local Authority, and was granted funds for a preliminary study on extending the fibre-optic network to the small villages and between villages in Tomelilla Municipality. The project has now come further than they dared to hope for. The local authority has taken over responsibility for the issue. Public purchasing of an operator and a service supplies is complete, and the next step is to start selling the product to the households of Tomelilla.

Broadband access is necessary if companies are to work efficiently,

and a prerequisite for attracting new businesses to rural areas. In order to get people to want to live in the country, one must offer them the opportunity to use cell phones easily, and to download games, movies and other forms of entertainment.

– Compared to a map of the road network, large parts of rural Tomelilla are empty, blank spots on the map of modern communications, says project leader Erland Holmquist.

Erland Holmquist is an experienced project leader, and has done similar preliminary studies on fibre-optic communications in the municipality of Ystad. Much of his work has focused on describing the benefits of the project to politicians and civil servants.

– It is important to describe the project carefully along the way, and not least to address the difficulties. You need to be clear on how the project is to proceed and keep your eyes on the target. As project leader, you can't sit around and wait for someone to decide on whether to grant you support or not. The situation changes, and you need to be in close contact with the administrative officers, Erland Holmquist says.



Photo: Helen Scheibe

The Association Väg 223 (Road 223) brings some 30 entrepreneurs together. All of them are women. Along the road, which winds from Nyköping in the south to Mariefred in the north, they have successfully created a strong brand in the tourism industry. This has given them more customers and new business ideas.

**Project name/name of company:** Väg 223 (Road 223)

**Project owner(s):** Association Väg 223

**Contact:** Chairman Åsa Ingårda

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**Project period:** March 2012–August 2014

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 500 000



# A different excursion along Road 223

– If we want to succeed in running a business in the country, we have to work together. We support each other and are each other's ambassadors. The project has given us more customers and a strong network. We've become a tourist destination to reckon with, says Åsa Ingårda, project leader and chair of the Association Väg 223.

Väg 223 has a common logotype in the form of a sunflower, and offers a different excursion along the road. Visitors can stop to buy experiences, services and handicraft products from the various companies and farms. They can have dinner or a cup of coffee at one of the cafés or restaurants along the road, or stay the night at one of the hotels. Visitors can also get a tailor-made package of activities like wild-game safari or canoeing together with their lodgings.

The association Väg 223 began on the International Women's Day, and celebrates its fifth anniversary this year. Member companies often meet and discuss the needs of the entrepreneurs. One example is common training programmes in order to strengthen entrepreneurship. The meetings also offer inspiration and spark new ideas.

– We initiate, lead and finalize all projects ourselves. If we need special skills, we buy them. New businesses have been started thanks to support and inspiration from other members of the association. Together we have found new solutions, Åsa Ingårda explains.

Another advantage of cooperation is that the association can afford larger marketing campaigns than any individual member could. The association has, among other things, produced a common map and a brochure that is available at the tourist offices along the road. The association is keeping up the good work, for instance by setting up a web gallery in order to offer goods and services along Road 223 throughout the year.

Åsa Ingårda points out that the variety of the goods and services on offer is one of the strong points of the project.

– Many ask if we're not worried about competing with one another. But it has turned out that the opposite is true. We all do different things, and the diversity has strengthened our brand. It means that there are more reasons to head our way.



**Project name/name of company:**

Äppelfabriken (Appel Factory)

**Project owner(s):** Katharina Ångström Isacsson

**Contact:** Katharina Ångström Isacsson

**Contact details:** info@appelfabriken.se, 070-496 13 22

**Project period:** June 2009–June 2013

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 996 000

**Website:** www.appelfabriken.se

Each year, tonnes of excellent fruit go to waste in our gardens. The business concept of the Apple Factory is to collect those fruits and berries and to use them for jams, juices and mulled wine of the finest quality. This has turned out to be a success, and the business grows every year.

# Refined surplus fruit is a great success

The owner of the Apple Factory, Katharina Ångström Isacsson, has won lots of awards and medals in Swedish and international championships. Old recipes are given new life and new tastes in her kitchen.

– Our products are intended to be of such high quality and taste so good that customers come back to us. We have not spent very much on advertising, but live on our good name that is spreading from person to person, Katharina Ångström Isacsson says.

What once started out as small-scale production in the kitchen at home has grown to become a professional food industry with an on-farm shop, a cider press, a brewery and a café. In addition to Katharina and her husband Lars, another 14 people are employed by the business during the peak season. The result is well beyond expectation.

– The raw material – the fruit and berries – come from our own orchards, or we get it for free from our neighbours, who are just happy that it does not go to waste. We collect it ourselves and use the opportunity to help our neighbours with other matters. This makes it a win-win situation, and creates more contact within the local community, Katharina Ångström Isacsson explains.

The business has grown successively, as consumer demand has

grown. The on-farm shop and the café with its beautiful surroundings in an ancient agricultural landscape have become a very popular excursion goal. Many customers have also realised that they can bring their own apples to the factory and have them turned into pasteurised juice while they wait. The Apple Factory is currently planning to produce a Swedish cider of French character.

The idea for the Apple Factory arose in 2006, when Katharina Ångström Isacsson and her husband Lars commuted to work every day. Along the way Katharina saw fruit and berries rotting away in the gardens. That gave her the idea to use this fruit and start making jams, chutneys, sauces and jellies in a very small food facility back home in their house on Färingsö. The first time they sold their products was at the Drottningholm Christmas Fair, and the success was immediate.

– All business advisors will tell you to do a thorough market analysis before starting a company. But if we had done a real analysis of the chances of a jam shop and a café way out on Färingsö, it would have told us no. Instead, we were guided by gut instinct and passion, says Katharina Ångström Isacsson.

NOMINATED FOR **RURAL ENTREPRENEUR** OF THE YEAR



Photo: Äppelfabriken



**Project name/name of company:**

Axtorp Sunhouse

**Project owner(s):** Karin & Tommy Abrahamsson

**Contact:** Karin Abrahamsson

**Contact details:** info@axtorpsunhouse.se,  
070-556 00 57

**Project period:** July 2011–February 2013

**Funds from the Rural Development Programme:** SEK 428 684

**Website:** www.axtorpsunhouse.se

On the outside, it looks like just another barn, but once inside, you're in a tropical paradise with water and a sunny beach. Axtorp Sunhouse is a unique phenomenon, and attracts more and more visitors to the area.

# A sunny paradise in the barn

The farming couple Karin and Tommy Abrahamsson have managed to make an innovative idea become reality. Their business Axtorp Sunhouse has become a popular place to visit, and more and more people come for a bit of recreation.

– We have received a lot of media attention and many more visitors than we expected. The Royal couple was here this spring, and that gave us a lot of positive attention. It was a good thing for the entire area, Karin Abrahamsson explains.

Many visitors come to have a good time, relax and enjoy themselves, alone or with colleagues or friends. Some customers have problems like pain, reduced mobility or stress, and for them the treatment helps to reduce the problem and makes them feel better. In the long run, the Abrahamsson's hope to establish contracts with the County Councils, so that more people can receive this form of treatment.

Nowadays, Karin Abrahamsson works full time in the business, while her husband works part time. They plan to let their grown-up children take over their agricultural business so that they themselves can focus their time on Axtorp Sunhouse. They also hire extra people during the peak season, and intend to employ more staff as the number of customers increases.

The unusual venture has meant taking a risk on big investments. It takes time to get approvals from public authorities, and also to establish a new activity and to attract customers.

– The main lesson for us is how important it is to believe in your idea and to make it come true no matter what obstacles you run into along the way. We've been lucky to have our agricultural business as a base, and to have received support for the investments we had to make. In the future, we hope to put solar panels on the roof. That's what we need now to make our sun facility complete, Karin Abrahamsson says.

She had the idea a couple of years ago, when she suffered from winter depression. She and her husband looked for various treatments and discovered light therapy, which has turned out to have a number of positive health effects. When they got the opportunity to buy a nearby farm, they took the chance and started to draw up plans for a sun facility focusing on the customer.

– Visiting us is meant to be a holistic experience, a time to relax and let go of all thoughts of everyday concerns. It should be like a holiday trip, Karin Abrahamsson explains.

NOMINATED FOR **RURAL ENTREPRENEUR** OF THE YEAR



Photo: Axtorp Sunhouse



**Project name/name of company:** Knäck & Bräck AB  
**Project owner(s):** Knäck & Bräck AB  
**Contact:** Annalena Brage och Niclas Geidvall  
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**Project period:** July 2011–Mars 2013  
**Funds from the Rural Development Programme:** SEK 900 000  
**Website:** www.knackobrack.se

Annalena Brage and Niclas Geidvall and their co-workers at Knäck & Bräck make crisp bread and rusks from local cereals that date back a thousand years. The business has developed swiftly and their products are now sold in delis all over Sweden and are exported to several other countries.

# Moose shaped crisp breads for export

Knäck & Bräck started in 2008 by small-scale baking and selling of crisp bread. In 2012, an environment-friendly bakery and a store were completed, and their products are now available in 300 delis all over Sweden. The products, like the popular moose-shaped crisp bread, are also sold abroad, for instance to Finland, the UK and Brazil. Four people work full-time, and several young people are employed by the hour.

The road to success has meant hard and heavy work for Annalena and Niclas and their co-workers. As the job got more and more demanding, they came at last to a point when they had to decide whether to invest in a new bakery or close down the business completely.

– The bank wouldn't give us the loans we needed. But we were lucky to find an entrepreneur who wanted to become our business partner. We also got support from the Rural Development Programme, and now we have a top of the line bakery and a wonderful team, and are ready to take on larger volumes, Annalena Brage explains.

The flour used in the Knäck & Bräck bakery comes from Wästgö-tarna, an association of farmers who grow old cereal varieties organi-

cally, and who grind their flour at the Levene Mill. This cooperation with the local farmers means a lot.

– Good raw material is everything to us. Our crisp bread is made from the same cereal varieties that have always been grown here in the Falbygden area. Ancient varieties are extremely healthy. Dinkel and emmer wheat contain antioxidants, an internal antibiotic, and have a low GI, Annalena Brage says.

Annalena Brage is a trained pastry cook, and after thinking about it for ten years she decided to fulfil her dream of starting a crisp bread bakery of her own.

– Crisp bread has a special place in the Swedish soul, and there is demand for healthy and tasty bread, so choosing a product was easy, says Annalena Brage.

The Knäck & Bräck recipe for running a successful business is high quality, healthy finances, and industrious networking.

– Don't be afraid to ask for help and to outsource to professionals. You can't do everything yourself, so do what you do best. Ask for advice and remember that if you're alone, you're weak.

NOMINATED FOR **RURAL ENTREPRENEUR** OF THE YEAR



Photo: Per Hansson



Photo: Mikael Eriksson

The Fish Kingdom app is the first free guide app for fishing tourists. It has received a lot of attention in international fishing magazines. During the first year, some 7 000–10 000 people have downloaded the app to their phones.

**Project name/name of company:** Appen Fish Kingdom (The Fish Kingdom App)  
**Project owner(s):** Leader Linné  
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070-560 08 97  
**Project period:** January 2012–July 2012  
**Funds from the Rural Development Programme:** SEK 29 400  
**Website:** [www.leaderlinne.se/fish-kingdom](http://www.leaderlinne.se/fish-kingdom)



# Smart guide for the fishing tourist

The Fish Kingdom app helps tourists to find all the information they need for a successful fishing trip in an area that covers six municipalities in the province of Småland. With just one touch on their smartphone, visitors can find out where the fish are biting, where to buy a fishing license, and get tips on nearby lodgings and activities.

– You could say that the Fish Kingdom app is like a portable tourist guide, project leader Mikael Eriksson says.

The aim of the Fish Kingdom app is to develop fishery tourism in southern Småland, and help companies to extend the tourist season. This has led to cooperation between the various fish management areas, and to the issuing of a common fishing license. Fishing fans from all over the world can access quick and current information, and the hope is that this will result in more bookings on fishing establishments, and that guests choose to stay an extra night.

– Since we were the first to offer this kind of application, we’ve received a lot of attention in international fishing magazines. We’ve

made people aware of the Fish Kingdom of Småland, and have got many more users than we expected at the outset. The sale of digital fishing licenses has increased as well, says Mikael Eriksson.

The information is provided in English, and the largest group of foreign users are Germans. The application has turned out to be worth its price, and a cost-effective alternative to ordinary brochures. It is easier to revise the information and keep it up-to-date. It should also be easy to develop the application and create new ones in order to reach other target groups.

– After many years in the tourism trade, I’m a great believer in new technology. It is cost-effective, and we can make things easier both for tourists and for the people who work in the sector. At the same time you need to keep up traditional marketing. Brochures and personal contacts at the tourist offices are also needed. You can’t rely on everyone having access to the latest technological gadgets, Mikael Eriksson says.

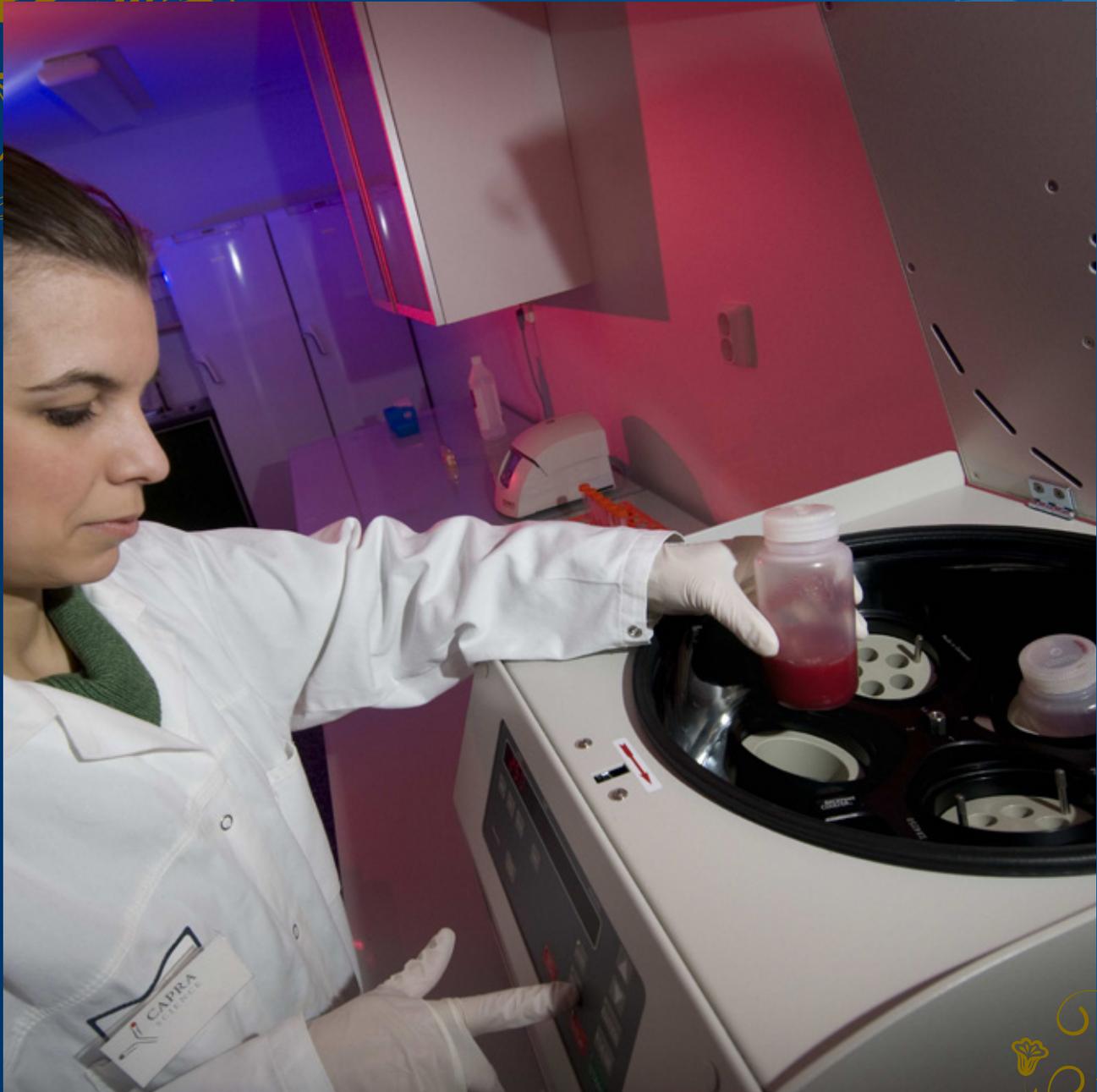


Photo: Nick Gregory

Capra Science AB is a unique company that runs an organic farm where goats are used for producing antibodies. Their customers are Swedish and European companies involved in diagnostics, pharmaceutical production, and research.

**Project name/name of company:** Capra Science Antibodies AB

**Project owner(s):** Lovisa Hessle Bergman

**Contact:** Lovisa Hessle Bergman

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**Project period:** May 2011–March 2013

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 206 000

**Website:** www.caprascience.com



# Advanced medical technology at the goat farm

In 2007 Lovisa Hessle Bergman and her husband started the company Capra Science AB. Today, their business has two full-time employees and are about to hire a third person full-time.

Lovisa Hessle Bergman is a doctor of medical genetics. As a researcher she has long experience of working with animals in laboratories.

– There is a widespread view within the research world that animals that produce antibodies should be kept under laboratory conditions. I started to think about better solutions, both for animal welfare and for product quality, Lovisa Hessle Bergman explains.

Antibodies can be described as the body's defence against various diseases, and they are used more and more in medicine, for instance for diagnostics and for pharmaceutical production. It is a billion euro industry still in the making. Antibodies are manufactured by a process similar to vaccination. The goats then become blood donors, providing a few decilitres of blood once a month.

– The business concept of Capra Science concerns advanced medical science, but is based on a well known principle, Lovisa Hessle Bergman explains. Good animal husbandry results in healthier ani-

mals. Animals that get to go outdoors and to keep their natural behaviour suffer less from stress, and that strengthens their immune defence. The result is that the animals have better lives and the final product is of higher quality.

Capra Science AB has one foot in agriculture and the other in the biotech business. At the farm outside Ängelholm they keep a hundred goats of the endangered Swedish landrace.

– This is a very social breed that is easy to handle. We saw a chance to help preserve it. A particular challenge is to find new breeding material, says Lovisa Hessle Bergman.

It took some time to get the first orders, and Lovisa Hessle Bergman and her colleagues have had to work hard to explain to the sector how they work.

– It was slow going at first, setting a new norm, but now we feel that we have the wind at our backs. The business has a good reference base of satisfied customers. We have no risk capitalists, which is unusual for the sector. We want to grow at our own pace to ensure that our concept is not eroded, says Lovisa Hessle Bergman.

NOMINATED FOR RURAL INNOVATION OF THE YEAR



Photo: Matilda Persson

At Tavlebord's Honey Farm, visitors can buy honey products and learn a lot about the fascinating lives of bees and their great importance for us humans. This unique excursion goal in the province of Bohuslän has created new jobs and led to rewarding cooperation in the area.

# A visit to the beehive

Tavlebord's Honey Farm offers many kinds of activities on the common theme of apiculture, honey and other bee-products. The farm has a shop, a bakery, a café, bed & breakfast, conference facilities, and it also sells plants. There is also an exhibition that describes apiculture then and now. In the display hive, visitors can see how the bees work. Tavlebord's Honey Farm is the first one in Sweden to combine apiculture with tourism.

– Consumers are very interested in clean food, and Swedish honey is in great demand. We want our many activities to create a holistic experience. Many of our customers become fascinated and want to learn more. They also appreciate the relaxed atmosphere and the tranquility here at the farm, says Pia Askland Josefsson, who runs Tavlebord's Honey Farm together with her husband Helge.

Pia and Helge both work full time in the business, and with the support of the Public Employment Service they have been able to hire another two people full time. During the tourist season they have also had staff employed by the hour. The Honey Farm cooperates with

**Project name/name of company:** Tavlebornds Honungsgård (Tavlebord's Honey Farm)

**Project owner(s):** Tavlebornds Honungsgård

**Contact:** Pia Askland Josefsson

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**Project period:** March 2011–November 2013

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 900 000

**Website:** tavlebordshonungsgard.se



several businesses in the area, for instance with a gardener who grows and sells flowers appreciated both by the visitors and by the bees.

Pia Askland Josefsson speaks enthusiastically about how important bees are for us humans. Experts say that 74 per cent of EU food production relies on pollinating insects. When bees die as a result of the disturbance of their natural living conditions, this threatens human survival as well.

– If the bees are doing fine, people do as well. The situation is serious, and it is increasingly important to spread the word about the importance of bees, says Pia Askland Josefsson.

The business has grown and become larger than they expected when they started. The business has increased its sale of honey products and has also made people interested in apiculture.

– Our business concept is clear, but we can make adjustments in order to meet the needs that we encounter along the way. It is exciting to see what happens when you take one step at a time, says Pia Askland Josefsson.



**Project name/name of company:** Din bror (Your Brother)

**Project owner(s):** Hässleholms municipality

**Contact:** Edina Burazerovic

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073-425 35 10

**Project period:** January 2012–June 2013

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 270 015

**Website:** www.dinbror.se

A project among young people in the province of Scania uses a form of conversation called Your Brother. “A brother is someone in whose company you are safe, someone who sees you for who you are”, says project leader Edina Burazerovic.

# Safe meeting-place makes young people stronger

The project has given boys at the ages of 12 to 20 the chance to meet, have a cup of coffee, and talk about things that feels important to them. The Your Brother method was implemented in the municipalities of Hässleholm and Perstorp, and focused on reaching young people in rural areas.

– Many young people have been interested in taking part, even though we have to compete with all other things that appeal to young people today. Every guy is here because he wants to, not because someone has told him to, Edina Burazerovic underlines.

The participating boys are of different age, some were born and raised in Sweden, others have been here a few years, and others still are new arrivals. They come both from towns and from rural villages.

– The mix is important, and helps to create a feeling of community based on their own experiences, not what others expect of them. Perhaps they come from an area with a bad reputation and are faced with negative expectations in the adult world, says Edina Burazerovic.

When we are young, we are more sensitive to what others think.

Many are uncertain about how to think and how to act in various situations. Some young people suffer from honour-based oppression. Many put on masks to get by, but when they meet in the groups they can be themselves. The talks are led by specially trained leaders, who are often young adults that the participants can identify with.

– The leaders are very good, and can guide the participants to find their own answers. They discover their identity not as a Swede, an Albanian or a Kurd, but as an individual. They learn to see themselves as the person they would like to be, says Edina Burazerovic.

Her years as a social field worker among young people have shown her the need, and she hopes that the project will have many successors all over Sweden.

– There is a large gap between adults and young people, and we know that many young persons are not doing well today. We need to create meeting-places where you can pause for a while, talk to each other, and feel part of a community. In this way, we prevent mental problems and aggressions, says Edina Burazerovic.

NOMINATED FOR INTEGRATION EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Patrik Andersson



**Project name/name of company:**  
Bröd i Bergslagen (Bread in Bergslagen)

**Project owner(s):** ABF

**Contact:** Eva Långberg

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0240-180 60

**Project period:** May 2010–January 2013

**Funds from the Rural Development  
Programme:** SEK 1 040 000

**Website:** <http://www.abf.se/Distrikt-och-avdelningar/ABF-Dalarna/ABF-Dala-Finnmark/Brod-i-Bergslagen/>

The goal of the project Bröd i Bergslagen (Bread in Bergslagen) is to create new meeting-places for Swedes and people who were born abroad. Baking together in old, wood-heated ovens has turned out to be an excellent way to meet.

# Meeting-place among the baking trays

Many old cottages all over Sweden have wood-heated ovens. The project Bröd i Bergslagen ABF intends to use them, and to spread knowledge about how to bake bread in a wood-heated oven. They involved local immigration associations in the project.

– There is great environmental and cultural value in using the old ovens instead of buying new ones. Many of our immigrants have baked bread in wood-heated ovens. This leads to a mutual exchange of skills and to a meeting of traditions. Baking together is also a natural way to learn the language, project leader Eva Långberg explains.

Bröd i Bergslagen aims both for adult education and for integration. The project has inventoried wood-heated baking ovens in the area belonging to Ecomuseum Bergslagen, which covers the provinces of Dalcarlia, Västmanland and Örebro. Many old ovens that had not been used for decades have been restored and are now fully operational. Lecturers have been hired to share their knowledge about how to restore and maintain old ovens. Some of the ovens have then been used when participants meet in order to bake together.

The participants are men and women from many countries. Some have lived in Sweden for many years, while others are recent arrivals. The project has trained leaders, who participate in the project on a voluntary basis. This has led to new contacts between the participants, and between old and new Swedes.

– Baking together brings peoples' everyday life closer, both physically and mentally. We share recipes, and there is a sense of recognition in the hands-on work. We talk about much more than just baking, and understand each other better, Eva Långberg says.

Now, some of the participants continue to bake together, and ABF arranges follow-up courses on baking special kinds of bread. The bread is sold at local food markets and fairs, and there are plans to develop a business based on wood-heated baking.

–The most important thing is that the project has caused many old and new Swedes to get to know each other, and has built up a network in the region, Eva Långberg says.

NOMINATED FOR INTEGRATION EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Eva Långberg



**Project name/name of company:** Provins Mat (Province Food)

**Project owner(s):** Provins Mat

**Contact:** Josefin Uhnбом

**Contact details:** info@provinmat.se, 070-912 22 05

**Project period:** October 2011–July 2012

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 335 051

**Website:** www.provinmat.se

Provins Mat has created a model for social entrepreneurship by making use of the hidden cooking skills of women born abroad. The pre-study has resulted in a catering business and a café with several employees.

# Hidden talents in the kitchen

Production is up and running at the Provins Mat kitchen in a yellow wooden house next to lake Alby in the municipality of Botkyrka. Last summer the new kitchen was completed, and two chefs are now employed to cook for organisations, conferences and various events. In the weekends, the house's own café is open. The recipes are influenced by the Arabic and the Pakistani cuisines.

Josefin Uhnбом is CEO of Provins Mat. She underlines that the main asset of the company is the co-workers cooking skills. It has proved itself to be a winning concept. The company is attracting more and more customers, and with the new kitchen it has reached its full capacity.

– This is not charity work, but a professional food company. Our concept is to cook and sell food of high quality made from raw materials mostly produced locally and organically. We have good contacts with local growers. The aim is to hire more people and cover more food influences from five continents, says Josefin Uhnбом.

Josefin Uhnбом came up with the idea while working as a job coach for people who are far away from the labour market. Instead

of focusing on the difficulties and the shortcomings, she wanted to use the available skills and create real jobs. She made a pre-study about social entrepreneurship in the food industry. Josefin Uhnбом had been inspired by visiting similar companies in the US.

– Many women who were born abroad have never worked outside their home, but they have great skills and practical experience in resource-aware cooking. Some of the dishes are based on recipes that have been used for generations. This is a hidden competence that many foreign-born women possess.

Starting and running a food company means a lot of work. The sector runs at high speed, and demands much of equipment and logistics. Working with people who have been outside the labour market for a long time can also be a challenge.

– But we don't focus on the difficulties, but rather on the great competence of our co-workers. We're building a structure for social entrepreneurship that could be spread to other sectors and to other parts of Sweden, says Josefin Uhnбом.

NOMINATED FOR **INTEGRATION EFFORT** OF THE YEAR



Photo: Erik Olsson

NOMINATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Päivi Lehtikangas

A project run by the Energy Office of the Örebro regional association has taught 15 rural shops to save money and energy. The results have been good, and they will now spread what they have learned to other shops all over Sweden.

**Project name/name of company:**  
Energieffektivisering i landsbygdsbutiker  
(Energy Efficiency in Rural Shops)

**Project owner(s):** The Energy Office  
of the Örebro regional association

**Contact:** Päivi Lehtikangas

**Contact details:**  
paivi.lehtikangas@regionorebro.se,  
019-602 63 23

**Project period:** May 2011–December 2012

**Funds from the Rural Development  
Programme:** SEK 322 187

**Website:** [www.regionorebro.se](http://www.regionorebro.se)



# Small measures can make a large difference

The project had two aims. The first was to reduce the environmental load by saving energy, and the second was to contribute to rural development by increasing the profitability of rural shops.

– Things are tough for many rural shops today. Their margins are often narrow, and they focus heavily on sales. Many have not had the opportunity before this to think about possible savings, for instance by cutting their energy bill, project leader Päivi Lehtikangas explains.

Through information and on-site training, the rural shops managed to save energy and reduce their electricity bill. Half of them also applied for investment support, for instance for building new, more energy-saving equipment for cooling and heating.

– Many shop-owners have also realised that they can save a lot of energy by taking cheap and simple steps, such as using timers on drink refrigerators, Päivi Lehtikangas emphasises.

The project involved cooperation with the Örebro County Administrative Board, who helped to select 15 rural shops to participate in the project. The local energy and climate advisors had an important

role to play by supporting and guiding the shop owners through the project, and to follow up after the project ended. An energy consultant mapped all the shops, and gave hands-on advice on how they could save energy.

The project produced information materials and arranged a national workshop to spread the word. The project will now continue in the form of new, computer-based training material about energy efficiency. This is done in cooperation with the main retailers in Sweden. The plan is to name the most energy efficient store in Sweden in 2015.

– In a small shop, the staff doesn't always have time to take part in organised training. E-learning may solve that problem, by letting them learn about energy saving when they have the time and the opportunity. The e-learning tool is to be offered to a large share of all shops in Sweden, and we believe that this can lead to great environmental benefits in the long run, says Päivi Lehtikangas.

NOMINATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Tomas Andersson

Peter Modig's farm outside Västerås uses horse manure for heating. By using biofuel from its own farm, the business has improved the working environment, increased profitability and created new jobs.

**Project name/name of company:**

Fastbränsleanläggning baserad på hästgödsel  
(Solid Fuel Facility Based on Horse Manure)

**Project owner(s):** Jädra gård

**Contact:** Peter Modig

**Contact details:** peter.modig@level21.se,  
070-267 98 08

**Project period:** November 2010–April 2012

**Funds from the Rural Development  
Programme:** SEK 750 000



# Horse manure heats the farm

– It has led to simpler handling of the manure and to fewer transports. We are now self-sufficient in heat, and thanks to increased profitability we've been able to hire two people full-time. A great benefit is that the working environment in the stables has improved a lot, Peter Modig says.

The improvement to the working environment is a thing he often emphasises when he presents his biofuel facility to other farmers.

– The working environment is often a great dilemma in farming. Not until now, when the new heating facility has been in operation during two winters, have we realised what a poor working environment we used to have. Instead of working in sub-zero temperatures, we now have heating and running water all the year round, Peter Modig explains.

But there have been many difficulties and obstacles along the way.

Peter Modig says that he underestimated the size of the project, and that some parts of the project turned out to be more expensive than expected. He's happy to share his experience. By sharing, you don't have to make each other's mistakes all over again, he underlines.

The basic technology was developed by a northern company together with the Luleå University of Technology. Peter Modig has developed the technology and added woodchips to make it possible to burn horse manure directly from the stable. His next project is about developing a drying facility that would make it easier to use horse manure as fuel also on small farms close to town.

– I want to show that you can burn horse manure on a small scale. It would be of great commercial interest for many farms and riding schools all over Sweden. It would also generate large environmental benefits, says Peter Modig.

NOMINATED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORT OF THE YEAR



Photo: Mattias Bokinge

A project in Vaggeryd Municipality uses waste material from local businesses in teaching. This has led to unexpected benefits both for the environment and for pedagogical activities. It has also led to increased cooperation between the business sector and the schools.

**Project name/name of company:** Remida i Vaggeryds kommun (Remida in Vaggeryd municipality)

**Project owner(s):** Vaggeryd municipality

**Contact:** Kerstin Nordenstam

**Contact details:**

kerstin.nordenstam@edu.vaggeryd.se,  
0370-67 82 60

**Project period:** October 2011–February 2014

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 925 631

**Website:** [www.kreativvaggeryd.blogspot.se/](http://www.kreativvaggeryd.blogspot.se/)



“Waste is what’s left when imagination has run out.”

The Recycling Centre in Skillingaryd, where schools can pick up wood, metal, cloth and plastics free of charge, is open two half-days a week. 75 local businesses operating in many different sectors are involved and donate materials to this activity.

– The project started out as a pedagogical effort aimed at the local pre-school. We wanted to stimulate the children’s creative and communicative abilities by offering them unfinished, varied and safe playing materials. The environmental benefits were a positive side-effect. We’re taking advantage of what’s already there and the children become more aware of environmental matters, project leader Kerstin Nordenstam explains.

Nowadays, the project is open for all children in the local pre-schools, compulsory schools and upper secondary schools. The time period of the project has been extended, and once it’s over it will become a part of the local authority’s ordinary activities.

The original idea comes from Reggio Emilia in northern Italy. They have for quite some time been working with waste materials in their pedagogical activities, inspiring pedagogues from all over the world.

They call their centre ReMida, and they take account of aesthetic, organic, and pedagogic values. The aim is sustainable development. The project group from Vaggeryd recently visited the town.

– The study visit gave us many new thoughts and ideas about how to present the material, for instance. It should be prettily and pedagogically displayed. Our motto is that waste is what remains when imagination has run out, Kerstin Nordenstam says.

The project has attracted many study visits to Vaggeryd. This goes to show that a small municipality can have something useful to offer big cities.

– Closeness and strong networks within the municipality have turned out to be important success factors, Kerstin Nordenstam explains. Our facilities have become a natural meeting-place for the school and local businesses. It’s been very useful for us to meet many entrepreneurs face to face, and that they have anchored the project in their businesses. Local entrepreneurs see benefits also in the long run by establishing good contacts in the schools, she continues.



**Project name/name of company:** Baldersnäs Horse Event

**Project owner(s):** Baldersnäs Horse Event

**Contact:** Hasse Forssman

**Contact details:** hastordbruk@home.se,  
0530-320 57

**Project period:** December 2011–August 2012

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 393 000

**Website:** [www.baldersnasfalttavlan.se](http://www.baldersnasfalttavlan.se)

Baldersnäs Horse Event arranged the Swedish Eventing Championship for seniors and young riders, and attracted a large crowd. They successfully involved hundreds of young people in the project, which focused on reducing the risks associated with eventing.

# Young people take centre stage when eventing restarts

Eventing is held to be the toughest equestrian sport, and the one with the greatest risk of serious injury to both horses and riders. The fixed obstacles are a particular danger. Before the championships in Baldersnäs, the organizer worked very deliberately to reduce the risks. Thanks to some of the best course designers in the world, they managed to build a cross-country course in which more fences than usual could be knocked down.

Seven equestrian clubs worked together in the project. Many young people worked as stewards during the competition. One element that was much appreciated was that all young people were admitted free of charge by using a special pass that bore the abbreviation VIR, Very Important Rider.

– We wanted to draw attention to all the young people who keep the equestrian sport going out on the clubs. They got to take part as stewards and were specially invited when Sweden's elite riders competed. This gave them inspiration and reinforced their self-confidence. They got to see that it is possible to go far, and what it takes to reach the elite level in equestrian sport, project leader Hasse Forssman explains.

The Baldersnäs Pony Cup involved young people both as organizers and as competitors. Young riders gathered points during three qualifiers, and the final took place at Baldersnäs. Hasse Forssman says that their work with young people has created cooperation and community feeling among the riding clubs in the province of Dalsland, and that this has inspired work in the clubs.

– When the riders get to experience competition at a high level, it encourages both young people and others to raise the bar for their own club, not least when it comes to safety. In this area, Baldersnäs has opened up new land and set a new standard for eventing, says Hasse Forssman.

His best tip for a successful rural project is to carefully anchor it with all people involved.

– Most people in equestrian sport do not get paid for their work, so a big and demanding project like this needs good support from everyone involved: entrepreneurs, politicians, and public authorities. This gives you good references to get back to in case problems arise during the project, says Hasse Forssman.

NOMINATED FOR **YOUTH EFFORT** OF THE YEAR



Photo: Carina Albertsson



**Project name/name of company:** Lärande sommarjobb (Educational Summer Jobs)

**Project owner(s):** Projekt Lärande bygd

**Contact:** Maria Richter Simsek

**Contact details:**

maria.richter.simsek@gmail.com

**Project period:** October 2010–December 2012

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 574 026

**Website:** <http://larandebygd.wordpress.com/>

The project Lärande sommarjobb involved young people in local non-profit organisation activities. They got to work with practical tasks to help the organisations, and at the same time they learned a lot about leadership and personal development.

# Summer jobs that rejuvenate non-profit organisation activities

During two summers, twenty young people got summer jobs at local non-profit organisations in the village of Berg in the province of Småland. The idea was to get young people involved in local non-profit organisations, in order both to create jobs and to rejuvenate the organisations in the village. With financial backing from the local authority, young people were employed for two weeks.

During one half of the day, the young people did practical tasks like gardening, cleaning, painting and baking, together with grown-ups already active in the organisations. The other half of the day they spent on inspiration and reflections on collective and personal leadership. One element that was very appreciated was when young people, who had left the village to pursue different paths through life, came back to tell the participants about their experiences.

– The idea was to give young people an overview. The world can seem very small in a village like ours, and this makes it extra important to show young people that they have opportunities and choices. It was also a way to establish contacts between the villagers and those who have left, project leader Maria Richter Simsek explains.

Lärande sommarjobb is a part of the project Lärande bygd (learning region), which aims to get people involved in their local environment and to know more about it. The project is owned by the foundation Elin Wägners Lilla Björka, and involved many private individuals and local organisations. Elin Wägner's ideas about social change are important to the project.

– We made a preliminary study that sought to identify the development needs of our region. One very important part is to get young people involved in the village's development, to build relationships and to exchange knowledge between generations, says Maria Richter Simsek.

When young people better understand their own role and their significance in the local community, they get more involved and more inclined to take action.

– We see that more and more young people are getting involved in the non-profit organisations in the region. I believe and I hope that the project has contributed to this, says Maria Richter Simsek.

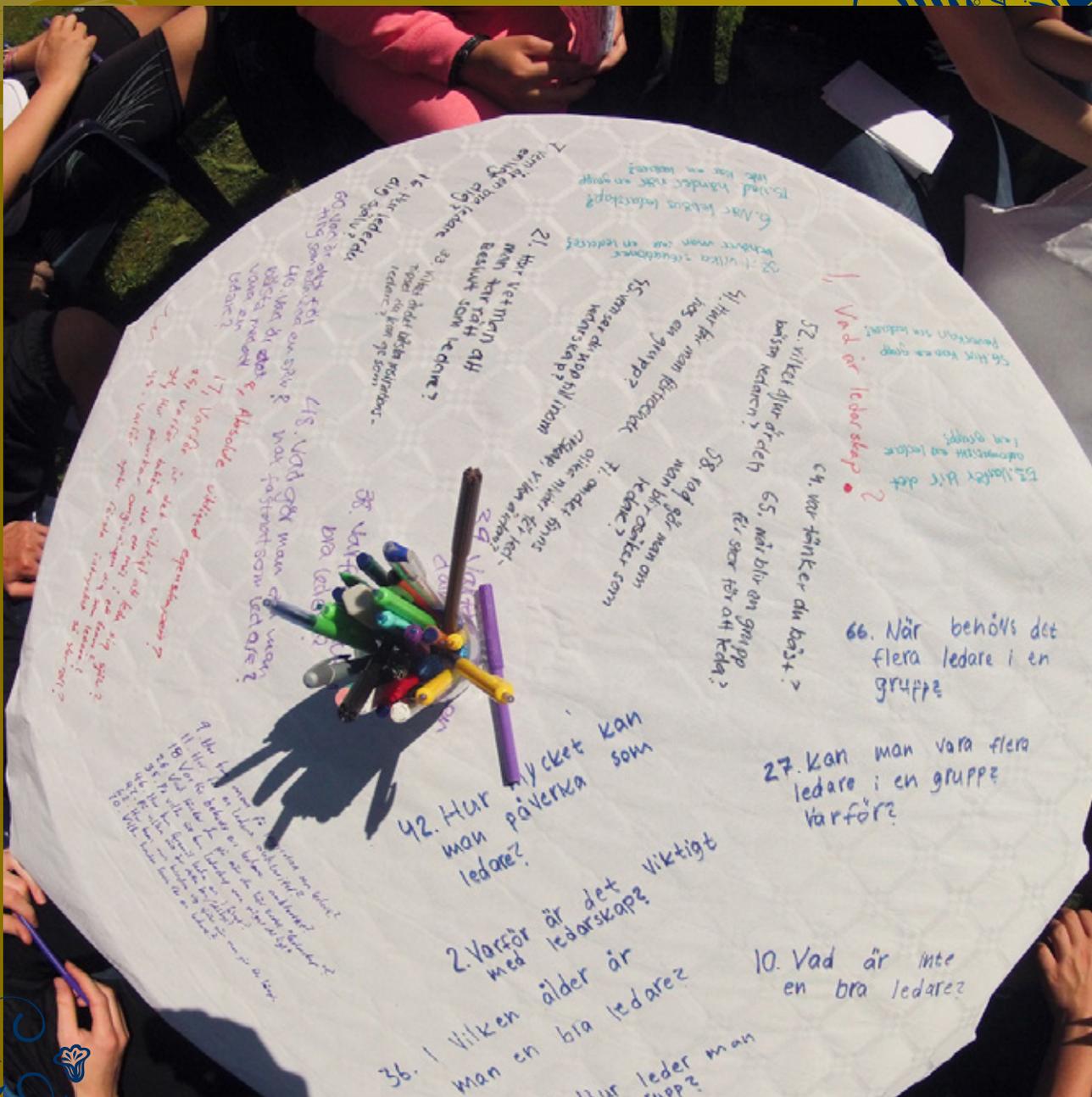


Photo: Albert Ohlin



**Project name/name of company:** Skånes ponnyagility

**Project owner(s):** Skånes ponnyagility

**Contact:** Ina Jacobsen

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070-297 09 29

**Project period:** April 2012–September 2012

**Funds from the Rural Development Programme:** SEK 20 000

The young people behind the Pony Agility of Scania have created a new, rewarding occupation for horse-loving people in rural areas. Pony Agility focuses on playful cooperation between humans and animals.

# Educational and playful for horses and young people

It began as a hobby for the smallest horses back home at the farm. Nowadays, the Pony Agility of Scania is a small but growing association that arranges practices and competitions throughout the year. They have presented their sport in various contexts and have appeared on TV and in newspapers both locally and nationally.

One of the project leaders, Ina Jacobsen, says that more and more people are becoming aware of pony agility. She explains how it works:

– The horse is loose, and follows the handler's instruction through a course with various obstacles. The point is that the horse shall understand and work with the handler even when it is loose. Small horses are bred to work, and it is important that they get the stimulus and exercise that they require. Pony agility requires a lot of work and a lot of patience, but above all it is fun and stimulating both for the horses and for the people, says Ina Jacobsen.

The four young project leaders have managed to implement and market their project together. They have established many new contacts and have successfully spread their beloved sport to others.

– It has been very educational and fun to carry out this project. It is

also a useful merit for the future, Ina Jacobsen explains.

Her number one tip for other young people who are thinking about starting a similar project is to go for something they are passionate about. To believe in themselves and what they have to contribute. For the rural areas need the initiatives of young people. It is important to use their ideas and make it easier for them to apply for project funding.

– My best tip for other young people is to start where you are, with what you think is important and fun. It's alright if it's odd and different. If you believe in your idea you can get other people interested, and don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it, Ina Jacobsen says.

Now, the Pony Agility of Scania continues to arrange practices and competitions. Their objective is that pony agility becomes a recognized form of competition in international equestrian sport. Their long term goal?

– To get pony agility accepted on the Olympic programme, of course, says Ina Jacobsen.

NOMINATED FOR **YOUTH EFFORT** OF THE YEAR



Photo: Ina Jacobsen



Photo: Kungälvsmat

The economic association Kungälvsmat consists of some 30 small food producers. The association delivers products throughout the year to a growing number of customers, and by working closely together they have managed to become a strong actor on the market.

**Project name/name of company:** Kungälvsmat (Kungälv Food)

**Project owner(s):** Kungälvsmat, ekonomisk förening

**Contact:** Per-Uno Karlsson

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070-851 14 84

**Project period:** October 2010–March 2013

**Funds from the Rural Development Programme:** SEK 526 120

**Website:** <http://kungalvsmat.se/>



# Small producers in successful cooperation

– Our project shows that cooperation pays off. As a small producer you have very little chance of influencing the market, but together we can make a difference. Whenever local products are talked about in the municipality, Kungälvsmat always gets asked, says project leader Per-Uno Karlsson.

Kungälvsmat is a cooperative project in which all local food producers are welcome to join, the large as well as the small. Via its website, the association has common sales of products like beef, mutton, vegetables, eggs, and honey. At present, some 200 customers are registered in the web shop. The association also supplies products to City Gross, which is the largest food store in the town of Kungälv. Another customer of Kungälvsmat is the Montessori school in Kungälv.

The members' products are marketed by common packaging and labels. The association also engages in common marketing activities in order to reach consumers. These can include popular activities like the spring release of cows, farm days, harvest festivals and market days. Several of these activities are organised together with the local authority and with other organisations. Per-Uno Karlsson empha-

sises that more and more consumers care about where their food comes from and how it is produced.

– We are a producer association and our job is to make our members more profitable, says Per-Uno Karlsson. However, we also have an important task in making consumers more aware of sustainable development. We see that interest in this issue is increasing, and nowadays we have interested consumers on our board of directors.

His number one tip for a successful rural project is to meet others who have carried out similar projects, and to learn from the mistakes of others. It is well worth the money to find professional skills and get help whenever necessary.

The ambition for the future is that Kungälvsmat will become an important actor in public purchasing, and supply food to, for instance, the local schools.

– The matter has been discussed at the local authority, since more and more people want local food also in public kitchens. But the road is long, says Per-Uno Karlsson.



Photo: Erik Johansson

The project Provgute has brought an entire region together in order to attract more people to come and live in the region. By offering trial residence on favourable terms, they have successfully convinced 24 adults and 12 children to try living in the village of Fårösund on northern Gotland.

**Project name/name of company:** Provgute  
(Try to be a Gotlander)  
**Project owner(s):** Provgute, association  
**Contact:** Ezzo Eriksson  
**Contact details:** [esso@tillvaxgotland.se](mailto:esso@tillvaxgotland.se),  
073-532 21 18  
**Project period:** January 2012–May 2014  
**Funds from the Rural Development Programme:** SEK 1 373 000  
**Website:** [www.provgute.se](http://www.provgute.se)



# Try to be a Gotlander: successful use of hosts

The idea arose when the senior level of the local compulsory school was about to be closed down due to lack of students. Some villagers joined forces and started a project intended to attract more people to settle in the region, in order to save the school.

– Without young people and without the school, this region will die. We realised that it was up to us to turn the ship around and attract more young people, says project leader Ezzo Eriksson.

Many houses on the island of Gotland stand empty during many months of the year, and at the same time many city people dream of moving to the island. However, many never dare to take that step, since it is a big thing to sell your house or your flat and give up your job and your social contacts back home. This gave rise to the idea to invite interested families to live in the village during a trial period. Participants are first invited to come and visit the island during a long weekend. They can stay one night for free in a youth hostel, and the children can go to the local school for a day. Those who want to can then try living on the island for a while, and the hope is that they will choose to settle permanently.

The project is based on very active local participation. Businesses,

organisations and private individuals have joined up to offer trial housing at low rent, to act as host families and contact persons, and to offer favourable discounts and memberships of various organisations.

– By putting so much effort into making everyone feel welcome, we help the families to quickly become a part of the local community and to build a social network. Many who experience this want to stay, says Ezzo Eriksson.

Lack of jobs is often a problem for people who want to move out to the countryside.

– But that's not the case on Gotland, claims Ezzo Eriksson. The participants have turned out to be creative people, and they get jobs. In our experience, those who had no job before get one when they move here.

The project has been so successful that the model will also be tried on southern Gotland. Provgute has also attracted national and international interest.

– Local companies sponsor us, and many private individuals and organisations contribute in various ways. Provgute is a project that involves the entire community, says Ezzo Eriksson.



Photo: Maria Rostedt

The Leader association Mitt i Småland (the Heart of Småland) has managed to give local businesses a leg-up in the form of an umbrella project. Minor support in the form of start-up grants has led to the establishment of 30 new businesses in the Småland countryside.

**Project name/name of company:** Startgas – vi tändar på din idé (Starting Fluid – your idea ignites us)

**Project owner(s):** Leader Mitt i Småland ideell förening

**Contact:** Per Andersson, Manager Mitt i Småland

**Contact details:** per@mittismaland.se, 0383-101 20

**Project period:** November 2008–December 2014

**Funds from the Rural Development**

**Programme:** SEK 1 260 000

**Website:** www.mittismaland.se



# Small sums produce great results

The starting fluid grants are intended for private individuals who want to test a business concept in a rural area. The support is at most SEK 30 000, and the applicants need to put up as much themselves, for instance through unpaid work. Support is not granted for investments in businesses that already exist, but only for the development of new business concepts. Examples include marketing surveys, study visits, networking, training and skills acquisition.

– Many people have been interested in applying for starting fluid grants, and we are pleased with the result. It is obvious that you can get big results from small amounts of money. We notice growing interest among leader associations throughout Sweden, and many have copied our way of working, says Project Manager Per Andersson.

Many of the successful applicants are women. Per Andersson believes that this way of working may suit women entrepreneurs particularly well. It offers the opportunity to start out small and to try your concept before you do it for real.

The Leader association helps the applicants to understand the rules, and pay the money up front. For the applicants, this means less

administration and that they get the money quicker. Under normal circumstances, it can take months or even a year to get project support funds. However, in this case, the umbrella project is already approved by the County Administrative Board, and support can be paid through the Leader office within a week, or at least within a month.

– We consider it our mission to provide good service to everyone in our region who has ideas about developing rural areas, says Per Andersson.

Another important factor behind the success is that results and experiences spread to others. The Leader association is at the centre of it all, and can facilitate contacts between actors.

– In this way we can get even more out of the project's funds, Per Andersson explains. There are no corporate secrets in our project. Those who receive support get to try out their business concepts, and in return they share their experience with others. Most participants consider this a benefit, since it has given them new and interesting contacts and ideas, he continues.

## Top tips for successful rural projects

If you want to succeed with a rural project, it's important that you don't lock yourself in to your priorities without seeing where they are leading, and to keep your eyes on the goal. You may have to revise your plans and change the direction of the project along the way.

A successful rural project requires a good pre-study.

Aid payments should be flexible and have short processing times, in order to allow even small, non-profit organisations to run large, expensive projects.

It is important to view rural projects as long-term undertakings.

Successful rural entrepreneurship requires cooperation from all parties involved, no matter their function.

Time is money for entrepreneurs. Use professional help for whatever you need and focus on doing what you do best.

In rural projects, good relationships with local politicians and civil servants are of particular importance.

One of the most important success factors for rural projects is choosing the right co-workers.

It is important to meet often and to keep up the discussion about how the project can best promote the participants' interests.

The first thing you need to do in order to succeed with a rural project involving decision-makers and politicians is to create the right conditions. This is why you right from the start need close and frequent contact with politicians and civil servants. You need to be patient and to provide a lot of information in order to get everyone on board.

You need to find working methods that allow everyone to contribute to the project and to receive its benefits in fair proportions over time. The trick is to get everyone to their bit instead of leaving the entire workload to one or a few persons.

In order for a rural project to succeed, the participants need to meet often. On these occasions the project leaders should provide information to ensure that everyone knows what is going on and trust the process.

You need flexible rules tailor-made to the conditions in the rural area, in order for businesses to grow at their own pace.

In order for staff at the public authority to function as advisors, they need business skills.

It is important to remember that project funds are venture capital. The idea is to allow entrepreneurs to test their ideas to find out if they really worked in practice.

Cooperation pays off. Networking is important. Entrepreneurs can often be quite lonely, and they have a great need to get out and meet other people.

The role of the project leader is to create meeting-places in order for the participants to feel that they cooperate and share in an activity with a common focus.

It is also rewarding to create a mix of large, middle-sized and small actors in the same working group. You should also try to involve representatives of different sectors, and to mix men and women of different background in the project groups.

Build contacts with other, similar projects in other parts of the country, and exchange experiences with them.

Successful landscape projects are based on shared motivation linked to peoples' needs.

In this brochure we present the rural initiatives that have been nominated for the 2013 Rural Gala.

