

**Supplement 1.**

*Ansökan SLF: Företagande – Behovsdriven forskning*

**Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)**

**Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF)**

**Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)**

## **Criticism, crime and threats against Swedish animal production – The perspective of Swedish farmers**

### **Summary**

Farmers with animal production can experience different types of criticisms directed against their activities from consumers, the media and inspecting government agencies. On another level, threats, damage, tampering, robbery and other criminal acts are directed against the farm's activities, but also against the farmer, family members and employees. This study main goal is to investigate the nature of the experiences of victimization materialized as threats, crimes and criticism against animal production in Sweden. This is achieved by assessing the consequences for individuals and farms, health, social and economic conditions. We focus on farmers not as 'victims' but rather as 'active agents', by illustrating ways that farmers handle, cope and respond to the criticisms and threats they are exposed in a daily basis. Interviews with farmers, focus groups as well as data coming from official statistics as well as media coverage will underlie the methodology of this study. Findings will lead to an action plan with concrete proposals on what measures are needed to create a better quality of life for animal producing farmers from a safety perspective. In particular are suggestions will be devoted to farmers themselves, agricultural organizations, authorities, politicians and not least, legislation.

### **Background and relevance**

*We came home after lunch and there it was a sticker from Animal Liberation Front on our door....lots of animals were missing. They burglarized freezers and fridges and vandalized our property: on windows, doors, gate, courtyard, house, bike ... it was written with a mark on the inside of the stable door "Animal Liberation Front sees you" (an animal farmer reporting burglary followed by vandalism in the property in 2018)*

This single event illustrates the types of incidents that farmers working with animal production may be experiencing in rural areas in Sweden. Despite the clear negative impact that these threats has on farmers, little is known about the nature of these threats and how these crimes affect quality of life of farmers and their families in Sweden.

Another example in which farmers frustration regarding animal welfare inspections by government agencies turned into a motion to the annual meeting of Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF) in which it was stated: “*engage external researchers to investigate the psychological impact on farmers' health as a consequence of inspections of animal welfare*” (LRF Västra Götaland,2018)

According to the National Food Strategy for Sweden (Government Offices of Sweden, 2017) the goal is more jobs and sustainable growth throughout the country. In order to reach this goal is it important to handle negative impact from conflicts about animal welfare inspections, threats from animal rights activists and other form of crime and conflicts. These issues are in focus for this grant application.

Farmers with animal production play an important role in food production, employment and rural development. Grazing animals contribute to the open landscapes and biodiversity. The public often has a positive view of farming and visitor-related activities such as school visits, open farms attract more and more visitors. To ensure good animal care, there are animal welfare laws and regulations issued by the Swedish Board of Agriculture and each county administrative board is responsible for the supervision and inspections.

These farmers may be targeted by different types of criticisms directed against their activities by consumers, neighbors, media and inspecting government agencies regarding issues such as animal welfare and environmental impact. During the past year, media has highlighted a number of individual events regarding inspections of animal production, with serious and sometimes tragic consequences. This has in most cases been related to animal welfare where farmers felt that they had been unfair and overly affected by the authorities' inspections. These cases have not always been objectively clarified, but the experience of being unfairly treated may be the final drop that caused the cup to flow over, with in some cases reported suicide.

On another level, threats, damage, tampering, robberies and other criminal acts are directed against the company's activities, but can also be directed personally against the farmer, family members and employees. Many farmers with animal production today live with great fear and concern about the activities that some animal rights activists operate. There may be aggressive demonstrations and actions at, for example open farm activities, but also threats directed towards farmers and employees as well as the family living on the farm, even children have been threatened. Reports also report unlawful intrusion, tampering, theft, etc. Other attacks on farmers with animal production have been directed directly to animals exposed to various forms of abuse and injuries.

To these problems described, it is also important to add the increasing levels of theft that affect farmers, regarding advanced technical devices such as GPS, but also ATV:s, farm tractors, machines, tools, pesticides, fuels and other farm assets.

The phenomenon described previously is not only typical for Sweden but reported in media from different parts of the world including Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. In England, for example, the “National Rural Crime Network” works actively against crime in rural areas. These problems are mentioned also by current research on rural crime has gained more attention in recent years in the form of various textbooks, such as the “Rural Crime and Community Safety” by Vania Ceccato (2016), journals such as the “Journal

of Rural Criminology” and recently a decision has been taken to set up the “Division of Rural Criminology” in the American Society of Criminology.

The worsening threat to animal-producing farmers is not yet a common phenomenon, but it is important to clarify how this affects farmers, other stakeholders and entrepreneurship, including potential impact on profitability and future confidence. What is and how does it matter, what is the experience, how do you handle this individually and in an enterprise perspective? What needs improvement, change and strengthening – also from the society, organizations, authorities and legislation?

### **Relevance, aim, goal, expected results and benefit**

This study **main aim** is to investigate the nature of the experiences of victimization materialized as threats, crimes and criticism against animal production in Sweden. This is achieved by assessing the consequences for individuals and farms, health, social and economic conditions. We focus on farmers not as ‘victims’ but rather as ‘active agents’, by illustrating ways that farmers handle, cope and respond to the criticisms and threats they are exposed in a daily basis.

We will also:

- Describe what type of support or lack of support they get from relatives, colleagues, the industry, the public, media, authorities and politicians
- Describe which type of real threats there is, which are behind the threats and which type of shortcomings there might be in legislation, authorities’ actions and other means
- Define a number of strategies that farmers can be used to tackle these problems

The **goal** is to be achieved by increased knowledge of the phenomenon, facts and understanding of the farmers fear and worries regarding inspections and crime affecting themselves and their animal production. This can lead us to a better understanding of society’s preparedness to deal with these problems against these farmers. With increased knowledge, it is possible to present a plan with specific actions needed and with recommendations on what needs to be done by different stakeholders and other possible actors to promote acceptable support for Swedish animal producing farmers.

### **Earlier research, knowledge of today and the connection to previous research**

Rural areas has often among the general population been regarded as a restful and peaceful part of Sweden which has been confirmed by movies, books and television. However, this is not so true any more (Lundqvist et al, 2018).

In Sweden, farmers and other residents living in rural areas are now exposed to “new types of stresses” that once were associated with urban areas only, namely the increased risk of being a victim of crime. As many as 3 of 10 farmers have been victims of crime themselves, or their properties in 2010-11 (LRF, 2012). , with the aggregate value of approximately SEK 200 million. Moreover, farmers feel powerless as most of them declare not going to the police as

they believe that reporting the crime is “waist of time” as the chances to catching the perpetrator is small (LRF, 2012). The situation has not improved since then as reported by another recent study by LRF (Johansson, 2018), in which two out of three farmers knows a colleague which has experienced rural crime during the last two years. Forty percent of the farmers have themselves been affected by rural crime during the last two years and 10% had been affected more than once. Half of the farmers affected did not report the crime to the police. Around 25% of the farmers are afraid that the farm or the family will be affected by thefts, damage or attacks by animal rights activists. Every tenth farmer knows someone in the neighborhood which had been the goal for animal right activists during the last few years. The figures about crime is also confirmed by a recent regional study in southern parts of Sweden (Lundqvist et al, 2018; Göransson et al 2018). They found that 40% of full-time farmers/growers experience problems with rural crime.

The situation with rural crime generates fear anxieties that go beyond the risk of been a victim of crime Box et al, 2003; Gray & O’Connor, 1990; Gray et al. 2011; Lagrange & Ferraro, 1989; Scott et al 2012).

### The conceptual model and hypotheses of study

We suggest that farmers’ safety is a function of factors at several scales. On one hand, animal farmers experience poor perceived safety because they feel targeted by different types of crimes, such as threats and assaults against them, their families, animals and their property. Overall changes in people’s values and society’s attitudes towards food production have changed in the last decades putting an indirect pressure on them as animal farmers. At the same time that they feel the desire to conform to society’s expectations, they feel victimized; attacked and criticized by animal rights organizations and environment groups.

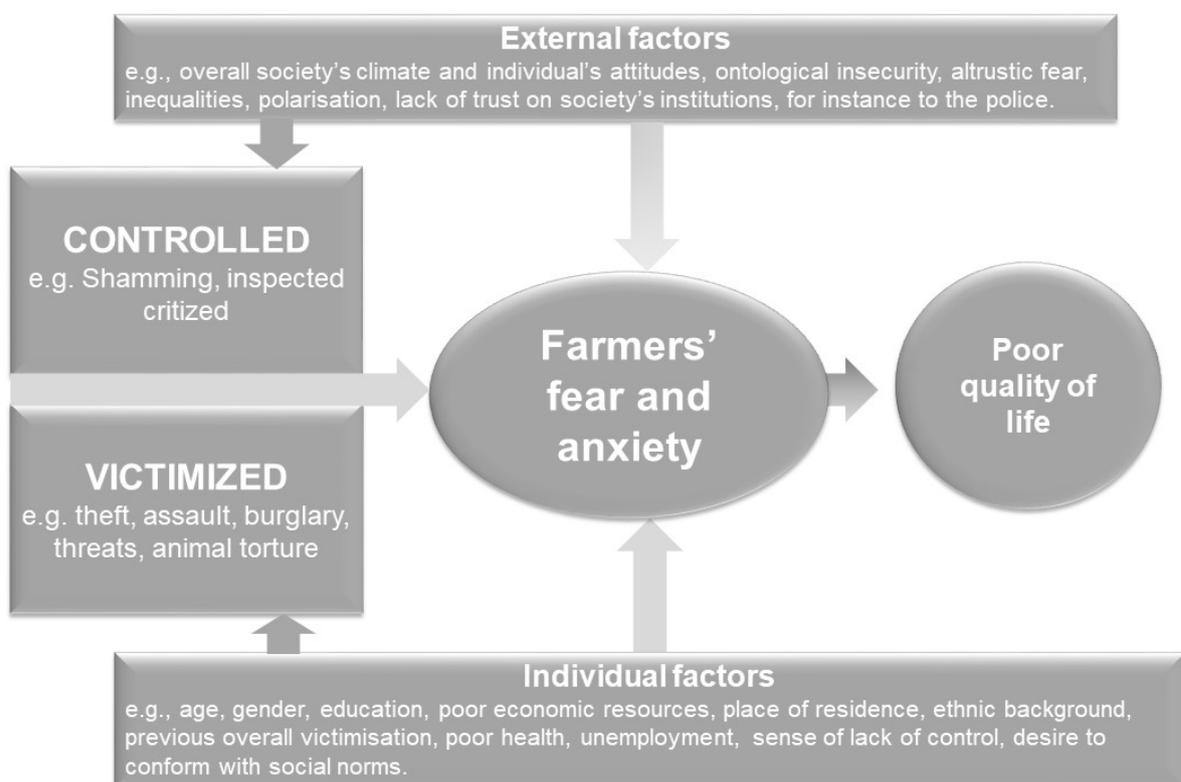


Figure 1 – The conceptual framework: Factors affecting farmers’ safety and wellbeing.

Transformations of rural areas have meant that some of the basic services are no longer there. Moreover, they might feel left out by institutions and other organizations (e.g. the police in case of been victimized by crime). On the other hand, they feel controlled and sometimes exposed by institutions that supposedly should be supporting their businesses. This process is bound to create levels of fear and anxieties among farmers that ultimately influence their wellbeing, their activities as well as their families. The study draws upon a vast literature on perceived safety as a background of this analysis, for details see Ceccato (2016). As indicated in our initial model are we going to study:

- a) farmers as victims of crime (such as ....threats, damage, tampering, robbery by animal rights activist and criminals)
- b) farmers pointed out as “the bad guys” (such as.....not following the animal welfare legislation or causing interference for neighbors, media or others due to smell from manure)

## **Data and methods**

Interviews with farmers, focus groups as well as data coming from official statistics as well as media coverage will underlie the methodology of this study. A discussion of the steps involved in the execution of this research are listed below by year:

### Year 1

- Establishing of research group with plan of duties and procedures
- Establishing of reference group
- Press-release and articles in relevant media (start of project)
- Up-date of literature, statistics and our national/international network
- A KTH/SLU MSc dissertation study about news media coverage of crime, criticism and inspections of farmers with animal production
- Developing a detailed study plan with a time-line
- A number of focus-group discussions with farmer (both with experiences of crime, criticism or inspections and those with no personal experiences of these type of events)
- Development of relevant questionnaires and tests/evaluations
- Submitting an application to the Regional Ethical Review Board in Lund
- Work-shop on preliminary results and experiences incl. reference group meeting
- Annual report for Year 1, plus press-release

### Year 2

- Selection of study populations for the different studies with the help of the Swedish Board of Agriculture, Statistics Sweden and the Federation of Swedish Farmers (important to have enough respondents in different parts of Sweden, as well as respondent from all major types of animal production, such as: poultry, dairy, beef, pigs, fur, sheep/goat and fish-breeding)
- National mail and/or web-based survey to farmers with animal production – a general study about their feeling of security and what are the positive factors to create security

for themselves and their farming activities. What are the threats and worries which creates un-security and what measures are needed to keep security and to protect against fear and threats.

- Interview study 1, with farmers which has experiences from inspections and criticism regarding their animal production (preliminary plan: 2-3 farmers from each type of animal production)
- Interview study 2, with farmers, which has experiences from animal rights activists and other criminal acts against themselves, relatives, employees and/or their farm. (preliminary plan: 2-3 farmers from each type of animal production)
- Work-shop on preliminary results Year 2 incl. reference group meeting
- Annual report for Year 2, plus press-release

### Year 3

- A minor study on what actual and formal support is there for animal producing farmers from the society, the organizations, the authorities including legislation., politicians and others to create and keep security (maybe year 1 or 2)
- Analyzing all data from studies within the project and writing preliminary report
- Reference group meeting
- Final seminar and presentation of results including recommendations /action plan
- Final project report and fact sheets for farmers and stakeholders
- Submitting / publishing 2-3 scientific papers in international journals

### **Ethical considerations**

The study will involve questions and interviews with individual farmers and others regarding personal emotions (such as fear and worries) and experiences of criticism, inspections and different types of crime. This is example of sensitive personal information which has to be handled according to the Act concerning the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans (2003:460). This means that all parts of the data collection and the handling of data will follow the legislation in order to guarantee participants their security and trust in our study.

If our grant application to SLF gets approved, we will submitting an application for ethical vetting in accordance with the Act concerning the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans. Our application will be sent to the Regional Ethical Review Board in Lund. We have experience of these procedures since previous research projects.

We will also pay the participating farmers according to the hourly rate as used by the Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF), for their working time during personal interviews/focus groups and other relevant in-put in our study.

### **Place in the knowledge chain, in the innovation system and receivers of up-coming results**

The present grant application “Criticism, crime and threats to Swedish animal production - The perspective of Swedish farmers” could be considered as “needs driven” research with the farmer in focus.

The aim is to create in-depth knowledge about what the consequences of criticism, crime and threats to animal production means to the individual farmer/farm/business and what type of measures / concept to solutions is needed at the farm level, local, regional & national levels.

Receivers of up-coming results is first of all farming and rural organizations, relevant authorities such as the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the Swedish Police as well as politicians at different levels. It is also important to communicate the results to national and international researchers.

### **Motivation of the project group composition**

The project is carried out in close cooperation between the Department of Work Science, Business Economics and Environmental Psychology (AEM) at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Alnarp, the Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF) and Department of Urban Planning and Environment, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, in Stockholm.

Our project group is a relevant and good mixture of different academic competences and research environments at SLU and KTH combined with the major organisation for Swedish farmers (LRF), which has the relevant networks with not only farmers themselves, but also relevant stakeholders.

- The Department of Work Science, Business Economics and Environmental Psychology (AEM) has extensive experience in research on the working environment and working life issues at SLU in Alnarp. **Peter Lundqvist** is a faculty professor in work science and main applicant. Besides him there will be two other researchers involved from the Department: **Catharina Alwall Svennefelt** which will defend her PhD dissertation on farmers working conditions this winter 2018/19 and she has a background as a farmer. **Eva Göransson** is an agronomist and has a background as a farmer, animal welfare inspector and safety engineer. At the Department there is also a number of other with relevant competence. [www.slu.se/aem](http://www.slu.se/aem)
- The Federation of Swedish Farmers – LRF – is an interest and business organisation for the green industry with approximately 140 000 individual members. Together they represent some 80 000 enterprises, which makes LRF the largest organisation for small enterprises in Sweden. LRF is contacted repeatedly by farmers who have been exposed to various types of criticism, threat and sabotage or who worry about what may happen. **Anders Drottja** is the Crisis Emergency and Work Environment Officer and coordinates the work over the whole country. <https://www.lrf.se/>
- Department of Urban Planning and Environment, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, in Stockholm conducts research on crime and crime in cities and rural areas. Professor **Vania Ceccato** conducts this research and has, among other things, written a textbook on "Rural Crime and Community Safety". <https://www.kth.se/profile/vace>

## **National and international collaborations**

A number of relevant national partners for collaborations are described in the Reference group and within our own organizations we also have a lot of relevant competences, which can be used in different parts of the project.

International collaboration will be included and main initial reference person is Professor Joseph Donnermeyer at the Ohio State University, USA. We have discussed our plans for this study for which he is giving his support and he is also willing to serve as an international resource person throughout this project.

Professor Donnermeyer has a focus on rural crime studies, including the criminological dimensions of food agriculture, rural community characteristics and crime as well as the development/revision of criminological theory for rural contexts (<https://senr.osu.edu/our-people/joseph-f-donnermeyer>).

## **Overview of reference group**

A reference group will be set up by relevant representatives of the industry with various forms of animal production (fur, poultry, pigs, beef/milk) as well as representatives from regional LRF support groups (Omsorgsgrupper/Bondekompis), the Federation of Swedish Forestry and Agricultural Employers (SLA), the Agricultural Work Environment Committee (LAMK) and the Swedish Centre for Agricultural Business Management (KCF). We will also if possible invite representatives from the Swedish Police, the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority. Names has been discussed, but final contacts will be taken when/if application is granted.

## **Plan for communication with stakeholders/the industry and scientific publication and information communication**

Throughout the project there will be press releases and articles in both traditional and social media, in collaboration with our Communication specialist Marianne Persson at our SLU Department and press-contacts at LRF and KTH.

The plan is to have an annual report of the progress in the project and at the end of the project there will be at least one final report and a number of fact sheets written in Swedish mainly for the stakeholders and the industry.

Scientific publications will mainly be written in English for relevant international journals such as the Journal of Rural Criminology and Journal of Agromedicine. Scientific results will also be presented at one or two international conferences.

There will be one or two work-shops with stakeholders, industry and researchers to discuss preliminary results and other relevant issues. It will be a small type of work-shop after year 1 about initial experiences and a larger work-shop after year 2 regarding preliminary results. At the end of year 3, a major seminar will be arranged, open for stakeholders, the industry, researchers and media. These events will be planned and carried out in collaboration with the

reference group and when possible together with the network “Safe Places”, organized by the KTH's Centre for a Sustainable Built Environment (<https://www.chs.kth.se/en>).

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