



Dialogue round-table based on a futures study with three scenarios

The 8th of May 2008 the Swedish Board of Agriculture invited the horse industry to a dialogue process at The Royal Mews. The Swedish Minister for Agriculture Eskil Erlandsson, as well as The Director General of The Swedish Board of Agriculture, Mats Persson, was present.

The dialogue consisted of two parts: the presentation of a futures study made up of three different scenarios for the Swedish horse industry in the year 2017 and round table dialogues. The purposes were: to create a widespread consciousness about different and possible futures, help decision makers and the Swedish horse industry to prepare for various scenarios and give them a tool for the decision making process and serve as decision basis for research and development.

The scenarios were presented in a dramatized form by two actors. Here are parts of the three scenarios from the future study written by consultant Margareta Ivarsson, commissioned by The Swedish Board of Agriculture: *In 2017, the horse industry has a turnover in billions of Swedish crowns each year and the horse-related businesses are professionally managed and producing services and products adjusted for the market. Disposed garbage is often collected by horse drawn carriages and most of the long distance horse transportation is carried by train.*

The futures study emphasizes the variety of stakeholders, needs and orientations within the horse sector and indicates many points of intersection between the horse industry, the public sector and commercial and industrial life.

The scenarios are based on three different perspectives: an economic, an environmental and a scenario based on relationships. The economic scenario describes a horse industry affected by the business cycle and how many Swedish equestrian events turn from voluntary based activities to profit making ventures. In the environmental scenario draft horses are taking the place of machines in lawn mowing, garbage disposal and transportation of children to and from school. The scenario focused on relationships presents a future where different sectors such as riding, breeding and horse based tourism work together on different issues concerning growth and new web based sites for equestrian knowledge management is readily available.

The Swedish Minister for Agriculture, Eskil Erlandsson, took active part in the dialogue, where the author of the futures study was the facilitator.



The Minister believes the most important question for the future of the Swedish horse industry concerns skills and competences. Many people engaged in the horse industry in Sweden are new: as owners, in running businesses and as entrepreneurs. The government can assist by providing knowledge and information in the form of training and courses. The Rural Development Programme for Sweden is a useful tool in this process.

Another important issue from the futures study was discussed during the dialogue; the need for applying a businesslike approach to a larger extent by the owners of horse based businesses. Otherwise, they will not be able to benefit from Sweden's competitive advantages; large acreage and clean environment. The entrepreneurs need to adapt their business to customers. Discussions around several tables also emphasized a need for research development concerning equine issues.

The futures study is a part of the vision of the Swedish Board of Agriculture to strengthen the green sector. In order to have good animal welfare and strengthened entrepreneurship in rural areas, investments are acquired within the different niches including the horse industry.

This dialogue process is a new methodology for the Swedish Board of Agriculture and this approach began with the horse industry on the 8th of May. Evaluations from the dialogue process included comments about the positive tone, the energy and the fact that the development of the horse industry was in focus, not differences and disagreements. **Conclusions from both the horse industry and the Swedish Board of Agriculture** can be summarised by the two words, coordination and integration. This is a task for both sides.

For further information please contact the Swedish Board of Agriculture, Department for Rural Development:

Magnus Nordgren, , tfn +36-15 58 67, magnus.nordgren@sjv.se
Maria Petersson, tfn, +36-15 58 30, maria.petersson@sjv.se

The model used for the futures study and the scenario development process is from The Vision Center for Futures Creation www.framtidsbygget.se Framtidsbygget® (available in English)