

Some Typical Swedish Farms

FARM A is situated in the southernmost part of the country, in the county of Skåne, which is the best agricultural district of the country. The soil is light clay in very high culture, comparatively rich in lime, and well drained with tiles. On the whole there is nothing but cultivated land in this part of Skåne, which is 6 miles southwest from the old university town of Lund.

The farm is just a little over 100 acres, all of it arable, with no forest. The farm buildings are half timbered, and although they have been standing for more than a century they have been modernized and kept in good repair. The 70-year-old manor house, built of brick, has central heating and other conveniences. Two other cottages are quite new and modern.

Before World War II the farmer operated on a 4-year rotation plan consisting of:

1. Winter wheat.
2. Sugar beets and mangolds, (mangolds on one-fourth of the field).

34 *Farmers' Co-operation in Sweden*

3. Barley, which serves as nurse crop for the clover seeds.
4. Ley (1 year).

This was considered the most intensive kind of rotation and its use was limited to the very best parts of Skåne. Because of this intensive cultivation the crops never failed, and yields did not vary more than 20 per cent. The farmer could count on 55 bushels of wheat per acre, 78 bushels of barley, 40 tons of sugar beets and 50 tons of mangolds.

Thanks to the roots, and particularly the beet pulp obtained back from the sugar factory, the farmer kept a comparatively large number of cattle — twenty-four milking cows and sixteen calves and heifers of the Friesian breed. Before the war he also used large quantities of concentrates. The average yield of his cows was 1,440 gallons with a fat percentage of 3.60. It was not a pedigreed herd, but occasionally he sold some livestock.

In pre-war days he delivered 100 hogs a year to the bacon factory. These hogs were fed mainly on skimmed milk from the butter-making dairy, on barley and on imported corn.

There were four permanent workers on the farm, one team of working horses, a tractor, and gang labor for the sugar beets and roots.

This land is rather high-priced, selling for around \$385 per acre, and renting for \$24 per acre. During normal times this type of farm paid very well. However, it must be remembered that it is the best land in our country and very well managed.

The foregoing discussion refers primarily to the pre-war period. Since that time there have been a number of changes on this farm.

Sugar beets do not bring in a lot of money. Their value is in the by-products (leaves and pulp) and in the fact that they keep the soil in high cultivation. Because of the shortage of labor the farmer can now grow only half as many sugar beets, and no man-golds. This reduction combined with the shortage of imported feeds has forced the farmer to reduce the number of his livestock, particularly the hogs.

An even more serious problem is finding competent help for the cattle. One neighbor has been forced to send his cows to the packing plant and use commercial fertilizer on his soil.

Our farmer wants to keep the herd, but circumstances may force him to sell it. It may be possible to run farms without any stock for a number of years, but there is still the question of "the long run."

As a substitute for sugar beets the farmers of Skåne adopted the oil seeds such as rape, mustard and flax. These were introduced during the first years of the war and yielded magnificent crops at first. Various diseases and pests invaded the fields, however, and cut the yields considerably. Although the oil seeds still yield a higher cash income than the sugar beets did, they take more out of the soil and do not provide as many by-products.

Thus we see that even with the best land the farmer faces a number of problems.

FARM B

This farm lies in the midlands, in the county of Södermanland, ninety miles south of Stockholm. The land is clay, requires liming once in the rotation, and the major part is drained with tiles. The drainage system is old, however, and does not work too well.

It is rather a big farm for Sweden, and might be called an estate. There are 320 acres of arable land, 80 acres of cultivated permanent pasture for grazing, and 600 acres of woods.

The farm buildings — cowshed, stable, tractor garage, barn, and granary — are all new, and now under the same roof. They replace the original buildings which were destroyed by fire some years ago. Although the farmer received \$21,150 from his fire insurance, he had to pay twice that much for his present equipment. The new buildings, however, have increased the value of the farm, and are equipped with modern, labor-saving machinery.

The manor house is a little too big, judged by modern standards, and though it is well constructed it needs modernizing. Three of the cottages are quite up-to-date, and four older ones will be thoroughly equipped as soon as materials become available.

The labor problem has not been as acute on this farm as on Farm A. The owner belongs to the landed gentry and the place has passed from father to son for four generations. It is much the same with the workers' families, and there is a strong feeling for traditions and solidarity between owner and labor-



FIG. 4. A typical small farm of about 20 acres. Buildings have electricity and running water but no other modern equipment.

ers. Of course a lot of the younger people have moved away to the towns, but this is not as serious a problem as it is on smaller farms. There used to be twelve permanent workers, and there are at present eight. The modern buildings, tractors and combine have made it possible to save a lot of labor. There is no gang-work at all, as there are no people available for that. The workers are employed full time, working on the farm in summer and in the forests in winter.

The farm is run on a 7-year rotation:

1. Fallow (half of it bare, half peas and vetches for cutting green and making into silage) .

38 *Farmers' Co-operation in Sweden*

2. Winter wheat and winter rye.
3. Oats. (Grass and clover seeds sown with the oats as a nurse crop.)
4. and 5. Ley.
6. Winter wheat, spring wheat or barley.
7. Oats or mixed grains.

Returns are considerably lower than on Farm A. The farmer is satisfied to get 45 bushels of winter wheat per acre, 70 bushels of oats, 40 bushels of rye or 46 bushels of barley, and about 33 bushels of spring wheat.

The livestock consists of seventy Red and White dairy cows and forty-five young cattle. The cows yield an average of 1,200 gallons, with a fat content of 4 per cent. Milk is delivered to the Stockholm Milk Center for direct consumption, and consequently there is no skimmed milk for hogs.

This farmer is a good exponent of rational farming. Under normal conditions he makes a profit, but his return is smaller than that of Farm A when you consider the difference in the size of the two farms. Also, between a third and a fourth of the income of Farm B comes from the forestry operations.

FARM C

This farm is situated in the poorer inland part of south Sweden, in the county of Småland. It has good moraine soil, is about 500 feet above sea level, and shows a marked need for liming. The drainage is partly tiles, partly stone drains, and some open ditches. Eventually all of it will be drained with

tiles. This is a typical family farm — about 35 acres are devoted to raising crops, and there are 10 acres of grazing land and 40 acres of woods.

The wooden buildings and farm house are old, and have no conveniences except piped water. However, all the buildings are well kept up.

The rotation is seven-course:

1. Roots, potatoes, peas and vetches for cutting green.
2. Winter rye, spring wheat.
3. Oats.
- 4, 5, and 6. Ley.
7. Oats.

The returns are lower still than on Farm B. Only rye, spring wheat and potatoes are cash crops. Everything else is used for feeding the stock which consists of two horses, nine dairy cows (crossbreds), four young cattle, four ewes, two breeding sows and seventy-five hens. The farmer usually fattens eight hogs a year; the rest are sold at 6 weeks.

Most of this family's income comes from their livestock. The woods are too small to provide much cash income, but they do furnish fuel for heating and wood for repairing buildings and fences.

The farmer and his family do all the work so there is no labor problem, except that the children often want to leave the farm and go into town as soon as they have finished school.

This is considered to be a fairly good sized farm, and in the government program, to be mentioned later, it is called a "base farm." The goal of future

agricultural policy is for farms of this size to have an income and standard of living comparable with industrial workers. This farmer's total income may at present exceed a factory workers' by 10 to 25 per cent — but he has much longer working hours, no holidays with pay, and can hardly leave the farm because of the animals. Also, his income covers not only his own work but that of his wife and his children. Under these circumstances the number of young people leaving the land is not surprising. If the wife of a factory worker takes a job, their combined income and living standard will far exceed that of the rural couple.

In the long run there may be more satisfaction in the work on the land — but the people do not seem to have discovered that yet!

It is only right that farmers should enjoy a higher standard of living, but this goal depends mainly upon a long-run increase in the prices they get for their products.

FARM D

This is in the northern part of the midlands, where neighbors are few and much of the area is covered with forests. The 18 acres of this farm are comparatively good soil (clay-moraine), and both buildings and land are well kept. Livestock furnish the main source of income since there are no woods on this particular farm. However, the farmer occasionally earns some money hauling timber in the woods belonging to one of the big woodpulp companies.

The farmer and his wife, who are in their late fifties, are alone on the farm. Their five children have gone to the town and taken industrial jobs.

Because of its small size this is a submarginal farm. The old couple love their land and their animals, and do not object because their living standards are much lower than in the urban areas — but the next generation will not be satisfied.

This problem might be solved by increasing the size of the farm, but arable land is at a premium in this district. Another solution would be to let the farmer have say 125 acres of woods. This would keep him and a son, and several horses, busy all year around.

Farms vary widely in our country and it has been possible to give only a few examples. They have been chosen in order to give some background to what follows. The descriptions mostly concern present time or the period before the recent world war. We must keep in mind that most of the farms are small; big holdings are rather rare.