

FIELD DAY AT KÖRSLÄTT FARM, KVIDINGE

10TH OF JULY 2018

We were around 20 participants on the farm walk at Körslätt farm the 10th of July. Magnus Bengtsson had invited to this open field day within the Solmacc project to discuss how he works to meet climate change in agriculture. The majority of the group consisted of farmers and the remaining were researchers, advisors and representatives from Organic Farmers Association (Ekologiska Lantbrukarna). The themes of the day were “How do we handle a new climate on the farm?” and “Nitrogen strategies in organic stock-free farming”. The extremely dry weather this season reminded us during the whole day about how climate change could affect Swedish agriculture in the future.

Magnus guided us through four main stations. At station one we saw two fields with sunflower and maize, crops that are still relatively new in Sweden but likely to be grown more commonly in a warmer climate. Magnus has success with these crops on his light sandy soils but harvesting of maize can be rather late. Last year he harvested his maize in November! The under-sown cover crop of radish, rye grass and clover were due to the drought still in a very early development stage. However, sunflower has a relatively low nitrogen requirement and was in a nice condition, but too short due to the dry conditions according to Magnus. We visited two spring barley fields and the crop was low and weak. In conditions with little precipitation, spring barley suffer very much on these light soils on Körslätt Farm.

Clover and cereal legumes are included in the crop rotation as part of the nitrogen strategy. The drought had large impact on these crops as well, though the lupines had coped slightly better with the dry conditions compared to the clover fields. At station two and three we discussed opportunities to grow more plant protein, such as lupine and faba beans for human consumption to lower the requirements of animal proteins in our diet. Researchers from RISE (Research Institutes of Sweden) told us more about the project MegaLegumes and how they focus on the whole production chain to develop interesting products from legumes for human consumption.

At the last station we had a look at a spring wheat field where reduced tillage has been practiced during the last five years. Despite the weather circumstances, the crop had handled the drought slightly better than the spring barley, which mainly could be related to the heavy clay soil on this field. However, even the tillage strategy without ploughing might have kept more moisture in the soil. Finally, Bengtsson stressed that the biggest problem during a warm and dry year like this, is not lack of nitrogen but the lack of water.

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