

SWEDEN

Improving competitiveness

Location

Brännland, Umeå
Municipality

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P2 – Farm viability and
competitiveness

Measure

M4 – Investment in physical
assets

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 235 980
EAFRD 47 196
National/Regional 47 196
Private 141 588

Project duration

2015 – 2017

Project promoter

Brännland Cider AB

Contact

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Website

www.brannlandcider.se/

A company that produces ice-cider in northern Sweden, combined RDP support and crowdfunding to plant an apple orchard that would support its production needs.

Summary

In 2010, Andreas Sundgren Graniti set up the company Brännland Cider AB in Västerbotten, in the northern part of Sweden, which produces ice-cider from Swedish apples. At the start, the apples they used were sourced from southern Sweden, since there was no commercial apple orchard in the North.



In this context and in order for Brännland Cider to become a sustainable producer, they needed to control the input of raw material and ensure that supplies will continue to cover their increasing production needs. RDP support and crowdfunding were used to finance the establishment of a new apple orchard of about 1000 apple trees, in cooperation with the Swedish University of Agricultural Science.

Results

The competitiveness of Brännland Cider will increase as a result of the orchard as they can better control the raw material they use.

The new orchard has strengthened the links between Brännland Cider and the local community.

The new apple orchard created one new job.

Farmers are beginning to grow apples for commercial reasons in Northern Sweden.

The production of cider has increased from 450 bottles in 2012 to 100 000 bottles in 2018.

The cider can be found in more than 350 shops all over Sweden, at some Michelin restaurants in Europe and is exported to 10 countries.

Lessons & Recommendations

- EAFRD support can be successfully combined with crowdfunding.
- Crowd-funding is a way to strengthen the links between a company and the local community, this aspect can be highlighted in future brand building/marketing campaigns.
- It is possible to re-establish apple production in northern Europe.
- It is possible to start, develop and expand companies with products of high international quality in rural areas in northern Europe.

Context

Andreas Sundgren Graniti wanted to produce first-class ice-cider using Swedish apples, which are of very good quality. Ice-cider is a fermented beverage made from the frozen juice of apples and is mainly produced in Canada.

In 2010, Andreas set up the Brännland Cider company in Vännäsby, outside Umeå. In 2011 he planted the first apple orchard and in 2012, the first investments were made in the production facilities. The first batch of his ice-cider consisted of 450 bottles. In 2013, 9 000 bottles were produced and in 2015, production increased to 20 000 bottles. In October of the same year, 350 liquor stores were selling the ice-cider produced by Brännland Cider and some Michelin-restaurants in Europe were offering it as well. In 2015, the apples used primarily came from Skåne and Småland in the southern part of Sweden, there had been no commercial apple orchards in northern Sweden for decades.

According to the company's business plan, production was set to increase to 100 000 bottles in 2017 and by 2021, at least 50% of the company's revenue should come from exports. In this context, an investment was needed to ensure the adequate supply of the raw material (apples) in order to keep up with the production needs.



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Objectives

The objective of this project was to establish an apple orchard of around 1000 trees, in cooperation with the Swedish University of Agricultural Science. The orchard will not only support the production needs of the company; it has also started a new trend of establishing apple orchards in the northern part of Sweden.

Activities

Before planting the apple orchard and in order to set this up as a trend, Brännland Cider started working together with different stakeholders. The company sought advice from Blomqvist's nursery in Lepplax, regarding the best choice of apple varieties to be planted in the orchard. Following on from these discussions, some varieties were tried out by a local farmer. This led Brännland Cider together with the local Rural Economy and Agricultural Society (Hushållningssällskapet) to start building up a network of potential apple farmers that could produce apples for the company in the future. In October 2016, Brännland Cider started to plant their orchard, with apple varieties from Sweden, Finland and Russia.

Local individuals and companies contributed to the project via a crowdfunding campaign that invited supporters to adopt a tree and name it. This money was used to supplement the EAFRD support, which was not enough to cover the entire investment. As a result of the campaign 360 companies and individuals contributed to the project and every tree in the orchard is connected to a person. This has strengthened the links between the local community and the Brännland Cider company.

Main Results

Economic benefits:

- The new apple orchard created one new job.
- The competitiveness of Brännland Cider increased, as they can now envisage having better control over the raw material they use.
- The new orchard strengthened the links between Brännland Cider and the local community: this aspect can be highlighted in future brand building/marketing campaigns.
- A new apple orchard tradition has started in the northern part of Sweden, as farmers are now beginning to grow apples for commercial reasons.

Expanding production:

Brännland Cider produces cider from one hundred percent apple juice, without additives. Production is in the county of Västerbotten and the apples originate in both the county of Skåne in Southern Sweden and from the northern part of the country. Winter apples picked in Västerbotten are combined with apples from a carefully selected partner in Skåne.

Ice-cider, or Cidre De Glace, was developed in Quebec in Canada in the early 1990s and is an ice wine made with apples instead of grapes. No additives such as sugar, alcohol or dyes are allowed in the production.

Brännland ice-cider is made of concentrated apple juice that freezes with the help of the cold northern winter and spring. From the frozen juice a concentrated cider juice is extracted, this then gets fermented slowly to an amber iced wine with equal parts of acid, sweetness and powerful apple flavourings. Brännland Ice-cider is equally good as an aperitif, with food or for mixing cocktails.

At the moment products from Brännland cider can be found in more than 350 shops all over Sweden and are exported to around 10 countries, among them France, UK and US. The company produces seven different varieties of cider sold in the Swedish shops. The turnover was close to 400 000 euro in 2017 and the company employs three people. They have increased the production from 450 bottles in 2012 up to around 100 000 bottles in 2018. The company is also preparing an application for EIP-Agri support for innovative farms growing apples in northern Europe.

Prestigious prizes:

Brännland cider has also won a series of prestigious prizes for high quality and good taste. For example it was awarded the prize of honour in 2018 by the Swedish Wine Magazine Allt om Vin.

Environmental / Climate action benefits:

The new orchard means that the transportation of apples from the southern part of Sweden will not be necessary in the future, thus reducing CO2 emissions.

Networking value:

The company collaborated with the Swedish University of Agriculture and SITES Röbbäckdalen to gather advice about the development of apple orchards in the northern part of Sweden.

"I do not see small-scale as an end in itself, it is not how you create jobs and that does not necessarily mean that you are more environmentally friendly. So the goal is to grow, but keep the small-scale thinking about our products"

Andreas Sundgren, Founder Brännlands Cider

Brännland Cider continues to work closely with the Hushållningssällskapet and a local farmer to develop and establish more apple orchards.



Transferability:

- As the project concerns the establishment of apple orchards in a northern climate, the knowledge gained might only be useful in areas with similar climate conditions, such as Finland, Norway or Russia.
- The use of crowdfunding and the tree-adoption initiative can be easily transferred to other projects and places across Europe.

Synergies with other EU policies:

As the new orchard is also used for research (by the Swedish University of Agricultural Science), the project contributes to the Europe 2020 strategy goal of 3% of EU's GDP to be invested in R&D.

Additional sources of information

<https://www.brannlandcider.se/en/startpage/>

<http://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/pagang/natverkstraffochullbaggega/la2019/landsbygdsagan2017/ullbaggepriset/landsbygdsinnovation/brannlandcider.4.4b052a0915ea09fa76585b4f.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvE57KZT3m9Gx2EAvw-zdLQ>

*This project has been categorised under 'Improving Competitiveness' by the nominating National Rural Network