



Global warming or just seasonal changes?



by Sven-Olof Malmqvist, M4L Board of Trustees,
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Living in a country like Sweden and having a farm is kind of easy life. You will not be exposed to any extreme weather not too dry not too wet but this year differs. Down south in Sweden where I live (close to Copenhagen), you get your bearing right no rain since late April. It means that that the first cut of grass is fine but second is gone and we all cross our fingers for the third one. Having a number of horses, we better start to import feed stuffs.

All grain is harvested with half yield and Sweden goes from net exporter to net importer of everything related with grain and roughage.

An old saying in Sweden is that the sugar beet leaves should cover the field so no soil can be spotted around the very famous Swedish Midsummer (June 25th). This year still not covered, and we talk about August 10th.

Farmers have been forced to enforce old initiatives like let the cattle in to the forests and in some places harvest the leaf on the branches of leafy trees, this we did last time during WW2.

The dry weather in Sweden has led to wildfires in the forest up north and as when I write this column it's still on with 100 000 of hectares affected, probably more than in California right now where they are used to it. A friend of mine told me that they have a terrible drought in New South Wales and now also Queensland as well and they have to carry water in a long distance to keep the livestock alive.

In every part of the world you can find constraints and difficulties but in particular in Africa and some Asian countries where they are exposed to extremes more or less every year. A huge difference is that a rich country like Sweden has the means to overcome the situation by importing, which is not valid for all countries and there must the world society act and try to ease the situation.

What I am saying is that what we are used to in the past may never be the same and so we better take some precautions, both internally and externally. The common issue is the water supply- no water – no life, it's kind of easy for everyone to understand but what has been achieved so far?

For the urban person living in a city water comes from a tap no worries so how can you expect them to understand how everything links together?

On my farm we have two deep wells (70-80m depth) and so far, we still have water to the entire farm, but our neighbors just have seven to eight metres wells, so you can understand their anxiety.

We all listen to the weather forecast which have promised rain more or less every week but so far nothing. Now we have strong hopes for rain coming weekend, so finger crossed again.

So next time when you like to spend some money on charity think about the water supply in under development countries in Africa and Asia.

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