

Building resilience of rural areas

Multifunctional farms and village action groups

Rebecka Milestad

Centre for Sustainable Agriculture
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
www.cul.slu.se



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Introduction

- The need to talk about the resilience of rural areas
- My understanding of resilience and adaptive capacity
- The importance of multifunctionality
- Four Swedish cases

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Why do we need to talk about the resilience of rural areas?

Trends in Swedish agriculture	1950	1980	2005
Arable land in use (million ha)	3,5	2,95	2,7
Number of farms (>2ha)	282000	118000	75000
Average number of cows at dairy farms	No data	15	46

(Statistics Sweden, 2006)

Only farms with >100 ha increase

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Why do we need to talk about the resilience of rural areas?



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Resilience is...

...the capacity of a system
to absorb disturbance:
to undergo change and
still retain essentially
the same functions and
structure

...the capacity to cope
with change

(Holling, 1986; Berkes et al.,
2003; Walker et al., 2004)

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Resilience thinking emphasises...

... the interdependence of
human and ecological
systems (social-
ecological systems)

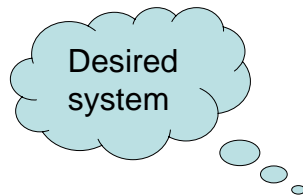
... that ecosystems are
dynamic

... that the management of
ecosystems need to be
flexible and adaptive.

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Resilience of what to what



(Carpenter et al., 2001)

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Adaptive capacity...

...is the ability of actors to manage a system successfully in terms of social-ecological resilience

(Walker et al., 2004)

...is a prerequisite for resilience

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Resilience of rural areas

Adaptive capacity of
rural actors



Resilience of farms

Adaptive capacity of farmers

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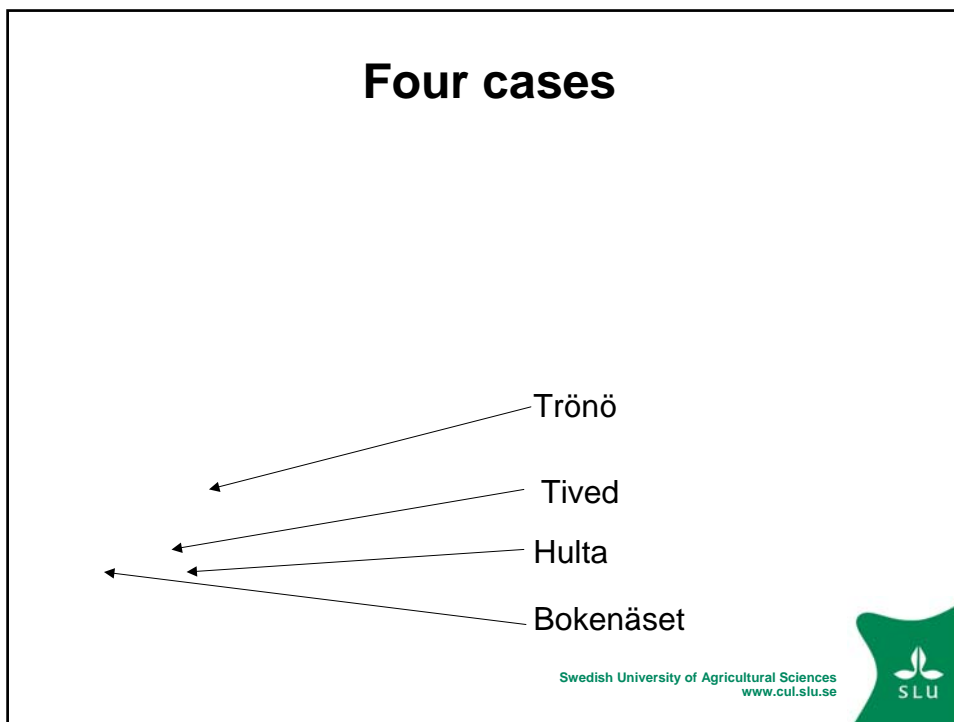
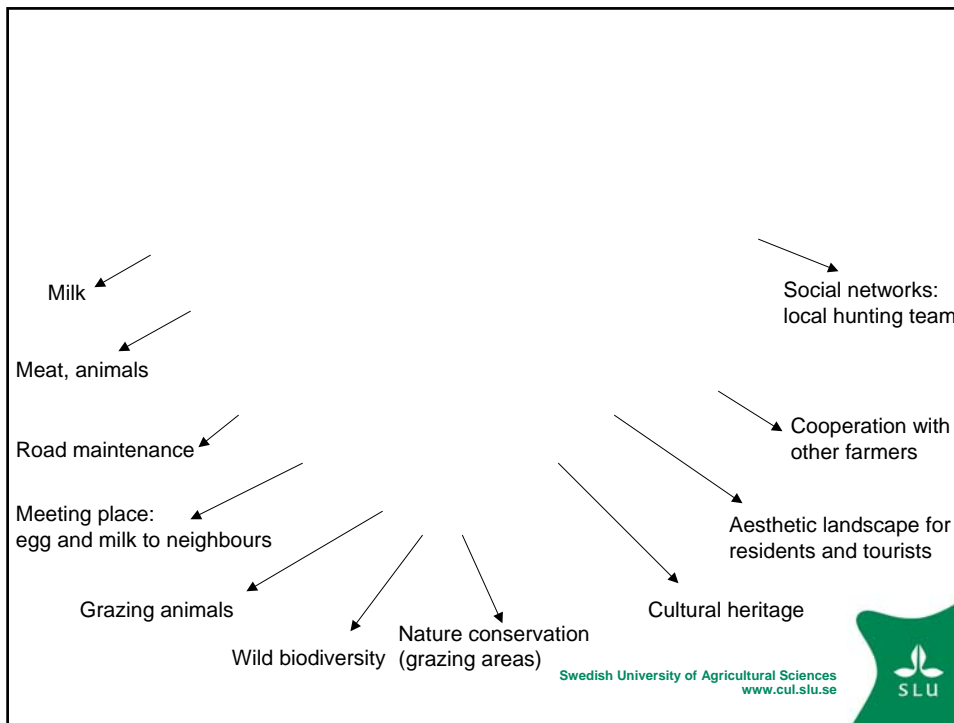


Multifunctionality is...

...an activity that has
multiple outputs and
that can contribute
to several societal
goals at the same
time (OECD, 2001)

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Trönö

- Forested valley
- Forest basis for local economy
- Farmers are forest owners
- Few animals left
- Some production of cereals
- Culture of cooperation

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Tj YX

- Small, part time farms
- Few farmers left
- Heavily forested area
- Forest owned by state company
- Grazing animals
- Far from population centres

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Hulta

- Small scale dairy and meat production
- Close to middle sized town
- Mosaic landscape
- Close cooperation between farmer and village residents



Bokenäset

- Close to large towns
- Mixed farming
- Coastal area
- Just as many holiday houses as residential houses



Village action movement

- In Finland since the 1970s
- Village action groups in Sweden since the 1980s
- Engaged citizens working for their area
- Democratic movement outside political structures
- National, regional, local levels
- Today 4 300 groups in both rural and urban areas



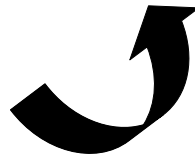
Why village action groups?

- Sparsely populated rural areas
- Out-migration
- Less services
- Lack of jobs

Village people realised that they have to rely on their own initiatives



What functions do farms have for their rural area?



In what way do farms support adaptive capacity of rural actors and resilience of rural areas?

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Social functions

- Open landscapes
- Meeting places
- Machines and buildings for joint activities

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Ecological functions

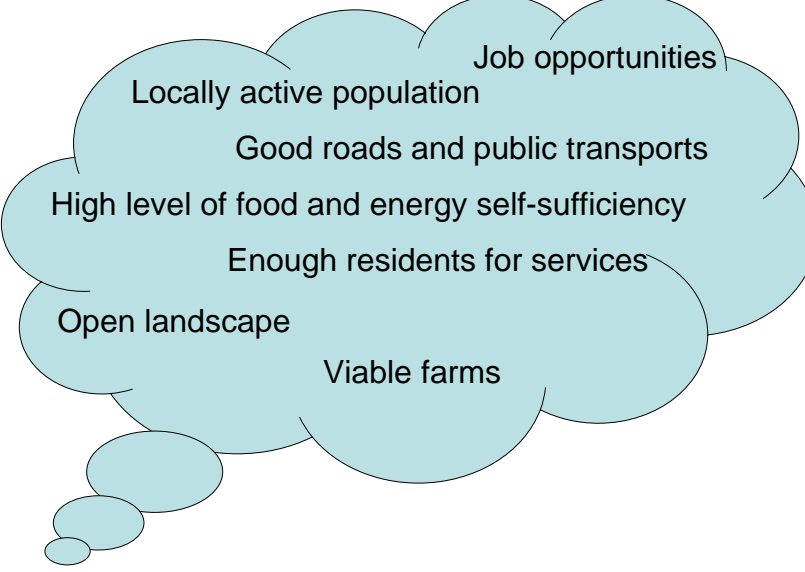
- Biodiversity
- Nutrient cycling
- Ecological knowledge



Economic functions

- Job opportunities
- Food with added value
- Machines and capital





Job opportunities

Locally active population

Good roads and public transports

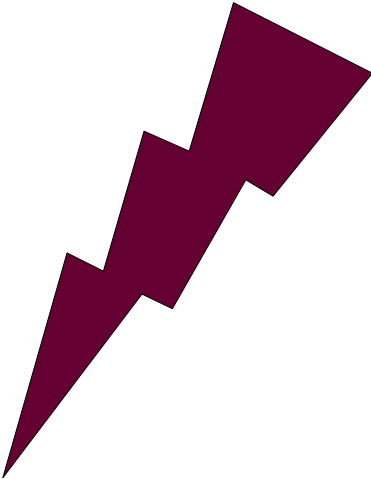

High level of food and energy self-sufficiency

Enough residents for services

Open landscape

Viable farms

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Climate change

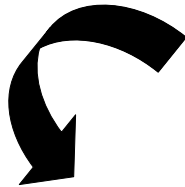
Peak oil

Changed policies

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How can village action groups increase adaptive capacity of farmers and resilience of farms?



How can village action groups build resilience of rural areas by supporting farmers?

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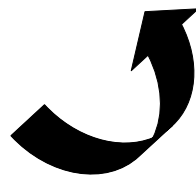
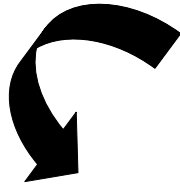
Village action groups can build resilience of farms by:

- Enhancing learning
- Creating meeting places
- Supporting networking
- Initiating cooperation
- Developing local food processing and marketing
- Creating ecological benefits

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Village action groups can support farm resilience



Farmers can support resilience of rural areas

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Thank you!

rebecka.milestad@cul.slu.se

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