

Natural Resources

Mining

Sweden's early wealth was built on its massive reserves of iron ore and copper. Today, however, the huge coppermines at Falun, in Dalarna, are long ago worked-out and have instead become an important tourist attraction as a major industrial museum.

Energy

Oil, hydroelectricity and nuclear power are Sweden's principal sources of energy. However, Sweden is not rich in natural energy resources and so has to import more than three-quarters of all its energy raw materials.

In a country which is technologically advanced – half the population own a mobile phone and almost two-thirds use the Internet – energy consumption is naturally high. Sweden is also cold – around a quarter of all Sweden's annual energy consumption is used to heat homes, workplaces and other buildings.

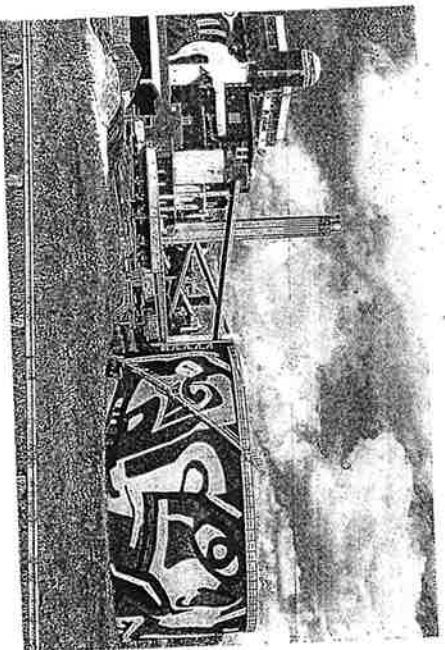
Oil

Sweden has no oil of its own. Oil consumption, however, accounts for over one third of the country's total energy supply. Every litre of petrol or diesel used in every vehicle in Sweden has to be imported.

Hydroelectricity

The great rivers of northern Sweden generate 64 terawatts (TW) of electricity in a normal year, depending on rainfall. The most productive river is the Luleälv which has 15 hydropower stations.

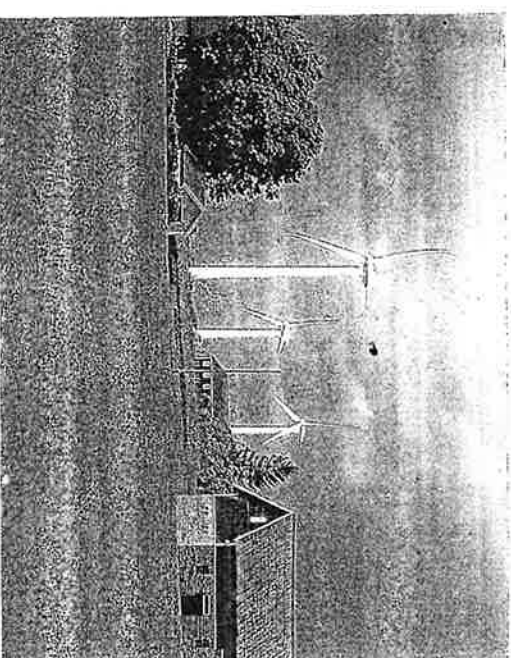
▼ An oil refinery and storage depot, Stockholm.



Nuclear power

Sweden has 11 nuclear reactors in four nuclear power stations. However, Swedes are concerned about the safety of nuclear reactors and nuclear waste, which has to be stored in specially sealed vaults. Following the meltdown at the Chernobyl reactor in the Ukraine in 1986, which devastated Sweden's reindeer farming industry and affected food production and tourism in the north, Sweden's energy policy for the twenty-first century is to work towards phasing out all its nuclear power stations.

► Wind-generated electrical power is produced by these giant windmills that are situated around Sweden's windiest coasts, in the south.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS



17m Robert Jacobsson, 17m 46 and 17m a builder from Uppsala. Our climate is harsh so we need to build well. Wood is a good material for us because our climate is rather dry. By law all new buildings in Sweden have to be well-insulated, triple glazed and energy-efficient. In our firm we specialize in under-floor heating. We lay plastic pipes onto the concrete, then put the wooden floor on top. The pipes carry warm water. It's much cheaper than burning a lot of oil to heat large radiators. The heat from the floor rises to heat the whole room. Even in winter you can walk on our floors without shoes and socks on.

Agriculture

Half of Sweden is covered by forest. About one third of the rest is hills and mountains, lakes and marshland. Less than one tenth of Sweden's total land area can be used by farmers. The climate severely limits what can be grown. About 40 per cent of farmland is used to grow barley, wheat and oats. Potatoes are grown throughout the country and sugar beet is grown in the south.

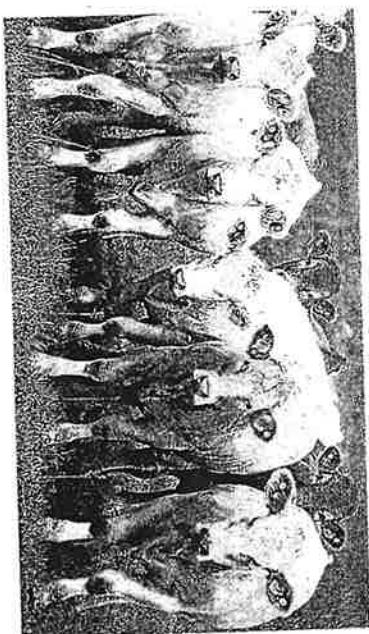
Vodka, which can be made from

cereals or potatoes, is Sweden's biggest processed food export.

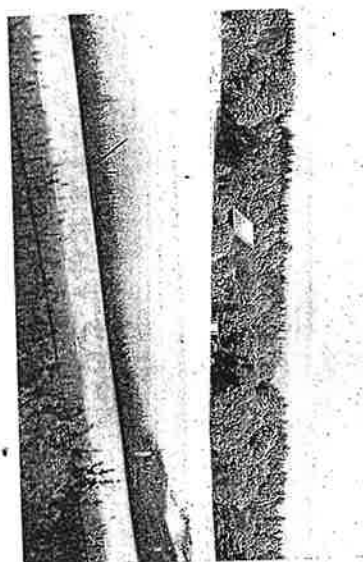
Most Swedish farms are still family-owned and worked by family members. But the number of people employed in agriculture is falling steadily. Fewer than 3 per cent of the working population of Sweden are employed on farms.

New markets

Almost three-quarters of Sweden's agricultural products go to the food processing industry. When Sweden joined the EU in 1995, it gained access to new markets in Europe. Today it is quite usual to find Swedish chocolates, baked goods, frozen vegetables and margarine in our supermarkets.



▶ Sweden produces 3.3 million tonnes of milk annually. Milk is an important part of the Swedish diet and is commonly drunk daily at mealtimes by adults as well as children.



▲ Oliseed rope is a relatively new crop to be grown on Swedish farms.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

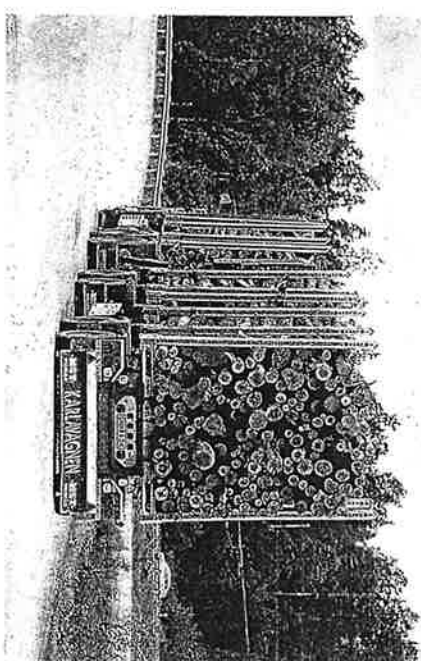


'I am Julie Skogs, a 40-year-old farmer from Leksand. There's no status in being a farmer today. You're nothing if you don't work with computers. This farm's been in my husband's family for over 250 years and with seventy-four cows we're a big farm for this area. These used to be farming communities. Now there are maybe one or two farms per village. Everyone's gone to the cities. And that means we have a labour problem. It's a very short growing season up here. The weather isn't kind to us either. So we have to get the hay cut and dried very quickly. Which means we need extra help, but only at certain times. No one wants to do farm work. Our sons aren't interested, so we have no idea who'll inherit this place.'

Forestry

Sweden is, above all else, a land of pine forests. It exports one tenth of all the world's forest products, is the fourth largest exporter of paper, the third largest exporter of pulp, and the second largest exporter of pine wood products, in the world. A third of all European newspapers and magazines are printed on Swedish paper.

The forests are, however, much more than just a source of raw material for industry. They are a natural resource in the widest sense and are carefully protected by Swedish law so that everyone can enjoy them.



▼ Logs being transported from the forest, where they have just been cut down and stripped, to a nearby paper mill.