

Increased feed use from surplus food and production residues

Summary

From a resource perspective, the best thing to do is to prevent food loss and waste and to use everything produced by the food chain as efficiently as possible. If products intended for food cannot be eaten by humans, it is more resource efficient for surplus food and residual products to be used as feed than to end up as waste in one form or another. Some may find the legislation governing the area complicated as several different laws apply. In general, it is easier to find uses for vegetable surplus food and production residues than for surplus containing animal products, due to the risk of disease transmission associated with the latter.

At present, we have comprehensive but incomplete follow-up of where food loss and waste end up, and development of follow-up methods have been identified as one of four crucial points in Sweden's efforts to reduce food loss and waste. Also, we have no official data on quantities of by-products produced by the food chain, nor of how such by-products are used. We believe that better follow-up in these areas would create opportunities to use more from the food chain as feed.

Most food waste arises in households. In order to prevent disease transmission, and because of the varied content, we currently do not see any possibility for food waste from households to be used as feed. The same goes for waste from other kitchens such as restaurants and caterers. The food industry is probably the one with the best chance of promoting more surplus food and production residues to be used as feed. For retailers, this could be more difficult since it is often required to carefully divide vegetable and animal food content, and also because many products are packaged.

Industry organizations and many companies are active in reducing food waste and in working to increase resource efficiency, but more need to see opportunities and work for this. Today, initiatives for feed use are often through contacts between companies. More information, logistics and mediation can contribute to increased use of surplus food and production residues as feed.

Interesting new technologies are studied to make use of food waste and production residues using insects, fungi or other technologies, and provided that the regulatory requirements are fully complied with, such solutions could increase resource efficiency in the future. We therefore see a need for more research on how contaminants and other substances are transmitted in these processes and how such feed production could be done safely. More knowledge of the environmental footprint for various provisions, such as feed and different forms of waste, would also contribute to a better overall picture and strengthen the resource hierarchy.



In Sweden, food companies that want to market feed must not only familiarize themselves with feed legislation and comply with it, but also receive food control and feed control from different authorities and pay a control fee for both of these checks. We believe that it is necessary to examine whether only one authority could control all legislation in the areas of food, animal by-products, and feed. This could reduce the costs and administrative burden for companies.

The Swedish Board of Agriculture has written the report in collaboration with The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and The Swedish Food Agency.

Full report in swedish at the Swedish Board of Agriculture nr 2020:04:

https://www2.jordbruksverket.se/download/18.6abd0a9c170f1c027163d1f/1584608139509/ra20_4.pdf

Contact: Karin Lindow, karin.lindow@jordbruksverket.se or +46 708143707