

The following text is a translation from Swedish to English of a speech held by Nils-Erik Norrby at Råby farm, Lund, Sweden march 2 2022 at the start of the campaign “Farm for Ukraine”, initiated by “Den Goda Jorden”, “*The Good Soil*”. Den Goda Jorden is a Swedish NGO that works to protect farmland. The speech was filmed and published on Den Goda Jordens web page March 4 2022. The translation was done March 5 2022 by Nils-Erik Norrby.

“It is March 2, 2022. I am located at Råby farm near the town of Lund in southern Sweden. We all know the current situation in Ukraine. Half a million people have had to leave their homes, a war is taking place with extreme suffering for the civilian population. What we have so far hardly spoken about here in Sweden is food security, both our own food security, the food security of Ukraine, food security for refugees and for all those countries that are dependent of exports of for example wheat and sunflower oil from Ukraine. Ukraine is one of the world’s large exporters of agricultural products.

It is still rather cold here, spring farming in Sweden has not started yet and neither in Ukraine, but there are not many days left until it will. The question is what will happen with spring farming in Ukraine and farming in general this season. If the situation continues to worsen, it is not sure that anything will be sown and neither harvested in Ukraine. This will affect many people both within Ukraine and outside Ukraine.

In this situation, you can see what is happening behind me right now here at Råby farm. During the last two days the farm land that has existed here is being dug away: fertile Baltic moraine soil that has been cultivated during centuries and that still is very suitable for cereals and other crops. The plan is to build residential housing here, following a plan from 2010. We who have gathered here today, have done so because we believe it is at this moment a wrong decision to dig away farmland. We will not engage in a debate if the houses that are to be built here are needed or not. That is a debate we can have later. New houses can wait one month, two months, half a year, until we know what direction the situation we are facing is going. It could very well turn out that we already this spring find that the farmland that has not yet been dug away, is needed for growing food.

This is far from the only place in Sweden where farmland at this very moment is being dug away, and it is not the only place where there are plans to do so. In Sweden we have several large companies, such as the Pågen bakery that to this day still have plans to build on farmland between the highway E6 and the town of Landskrona. This is not either a question that we will discuss now if it is right or wrong, but we turn to all of you who have plans like this, among them Pågen, and ask that you halt your plans until we know what will happen next with food security in Sweden, food security in Europe and around the globe. Many are those in need of food right now, and many are those that in the near future face an uncertain situation.

Thank you all for listening. Please support us in this campaign, that also cooperates with “Potatisuppropet”* in the town of Söderhamn. Thank you.”

**“Potatisuppropet”, “The potato petition”, was a campaign started in the year 2020 by farmers and NGO:s in the county of Söderhamn, 220 kilometers north of Stockholm. The campaign was inspired by “Potatisupproret”, “The Potato Revolt”, of 1917 where a severe shortage of food in Sweden due the first world war led to violent demonstrations in many towns.*