



Tannery of the Year: Tärnsjö Garveri, Sweden

There are few tanneries left in Scandinavia. As one of those that remain, Tärnsjö Garveri in Sweden knows it must continue to offer "something unique" to claim its place in a global industry that now carries out almost all of its activity much further south.

Perhaps two main qualities, above all others, are essential for a company to keep producing leather in countries such as Sweden, which has one of the highest levels of per capita wealth in the world. Such a company would have to be able to bring to market something that producers in lower-cost locations are unable to emulate, and it would have to love leather. Axel Bodén, chief executive of Tärnsjö Garveri, believes he and his colleagues can demonstrate both.

An economics graduate whose family has long ties to the Swedish leather industry, Axel Bodén took over as chief executive of Tärnsjö Garveri while still in his early thirties in 2012. He's a fifth-generation leather industry professional, although his forefathers worked mostly with small skins at facilities in the far south of Sweden, importing goat skins from Asia and making finished leather for Swedish producers of shoes, gloves and other products. By the 1980s, rising costs and the growth of international trade were making it difficult

for Mr Bodén's father to keep this business model going and he decided to end production and move his family further north to the area around the ancient university and cathedral city of Uppsala where he had farming interests. By coincidence, there was a tannery, albeit a very different one, nearby in the tiny town of Tärnsjö.

Environmental vision

Founded in 1873, the Tärnsjö facility was run by a local family named Aström for almost 100 years. Financial pressures led the family to sell in 1971 and new owner, Nils Nyman, proved to be a visionary. He moved production away from chrome-based tanning ("there is no chrome anywhere in the tannery", Axel Bodén says) and, ahead of his time, began to promote Tärnsjö Garveri as an environmentally sound producer of leather. Following a short period in the ownership of venture capitalists, Axel Bodén's father renewed his interest in the



leather industry by joining forces with business partner Torbjörn Lundin to take over the tannery in 1993. When his father died in 2003, the current chief executive joined the business and took over the running of it when Mr Lundin retired in 2012.

"My father never pushed me into the business," Mr Bodén says, "but I was interested in leather because I had heard him talk so much about it. When the opportunity came, I thought I might regret it if I didn't at least give leather a try. I was 22. I spent time in every department to try to understand how things worked and, in time, took charge of sales and marketing while Torbjörn was chief executive. For the first five years I was super naïve, but I kept learning. I wanted to understand this business."

The original owners, the Aströms, had their ups and downs, but they built up a good business by taking hides from local cattle farmers and turning them not just into leather but into high-quality harnesses and similar products, which they sold back to the farmers. They were working with high-quality raw material and soon developed a reputation for excellent craftsmanship. The present management team is determined to maintain that reputation. It's proud of its output, which now includes a range of exclusive bags and leathergoods, part of a move to present its products under the umbrella name 'House of Leather'. The third floor of the tannery is now devoted to the manufacture of these products, with 15 in the range for now and a further 25 planned. Some have become available to online shoppers through the Mr Porter website (a spin-off from the Net-A-Porter site), as well as in independent boutiques in Stockholm and London. The company also produces finished goods for external customers and its range of vegetable-tanned leathers remains in demand among exclusive brands and manufacturers who make footwear, accessories and equestrian equipment of their own. Tärsjö has even hosted a school of saddlery, the only one remaining in northern Europe, although this is about to move to a different location nearby because the tannery is expanding its production of finished items and needs the space.

Certified organic leather

The raw material, 99% of the time, is bovine hides from Sweden, with small amounts of deer and horse making up the rest. However, it's not the special raw



The tannery is set in a heavily wooded area, and next to a small lake. On two sides of the tannery there is housing for local residents, but also housing for second homes for holiday purposes.

material or the commitment to chrome-free tanning processes that make Tärsjö Garveri stand out, Axel Bodén feels. After all, tanners elsewhere have access to Swedish hides and livestock farmers in other northern European countries can offer hides of similar quality, and vegetable-tanning is widespread. "To survive we need to be niche," he explains, "and it is part of our niche to use vegetable-tanning processes and to be a bit old-fashioned. But the unique thing is that we offer leather that is certified organic, made from hides that we source from farms and abattoirs that are also certified organic."

Certification of the hides comes from KRAV, a Swedish organisation that promotes and certifies ecological, sustainable agriculture throughout the country. It is a member of International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements and has a high level of recognition (it says 98%) among Swedish consumers, used to seeing the KRAV label on their supermarket shelves and used to being asked to pay a little more for the products that display them because the KRAV label, the organisation explains, is a clear indicator of care for the environment, for animals, for health and for social responsibility. The tanner pays more for KRAV hides, too, of course, a premium of

around 15% compared to hides from non-organic sources.

Netherlands-based independent network Control Union gives third-party support for this KRAV certification under the Organic Content Standard (OCS), which applies to non-food products; accreditation under OCS means the presence and volume of organic material in the product has undergone thorough verification. The farms and abattoirs tick the right boxes for KRAV and so the tannery ticks the right OCS boxes for Control Union, which insists that it "continually monitors" compliance. Tärsjö Garveri's environment director, Torgny Eriksson, says his contacts with Control Union are very regular, because documentation from Control Union, such as transaction certificates, is what the tannery's customers require to be able to prove that the leather they source from Tärsjö is certified 100% organic. He's had the conversation with Control Union, and says: "We are the only tannery in the world that can supply 100% certified organic leather."

One way

In fiscal year 2015-2016 (July-June), 70% of the hides Tärsjö Garveri processes will be KRAV hides, and from 2016-2017 onwards,



From a technical point of view

(1) Overview of operations

Tärnsjö's tannery, leather workshop and offices are located in open countryside approximately 60 kilometres from the city of Uppsala. The tannery was first established in 1873, and at present employs around 50 people on site, 20 being directly involved in leather manufacture, the others in the making of specialised leathers. The tannery processes around 1,800 Swedish hides per month of a weight to produce approximately one million square-feet of leather each year. All of this leather is vegetable tanned and free of any metals, with outlets for upholstery leather at 1.1–1.2 mm, tooling sides at 2.0–2.5 mm, tooling leather 3.0–3.5 mm, and grain leathers at 3.5–5.0 mm. These leathers are all full grain, dry vegetable tanned, with some tumbled, and greased leathers.

The hides used are from accredited and regulated slaughterhouses. The majority of these hides are obtained from farms accredited as fully organic and are fully traceable to the farm and individual animal.

(2) Manufacture and processing

Some of the hides used by the tannery are provided by two nearby slaughterhouses that are approved, having been audited to standard and certified by independent audit company KRAV. Moreover, about 75 farmers accredited as being fully organic (grass- and silage-fed stock from each farm without additives, free from antibiotics unless needed for specific treatment, holding pens to approved standards, and meat fully traceable back to the animal at birth) are providing a majority of the hides the tannery processes. A premium of around 15% is paid for these hides, and the objective of Tärnsjö is to increase supply from this specialist source of organic supply to 100% so that all of the leather manufactured can be presented as fully organic.

The wet salted hides are generally cows in the weight range 24–28 kilos at age 6–10 years, and bull hides at 30–35 kilos at 12–15 months, although the weight can rise to 60 kilos for mature bulls. The input weight is 4.0–4.5 tonnes, and these are soaked for one day, then limed for one day using a pair of wooden drums 3.2 metres in length and 3.0 metres in diameter.

A hair-recovery process is used with the float recirculated and filtered over a two-hour period. Here, during the hair-release stage, the float is discharged into the external drainage gutter surrounding the drum, then fed into a holding sump, from where it is pumped to a hair filtration unit and hair compression, with the float returned to the drum. The volume of recovered hair is approximately 0.6 to 0.7 cubic-metres per input load.

After washing and unloading the hides are fleshed using a single out-feed Rizzi fleshing machine. For the operation, the hides are loaded in stainless steel containers, then raised by forklift and placed on the mezzanine that supports the fleshing machine. However, between the load and the machine, a stainless-steel table is placed that can be rotated horizontally. The hides are slid across this and offered to the lime fleshing operation, but on out-feed the hides are fed back onto the table by the operatives. The same table is then turned through 180 degrees so that the remaining half of the hides



The tannery is provided with hides from two local accredited abattoirs. Immediately after slaughter and mechanical hide-pulling, the hides are salted. Because of the relatively low rates of slaughter, the hides are piled for two weeks and until an effective number has built up before delivery to the tannery.



The tannery operates a hair saving process. All of the recovered hair is screened and compressed and dropped into a stainless steel container. The recovered hair is composted and matured with other organic matter, then applied to agricultural land.



All lime fleshing is performed on a single conventional out-feed Rizzi fleshing machine. The handling arrangement is unusual as hides are slid into the machine from a feed table. On out-feed, the hides are guided back onto this table, which is then rotated 180 degrees. The neck end is then fed into the machine to complete the action.



can be fed directly into the machine. This avoids the heavy manual turning of the hides that is typical of single machine operations.

After lime splitting to substance, the hides are tanned in a bank of four wooden and two stainless steel Dose drums of size 3.0 x 3.0 metres in diameter. All of the leathers are vegetable tanned, mainly based on mimosa, but sometimes mimosa and quebracho in combination. Three different pretanning processes are used as sulfuric-salt pickle, light synthetic pretannages, and vegetable-only pretannages. Fatliquors are included in the tanning process to avoid folding and creasing, and the tanning times vary between two and five days according to the hide thickness and technical requirements. This high number of combinations is needed due to the complexities of the end use where the range can be summarised as follows:

- Soft furniture and small leathersgoods ranging from 1.1–2.0 mm thickness
- Firm leathers at 2.0–2.5 mm for horse saddlery, shoes, furniture, bags and small leathersgoods
- Tooling leathers at 3.0–3.5 mm for highly durable belts, straps, saddlery and tooling
- Heavy grain leathers at 3.5–5.0 mm for heavy saddlery, walls and flooring.

On average, the yield from these leathers is between 0.8 and one square-foot per kilo of raw material. At present, tanning with spruce extracts to produce a cream soft leather are at an advanced stage of development, and recycling of used vegetable tanning floats is planned too.

Hides are stacked, and immediately sammed, then shaved to final substance. Retanning is performed in four wooden and two stainless steel drums of different dimensions to suit the different weights and substances. Particular attention is given to the dyestuffs used, as these must be completely metal-free to comply with the complete avoidance of any metal in the leather processing.

About 30% of the leathers are drum stuffed in stainless steel Dose drums, using hot blends of paraffin waxes, stearates and natural greases and oils for between six and eight hours according to thickness and the end product. This is followed by setting two ways on the flesh, and two ways on the grain side using a Rizzi setting machine fitted with a cold steel roller. Suspension drying takes between two and seven days, followed by stretching on a pair of Dynavacs.

There is a single-headed spraying machine and drying unit in the finishing department and a hand spraying unit, and all of the finishing is water-based. Combinations of embossing machines and ironing machines are also used, and a G-frame press for traditional plating.

After final sorting and grading, leathers are dispatched, although a considerable volume is manufactured into various leathersgoods on site. This includes belts and harnesses for horse trotting competition, but also for heavy horse use and eventing. Other items include leather guards for axes and knives, gun cases, hand and travel bags, hats, leather headboards for beds and flooring materials. Of special interest are full size leather mannequins that can be filled with small stone to any body size and weight. These have proved ideal for



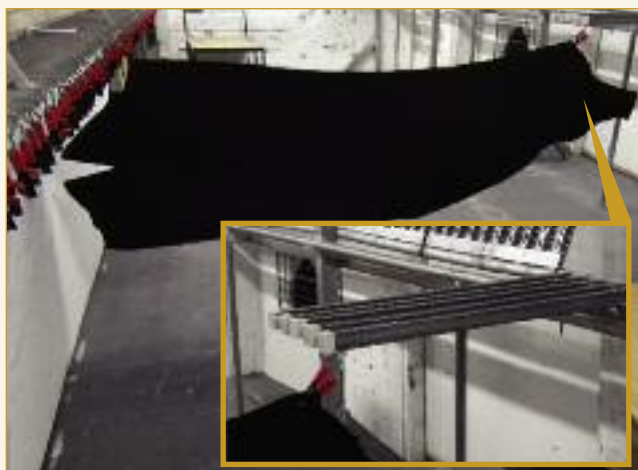
After lime splitting, the splits are delivered directly into recycled polythene lined containers, then sealed and stored at 3°C before sale for gelatin manufacture.



This Dose stainless steel drum is one of four vessels used for stuffing the lightly sammed vegetable tanned hides. Several different blends of waxes and greases are used in this operation.



After drum stuffing, all of the hides are set two ways on the flesh side, then two ways on the grain side to flatten and enhance the final grain appearance.



This area is fully available for other use, but provides additional drying capacity as required. Sides are suspended from permanent fittings on the left, whereas on the right sets of five extended arms can be lowered from the vertical to the horizontal position (see inset) for hide attachment. The suspension clip can be fitted at many points along each arm to ensure the right tension.



The finishing department is filled with a single spraying machine and through-feed rolling equipment, but also uses this classic G-frame press for kiss-plating and special embossing effects.



Once manufacture is complete, every side is inspected in natural light before dispatch to customers, or delivery to the craft workshop.

fire-fighting exercises, as well as rescue and resuscitation exercises as they are more tactile than artificial alternatives. It is possible to trace all of these items back to the abattoir and, in the case of organic farm sourcing, back to the individual animal.

(3) Solids management

- Hair from the hair recovery process is delivered to a local farm. Here, it is mixed with green waste and earth, and left to compost for six months. It is then applied to the land for land conditioning and improvement.
- Limed fleshings are mascerated, and mixed with all of the fine vegetable-tanned shavings for anaerobic digestion to produce methane at a specialised plant in the city of Uppsala, 65 kilometres from the tannery. Transport costs are covered by the tannery.
- About 10% of the limed splits are vegetable tanned, with the remainder sold for collagen fibre and gelatin production. Pallets are returned to the abattoirs, but if damaged, they go together with all packaging, paper and cardboard to be compressed and sent to a controlled incineration plant for heat recovery.
- Larger leather trimmings are sold for small leather items. Small trimmings are presently used for biogas, but the company is looking to sell this material to manufacturers of chrome-free leather board. Any other waste is subject to controlled landfill deposit.

(4) Water and environmental management

[a] WATER

The ground water level is deep and very abundant; lakes are plentiful in this area and all water used within manufacture is abstracted directly from the ground.

[b] EFFLUENT TREATMENT

Approximately 80 cubic-metres of water is used each day for manufacture. This is discharged from the tannery after coarse screening and delivered via a 1.5 kilometre dedicated pipeline to the local effluent treatment plant for the town of Tärnsjö. This plant is specifically designed to treat both domestic and industrial effluents, the only industrial provider at present being the tannery. It is run independently, with charges allocated to the tannery based on strength and volume, which are continuously recorded.

Three different effluents are received: domestic wastewaters piped to the plant, tanker deliveries from domestic septic tanks, and the tannery. Each of these effluents is fine-screened separately, with the piped and tankered domestic effluents then being mixed and subjected to separate conventional primary setting and biological treatment.

The tannery effluent is settled, and then treated by conventional biological treatment, in a plant of 1,200 cubic-metres capacity, the air being provided by submerged diffusers. The in-feed to this plant is between 1,500 and 2,000 milligrammes per litre BOD and, after extended treatment – currently 12 days – the strength is reduced to between 3 and 8 milligrammes per litre BOD.



The limits for discharge as set at 15 milligrammes per litre BOD and 0.5 milligrammes per litre phosphorous, so effluent is then dosed with aluminium salts to remove any remaining phosphorous, and settled in parallel with the domestic treated effluent after biological treatment. At this stage, the two settled effluents are mixed, then chemically dosed and settled for tertiary treatment, then sand filtered before delivery to a nearby stream that discharges into a local lake.

All of the solids from primary and secondary settling are dosed with polyelectrolytes and dewatered using a filter press. The visual appearance is similar to an inclined centrifuge, but the inner cylinder is static and constructed with fine close-placed stainless steel bars which act as a filter. The wet solids are moved under pressure towards the exit orifice at the top of the incline using a slow rotating auger. The whole enclosed screen is automatically pressure washed every hour to clean the screen. This has replaced centrifuge dewatering, being lower in energy demands, noise levels and maintenance costs, and providing a sludge solids content of 28%.

All of the solids are mixed and piled together on a concrete base. They are then delivered to a facility near to Uppsala where they are mixed with other bio-materials and soil, then used at controlled solid waste deposit sites for top cover and to help establish plant growth.

[c] ENERGY

All of the energy used for manufacture at the Tärnsjö tannery is generated from oil and electricity provided by the

national grid. The company is looking to replace oil as a source of fuel by using wood instead as this is abundant in this area. Excluding the energy recovered by external companies as biogas fleshings and shavings, and energy from combustible waste, the total electrical energy use at present is more than 600,000 kilowatt-hours per year, and oil consumption 150 cubic-metres per year. ☺



Horse bridles and saddles, straps, cases, bags, and caps are all crafted on site. The workshops are extensive, and other goods include leather headboards and leather mannequins. An independent school for leather craft and saddlery is also housed at this site.



The effluent is fully treated by an external provider at 1.5 km from the tannery. The tannery effluent, after full primary and secondary dosing is mixed with treated domestic effluent. Tertiary treatment comprises chemical dosing and clarification, then filtration through this pair of sand filters.



All of the settled solids from primary, secondary and tertiary clarification treatment are chemically dosed, then dewatered to around 28% solids in this huber screw press. Essentially a cylindrical bar screen filter, solids at the base and sides are compressed as they are slowly screwed towards the top of the inclined cylinder before discharge.

the figure will be 100%. Current production levels are around 22,000 hides per year giving an output of roughly one million square-feet of finished leather but there is capacity to increase this to an annual figure of 40,000 hides, which would constitute a tenth of Sweden's annual cattle slaughter. Around half of the Tärnsjö Garveri total comes directly from local slaughterhouses

and the other half from a Stockholm-based private hide dealer who sources material from a much wider area in the centre and north of the country. Axel Bodén says the Scanhide co-operative in Denmark is currently taking 70% of all of the hides Sweden produces, but he still insists the sources he has in place can provide all the material he and his 50 employees need.

In the old-fashioned way

Sourcing certified local hides directly is already working well. Some come from specialist abattoirs that are within 50 kilometres of the tannery. One of these, Lövska Kött, is just outside the city of Uppsala. It is small, slaughtering just 150 head of cattle per week on average (it handles sheep and pigs too), but it is an



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The abattoirs providing hides to the tannery are fully accredited to KRAV standards. Each individual animal is monitored through the system, and the meat stamped for compliancy. Each carcass can be traced back to the farm of origin, and much of the meat is returned to the farm for farm-shop sales.



The last remaining saddlery school in northern Europe is also located on this site, catering for around 15 students, who benefit from easy access to the extensive range of tooling and heavy grain, vegetable tanned leathers.

enthusiastic supporter of Tärnsjö Garveri's ambition to use only KRAV-certified hides. The same goes for the Faringe abattoir in the village of Huddungeby, just 20 kilometres from Tärnsjö. The system in place includes steps to make traceability possible back to the farm, and even back to individual cows; if customers require this much information, it is available. KRAV's criteria for the livestock farmers include strict rules about the space the cattle enjoy inside and out, on using antibiotics or pesticides on the cattle or fertiliser on the pastureland. One farm close to the tannery, Grellsbo Hereford, has pure-bred Hereford cattle. It's been organic since 2001 and no longer has anything to do with supermarkets. Its cattle go for slaughter to local abattoirs and then farmers Bo Larsson and his brother Mats sell the meat directly to discerning consumers. "Consumers want to buy our meat," Bo Larsson says, "because they can buy a product that they can't find in a store. It's only 20 kilometres from here to the city [Uppsala], but it strikes me that the distance is becoming greater all the time because people in the city tend to have such poor understanding of where food comes from. There is no big secret to it; we just do things in the old-fashioned way."

Add more value

"This is not a volume market," Axel Bodén explains. "It's all about quality. KRAV is our niche; KRAV is what we want and we can get that raw material in Sweden. It's growing and may already be approaching 20% of all the cattle in Sweden. This is the way for us to add more value." He says he knows it works. Since 2014, Swedish fashion retail group H&M has been using Tärnsjö leather along with organic silk and other exclusive materials in a special capsule collection it calls Conscious (much to the delight of Control Union). "It's small and niche, like us," Axel Bodén says (of the Conscious collection, not of H&M), "but it will get bigger. The products sold really quickly." H&M is among a group of new customers who found their way to Tärnsjö thanks to pioneering work by Magnus Ericson, a Swedish footwear entrepreneur who has, since 2010, been helping a famous local children's shoe brand, Kavat, capture new customers among parents prepared to pay a premium for certified organic chrome-free leather in the shoes they buy for their children.

"Our main customers today are high-end brands in fashion, furniture, shoes, saddles (for horses and for bicycles)," Mr Bodén says, "and our first and second selections are good for them. Of course, we need to find buyers for our third selections too and we believe that here, too, our environmentally friendly strategy can help us; the third-selection material does not really stand out on its own, but the way we produce it does stand out. The key point is that story-telling and transparency are now very important for brands and we are finding that, more and more, they want to make the way they source their leather part of their stories. This is good for us. We want them to say, 'We buy Tärnsjö'. We want them to think of us as the House of Leather."

Demand stands up

In good times, large numbers of consumers say they want sustainable products, Mr Bodén acknowledges, even if they can appear less enthusiastic about this subject when economies go down again. "The volume market is always going to be people for whom price is everything," the Tärnsjö chief executive says. "People always want to look after their wallets. I understand. However, there will always be customers who want to look after the planet too. It may be a smaller market, but small is the future for us. We have our traditions and we have been doing this for a long time and we want our customers to trust us and to believe in what we are producing. What we tell them is that if they put Tärnsjö leather in their products, it will help them stand out. We will never move away from being as natural as possible because we believe there will always be a market for that, with the raw material as the key."

For him and his business, he says this means it is essential to take a long-term view, with the aim of growing a little bit year on year without taking any big risks, without having to find lots of new people (Tärnsjö is in a rural area) and without having to move production. Mr Bodén asks: "Where would we move to? If we moved production to an area with lots of leather production, we would not be unique. Now we are unique." He is proud of the company's commitment to being small and different and says the death of the leather industry in Europe will be when all the entrepreneurs are driven out by large groups.

How to spruce up veg tanning

Today, the tanning system that underpins Tärnsjö Garveri's



Some of the saddlery and bridle leathers manufactured by the tannery and for sale at their nearby leather and outdoor outlet shop. The range is considerable covering both trotting and heavy horse uses.

operations is TFL's White Line System, whose technical solutions for chromium-free leathers suit the Swedish tannery's needs well. Mimosa is in use extensively, with some quebracho and tara too. None of these plants are native to Sweden and another strand of the tannery's sustainability strategy is to substitute them all for extracts from native spruce bark. Trials have shown this can be a successful method for tanning leather on an industrial scale. The powerful timber companies that grow the spruce use much of the bark for fuel at the moment, but Tärnsjö Garveri says there is backing from the Swedish government now to encourage them to harvest the extracts first and then use the bark as they wish. To use a tanning agent extracted from local raw material would complete the picture, the leather producer says.

In terms of machinery, Axel Bodén says he prefers technology from Italian machinery manufacturers but points out that, with relatively small production volumes, he has to manage his machinery budget carefully. "We don't have too much money for new investment," he explains, "but we've often been able to pick up machinery from other tanners. For example, we bought a new splitting machine two years ago and it was a reconditioned, second-hand machine; it still represented a big investment for us. We want good, solid, reliable machinery, but the latest inventions are sometimes too big a change for us. Roller-coaters are a good

example because a more efficient way of hiding defects is not for us. We don't want to hide them." One change that has occurred over the last ten years or so is that wooden drums in the tannery are gradually giving way to plastic ones. Plastic, therefore, isn't always a negative for Mr Bodén; however he does not like the push he says has come from the automotive industry to make leather look more and more like plastic. "Automotive brands don't want any claims," he continues, "and the consumer these days expects a smooth surface in a car interior, with no defects and no scars. Tanners have had to use tricks to make their product look more and more 'perfect' and as a result they, the tanners, have painted themselves into a corner in which it seems that using these tricks is the only way to make leather acceptable. We are pushing away from that. Leather is a natural product and a scar, far from being something awful, just showed that the animal the hide came from had freedom and lived a bit."

High standards

Conditions in Sweden regarding workers' rights, terms and conditions are widely recognised as being among the best in the world. The standard of living is high and breaks and holidays are generous; labour costs are expensive. Compared to most Swedes, who work (in front of a computer) in the knowledge economy, the workers at Tärnsjö Garveri do a tough job, according to

their chief executive. But salaries are good and the relationships between the management team and the workforce and between the company and the trade unions that represent the workers are good. One of the things Mr Bodén introduced when he took over as chief executive was to give 20% of profits each year to the workers as a bonus payment. How much individuals receive depends on their salary levels and on the number of hours they have worked, but for some this has been the equivalent of an extra month's salary, and one spin-off for the business was a notable decrease in absenteeism. "What I wanted was to raise people's level of ambition and for them to show me they care about the product," the chief executive says. "I've put a lot of thought into the question of what we need to do to be able to survive here, in a very small town in a very expensive country. This conversation with the workforce is part of it. We put the name Tärnsjö Garveri, Sweden, on everything and I want the workers to be proud of it, to tell their friends that this is where they work. I want them to hold their heads up high. So we have put videos onto the company website showing the workers carrying out their work and interviewing them. This is a bit of a cultural change because Swedes, in general, are very modest. The idea is to show people that their work counts."

The local authorities in the municipality of Heby and, one tier up, in Uppsala County, have responded favourably to these developments. Debate continues on a number of issues, but Axel Bodén describes relationships as very good. "I think they are quite proud of us," he says modestly; "they certainly try to help us." He mentions that this is an area in which many of the companies that used to operate have suffered because of changes in the wider economy. He mentions, almost as an afterthought, that he was named as the municipality's and then the county's entrepreneur of the year in 2014, going on to take third place for the whole of Sweden as the competition escalated. "It's exotic and strange to make leather in Sweden today. That wasn't the case 70 years ago, but it is now."

And yet Tärnsjö Garveri is still there, producing leather in the most environmentally friendly way it can, addressing the sustainability of its material from the start of the supply chain to the end, processing a sustainable material in a sustainable way. 🌱