



When Norwegian leathergoods brand Hvrnmnsn decided it wanted to bring out a luxury tote bag in certified organic leather it found “the obvious choice” of partner in Swedish tanner and leathergoods manufacturer Tärnsjö Garveri.

Only organic leather will do

Leathergoods brand Hvrnmnsn (pronounced 'Vermannsen'), based in Norway, has added a special tote bag to its collection. It said at the time of the launch in June that the new bag is a “modern expression of Scandinavian design”, with clean lines, stitching by hand and “Nordic simplicity” among its key characteristics.

At the time, Hvrnmnsn confirmed to *World Leather* that the bag is made from vegetable-tanned, certified organic leather from Swedish tannery Tärnsjö Garveri. Tärnsjö claims to be the only tannery in the world producing 100% certified organic leather, classified as such thanks to its own processes and because the hides it uses come from farms that meet the standards of Swedish organisation KRAV, which is responsible for the certification of ecological, sustainable agriculture in the country.

Assurances for consumers

KRAV-labelled products have a prominent presence in Swedish supermarkets and they are popular. According to the organisation, the label offers assurance to consumers that these products have been produced “in an environmentally friendly and ethical manner”; it is also a guarantee that the product has undergone inspection (self-assessment will not do as far as KRAV is concerned).

With its focus on food, however, and with the Swedish leather industry now limited to just a handful of tanneries, KRAV had to bring in outside help when Tärnsjö Garveri asked for its leather to be granted the right to call itself certified organic; it relies on third-party support from global independent network Control Union, which administers the Organic Content Standard (OCS) for non-food products. Tärnsjö Garveri felt completely justified in sticking

to its guns over this. It produces small amounts of deer and horse leather, but 99% of its output is bovine with, all the hides coming from Sweden.

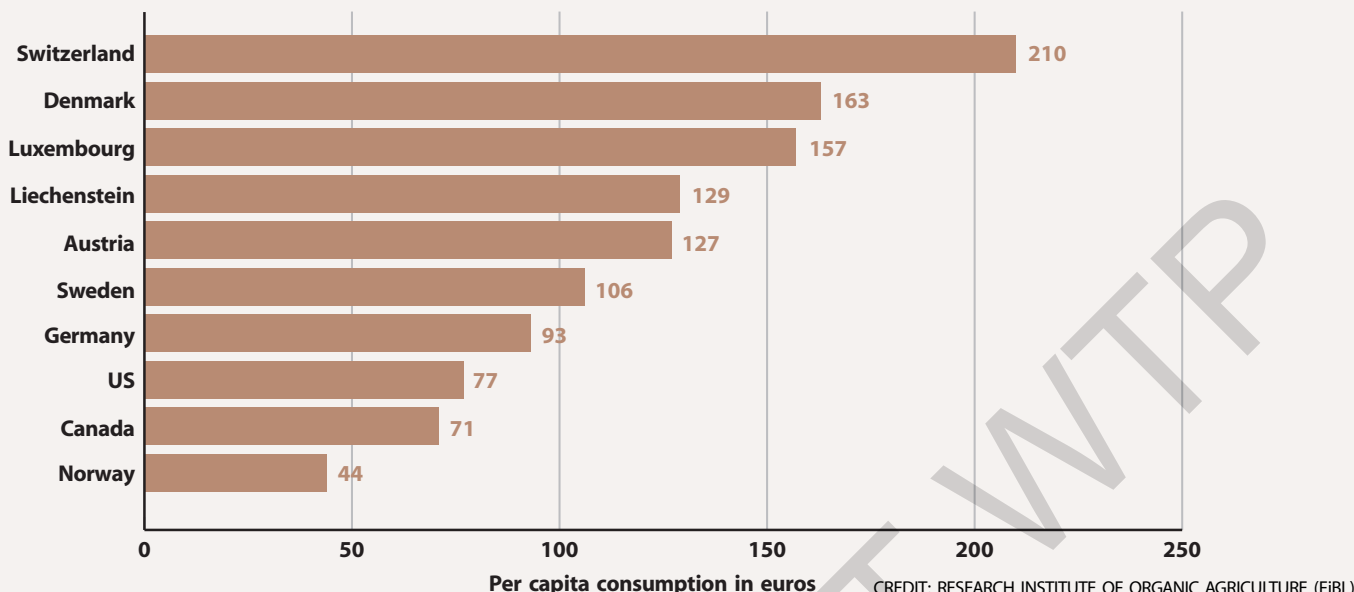
In the case of around 50% of those Swedish hides, the livestock farms and the abattoirs from which the tanner buys the material have KRAV certification. Its own processes comply too because its system is completely reliant on plant-based tanning agents, familiar ones such as mimosa, quebracho and tara, but Swedish spruce extracts are part of the mix as well. If the hides are KRAV-certified and the tanning processes are vegetable-based and free from hazardous substances, Tärnsjö Garveri feels it merits the accolade of producing certified organic leather. It intends to keep pushing up the certified organic proportion of bovine hides it sources until this description covers its entire bovine leather output. The day is

With its clean lines and "Nordic simplicity", Hvrmmnsn claims its new tote bag is "a modern expression of Scandinavian design". The bag is made from certified organic leather from the only tanner to meet that requirement, Tärnsjö Garveri from Sweden.

CREDIT: HVRMNNNSN

Top ten countries for per capita spend on organic products 2013

FiBL-AMI-OrganicDataNetwork Survey 2015



near, the tannery says, when the figure will be 100%; it all depends on farmers and abattoirs gaining KRAV certification.

One of a kind

The Swedish company is on the record as saying that, according to Control Union, no other tannery in the world has gone through this certification process and, therefore, no other leather producer in the world can justify (with certification) the claim that its leather is genuinely organic.

These hides cost the tannery about 15% more than standard hides and it seems perfectly fair for Tärnsjö Garveri to try to reap some reward from going to all this trouble. 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 Exclusive. Now Hvrnnnsn is following this example. What is more, the Norwegian leathergoods brand is making use of Tärnsjö Garveri's ability as a manufacturer of finished products, commissioning the tannery's own artisans to produce the new tote.

Target customers

"It's very important for Hvrnnnsn that the leather in the tote bag is certified organic; it's one of the unique selling points," a spokesperson for the brand tells *World*

Leather. "And the goal is to target customers that also see this as an important aspect when they choose fashion brands and products."

Scandinavia appears to be a sound part of the world in which to search for consumers who prefer as many of the products they buy as possible (from haricot beans to handbags) to be certified organic. The Research Institute of Organic

Agriculture (FiBL) has figures that put all three Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden and Denmark) among the top ten in the world for per capita spend on certified organic products. Denmark is second only to Switzerland, with an average per capita spend of €163 per year. Sweden is in sixth place on €106 per person per year and Norway is tenth with €44.



Finished leather awaiting inspection at Tärnsjö Garveri. Around 50% of the tannery's hides come from certified organic cattle, which allows the Swedish company to offer certified organic leather.

CREDIT: WTP

Obvious choice

As mentioned, Hvrnnnsn has focused some of its messages about the bag on Nordic qualities, including its ability to reflect the light and fresh air of a Scandinavian summer evening. But the real emphasis is on its sustainability. The luxury leathergoods brand talks about being able to trace the leather back to the farm the hide came from (Tärnsjö Garveri says traceability back to individual cows is also possible if customers want to have that level of information). The patina that the veg-tanned leather will naturally take on with time is also part of the appeal, especially as this will be the result of interaction between the bag and its owner and, therefore, customised, proprietary and unique. For all these reasons, the Norwegian brand says choosing Tärnsjö Garveri was "the obvious choice" for its new tote bag. 🌿