

Declaration of intent- Jan Bengtsson

As I see it, the most important question for SLU is how the university can address the major future challenges and the research needs these entail, and not only today's questions. I want the university to be a pro-active actor, not reactive that is prepared to rapidly meet society's needs for scientific knowledge in our core areas, i.e. land use, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable development. While research directly addressing the daily needs of our traditional sectors is important, it cannot be allowed to dominate the need to address the large long-term research challenges.

The future challenges are usually inter-sectorial and inter-disciplinary, but they also require in-depth disciplinary knowledge. I believe that our sector-role needs to be extended outside the traditional sectors, and include, e.g., the large environmental sector, land use, urban and rural planning, and – of course – production systems in forestry, agriculture and aquaculture. I want to support research collaborations between the traditional and the new sectors. Therefore, the university needs strong social science competence within our core areas, like rural development and planning and management for sustainable land use.

I want to involve the employees at the university in the processes needed to make these changes happen, especially in the university's strategy processes. This will take time and should begin already during 2017. The new future platforms will play an important role, but far from the only one.

I want to protect (what is left of) the "collegial governance" of the university against steering models developed in the private sector. Involving the university's employees in strategy development is one way of doing this. This will ensure that the strategy is the university's, not just an internal document of a few, largely based on expectations of the next research proposition or the immediate wishes from ministries or sectors. SLU should be able to rapidly provide knowledge on sustainability and land use issues when it is asked for by society.

I have worked at SLU since 1989. I have extensive experience of research in both forestry and agriculture. I am professor in ecology and environmental research at the department of ecology in Uppsala, and have approximately 15 years' experience of inter-disciplinary research, advisory boards, research evaluation, and education. I have been a member of the steering group for the Future Agriculture program, in which we, for example, used scenarios to develop a research program.