



## Final Report – AgriBuild Conference

### Overview

The AgriBuild conference, titled "Renewable, Sustainable Building Materials from Agriculture," was held on April 4, 2024, at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Alnarp, specifically in the Crafoord Hall. The event drew a total of 90 visitors, including approximately 15 participants who joined digitally via ZOOM.

### Key Highlights

The conference aimed to explore and promote the use of agricultural products as sustainable building materials. It successfully brought together professionals from various sectors to learn, discuss, and network. The event was notable for its diverse range of presentations and the mini-exhibition showcasing different agricultural building materials.

### Value of Networking

The AgriBuild conference emphasized the importance of networking, providing a platform for professionals to connect, exchange ideas, and collaborate on future projects. This aspect was integral to the conference's success, fostering communication and potential partnerships among attendees.

### Lessons Learnt (a Waiver...)

With my entrepreneurial background and as newly employed at SLU, I was not aware of several systems set-up, time and other constraints such as concerning decision making and information systems. I therefore would like to apologize to Partnerskap Alnarp for the extra assistance needed to row home the project and the seemingly overshot requested sum in relation to the actually used amount. The AgriBuild conference helped me as organizer, e.g. to learn the workings of various internal systems SLU Alnarp while creating the event so in the future I will be able to act with greater ease and accuracy. Thank you for your understanding.

## Conference Summary

The conference featured eight presentations on topics including sustainability, hempcrete, hemp insulation, reeds, linseed oil products, as well as Boverket regulations and municipal governance and planning. The event concluded with a one-hour workshop where five groups thematically worked on four main aspects of agricultural-based building materials. The groups discussed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats concerning production, processing and sales, architectural design and planning, and municipal and governance-related issues. Despite differing opinions, when the conference ended with a joint panel discussion, several important areas were highlighted:

- There is a significant problem with the lack of communication between actors at different levels. Although many one-person businesses "grassroots," small companies, and some medium-sized companies representing architecture, construction, and trade were present, large companies such as Skanska, PEAB, and NCC were not interested in participating. This hinders communication between actors and results in the absence of large-scale construction with climate-positive, CO<sub>2</sub>-negative renewable materials.
- The development and transfer of knowledge between academia, business, and authorities are too slow. One suggestion for improvement would be to invest more in shorter projects, for example at the master's level, which can be expanded but already provide concrete results in a short time. Organizing more meetings, practical demonstrations, and conferences or seminars similar to "Lantbygg" can help improve knowledge transfer.
- There is great potential for improved coordination and management of the production and use of agricultural-based building materials.
- Although materials with high embedded energy such as concrete and steel will continue to play a role in construction, there is room for renewable materials in certain areas, such as small house construction and frame systems. The same applies to technical insulation replacement with renewable materials such as hempcrete, fiber insulation, etc.
- A concrete research-based proposal was to gradually introduce requirements for the use of climate-positive, CO<sub>2</sub>-negative renewable materials in construction as a way to quickly achieve a paradigm shift in the construction sector towards a transition from a resource-intensive and fossil-based industry to a sustainable, energy and resource-efficient sector.

As a result of the conference's success and due to the high demand from many attendees, the Institutionen för Biosystem och teknologi plans to hold the conference as an annual event, focusing on various important topics related to the institution's work.