

FARMERS' DIALOGUE

How it started

'Ove and Ingalill Jensen Swedish farmers'

“Ingalill, my wife and I were happy with our lives. We considered farming to be an exciting profession although Ingalill at times said, “I think something is missing, but I don't know what?” In 1960, we received an invitation to a New Year's conference at Caux in Switzerland. Ingalill said, “Perhaps we could find there, what I think we're missing.” We learned about the goal to rebuild the world and we were struck by the honest ways people related their experiences in life. One comment impressed us: “if we want to change the world, we must begin with ourselves”. The 4 absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, became guidelines for our lives.”



Ove and Ingalill Jensen



The Jensen family

Ove recalls meeting several farmers from Kenya. These farmers practiced listening to their inner voices and were honest about the mistakes and successes in their lives. They suggested that we listen in silence to our inner voices before the clamour of the day and compare our lives with the four absolute standards. We did this and I quickly understood what this would involve. The voice reminded me of how I had cheated in school, how as a farmer, I had avoided declaring items of income in my tax returns, how I incorrectly calculated finances in my favour while not informing the vendor.

As a student, I fiddled my telephone bills to avoid paying for all my calls to Ingalill...”

As a member of the dairy production board in his region, Ove became aware of the need for food around the world helping him see the importance of the work he was doing. This approach to life had many implications in running the farm. He had become frustrated to see the spreading of wild oats from his neighbour's fields to his own. He urged his neighbour to do something and had the thought to go and help him pull them out. Something different started between them. His neighbour even said to Ove that he had owed him some money for a long time and Ove had forgotten about it. He was interested to discover how his decision to help his neighbour had stimulated this reaction.



Ove inspecting his beef cattle



Swedish and French farmers meeting to exchange ideas

Ove planned a farming conference in 1970 with the title: “Can We Provide for Humanity?” Later in 1993 he invited French farmers he had met in Caux to come to Värmland. They discussed the need for farmers from different parts of the world to meet and have a dialogue on providing food for the needs of humanity. This key thought was to create something and to bring farmers together around the world with the first conference being held in 1994 in Switzerland, in Caux. This thought was the beginning of “Farmers' Dialogue.”



Initiatives of Change

Farmers' Dialogue is a programme
of Initiatives of Change

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