

## **Swedish Competition Authority directs fresh criticism at the Swedish Board of Agriculture**

**The Swedish Board of Agriculture has been harshly criticized by the Swedish Competition Authority in a document that gives the Competition Authority's view of the Board of Agriculture's procurement of veterinary services.**

In the spring the Board of Agriculture offered, for the first time ever, private veterinary practitioners the opportunity to submit quotes for the on-call activity that is currently solely conducted by district veterinarians.

The contract was drawn up in the form of a pilot project and the outcome was meager. Just one private veterinarian submitted a tender, which was not accepted by the Board of Agriculture.

The Competition Authority has for some time highlighted the distorted relationship between district veterinarians on the one side, and veterinarians in the private market on the other.

In a letter sent to the Board of Agriculture in November, the Competition Authority reiterated its criticism. The letter refers to the procurement that took place in the spring, and the criticism can be briefly summarized as follows:

- The pilot project concerned far too small a part of the business.
- It was unclear what the tender was about, i.e. the obligations a veterinarian assumed if he/she won the contract – and how much compensation would be paid.
- Far too few veterinarians knew about the tender, a fact the Board of Agriculture had noted in its own evaluation.

The Competition Authority is of the opinion that the Board of Agriculture should make the procurement procedure “more representative in relation to the entire eligible-for-subsidy process”. The services being procured should then be more comprehensive and also include other services in addition to the on-call services. Additionally, consideration should be given to the local market conditions in each area.

Furthermore, it should be clear what obligations a private veterinarian who might win the process would have to assume and the level of compensation that applies.

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