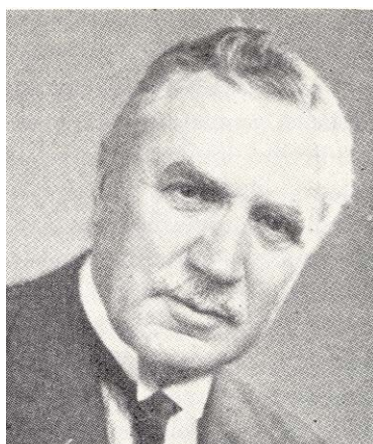




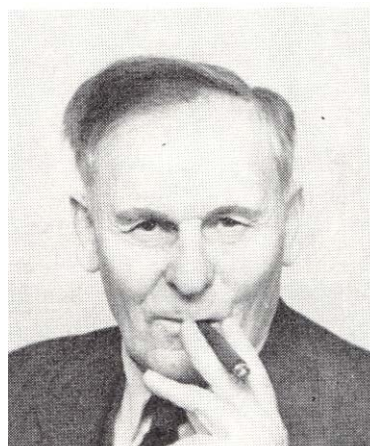
## **NJF – a short History**

### **The NJF Pioneers**

The history of NJF begins on 9 February, 1918 at a Danish plant production meeting in Copenhagen, where also a few agricultural researchers from Sweden and Norway took part. One of the participants, the grassland specialist, Dr Anders Elofson, Sweden, brought forward a proposal of an association of agricultural researchers from the Nordic countries. His idea was greeted with enthusiasm and a successful Danish tenant, Mr Elias Lunding, was commissioned to lead the work of the realisation of such an association. That very day the idea was discussed in a group consisting of Dr Elofson, Professor Nilsson-Ehle and Dr Witte from Sweden, and Director Dorph-Petersen, Professor Kølvin-Ravn, Dr Erik Lindhard from Denmark as well as Mr Lunding. Only a week later at a meeting in Stockholm Mr Lunding presented his proposal for statutes of the new association. Finally, on 19-20 March - in connection with the Swedish Agricultural Meeting (Lantbruksveckan) - after some minor amendments in the statutes suggested by Professor Emil Korsmo, Norway, a group of delegates was authorized to lead the discussions at the respective national meetings which would take place immediately.



Dr Anders Elofson  
Sweden, 1873-1957



Mr Elias Lunding  
Denmark, 1878-1969

Representatives of Denmark, Norway and Sweden met in Copenhagen on 24 September, 1918. Mr Elias Lunding was appointed Secretary General and Professor Herman Nilsson-Ehle, Sweden, was elected the first chairman of NJF. During the following three days, the rules were outlined and the national associations were founded. Professor T. Kølpin-Ravn was the first chairman of the Danish association, Director W. Christie the first chairman of the Norwegian association and Professor H. Nilsson-Ehle the first chairman of the Swedish association. The basic structure of the national associations and the scientific sections, as formulated in the first statutes, is still valid.

It is evident that Elofson and Lunding were the real enthusiasts but their personalities were rather different. Elofson was the visionary, the missionary and the charmer and Lunding the patriarchal leader - he could be brusque and sharp - but he was at the same time a very generous man, who also supported NJF economically. There were also other pioneers like Professor Emil Korsmo, Norway, Professor K A Bondorff, Denmark, Professor Otto Valle, Finland and Direktor Lars Spildo, Norway.

### **From three to eight countries**

At the beginning of 1918, when NJF was founded, the First World War had not yet come to an end. When the first meeting in Copenhagen took place, the transformation of Central Europe was going on and Finland was not yet an independent country. The first statutes of NJF had been formulated in such a way that also a Finnish national association would be able to join later, but due to the political situation in Finland (the civil war), it was impossible to address a formal invitation to the Finnish colleagues from the beginning. However, at the meeting of the Central Board in Stockholm in March 1919, the Finnish association could be established and Professor Arthur Rindell was elected chairman.

In 1926, the Icelandic association was founded. However, the contacts between the Icelandic and the other Nordic agricultural researchers were scarce and therefore in 1954 - 28 years later - 35 representatives from the other Nordic countries visited Iceland in order to improve the relations with the Icelandic colleagues and to establish contacts. Senior Consultant Arni G. Eyland was the Icelandic coordinator. The excursion to Iceland lasted for 10 days.

When the Baltic countries became independent in 1991 the Nordic countries were very

interested in establishing contacts and to start cooperation with these former Soviet republics. Almost 50 years had passed with no contacts and connections at all, neither agriculturally nor commercially. Already in 1989, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway begun to renew their contacts with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and after the independence a lot of efforts were made to re-establish the contacts. In 1998 Baltic citizens were able to join NJF through the Finnish association.

Founded in 1918 NJF seems to be the oldest Nordic organisation. Below some other organisations are listed:

1919 The Association Norden

1934 NBC; Nordic Farmers' Organisations Central Council

1952 Nordic Council

1965 NKJ; Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural Research

1971 Nordic Council of Ministers

### **The three basic pillars of the young NJF**

The number of members of NJF increased rapidly from the beginning and amounted to 800 within a year. At the time for the first congress in 1921 the number of members exceeded 1 200. When the first NJF congress was arranged in Copenhagen, more than 300 members took part. This was the breakthrough of NJF. The three basic pillars may be summaries as: The sections, the Journal (NJ) and the Congresses.

### **The sections**

From the very beginning it was emphasised that NJF was an association for Nordic researchers and not for Nordic research. The aim was to promote contacts and cooperation between the scientists in the Nordic countries through the sections. "We wanted to become aquatinted" is a classical sentence.

As early as in October 1919 six sections had been organised. Each section elected its own board with representatives of all four countries (Iceland had not yet joined the organisation) in the board. It is worth mentioning that there were discussions about the fact whether NJF should work only within plant science or in other areas of agriculture as well. Of the first six sections, five belonged to plant science; the sixth was economy. During the 1920's further four sections were added: Soil fertility and management, Water regulation, Animal science and Grassland. In 1937 a section for Machinery was established. After the Second World

War, in 1947, (there were no congresses between 1938 and 1947) the sections were re-organised at a meeting in Oslo. At that time the sections were organised in nine units, much like the organisation of today and numbered: I-IX. The subsection for Fur Animals was also established. In 1951 section X: Extension and Education was added and in 1967 a section for Food Science. In the late 1960's the environmental issues became more important and as a result of this section XI Environment was established in 1975. In 1987 further two sections were added; section XII Aquaculture and section XIII Agricultural Analytic Chemistry. As a result of the increasing numbers of sections, the numbers of representatives in the Assembly of Delegates grew. This became both expensive and time-consuming and NJF found it necessary to reorganise the structure of the sections. It led gradually to merging, consolidation and discontinuance of sections and from 2003 there are eight sections.

### **The Journal, NJ**

The top priority of NJF, at the time of its foundation, was to edit the journal *Nordisk Jordbruksforskning*, NJ (later translated to *Nordic Agricultural Research*). To learn from the latest findings in the neighbouring countries was a cornerstone. As early as in 1919 the first edition, containing of 538 pages (!), was published. Despite the lack of paper, the journal was published also during the Second World War. It became very important that the Journal was published during the war, because the contacts between the members were maintained. Due to the circumstances it was difficult to arrange meetings. (The Nordic countries were not on the same side of the front).

For some time the need of a journal with scientific original articles written in English, German or French had been discussed. The continuously increasing costs for NJ were also a problem and the time had come for a change. In 1950 NJF, in cooperation with the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, founded *Acta Agriculturae Scandinavica*. It is worth mentioning that the Secretary General of NJF, Professor Robert Torssell, at that time also was Secretary General of the Academy. For some time the Nordic governments guaranteed the publishing and *Acta* was also incorporated in the international exchange of literature that the Academy's library were involved in and thus the Journal could rapidly be distributed over the world.

Later on the contents of NJ changed to also include seminar summaries, annual reports, as well as information on upcoming arrangements. NJF's *Utrednings- och Rapportserie* (Investigations and Reports) was founded in 1981, where results from different working

groups and seminars were published. From 2005 the printed Annual Report and Outlook became the continuation of NJ. The electronic newsletter NEWS FROM NJF has also been distributed to the members from 2005. It became also necessary to establish a new series of Reports where presentations from seminars could be published both electronically and in a small paper edition. These series of Reports have been in effect since 2005. All seminars are not necessarily published in the Report series, but can also be published in other journals depending on scientific area and level. In 1981 a new agreement concerning Acta between the Academy and NJF was signed. An editorial board was established and the articles were examined by reviewers before publishing. During many years the expenses had been increasing and the Academy paid for several hundred copies which were distributed to the Academy members. A reconstruction was therefore made in 1991. Acta was divided into two editions; Acta Section A - Animal Science and Acta Section B - Soil and Plant Science. However, the deficits could not be covered and in 2002 the Journal was sold to the editor Taylor & Francis. The Academy left the responsibility for Acta and NJF became a sleeping partner. Acta is however still mentioned as the official journal of the Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists (NJF), and NJF is responsible for finding scientific editors.

Agricultural economy has since the start of NJF been an important issue. When Acta was divided into section A and B the question arose if an Acta-Economy might be of interest. After a lot of discussions, in which NJF was involved, Acta Section C - Food Economics was founded. The first volume was published in 2004. Taylor and Francis owns all three sections but the editor and NJF have reached an agreement meaning that when and if the profit exceeds a certain amount, NJF will get a part of it.

### **The Congresses**

The first congress was arranged in Copenhagen in 1921. Research leader Erik Lindhard, chairman of the Danish association, opened the congress. Thanks to NJF the channels and contacts existed still after the First World War. A congress made it possible to cover the need for cooperation between the different scientists and experts in agriculture. Earlier it had been possible to meet at exhibitions, like the one in Copenhagen 1888, in Stockholm 1897 and in Kristiania (Oslo) in 1907. Of course it was difficult to arrange such meetings during the First World War. Therefore, the NJF congress in 1921 was very important for exchange, cooperation and social contacts. As mentioned above, it was the breakthrough of NJF. From the beginning the intervals between the congresses were two years, later three years and since

1963 four years. There were two interruptions; 1929-1935 and 1938-1947, due to the economic crises and the war.

At the congress in Copenhagen in 1967 when NJF also celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary (one year too early using the congress for the jubilee), 1 050 persons participated. The congress in 1971 in Uppsala with 1 296 participants holds the record. Also Helsinki in 1983 with 1 002 participants exceeds the number of one thousand. It is of particular interest to note that the congress in Reykjavik 1975, the first congress arranged in Iceland, drew 970 participants.

The congresses are listed below with number of participants and chairpersons/presidents. Sirpa Kurppa was the first female chairperson of NJF. Sveinn Aðalsteinsson was the first President (elected 2003) and Jørgen E.Olesen was the chairman of the congress 2007.

<b>Year</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Congress</b>	<b>Participants (incl. spouses)</b>	<b>Chairperson</b>
1918		-	-	Herman Nilsson-Ehle
1921	I	Copenhagen	300	Erik Lindhard
1923	II	Göteborg	334	Herman Nilsson-Ehle
1926	III	Oslo	396	Werner Christie
1929	IV	Helsinki	323	Arthur Rindell
1935	V	Köpenhamn	505	K. Dorph-Petersen
1938	VI	Uppsala	483	Anders Elofson
1947	VII	Oslo	500	Lars S. Spildo
1950	VIII	Helsinki	545	Otto Valle
1953	IX	Copenhagen	902	Tovborg Jensen
1956	X	Stockholm	918	Ivar Johansson
1959	XI	Oslo	877	Lars S Spildo
1963	XII	Helsinki	956	Otto Valle
1967	XIII	Copenhagen	1 050	Aksel Dam Kofoed
1971	XIV	Uppsala	1 296	Lennart Hjelm
1975	XV	Reykjavik	970	Sveinn Hallgrímsson
1979	XVI	Oslo	788	Anton Skulberg
1983	XVII	Helsinki	1 002	Erkki Oksanen
1987	XVIII	Århus	766	Helge Holsteiner-Jørgensen
1991	XIX	Uppsala	887	Jan Rendel
1995	XX	Reykjavik	771	Richard Brynjólfsson
1999	XXI	Ås	568	Nils Kolstad
2003	XXII	Turku	441	Sirpa Kurppa
2007	XXIII	Copenhagen	258	Sveinn Aðalsteinsson

## **Language**

Already in 1934 the language issue was discussed and it became possible to use Finnish with an interpreter. The issue of language has then been discussed several times. Particularly Icelandic members and young Finnish members have promoted the change to English, but the basic idea has always been that the Nordic countries can cooperate and communicate in “Scandinavian”. However, during the discussions of membership for the Baltic countries, the situation changed and in 1998 it was finally decided that English would be the official language of NJF. However, the decision was made after prolonged discussions during a meeting of the Assembly of Delegates in Iceland and some delegates meant that NJF lost something of its basic idea.

## **The General Secretariat**

During 31 years, from 1918 to 1949, the secretariat was located in Copenhagen with Mr Elias Lunding as the Secretary General. In 1949 Professor Robert Torssell, Secretary General of the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry (KSLA), became Secretary General of NJF, even though Mr Lunding still was “the general” and Professor Torssell only “the secretary”, as Torssell mentions in his review of NJF’s first 50 years, 1918-1968. When Elias Lunding finally left his responsibilities of the NJF administration, he had served NJF for 41 years!

The locations of the General Secretariat and the Secretaries:

<b>Year</b>	<b>General Secretariat</b>	<b>Secretary General</b>
1918-1949	Copenhagen	Elias Lunding
1949-1961	Stockholm	Robert Torssell
1962-1970	Oslo	John Ringen
1971-1991	Oslo	Ottar Jamt
1992-1996	Helsinki	Erkki Oksanen
1997-2003	Copenhagen/Ringsted	Jens Wulff
2003-2007	Stockholm	Tord Eriksson
2007-	Stockholm	Roland Sigvald

In 1949 the secretariat moved to KSLA in Stockholm and remained there for 12 years.

In 1962 the secretariat moved to Oslo connected to the Research Board of Norway, and its Director John Ringen became Secretary General until 1970. His successor, Director Ottar Jamt, held the position of Secretary General until 1991. At that time, the secretariat had been located in Oslo for 30 years. During 1992-1996, the secretariat was located in Helsinki with Professor Erkki Oksanen as Secretary General and 1997-2003 the secretariat was back in Denmark with Mr Jens Wulff as Secretary General. In 2003 the secretariat moved from Copenhagen to Stockholm and the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry became once again the host of NJF. The Secretary of the Agricultural section at the Academy, Mr Tord Eriksson, became the Secretary General for a four-year period, and in 2007 he was succeeded by Dr Roland Sigvald.

### **NJF enlargement to the Baltic States**

The contacts with the Baltic countries had more or less been cut off for 50 years during the Soviet time. When these countries became independent in 1991, the Nordic countries were very interested in establishing contacts with their Baltic colleagues. At the 75<sup>th</sup> celebration of NJF in 1993 in Copenhagen one of the gifts was an amount of money with the purpose to make an overview of the research institutes, universities and people working in agriculture in the Baltic republics. (The donor was the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry). The overview was made in Finland and presented in 1995.

A few representatives from each Baltic country were invited to the NJF congress in Reykjavik in 1995. As mentioned earlier it became clear that NJF had to change its official language from “Scandinavian” to English if the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian colleagues would be interested in cooperating with the Nordic countries. When the decision was made in 1998, Baltic agricultural scientists were invited to become members. During a transition period, the Balts were members of NJF through the Finnish national association.

At the first Baltic meeting of NJF's Presidium - in Jelgava, Latvia in August 2004 - a decision to appoint National coordinators was made. Dr Heldur Peterson, Estonia, Vice rector Peteris Rivza, Latvia and Dr Algirdas Radzevicius, Lithuania were appointed from the Baltic side to be additional members to both NJF's Presidium and Assembly of Delegates. The yearly meeting of the Assembly of Delegates in November 2005 was held in Kaunas, Lithuania. Specialists from all three Baltic countries, representing all eight scientific areas of the sections, were invited, totally 24 Baltic scientists, altogether 45 persons including the

chairpersons of the sections, the Presidium and the Baltic national coordinators. From this very meeting the Baltic countries are represented in all section boards.

The picture below shows the participants of the meeting in Kaunas in November 2005 from which date NJF became a Nordic-Baltic Association.



### **Vitalization**

During late 1990's a discussion about the number of sections, the area of responsibility etc began. Denmark, Finland and Sweden had all become members of the EU. Did an interest for NJF still exist? During 2000 it had become clear that it was necessary to vitalize the organisation. Chairperson at that time was Professor Sirpa Kurppa, Finland. An analysis of the surrounding world was made and a working group led by Dr Lillian Øygarden, Norway, produced the report: Recommendations for the future development of NJF. These recommendations were more or less sanctioned and thus it was necessary to adjust and modernize the statutes essentially. In 2004 the new statutes, the first in English, were put into use.

One of the most radical changes was that the election of the head of NJF is made directly by the members and that the head from now on is named President of NJF. Earlier the praxis was

that the chairperson of NJF was appointed by the Central board (now named Presidium) representing the country which had to arrange the next congress. The reformation of the sections implied the closing of section VI Food Science, other sections merged. Section XIII, Analytical Agricultural Chemistry was transformed into a permanent working group. Eight sections were formed, in other words very similar to the organisation of the sections made in 1947/1951. In the new structure of and recommendations for NJF it was emphasized that new techniques had to be implemented and used in order to communicate with the members as well as with society. An extensive work began to modernise the website and to develop an online system for arranging seminars in order to be able to handle the seminars entirely electronically. The computerization of the membership register as well as the election of President from Member's area are some examples.

### **Seminars “The core business”**

From the beginning the most important activity was to publish articles, reports, abstracts as well as lists of literature. At the same time sections were built up and working groups were organised. The difficulties in arranging single meetings in these groups opened for the idea to coordinate different meetings and make the programme more stimulating; the idea of congresses was born. The publishing of scientific original articles were solved in 1950 by the establishment of *Acta Agriculturae Scandinavica*. Inter-Nordic handbooks were published. To discuss and establish Nomenclature and Terminology in many different fields were other important issues for the Nordic cooperation. At the beginning of the 1960's scholarships for young scientists came into use and in the late 1960's on the initiative of NJF courses for young scientists, a work that other organisations like NMR and NOVA have continued.

The number of working groups within the sections increased during 1950's and 60's. When it became necessary to discuss an issue more profoundly, the interests in seminars grew. It was Robert Torssell who introduced seminars, around 40 years after the start of NJF. During the 1960's and 70's the number of seminars increased rapidly and have hence developed to be “NJF's core business”, as the first president of NJF Professor Sveinn Aðalsteinsson, Iceland, said. The time-saving administration of seminars makes it still possible for very busy people to arrange seminars despite their day to day work.

The second President of NJF Dr Oiva Niemeläinen says that the Nordic-Baltic countries form a strong region within the EU in order to look after issues that are important for Northern

Europe as well as the need of a scientific development. To provide a useful networking platform will be the key objective for the activity also in the future.

### **Honorary members**

The first honorary members of NJF were elected 1949. Since 1971 the criteria for being an honorary member in NJF say: “Persons who have made a significant contribution in or for NJF may be proposed to be an honorary member. Honorary membership in NJF is a very high distinction and it is few persons who can be honoured in that respect. A person who is proposed to be an honorary member must through his/her contribution been conductive to that NJF has taken new initiative of importance for the Nordic cooperation within agricultural research and/or in a particularly manner has made a fundament for NJF to intensify and develop the activity.” During the first 90 years five representatives from each of the countries Denmark, Finland and Norway have been elected, eight from Sweden but none from Iceland.

The following persons have so far been elected honorary members of NJF:

Superintendent Anders Elofson, Sweden	1949
Professor Emil Korsmo, Norway,	1949
Director Elias Lunding, Denmark	1949
Professor K.A. Bondorff, Denmark	1963
Director Lars Spildo, Norway	1963
Professor Robert Torssell, Sweden	1963
Professor Otto Valle, Finland	1963
Professor Erik Åkerberg, Sweden	1965
Professor Erkki Kivinen, Finland	1967
Director John Ringen, Norway	1971
Professor Nils Westermarck, Finland	1971
Professor Lennart Hjelm, Sweden	1973
Professor Kåre Fröier, Sweden	1975
Director Hans Dybvad, Denmark	1977
Professor Birger Granström, Sweden	1982
Superintendent Aksel Dam Kofoed, Denmark	1986
Professor Eeva Tapio, Finland	1986
Professor Erkki Oksanen, Finland	1987
Director Ottar Jamt, Norway	1991

Professor Agner Neimann- Sørensen, Denmark	1999
Professor Jan Rendel, Sweden	2001
Professor Lars Sjøflot, Norway	2007
Agronomist Tord Eriksson, Sweden	2008

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Torsell, Robert, 1967. Nordisk Jordbruksforskarens Forening, 1918 – 1968. Off-print from NJ No 2, 1967.

Tapio, Eeva, 1993. Nordiska Jordbruksforskarens Förening, 1968 – 1993. NJ No 4A, 1993.

Personal communications, Professor Harry Linnér, Sweden and Senior lecturer Oiva Niemeläinen, Finland.

This short summary of NJF's history was made for the 90<sup>th</sup> jubilee in Helsinki on 5 November, 2008. The established fact is that a lot of voluntary work for agriculture has been done during these 90 years.

Stockholm, October 2008

Tord Eriksson