

Farming for Nature



What is 'Farming for nature'?

- ⇒ Farmers play a more significant role in managing nature and landscape
- ⇒ Farmers are guaranteed financial compensation for green services
- ⇒ Long-term agreements ensure nature development and a fair remuneration for farmers
- ⇒ Farmers are free to decide which management form best suits their circumstances, and which parts of their farm will be used for new landscape elements
- ⇒ Farmers still own the land. The farmer enters into an agreement on the way it is to be used, and this is laid down in a contract (in the form of a servitude or lease).
- ⇒ Zoning is based on three management types:
 - ⇒ Large-scale
 - ⇒ Landscape-oriented
 - ⇒ Nature-oriented
- ⇒ Collaboration with local and regional partners, guaranteeing that the specific character of the land will be preserved.





From idea to reality

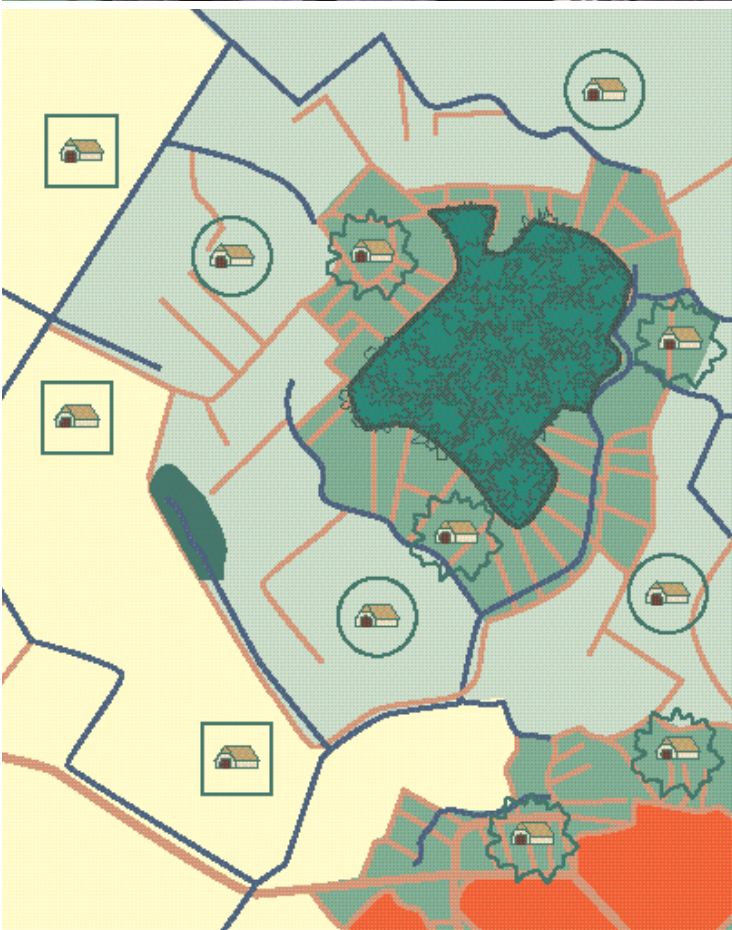
'Farming for nature' is still a dream: it won't start to get really interesting until it is put into practice. But then each agreement implemented will provide new insights, adding another dimension to that dream, and bringing it closer to realization.

Possibilities for concrete applications are being studied in various regions throughout the the Netherlands, including:

- *Biesland polder (Delfgauw):
a small agrarian enclave within an urban area*
- *Twickel (Ambt-Delden):
a large country estate near the new urban network known as Netwerkstad Twente*
- *Amerdiep (Drenthe):
an upstream hayland landscape along the rivulet Drentsche Aa*
- *Salland (Overijssel):
an experimental farm focusing on blue/green services in the sandy-soil landscape*

'Farming for nature' can be tailored to suit each specific area. During the pilot projects special attention will be given to ensuring that the contracts with individual farmers are in agreement with European legislation.





large-scale farms



landscape-oriented farms



nature-oriented farms



nature reserve



city

Three types of farming enterprise:

large-scale farms



*landscape-
oriented farms*



*nature-
oriented farms*



Large-scale farms

On the large-scale farms, extensive areas of land are worked at the same time. Produce is marketed and good farming practice is observed. This type of farm is found mainly in the younger reclamation areas and on land used for arable farming.



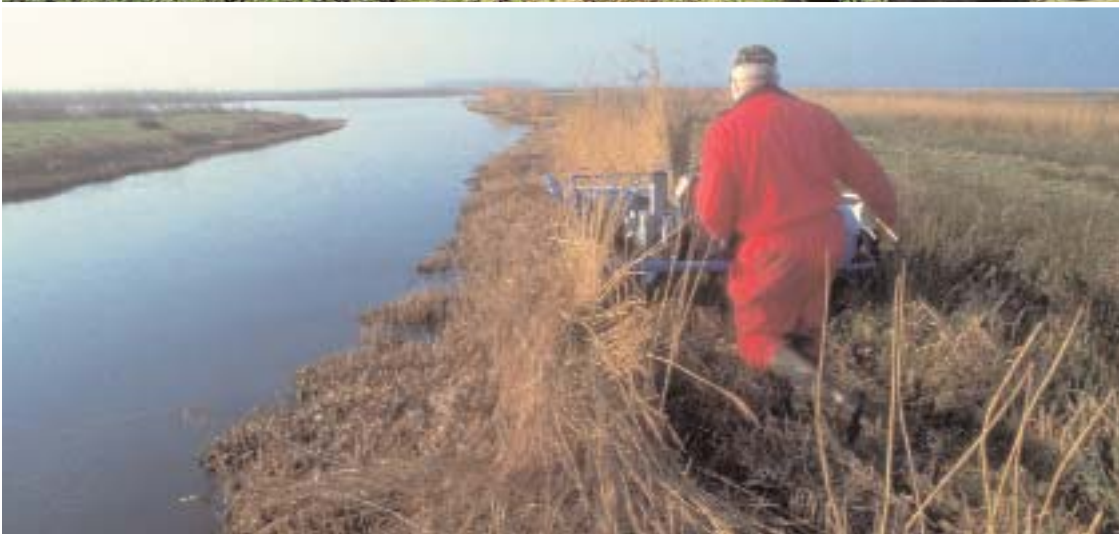
Landscape-oriented farms

On the landscape-oriented farms the emphasis is also on agricultural production. In addition, there is some income from the preservation and management of existing and new landscape elements, such as hedges, tree rows and ponds. Most of these farms are part of the old man-made landscape.

Nature-oriented farms

The nature-oriented farms are run along quite different lines. The management is self-contained, which means that no manure, concentrates, or roughage are brought in from outside. The farmer produces less food, but he is conserving nature; and the green services he performs (nature and water management) earn him an income. Nature-oriented farms are found mainly in wet regions or small-scale areas with considerable relief. They are also desirable in proximity to cities, because of their recreational appeal. They form the ideal interface between the city and nature, and are themselves areas of high biodiversity.





What's in it ...

*for
the farmer?*

*for
nature and
the landscap?*

*for
the populace
as a whole?*



What's in it for... the Farmer?

Landscape- and nature-oriented farms will only be viable if they provide a sustainable income. The key characteristics are:

- *The farmer's economic compensation is attractive.*
- *He can leave the poorest land for the benefit of nature and the landscape.*
- *He is assured of long-term compensation for activities related to the management of nature and the landscape.*

The latter condition can be met by paying the landscape- and nature-oriented farmers an annual sum via a regional fund. On a nature-oriented farm this payment will constitute the bulk of the annual income. By not basing the remuneration on precisely defined 'target types', 'target species' and prescribed measures, but rather consulting with the farmer on the various landscape elements and the most appropriate operating plan, the farmer is still in charge of his own farm. In the future, nature-oriented farms and, in some cases, landscape-oriented enterprises will be eligible for 'estate' status. This has certain fiscal advantages when the property is transferred. The farmer also has the satisfaction of knowing that society values his contribution to nature and the landscape.



THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

Farmers needed (m/f)

We are seeking highly motivated farmers (m/f) to take advantage of the excellent opportunities in our agricultural and nature areas. The Dutch countryside is extremely diverse and provides a wide range of farming options. This makes it possible to find the ideal match between your expertise and experience and the farming conditions in one of our zones.

What we offer:

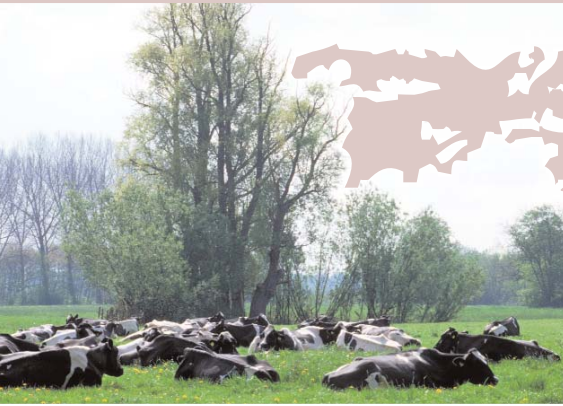
- 18 large-scale farms
- 35 landscape-oriented farms
- 18 nature-oriented farms

In addition to an agricultural degree, candidates for the nature- and landscape-oriented farms will have had basic training in agricultural ecology or followed a supplementary course. Good communicative skills, creativity and a spirit of enterprise will increase the candidate's chances of success.

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How do

nature and the landscape benefit?



Because farmers with a landscape- or nature-oriented enterprise receive financial compensation for existing and future landscape elements, the quality of the green space is enhanced. Clear private-law agreements, in the form of servitudes, for example, will guarantee the maintenance and management of nature and the landscape for years to come. That continuity is the major guarantee for the future quality of nature. In a nature-oriented enterprise differences will gradually become apparent between land parcels which still produce a reasonable yield and others which are slowly becoming less suitable for agricultural production. This provides new opportunities for wild plants and animals traditionally found in the agrarian man-made landscapes. Thanks to the zoning of the three types of enterprise, with the nature-oriented farms situated around nature areas or around the cities, regional gradations gradually appear, from small-scale to large-scale landscapes, with natural elements of varying quality.

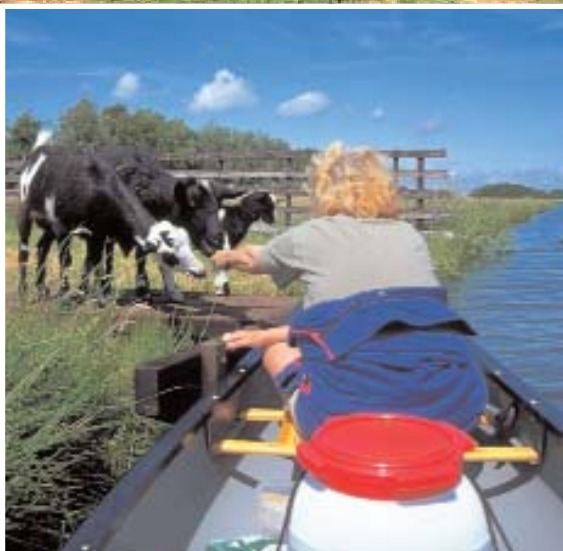


What are the advantages for

the populace as a whole?



Where at present the built environment often borders on vast inaccessible fields of monocultures (e.g. maize), in the future new management set-ups will create a half-open landscape with meadows filled with flowers, and fields alternating with windbreaks, tree groups and small bodies of water. This will create a strong alliance between city, agriculture and nature. For those coming from the city, the nature-oriented areas provide access to the landscape-oriented zone. Here the man-made landscape is surrounded by a variety of green structures, both old and new. This creates a varied and dynamic landscape. Home-made products are sold at the farm gate, while each region is recognizable by the building style of the farmhouses, the shape of the parcels and the structure of the wooded banks.

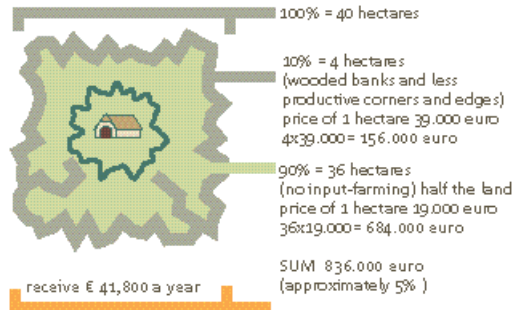


The financing: an example

Henrik and Ida Egbrink have a dairy farm set in the pleasant countryside of Twente, in the eastern part of the country. Until recently they had taken advantage of every possibility for expansion that presented itself. Now, however, they are increasingly conscious of the limitations of the landscape, and the fact that the large-scale farming they had always strived for on their farm now has little future. The wet grasslands along the streams, the winding borders between the various parcels and the convex arable fields are getting in their way. And as much as they love the landscape, they would like to get rid of the relief and the wooded banks.

After talking for hours, weighing the pros and cons, they reach a decision: it's time for a change! Their farm borders on a nature area. The obvious way forward is nature-oriented farming. This is no small step: from now on no manure, concentrates, or roughage can be brought in from outside. This will mean a considerable decline in production. But they will still be farmers, and this drawback will be offset by a sustainable income. A number of other farmers are also switching. Of the 40 hectares that make up Henrik and Ida's farm, some 10% is set aside, and these 4 hectares, made up of wooded banks and less productive corners and edges, are transformed into landscape elements. The full price of the 4 hectares ($4 \times \text{€ } 38,000 = \text{€ } 152,000$) is deposited into the fund, since they have very little agricultural value. The remaining 36 hectares will be managed according to the guidelines for nature-oriented agrarian enterprises. Because this produces fields and grassland with a wealth of flowers, half the land price of these hectares is deposited into that same fund ($36 \times \text{€ } 19,000 = \text{€ } 684,000$). The return on that sum (approximately 5% of 836,000) is paid out annually. This means that Henrik and Ida receive in addition to their income from agricultural

Nature-oriented farm



products, € 41,800 a year in return for switching to nature-oriented farming. The terms agreed to by the partners are laid down in an agreement under private law. It sounds almost too good to be true: an excellent deal for everyone involved! Not only for the farmer, who knows that the continuity of his business is now guaranteed, but also for nature and the landscape, since only a long-term perspective can ensure continued quality. The authorities also benefit, since the area is covered by a nature-management subsidy, which means that the government would otherwise have gone on investing in the land for years to come. This way, in a few years the expenditures involved in 'Farming for nature' will be lower than under the terms of the previous regulations. A significant part of the money in the fund is provided by regional parties. The waterboard district has much to gain by nature-oriented management, since the water table can be maintained at a higher level. The provincial authorities, who have a green-services policy, also invest in the fund, while other contributions come from the municipality and businesses. The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries is responsible for the other half. Sometimes Henrik and Ida exchange a smile. They can hardly believe it's really happening!



The three most frequently asked questions:

What is new about all this?

The goals are not new, only the proposals for achieving them – and the cohesion between the various elements. The basic element is the set-up of the agrarian enterprise. It is governed by simple conditions which allow nature to develop in a particular spot, not strict rules about which types of plants are desirable. And there are greater benefits for nature and the landscape than under the current system, which is based on compensation. And thanks to the simplicity of the scheme, it is much less bureaucratic.

Will this result in mineral shortages on nature-oriented farms?

Certain shortages do arise, since on a nature-oriented farm no minerals are brought in from outside. There is a decline in the suitability of the land for intensive agricultural production. The farmer himself decides which parcels need manure and which can get along on very little or none at all. In the latter case, the 'good' grasses

rapidly decline, and all sorts of other herbs and grasses start to develop. This leads to an increase in the nature values, while grass production tapers off until it reaches values which used to be considered normal about a hundred years ago. In this way, making the most of all the minerals available actually fosters biodiversity.

Can an agreement be undone?

Developing nature and the landscape takes time, and the quality of both increases when the land is under continuous management. For this reason, long-term agreements are drawn up. The landscape-oriented farmer must agree to maintain the green and blue landscape elements, and the same holds true for his successor: the obligations entered into take the form of a servitude resting on the land. In the case of a nature-oriented farm, the land can only be sold to someone who practices nature-oriented farming, so that the desired management form is continued.



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