

Interest from the UK in the farming-estate project Boxtel

Farmers from Cornwall foraging in Kampina



A party of farmers from Cornwall was introduced to the Groene Woud (Green Wood) on Wednesday, the 4th of October. They were introduced to the area by researcher Herbert Diemont (left) and civil servant Peter van Oers (second to the right).

On Wednesday the 4th of October twelve farmers from Cornwall in South England had an extensive introduction into various on going projects in the National Landscape Groene Woud. The farmers were met by Peter Oomen on his farm “Hoeve Bosrand”. He introduced his colleagues to his farm and took them for a walk in the the adjacent Kampina heathland. “ We in Cornwall are also in the process to keep cattle on rough grazing and heathlands” told Joe Oliver, leader of the delegation.

The visit to Hoeve Bosrand can be considered as a classic example of European cooperation. The farmers from Cornwall are involved in a Interreg-project that with support of the European Union should achieve restoration of the heathlands. “ We cooperate with farmers from Normandy and Brittany , but exchange also information with farmers in Wales and The Netherlands” explains Oliver.

He is the leader of the HEATH project which makes an effort to restore 3,500 hectare of heathlands in the west part of Cornwall, which has not been grazed for ages. “ In the past there was among the cattle a threat of tuberculosis which has had decreased management on heathlands. Moreover small farms disappeared and the surviving farmers did not need longer the rough grazing, “ explains Oliver.

At present several organisations in Cornwall want to re-introduce grazing on heathlands.

“Grazing by cattle should be restored in order to increase biodiversity” he says. “ Peter Oomen` s farm is interesting for us as his cattle is grazing on heathlands and rough grazing. This is why it interesting to visit this kind of projects in the Netherlands.

Farmestate

The visit of the farmers from Cornwall to Boxtel is mainly attributed to the “Farmestate” project, which started a few years ago. The project is nearly ready and both Peter oomen and his neighbour Jan Vermulst start to manage the nature in the vicinity of their farms. “ for example we will restore the wooded banks which were previously present. In this way we restore as well enforce the character of the landscape,” explains Peter Oomen.

In the farmestate farming will be continued , but low input farming will replace intensive farming. A peculiar element is that there is also an opportunity to built houses. “Deprivation of the price of the agricultural land is compensated by permission for a few building lots” explains Oomen. The project Farmestate is prepared by the the municipality Boxtel and Anton Stortelder of Alterra (Wageningen university).

Yesterday Diemont explained the in`s and outs of the project in depth.” In the farmestate there are opportunities for farming as well as for amenity” he told. The planned activities include opportunities for picnicks, playing grounds, “forage-nature” and place were wildlife can be observed. There ideas to allow to some extent the catering industry on the farmestate.