

LIVESTOCK

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Minister Gerda Verburg examines Rondeel eggs.

Rondeel egg on the shelves

In June this year, the Dutch supermarket chain Albert Heijn started selling animal-friendly eggs produced in the new *rondeel* (round shed) barn. This design was developed by researchers at Wageningen UR Livestock Research six years ago to meet the needs of laying hens, poultry farmers and the environment. A group of entrepreneurs put the design into production and the first *rondeel* barn opened in Barneveld near Wageningen this spring. The eggs – marketed in a round box – get three stars from the Dutch 'Better Life' animal welfare label.

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Modern city square too bare

Bare city squares are either swept by chilly winds or turn into furnaces when the sun is hot. Urban designers should pay more attention to microclimates in cities, says Sanda Lenzholzer of the Landscape Architecture chair group at Wageningen University.

For the research for which she got her PhD in June she talked to thousands of passers-by on city squares in the Netherlands. The most modern, usually bare squares are not very inviting for people to sit around on. So they attract teenagers who come to 'hang out', and even vandals. The PhD researcher looked for designs for a more comfortable city.

A tree canopy creates a nice atmosphere, for

example, besides giving people a choice between sun and shade. Trees also seem to provide more cooling than a fountain. Lenzholzer is among the pioneers in this field in the Netherlands. She also analysed the city climates of Arnhem and Nijmegen, and she is involved in European projects on climate readiness.

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The Schouwburgplein in Rotterdam.

ECONOMICS



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Farmers' income lowest for 20 years

Economically, 2009 was a bad year for agriculture in the Netherlands, reports the Agricultural-economic Report for 2010 from the agricultural economics institute LEI, part of Wageningen UR. Production went up slightly but most product prices went down. The average Dutch farming income is lower than it has been for twenty years: it dropped by an average of 5,500 euros per farm. Land prices appear to be rising faster than the added value in land-dependent agriculture. Just when agriculture needs to up profits to cover costs of complying with future legislation on the environment and animal welfare, says the LEI.

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