



Rebalancing nature & food production in Overijssel

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The challenge

Creating a living countryside

"Rural areas cover 91 % of the territory of the European Union (EU). Farming and forestry remain crucial for land use and the management of natural resources in the EU's rural areas, and as a platform for economic diversification in rural communities. The strengthening of EU rural development policy is, therefore, an overall EU priority." EU, 2008

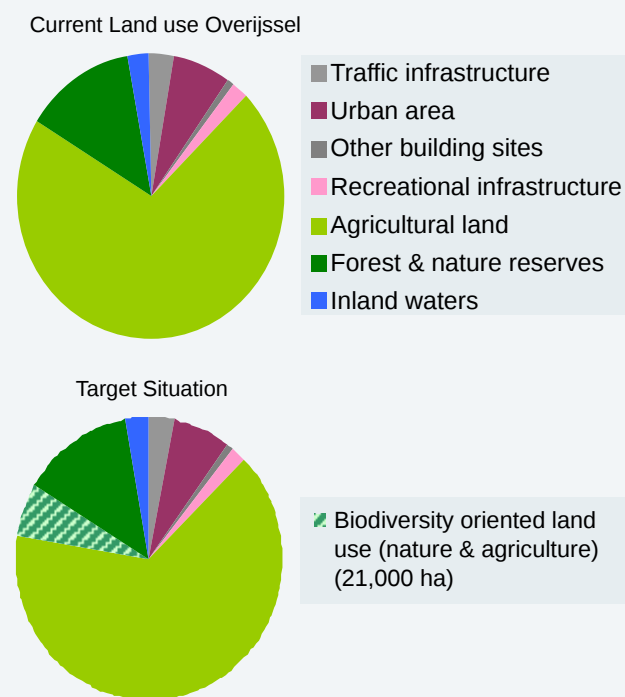
Rebalancing organic agriculture in the region

"Organic Agriculture should fit the cycles and ecological balances in nature. These cycles are universal but their operation is site-specific. Organic management must be adapted to local conditions, ecology, culture and scale." IFOAM, 2008.
Current Dutch organic systems are still not balanced.

Improving conditions for biodiversity

"The Earth's life support systems, from its forests and flowers to its coral reefs and waterways, are under assault as never before. The loss of biodiversity is an environmental crisis with profound economic and human dimensions. Nature's assets underpin the very lives and livelihoods of more than six billion people. Solutions to the biodiversity crisis require long-term thinking" Ahmed Djoghlaif, World Biodiversity Summit, Bonn, May 2008.

The region



People

Partners

Animal Sciences Group has a long history in animal research and uses its expertise, facilities and network to enhance sustainability. ASG owns two organic research farms in Overijssel.
Natuurmonumenten owns 10,000 ha of nature reserves in Overijssel and aims to strengthen biodiversity and landscape values.
Dianthus Foundation initiates regional supply chains and aims to improve local agriculture and agro-tourism.

Financiers

Echt Overijssel!

Is funded for a period of five years by the Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the EU through the province of Overijssel.



The Project

Aims

Short term

Mobilizing social energy with farmers and other stakeholders in the region

Organizing cooperation between experts

Establishing new trade relations between parties in the region

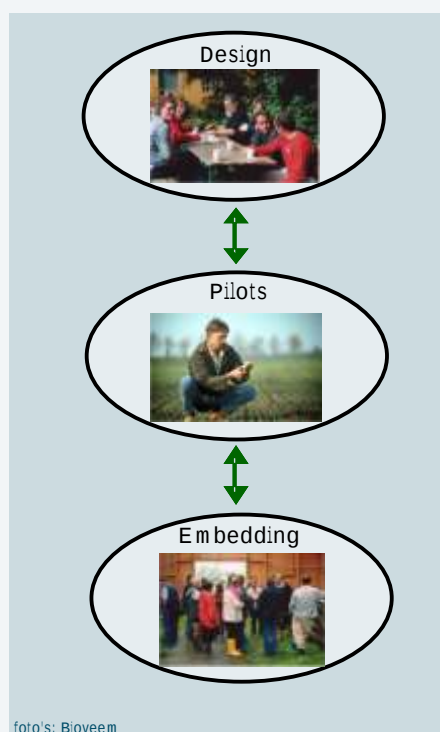
Merging land use strategies for agriculture and nature conservation

Matching European Funding with the needs of the region

Long term

Create regulatory flexibility

Replacement of dominant regime practices through more sustainable ways



Approaches

Design of new farming systems

RIO (Reflexive interactive design; Bos et al. 2007)
Cradle to Cradle (Mc Donough & Braungart 2002)

Moderating dialogue & reflection

Regional learning networks
Regional, national, international meetings
Excursions / Conferences

On-farm experiments

E.g. cultivation of organic grain on ancient arable land to create local input for organic feed & food chain; animal production with local feed stuffs only

Experiments with new agri-environmental schemes on farm level as well as landscape level

System analysis & research

Life cycle analyses; farming systems modeling; regional and farm scale mineral balances
Intense monitoring of progress & results