

PREPARATORY ACTION

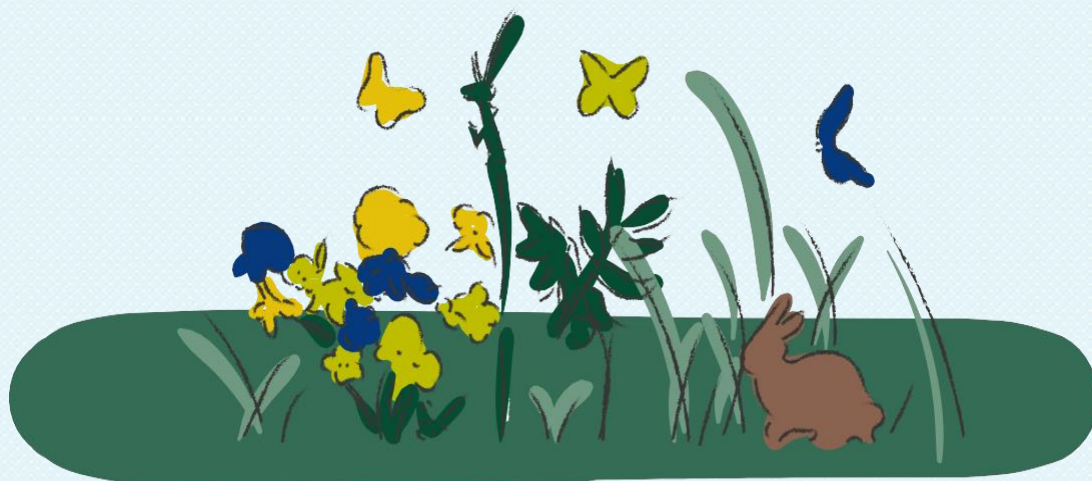
EU plant and animal genetic resources in agriculture

Compendium of projects

THE NETHERLANDS

Zeldzaam Lekker (Rare and Tasty)

Adding value to recognised products and services from rare domestic animal breeds in the Netherlands



The publication is part of the study “Preparatory action on EU plant and animal genetic resources in agriculture”. The Preparatory Action has been initiated by the European Parliament and financed by the European Commission.

The objectives of the Preparatory action are to better understand the stakes of European neglected genetic resources in agriculture and to tap onto their economic potential.

It aims to provide inspiring examples of how to make the conservation of neglected breeds and varieties economically viable and encourage farmers and other stakeholders to engage.

Funded by the European Union



Legal notice

The information and views set out in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission's behalf may be held responsible

1 Introduction



The Dutch Rare Breeds Society (SZH) was founded in 1976. The foundation aims to maintain the variation among farm animals in the Netherlands and to prevent original breeds from extinction via valorisation.

SZH started the “Zeldzaam Lekker initiative” (“Rare and Tasty initiative”) in 2012, in collaboration with breeders, entrepreneurs and breed societies.

A number of entrepreneurs succeeded to develop breed-specific products and/or services. In this fiche, the focus is on rare domestic cattle breeds. A number of success stories are highlighted to explain the concept of “Zeldzaam Lekker”.

2 Description of the genetic resource

In the past century Dutch local native cattle breeds have gradually been replaced by the high productive Holstein Friesian breed. The Holstein-Friesian is the most productive dairy cow in the world. Today more than 99 percent of Dutch dairy cows is Holstein Friesian.

Recognising this trend and the threats to the unique native Dutch cattle breeds, the Dutch Rare Breeds Society – after its foundation in 1976 – put a lot of effort in promoting the conservation and valorisation of Dutch rare breeds (all species included).

The originality of this project is that there is no particular focus on one breed as it concerns all different species that could bring diversity and variability of species and breeds at farm level.



Status of Dutch cattle breeds (2017). www.wur.nl/cgn

	Population size (breeding females)	Status	Trend
<i>Deep Red</i>	1,150	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Growth</i>
<i>Dutch Friesian Black and White</i>	2,129	<i>Vulnerable</i>	<i>Stable</i>
<i>Groningen Whiteheaded</i>	1,603	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Stable</i>
<i>Holstein Black and White</i>	1,200,000	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Stable</i>
<i>Holstein Red and White</i>	250,000	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Stable</i>
<i>Dutch Belted</i>	3,356	<i>Vulnerable</i>	<i>Growth</i>
<i>Meuse Rhine IJssel</i>	12,113	<i>Normal</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
<i>Dutch Friesian Red and White</i>	485	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Stable</i>
<i>Improved Red and White</i>	707	<i>Threatened</i>	<i>Stable</i>

3 Objectives of the project

The general objective of SZH is to support the conservation of rare domestic animal breeds in the Netherlands and to promote the use of rare breeds and to promote the development and marketing of special products and services derived from or associated with rare breeds.

SZH developed a label for recognized products or services associated with rare domestic animal breeds, thereby contributing to maintaining those breeds.



With this recognition, the SZH offers a stage for entrepreneurs that have rare breeds and who want to promote their products and services. Characteristic of these companies is that their products and services distinguish themselves from similar products due to their concept, story, the taste, the way in which the product is made, and short supply chains. The origin and creation of the product is clear and transparent.

Additionally, the project has put large focus on tourism as another “product”. Some Dutch Nature Organisations have already discovered the touristic values of rare breeds (herds) as the flagship of a certain region (e.g. herds of heath sheep on the moors). SZH stimulates others to do the same, for instance to promote the breeds on touristic cycle tours, farm and country events and B&B farms that keep rare breeds, and encourage hobby-breeders to choose deliberately for native breeds.

4 Actors involved and roles

A “Zeldzaam Lekker entrepreneur” is an ambassador for the rare breeds, the SZH and its activities.

A number of entrepreneurs succeeded to develop breed-specific products and/or services. In this fiche, the focus is on rare domestic cattle breeds. A number of success stories are highlighted to explain the concept of “Zeldzaam Lekker”.

SZH stimulates contacts between breeders, assists in starting breeder organisations and herd books, helps in defining breeding goals and gives advice on mating combinations. Breeders that want to promote their breed in a really active way can earn the SZH certificate “Erkend Fokcentrum” (certificated breeding centre) or “Erkend Educatief Centrum” (certificated education centre) or “Erkend Zeldzaam Lekker Centrum” (certified producer of products or services of rare

breeds). These are centres where people can meet rare breeds. The importance of education at city farms is also acknowledged and supported by the SZH, for example by starting projects in collaboration with the organisation called Dutch City Farms.

5 Steps and activities undertaken

During the past decades, SZH stimulated the maintenance of native Dutch breeds and supported breed societies and herd books at technical and strategic level.

SZH has promoted the use of rare breeds in environments where they are well adapted. With this perspective it is important to realise the importance of (further) development of economically viable and ecologically sustainable production systems.

Development of niche products/regional products can go hand in hand with nature management, multifunctional systems, ecological, social and economic values, and sustainability objectives.

The label Zeldzaam Lekker (“Rare and Tasty”) was developed to recognise the products and services associated with rare breeds. Producers who are interested to participate have to contact SZH. The label is not a legally protected trademark. Zeldzaam Lekker producers are interconnected through this label, and producers can show their products and stories on the website www.zeldzaamlekker.nl. Every year producers exchange their experiences in a workshop.

6 Results to date

The main results of the project are related to marketing and communications of valuable products and services associated with rare breeds which became increasingly popular among farmers/breeders as demonstrated by the success stories presented below.



Several Groningen Whiteheaded farmers (Van Meyenhorst, Veld & Beek, and NieDijk, Sophiahoeve, Langelaan) successfully sell Groningen Whiteheaded meat, cheese and other dairy products in short supply chains, directly to consumers. Cattle is grazing on the farms and often in nature areas.



Deep Red cattle and their products and services are promoted by De Grote Modderkolk, Klein Swormink and Erfgoed Bossem. Erfgoed Bossem won several awards, including one from TripAdvisor, because of the unique experience they offer their guests. The camping site on the farm is between the Deep Red cattle. Brandroodkaas (“Deep red cheese”) is a high quality product that is sold by a Deep Red cattle farmer.



Dutch Belted – “Stichting Lakenvelder vlees”: The Foundation for Lakenvelder Meat was founded in June 2010 with the objective to monitor the quality of both meat and purebred animals, and to promote and organize the sale of Lakenvelder meat. All this with the ultimate aim: maintaining the Dutch Lakenvelder cattle population and generating added value for the breeders of Lakenvelder cattle. More information at: <http://zeldzamerassen.nl/lakenvelderrund/stichting-lakenvelder-vlees/>



Dutch Friesian Red and White – “Fries Roodbont vlees”: The Dutch Friesian Red and White cow is a native cow breed from Friesland. At present there are less than 500 red-colored Dutch Friesian cows in the Netherlands. Farmers such as Rispens State sell quality beef of this breed. More information at: <http://www.friesroodbont.nl/>



Every year a “Zeldzaam Lekker dinner” is organised by the SZH, where a Slow Food Chef prepares a very special dinner with Dutch rare grains, wines, vegetables, meat, milk, and other traditional products. Also Zeldzaam Lekker farmers organise dinners where people have dinner in the barn between the animals.

7 Next steps

The objective of the SZH and associated breeding associations and breeders is to maintain native Dutch breeds and to support the conservation and valorisation of these breeds. The continuation of activities depends on potential projects and interests presented by farmers as well as funding and resources available to develop these projects.

Moreover, the SZH will continue to raise awareness in society about the value and risk status of local breeds and SZH strengthened their lobby towards politicians and policy makers in order to improve policies and legislation for the benefit of conservation and sustainable use of Dutch native breeds.

8 Lesson learned and good practices

The experience of the SZH allows drafting some success factors and bottlenecks in the development of sustainable valorisation projects:

- **Success factors:**

- ✓ Driven by enthusiasm of farmers/breeders for their farm, their breed and their products. Leadership comes from the breeders;
- ✓ Strong connection to sustainability goals and local produced food;
- ✓ Short supply chain, direct sales to consumers;
- ✓ Connecting different labels that have similar goals (e.g. Slowfood, Organic, Zeldzaam Lekker);
- ✓ Further investment in organising and supporting supply chains;
- ✓ Communication and marketing approach to consumers and wider society;
- ✓ Regional approach; and
- ✓ Sharing best practices (national and international).

- **Bottlenecks:**

- ✓ Different and several labels may confuse consumers;
- ✓ Quality of products is more variable;
- ✓ Small farmers are not always supported by legislation;
- ✓ Profitability per working hour is low ("way of life");
- ✓ Individual producers tend to re-invent the wheel over and over; and
- ✓ Seasonality of products leads to discontinuity in supply.

9 Participation to other projects and to networks/ funding.

The SZH is a partner in several national projects and networks. It liaises also with international networks of which:

- CGN – Centre for Genetic Resources, the Netherlands of Wageningen University & Research. www.wur.nl/cgn. CGN carries out Statutory Research Tasks for the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). CGN focuses on conservation and use of vegetable crops, farm animal breeds and autochthonous forest species. CGN maintains gene bank collections and promotes and supports the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources.
- SAVE - SAVE-Foundation - Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe <http://www.save-foundation.net/?lang=en>. SAVE undertakes practical work to ensure a sustainable future for traditional breeds by storing and maintaining their genetic material; and
- SlowFood - Slow Food Netherlands is the national umbrella organisation connected to the Slow Food International organisation and closely working together with the Youth Food Movement in the Netherlands. Slow Food is an organisation that promotes local food and traditional cooking. Promoted as an alternative to fast food, it strives to preserve traditional and regional cuisine and encourages farming of plants, seeds, and livestock characteristic of the local ecosystem. <http://www.slowfood.nl/index.php?page=Slowfoodnederland>
- ERFP – European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources. The European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources (ERFP) is the regional platform to support the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use of animal genetic resources and to facilitate the implementation of FAO's Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources in Europe. <https://www.rfp-europe.org/>

SZH and CGN have been partner in several European research projects

- EURECA – Towards (self)-sustainability of European Regional Cattle Breeds. www.regionalcattlebreeds.eu. Action EURECA 012 AGRI GEN RES 870/2004 received financial support from the European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, under Council Regulation (EC) No 870/2004. 2007-2010;
- IMAGE – Innovative Management of Animal Genetic Resources. Innovative Management of Animal Genetic Resources" (acronym IMAGE) is a project funded by the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme of the European Union. The aim of IMAGE is to enhance the use of genetic collections and to upgrade animal gene bank management. IMAGE will further develop genomic methodologies, biotechnologies, and bioinformatics for a better knowledge and exploitation of animal genetic resources.

Contact of the responsible of the project:

Nonja Remijn

Coordinator of the Dutch Rare Breeds Society and the Zeldzaam Lekker initiative.

Gebouw De Valk, kamer 070, Dreijenlaan 2

6703 HA Wageningen, The Netherlands

Phone: +31 654922275

nonja.remijn@szh.nl

www.szh.nl, www.zeldzaamlekker.nl