

ABSTRACTS

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Farming for vegetation and water management: *Farming for nature*

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What is "Farming for nature"?

- Farmers play a more significant role in managing nature and landscape
- Farmers are guaranteed a (partial) income from green services such as water and nature management
- 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 farming
 - Landscape-oriented farming
 - Nature/water-oriented farming
- Collaboration with local and regional partners (e.g. water managers)
- 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 collaboration with policy makers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery - in various regions throughout the the Netherlands.

"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.

Three types of farming enterprise:

I - 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.

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

III - 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 - such as 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.

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 (mainly wet parcels) 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., regional gradations gradually appear, from small-scale to large-scale landscapes, with natural elements of varying quality.