



Wim de Vries: nitrogen law is ambitious

Minister of Agriculture Carola Schouten's nitrogen bill, which was tightened last week to make sure it got enough support to pass in Parliament, is very ambitious, says WUR nitrogen expert Prof. Wim de Vries. We cannot achieve the target of a 50 per cent reduction in emissions of nitrogen compounds in 15 years with technical measures alone.

First the Cabinet wanted reductions of 26 per cent by 2030 whereas the Remkes commission had recommended 50 per cent by 2030. Now Schouten's negotiations with three opposition parties have led to an

The Netherlands cannot achieve its targets with technical measures and tailored solutions alone

obligation to cut levels by 50 per cent by 2035. 'You won't achieve that just with technical measures, such as less protein in animal feed, separating out manure, diluting manure and low-emission barns,' says De Vries. Livestock numbers need to come down too. Buying up livestock farms near nature areas does not do much to help the nitrogen emissions situation. 'The blanket of nitrogen compounds covering all of the Netherlands needs to be reduced. I'm all for tailored solutions near nature areas but you also need generic policies to achieve the target.' De Vries thinks the first priority is to get clarity on what farmers need to do. 'You need policy for large-scale farmers who want an intensive, sustainable business under strict emission rules and policy for farmers who want an extensive setup and to be paid for ecosystem services. In addition, you can buy out some of the farmers.' AS

Read a longer version of the interview with De Vries on resource-online.nl