



WUR nitrogen study raises questions

MPs want to know why the ministry of Agriculture does not see any implications from a WUR study of critical nitrogen values.

That is the essence of a series of parliamentary questions put by Laura Bromet and Joris Thijssen (of the left-wing GroenLinks and PvdA parties respectively), prompted by an article in *Resource*. That article (on 14 June) was about a study looking at a new method to determine nature's response to nitrogen emissions.

In the study, lead researcher Wieger Wamelink and his team showed that the new method gave a reliable association between nitrogen deposition and the nature quality for 37 of the 61 habitats they examined. In 26 of those 37 habitats, nature was harmed

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and biodiversity declined before the current critical threshold value was reached. However, that solid conclusion based on

the study, which Wamelink confirms in the *Resource* article, is missing in the report summary. Wamelink says that after some discussion, 'a summary was chosen that a broad readership will understand'. The results are still to be found elsewhere in the report.

No implications

The report was sent to the Lower House of Parliament in June. Agriculture minister Carola Schouten told parliament she does not yet envisage any implications from the report. She believes the results are insufficiently 'plausible' for too many habitat types. The MPs who submitted the parliamentary questions have their doubts about this.

Bromet and Thijssen say the solid conclusion in the report 'probably has far-reaching implications' for the nitrogen emission targets, which may need to be even more rigorous. The MPs are still waiting for an answer to their questions. RK