

Bonus for quick nitrogen decision

A ‘seriously attractive scheme’ was what the minister Christianne van der Wal promised farmers who were willing to put an end nitrogen emissions — and close their farm as a result. She sent a letter outlining the scheme to Parliament last Friday. Edo Gies, senior researcher in Dynamic Spatial Use, comments on the scheme.

Is that a good idea, rewarding quick decisions with higher compensation, 30 per cent above the market value?

‘There was not that much interest in the previous schemes. It’s hard to say whether this one will work. In the end, each farmer makes their own assessment: what are my plans for the future, do I have a successor, what does the market look like?’

Is the government pushing too hard with its ‘quick decision bonus’?

‘The scheme is voluntary so far: farmers don’t have to take up the offer. But that could change and the government could force farmers to give up their business. What is more, there is hardly

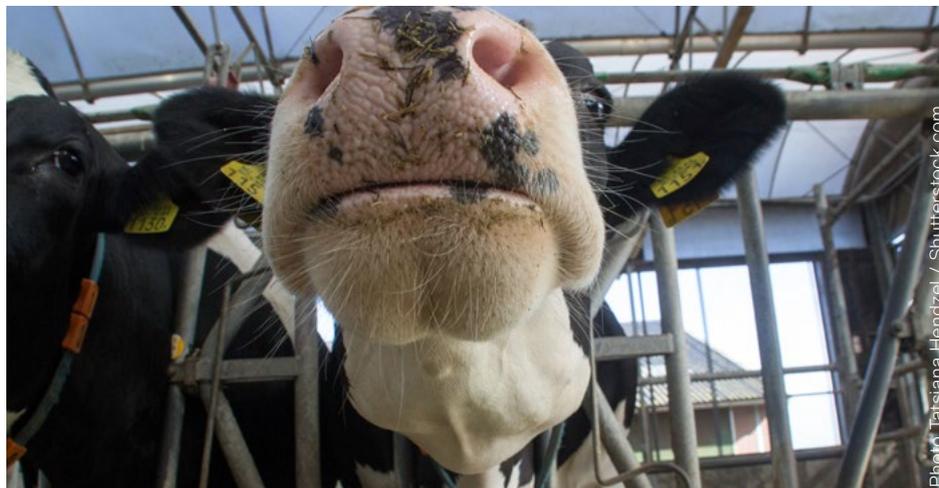


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‘It’s hard to say whether this will work’

any space left for development in various parts of the Netherlands and that is not going to change in the future. I can imagine farmers

in that situation feel a lot of pressure to let themselves be bought out now, even if they would really prefer to carry on farming a few more years.’

Does the scheme offer a solution for the nitrogen crisis?

‘That depends on where the farms that stop are: whether they are close to nature areas badly affected by nitrogen. It seems sensible to prioritize the closure of farms located in areas where nitrogen deposition causes most problems. The minister has now asked the provinces to come up with a plan first. So there still no real clarity.’ ME