

Developing a vision on agroforestry for the Nijmegen-area in the Netherlands

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Nijmegen-area

- Nijmegen: originally on the south bank of the river Waal, now growing onto the north bank of the river, in the direction of the city of Arnhem.
- The landscape between Arnhem and Nijmegen is relatively open and is currently meant to be kept open: further urban development is not allowed.
- The municipality of Nijmegen does not include the countryside between both cities, this is part of the municipalities of Overbetuwe and Lingewaard.
- Nevertheless, Nijmegen wants to contribute to the sustainable development of the area between itself and believes that agroforestry can be a part of this and can be a part of the local food chain.

Applied research

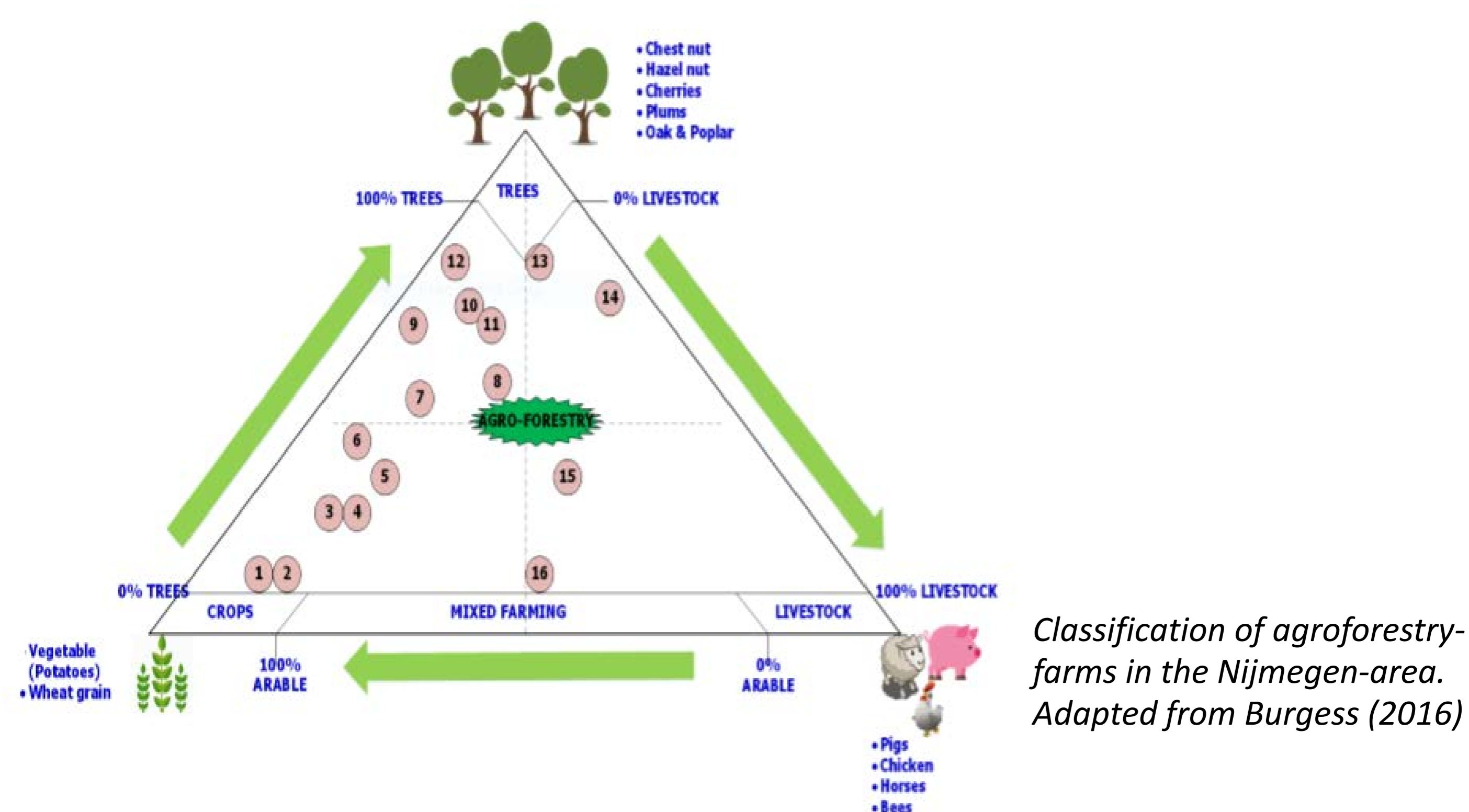
- The project is to contribute to vision forming by the municipality of Nijmegen.
- Students and researchers perform various types of research projects and use various methods, such as: Rapid Rural Appraisal methods, interviewing, research by landscape design.
- The final conclusions will advise the municipality elements of a policy on agroforestry.

Current awareness of agroforestry

- Agroforestry: a relatively new farming system in the Netherlands
- Initiatives have been appearing since the last ten years.
- Most of the local initiatives around Nijmegen are relatively small, and have an emphasis on crop-related systems, and can be described as forest gardening (or food forests). Most of these initiatives are newcomers, with little or no previous experiences in (arable) farming.
- Currently farmers and other stakeholders in the area are familiar with the concept of agroforestry, but generally their definitions are not very clear and tend to describe the system of forest gardening.
- Other stakeholders (the local waterboard, the national forestry service) have no specific view on agroforestry.



An example of alley cropping at the village of Bemmel



Perceived impact

- Residents of the area north of Nijmegen appear to be in favour of agroforestry/forest gardening.
- There are worries about cluttering of the open landscape with trees and the impact they will have on the outlook.
- Residents, farmers and other stakeholders voice a positive impact on biodiversity.
- Stakeholders are sceptical about the potential business model.

Opportunities for agroforestry in Nijmegen-area

- Agroforestry-products can be marketed as local products.
- Combine agroforestry with consumer-related activities such as recreation.
- The attention for agroforestry is growing, also on a national level

Preliminary elements for the vision

- Discuss if agroforestry should be a policy goal or should be a mean to reach other goals like improving ecosystem services or strengthening the local food chain.
- If agroforestry is to be part of the local food chain, also consider other elements of this food chain.
- Be aware of the visual impact of large areas of agroforestry and the impact this will have in the open area.
- Make it in intergral policy, working together with other municipalities in the area

References

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