

# Looking for agroforestry options for dairy farmers

## **Farmers and researchers are co-creating designs to show how agroforestry can be implemented successfully on dairy farms.**

Combining agroforestry with dairy farming is relatively unexplored territory. 'This project seeks practical starting points for dairy farmers in the three northern provinces who are considering integrating agroforestry into their farming systems,' says research coordinator Heleen van Kernebeek of Wageningen Livestock Research. The project is a public-private partnership that includes the farmers' association LTO Noord and the provinces of Friesland and Drenthe. During

workshops, farmers and researchers co-create designs for agroforestry on dairy farms. Van Kernebeek is full of praise for the atmosphere. 'Together with the participating farmers, we are on a roll now. Every step forward raises 10 new questions. That is a fascinating and enjoyable process.'

## **Woody crops**

The aim of the project is to gain insights into the added value of perennial woody crops for a dairy farm, for example for supplying feed, keeping the cows cool in hot weather, or capturing and storing nitrogen. Another important aspect is the earning potential of agroforestry.

Van Kernebeek has found the participating dairy farmers eager to explore new possibilities. 'Although of course, like us, they still have plenty of questions about the practical feasibility,' she says. 'We can find answers to some of the questions by delving deeper into the literature. We also hope in due course to find answers through experiments at the Dairy Campus in Leeuwarden and on participating dairy farms.'

Incidentally, the researcher stresses, there is still room for a few more participants. Interested dairy farmers in Friesland, Groningen or Drenthe can go to the Livestock Research website to sign up. ME