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DRONTEN

Talent for growth

Grazing4AgroEcology – German visit to the Netherlands – 7 June 2023

Grazing: for the farmer, the environment, animals and society



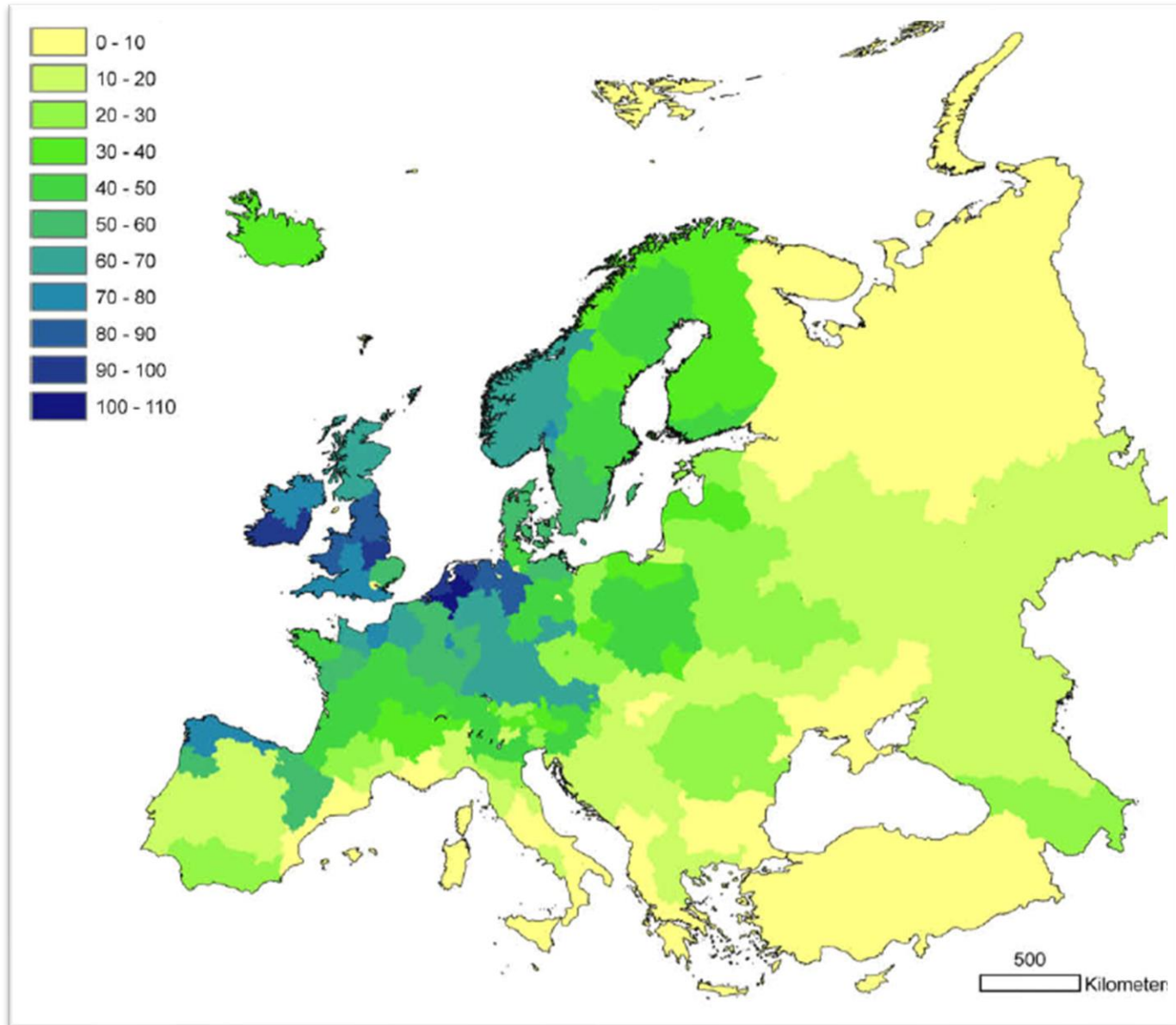
Grassland management in the Netherlands

Agnes van den Pol – van Dasselaar

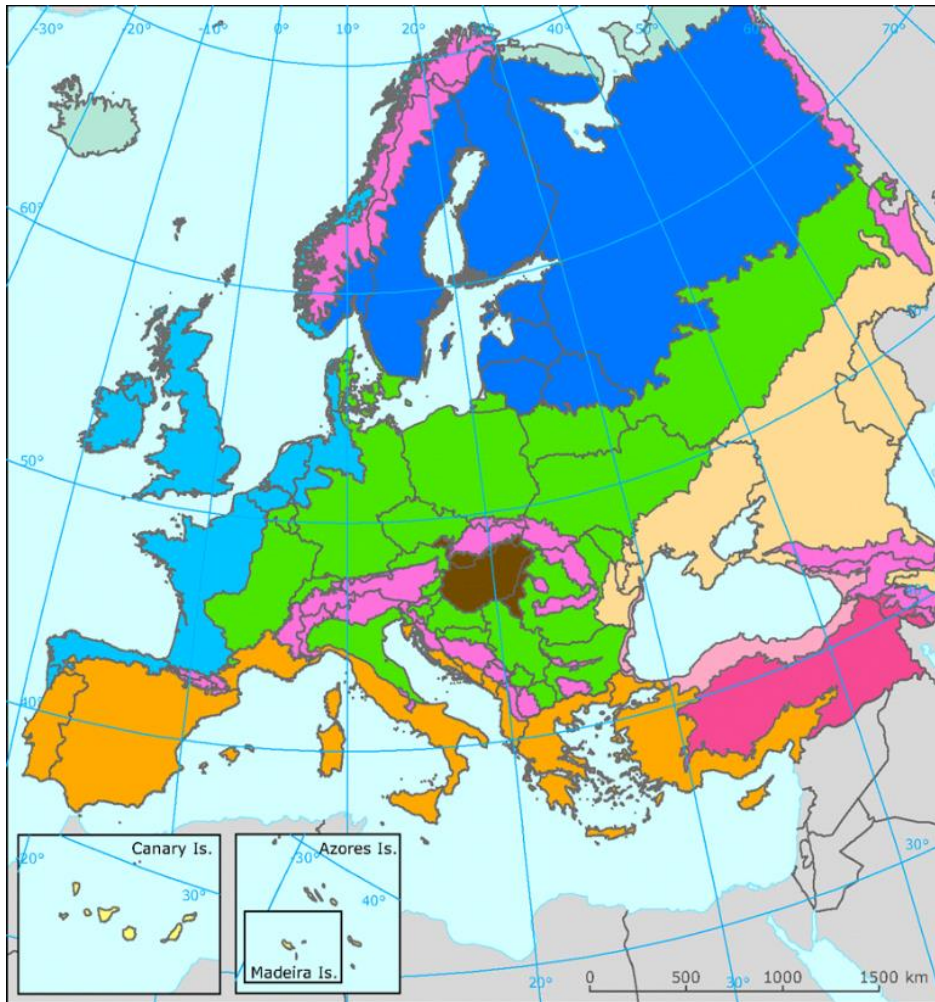


Europe

Estimated grassland productivity in decitons per hectare (Smit et al. 2008, AgricSyst 98, 208-219, Eurostat 2014)



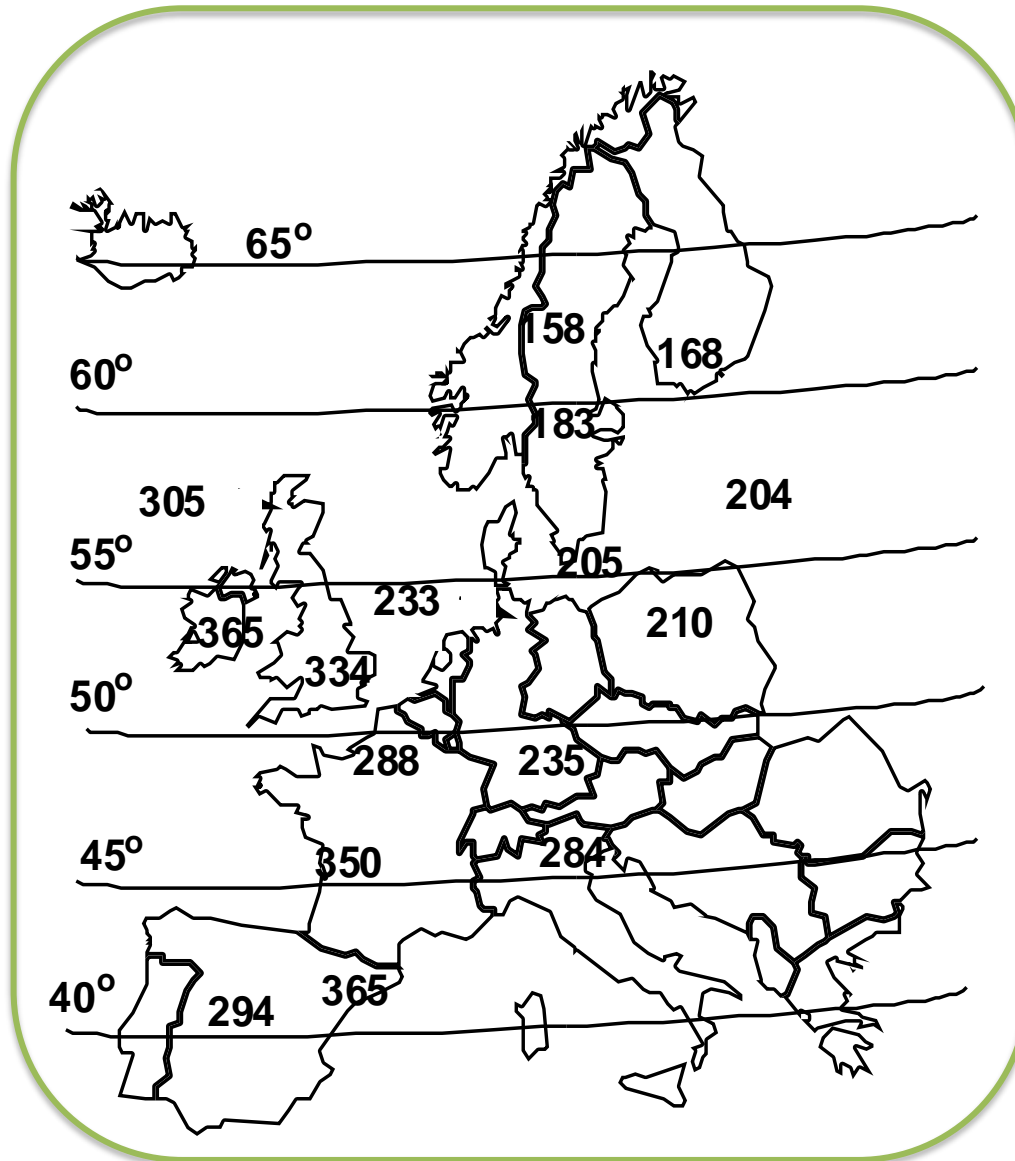
Climate



Biogeographic regions in Europe, 2011

- Alpine
- Anatolian
- Arctic
- Atlantic
- Black Sea
- Boreal
- Continental
- Macaronesia
- Mediterranean
- Pannonian
- Steppic
- Outside data coverage

Length of the growing season, days >5°C



The Dutch dairy sector

15.000 dairy farms

Average size 107 cows

9000 kg milk per cow per year

14.5 billion kg milk (11 before abolishment quota)

Majority FrieslandCampina

1.800.000 ha agricultural area

950.000 ha grassland

200.000 ha silage maize

Large area for dairy farming

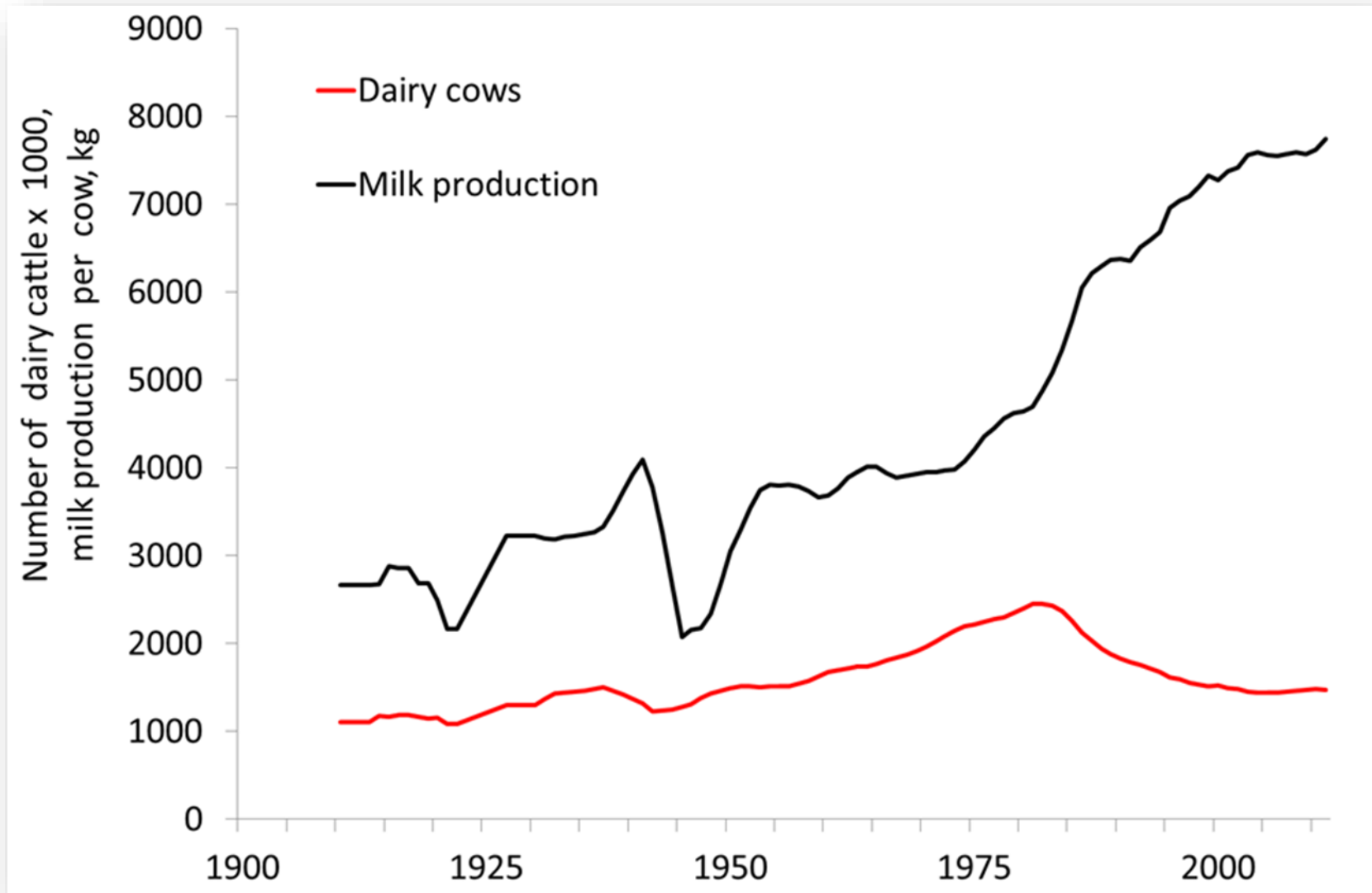


Developments in the past decades



Developments

Source: CBS



Some characteristics of the Dutch dairy sector

- Regional differences in soil quality
- 60% of NL below sea level (-1 to -7m)
- Areas above sea level originally mostly poor sandy soils, fertilisation increased soil mineral content
- Average net yield of grasslands 9 – 11 tonnes DM yr⁻¹
- Rations characterised by relatively large amounts of supplementation, mainly maize silage, grass silage and concentrates

What does a Dutch dairy cow eat?

Average per day

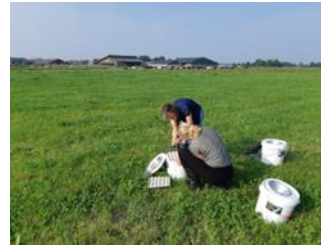




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Grassland and Grazing at Aeres University of Applied Sciences

- **Research: How can grasslands be optimally managed and utilised to create value for farmers and society?**
- **Education and training**



Aeres Farms



Trends in grazing in the Netherlands

Grazing = Societal issue?

- In the Netherlands: yes!
- Cultural heritage, animal welfare

- Started around 2000
- 2012: “Convenant Weidegang” (“Grazing Covenant”)
- Aim: stable number of grazing cows
- > 80 parties signed the Treaty by now



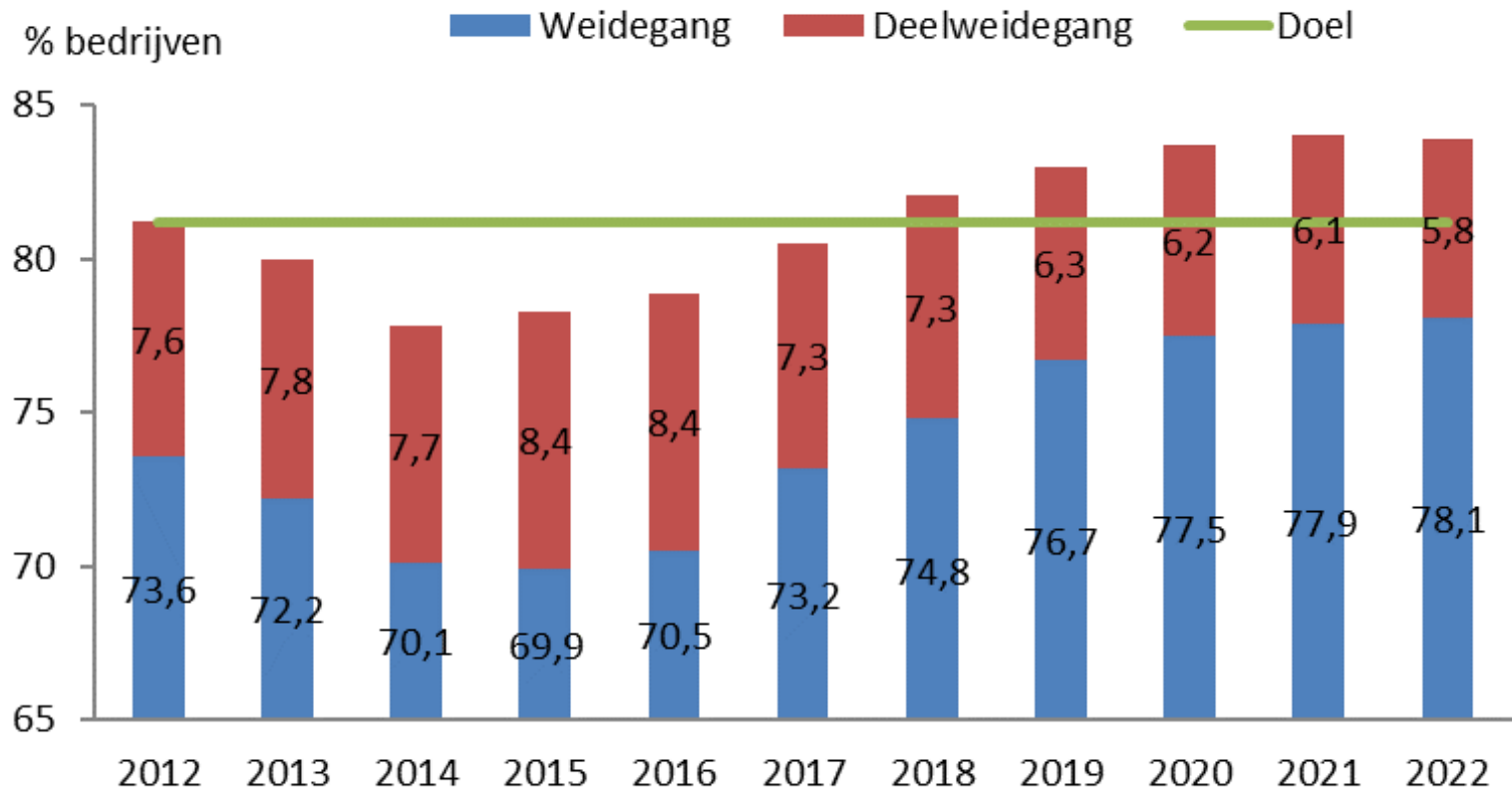
18 June 2012 – Covenant Weidegang “Grazing covenant”



Grazing Covenant

- Dairy farmers: e.g. LTO Nederland
- Dairy industry
- Feed industry: e.g. Agrifirm, For Farmers
- Banks: e.g. ABN AMRO, Rabobank
- Accountants: e.g. Accon AVM, Alfa
- Semen industry, veterinarians, cheese sellers
- AMS industry: Lely, DeLaval
- Retail: Albert Heijn, Jumbo Supermarkten
- NGO's: Dierenbescherming, Natuur & Milieu
- Nature conservation: Staatsbosbeheer, Natuurmonumenten
- Government
- Education and science

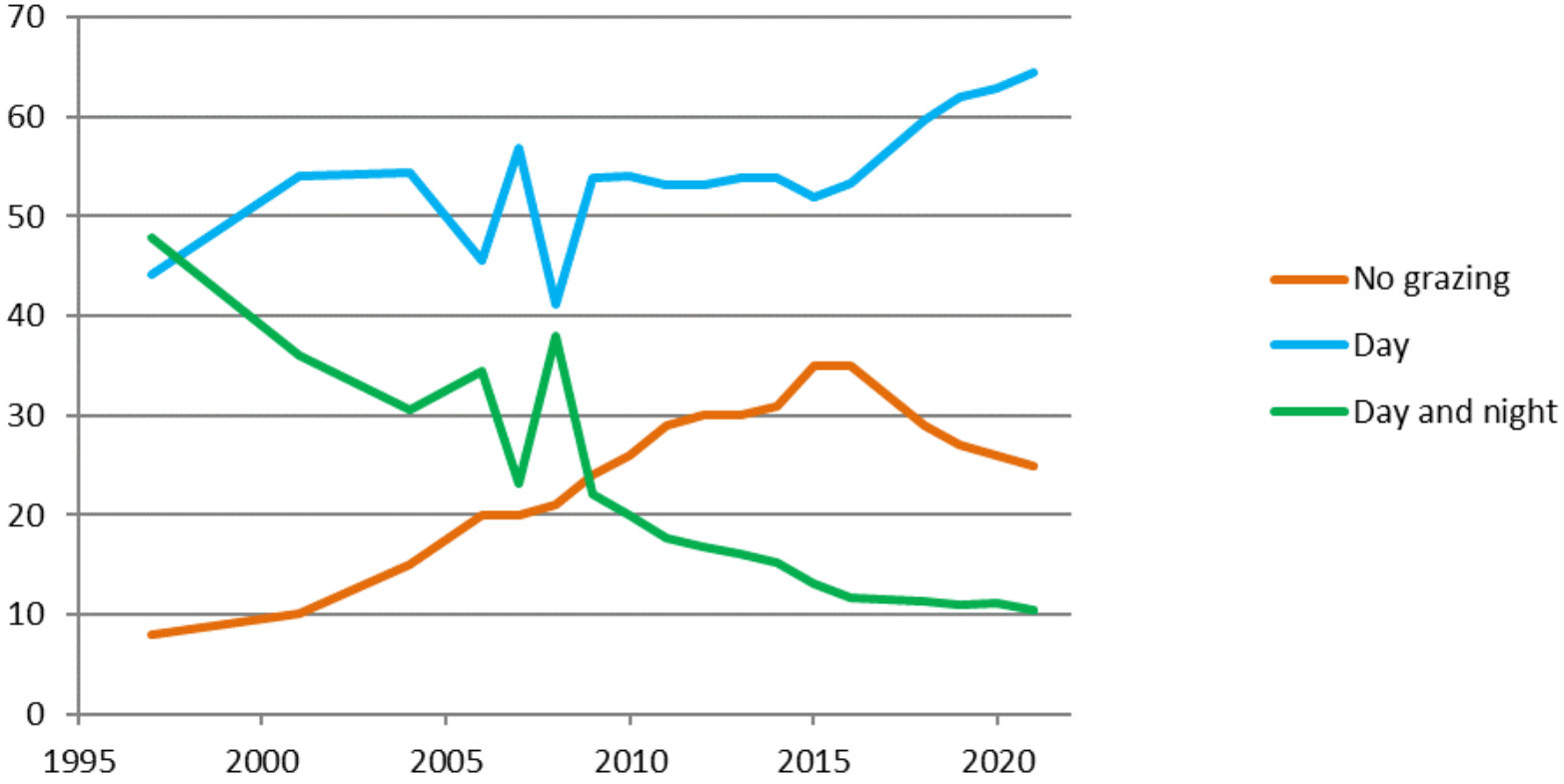
Grazing in the Netherlands



Percentage of farms with grazing increases again
Source: Duurzame Zuivelketen

Grazing in the Netherlands

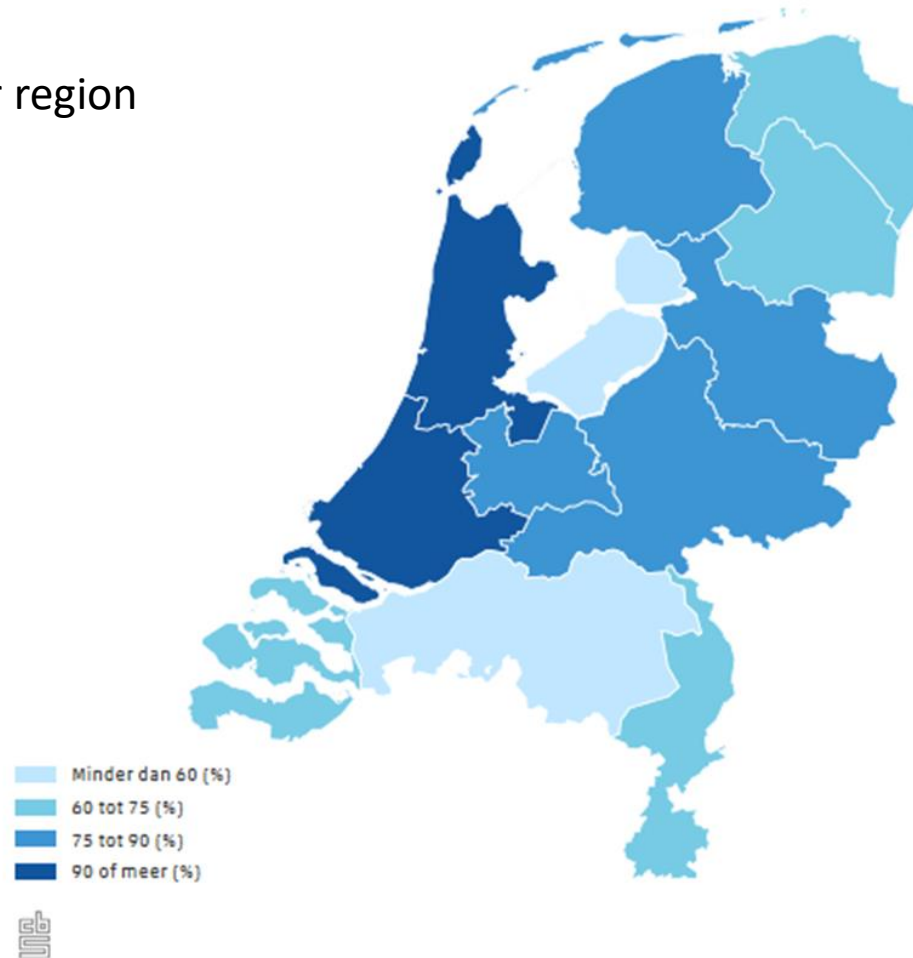
% dairy cows



CBS, 2023

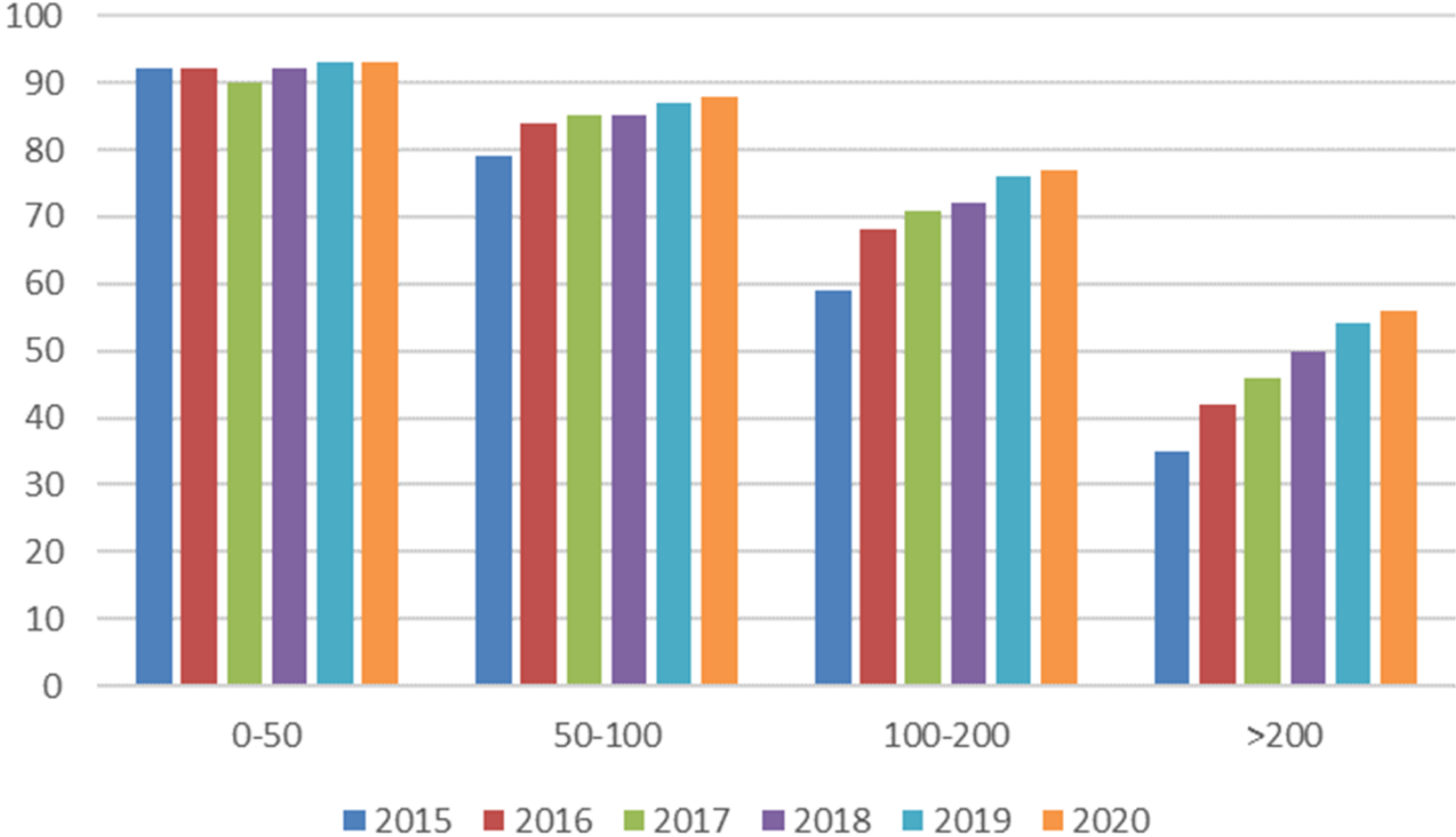
Grazing in the Netherlands, % cows grazing

% cows grazing per region



Effect of herd size - Large herds start grazing

Netherlands, % cows grazing



CBS, 2021

Initiatives to stimulate grass based ruminant production

- Treaties
- Premiums
- Market concepts / differentiation of products
- Research
- Advice
- Simple grazing systems

New Dutch Grazing



New Dutch Grazing, what?



- Compartmented continuous grazing
- An adapted set-stocking system for stocking rates up to 10 animals per ha
- Cows rotate on a daily basis between six compartments on one platform
- Efficient grass utilisation and efficient cow production with ease of labour
- Easy to use in situations of high stocking rates and large milk production per cow

New Dutch Grazing – Inno4Grass Farmers of the Year 2018

Family de Rooij



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1rF6_k7zto



New Dutch Grazing, how?



Step 1 (only once or once a year):

- Divide the grazing platform in a number of equal-sized paddocks, invest in infrastructure to facilitate grazing: water, roadways, fencing, etc.

Step 2 (every 4/5/6 weeks):

- Choose a new grazing platform, mow paddocks set for mowing

Step 3 (daily):

- **Every day a new paddock**, put cattle in at max 12 cm grass height, take cattle from pasture at minimum 8 cm grass height
- Adjust supplemental feeding when needed, depending on grass height of the paddock that cows have just left

Additional information “New Dutch Grazing”

- Brochure: <https://edepot.wur.nl/530440>
- Background: <https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/edepot/466875>
(in Dutch)



<https://www.aeresfarms.nl/faciliteiten>



Thank you!



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