



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries,
Food Security and Nature

Area-based approach in agriculture and nature policy in The Netherlands

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Content

- A short history of agriculture in the Netherlands
- Current agricultural system
- Current challenges
- Area based approach
- Financing the transition?



A short history of agriculture in the Netherlands 1/2



Watermanagement

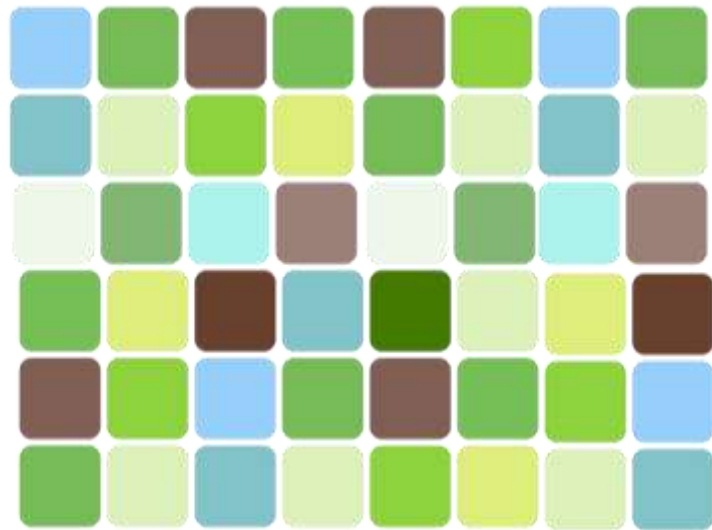
- One third of the country: below sea level and half of the country is vulnerable to floodings
- Protecting land from water has characterised the country
- Centuries of building dikes and channels for drainage to cultivate land for agriculture



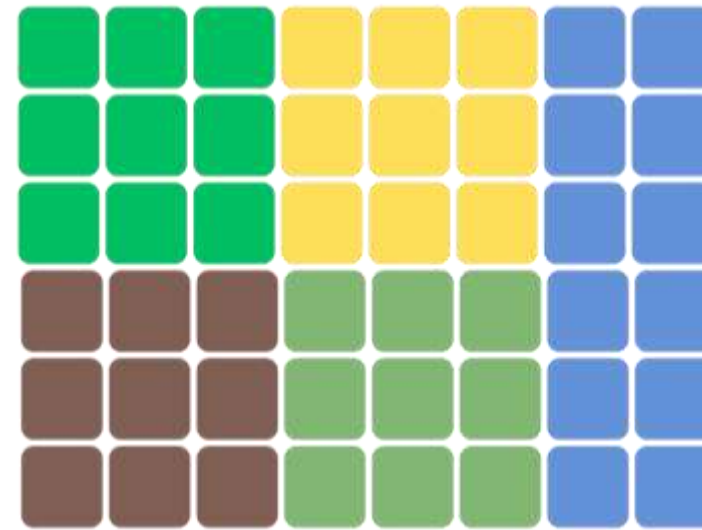
Foodshortage 1950

- A new modernised agricultural policy to increase food production, in line with the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**
- Large scale landscaping for optimised land use

The history of agriculture in the Netherlands 2/2



From: Small-scale mixed farms



To: Upscale mechanised system



Current agricultural system

- 54% of Dutch total area is used for agricultural production
- 1.2 million ha from the 2.2 million ha are used for livestock feed production
- Number of livestock in the Netherland (18 million habitants):
 - 99.900.000 chickens
 - 11.400.000 pigs
 - 3.800.000 cattle
 - 850.000 sheep
 - 480.000 milk goats

Current challenges (agriculture related) 1/3

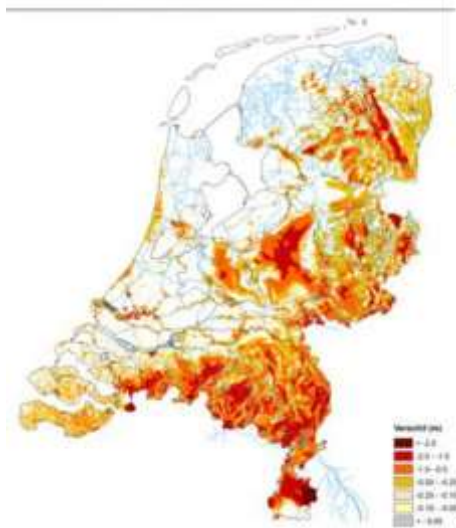
- Space

Densely populated country and growing number of activities that require space

- Energy transition
- Residences
- Infrastructure
- Defense and resilience

Current challenges 2/3: Water-related issues

- Water quality i.e concentration of nutrients and crop protection products
- Water availability: extreme droughts in summer are affecting river flows, groundwater levels and result in difficulties for agriculture, inland shipping and surface water quality
- Land subsidence in peat area's leads to foundation issues

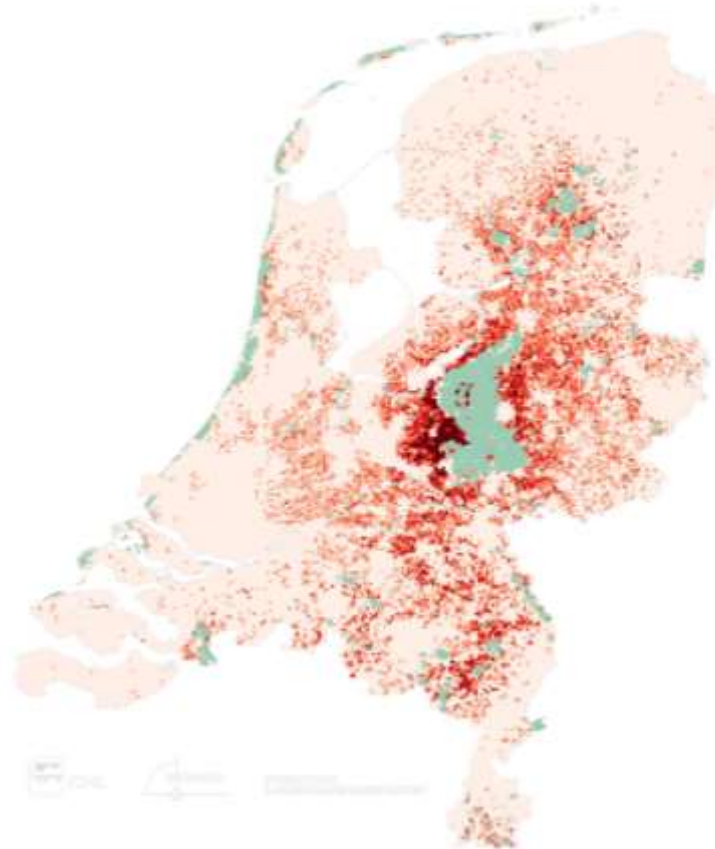


Current challenges (agriculture related) 3/3

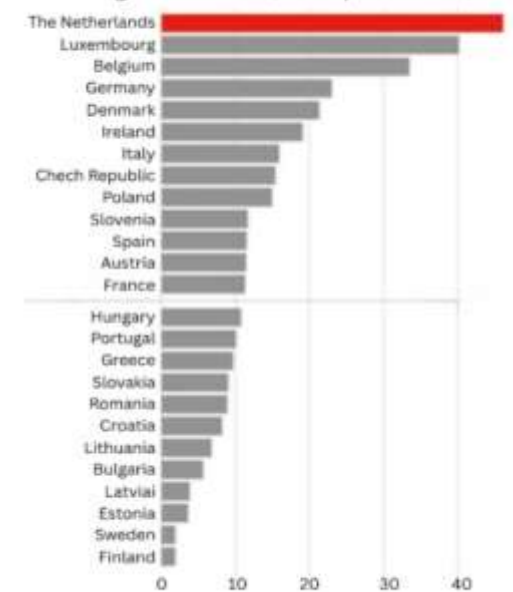
Nitrogen crisis

- Multiple stress factors effect on nature quality
- In many areas Nitrogen deposition is a key pressure factor
- Resulting in nature permit crisis: Delay or halted nature permits
- Nitrogen Lock

Deposition contribution Natura 2000 areas



The Netherlands largest emitter in relative terms
Total nitrogen emissions (kilo N per hectare)



Source: CIEP, Eurostat

Political crisis demanding a new approach

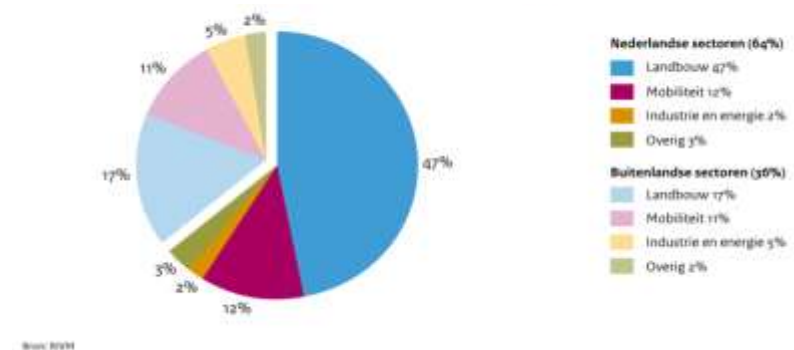
Goal:

- Restore nature and reach **favourable conservation status** in N2000
- Combine with other EU directives (**Water framework**, climate goals)
- Create space for nature permits and UNLOCK the country

Solution:

- Large scale transition of our Agriculture
- Transform into more nature inclusive practice
- 2 legged program with €20 billion euros through 2035
 - General **measure** with new emission standards for all farmers
 - Area-based approach

Origin of Nitrogen deposition



The Area-based approach

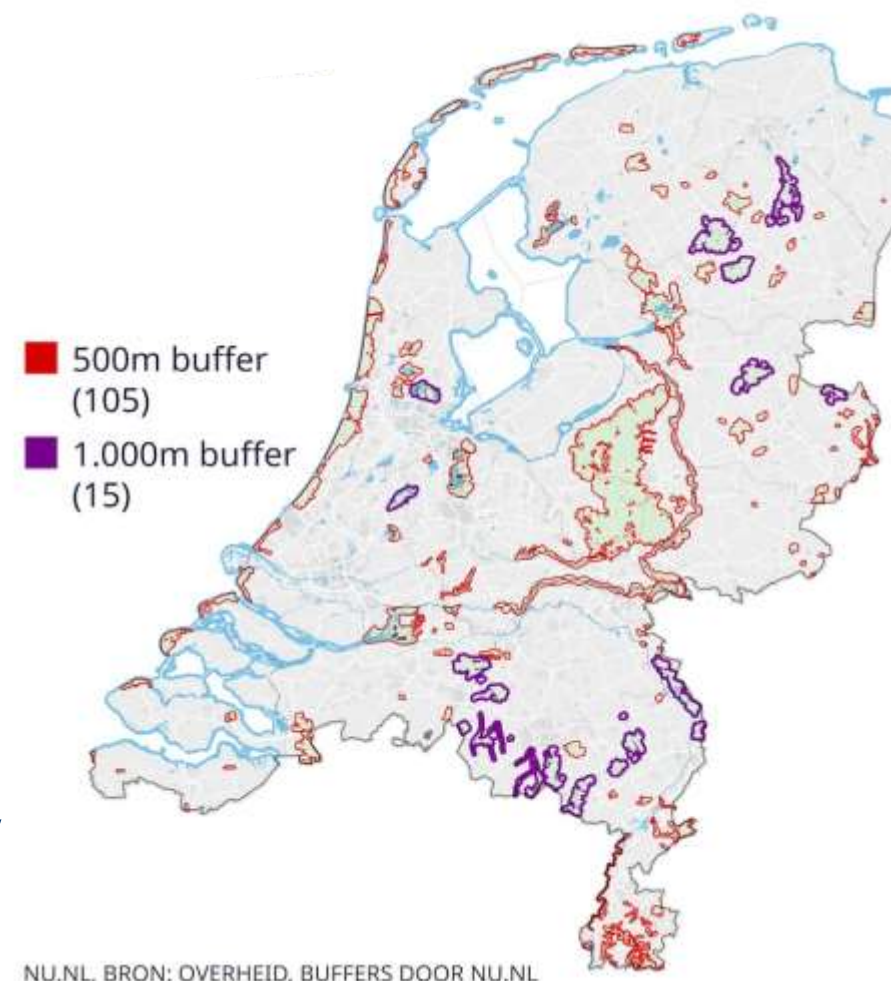
Why?

- Acknowledges differences in soil, landscape, culture, strengths and challenges between regions
- Nitrogen deposition most effectively tackled locally
- Joint cooperation with local organisations, entrepreneurs and inhabitants
- Feeling of ownership from inhabitants and entrepreneurs

How?

500 – 1000 meter zones around N2000 areas

- Restoration of hydrological systems
- Regulations on fertilization, crop protection, cattle density
- Landscaping and redesign by local governments



Requirements

Agricultural Transition: What It Demands

- Strong political will
- Financial hardship for farmers
- Significant time
- National government in the lead
- Significant amount of money.

And

- €20 billion is not enough, broader support needed
- Asks for permanent change of perspective: from most efficient food production to nature inclusive, sustainable practice
- What will drive the change?
- Who benefits?

Caroline van Leenders & Deborah Heijblom

– Netherlands Enterprise Agency

→ Accelerating private investments in Nature-based Solutions



Examples financing by stakeholders

Green Heart Region

- Peatland with increasing land subsidence
- Leading to great climate effect, CO2 emission
- But also foundation problems for, infrastructure and building
- Raising waterlevels affect dairy farmers, but needed to tackle foundation problems and climate
- Are local partners willing to contribute ?



Important economic clusters



- Chipfactory ASML, Schiphol Airport and Rotterdam Harbour
- Expansion of economic activity
- Need for infrastructure and housing
- Nature permit and ground needed

Thank you for your attention

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