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Nestlé and Vreugdenhil Dairy Foods: towards more sustainable dairy

Vreugdenhil Dairy Foods and Nestlé combine joint know-how and financial resources towards more sustainable dairy. Over the past few months, 17 enthusiastic dairy farmers of the Nijkerk-based powdered milk specialist performed trial runs with feeding measures, sowing herb-rich grassland and generating renewable energy. The objective: a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 as a key step in the transition towards regenerative agriculture. In this project, called Low carbon farming, Nestlé and Vreugdenhil are supported by scientists from Wageningen University & Research. The project will be extended step by step to include another 250 dairy farmers in 2030.

Regenerative agriculture is a collective name for sustainability measures in agriculture, such as improving soil and water quality, increasing biodiversity and optimising dairy farmers' revenue model. "We want to offer dairy farmers the entire package of measures," says Vreugdenhil CEO Albert de Groot. "Where possible, we will include new technologies alongside existing ones. To make an impact, regenerative agriculture requires a collective chain approach. That is why we are proud to be developing an appropriate roadmap together with our dairy farmers and Nestlé."



Custom approach

Typical aspects of this project are the custom approach, cooperation and knowledge sharing. "We are learning by doing and are using science-based knowledge and measures in the process. And because every farm is unique, we need customisation," explains De Groot. Nikki Adamo, CEO Nestlé Nederland: "The Netherlands is one of the main agricultural countries for Nestlé worldwide. "Based on the first successful implementations and broad enthusiasm among all parties involved, we will gradually roll out the project more broadly among another 250 dairy farmers. To make the desired impact, we will jointly invest more than 50 million euros over the next few years to realise our ambition of halving our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Future

The dairy farmers that participate in this sustainability project have been given full control. After all, farmers know what is best for their farm and can make considered choices as to which measures should be applied. Tim van Noord, dairy farmer in Hellow: "I took over the farm from my

father, who had taken it over from his father. I want my children to have a future in the company, and this requires change. Nestlé and Vreugdenhil are providing me with the finances and knowledge to complete this transition for the longer term up to 2030. I am not alone, we are in this together."

The steadily growing world population comes with an increasing need for sustainable food production. Nestlé is committed to regenerative agriculture and the production of plant-based products across the globe. Regenerative agriculture is rooted in the resilience and intelligence of nature.



CO₂ neutral from grass to glass by 2050

Vreugdenhil Dairy Foods, together with partners in the chain, has taken valuable steps in the field of sustainability over the past years. More and more dairy farmers are working to protect and regenerate nature. In 2021, almost 70% of our dairy farmers took extra measures such as meadow bird management, ditch edge management and the construction or protection of other landscape elements to increase biodiversity on their land. Over 94% of dairy farmers who supply their nutritious products to Vreugdenhil participate in our sustainability programme.

It is our ambition to be CO₂ neutral from grass to glass by 2050. Together with our internal and external stakeholders, we are working on several projects to achieve this ambition, one of the main ones being the Low carbon farming project with Nestlé.

Nestlé's ambition: net-zero emission by 2050

Climate change poses a risk to the future of food, with food production and consumption being an important source of greenhouse gas emissions. The regenerative agriculture project is part of a larger movement within Nestlé that is committed to cutting its greenhouse gases in half by 2030 to reach net zero emissions by 2050. Net-zero means the company will drastically reduce its farm-to-shop greenhouse gas emissions and remove its remaining emissions from the atmosphere with in-house projects that store carbon in soils and trees.

Nestlé is driving regenerative agriculture in its global food production chain with projects such as the NESCAFÉ plan 2030 to help make coffee farming more sustainable, the Income Accelerator Programme to support farmers in the transition to sustainable cocoa farming, and in the Netherlands by enabling the transition at dairy farms by halving greenhouse gas emissions.

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Note for the editors: If you have any questions regarding this press release, please contact Susanne ter Wal communicatie@vreugdenhil.nl, telephone: 06-5887 4607.