

NETHERLANDS

Farm's performance, restructuring & modernisation

Location

Ouderkerk aan de Amstel

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P2 – Competitiveness

Measure

M4 – Investments in physical assets

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 940 000

EAFRD 120 000

National/Regional 120 000

Private 100 000

Loan 600 000

Project duration

2017 – 2019

Project promoter

Coöperatieve Vereniging
Amstelgoed Natuur Zuivel
U.A.

Contact

info@natuurbeleven.nl

Website

n/a

Amstelland Natuurzuivel is a cooperative of farmers in the Amstelland region who set up a milk factory to produce regional dairy products for the Amsterdam area.

Summary

Amstelland Natuurzuivel is a cooperative of twenty dairy farms in the Amstelland region. They decided to set up a collective milk processing factory in order to supply their milk to Amsterdam and the surrounding areas.

The farmers will receive a slightly higher price for their milk due to their close proximity to the customers. This higher price will allow them to operate in a way that is less intensive and more conducive to the sustainable management of valuable meadow bird areas.



Results

The project supported the establishment of a new dairy factory, that will increase profitability for local farmers while enabling sustainable environmental management.

The new milk processing factory will create 3 full-time jobs at the start of the project and potentially another 5 jobs within 5 years.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ It is an intensive and lengthy process to develop ideas into a promising project especially if it involves different parties and stakeholders. Sometimes, initial ambitions might not be realistic.
- ❑ A major constraint was the fact that some of the farmers were obliged by their contractual commitments to large companies, *not* to supply any part of their milk produce to other ventures – such as the proposed factory. The cooperative took action by proactively entering into negotiations with Royal Friesland Campina: seeking permission for the farmers under contract to them to deliver 30% of their milk to the cooperative's milk processing factory. It therefore pays to be proactive.
- ❑ Applying for RDP support was a complex process which required a lot of expertise - this should not be underestimated.

Context

Amstelland Natuurzuivel is a cooperative of twenty dairy farms in the Amstelland region. Together they decided to set up a milk factory for the production of regional dairy products for Amsterdam and its surroundings. The special feature of their idea is that their dairy products will be produced at less than 5 kilometers from the consumer. Because of the short supply chain, the farmers will get a higher price for their produce and this will enable them to farm less intensively.

Part of the slightly higher price which they will receive for their milk will cover the costs of a meadow bird management plan that the farmers have agreed to implement on their farms. With a view to preserving and restoring the special landscape in Amstelland, the farmers will maintain a herb-rich grassland which they will mow at a later date in order to provide a good environment for meadow birds.

To realise this project, the Amstelgoed Natuur Zuivel cooperative are working in partnership with Vogelbescherming Nederland (Netherlands Bird Protection), the Commonland foundation (landscape protection) and the foundation for Sustainable Agrarian Nature Management (DAN). The province of Noord-Holland will subsidize the construction of the dairy factory and the National Green Fund has lent funds to the cooperative. The municipality of Amsterdam also supports the project financially.

Objectives

The objectives of this project:

- To develop a strategy for adding value to the sustainable production of local milk while contributing to the wellbeing of meadow birds in the area
- To organise an effective local supply chain
- To inspire farmers to participate in nature management



Activities

The farmers of the cooperative joined forces to gather ideas about how they could get a local dairy product onto the market. They abandoned an initial idea of making cheese and eventually came up with the idea of starting a milk factory. The farmers gained a good understanding of the possibilities available to them through a feasibility study that they commissioned. When the idea proved to be a promising one, the farmers set up the Amstelgoed Natuur Zuivel U.A. cooperative association

Subsequently, the cooperative rented an existing space in a nearby business park and in 2018 they purchased the machines. The factory is expected to be completed in February 2019, after which the production lines will be thoroughly tested. The farmers themselves are closely involved in the entire process.

Discussions with various supermarket chains in the region took place during 2017 and 2018. In 2019, there will also be discussions with large institutions such as hospitals and the Schiphol Airport, regarding the possibility of supplying them with milk.

The official launch is planned for the start of summer 2019.

Main results

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Additional sources of information

www.facebook.com/boerenvanamstel/