
STICHTING WEIDEGANG ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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2017 SUMMARY

In 2017 the number of dairy farms where cows had access to meadow grazing increased. Currently, some 80.4% of dairy farmers practice some form of grazing on their farms. The percentage of farms where cows can graze increased this year despite the relatively high number of farmers who ceased farming activities. This increase can be attributed in great part to the number of dairy farms that allowed the cows meadow access for the first time. Several hundred farmers decided to let their cows roam the meadows again, after having previously kept their cattle confined to the barn year-round.

Year	Total	Full grazing	Partial grazing
2017	80,4%	73,2%	7,3%
2016	78,9%	70,5%	8,4%
2015	78,3%	69,8%	8,4%
2014	77,8%	70,1%	7,7%
2013	80,0%	72,2%	7,8%
2012	81,2%	-	-

Table 1: % of dairy farms with meadow grazing in the Netherlands (source: Sustainable Dairy Chain (Duurzame Zuivelketen)).

Up to the end 2017, GrazingCoaches, supported by dairy companies, have held around 1000 interviews with dairy farmers about the option of reintroducing grazing on their farms. Approximately half of those interviewed indicated their willingness to start grazing again and 118 farmers actually started in practice under supervision of a GrazingCoach in the framework of the New Grazers initiative (Nieuwe Weiders). The numerous enthusiastic reports published in trade journals about the experiences of dairy farmers who have switched to meadow grazing is remarkable.

In 2017, New Dutch Grazing (Nieuw Nederlands Weiden) was developed to promote and embed grazing in the herd management systems of dairy farmers. This is a modified and further developed version of the practice of rotational grazing. It is a practical solution for dairy farmers who do not want to devote too much time to grazing, but do want to convert more fresh grass into milk production. The system is transparent for the farmer and the cow, as the animals are grazed each day according to a prescribed plan. This system also makes grazing a more sustainable practice in fluctuating (weather) conditions. New Dutch Grazing is also a suitable and clear system for high milk production, large herds or when an AMS is used.

In 2017 sales of Meadow Milk increased across the board. Products bearing the Meadow Milk logo are now available in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Spain and Italy. Preparations have also been made for the market launch in Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Croatia in 2018.

In the Netherlands, products in practically the entire dairy range are available with the guarantee that they have been produced from meadow milk; products such as toasties, sandwiches and meat replacers have also been introduced. In Germany a wide range of products is now also available, with the Meadow Milk logo or an alternative quality mark. In Belgium, the system is leading for cheese and liquid dairy produce. Belgian supermarkets are preparing to launch an even wider range of Meadow Milk products. In the other countries, the main product sold with the Meadow Milk logo is Dutch cheese.

At the end of 2017, 93 companies in the Netherlands, seven in Belgium, six in Germany and one in France were certified under the conditions of the Meadow Milk scheme to produce Meadow Dairy products. In 2017, the foundation also approved the first five digital measurement systems that farmers can use to register the grazing time of individual cows.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the Grazing Foundation is to encourage the visibility of cows in the Dutch landscape by stimulating grazing. A cow grazing in a meadow is an integral and typical aspect of the Dutch landscape.

The activities of the Grazing Foundation have two focus areas:

EXPERTICE

Boosting the levels of expertise and knowledge of grass and grazing and recruiting New Grazers (section 1).

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Safeguarding the integrity of meadow dairy products and issuing the Meadow Milk logo (section 2).

The foundation's ambition for its expertise activities is to involve a wider target group in boosting levels of knowledge on grassland management and grazing, and to embed greater skills relating to grass and grazing in the knowledge infrastructure of dairy farming. To facilitate this aim, a new, simple and robust grazing system has been developed: New Dutch Grazing.

1 EXPERTISE: GREATER GRASS AND GRAZING SKILLS

The GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers have a direct link with practice and are therefore key in disseminating and boosting skills relating to grass and grazing. Our GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers offer advice and support in a variety of ways to dairy farmers: groups can take part in FarmWalk, participate in a two-year guidance course for New Grazers, arrange a personal strategic advice session or attend lectures for study groups.

As well as the activities of the GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers, the secretariat acts as a help desk for questions from dairy farmers and farm visitors, has an advisory role in scientific projects such as 'Amazing Grazing' and functions as an educator in enhancing the knowledge of advisors and other farm visitors regarding grazing. Via the Meadow Man (a virtual expert with a newsletter and information platform on social media) tips to improve knowledge of grass and grazing are communicated to a wide target group.

1.1 GRAZINGCOACHES AND GRAZINGTEACHERS

Our GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers are employed by various companies; agricultural consultancies, accountants, compound feed producers, seed companies and agricultural colleges and universities. In 2017, 56 GrazingCoaches and 20 GrazingTeachers were active.

In 2017, the Grazing Foundation organised various immersion days for the GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers at the Practical Institute for Grazing. Central was a variety of topics relating to grass and grazing (GRAZING focus) and to coaching groups and acting as ambassadors



Figure 1: A group of GrazingCoaches listens to trainer Bert Philipsen during an immersion day.

for grazing as a GrazingCoach (EDUCATION focus). These days offered GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers a chance to refresh their knowledge so they can continue to coach dairy farmers and students based on the latest themes and insights. Content for these days at the Practical Institute for Grazing was provided and presented by Bert Philipsen (Wageningen UR Livestock Research) and René Schepers (Schepers Adviseurs).

In February 2017 the Grazing Foundation organised a day specially for GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers. The central topic of this day was the ambassador role of coaches and teachers and the kind of tools they consider are needed to convey the importance of grazing to a wider audience. The specific topics of the refresher days were then based on this input.

The topics were:

GRAZING FOCUS

- Rotational grazing
- Cow-centric and 10,000 litres
- Closed loop navigator and economy
- Labour and robot

EDUCATION FOCUS

- Ambassadorship GrazingCoach
- Coaching
- Help desk for colleagues, mobilising support and knowledge transfer

1.2 ADVICE AND SUPERVISION DAIRY FARMERS

The advice and support provided by GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers takes four different forms: groups can take part in FarmWalk, participate in a two-year guidance course for New Grazers, arrange a personal strategic advice session or attend lectures for study groups.



Figure 2: Advice and support from GrazingCoaches takes four forms.

1.3 NEW GRAZERS

The New Grazers project was launched in April 2015. This project was developed to provide intensive support for two seasons to dairy farmers wanting to switch from keeping their cattle inside year-round to grazing their lactating cows (New Grazers). The aim is enabling farmers to integrate grazing as well as possible into their herd management practice. Following an introductory interview, supervision covers an advisory session, a Farm Walk and individual support and guidance from a GrazingCoach.

NIEUWE WEIDERS

EEN INITIATIEF VAN STICHTING WEIDEGANG

The number of participants in the New Grazers project has risen; 2015 was a start-up year, participation grew steadily in 2016 and in 2017 numbers have virtually doubled.

Thanks to the efforts of various dairy organisations, such as widescale telephone actions, many introductory interviews were held up to and including 2017. GrazingCoaches, assisted by the dairy organisations, have also held around 1000 consultations with dairy farmers about grazing options. During these sessions, some 50% of these dairy farmers indicated their intention to start grazing, independently or as part of the New Grazers project.

Year	Number of introductory interviews	Number of participants*
2015	28	9
2016	200	64
2017	736	118
Total	964	191

Table 2: Participants New Grazers.

* Based on year grazing started

Thanks to a.o. the efforts of dairy organisations, the percentage of dairy farms that practised grazing in 2017 increased by 1.5%.

Year	Total	Full grazing	Partial grazing
2017	80,4 %	73,2 %	7,3 %
2016	78,9 %	70,5 %	8,4 %
2015	78,3 %	69,8 %	8,4 %
2014	77,8 %	70,1 %	7,7 %
2013	80,0 %	72,2 %	7,8 %
2012	81,2 %	–	–

Table 3: % of dairy farms with meadow grazing in the Netherlands (source: Sustainable Dairy Chain (Duurzame Zuivelketen)).

OPEN DAYS

In August and September ten New Grazers, and their GrazingCoaches, organised open days for fellow dairy farmers. The primary aim was to inform dairy farmers who still keep their cows indoors about grazing and encourage them to make the switch by showing how the system works in practice. Another objective was to increase awareness of the informative role of the foundation. During guided tours of the barns and the meadows, the New Grazers demonstrated how grazing is integrated in daily herd management.

A total of 100 visitors attended the open days. Worth noting is the extensive media exposure the open days created: ten highly positive items (articles, videos, photos) were published in trade journals including Boerderij, Melkvee, Nieuwe Oogst, Veeteelt, Boeren Business and NMV Nieuws.



'Koeien hebben tijd nodig om te wennen'

In het vakblad Melkvee van juli 2016 stond een artikel over enkele startende weiders. Met wisselend succes leerden zij hun kudde vorig jaar opnieuw grazen. Melkvee benaderde de veehouders dit jaar opnieuw. Zij zijn nu een jaar aan ervaringen rijker en vertellen over hun bevindingen.

Willem Verkuiljen, De Mortel (NB)

Willem Verkuiljen had in zijn eerste jaar als weider door flinke natte periodes geen echt mooie weideperiode voor zijn dieren. Toch bestond de veehouder uit De Mortel dit jaar weer een stapje erbij te doen. Waar vorig jaar alleen het jongere, de droge koeien en de laagproductieve dieren weidden, gingen nu ook de hoogproductieve dieren de weide in. In 2017 was tot het begin van deze maand extreem droog. Zowel ruttigheid als droogte is niet ideaal, vindt Verkuiljen, maar hij heeft toch een lichte voorkeur voor dit drogere jaar. „De gras van het gras blijft beter en ook voor de uiergezondheid is een droog land

bevoordelijker dan een nat perceel.“

Al met al bevalt het weiden tot nog toe prima. De koeien werden vorig jaar snel „toen ik de koeien vorig jaar buiten deed, profiteerde ik van het feit dat de droge koeien daar al langer liepen. Daardoor waren de meeste koeien na een maand wel gewend. Er zijn echter ook een paar oudere koeien bij die nu nog steeds niet aan het weiden kunnen wennen.“

Ook productie leverde Verkuiljen wel wat in. „Ik milk voorheen op stal wat meer, maar ook de houeverheid krachvoer lag toen hoger dan nu. Ik denk dat per saldo weiden iets voordeliger uitpakt.“

Toch vindt de brabander dat de weideperiode nog wel wat hoger mag. „Weiden kost nu eenmaal veel tijd. De arbeid die er in gaat

zitten, wordt nog maar matig betaald.“

Melk eronder houden is voor de ondernemer een uitdaging, al is een hoge productie voor hem geen doel op zich. „Vorig jaar leerde ik dat ik de koeien niet te laat naar buiten moet doen bij de eerste stroek. Het gras moet niet te lang zijn. Dit jaar maakte ik een andere miscalculatie. Ik heb ze dit jaar iets te rigoureus allemaal naar buiten gedaan en gelijk het krachvoer teruggevoerd. Volgend jaar zou ik het ranteven wat meer geleidelijk aanpassen. Daarnaast ben ik nog steeds gevind genog moet op de eerste stroek te doen. Dat werkt goed voor een maatsede, maar ik weet nu dat het gras daar voor de koeien niet smakelijker op wordt. Zo leer ik ieder jaar wat. Ik denk dat dat over vijf jaar wellicht nog steeds wel zo is.“

Fokke Terpstra, Wijndalud (FR)

Elke laag gras die de koeien in de weide hebben, is vooral voor ons. Jongeren van al het gras in buiten perken en veldjes, levert weiden voor ons ook nog een financiële plus op.“

Terpstra en De Groot deden de koeien vooral buiten, omdat zij dat gewoon moed vinden. Het financiële kosten voor hen in eerste instantie slechts op de tweede plaats. „De besparing op kosten voor koeien en de weidepremie zagen we daarbij als een mooie bijvangst. Maar nu de financiële voordelen significant blijven, is het financiële voordeel van weiden voor ons zeker niet zo'n groot argument voor het weiden van de koeien als onze mening dat het 'moet' is.“

Het ontwaar gebroedre 2016 als keepjar.

„Vorig jaar hebben we allicht maanden van weiden. In 2016 hebben we vier maanden van 3 hectare, waarop we anderhalve toedekken. We hebben de koeien een tijd van 10 tot 16 tot 18 uur buiten lopen, een tijd van 7 tot 10 uur van de ene tijd tot een paar dag. Dat laatste heeft het best en dat doen we dit jaar weer. Dit jaar hebben we de perken kleiner gemaakt. Nu doen we een omroeven. Dat bevalt goed. We begonnen met perken van 1 hectare, die we toen met heel veel grasden. Eind juni maakten we de perken 1,5 hectare groot, zodat we daarmee dat de grasland in deze tijd van het jaar wat trager gaat. Dat lijkt nu ook goed te werken.“

Jaap Treur, Bantega (FR)

Jaap Treur begon in 2015 met het weiden van zijn koeien. Dit zijn koeien van weidingen te laten voorover vergen nogal wat discussieperenningen. Vorig jaar vertelde hij dat de koeien in 2015 nauwelijks in de wei werden bijten. Dat ging in 2016 stukken beter, al moest hij nog steeds erg zijn best doen om de dieren ook 's avonds in de wei te krijgen. „Dit jaar merk ik voor het eerst dat de koeien echt zelf de wei in willen. Ik denk dat daarom moet geweest dat de velden van dit jaar als park ook al geweest hebben. Toch is er ook nog steeds een klein beetje dat het weiden van de koeien niet zo makkelijk is als het lijkt te zijn.“

De melkproductie is bij het weiden van Treur niet gestegen, maar wel niet gedaald. „Ik merk wel dat het noodzakelijk is om het gras in te scheren. Zo houd je namelijk gras. Zonder uiteindelijk gras draai te krijgen en dit ook de productie.“

Treur het vorig jaar wisten de afsluiting van een rant wel noodzakelijk te vinden. Dat die periode nu het anderhalve rant pergenen is, vindt hij mooi meegenomen. „Inmiddels houd ik ook echt wel extra's over aan het weiden. Een verdere verhoging van de weidepremie zou mooi zijn, maar ik denk dat we nooit alle heidevelden koeien in de wei krijgen. Zelfs met al de premie 5 cent per kilo melk zou worden.“

Figure 3: Publication in Melkvee motivated by open days at New Grazers. Items were also published in journals including de Boerderij, Melkvee, Nieuwe Oogst, Boeren Business and NMV Nieuws.

1.4 FARMWALK

FarmWalk is a programme for dairy farmers. It promotes better grassland and grazing management based on measurements made during a weekly inspection of the grass, observation, planning and focussed decision-making. During the grazing season, dairy farmers meet five times in a study group to share their experiences with fellow farmers and a GrazingCoach and learn from each other. A specific approach has been developed for each season with focus points, background information and decision points. Grazing Foundation has offered the FarmWalk programme since 2013.

In 2017, 113 participants took part in FarmWalk of whom approx. 35% were joining for the second year. This group was divided into 14 groups with a sub-focus:

- Standard FarmWalk
- Organic FarmWalk
- Robot FarmWalk
- Feed wedge FarmWalk
- FarmWalk for veterinarians
- FarmWalk for yields
- FarmWalk with focus on sustainability

Year	Participants
2013	94
2014	509
2015	947
2016	270
2017	113
Total	1933

Table 4: Participants FarmWalk.

Up to and including 2017, almost 2000 dairy farmers have been trained in the FarmWalk concept via the Grazing Foundation. FarmWalk has been successfully adopted and integrated outside the scope of the foundation (under different names). From 2018, the Grazing Foundation will offer FarmWalk for the cost price (€250).

1.5 STRATEGIC ADVISORY SESSION AND LECTURES

During the advisory session, farmers are advised personally on grazing by a GrazingCoach. Various topics can be discussed based on the specific situation on the dairy farm: financial aspects, labour, grazing options and how to set up a grazing system. The Grazing Foundation has offered strategic advisory sessions since 2008. Around 20 GrazingCoaches have attended special training for this role. In 2017, 80 advisory sessions were held, bringing the total number of dairy farmers advised since 2008 to more than 1400. From 2018, the Grazing Foundation will offer advisory sessions, for the cost price (€500).

Lecture programmes are presented by a GrazingCoach for groups of 10-50 dairy farmers.

The Grazing Foundation has offered lectures since 2012. In 2017, 41 lectures were organised, bringing the total number of lectures to almost 200.

Year	Number of Advisory Sessions	Number of lectures
2008	400	-
2009	350	-
2010	213	-
2011	69	-
2012	71	35
2013	67	25
2014	76	30
2015	45	33
2016	68	28
2017	80	41
Total	1439	192

Table 5: number of advisory sessions and lectures over the years.

1.6 MEADOW MAN

In 2017 the Meadow Man exchanged his weekly e-mail with professional tips for the Meadow-Studio, where short instruction films are produced showing farmers how to simply and successfully graze their cattle. In addition, data on grass growth and quality, and a topical tip from the Meadow Man, are distributed via the weekly newsletter in trade journal Veeteelt (circulation > 20,000). A column written by the Meadow Man also appears every month in Melkvee Magazine.

VIDEOS

Under the Meadow Man label, four instruction videos have been produced on rotational grazing, with a starring role for the toy farm owned by the Meadow Man's young son. The videos have a dual purpose; to develop a simple concept and to communicate this concept in a low threshold, appealing way. The videos received broad exposure via the Veeteelt newsletter. The videos were also distributed via the social media platforms used by the Meadow Man: Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The videos have received a few thousand views and were well received.



De Weidestudio deel 1: Roterend standweiden

Weideman video deel 2: Bijvoeding

Weideman video deel 3: Maaien en bemesten

Weideman video deel 4: Roterend standweiden in de

Figure 4: Instruction videos on YouTube by the Meadow Man.



Producing these videos was also necessary to develop a simple and robust system to promote grazing. It led to the development of the New Dutch Grazing system. The ambition of the system is to structurally boost the grazing practice of a large group of dairy farmers (> 10,000) so that grazing becomes simpler and integrated more robustly, and more grass is harvested through grazing. Tools were developed so that advisors could easily implement New Dutch Grazing on the farms of interested dairy farmers.

GROWTH AND QUALITY DATA OF GRASS

Trade journal Veeteelt has taken over the Meadow Man newsletter activity. Data on grass growth is the central focus. The newsletter is a way for the foundation to share advice with a large target audience. The weekly newsletter of Veeteelt features an item on growth and quality data of grass, and a topical tip from the Meadow Man. The foundation contributes to collecting the relevant data, and the Meadow Man provides the weekly tip.

1.7 GRAZING CRASH COURSE FOR ADVISORS

Growing numbers of dairy farmers are asking advisors and other farm visitors for advice on grazing. Consequently, the foundation is increasingly being approached by farm visitors asking how they can boost their levels of knowledge on grazing to satisfy the expectations and needs of their clients. To fill this knowledge gap, the Grazing Foundation, in cooperation with Bert Philipsen (Wageningen UR Livestock Research) and René Schepers (Schepers Adviseurs) has organised a compact crash course on grazing. In three morning or afternoon sessions, participants learn the ins and outs of grazing. By organising the course on an actual farm, participants can combine theory and practical experience.

In 2017, three crash courses were organised, attended by 65 advisors on their own initiative. In addition, in-company courses were organised for various categories of farm visitor such as feed companies, banks and dairy equipment suppliers. Participants assessed the courses as very useful and highly educational.

2 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MEADOW DAIRY PRODUCTS AND ISSUING THE MEADOW MILK LOGO

The meadow milk logo guarantees that the product is made from meadow milk. Meadow milk is milk from farms where the cows graze in pastures from spring to autumn for at least 120 days a year and for at least 6 hours a day. The milk is collected separately and processed into fresh dairy products – such as milk, buttermilk, custard and yoghurt –, cheese and other dairy products. The Grazing Foundation safeguards the production process, transportation and processing of the meadow milk into the final meadow dairy product.



Figure 5: The Meadow Milk logo is available in several languages.

As the owner of the Meadow Milk Logo, the Grazing Foundation lays down the requirements for certification and use of the Meadow Milk Logo. In order to use the Meadow Milk Logo, dairy products must satisfy the following requirements:

- The product is a dairy product or a product of which at least 10% of the dry matter consists of dairy ingredients, and the product is intended for human consumption.
- Throughout the production chain, the producers have worked in accordance with the requirements for grazing and meadow dairy products laid down by the Grazing Foundation, as demonstrated by the fact that every link in the production chain holds a valid Grazing Certificate. In short, this means that:
 - The cows which supply the milk are able to graze in accordance with the Grazing Foundation's requirements; and
 - The milk is stored, transported, processed, treated and packed separately from standard dairy products.
- The brand owner for the product has concluded a Licence Agreement with the Grazing Foundation.



Figure 6: The Meadow Milk logo guarantees that a product has been made from milk produced on farms where cows graze in the meadow from spring until autumn for at least 120 days a year and for at least six hours a day.

The Meadow Milk logo was introduced in 2007 to encourage the grazing of cows in the Netherlands and to make products prepared from meadow milk easily identifiable. The logo was transferred to the Grazing Foundation in 2012. Since then, all dairy companies and food retailers have been able to use the Meadow Milk Logo. In 2016 the Meadow Milk Logo also became available for use on dairy products manufactured outside the Netherlands. The same requirements apply to these products.

In 2017, the Grazing Foundation revised its General Terms and Conditions and License Agreements to make them easier to understand and to ensure the process of certification and granting licences is accurately established. At the same time, a few modifications were made to the contents. To facilitate ease of use, and to accommodate users who speak other languages, a general manual, a manual on use of the Meadow Milk logo and the guidelines for control plan part A are published in English, Dutch and German.

2.1 USE OF THE MEADOW MILK LOGO

In 2017 sales of Meadow Milk increased across the board. Products bearing the Meadow Milk logo are now available in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Spain and Italy. In addition, new products have been introduced and preparations are made for the market launch in Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Croatia in 2018.

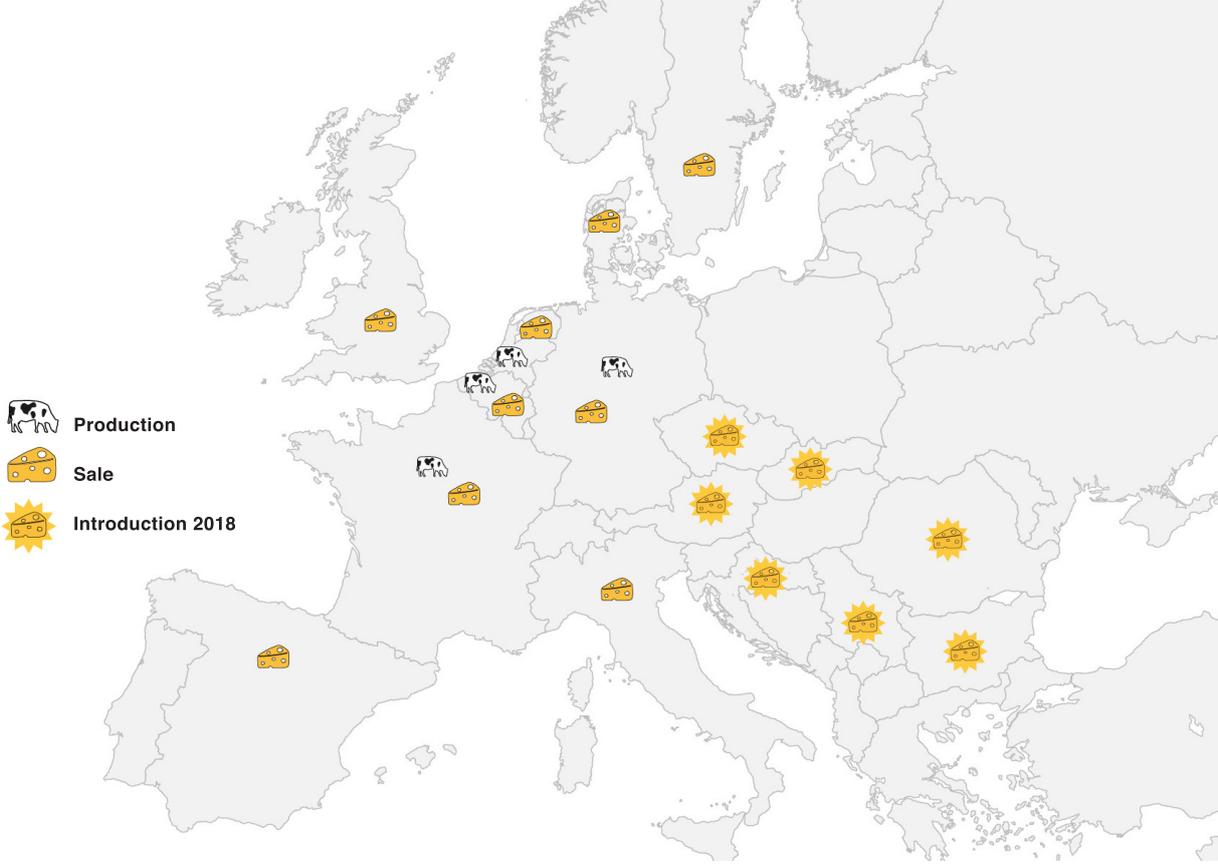


Figure 7: Countries where products with the Meadow Milk logo are produced, sold and to be introduced.

In the Netherlands products in practically the entire dairy range are available with the guarantee that they have been produced from meadow milk; products such as toasties, sandwiches and meat replacers were introduced in 2017. An estimated one billion euros of Meadow Milk is sold in the Netherlands. In Germany a wide range of products is now also available, with the Meadow Milk logo or an alternative quality mark. In Belgium, the system is leading for cheese and liquid dairy produce. Belgian supermarkets are also preparing to launch an even wider range of Meadow Milk products. In the other countries, the main product sold with the Meadow Milk logo is Dutch cheese. The food service sector has also shown interest in using the logo. Whether and how this will be possible is currently being investigated.

MEADOW MILK LOGO SCAN IN SUPERMARKETS

Commissioned by the Grazing Foundation, IRI performed a scan to monitor use of the Meadow Milk logo. IRI investigated whether the Meadow Milk logo is justifiably and correctly used on consumer packaging. The principal conclusion is that the Meadow Milk logo is widely used – a total of more than 600 products with the Meadow Milk logo were scrutinised – and in the majority of cases use was found to be justifiable and correct.

2.2 THE GRAZING CERTIFICATE; PART A, B AND C

Central to the safeguarding of Meadow Dairy Products are the dairy companies which collect raw milk from dairy farmers, the transport companies which transport the raw milk from the dairy farm to the dairy company and the various production locations which (further) process the dairy products into the end product. These companies are eligible to be granted a Grazing Certificate. Depending on their role in the production chain, they may be eligible for part A, B and/or C.

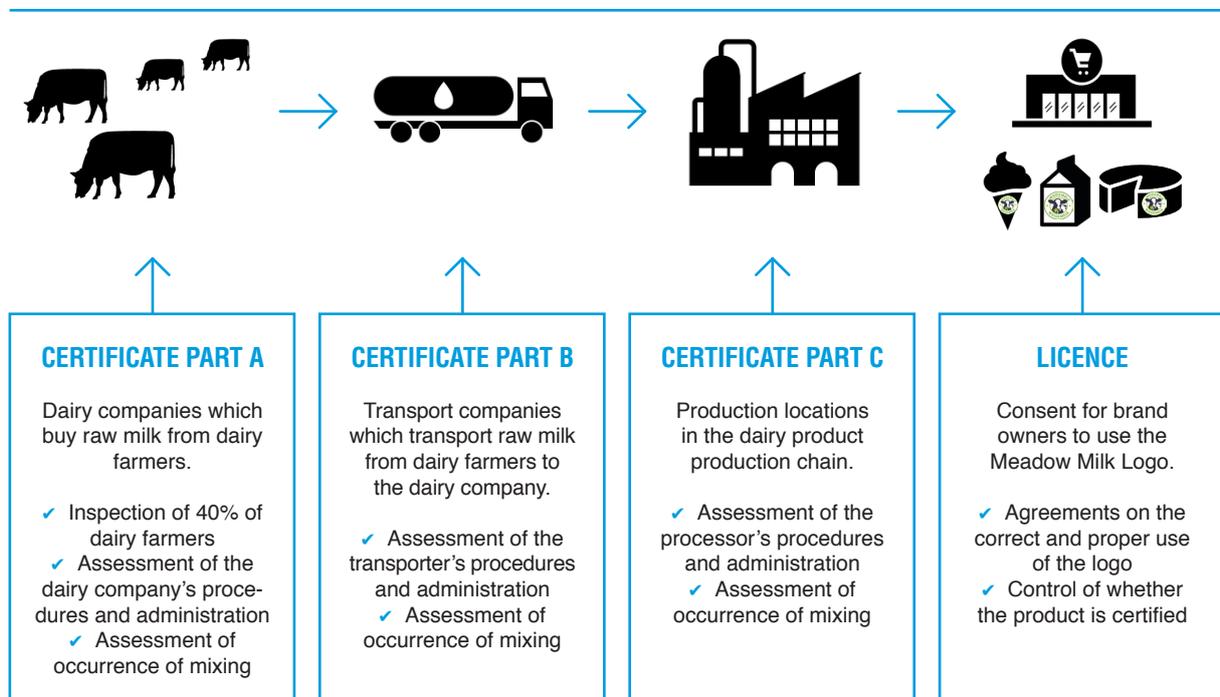


Figure 8: Every link in the production of a Meadow Dairy Product must hold a valid Grazing Certificate. Depending on its role in the production chain, this may be part A, B and/or C. When the entire dairy product supply chain has been certified, the end product may be sold to the consumer with the Meadow Milk Logo on the packaging, once the brand owner has received a Licence from the Grazing Foundation.

2.3 SYSTEM OF AUDITS AND CONTROL

All certificate holders are assessed at the outset and annually thereafter by a Certifying Body (CB) which is affiliated to the Grazing Foundation. The assessment by the CB is known as an audit. Figure 1 summarises the points that the CB takes into account during the assessment. In brief, the CB checks that the milk flow originates from cows which have access to grazing and that the milk flow throughout the production chain is not mixed with non-grazing milk flows. The following CBs are currently affiliated to the Foundation:

- Qlip, Leusden NL (for Grazing Certificate parts A, B and C)
- Melkcontrolecentrum Vlaanderen (MCC), Lier BE (for Grazing Certificate part A)

All farms which hold a Grazing Certificate are audited every year. In brief, the audit consists of the following elements:

- The CB assesses the Control Plan drawn up by the company applying for certification or the certified company. See section 6 for an explanation of the Control Plan.
- Following approval of the Control Plan, the CB visits the company and assesses whether it is operating as described in the Control Plan.
- For Certificate part A: annual inspection of 40% of dairy farmers supplying meadow milk in the following percentages:
 - Minimum of 10%: unannounced, based on a risk assessment, by an accredited CB
 - Minimum of 15%: announced, based on random sample, by an accredited CB
 - Minimum of 15%: announced, based on random sample, by a Meadow Dairy Company or an accredited CBI

RESULTS DAIRY FARM INSPECTIONS 2017

The table below shows the results of the inspections performed on dairy farms in 2017. The number of farms participating in the scheme has risen compared with 2016. The inspection objectives as described above were realised.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of participating dairy farms	9.802	9.441	9.565	11.450	15.828
Inspected dairy farms	39,6%	67,1%	34,1%	49,3%	44,1%
– inspected by CB after risk assessment	n.v.t.	n.v.t.	n.v.t.	17,0%	14,5%
– inspected by CB	10,2%	10,3%	28,5%	26,4%	22,2%
– inspected by dairy company	29,4%	56,9%	5,6%	5,9%	7,4%
Repeat inspection*	10,1%	8,1%	2,3%	9,4%	3,9%
Positive assessments*	95,5%	97,4%	98,7%	98,6%	98,4%
Negative assessments*	4,5%	2,6%	1,3%	1,4%	1,6%

Table 6: Inspection results dairy farms, 2013-2017.

* % of inspected dairy farmers.

The main reasons for repeat inspections are:

- Failure to maintain correct administrative records (non-compliance will be checked at the repeat inspection).
- An insufficient percentage of cattle grazing in the meadow was established (non-compliance will be checked at the repeat inspection).

NB: A repeat inspection regarding the second point may be due to practical herd management reasons. For example, inspection took place around milking time or because weather conditions (too wet or too hot) on the day of inspection prevented the cows from having meadow access.

The main reasons for a negative assessment are:

- Structurally insufficient percentage of cows grazing in the meadow to meet the standard of 120 days, six hours a day.
- No or insufficient grazing registration.
- Insufficient availability of grass/ too few hectares per cow available for grazing, so that the cows are prevented from exhibiting their natural grazing behaviour.

Dairy farmers who receive a negative assessment will be removed from the list of suppliers of meadow milk.

2.4 CERTIFICATES

The increase in the number of certificates continued in 2017. At the end 2017 almost 200 certificates had been awarded. In 2017 the number of certified farms in our neighbouring countries also increased.

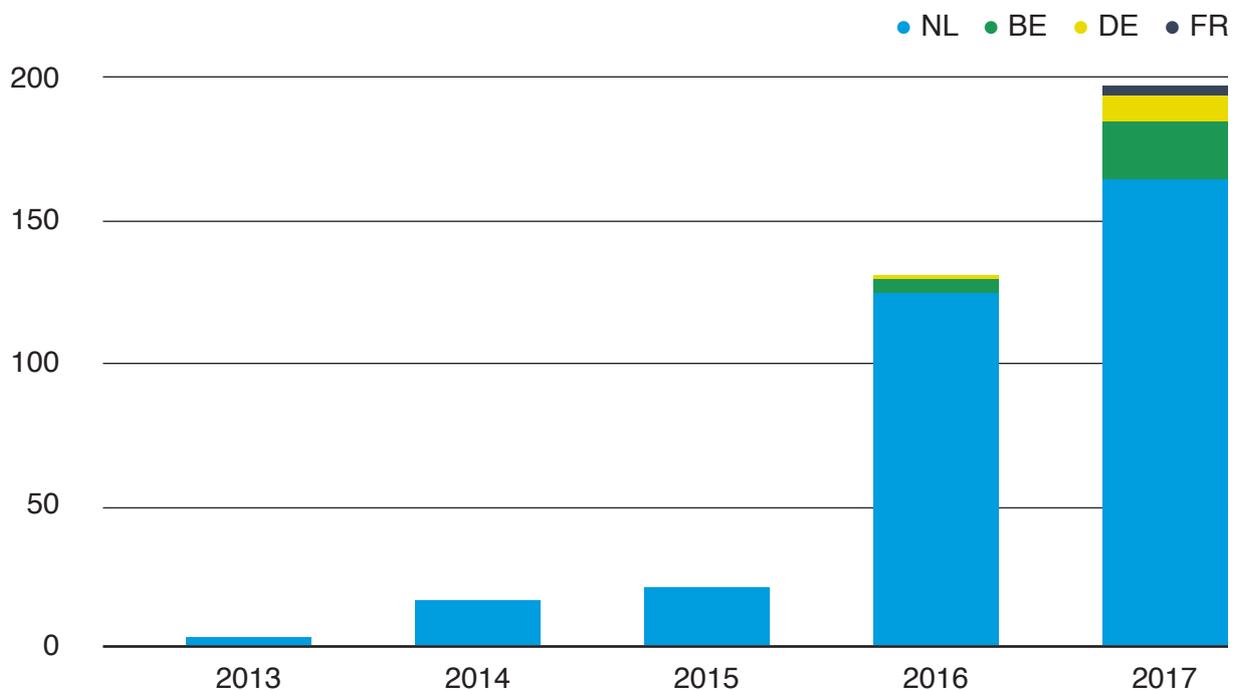


Figure 9: Total number of certificates per country.

In 2017, 107 farms had one or more valid Grazing Certificates. The latest overview can always be found on <http://www.weidemelk.nl/nl/deelnemers>. The table below show the number of farms and the type of certificate (part):

Part certificate combination	NL	BE	DE	FR	Total per part certificate
ABC	11	3	2	1	17
A		1			1
B	2				2
C	44	2	2		48
AB	3		2		5
AC	1	1			2
BC	2				2
FDP	30				30
Total per country	93	7	6	1	107

Table 7: number of certified farms, categorised per country and part certificate combination.
FDP= Farm dairy processor.

2.5 INTEGRITY PROGRAMME

In 2017 the Foundation performed a number of activities in the context of its integrity program. The purpose is to ensure that Certifying Bodies (CBs) affiliated to the Foundation ensure a full, uniform, independent and impartial process of certification and auditing. An office audit was performed at both CBs. Two harmonisation meetings were convened; one for activities relating to dairy farm inspections and one for process inspection at dairy companies, transporters and processors in the chain.

2.6 DEMONSTRATING GRAZING USING A DIGITAL MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

Starting in 2017, dairy farmers can use a digital measurement system to register the time individual cows spend grazing. This system enables them to demonstrate compliance with the conditions regarding meadow access. The system used must appear on the White List of measurement systems for individual cow grazing time. Dairy farmers wishing to use this option must inform their dairy company when applying for meadow grazing. The standard deadlines when applying for meadow grazing also apply in this case.

If a company wishes to have its measurement system placed on the White List, an application for assessment can be submitted to Qlip. Qlip will assess the system and advise the Grazing Foundation on whether the system can be approved. The conditions and the latest White List of measurement systems for registration of individual cow grazing time can be found on the website of the Grazing Foundation (www.weidemelk.nl). At the end of 2017, five measurement systems were listed.



CONTACT

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