
STICHTING WEIDEGANG

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



NIEUWE GRACHT 3
2011 NB HAARLEM

023 23 020 23
INFO@STICHTINGWEIDEGANG.NL

2018 IN SUMMARY

PERCENTAGE OF DAIRY FARMS WITH MEADOW GRAZING

In 2018, the number of dairy farms where cows had access to meadow grazing increased to its highest level since monitoring of the Sustainable Dairy Chain started in 2012. Data provided by dairy companies shows that 82.0 percent of dairy farmers now give their cows access to meadow grazing.

| Year | Total | Full grazing | Partial grazing |
|------|-------|--------------|-----------------|
| 2018 | 82,0% | 74,8% | 7,3% |
| 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% | - | - |

% of dairy farms with meadow grazing in the Netherlands. Source: ZuivelNL.

INCREASE IN GRAZING THANKS TO NEW GAZERS

The increase in access to meadow grazing is partly attributable to new grazers. On hundreds of farms, farmers have decided to let their cows roam the meadows again, after having previously kept their cattle confined to the barn year-round. The Grazing Foundation supports new grazers in the framework of the New Grazers project (Nieuwe Weiders). Since 2015, around 1400 dairy farmers have received guidance and support in the process that leads to starting meadow grazing. In the period that they started grazing over 400 dairy farmers were supported, either by a plan of action or by two years of intensive coaching.

ROLL OUT NEW DUTCH GRAZING

The New Dutch Grazing (Nieuw Nederlands Weiden) system was developed in 2017. The initiative is the ideal solution for dairy farmers who want a simple way to graze their cows. The concept was rolled out in 2018. GrazingCoaches advise dairy farmers on how to introduce and implement New Dutch Grazing on their farms, teaching material has been developed by teachers active in green education and various farm visitors have integrated the concept into their communication and advice. Important farm visitors have also integrated the concept into their advisory services. Six demo farms provide information on the practical aspects of the system to groups of dairy farmers and farm visitors. The farms can be visited by these groups to see just how easy it is to implement good grazing practice.

DROUGHT

The 2018 grazing season was characterised by a spring with strong grass growth, followed by

an exceptionally dry summer. This drought was experienced in all the countries where dairy farmers graze their cows graze according to the conditions of the foundation. The drought forced a number of farmers to temporarily stop grazing. Thanks to the good conditions in autumn, practically all the dairy farmers had no difficulties offering their cows sufficient time in the meadow.

GROWTH OF MEADOW MILK CONTINUES

The number of participants in the foundation's Meadow Milk scheme continued to grow across the board in 2018. At the end of 2018, almost 17,000 dairy farmers, 130 certificate holders and 30 licence holders had joined the Meadow Milk scheme. In 2018, ABCG from Germany joined the scheme as a Certification Body. A wide variety of dairy products is now available with the Meadow Milk logo, ranging from fresh dairy produce and cheese to ice cream and products that contain dairy, such as sandwiches and cheese souffles.

In 2018, a number of new dairy quality marks were introduced or announced, such as On the Way to PlanetProof, Beter Leven Keurmerk and a line of dairy products from supermarket chain Albert Heijn that fulfil additional sustainability requirements. All these new schemes use the requirements for grazing defined by the Grazing Foundation as their basic conditions.



Countries where products with the Meadow Milk logo are produced and sold.

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:

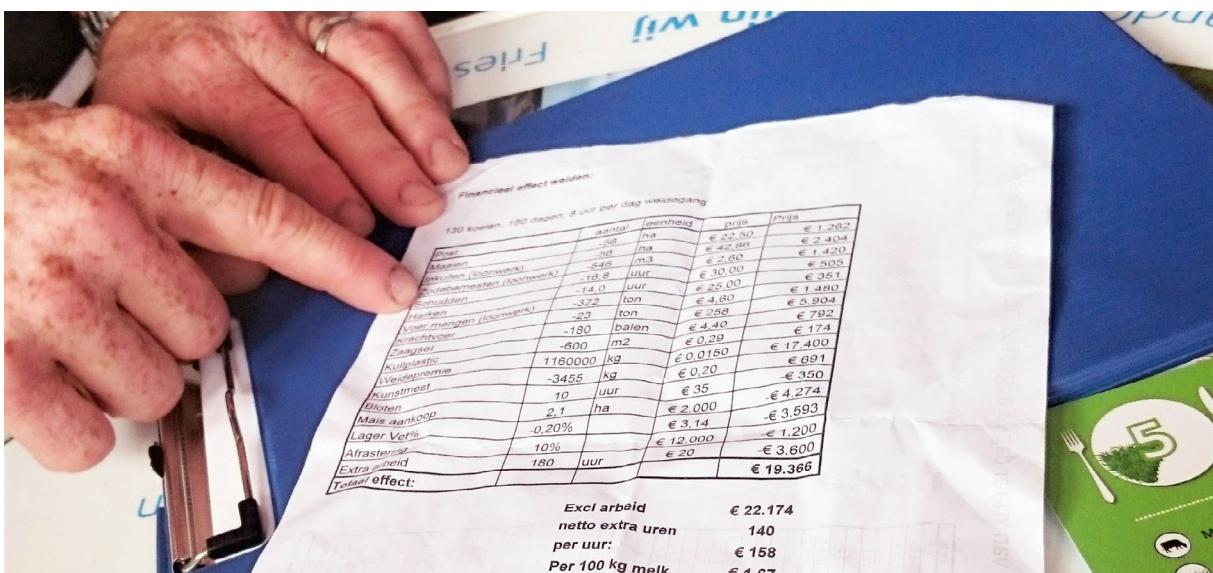
- Expertise: boosting the levels of expertise and knowledge of grass and grazing and recruiting New Grazers.
- Quality Assurance: safeguarding the integrity of meadow dairy products and issuing the Meadow Milk logo.

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 achieve this ambition, so-called New Grazers (Nieuwe Weiders) - dairy farmers who previously confined their cows to the barn for years - have been guided and supported, and a new, simple and robust grazing system has been developed: New Dutch Grazing (Nieuw Nederlands Weiden).

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 guidance to dairy farmers who already have experience with grazing or to dairy farmers who are planning to start or recently started grazing (New Grazers). They also give presentations to 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 NEW GRAZERS

The increase in access to meadow grazing is partly attributable to new grazers. On hundreds of farms, farmers have decided to let their cows roam the meadows again, after having previously kept their cattle confined to the barn year-round. The Grazing Foundation supports new grazers in the framework of the New Grazers project. Since 2015, around 1400 dairy farmers have received guidance and support in the process that leads to starting meadow grazing. In the period when they started grazing over 400 dairy farmers were supported, either by a plan of action or by two years of intensive coaching.

Dairy companies and other farm visitors have played a key role in recruiting New Grazers to join the project. Their efforts are supported by communication material: flyers, advertisements in member magazines and free publicity in trade magazines for dairy farmers. In 2018, approximately 300 dairy farmers were supported, either by a plan of action or by two years of intensive coaching, in the period when they started grazing.

OPEN DAYS

In April and May 2018, six New Grazers, and their GrazingCoaches, organised open days for their fellow dairy farmers. The primary aim was to encourage farmers who still keep their cows indoors to make the switch by demonstrating how the system works in practice. During guided tours of the barns and the meadows, the New Grazers demonstrated how grazing is integrated in daily herd management and there was an opportunity to ask questions. These open days were visited by four to 10 participants per dairy farmer. The open days generated extensive media exposure by trade journals (Veeteelt, Nieuwe Oogst, Melkvee Magazine). GrazingCoaches also supported open days that were organised by FrieslandCampina. On these open days, the emphasis was on partial grazing systems.



FINAL PUSH

Preparations for the final year of the project started after summer 2018. A final push was launched to ensure that dairy farmers who start grazing in the last year of the project are also supported: central to the approach is that specific questions raised by dairy farmers are prioritised and that bite-sized products are offered.

From 2019, New Grazers can use of the following advisory tools: orientation before starting grazing, plan of action for starting grazing and full support when starting grazing.

1.2 NEW DUTCH GRAZING

In 2017, New Dutch Grazing was developed to promote and embed grazing in the herd management systems of dairy farmers. New Dutch Grazing is the 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. New Dutch Grazing combines a higher intake of fresh grass with good milk production. The system is transparent for the farmer and the cow, as both of them know exactly what is expected each day. New Dutch Grazing facilitates a robust grazing system grazing suitable for fluctuating (weather) conditions and enables plots contiguous to the farmhouse to be mowed along with plots in other locations at the same time. New Dutch Grazing is also suitable for a well-organised grazing system with a large herd, automatic milking systems or for farmers who aim for high milk production.

STEP 1

Divide the pasture close to the farm into sub-plots of equal size (using flexible wire).

STEP 2

Every 4-5-6 weeks, select which plots you want to use in your grazing plan.

STEP 3

Rotate the cows in your grazing plan by using a new plot each day.

New Dutch Grazing: three steps.

TOOLS

The concept was rolled out in 2018. Starting in the grazing season of 2018, GrazingCoaches from the Grazing Foundation can advise dairy farmers on how to implement New Dutch Grazing on their farms. Various tools have been developed to help. Teaching material has been developed for teachers active in green education. The expertise, experiences and tools have been shared with various categories of farm visitors via a crash course. All key farm visitors have now integrated New Dutch Grazing as the main principle in their advice in grazing.

DEMO FARMS

From 2018, groups of dairy farmers and farm visitors can visit six demo farms on New Dutch Grazing to gain information about the practical aspects of the new grazing concept and see how the system works in practice. Data is also being collected on the farms to provide more insight into the technical results of this method of grazing. These demo farms are located in various regions of the Netherlands on a variety of soil types and vary from two, three to seven cows per hectare of plot contiguous to the farmhouse. Some of the farms have a traditional milking parlour, others use automatic robot milking systems.



Location of the six demo farms.

1.3 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 2018, 56 GrazingCoaches and 18 GrazingTeachers were active.

In 2018, the Grazing Foundation organised various immersion days for the GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers at the Practical Institute for Grazing. Central was the New Dutch Grazing Concept. 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).

CRASH COURSE

In the autumn of 2018, a crash course for consultants and farm visitors was organised, with a focus on New Dutch Grazing and the corresponding tools. The training session were attended by three classes of participants, including in-company training for Flynt. A total of 54 farm visitors received training.



PARTIAL GRAZING GUIDE

The Grazing Foundation has developed and published a guide outlining the options for partial grazing. Offering all the cows full access to grazing is difficult, or even impossible, for some farmers. Partial grazing can be a solution in this case. The best way to organise partial grazing differs per farm. The guide helps dairy farmers make a well-considered choice regarding which animals to graze. The pros and cons of grazing are listed for each animal category, and the guide offers advice on how to graze in a practical and well-organised way. The partial grazing guide can be downloaded and ordered on: stichtingweidegang.nl/kennis-en-advies/kennisbank. Trade journals Veeteelt, Nieuwe Oogst, Melkvee Magazine and Melk have all published articles giving extensive coverage to the publication of the partial grazing guide.

MEADOW MAN AND GRASS GROWTH FIGURES

ABZ Diervoeding, Agrifirm, CAV Den Ham, De Heus, De Samenwerking, Schothorst Feed Research, ForFarmers, AgruniekRijnvallei, Eurofins Agro, Wageningen UR and the Grazing Foundation gathered data on grass growth and grass quality every week in various regions for Veeteelt magazine. Together with a grass growth forecast, the data was published in the Veeteelt e-mail newsletter (20,000 readers). Along with the grass growth figures, a tip from the Meadow Man is also published every week. The Meadow Man is also active on social media. Activities include publishing his monthly column from Melkvee Magazine.



ANIMAL HEALTH

In collaboration with a group of veterinarians, the availability of expertise on grazing and animal health was identified in 2018. The following topics were discussed:

- Grazing plans for different animal categories such as young stock, heifers, productive cows and dry cows.
- Conditions for (forage/roughage) feed management.
- Disorders and infections.

Intensive knowledge sharing between veterinary and grazing experts has created an overview of the main aspects of grazing for veterinarians and veterinary knowledge for grazing experts. It has also revealed various aspects in which both specialist areas can reinforce each other. The expertise will be shared further in the form of training courses for groups of veterinarians in 2019. In addition, an overview article will be published in the *Tijdschrift voor Diergeneeskunde*. (Journal for Veterinary Medicine).

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. 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:

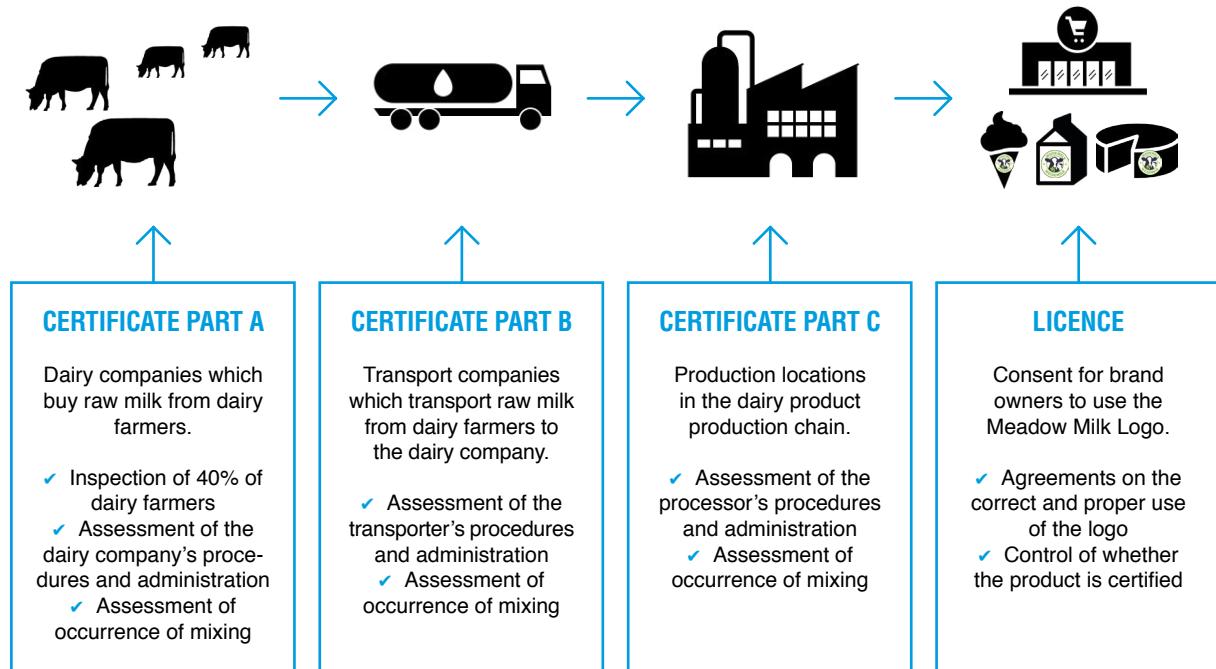
- The product is a dairy product or a product of which at least 10% of the dry matter consists of dairy ingredients, and the product is intended for human consumption.
- Throughout the production chain, the producers have worked in accordance with the requirements for grazing and meadow dairy products 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.

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.

To facilitate ease of use, and to accommodate users who do not speak English, 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 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.



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.

2.2 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. The above figure summarises the points that the CB takes into account during the assessment; 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 Netherlands (for Grazing Certificate parts A, B and C)
- Melkcontrolecentrum Vlaanderen (MCC), Lier Belgium (for Grazing Certificate part A)
- ABCG, Alsfeld Germany (for Grazing Certificate part A)

All farms which hold a Grazing Certificate are audited every year. 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.
- 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 risk assessment, by accredited CB
 - Minimum of 15%: announced, based on random sample, by accredited CB
 - Minimum of 15%: announced, based on random sample, by Meadow Dairy Company or accredited CB

2.3 CERTIFICATION BODIES AND INTEGRITY PROGRAMME

In August 2018, a third CB joined the foundation, namely ABCG from Alsfeld, Germany. For the moment, ABCG will only perform audits and inspections for Grazing Part A.

In the context of the integrity programme, all CBs have been audited by an independent QA expert. The huge progress made by the CBs in the quality assurance processes compared with the first office audits performed at the end of 2016 by the foundation was particularly noticeable. A few minor areas for improvement have been identified. The overall conclusion is that the integrity programme appears to be working effectively.

2.4 HARMONISATION

Harmonisation meetings were held in April and May 2018; one with inspectors (employees who inspect dairy farmers) and one with auditors (employees who audit Control plans and production locations of certificate holders). The purpose of harmonisation is to safeguard the quality and uniformity of the certification and inspection activities of CBs. During the meetings various cases were discussed, which were proposed by the CBs beforehand. Inspectors (inspectors, auditors and reviewers) from Qlip and MCC attended the meetings.

A meeting with A-certificate holders was organised in July by the Grazing Foundation. This was the third time a meeting was held. Of the 24 dairy companies with an A-certificate, 14 sent one or two representatives. The participants recognise the importance of clear and strict inspections to safeguard the scheme's credibility.

2.5 CERTIFICATES

At the end of 2018, there were a total of 130 companies with one or more valid Grazing Certificates. Together, they have a total of 244 part certificates. The latest overview can always be found on: www.weidemelk.nl/nl/deelnemers.

| Certification combinations | Netherlands | Belgium | Germany | France | Total |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| All three (ABC) | 12 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 20 |
| One or two | 58 | 8 | 2 | | 68 |
| Farm dairy processor | 41 | 1 | | | 42 |
| Total | 111 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 130 |

Number of certified farms, categorised per country and certificate combination.

2.6 RESULTS DAIRY FARM INSPECTIONS 2018

The table below shows the results of the inspections performed on dairy farms in 2018. The number of farms participating in the scheme has risen compared with 2017. The inspection objectives as described above were realised.

| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of participating dairy farms | 9.802 | 9.441 | 9.565 | 11.450 | 15.828 | 16.837 |
| Inspected dairy farms | 39,6% | 67,1% | 34,1% | 49,3% | 44,1% | 47,4% |
| – inspected by CB after risk assessment | n.v.t. | n.v.t. | n.v.t. | 17,0% | 14,5% | 15,7% |
| – inspected by CB | 10,2% | 10,3% | 28,5% | 26,4% | 22,2% | 22,9% |
| – inspected by dairy company | 29,4% | 56,9% | 5,6% | 5,9% | 7,4% | 8,8% |
| Repeat inspection* | 10,1% | 8,1% | 2,3% | 9,4% | 3,9% | 3,3% |
| Positive assessments* | 95,5% | 97,4% | 98,7% | 98,6% | 98,4% | 98,9% |
| Negative assessments* | 4,5% | 2,6% | 1,3% | 1,4% | 1,6% | 1,1% |

Inspection results dairy farms, 2013-2018.

* % of inspected dairy farmers.

2.7 LICENCES

30 licences for the use of the Meadow Milk logo were issued:

Aldi Inkoop B.V., Arla Foods B.V., Catharinadal kaasmakerij, Cono Kaasmakers, De Producent, De Zuivelhoeve Produktie BV., De Zuivelmakers B.V., Detailresult, Distributie Trial B.V., DOC Dairy Partners, FrieslandCampina, HEMA, Holland Foodz B.V., Hoogvliet, IJspaleis B.V., Jumbo, PLUS, Lidl Belgium GmbH & Co. KG, Lidl Nederland GmbH, METRO ag, Robberse Kaas B.V., Savencia Fromage & Dairy Deutschland GmbH, Streekselecties B.V., Superunie, Unie-Kaas Kaatsheuvel B.V., Vecozuivel, Westland Kaasspecialiteiten B.V., Zijerveld, Zuivelbedrijf den Eelder B.V., Zuivelcoöperatie Deltamilk B.A.





CONTACT

For any questions, comments or suggestions, please contact the secretariat of the foundation via:

Stichting Weidegang
Nieuwe Gracht 3
2011 NB Haarlem

023 23 020 23
info@stichtingweidegang.nl
www.stichtingweidegang.nl

