



Implementing Circular Food Systems in the Dutch regions

TEAM C

The solutions for global problems like climate change and decreasing biodiversity are to be found locally. That is the starting point for WUR's "Finding Answers Together" strategy. The region as a place for public and private actors to collaborate in addressing environmental and societal challenges for safe and affordable food is increasingly recognized as well as visible in society. In order to create better knowledge transfer from research towards application in the field the need of, and the collaboration with these end users, is more relevant as ever before.

An approach for collaborating in the regions

As a starting point for working on a safe and circular food systems in the regions three geographic zones are defined: North Netherlands, East Netherlands and South Netherlands. The regions cover the natural resources on land, open water and the sea. These three zones are also characterized by the presence of an experimental zone for the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

Together with regional partners groundbreaking ideas can be developed and research proposed in addition to developing better education programs for students and professionals. Together with local entrepreneurs, WUR encourages "Living labs" where solutions for more circular food systems are explored.

About our work in the regions

North Netherlands

In the Northern Netherlands, government, entrepreneurs and education are actively exploring the transition to circular agriculture. Experience has already been gained by partners in the field with area-oriented work and work at experimental fields. As a collaboration partner for WUR, they offer many knowledge development opportunities.

For the abovementioned reason, WUR aims to work strategically with entrepreneurs, universities and governments in the provinces of Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe. The nature-inclusive circular farm Eytemaheert is an example of this. Together with the owners of the farm a research program in which the concept of circularity will be tested. As well, with the University of Groningen WUR fills a full portfolio with research projects. With 6 other knowledge institutes WUR is partner in a deal with the national government aiming more nature-inclusive agriculture.

East Netherlands

Strategic collaboration is important to transfer knowledge between WUR and the initiatives in the Achterhoek (region in east Netherlands).

In the Achterhoek there are several initiatives like farmers cooperation De Marke and farmers' association Vruchtbare Kringloop Achterhoek. For example, dairy research farm De Marke will work with multidisciplinary teams on the development of the circular (dairy) farm of the future on sandy soil. At the same time, the farm is exploring new forms of ownership, farm income and connection to society.

South Netherlands

Together with partners in the provinces of Zeeland, North Brabant and Limburg WUR is keen to develop research to underpin their aim of transitioning to more circular food system.



The animal farming sector on the sandy soils of Limburg and Brabant is the main example of intensive agriculture which is on the eve of major shifts in the coming years driven by changing governmental policy and regulations. What will this region look like in 2030? Both on the landscape level as well socio-economically and how can actors respond to this? Additionally the province of Zeeland has very specific land and aquatic resources linked to the food system. Research is needed concerning the interactions of land and sea and the food system linked to. Salinization linked to the availability of fresh water for example and the efficiency of nutrients used for food production are areas that would benefit from more circular food system thinking.

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This sheet is a product of TEAM C, an agile team that has worked on one circular food system based on the principles of Imke de Boer and Martin van Ittersum on behalf of Martin Scholten

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