



van Wezel - de Roy - farm manager



Kees van Wezel



68 hectares



improvement of  
grassland management

## COWS GRAZING IN HERB-RICH GRASSLAND IN THE NETHERLANDS

Sustainable farming can be achieved by supplying as few inputs as possible, such as artificial fertilizers and concentrates, and by using the natural resources as much as possible. Based on this philosophy, Kees van Wezel from Roosendaal (Netherlands, 68 ha, sandy soil, 140 pro-CROSS dairy cows (Holstein x Montbéliarde x Viking Red) and 2 milking robots) works with grazing in herb-rich grasslands. The herb-rich grasslands consist of a mix of grasses (such as timothy and cocksfoot), herbs (such as sainfoin, salad burnet, chicory), and clovers (such as red clover and white clover) which gives a lot of biodiversity and a stable grassland production. The herb-rich grasslands were established by re-seeding using rye as a cover crop. After the second year, each year 5-10 kilo of herbs per hectare is overseeded. In addition, irrigation of the herb-rich grasslands helps to maintain the herbs in the sward. The plots are fertilized with solid manure and bokashi, manure from the grazing cows and supplemental slurry if necessary.

Kees considers it important that the herb-rich grasslands are not grazed too short, to about 10-15 of grass height, to protect soil life and to ensure rapid plant regrowth. He also allows the plants to grow for longer periods. This is achieved through strip grazing with a lead and back fence, where fresh grass is provided several times a day. Grass that remains is not considered a loss, but rather a yield for the next cut. Also with this management, ensuring that the cows get enough dry matter remains a challenge. Another challenge is the drought sensitivity of the herb-rich grasslands on this sandy soil. However, to achieve better harmony with nature, Kees van Wezel believes that a transition from "flat and tight" to dynamic herb-rich grasslands is beneficial.

### Farmer Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onKV1cqZtRg>

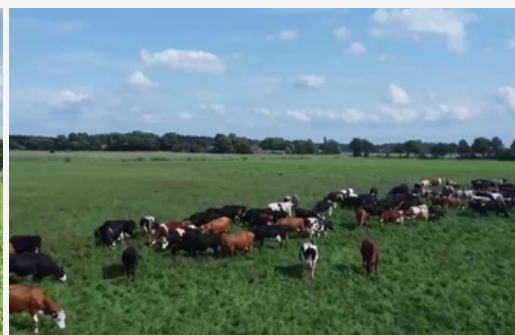


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