

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

After high school and agricultural studies, Agnes de Boer joined her mother as a farmer. Initially, they merged their 60-cow farm with a neighbour's and switched to organic farming in 2009. By 2011, Agnes and her mother resumed independent farming with 60 cows on 47 hectares.



Figure 1. Agnes (33) with the audience award for the Best Grassland Farmer (October, 2023)

In 2019, contractor Klaas Jan Mulder joined permanently. From 2021 to 2022, they transitioned from organic to regenerative farming, transforming their dairy farm in Leens, Groningen. The base is that grass is the only food for the cows. By introducing strip grazing and the New Zealand ABC system in 2021, they increased grass yield from 7,500 to 9,500 kilos of dry matter per hectare, eliminating concentrate feed and halving costs. Their cows, milked by a robot, graze day and night on the grass, improving health and milk production.

They now produce 400,000 kilos of milk annually from 75 cows on grass alone.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

The farm is now self-sufficient in roughage, enhancing omega-3 fatty acids in the milk. Innovative cow walkways and underfloor drainage have minimized grass trampling, extending the grazing season and reducing indoor time from 7 months to 101 days. After two years of intensive learning and applying grazing management techniques, Agnes was awarded the "Best Grassland Farmer" audience award by Veeteelt in 2023.



Figure 2. Grazing cows

Agnes encourages other farmers to trust in the power of grass and cows. Transitioning to environmentally responsible, regenerative cow farming is feasible, financially profitable, and provides mental tranquility and scenic beauty, all of which she enjoys.

USEFUL LINKS

www.instagram.com/boerderij_edzemaheerd
<https://veeteelt.nl/beste-graslandboer/bgb-finalist-agnes-de-boer-kostprijs-gehalveerd-door-volledig-grasrantsoen>;
<https://puregraze.com/natuur-inclusieve-landbouw/pure-grazers-genomineerd-voor-beste-graslandboer-2023>