

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Since January 2024, Merel Gerritse and Irma Brassinga have been running Boerderij Eetmeerbosch, a 2-hectare CSA farm dedicated to regenerative and agroecological agriculture. Merel, a former HR-manager, and Irma, an anthropologist, moved into professional farming after training at institutions such as the Warmonderhof Foundation. Designed by Wouter van Eck in 2017, Eetmeerbosch is located near the industrial area of Nijmegen and is supported by volunteers and hundreds of self-harvest pass subscribers.



Figure 1. Irma (left) and Merel (right), co-directors of Eetmeerbosch (2023)

The food forest serves as a biologically diverse wildlife sanctuary and community space. Local schools and care institutions including Huis van Compassie Nijmegen, collaborate with Eetmeerbosch to provide safe spaces for young and vulnerable people to experience self-harvesting. Each week, Eetmeerbosch supplies ingredients for communal meals for around 60 people, fostering a compassionate social environment. Children and young people

learn about vegetables, seasonal rhythms, and growing food.

In April, Irma and Merel successfully completed their expansion crowdfunding campaign, surpassing their €20,000 target with 164 backers, demonstrating strong community support.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Eetmeerbosch introduced an innovative solidarity payment system for the self-harvest pass from April to December. Subscribers pay fees based on the farmer's wage, farming costs, and their financial capacity, ensuring income certainty for the farmer and accommodating different economic situations of self-harvesters. The solidarity payment encourages rethinking socio-economic equality and mutual support, aligning with Eetmeerbosch's mission to create a healthy, resilient, biodiverse landscape and an engaged community that strengthens social sustainability.



Figure 2. Open day visitors (2024)

USEFUL LINKS

<https://eetmeerbosch.nl/>;
www.instagram.com/boerderij_eetmeerbosch/;
<https://eetbaarnijmegen.nl/>