
GRAZING FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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2022 SUMMARY

PERCENTAGE OF DAIRY FARMERS WITH GRAZING STABILISES

Compared with 2021 and following years of growth, the percentage of dairy farmers that allow their cows to graze stabilised in 2022. The percentage of partial grazing has been decreasing since 2016. In 2022, 78.1% of dairy farmers grazed their dairy cows for at least 6 hours a day for at least 120 days a year. Some 5.8% of dairy farmers allowed some of their dairy cows or young stock to graze.

Year	Total	Full grazing	Partial grazing
2022	83,9%	78,1%	5,8%
2021	84,0%	77,9%	6,1%
2020	83,7%	77,5%	6,2%
2019	83,0%	76,7%	6,3%
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: Sustainable Dairy Chain (Duurzame Zuivelketen).

INTEGRATE GRAZING INTO FARM MANAGEMENT

The focus of the foundation's knowledge activities is to embed grazing even more firmly in the management practice of dairy farmers. The principle is that meeting the criteria that define grazing is not the central focus for dairy farmers, but rather giving form to the two primary functions of grazing: harvesting grass and feeding cows. Optimally interpreting and satisfying both criteria contributes to the efficiency and revenues of dairy farmers and helps achieve other sustainability goals.

In the context of the Grip on Grass project, GrazingCoaches mentored 250 dairy farmers individually and in study groups in order to gain experience with more grazing, combined with a reduction in the crude protein content in the ration.

GRAZING YOUNG STOCK

In order to rear a good grazing cow, it is important to graze young stock. A new standard has been developed by the foundation for this purpose. There are three variants for dairy farmers to choose from. In all variants, the focus of the first year is on creating and developing immunity to gutworms and lungworms. If grazing was possible when they were calves, heifers can optimally utilise meadow grass during grazing, even in pastures that are further away.

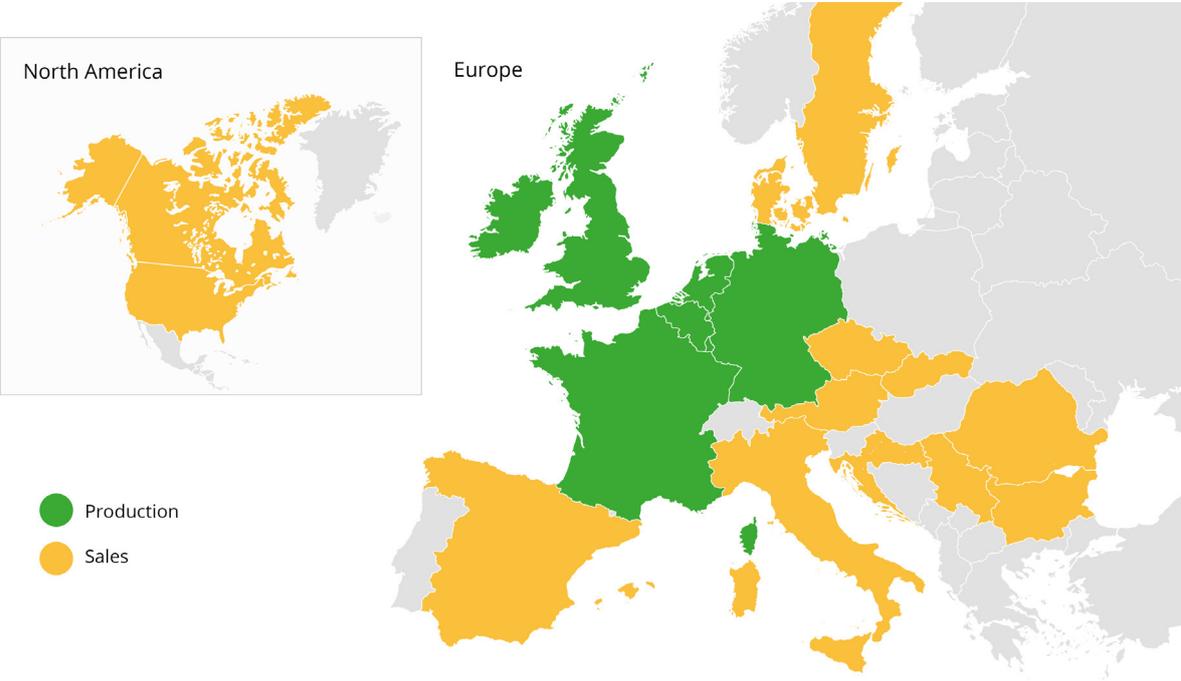
An assurance scheme has also been developed based on this system for the new standard for grazing young stock. The assurance scheme enables dairy farmers to demonstrate that they graze their young stock in compliance with the requirements established for this purpose in the certification scheme of the “On the way to Planet Proof” sustainability label.

GRAZING INDICATOR

In 2022, Qlip’s Grazing Indicator was authorised as a tool to perform risk-based grazing inspections. The Grazing Indicator analyses the composition of tank milk samples to assess whether dairy farmers are complying sufficiently with the requirements for grazing. The Grazing Indicator makes it possible to monitor and safeguard sufficient grazing all year round.

PRODUCTION OF MEADOW DAIRY AND THE USE OF THE MEADOW MILK LOGO

The figure below shows an overview of the countries in which meadow farm milk is produced and meadow dairy products are sold. Dairy farmers in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France graze their cows according to the conditions of the Grazing Foundation; in total there are over 15,000 participants. Meadow dairy is sold across Europe. The most important markets are the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. The requirements for meadow dairy are also integrated in the conditions of the On the way to Planet Proof label managed by SMK (Stichting Milieukeur), the Better Life label scheme initiated by the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals and the Better quality label of Dutch supermarket chain Albert Heijn.



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

INTRODUCTION

In this annual report, we report on the activities and results of the Grazing Foundation in 2022. 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:

- Knowledge: greater grassland and grazing skills.
- Safeguarding: safeguarding the integrity of meadow dairy products and issuing the Meadow Milk logo.

The focus of the knowledge activities is on stimulating as many dairy farmers as possible to graze their cattle outdoors and to maximise the benefits of meadow grazing. Two focal points were chosen to this end:

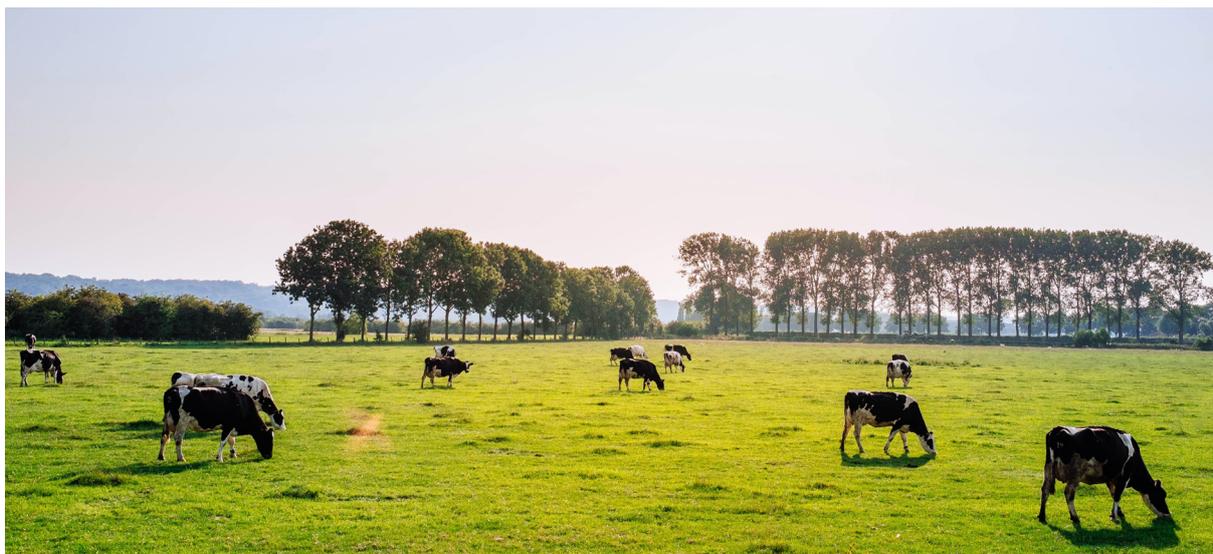
- • Advice and guidance for dairy farmers on better grazing practice or how to start grazing. This is given by the GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers, via the Meadow Man and by developing new grazing concepts. .
- Better integration of grazing into general farm management practice. We do this by expanding New Dutch Grazing into a total package for grassland and forage management. We are also putting this integrated approach to grazing on the agenda of suppliers and advisers, and in green education.

To safeguard this, ensuring a reliable scheme is vital that balances an independent and impartial certification, inspection and auditing process and a practical and workable system for stakeholders.

In Chapter 1, we show the progress made in 2022 for the knowledge activities. Chapter 2 sets out the facts and figures about safeguarding. Chapter 3 contains the foundation's financial statements.

1 KNOWLEDGE: GREATER GRASSLAND AND GRAZING SKILLS

Our network of GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers plays a pivotal role in strengthening grazing expertise. They are employed by various companies, agricultural consultancies, accountants, compound feed producers, seed companies and agricultural universities of applied science. They are in direct contact with everyday practice. After following a practical grazing study programme, they offer advice and guidance to dairy farmers, both new and experienced in grazing. The figures, which are still increasing annually, show clearly that this approach works.



In addition to our GrazingCoaches and GrazingTeachers, the foundation's secretariat also plays a major role in sharing knowledge. To this end, the foundation has developed ready-to-use concepts for practice and guidelines. These concepts and guidelines are propagated sector-wide by all major suppliers and advisers. To promote a uniform approach to grazing in which the dairy farmer is key, the foundation also contributes ideas on request about the implementation of research programmes and policy, such as the implementation of grazing for the reduction of ammonia emissions and the way in which grazing can be structured in the Eco-scheme of the new Common Agricultural Policy.

The foundation also communicates via the Meadow Man in Veeteelt en Melkvee Magazine about grass and grazing skills. The grass growth figures are published weekly on the Veeteelt website and in their newsletter. In addition, the foundation offers content to trade magazines to inform dairy farmers about the possibilities of grazing.

GRIP ON GRASS

The demonstration project 'Grip on Grass' was developed in consultation with sector parties with the aim of reducing ammonia emission. After an intake at the end of 2021, more than 250 dairy farmers were mentored individually and in study groups to gain experience with more grazing, combined with a reduction in the crude protein content in the ration.

Grass not only plays an important role in grazing; as the main protein source in the dairy ration, it also plays a key role in reducing the crude protein content in the ration. Moreover, steering with grass can be an essential part of achieving broader sustainability goals.



The project not only aims to promote knowledge sharing between dairy farmers about the skill of growing grass and grazing, it also wants to describe best practices that can be developed into a new standard that is actionable for the entire sector. For example, in 2022, the project developed a new standard for grazing young stock. In order to rear a good grazing cow, it is important to graze young stock. Being able to graze at a young age teaches cows to graze properly and create and develop immunity to gutworms and lungworms. Three variants have been developed for dairy farmers to choose from. The basis of all three variants is that young stock are grazed in a stable group for the first year to give dairy farmers a clear overview of animal health. This will allow immunity to gutworms and lungworms and good growth to be combined with minimal use of dewormers. If grazing was possible when they were calves, heifers can optimally utilise meadow grass during grazing, even in pastures that are further away.

PEAT MEADOWS AND GRAZING

One of the major concerns of dairy farmers on peat soil in relation to raising surface water levels is whether they can continue to graze their cows. Grazing is not only a characteristic part of peat meadow landscapes, but also an important part of the revenue model for dairy farmers because harvesting grass via meadows is cheaper and dairy companies offer a premium for meadow milk. In 2022, the foundation investigated the possibilities, limitations and points for attention of grazing on peat soil with a high water level. The investigation concluded that

grazing is crucial to create a dense, strong sward. Grass in a sward that is grazed produces more side shoots which gives the meadow more strength and load bearing capacity. Grazing with a high surface water level demands greater flexibility from both dairy farmers and the conditions dairy farming must comply with. In brief periods of heavy rain, the load bearing capacity of meadows with a high water level is reduced and these meadows are regularly unsuitable for grazing. This means that farmers who use this type of meadow must take advantage of every opportunity to graze or use farm machinery.

NEW GRAZERS

The New Grazers project was concluded in 2022. The project played a key role in stimulating grazing in dairy farming, achieving the objectives set out in the Grazing Covenant and altering the attitude towards and perception of grazing held by dairy farmers. The dairy farming sector now widely shares the opinion that grazing is also possible in combination with modern farm management systems and that starting with grazing is perfectly feasible even if grazing has not been practised for a number of years. In addition, grazing now enjoys broad support and dairy farmers are proud they have mastered the skill of grazing.

The project did not accomplish this result on its own but was part of a broad movement backed by the immense commitment to stimulate grazing of the dairy sector, the primary sector, advisers and suppliers, parties in the dairy chain, supermarkets and the authorities. The project was central to and acted as a key driver for other activities initiated by, for example, dairy companies. In addition, other advisers and suppliers, such as feed companies, have adopted and integrated the concept of mentoring dairy farmers that was central to the project into their own advisory services.

The project supervised a total of 1400 dairy farmers, 800 of whom actually restarted grazing.

2 SAFEGUARDING: SAFEGUARDING THE INTEGRITY 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 originates from farms where cows graze in the pastures from spring to autumn for at least 120 days a year and for at least six 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 assures the production process, transport and processing of meadow milk.

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. As of 2016 the Meadow Milk logo has also been made available for dairy products produced outside the Netherlands. The same conditions apply. The logo is available in a variety of languages. For more information on grazing, meadow dairy and the certification scheme, please consult our manuals at www.weidemelk.nl under 'Conditions'.



CERTIFYING BODIES

Five certifying bodies are affiliated with the foundation:

- Qlip, Zutphen, the Netherlands
- Melkcontrolecentrum Vlaanderen (MCC), Lier, Belgium
- SGS, Emstek, Germany
- Bureau Veritas, Paris, France
- Certis, Le Rheu, France

CERTIFICATES

At the end of 2022, there were a total of 188 farms with one or more valid Grazing Certificates. Together, they hold 311 partial certificates. An up to date overview can always be found on weidemelk.nl/nl/certificaten.

	NL	BE	DE	FR	GB	LU	Total
Number of farms*	139	30	9	8	1	1	188

*Number of certified farms, categorised per country.

GRAZING INDICATOR

In 2022, Qlip's Grazing Indicator was authorised to perform risk-based grazing inspections. The Grazing Indicator analyses the composition of tank milk samples, which are taken every three days on dairy farms and used for quality assurance and the payment scheme, to assess whether dairy farmers are complying sufficiently with the requirements for grazing. The analysis is based on the fact that the fatty acid composition of milk is affected by what a cow eats, making it possible to see whether they were fed fresh grazed grass or other feed such as silage grass.

As the Grazing Indicator enables sufficient grazing to be monitored and safeguarded throughout the year, dairy companies that utilise the Grazing Indicator can reduce the number of inspections on dairy farms. Instead of 40% of participating dairy farmers, 20% of participating dairy farmers need to be inspected.

Authorisation of the Grazing Indicator as a tool was based on validation trials performed on 1000 dairy farms in 2021. Independent research organisation TNO supported the Grazing Foundation in assessing the validation trials of the Grazing Indicator to enable the system to be authorised.

RESULTS INSPECTIONS 2022

The table below shows the results of the inspections performed on dairy farms in 2022 by Certifying Bodies.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of participating dairy farmers	15.828	16.837	16.259	15.470	15.771	14.986
Inspected Dairy Farmers total	44,1%	47,4%	44,6%	48,2%	47,7%	29,0%
by CB after risk assessment	14,5%	15,7%	15,1%	27,3%	29,7%	12,9%
by CB	22,2%	22,9%	25,8%	14,8%	10,8%	13,5%
By Dairy Company	7,4%	8,8%	3,6%	6,1%	7,1%	2,5%
Repeat inspections*	3,9%	3,3%	4,7%	3,4%	3,2%	12,2%
Positive assessments*	98,4%	98,9%	98,6%	99,5%	99,4%	98,9%
Negative assessments*	1,6%	1,1%	1,4%	0,6%	0,6%	1,1%

Inspection results dairy farms, 2017-2022.

* % of inspected dairy farmers.

The results of the inspections clearly illustrate the effect of introducing inspections based on the Grazing Indicator. Of the 14,986 (64.1%) dairy farmers, some 9,604 were covered by inspections using the Grazing Indicator. This resulted in a decrease in the total number of inspections whereas the number of risk-based inspections increased. The number of repeat inspections performed reveals how well the Grazing Indicator can identify and select at-risk farms.

LICENCES

Two new licences for the use of the Meadow Milk logo were issued in 2022. The Grazing Foundation concluded licence agreements with a total of 49 parties.

SAFEGUARDING GRAZING YOUNG STOCK

On the request of SMK, the Grazing Foundation developed an assurance scheme that enables dairy farmers to demonstrate that they graze their young stock in compliance with the requirements established for this purpose in the certification scheme of the “On the way to Planet Proof” sustainability label. The assurance scheme cross-references schemes for a structured approach to grazing young stock developed by the foundation (see chapter Knowledge: greater grass and grazing skills; Grip on Grass).

3 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

REVENUE	2022	2021
ZuivelNL; secretary	19.597	20.382
ZuivelNL; knowledge development and sharing	123.627	144.618
ZuivelNL; New Grazers project	18.475	37.635
Ministry of EA; New Grazers project	18.475	37.635
Dairy farmers/dairy companies' own contribution for advice and training for grazing	3.663	10.950
Contribution-transfer certificate holders and CBs for Meadow Milk safeguarding	301.383	300.659
RVO contribution: Raising Level Peat Meadows and Grazing	0	24.793
Grip on Grass subsidy	392.689	180.467
Total revenue	877.908	757.140

Revenue Grazing Foundation, 2021-2022.

OPERATING EXPENDITURE	2022	2021
Secretary	39.193	46.147
Knowledge development and sharing	125.877	147.993
New Grazers project	38.363	82.845
Safeguarding Meadow Milk	191.179	187.004
Raising Level Peat Meadows and Grazing	0	25.457
Grip on Grass	392.689	180.467
Total operating expenditure	787.300	669.914

Operating expenditure Grazing Foundation, 2021-2022.

BALANCE	2022	2021
Balance	90.607	87.226

Balance Grazing Foundation, 2021-2022.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS PER 31 DECEMBER 2022

ASSETS	2022	2021
Receivables		
Accounts receivable	6.934	166.373
Other receivables	20.565	11.071
Accrued assets	180.588	76.332
<i>Total receivable</i>	<i>208.088</i>	<i>244.776</i>
Liquid assets		
Payment Accounts	1.061.257	718.507
Total assets	1.269.345	963.282

Assets Grazing Foundation, 2021-2022.

LIABILITIES	2022	2021
Equity capital		
Capital	325.178	234.574
<i>Total equity capital</i>	<i>325.178</i>	<i>234.574</i>
Short-term liabilities		
Accounts payable	67.728	69.603
Suspense accounts for VAT	0	0
Accrued liabilities	876.439	659.105
<i>Total short-term liabilities</i>	<i>944.167</i>	<i>728.708</i>
Total liabilities	1.269.345	963.282

Liabilities Grazing Foundation, 2021-2022.



CONTACT

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