
GRAZING FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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INTRODUCTION

In this annual report, we report on the activities and results of the Grazing Foundation in 2025. 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 grazing 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, communication via the Meadow Man, the YouTube series *Op het Scherpst van de Snede* and in trade journals.
- Better integration of grazing into general farm management practice. We do this by developing knowledge products and practical tools which are applied to integrate grazing and grassland management into modern farm management systems and linking them to other dairy farming objectives such as reducing emissions of nitrogen and greenhouse gases. We are also putting this integrated approach to grazing on the agenda of suppliers and advisers, and in green education.

In Chapter 1, we show the progress made in 2025 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

We are working on new concepts for grazing in modern farm management systems in collaboration with dairy farmers, advisers, chain parties and Wageningen University and Research. We are consolidating our expertise in grass and grazing in order to respond to new challenges relating to manure, nitrogen and greenhouse gases.

GRAZINGCOACHES NETWORK

Our network of GrazingCoaches 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 training at the Practical School for Grazing, they offer advice and guidance to dairy farmers, both new and experienced in grazing.

Four follow-up days were organised for this network of 65 GrazingCoaches in 2025 on the future of dairy farming, virtual fencing, challenging grazing in the south of the Netherlands (excursion) and calculating with forage. Intake interviews were also held with 15 new GrazingCoaches for the training due to start in 2026.

GRIP ON GRASS

The 'Grip on Grass' project concluded in 2025. The project has demonstrated that dairy farmers can successfully graze their herd more and reduce the crude protein content in the ration at the same time. Dairy farmers were supervised for a three-year period in the form of study groups, individual advice sessions and support from trained GrazingCoaches. The main focus of the final phase of the project was on the effects of phasing out of the derogation and how meadow grazing still can be practised. One of the tools specially developed for this purpose is a derogation model, which allows farmers to calculate the impact of various choices in grazing, rations and manure disposal.

'Grip on Grass' also placed a strong emphasis on knowledge sharing in the sector. The YouTube series *Op het scherpst van de snede* released more than 15 practical videos covering topics such as grazing young stock, milking robots and grazing, heat stress, herb-rich grassland, derogation and the feed balance in the barn. Articles were also published in trade journals such as *Boerderij*, *Veeteelt*, *Nieuwe Oogst* and *Melkvee Magazine*.

In the framework of the project, various practical tools were developed to support dairy farmers in grazing, optimising rations and forage planning. One example is an online tracking system that provides insight into the grass intake and the crude protein content of the ration. An options chart was also developed, outlining measures to increase grass utilisation through grazing while reducing the crude protein content.

Another development was a new approach to grazing young stock. This has been adopted by organisations such as Friesland Campina and Farmel.

In collaboration with other practical projects, the *Grote RuwvoerSpel* board game was developed as a planning tool that links forage production to rations. Finally, an initial version of an LP model was developed to automatically optimise forage crop cultivation and rations.

GRIP ON GRASS 2.0

In 2025, preparations were made to launch the 'Grip on Grass 2.0' project in 2026. The main objective of this project is the development of tools capable of predicting grass quality without the need for lab analysis. Some 30 dairy farmers, divided into six study groups, are participating in the project. During the grazing season, the predictions of the crude protein content of the grass by the dairy farmers will be compared weekly with grass analyses of the same plot in the laboratory.

MANURE AND GRAZING FACTSHEET

As the manure derogation has expired, dairy farmers must spread less manure on their own land and have to find alternative methods to dispose of their excess manure. This development also raises questions about how grazing practices can be adapted to the new situation, while ensuring there is also sufficient manure in the slurry pit in spring to fertilise their own land and dispose of manure. An analysis of 86 dairy farms and simulation calculations has shown that planning and storage capacity are decisive factors. The analysis reveals that it is possible to practice grazing without a derogation. However, whether the farm grazes or not, careful planning is essential. The results have been summarised on a factsheet and shared with the dairy farming publications.

CONVENANT VOERSPOOR

Organisations active in the dairy farming sector, the dairy production sector, the feed sector, consultants and knowledge institutions have joined forces to reduce the amount of crude protein in rations for dairy cows. On 27 February, agreements to reduce nitrogen emissions via manure in this way were established in a covenant. The aim is to reduce the average share of crude protein in the total ration (forage and supplementary feed) on Dutch dairy farms from 163 grams per kilogram of dry matter in 2023 to a maximum of 160 grams per kilogram of dry matter in 2025 and 158 grams per kilogram of dry matter in 2026.

The Grazing Foundation supported establishing the covenant, as meadow-based farms, which practice frequent grazing, require a specific approach.

COMMUNICATION

The Grazing Foundation communicates about grass and grazing skills via the Meadow Man in trade publications *Veeteelt* and *Melkvee Magazine* and with content in the YouTube series *Op het Scherpst van de Snede*. The grass growth figures are published weekly on the Veeteelt website and in their newsletter. In addition, the foundation offers content to trade journals to inform dairy farmers about the possibilities of grazing.

2 SAFEGUARDING GRAZING

Stichting Weidegang manages certification schemes that enable dairy farmers to demonstrate that they allow their cows and young stock to graze outside. These certification schemes are used by quality labels and the government of the Netherlands and form the basis of the Meadow Milk Logo.

SAFEGUARDING THE INTEGRITY OF MEADOW DAIRY PRODUCTS AND ISSUING THE MEADOW MILK LOGO

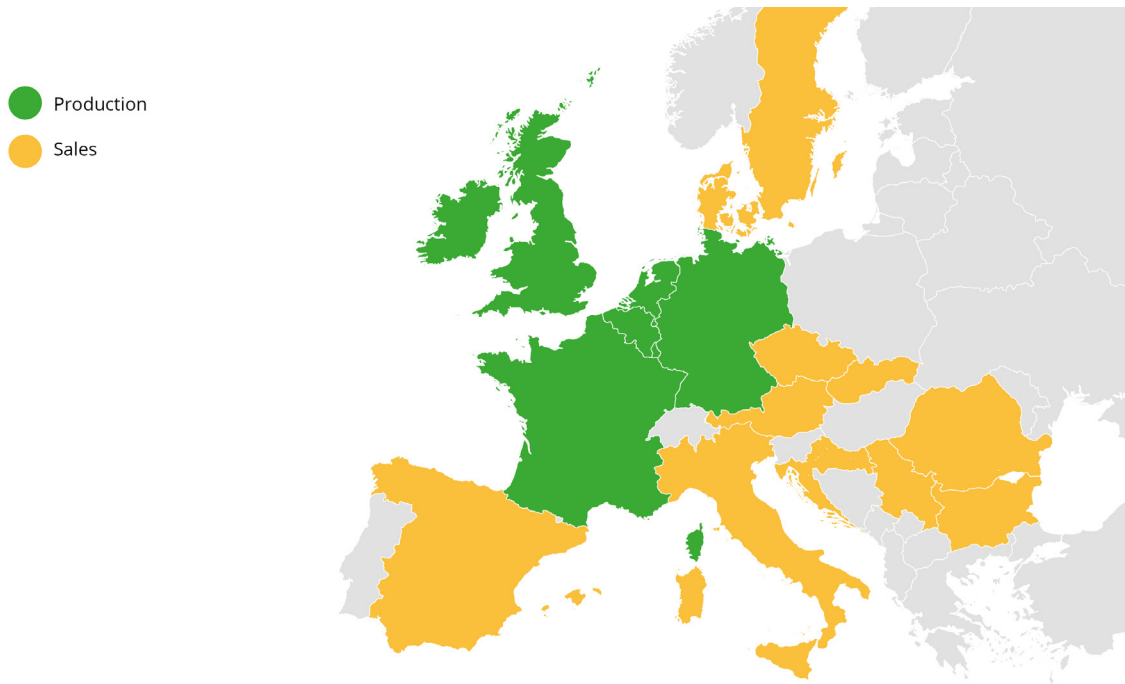
The Meadow Milk logo guarantees that the product is made from meadow milk. Meadow milk originates from farms where cows graze in the pastures from spring to autumn for at least 120 days a year and for at least six hours a day. The milk is collected separately and processed into fresh dairy products – 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 various languages. For more information on grazing, meadow dairy and the certification scheme, please consult our manuals at www.weidemelk.nl under 'Conditions'.



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

The figure on page 5 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 12,000 participants. Meadow dairy is sold across Europe. The most important markets are the Netherlands and Belgium. The requirements for meadow dairy are also integrated in the conditions of the *On the way to PlanetProof* label managed by SMK (Stichting Milieukeur), the *Better Life* label scheme initiated by the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals, *Tuurlijk!* from DOC and the *Better quality* label of Dutch super-market chain Albert Heijn.



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

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 2025, there were a total of 162 farms with one or more valid Grazing Certificates. Together, they hold 298 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*	119	26	6	9	1	1	162

*Number of certified farms, categorised per country.

RESULTS INSPECTIONS 2025

The table below shows the results of the inspections performed nationally and internationally on dairy farms in 2025 by Certifying Bodies.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of participating dairy farmers	15.771	14.986	14.198	9.516	8.706
Inspected Dairy Farmers total	47,7%	29,0%	27,8%	31,4%	31,6%
by CB after risk assessment	29,7%	12,9%	11,0%	12,5%	11,6%
by CB	10,8%	13,5%	14,6%	16,8%	17,4%
By Dairy Company	7,1%	2,5%	2,2%	2,1%	2,5%
Repeat inspections*	3,2%	12,2%	9,8%	14,0%	11,2%
Positive assessments*	99,4%	98,9%	98,9%	98,4%	98,6%
Negative assessments*	0,6%	1,1%	1,1%	1,6%	1,4%

Inspection results dairy farms, 2021-2025.

* % of inspected dairy farmers.

The table above also shows two changes to assurance schemes:

- In 2022, the use of the Grazing Indicator in the Meadow Milk Scheme was permitted. The Grazing Indicator analyses the fatty acid composition of tank milk samples to assess whether dairy farmers are complying sufficiently with the requirements for grazing. Dairy farms are continuously monitored in this way. Dairy companies that use the Grazing Indicator may inspect at least 20% of dairy farmers instead of at least 40%. In the inspection scheme of the Grazing Indicator, 15% of the inspections are risk-oriented and all the inspections must be unannounced. In 2025, the Grazing Indicator inspections concerned 5347 (61.2%) of the 8706 dairy farmers. As the Grazing Indicator was developed by Qlip, it can only be used in the Netherlands.
- In 2024, the Grazing Foundation introduced the assurance scheme for the eco-activity Grazing. Dairy farmers that participate in eco-activities can choose to have the results communicated to their dairy company so they do not have to record a double grazing calendar. Practically all dairy farmers use this option. The inspection results of the eco-activity Grazing are shown separately below.

LICENCES

In 2025, two new licences for the use of the Meadow Milk logo were issued. The Grazing Foundation has concluded licence agreements with a total of 48 parties.

LOGO SCAN BELGIAN SUPERMARKETS

Following the logo scan by the Grazing Foundation in Dutch supermarkets in December 2024, an inspection was performed in May 2025 in seven Belgian supermarket chains to assess whether the Meadow Milk logo, and the associated text, were used correctly in compliance with the regulations. In Belgium, a number of A-brands and private label

brands use the logo. The Meadow Milk logo is also used correctly in Belgium. The old Meadow Milk logo was still used on some packaging, but this will be phased out in the short term.

PILOT AUTOMATIC MILKING SYSTEMS

In 2025, the pilot to develop an alternative criterion for the standard for dairy farmers with an automatic milking system with a free option for grazing that states that at least 75% of the cows must be in the meadow during grazing hours was continued. This pilot started in 2024, in collaboration with Qlip. The pilot examined various aspects of farm management, such as the interpretation of the meadow grazing system, the cow route (the route taken by a cow to reach the meadow) and the feed regime in combination with so-called '24-hour management'.

Analysis of the results from 70 farms has shown that a number of factors clearly influence the percentage of cows in the pasture during inspection.

- No feed during the grazing times.
- Managed cow traffic that automatically sends cows outside after milking during the grazing times.

Experts also mentioned the occupation rate of the automatic milking system as a third important factor in combining automatic milking with grazing.

Based on the pilot, it was decided to apply an alternative inspection standard in the Meadow Milk Scheme for one year, during the 2026 grazing season, for Affiliated Dairy Farmers with an automatic milking system and free cow traffic between the meadow and the barn who supply milk to a Meadow Dairy company that is certified by Qlip. At the end of the 2026 grazing season, the Grazing Foundation will use the inspection results to evaluate the robustness and usability of this inspection standard. If the results are positive, this inspection standard will be permanently incorporated in the scheme for the 2027 grazing season. If the results are negative, using this adapted inspection standard will not be possible from 2027 onwards.



For Affiliated Dairy Farmers with an automatic milking system and free cow traffic between the meadow and the barn who comply with at least one of the three criteria below, the inspection standard for the percentage of cows in the meadow will be reduced from at least 75% to at least 60%:

- No feed and little or no forage residues visible in the barn during grazing times.
- Managed cow traffic that automatically sends cows outside after milking during the grazing times.
- A maximum occupation rate of 55 dairy cows (excluding dry dairy cows) per automatic milking system.

SAFEGUARDING ECO-ACTIVITY GRAZING

The Grazing Foundation has developed a certification scheme for the eco-activity extended grazing. Under the conditions of the Dutch interpretation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), farmers are eligible to apply for an eco-premium. This is an additional payment made on top of the basic payment. To be eligible for the eco scheme, the participants must perform eco-activities. Dairy farmers can decide to graze their dairy cows for 1500 or 2500 hours.

The certification scheme of the Grazing Foundation has been approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature to safeguard the eco-activity Grazing from 2024. Qlip performs inspections for compliance with this scheme as a Certifying Body for the foundation. By being approved, the foundation can ensure that certification of the eco-activity extended grazing is harmonised as far as possible with the certification of grazing for Meadow Dairy.

2025 was the second year that the certification scheme was implemented. In 2025, 3503 dairy farmers registered with Qlip for the eco-activity grazing. This breaks down into 2790 dairy farmers for category 1 (1500 hours) and 713 dairy farmers for category 2 (2500 hours). At the end of the year, 3426 dairy farmers received the declaration that they had complied with the conditions for the eco-activity Grazing in 2025: 2761 dairy farmers for category 1 (1500 hours) and 670 dairy farmers for category 2 (2500 hours).

AMENDMENTS TO GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR ECO-ACTIVITY GRAZING

The certification scheme was evaluated after the end of the 2024 grazing season. The following points were subsequently amended in the general terms and conditions with effect from 1 January 2025:

- Participants must register grazing hours in advance.
- After an inspection with the outcome 'doubtful' or 'incomplete', the grazing calendar must always be up-to-date and may no longer be updated afterwards.
- The standard for 2500 hours of grazing applicable to the plot contiguous to the farmhouse has been amended from 2.5 to 3 dairy cows per hectare of contiguous plot.
- Grazing only at night is no longer permitted. To count the hours of this grazing day as grazing hours, the cows must graze for at least two hours between 06:00 and 22:00.
- Dairy farmers can register grazing hours until 30 November. Previously, this was until

15 November. Since Qlip cannot perform an assessment on the last day of grazing, as dairy farmers are still permitted to register hours on that day, this has been amended to 'no later than two working days after 30 November and 15 October respectively'.

- The grounds for advice for exceptions have been extended. The general terms and conditions stated that the Grazing Foundation can advise the Ministry to reduce the number of grazing hours in a given year due to veterinary reasons or weather conditions. This has been extended by adding 'exceptional circumstances, including but not limited to'.

INSPECTION RESULTS FOR ECO-ACTIVITY GRAZING

Results inspections Eco-activity grazing	2024	2025
Number of participating dairy farmers	3749	3503
Inspected dairy farmers total	46,2%	41,6%
by CB	46,2%	41,6%
Repeat inspections	14,1%	6,2%
Positive assessments	97,7%	99,8%
Negative assessments	2,3%	0,2%

Inspection results dairy farms, 2019-2024.

Grazing declaration	2024	2025
Grazing declaration issued total	3483	3426
Grazing declaration not issued total	266	77
Grazing declaration issued for 1500 hours	2978	2761
Grazing declaration not issued for 1500 hours	251	72
Grazing declaration 2500 hours requested, issued for	59	43
Grazing declaration issued for 2500 hours	505	665
Grazing declaration not issued for 2500 hours	15	5

Explanation: the Grazing Declaration is not issued if there a negative inspection result or if the grazing hours to be achieved are not reached.

SAFEGUARDING GRAZING YOUNG STOCK

The certification scheme 'On the way to PlanetProof' for milk includes a criterion stating that young stock must be grazed. To enable farmers to demonstrate compliance, the Grazing Foundation developed the certification scheme Grazing Young Stock. This scheme became available in 2024. A participating dairy farmer must establish a grazing plan prior to the grazing season. This plan indicates how the young stock on the farm will be given meadow access for grazing. There are two ways to do this:

- Choose from one of the three grazing schemes for young stock issued by the Grazing Foundation.
- Establish their own grazing plan for young stock.

Dairy farmers who subcontract the rearing of their young stock to a specialised rearing farm must conclude a contract that details the required criteria for grazing young stock. In this case, the rearing farm must establish a grazing plan.

There are two dairy farms with a Grazing Young Stock Certificate. In 2025, 771 dairy farmers and young stock rearing farms participated in the scheme for young stock farming. 343 inspections were performed on these dairy farms. 64.4% complied with the requirements, 1.2% failed to comply. 14% of the inspections had an outcome 'doubtful' and 20.4% 'incomplete'. 119 follow-up inspections were performed, of which 86.6% complied, 2.6% failed to comply and 5% were again concluded with 'doubtful'.

3 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

REVENUE	2025	2024
Subsidy ZuivelNL	165.000	165.000
Subsidy LVVN	213.238	389.626
Contribution Safeguarding Grazing	407.561	465.175
Miscellaneous income	21.999	54.380
Total revenue	807.798	1.074.180

Revenue Grazing Foundation, 2024-2025.

OPERATING EXPENDITURE	2025	2024
Secretary	66.928	42.908
Knowledge development and sharing	150.048	187.288
Safeguarding Grazing	356.950	359.871
Grip on Grass	213.238	389.626
Total operating expenditure	787.164	979.693

Operating expenditure Grazing Foundation, 2024-2025.

BALANCE	2025	2024
Balance	20.634	94.489

Balance Grazing Foundation, 2024-2025.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS PER 31 DECEMBER 2025

ASSETS	2025	2024
Receivables	238.315	189.007
Liquid assets	485.143	576.739
Total assets	723.457	765.745

Assets Grazing Foundation, 2024-2025.

LIABILITIES	2025	2024
Equity capital	475.003	454.369
Short-term liabilities	248.454	311.377
Total liabilities	723.457	765.746

Liabilities Grazing Foundation, 2024-2025.



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