

NETHERLANDS

Restructuring and
developing physical
potential and
promoting innovation

Location

Klundert

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 1 – Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector

Measure

M121 - Modernisation of agricultural holdings

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 800 000
EAFRD 280 000
Private 520 0000

Project duration

2009 – 2010

Project promoter

Klaverhof vof

Contact

Marc Havermans
marc@idv-advies.nl
tel. 0612145884

Website

<http://www.idv-advies.nl/>

In response to the current societal trends for sustainable farming and responsible business management, farmers developed an animal friendly barn where cows are healthier, have more space and less hoof problems.

Summary

Current cattle housing concepts date back from the last century and no longer apply to modern requirements for social, sustainable and responsible business practices. Today it is understood that it is necessary giving the cows more space with a soft floor made of compost, so the animals can exhibit much more natural behaviour.



The main goal was to develop an animal friendly barn, where cows are healthier, have more space and less hoof problems. Dairy farmer Marc Havermans developed together with other companies a new natural housing system for dairy cows. The beneficiary also started experimenting himself. He commissioned a compost business to do a study to come up with the best possible compost features for the floor, which he further developed. The upper part of the housing was developed in collaboration with a greenhouse construction company. The ventilation in traditional greenhouses is not sufficient. The new high ceiling is covered with transparent plastic foil, a cheaper construction than glass. The rays of the sun kill possible mould and germs. Some pieces of cloth are hung up to create shade, so that the cows – just like in nature – can go and lie in the shade once the temperature tops 25 degrees. The cloth on the sides makes sure that wind can't reach the barns, because cows really don't like a hard wind. Now the cows are so satisfied that even in summer they prefer to stay in the barn. The animals are living now in a so-called Integral Sustainable Loose Housing System (IDV-barn).

Results

Benefits of the IDV barn are:

- Cows are stronger, have better immune system, live longer.
- Lower use (and cost) of medication. Reduced use of antibiotics.
- Animal friendly, natural behaviour
- Increase fertility rate
- Compost for better soil fertility

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ In the beginning the wrong machines for applying the compost were used. The composition of the compost was also changed several times. After this process of trial and error there is no need to supply any dry compost up until November.
- ❑ Although the barn is ready, it is still needed to do a lot of research. For instance, the farmers still don't know if milk and manure from the IDV barn will generate more money. Also on ammonia emissions they are still experimenting with the right format of feeding troughs, which make the cows spill less. So there is still a long way to go.