

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** In King's Speech Circular Agriculture is Cited as the Future for Dutch Farming

**Country:** Netherlands

**Post:** The Hague

**Report Category:** Agriculture in the News, Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security, Agriculture in the Economy, National Plan

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**Report Highlights:**

On each third Tuesday of September, the Dutch King's speech is held prior to the opening of the parliamentary year. In his speech, King Willem-Alexander mentioned circular agriculture as option to tackle the Dutch nitrogen problem. According the Netherlands Agricultural and Horticultural Association, there is a lot of anger and despair among Dutch farmers. The Dutch Government is holding firm on their goal of halving the national nitrogen emissions by 2030. But despite an allocated budget of €24.3 billion to tackle the problem, until now they have been unable to provide certainty to the Dutch agricultural sector.

On each third Tuesday of September (called Prince's Day), the Dutch King gives a [speech \(transcript in Dutch\)](#) to open the Dutch parliament and announce the Dutch government's annual budget. The King's speech contains the government's key plans for the year ahead. The content is determined by the Dutch Cabinet with approval of the King. In his speech, King Willem-Alexander discussed the government's approach to tackle the Dutch nitrogen problem (for more information see GAIN Report - [Government Presents National Program to Reduce Nitrogen Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Rural Areas](#)), and the outlook for Dutch farmers and rural areas:

*"The Cabinet will do everything possible to gain broad support for tackling the nitrogen problem. Industry, transport sector, and agriculture must reduce emissions. The aim is to restore nature, create a vital countryside, and provide a good future for Dutch farmers. That is why halving nitrogen emissions is unavoidable, also because of court decisions and to ensure that permit granting (mainly housing) does not come to a standstill. At the same time, there are understandable emotions from farmers who fear for the future of their family business, which they are so proud of, often for generations. The switch to circular agriculture requires a lot but offers farmers the prospect of a good future and a decent income. It is important to allow sufficient time in the coming year for the precise implementation per region. Sometimes a different business model will provide a solution, sometimes a new technology, sometimes business relocation, and sometimes buyout will be the best option. Banks, feed manufacturers, supermarkets and consumers also have their own responsibility. In the coming year, the government will continue to work with all parties on joint solutions."*

The King also stated the urgency for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the transition towards sustainable energy sources:

*"The aim for 60 percent less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030 requires action now. The government is focusing on making the industry more sustainable, more wind energy and green hydrogen, and a new role for nuclear energy. People who make their home more energy efficient can receive a subsidy. This summer's drought underlines the importance of being prepared for extreme weather events and adapting to climate change."*

After the King's speech, Dutch Minister of Finance Sigrid Kaag presented the Dutch Government's [Annual Budget](#) to the Dutch Parliament. Over a period of 12 years, until 2035, a budget of €24.3 (\$24.3) billion will be made available to restore nature in the Dutch countryside. By July 2023, the Dutch provinces must complete their plans for nature restoration by region. The budget will be used to tackle nitrogen emissions, water pollution, and the cause and negative effects of climate change in rural areas. In 2023, a budget of €340 (\$340) million will be made available for technical innovations for the intensive livestock sector and supporting sustainable fisheries, €300 (\$300) million for restoration of nature reserves, and €182 (\$182) million for lowering nitrogen emissions near nature reserves to improve biodiversity.

The Netherlands Agricultural and Horticultural Association (LTO) states on their [website](#) that *"Despite all the promises about future prospects, it is still completely unclear what the economic, social and cultural impact will be of the Cabinet plans for, for example, water, climate and nitrogen. There is a lot of anger and despair among Dutch farmers. They get blow after blow, and the Dutch Cabinet has not*

*been able to provide a perspective. Solving this crisis between politics and countryside requires all the attention from the Cabinet.”*

In The Hague, six tractors were seized from farmers (protesters) who tried to get into the city center. They were part of a larger group, which the majority was stopped by police blockades. The Mayor of The Hague and the Dutch Minister of Justice and Security have announced that the police will take action against farmers who try to come to The Hague.

While the Dutch Government is holding firm on their goal of halving the national nitrogen emissions by 2030, until now they have been unable to map out their approach and provide certainty to the Dutch agricultural sector. On September 5, 2022, Dutch Minister of Agriculture Henk Staghouwer resigned after he informed the Dutch Cabinet and Parliament about his Ministry's delay to provide an outlook. Both the Government and agricultural sector are eagerly awaiting the report of the appointed mediator Johan Remkes. For more information see GAIN Report - [Dutch Minister of Agriculture Nature and Food Quality Resigns](#).

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.