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Business models for agroforestry through value creation

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KCNL-funded project to investigate how six Dutch agricultural entrepreneurs can develop agroforestry business models through value creation

Project duration: September 2018 to summer 2020

Growing interest in agroforestry in the Netherlands

The interest of Dutch government and the industry in agroforestry is increasing, due to reasons like agroforestry being more resistant to climate change, more CO_2 fixation, greater biodiversity etc.

Aim of the project

All six companies of the project are interested in (more) agroforestry practises on their companies, but have questions about how they can best sell their current or future agroforestry products and services, and how they can create value for other revenues of their agroforestry system (financially or otherwise). Most entrepreneurs first want more certainty before they want to take the step towards (more) agroforestry.

Very diverse companies

The six entrepreneurs of this project are Country Winery, Ekoboerderij Arink, Bioboerderij Wim Hekkert, Marleseveld, De Regte Heijden and Zuuver. They are involved in fruit growing, cows, chickens, pigs or a combination thereof.
The one company is further with agroforestry business activities than the other. For example, one entrepreneur already has a food forest while the other has not yet started agroforestry, but would like to get advice on where to start.

Support by Universities of Applied Sciences Van Hall Larenstein and HAS Den Bosch

Students and researchers from Van Hall Larenstein and HAS Den Bosch support the six entrepreneurs in their search for value creation of agroforestry business on their farms.

Knowledge and expertise from other project partners

Expertise centres Agrobosbouw NL and Stichting van Akker naar Bos bring in knowledge and expertise from other projects. Provinces of Overijssel and Gelderland are involved to see how the regulations regarding agroforestry can be better supported, since legislation and regulations are currently still delaying the rapid further development of agroforestry in the Netherlands.

Project results so far

Three areas of research have been defined for the project: value creation, chain development and landscape design.
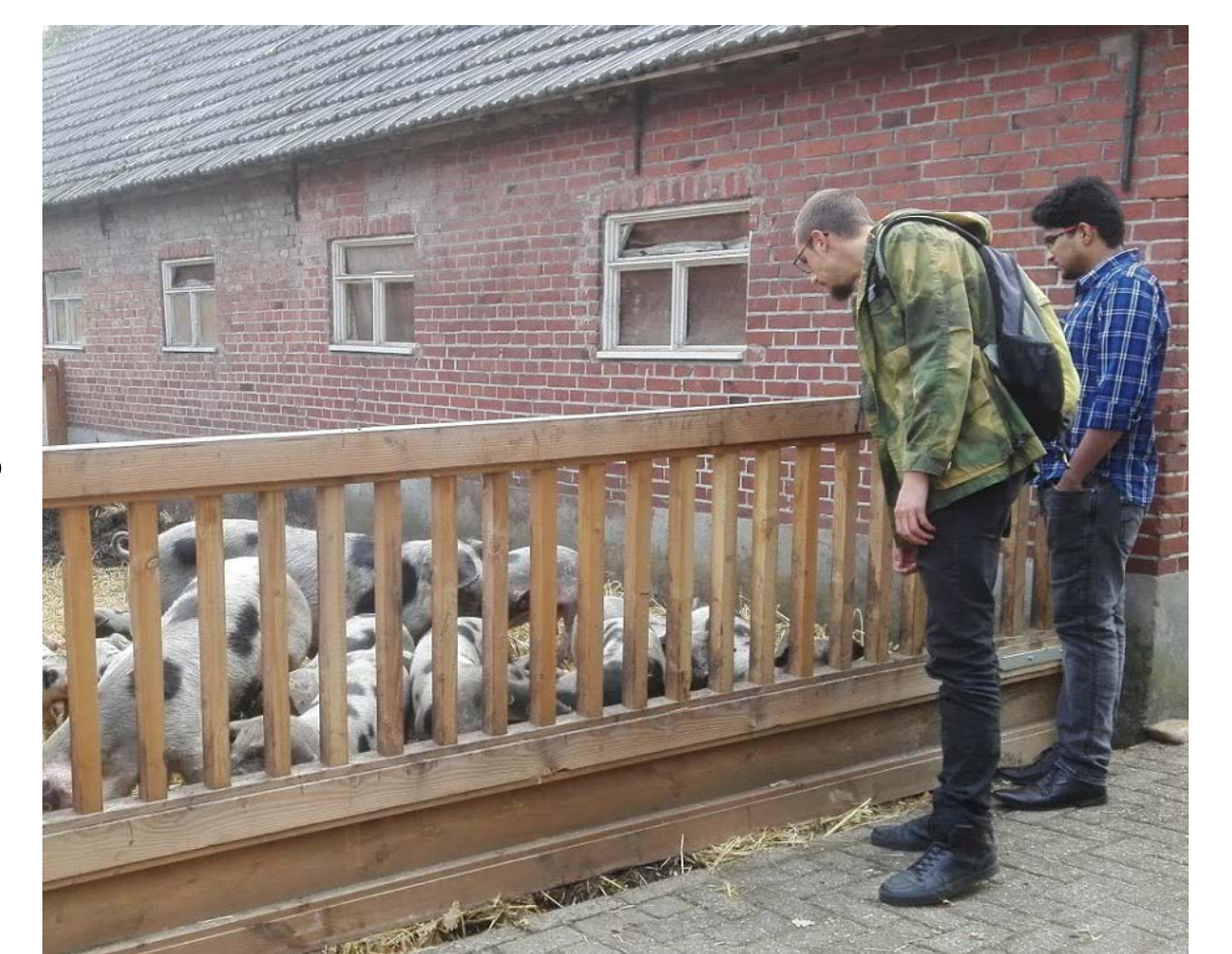On five out of the six farms, students have done an assessment of the farm and the farmer's wishes for agroforestry initiatives, and have come with ideas. Then, for each farm, the students have performed a feasibility study for the agroforestry idea that seemed most promising, and worked out a business plan. A researcher from Van Hall Larenstein did the same for the sixth company of the project.
Currently, further research is performed by two thesis students.
One student is working on the establishment of chicken keeping under agroforestry to optimize soil fertility and biodiversity for pollinating insects. On this farm a zero measurement is done on biodiversity for insects, which will be repeated after some time to measure the effect of the new landscape.
For another farm, a student is making a comparison of three possible new landscape designs for the farm, and their consequences for value creation: organic, circular or agroforestry.

KCNL

The Dutch Knowledge Centre for Nature and Living Environment KCNL collects, develops and disseminates knowledge as a network organization of education, government, entrepreneurs and social organisations.

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