

Regional beef cooperative - Sustainable beef production in an innovative way

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The regional beef cooperative *Natuurvlees Westerkwartier* is a joint venture between various links in the meat chain: a.o. dairy farmers, cattle farmers, nature conservation organizations, meat processors and care institutions. The calves, which are normally sold almost immediately, are instead kept on the farm. After about three months they will be taken over by the cooperative and the animals will graze on nature land. There they graze wonderfully among the meadow birds.

In the winter they will be kept in the stables and the animals will be fed as much as possible with feed from the region, for example from arable farmers in the area. The cooperative aims to grow into sales to large kitchens in a growth model. By working on a relatively large scale, there is more guarantee of sales and with this scale we provide a transition model for the region.

The cooperative will contribute to added value in various areas. For the organizations involved, but also for the region, it leads to economic benefits. By working together with



people with a distance to the labor market, the cooperative is also of added value in the social area. With the circular idea and the small distances, they want to limit the negative effects on biodiversity, climate and planet. In other words; their ambition is to be active in all areas of sustainability!

What's the next step?

The cooperative was founded in the spring 2019. The founders are several dairy farmers, a meat producer, a slaughterhouse and the regional cooperative Westerkwartier. The temporary board is formed by a chairman, secretary and treasurer.

The nature conservation organization Staatsbosbeheer could, for legal reasons, not be a member of the cooperative. However, they are an important partner and still active. They provided the first hectares of land for the grazing cows.

The cooperative is currently recruiting new members and in December the first general meeting will take place. At the meeting a board will be elected, and a business plan will be adopted. For the moment a student is working on a study to find out the most suitable marketing strategy for the cooperative.

Do you want to learn more?

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