FORM BEST PRACTICES CONTEST

Municipality	Midden-Delfland	Country	The Netherlands
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Name project

Sustainable farmer, project study groups cycle agriculture

Category Certification Criteria

X (2) Energy and environmental policies (politiche energetiche e ambientali);
O Infrastructure policies (politiche infrastrutturali);
O Quality of urban life policies (politiche per la qualita' urbana);
X (1) Agricultural, touristic and artisan policies (politiche agricole, turistiche, artigianali);
O Policies for hospitality, awareness and training (politiche per l'ospitalita, la consapevolezza e la formazione);
O Social cohesion (coesione sociale).

Summary project

The project cycle agriculture contains all parts of operational business from the farmer. It is an important part from the project 'sustainable farmer'. The municipality was commissioned by the province and ministry executor of this project. The municipality is working closely together with the organization of the farmers representatives.

This part of the project consists of three study groups of 10 participants each. The study groups are:

- Animal welfare (healthy cows)
- Healthy soil and grass
- Strategic entrepreneurship and economy

These study groups will be guided and supported by academic staff of universities. Practical experiments are performed on the farms. All results are available for scientific research and publications.

Animal welfare
The goal is to improve animal utilization and reduce the use of antibiotics.
The results are more resilient cows and a higher production of milk. Nutrition, welfare / housing and breeding are the topics. Farmers work on this goals in theory and practice.

Healthy soil and grass
The aim is to improve the soil utilization.
Farmers works on building a healthy soil. Fertilizer, rooting, organic matter, soil biota, soil chemistry, hydrology and structural improvement are the topics they working on in theory and practice.

Strategic entrepreneurship and economy
The goal is to make choices that suit to the farmer and his farm and to improve the strength of the area/region. Farmers works on strengthening their entrepreneurial strength. Dilemmas are discussed. Farmers develop their own business strategy and long-term vision (a stable line) further. Sharing business figures, dreams, successes and setbacks is essential for this study group. The participants are responsible for completing economic data on a web tool that is developed by LBI (Louis Bolk Institute http://www.louisbolk.org/ (English website).

Goal project

The aim of the project is to ensure that farmers (milk producers) can continue to operate ecological and on a small scale.
Second goal is to generate information that can be use by farmers in other regions and countries.

Result project

This part of the project is started October 2013. Project duration is four years.
The farmer receives a certificate yearly. The certificate contains a score on five indicators. Quality of air (ammonia (NH3) per 1.000 kilo milk), quality of water (Nitrogen (N) surplus per hectare), quality of soil (Phosphor (P) surplus per hectare), climate (carbon dioxide (CO2) per equivalent of milk and footprint (%food unit of milk produced).

Revenue from the first year is a reduction of operating costs. At the same time there is an improvement of environmental scores.

Finance (costs and benefits)

The costs for this project of four years are € 500.000,-. The farmers receive compensation for their work on average € 3.000,-. In addition, there is an increase of the company costs by the farmers.

Staff (time use and saving)

Staff time using is about 200 hours each year of the project. A part of these hours is necessary for the European approval of the compensation for farmers.

Additional information (if necessarily)

Recycled Agriculture is a form of sustainable agriculture where the circuit is closed substances. This means that all substances away from agriculture in an area be brought back into the area. The amount of substances that leave an area, such as nitrates should therefore end up back in the area. Use is made of the available resources and the farmer in the most efficient way possible trying to keep. Equal the outflow and inflow of these resources. Research by Wageningen University and Research Centre shows that cycle agriculture ensures a lower concentration of nitrates in groundwater due to the outflow of nitrogen is reduced to the plot where agriculture is applied. Recycled Agriculture has the advantage that the emission of nitrogen oxides (N2, N2O and NOx) in the air decreased by twenty percent compared to traditional farming under dry conditions. The leaching of NO3 in groundwater investigation, acting in accordance with thirty percent. A disadvantage is that there are scattered at a recycling agricultural livestock manure on the land, which is contrary to various policies. These different types of policies are spread across various administrations, including Brussels. The reduction in emissions is only noticeable on a small scale and not over a larger area. Want to have a greater effect on the level, several actors are needed who are willing to work. Recycled Agriculture can offer returns higher for small-scale farmers. Recycle Agriculture ensures better balance, according to the people planet profit model.

Link website:

Dutch website with information about cycle agriculture:

http://www.boerenverstand.org/kringloop/

Dutch website from the project:

http://www.boerinmiddendelfland.nl/

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