

### **Responsible** soy

The Dutch dairy cow's diet consists mainly of grass and maize (92%). The rest comes from compound feed, which is partly made from byproducts and soybean meal. Most soy comes from South America, where soy cultivation is sometimes accompanied by deforestation. Since 2015, the Dutch dairy sector has exclusively used soy certified as 100% responsible in Dutch dairy cow feed, which means soy grown without causing deforestation. The Dutch dairy sector also promotes land-related dairy farming. An important part of this is that dairy farmers themselves provide the majority of their protein requirements, thus minimizing the import of raw materials for livestock feed, like soy, from outside Europe.

## Why does the Dutch dairy cow need soy?

The optimal diet for a dairy cow consists of roughage, like grass and corn, (92%) and compound feed (8%). Compound feed contains several different products, including corn, rapeseed, beets, soybeans, and byproducts from the food industry. Soy is an important ingredient in feed because of its **high protein** content.

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Since 2015, dairy farmers in the Netherlands are only permitted to take feed from suppliers which have purchased sufficient amounts of responsible-certified soy. The Dutch dairy chain is thus the first sector in the Netherlands to switch to 100% responsible-certified soy.

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### Factsheet Responsible Soy

# What is soy, what parts of it are used, and where is it cultivated?



The soybean is a legume. The beans are dried, dehulled, and then pressed into oil. The **byproducts** from this process (the flakes and the hulls) are ground into meal. Soy oil is used in products like salad oils, margarine, frying fats, soap and plastic. The meal is mainly processed into livestock feed.



Most soy is cultivated in North and South America. Soybean cultivation in South America is sometimes accompanied by deforestation, the destruction of other unique environments, and the irresponsible use of pesticides. Global production of soy is increasing as a result of the growing food demand. In 2015, total soy production equaled around 300 million tons. Only about 2% of soy is produced responsibly.

#### How much soy does a cow eat?

On average, the Dutch cow eats 55 kilograms of grass and corn on a daily basis; this grass and corn is also grown in the Netherlands. The cow's diet is also supplemented with 5 kilograms of compound feed. This compound feed (8% of their diet) contains corn, soy, citrus, palm kernels, rapeseed, beets, wheat, and other byproducts from the food processing industry. This translates into 750 grams of soy products per day for the cow, or 1.25% of their total diet.



In 2013, **2.1 million tons** of "soy equivalent" (a unit to calculate the total volume of all soy products) were used in the Dutch animal feed industry. This represents a little less than 1% of global production. Of this 2.1 million tons, 39% went to poultry farming. Dairy farming and pig farming each accounted for 30%.



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#### What is responsible soy?



To combat deforestation and pesticide use and to improve the situation for soybean farmers, many initiatives have been launched around responsible soy. One of the certification systems is the **RTRS**, **the Round Table on Responsible Soy**. The RTRS is the most widelyrecognized standard for responsible soy, and is supported by around 200 soy producers, traders and processors, food companies, banks and NGOs. The percentage of RTRS or similarly certified soy is estimated at 2% worldwide.

### Responsible soy in Dutch dairy farming



In 2015, it was agreed that Dutch dairy farmers are only permitted to take feed from suppliers which have purchased sufficient amounts of responsible-certified soy. The Dutch dairy chain is thus the first and only sector in the Netherlands to switch to 100% responsiblecertified soy for livestock feed. This was realized in part thanks to cooperation with the WWF, Solidaridad and Natuur & Milieu.



Due to the limited supplies of responsible soy, it cannot be fully processed on its own. As a result, responsible soy is mixed with uncertified soy. The Dutch dairy sector guarantees the use of responsible-certified soy through the "book & claim" method.



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### Land-related and largely selfsufficient protein supplies

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In 2018, the Dutch dairy sector accepted the binding advice provided by the Land-Relatedness Commission. Land-related dairy farming comes with major advantages for the dairy farm, its surroundings, and for society as a whole. The Commission's advice includes a vision for how the land-related dairy farm will look in 2025.

#### Protein from own land by 2025

An important aspect of land-related dairy farming is that every dairy farm provides the majority of their protein need (fodder) from their **own lands** or from farms nearby. Selfsufficiency in the protein supply fosters grass cultivation. Ultimately, it will also sharply reduce the need for raw materials imported from outside Europe (such as soy and palm oil products): a two-thirds reduction by 2025 compared to 2018.

In land-related dairy farming, the cycle of minerals for fodder and manure is closed as much as possible at the farm and local level. Grass, corn and other feed crops are given to cattle, and the manure from the herds is used to fertilize crops. This creates **short cycles** that eliminate the need for the transport of feed and manure over long distances.