



## UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

### Speaking about Farming

*Embodied Deliberation and Resistance of Cows and Farmers in the Netherlands*

Meijer, E.

#### DOI

[10.1163/9789004528444\\_008](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004528444_008)

#### Publication date

2023

#### Document Version

Final published version

#### Published in

Animals Matter

#### License

CC BY-NC

[Link to publication](#)

#### Citation for published version (APA):

Meijer, E. (2023). Speaking about Farming: Embodied Deliberation and Resistance of Cows and Farmers in the Netherlands. In J. Dugnoille, & E. Vander Meer (Eds.), *Animals Matter: Resistance and Transformation in Animal Commodification* (pp. 132-154). (Human-Animal Studies; Vol. 26). Brill. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004528444\\_008](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004528444_008)

#### General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

#### Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

# Speaking about Farming

## *Embodied Deliberation and Resistance of Cows and Farmers in the Netherlands*

*Eva Meijer*

### Abstract

In this chapter, I compare the political voice of cows and farmers in the Netherlands by considering practices of deliberation and resistance in the context of an ongoing debate about the future of farming. I do so to get a better grasp on their respective political exclusions and investigate possibilities for change. To conceptualize political voice in a multispecies context, I draw on insights from political animal philosophy showing that relations between human political systems and nonhuman animals are political and that animals are political actors. To analyze the cows and farmers' oppressions, I use a multi-optic lens that does not reduce one form of oppression to another, but rather sees different forms of oppression as interrelated and woven into the same larger power structures. In the chapter I first describe how farming in the Netherlands is changing and the effects of these changes on cows and farmers. I then look at the political voice of cows and farmers, focusing on embodied deliberation and resistance. I conclude by showing that even though there are parallels and points of connection in the oppression of cows and farmers, there are significant differences in their positions, especially because the latter group has more political voice than the former.

### Keywords

animal deliberation – animal politics – animal philosophy – animal resistance – multispecies democracy – social and political philosophy

### 1 Introduction

On 1st October 2019, a group of Dutch farmers took to The Hague with tractors for a protest, causing the biggest traffic jam ever seen in the Netherlands (NOS 2019a). Responding to changes in the legislation concerning farming and

to their own exclusion from deliberation about the future of farming, Dutch farmers' protests have received much coverage in the media (Bosma and Peeren 2021; NOS 2019b). Farmed animals are also affected by the changes the farmers respond to, but they are much less visible. When a cow escapes on the way to slaughter, online media reports about it, and cow sanctuaries portray survivors of the dairy and meat industry, but these stories are rare, and while they are sometimes picked up by the mainstream media, they are often soon forgotten afterwards (Dumon Tak 2017).<sup>1</sup>

It may appear as if the positions of cows and farmers are opposed: farmers profit from the industry that causes animals to suffer, and protesting farmers are vocal about wanting to keep this situation intact (Bosma and Peeren 2021). However, both groups are affected by the intensification of farming in the past fifty years, as I will discuss in more detail below.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, cows and farmers are both silenced in current Dutch debates about the future of farming, although in different ways and to different degrees. In what follows, I investigate commonalities and differences in practices of resistance among both cows and farmers, in relation to the ways in which each group is excluded from processes of deliberation. Regarding both cows and farmers as political agents, I focus specifically on how forms of exclusion target these groups' options for political voice, i.e. the ways in which they can co-decide democratically the terms under which they live (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019).

My approach to examining cows' and farmers' political voice and agency, and their entanglements, is inspired by Claire Jean Kim's (2015) ideas about the workings of power. Categories of difference, such as species, race or gender, are often seen as natural or biological categories. Kim shows that they are historical-social constructions. Cultural differences do not arise in a vacuum, they are produced interdependently through power relations. For this reason, forms of domination often cannot be separated easily, as they continually inform each other in specific social settings. Kim writes that instead of using a single-optic lens, that sees one form of oppression as fundamental ontologically or morally, we therefore need to develop a multi-optic lens to adequately assess situations in which human and animal oppressions are at

- 
- 1 In this text, I focus on bovines and not on other farmed animals for two reasons. First, bovines are seen as the biggest contributor to nitrogen pollution in the Netherlands and the Dutch government legislation specifically targets the dairy industry. Second, in contrast to other groups, like pigs or chickens, there is some (albeit anecdotal) evidence about their resistance.
  - 2 I should also note that "farmer" is a diverse category, that includes very rich people who own a lot of land, small scale organic farmers, and many positions in between.

stake (2015, 15–20). We cannot reduce one form of oppression to another, and need to recognize the multidimensionality of power working in interhuman and interspecies relations. To do justice to the existence of different groups' experiences of oppression and their interconnectedness, we should see different perspectives simultaneously and take into account webs of relations, and analyze the taxonomies of power that shape them. In what follows, I do so by first sketching the developments that led to the current Dutch debate about the future of farming, and then analyzing how this affects the political position of cows and farmers in those debates, from the perspective of deliberation and resistance.

In the next section I turn to current discussions about the future of farming in the Netherlands. I look at how changes in farming practices affect farmers and cows, and bring to light overlaps in their situation. In section 3, I turn to the implications of these changes for cows and farmers' political agency and voice. I draw on insights from political animal philosophy to argue for an embodied understanding of multispecies deliberation. In section 4, I further consider political agency and voice, through the lens of embodied resistance. I conclude by arguing that even though there are parallels in the marginalization of cows and farmers, the latter group has more options for agency, and that looking at their oppressions through the lens of deliberation can help to imagine new ways forward.

## 2 Changes in Dairy Farming in the Netherlands

Animal agriculture in the Netherlands is changing rapidly, due to ecological, economic, political, and social factors. At the time of writing, late 2021, the discourse about the future of farming in politics and the media tends to mainly focus on solutions to nitrogen pollution.

Animal agriculture is the biggest contributor to nitrogen pollution in the Netherlands (nearly half of it), which leads to severe ecological damage (Science 2019). The Dutch have the highest amount of nitrogen pollution in Europe (Aanpak Stikstof 2021) and ammonia emissions from industrial farming are seen as the main problem. Dutch farms have four times more animals per hectare than the average in Europe, two thirds of Dutch land is used for agriculture (Science 2019). Pollution affects almost all Dutch Natura 2000 nature reserves, leading to the biggest loss of biodiversity in Europe, including the extinction of 85% of the indigenous plant species in the past 120 years, and of many animal species, notably many species of water birds and bees (Keulartz 2019).

In order to counter these trends, the environmental groups *Coöperatie Mobilisation for the Environment U.A.* and *Vereniging Leefmilieu* sued the Dutch government, and in 2018 the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled against the government, criticizing the permit system that was in place to reduce emissions for not being effective enough (Science 2019). In response, the daytime speed limit was changed from 130 to 100 kilometers per hours, and farmers were forced to pay a certain amount of money per animal, depending on the species and the number of animals on a farm, for the emissions that they produced (Aanpak Stikstof 2021). Farmers were also offered money for ending their business (ibid). As these measures are not effective enough, there is now discussion about expropriating farmers, which was seen as unacceptable before by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance, as well as by farmers' organization LTO (NRC 2021b). This discussion is situated in the larger context of the climate crisis (Science 2019).

The government's attitude towards the future of farming is influenced by the political parties that are in power at the moment. The political parties that traditionally represented the farmers have become much smaller in the past decades, leading to a situation in which the Dutch government no longer unconditionally supports farmers. The CDA (Christian Democrats) were an important force in Dutch politics for a long time, and traditionally represented farmers' interests (IandO Research 2021). Under the influence of neoliberalism and the rise of right-wing political parties, they began to lose voters (Otjes and Louwse 2015). They gave up their position in power after the 2010 national elections, when they lost half of their voters, and continue to lose in elections. While other parties, such as the small party SGP (Conservative Christians), may also voice farmers' interests, the political landscape is currently fragmented and there is no large party specifically representing farmers' interests. Over seventy percent of the farmers now say they mistrust the political parties in power (IandO Research 2021).

Furthermore, public discourse about farming has changed, including how society views animals and animal welfare (Meijboom and Stafleu 2016). In the case of cows, Dutch animal welfare organizations such as *Wakker Dier*, *DierandRecht* and *Animal Rights*, as well as the Party for the Animals, have managed to draw attention to the structural maltreatment of cows and calves in the dairy industry. There are also campaigns critiquing the necessity of dairy consumption, for example by the organization *DierandRecht* in 2021. The rise of plant-based food, including the availability of alternatives and changing societal views of what is healthy has transformed public debates around these issues in the past several years, as does growing awareness of animal suffering and the effects of animal exploitation on the environment (NOS 2021).

## 2.1 *Effects on Cows*

The current critique of existing farming practices and calls for more sustainable models of farming, have not led to improvement of the life circumstances of cows. All dairy cows are still forced into a routine of being impregnated, giving birth, not raising their children, being milked, and when they are less “productive” they are sent to slaughter. Cows have been bred to give more and more milk since the 1970s, leading to normalized exhaustion and illnesses (Cornips et al. 2021). The way in which cows are housed also influences their physical health, for example, a third of the dairy cows never experience a life outside, leading to an increase in infections of their hooves and udders (Cornips et al. 2021; Wakker Dier 2021).<sup>3</sup> Fifty to seventy percent of all Dutch dairy cows are sent to slaughter when they are around four years old due to health or fertility problems, while they could live into their twenties (Wakker Dier, 2021). Male calves are separated from their mothers directly after they are born and housed in solitary igloos, then live in small groups until they are old enough to be sent to slaughter, often with long journeys to the slaughterhouses (ibid). In Dutch political and legal institutions there is little attention for the life circumstances of cows. While Dutch animal welfare laws have prohibited the abuse and neglect of farm animals since 1961, they still allow conditions for so-called “mundane” forms of violence to take place in farming practices, such as killing the animals, and there is no legislation protecting cows as workers.<sup>4</sup>

3 In the past decade the number of farms with animals in the Netherlands dropped by half, but the number of bovines did not: while there are fewer farms, the existing farms are bigger (Trouw 2021). The dairy cows who do get to go outside spend less time on pasture, on average 648 hours a year in 2018, which was 941 in 2013 (CBS 2019).

4 The first Dutch animal welfare law came into being in 1961. Since 1886 it had been a criminal offense to abuse animals, but only because it had a bad effect on the moral sentiments of humans. In 1961, harming animals without a reasonable cause was criminalized. Because of the formulation of the law – “a reasonable cause” was usually interpreted broadly – prosecution and punishment of animal abusers was difficult. This changed in 1992, when the *Gezondheids- en welzijnswet voor dieren* (Health- and Welfare law for domesticated animals) was passed. This law included a set of regulations, for example, a prohibition to harm animals, to withhold appropriate care to an animals, and a duty to assist an animal in need. It also included rules for housing, transport and slaughter of animals, and for dealing with diseases. While this law made it possible to prosecute certain forms of animal abuse, it also allowed for many harmful practices, such as the killing of animals for human food. In 2013 the *Gezondheids- en welzijnswet voor dieren* was replaced by the *Wet dieren* (Law concerning the animals) which recognizes that animals have intrinsic value (*Wet dieren Artikel 1.3 Intrinsieke waarde*), and prohibits animal abuse. However, it includes the caveat that one should respect their welfare “insofar as can be reasonably expected”. So far, the economic interests of farmers, and acceptance of the treatment of farmed animals by the general public, were seen as a sufficient ground to allow for existing practices of animal exploitation. In 2021, the Party for the Animals submitted an amendment stating that the bodies of animals

The conditions under which cows live also affect their social lives and their options for self-expression. At different points in their lives, the social relations of the cows are severed, beginning immediately after they are born, a process that is repeated when females mature and have their own calves taken from them. Relations with their colleagues or friends also end abruptly when cows are sent to slaughter. This makes it difficult to form long-lasting friendships, learn from others and co-create collective and cultural knowledge (Blattner, Donaldson and Wilcox, 2020; Gygax, Neisen and Wechsler, 2010; Marino and Allen, 2017). Their captivity affects how they can express themselves, not just in terms of space for movement, but also emotionally and linguistically (Cornips and Van den Hengel 2021; Gillespie 2018).

Even under these conditions, cows have many ways of creating meaning, using body language, vocalizations, gestures, eye contact, and in general engaging actively with their material surroundings and the other beings they encounter, like humans (Cornips and Van den Hengel 2021). However, compared to cows who live in sanctuaries, their repertoire of creating meaning is severely limited (Blattner, Donaldson and Willcox 2020; Dumon Tak 2017; Gillespie 2018; Jones 2014; Jones 2014; Meijer 2021). For example, in sanctuaries cows may form lifelong friendships, develop cultural norms that change over time (for example, with regard to greeting visitors and daily habits), and the opportunity for what Bert Hollander, the human at the Dutch Leemweg cow sanctuary calls “personal growth” (Hollander personal communication 2021). Cows in intensive farming have no opportunity to form these networks and in addition to physical restrictions have less opportunity for cultural and social learning, or to exercise their will and express their emotions. Furthermore, some dairy cows and calves perform deviant behaviors due to the conditions of intensive farming, such as stereotypies (Tapki 2007; Redbo 1992), for example, tongue rolling, or licking bars and walls (De Lauwere et al. 2019).

## 2.2 *Effects on Farmers*

Many farmers also experience pressure, which leads some farmers to protest, as I will discuss in more detail below, but it also leads to an increase in mental health problems. Farmers in the Netherlands have a higher risk of becoming

---

can no longer be adjusted to fit housing conditions of animals on farms, such as tail docking or genetic modification of farmed animals, but that the housing conditions should change to be able to accommodate their natural behavior instead. This amendment was accepted by the Second and First Chambers. At the time of writing, late 2021, there is discussion about the implementation of this amendment.

depressed or suicidal than the average Dutch citizen and this risk has grown (NRC 2021).<sup>5</sup> Farmers mention causes of depression that include the increasingly complex and demanding, ever-changing legislation – such as laws and regulations connected to reducing nitrogen emissions previously mentioned – financial difficulties, economic uncertainty, farming becoming “more complex” and increased business risks (ibid). The fact that farmers usually do not speak about their problems, partly due to cultural factors<sup>6</sup> but also because of the competition between farmers, appears to contribute to this phenomenon (ibid; Dugnoille this volume).

Farmers also mention a loss of freedom, based on the factors just introduced, and resulting from their economic dependence on banks, specifically the Rabobank (ibid; Zembla 2021). 85% of Dutch farmers are customers at the Rabobank. This bank originated from small *boerenleenbanken* (farmer’s loan banks) and many farmers have been customers for several generations. Where farmers used to own their farm and the land, and maintained financial independence, now they often depend on the bank to obtain loans or for investments. This bank has significant power over the course of farming in the Netherlands (ibid), and over the lives of individual farmers.<sup>7</sup> Transitioning to a sustainable model of agriculture usually means fewer animals and less profit, so that Rabobank would be reluctant to support the transition. The bank reserves 5% of their budget for these transitions, which is a small percentage, and most farmers fail to meet the application criteria.

### 2.3 *Effects on Cow-Farmer Relations*

The decisions that farmers make, such as choosing to build bigger farms or use a milking robot, greatly influence the lives of cows in an obvious hierarchy between the cows and the farmers – farmers profit from exploiting cows, hold them in a particular kind of captivity and decide upon key aspects of

5 Between 2013 and 2016, the number of farmers who took their own lives grew from 12,5 to 17,4 per 100.000, while national numbers grew from 11,2 to 11,3 (NRC 2021).

6 These cultural factors are to some extent gendered, as I discuss in footnote 8, but it is also a matter of not speaking so much in human language with words, in part because in certain rural areas humans do not speak so much at all, but also because farmers express their knowledge differently. I return to the expressive and more-than-human aspects of farmers’ languages in the discussion of deliberation below.

7 Furthermore, a report from the *Eerlijke Geldwijzer*, an organization that maps investments of Dutch banks into harmful sectors, such as financing the arms trade, criticizes the Rabobank for financing animal exploitation. Between 2012 and 2017, the Rabobank invested 6,8 billion euros in the “meat industry”, including 1,9 billion in Tyson Foods, a company repeatedly criticized for animal abuse.



their lives. However, there are also overlaps in farmers' and cows' positions. This becomes clear when we look at the underlying social structures that shape their experiences, including their common experiences, and when we consider their options for political voice. I will turn to the latter in the next section, but first I briefly explore how the developments discussed above impact the lives of both cows and farmers.<sup>8</sup>

While reducing nitrogen pollution is connected to the health of ecosystems and the natural world, legislation and political decision-making in the Netherlands prioritizes economic growth over other interests. This is true for most neoliberal capitalist societies, in which the value of animals, the natural world and human labor all are measured by economic standards (Gillespie 2018; Shukin 2009; Stuart and Gunderson 2020). This affects farmers factually: as described, they are caught up in a system that demands profit. It also affects their conceptualizing of their farm: as a company and not a way of living with specific farm ethical standards (Dugnoille this volume; Meijboom and Stafleu 2016). How cows are disadvantaged is clear: they are seen as commodities, a means to make profit. The goal of a cow is to provide dairy, meat and thus profit and use for human societies, and not to live a good cow life.<sup>9</sup>

8 A point of interconnection that for reasons of space I cannot discuss in detail in this chapter concerns gender. In the analysis of the animal industry, ecofeminist thinkers show that gender cannot be left out of the picture (Adams 2015; Wilkie 2010; Dugnoille this volume). The dairy industry is exemplary for how this works. Both in patterns of exploitation of cows, and in human attitudes towards this exploitation, gender plays a role. Female cows experience specific forms of violence, such as being impregnated by humans, giving birth every year, having one's children taken away, being milked daily; male calves are usually killed at a young age. In humans, Dutch farming practices were traditionally also gendered, and often still are. For example, often women would not be allowed to drive tractors since this was seen as a man's job, and were allocated the task of feeding newborns (Wilkie 2010). This reflects more general views of masculinity and femininity in society. Gender expectations also affect male farmers. For example, it is not seen as masculine to speak about one's problems, which affects farmers' mental health. In farmers' protests that began in 2019, the protesters presented a view of farmers as authentic, and as "real men" (Bosma and Peeren, 2021). For example, they adopted the song *De boer dat is de keerl* [The farmer that is the man] by the Dutch band Normaal, which excludes female farmers, and used a homophobic text on the back of a caravan, implying that those on the left are homosexual and not real men (ibid).

9 On the website [melkvee.nl](https://www.melkvee.nl), [dairy cattle.nl](https://www.dairy cattle.nl), a dairy farmer's website, we find a clear example of this, in a mention of the death of Geertje 23, who was chosen as the best farmers' cow of 2019. While Geertje 23 was not the highest milk producer, the article writes, she did have a high lactation value, a low somatic cell count (she was not prone to infections) and with two inseminations per pregnancy she had a good fertility. A good farmers' cow is someone whose body steadily produces profit. <https://www.melkvee.nl/artikel/426117-geertje-23-beste-boerenkoe-2019-overleden/>.

While farmers and cows occupy different positions in the power scheme, they are under the influence of the capitalist logic, that structures their material positions and their relations (Davis 2010; Dugnoille this volume; Shukin 2009; Stuart and Gunderson 2020). Stuart and Gunderson (2020) argue that both dairy cows and farmers can be seen as alienated workers under the conditions of industrialized farming, albeit in different ways, and that both groups suffer because of the emphasis on production.

Relatedly, multispecies farm relations are affected by the industrialization of farming. Machines now complete much of the labor previously undertaken by human workers, and more cows spend their lives inside than ever before (Cornips et al. 2021; Theunissen and Jansen 2020; Stuart and Gunderson 2020). This leads to a loss of interspecies interaction, and for both cows and farmers to a loss of interaction with the natural world. An example of how this manifests in practice is the increase in the use of the milking robot (Driessen 2014). While this machine can function as a tool in multispecies deliberation, as I will discuss in more detail below, it leads to a loss of cow-human interaction.<sup>10</sup> Another example is the increase in the number of “*megastallen*”, mega-farms that house over 250 dairy cows. In 2017, there were 440 *megastallen* for dairy farming in the Netherlands (Wakker Dier 2021). On these farms, farmers do not know the cows’ personalities, physical conditions, friendships, and so on, which affects interspecies relations and the forms of care that are possible (Theunissen and Jansen 2020). The focus on production furthermore leads to ambiguities in the position of the farmers, who simultaneously have the role of carer for the animals, and economic producer (Dugnoille this volume; Stuart and Gunderson 2020; Wilkie 2005).

### 3 Political Voice of Cows and Farmers: Silencing and Deliberation

The democratic position and political agency of cows and of farmers is shaped by the developments I described above. At the same time, democratic

<sup>10</sup> In interviews, depressed farmers connect this to a loss of meaning in their lives (Eenvandaag 2021; see also 2Doc 2018; NRC 2021; Zembra 2021). Een Vandaag (2021), a national news program, for example interviewed farmer Erik Jansen. Jansen lost his brother, the co-owner of his farm, to suicide in 2014, and later on suffered from depression himself. Next to losing his brother, one of the reasons he mentions for his break down is the mechanization of his work. While a milking robot was meant to make life easier, he tells the camera, it made him lose connection with the cows, which for him is a relaxing and meaningful aspect of his life. It made him into a manager. Farming is not a job, Jansen says, it is a way of life.

delineations (e.g., who belongs to the demos, how political communication is shaped institutionally and in practices, or who has voice) determine the position different beings have in society.

In considering the political position of cows and farmers, it may again seem as if there is a binary opposition between human farmers, who have full democratic rights and can express themselves politically as citizens, and cows, whose personhood is denied, who have no membership rights or working rights, nor any option to contribute to debates about their position in society. However, cows also influence politics, and farmers' voices are marginalized in certain ways. This becomes clear if we consider practices of deliberation regarding the future of dairy farming in the Netherlands.

Deliberation about the future of farming practices takes place at multiple levels of society. It occurs in official political settings, such as the Dutch parliament, provincial government and local governments, where politicians from different parties decide upon legislation and regulations concerning the size of farms, taxes, animal welfare regulations, buying land from farmers or expropriating them, and so on. These discussions are informed and shaped by other deliberative human practices, such as reporting by the media, messages on social media, street protests, scientific reports, interventions by animal welfare organizations and farmers' organizations, and the public debate more generally. Furthermore, humans do not exist in a vacuum: the presence of cows, interspecies interactions, and cow acts influence political decision-making materially, symbolically and culturally. Deliberation is always already more than human (Driessen 2014; Meijer 2019). In the case of nitrogen pollution, the influence of cows may seem very straightforward: cows are the biggest contributors to this form of pollution, simply by existing as bodies. While this indeed plays a role, my interest here lies with the linguistic and embodied deliberative interventions of cows in the debate.

### 3.1 *Cow Deliberation and Silencing*

Traditionally, deliberation has been conceptualized as a form of politics interconnected with rational speech (Meijer 2019; Young 2002). This view has been challenged from different directions. Feminist philosophers of deliberation have drawn attention to how emotional and nonverbal forms of expression play a role in deliberative interactions, that deliberative interactions are shaped by historical power relations, and that a power-free space of engagement does not exist (e.g. Bickford 2011; Mansbridge et. al 2012; Young 2002; see Meijer 2019 for a longer description). Visions of such a space are in fact shaped by historical power relations (ibid). Furthermore, different cultures have different forms of political expression, which may include habits and rituals (ibid, Chapter 3).

Cows are not recognized as political actors and have no formal legal or political standing in the Netherlands. They are also not seen as capable of speaking or having political voice. This position is not unique to cows, nor to the Netherlands: animals are generally not seen as speaking beings, nor as political actors (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019). Recently, animal philosophers have challenged this view, by drawing attention to the relations that exist between human political communities and groups of animals, and to political animal agency. Political philosophers are considering relations between human political communities and other animals, focusing on questions of democratic representation, inclusion, and political agency (*ibid*). Some animal philosophers explore the potential of deliberative approaches to democracy in thinking about human-nonhuman interactions (Driessen 2014; Meijer 2019; see also Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) for an extended discussion of political animal agency).

Conceptualizing animal or multispecies deliberation includes attending to species-specific forms of expression, existing human-animal relations, and therefore taking into account the situatedness of encounters and interactions. Clemens Driessen (2014) draws attention to how technological interventions can stir dialogue between human and nonhuman animals. He describes a 2007 experiment, led by Dutch farmers, researchers and technologists, in which cows learn to use a mobile milking robot on pasture (2014, 139–142). Confronted with this new machine, cows adapt their views and behavior, and in turn the farmers adapt the settings of the machine. The encounter with a new machine enables the cows to behave in new ways and the farmers to see them differently. For example, when the milking robot was in the barn, the cows milled around it and even vandalized it, but when the group of farmers rode it outside, the cows went up to it only to use it. This led a farmer to change his judgment of the meaning of the acts of the cows from “vandalism” to boredom and dissatisfaction with their housing conditions (148). Driessen describes the process as a dialogue, in which the milking robot is the topic of the conversation. This example shows that even though cows are not officially recognized as political actors, their agency can play an important role in local deliberative settings, and in some cases already does. While power relations are unequal, the cows in the example above have some voice in the context in which they live.

In dialogues with one another and humans, cows may use different vocabularies. Cornips and Van den Hengel (2021) investigate the linguistic meaning-making practices of Dutch dairy cows and calves under the conditions of intensive farming. They argue that both physical expressions, such as vocalizations, and interactions with the material environment, such as the rhythmic

clattering of the iron bars, using their bodies or mouths, are forms of language. The cows and calves in the study are bilingual or multilingual, they assert, and are involved in a complex set of practices in which they can move from one code – such as the vocal – to another – rattling bars and body synchronizing – in the same discourse. The latter code is more context-dependent. Cows use these forms of language to speak to one another, and to humans. They for example greet humans that enter their barn (Cornips 2021). Studies in sanctuaries also show that bovines have many ways of communicating with one another and animals of other species, including humans (Blattner, Donaldson and Wilcox 2020; Gillespie 2018; Jones 2014; Jones 2014).

While certain humans, including certain academics and farmers, may recognize that animals exercise agency, they are not seen as political actors and not formally acknowledged as having a political voice by the general public and in law as well as in other institutions. This has democratic consequences: they do not have a right to speak or to be heard in processes of deliberation that affect their lives and futures. This is a problem for the cows, who are seen and treated as objects, but it is also a democratic problem. Being able to co-determine the questions that affect one's life is seen as a necessary condition for the legitimacy of democratic decisions (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019).

Cows are thus silenced in different ways: their language is not seen as meaningful language, they do not have an official voice in political and social questions that concern their lives, and when they affect politics in embodied ways, this agency is not recognized by most human citizens or politicians, nor by democratic institutions. When their presence is recognized, for example as contributing to pollution, they reduce simply to bodies, and fail to gain visibility as individuals – legislation regards them as numbers and not subjects or citizens. Furthermore, while objects like milking robots and bars may function as tools for communication and show that cows have agency, in the transition to “mega farms” their options for individual expression, for engaging with farmers and thus influencing questions of everyday politics concerning their bodily integrity and freedom of movement, are increasingly limited.

### 3.2 *Silencing of Farmers: Informal and Everyday Politics*

In contrast to cows, farmers do have full citizenship rights, can vote in elections and choose to be politicians. Furthermore, they can protest with their tractors, use social media to express themselves, give interviews and have many other ways of influencing the public debate. However, as a group, farmers are underrepresented in discussions about the course and future of many of the issues they are experts about. Meijboom and Stafleu (2016) write that interest groups in society rather than farmers often initiate debates

about food production, water management, land use, animal welfare and public health, and consumer organizations, animal welfare and environmental organizations are more present in the public debate about the future of farming than farmers themselves. Focusing on Europe, Meijboom and Stafleu explain that before WW2 farmers were independent entrepreneurs. This role changed under the influence of government efforts to guarantee food security for all, which led to a shift in the position and role of agriculture: it had been a primary, basic sector of the economy and became secondary technical sector, connected to the rest of the economy in complex ways. European farmers could no longer make individual choices, but became embedded in a demanding national and European political, economic and legal context. This led to a loss of independence and autonomy, and in the past decade, also led to an increasing demand for transitioning to sustainable models of farming. This added moral challenges to the existing technical and economic challenges. Meijboom and Stafleu connect the loss of voice of farmers in the public debates to these moral challenges. They see a mismatch between the types of ethical questions raised by consumer organizations, animal welfare and environmental organizations and farmers' traditional values. Farmers are left out of debates about the future of farming because they are not recognized as skilled professionals.

However, the recent rise of farmers' protests and other initiatives challenges this interpretation of the situation (Bosma and Peeren 2021). While there are certain debates most farmers do not actively contribute to, such as the discussion about animal welfare,<sup>11</sup> vocal subgroups such as the Farmers Defense Force do manage to garner substantial media coverage in which they present farmers as authentic Dutchmen, who know best when it comes to farming (ibid). Still, the FDF represents only a small percentage of the farmers, and while their presence in the media is constant and might affect political decision-making, this does not immediately translate into political voice.

The work of political philosopher Iris Marion Young (2002) provides another explanation for the lack of farmers' voice in political debates that concern the future of farming, by considering the role that different forms of language play in deliberative practices. With the transition to new forms of farming came new forms of communication, more complex bureaucratic and administrative practices, and the introduction of new spheres of interaction. Having discussions about farming in the media, in official political contexts or with societal

---

11 An exception are the Caring Farmers I mention below.

organizations differs from speaking to cows, neighbors and others in a local context. It asks for a different way of positioning oneself but also for use of different forms of language, for example, speaking in standard Dutch and not in one's dialect, or speaking in a rational manner using formal types of arguments, instead of drawing on embodied forms of practical knowledge, or showing someone what you mean. Young (2002) makes a distinction between internal exclusion and external exclusion in processes of deliberation. External exclusion is the type of exclusion the cows experience – they cannot take part in the conversations that determine the substance of their lives. While farmers are officially included, there are ways in which they are not taken seriously within given discourses. This is internal exclusion. Young draws attention to how those who speak in dialects, have a foreign accent, speak more passionately or use more “body language”, tell stories instead of use formal arguments, are considered to have less knowledge or are taken less seriously in formal political settings, such as city council meetings or parliamentary politics (Young 2002). Furthermore, bureaucratic societies tend to value abstract forms of expression and knowledge above practical and embodied forms of expression and knowledge (Meijer 2019). This structures and influences what humans can say and the effects of their speech, and affects how much voice farmers have in debates in politics and media.

The fact that language is only seen as human language also influences humans' options for voice. Some of the problems farmers face are interconnected with changes in their daily practices and the more-than-human world within which these take place. Farmers describe interacting with cows, with the land, and performing physical routines as belonging to the core of dairy farming (Meijboom and Stafleu 2016; see also Eenvandaag 2021). When elements are taken out – such as the interaction with the animals, or even having to get up early – the meaning of farming changes, which affects the subjective experience of farmers. The elements removed now are often the more-than-human ones, such as interacting with cows and the land, and this changes farmers' option for expressing themselves. Now farmers speak to machines, robots, computer programs and other humans. This might suit some individuals perfectly, but for others it leads to problems. A more-than-human embodied approach to deliberation is therefore relevant to thinking about farmers in two ways: it draws attention to forms of communication that are not seen as appropriate or relevant and to forms of exclusion that remain hidden in anthropocentric approaches, and it brings to light the relevance of acknowledging the value of multispecies interaction in thinking about the future of farming.

#### 4 Political Voice II: Resistance and Possibilities for Change for Cows and Farmers

The short foray into exclusionary mechanisms related to deliberation above has shown that there are points of connection between the ways in which farmers and cows are silenced, and can exercise agency. The farmers however have a privileged position, something that becomes even more clear when we consider the options both groups have for resistance, and how Dutch society acknowledges their resistance. Resistance is a second lens through which questions of political agency and voice can be explored, one connected to the practices of deliberation I discussed above. Acts of resistance inform and shape other forms of political deliberation, and can sometimes also be seen as deliberative practices in themselves (Young 2001).<sup>12</sup>

##### 4.1 *Farmers' Protests and Just Transitions*

At least three forms of farmers' protests arose in the Netherlands in the past few years: street protests by angry farmers, the foundation of the political party BBB, BoerBurgerBeweging (FarmerCitizenMovement), and the establishment of new farmers' organizations that aim to reform farming practices. The most visible form of farmers' protest are the street demonstrations of angry farmers, by the groups Farmers Defence Force' (FDF) and Agractie. Both groups were founded after animal rights activists occupied a pig farm in Boxtel in May 2013. Politicians condemned this event, but farmers responded to it by stating they felt intimidated. They also saw it as part of a more general tendency in Dutch society to undervalue farmers, something they connect to misunderstandings of what farming entails by those who live in urban areas, and to a lack of political representation of their interests (Bosma and Peeren, 2021).

The tractor protest I described at the beginning of this chapter was the first in a series of protests, in which the farmers presented themselves as necessary workers for Dutch food, using the slogan "No farmers no food" (ibid). In addition to blocking traffic, they also used force at a protest in Groningen in 2019, when a farmer on a tractor drove through fences and nearly ran over a bicyclist, and another farmer demolished the door of the Provinciehuis (provincial building). At a protest in Eindhoven in 2020, a 17-year-old farmer deliberately set out to run over members of the military police with his tractor. Members of the FDF also threaten farmers and organizations that want to contribute to

12 For reasons of space I cannot defend this view in more detail. See Meijer (2019) for a longer discussion of the types of acts that can be seen as deliberative and how they are connected.



sustainable change, and in doing so successfully obstruct initiatives (Volkskrant 2021). Bosma and Peeren (2021) analyzed the protests in relation to the image the general public has of farmers, and note that even when the protests turned violent, politicians and the public responded with little condemnation. They argue that this is related to farmers presenting as real Dutchmen, which allows them to vent their anger in destructive ways.<sup>13</sup>

The acceptance of the farmers' violence also follows from the fact that their message is conservative: they oppose the transition to ecologically just ways of farming, measure interests economically, and are human-centered. Their image as authentic Dutchmen also plays a role here too, but is at least in part misleading: the protesting farmers present themselves as local authentic farmers, but the protests received substantial financial support from companies, such as fodder companies De Heus and ForFarmers, and slaughterhouse company Vion (Bosman and Peeren 2021).

Soon after the farmers' protests began, a new political party was founded, the BoerBurgerBeweging (FarmerCitizenMovement), or BBB. The BBB participated in the national elections of 2021 and now has one seat in parliament. They call themselves the voice of the countryside. The party has similar aims and stand points as the protesting farmers, and doubts scientific insights concerning climate change and pollution. In the case of nitrogen pollution, they want to establish new forms of measuring pollution on farms, and argue all current measures should be abolished (NOS 2021). In October 2021, two thirds of animal farmers state that if there would be elections now, they would vote BBB (IandO Research 2021).

There are also counter movements, that aim to establish sustainable models of farming and that offer new ways of viewing the role of farmers in society. For example, a Dutch group of farmers called the Caring Farmers actively work towards "nature-inclusive circular agriculture" and improving animal welfare. Certain individual farming initiatives focus on regenerating soil and working with nature instead of against it.<sup>14</sup> While the Caring Farmers and these latter group's efforts are less visible in the media, they do resist the political and economic structures that oppress animals, including humans.

---

13 Above, I discussed farmers speaking out about depression in the media, following a report in *NRC Handelsblad* newspaper in 2021 (NRC 2021). The interviews they gave can in this context also be seen as a form of resistance: being open about psychological problems goes against the stereotype of the farmer as tough and aggressive, and instead draws attention to vulnerability and the importance of connection.

14 For example regenerative farm Bodemzicht, <https://www.bodemzicht.nl>, and Stichting Kapitaloecen that wants to buy land free for nature, <https://www.kapitaloecen.nl>.

This brief overview shows that Dutch farmers have different possibilities for organizing, and resisting systems they see as unjust. It also reveals how groups of farmers may have very different aims, and that protesting with anger can lead to a great deal of press coverage, in contrast to groups providing sustainable alternatives. However, the fact that there are options for resistance does not mean that all individuals have access to these, are capable of resisting, or want to resist. Nor does it mean that resistance always leads to positive change – in fact, some of the protesting farmers oppose such change. While farmers' perspectives should be taken into account in discussing the future of farming for democratic reasons, establishing just social and ecological relations is therefore not just a task for the farmers but for the whole of society.

#### 4.2 *Cow Resistance and Possibilities for Multispecies Change*

Similar to deliberation, protest has in recent years been conceptualized as a more-than-human practice (Hribal 2011; Meijer 2019; this volume). Animal resistance may involve physical resistance or using violence, escaping from captivity, throwing feces at humans, refusing to work, voting with one's feet, occupying a certain territory, and many other kinds of acts. As Jason Hribal writes, animal acts of resistance are often deliberately not recognized as such by humans exploiting the animals, because they challenge the view of animals as passive beings or objects, and their exploitation. However, animal resistance does affect many practices, ranging from how barns are set up to discourses about animal rights (ibid).

In recent years, a few Dutch cows made the headlines by escaping on the way to slaughter. The most famous pair, Zus and Hermien, managed to escape on the way to slaughter in 2018. Zus was caught soon after her escape, but Hermien hid in the woods near a small town called Lettele for weeks; news media reported about the escape almost daily. When she was finally caught, both cows were taken in by cow sanctuary the Leemweg, where they still live.

Zus and Hermien remain an exception, because the room that cows have for resistance is generally very limited. In relation to humans, cows can act violently, some escape their captivity or slaughter, and they can also choose to ignore humans (Dumon Tak 2017). Furthermore, continuing to create meaning and build relations under the conditions of intensive farming can also be seen as a form of resistance. Cornips and Van den Hengel (2021) show that cows and calves consistently try to create meaning under conditions of captivity, by engaging with one another and their physical environment. They do so as social beings, who are aware of the relationships they are part of, even if humans ignore them. For example, cows may keep greeting humans who

ignore them (Cornips 2021). Creating meaning in a situation where you are not seen as someone capable of doing so is an act of resistance.

Cows are not the only ones who may try to change their situation. Animal sanctuaries such as the Leemweg also aim to change existing views of cows by drawing attention to their subjectivity and relationships. The Leemweg does this by sharing the stories of individual residents online, on their website and Facebook page, such as the story of Hermien and Zus. They also share videos and stories that portray friendships between cows, show the depth of relations between family members, or portray friendships between the cows and the goat Thea (<https://koeienrusthuis.nl>; see also Dumon Tak 2017; Tsovel 2005). Dutch writer Bibi Dumon Tak wrote a book about the Leemweg, in which she portrays 19 of the residents, including their histories in the dairy and meat industries, and petting zoos. Because the cows in the sanctuary often spend many years together and no longer must work, they have time for self-development and living the good life. This is expressed in how they interact with one another, humans, and the other animals who live at the sanctuary. They develop elaborate forms of attentiveness towards others, caring behaviors, and teach new cows and calves who come into the group about these norms (Dumon Tak 2017). Stories about these behaviors offer a new way of thinking about cows, and a new starting point for interacting with them.

While these and other stories about cows find an audience in animal friendly people, they rarely appear in mainstream discourse. This is unfortunate, because as Tsovel (2005) writes, stories about individual animals have a powerful role to play in addressing the exploitation of farm animals. But resistance is not always loud, and not always immediately successful, if at all.

## 5 Conclusion

Cows and certain farmers are marginalized under the conditions of modern dairy and meat farming, but not in the same ways and not to the same degree. Cows are denied political and social voice on many different levels of society: by farmers, the industry that profits from their work, consumers of dairy and meat, the political system that regards animals as mute, and other cultural and social mechanisms that reinforce animal silence. Farmers are denied voice in subtler ways, through systems that generate economic dependence, measure value economically, and do not consider or even stigmatize certain forms of expression and more-than-human ways of meaning-making. Farmers have more room for self-expression than cows, and what they say is more easily

heard: both in terms of deliberation and resistance, farmers' agency gains greater recognition in politics and the media.

Both groups resist their oppression, but cows have very little possibility to do so, and their resistance often goes unnoticed. Farmers can choose differently, for example, to change to veganic farming, or to sell their farm. In practice, as explored, these transitions can prove difficult. While farmers have much more uptake for their agency than cows, they do experience clear systemic restrictions. As the protests show, not all farmers want to change; a vocal conservative subgroup of farmers, financed by large companies, claims to be "real" farmers, which stymies the project of improving the life circumstances of farmed animals.

The solution to cow oppression is not a return to small-scale farming. This might be preferable for certain farmers, but research in animal sanctuaries (Blattner, Donaldson and Willcox 2020; Gillespie 2018; Jones 2014; Jones 2014; Meijer 2021) and fields of study like ethology (Marino and Allen 2017) gives us sufficient reason to assume that when given the choice, no cow would accept the system of being inseminated, giving birth, giving up her calf, being milked, and killed prematurely. Taking seriously cows' voices and perspectives implicates an end to these practices. While political and legal institutions can and should play a role in improving the situation for cows, we should not overlook the cultural and social component to this process. Considering relations through the lens of deliberation and political voice can help bring to light the cows' perspectives and function as a starting point for acting differently with them.

Challenging cow and farmer oppression does not mean abolishing all relations: it does mean that humans need to begin to engage differently with cows in order to shape a different common lifeworld together (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019; 2021). There are already examples of farmers who choose differently and for example move to plant-based farming, regenerative farming, or found sanctuaries. The government should support these changes and thus promote the positive contribution that farmers can make to sustainable societies, as a first step towards interspecies justice. However, forming new relations with cows and other farmed animals is not something that should be or can be done by farmers alone. In fact, this chapter shows how reformulating multispecies relations interconnects with large-scale cultural, economic, ecological social and political questions, and that change requires efforts from all citizens on different levels of society.

## Acknowledgments

I thank Julien Dugnoille and Elizabeth Vander Meer for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

## Work Cited

- 2Doc. 2018. *Het mysterie van de melkrobots*. NPO Start. [https://www.npostart.nl/2doc/04-06-2018/KN\\_1699017](https://www.npostart.nl/2doc/04-06-2018/KN_1699017). Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Aanpak Stikstof. 2021. <https://www.aanpakstikstof.nl>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Adams, Carol J. 2015. *The sexual politics of meat: A feminist-vegetarian critical theory*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Bickford, Susan. 2011. "Emotion Talk and Political Judgment." *The Journal of Politics*, 73(4), 1025–1037.
- Blattner, Charlotte, Sue Donaldson, and Ryan Wilcox. 2020. "Animal Agency in Community." *Politics and Animals*, 6, 1–22.
- Bosma, Anke, and Esther Peeren. 2021. "# Proudofthefarmer: Authenticity, Populism and Rural Masculinity in the 2019 Dutch Farmers' Protests." In *Politics and Policies of Rural Authenticity*, edited by Pospěch, Pavel, Eirik Magnus Fuglestad, and Elisabete Figueiredo, 113–129. Taylor & Francis.
- CBS. 2019. *Landbouwtelling 2019*. CBS. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2019/48/opnieuw-meer-melkkoeien-in-de-wei>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Cornips, Leonie, and Louis van den Hengel. 2021. "Place-Making by Cows in an Intensive Dairy Farm: A Sociolinguistic Approach to Nonhuman Animal Agency." In *Animals in Our Midst: The Challenges of Co-existing with Animals in the Anthropocene*, edited by Bernice Bovenkerk, and Kozef Keulartz, 177–201. Springer.
- Cornips, Leonie, F. van Eerdenburg, L. van Erp, Marjo van Koppen, and B. Theunissen. Forthcoming. "Onze melkkoel, letterlijk en figuurlijk." In *Dierzaamheid: Duurzaam samenleven met dieren*. Uitgeverij Noordboek | SterckandDeVreese en Bornmeer.
- Davis, Karen. 2010. "Chicken–human Relationships: From Procrustean Genocide to Empathic Anthropomorphism." *Spring: a journal of archetype and culture*, 83, 253–278.
- Donaldson, Sue, and Will Kymlicka. 2011. *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Driessen, Clemens. 2014. *Animal Deliberation: The Co-evolution of Technology and Ethics on the Farm*. Thesis: Wageningen University.
- Dumon Tak, Bibi. 2017. *Het Koeienparadijs*. Amsterdam: Querido.

- Eenvandaag. 2021. *Meer Boeren hebben Psychische Problemen*. Eenvandaag. <https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/item/meer-boeren-hebben-psychische-problemen-en-hulp-kan-beter-boer-erik-weet-er-alles-van-ik-kreeg-verkeerde-adviezen/>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Farmers Defence Force. 2021. <https://farmersdefenceforce.nl>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Gillespie, Kathryn. 2018. *The Cow with Ear Tag #1389*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Gygax, Lorenz, Gesa Neisen, and Beat Wechsler. 2010. "Socio-spatial Relationships in Dairy Cows." *Ethology. International journal of behaviour biology*, 116(1), 10–23. doi: 10.1111/j.1439-0310.2009.01708.x.
- Hribal, Jason. 2011. *Fear of the Animal Planet. The Hidden History of Animal Resistance*. Chico: AK Press.
- IandO Research. 2021. *Veeboeren Wantrouwen Overheid* <https://www.ioresearch.nl/actueel/onbegrepen-veeboeren-wantrouwen-overheid/>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Jones, Miriam. 2014. "Captivity in the Context of a Sanctuary for Formerly Farmed Animals." In *The Ethics of Captivity*, edited by Lori Gruen, 90–101. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, Patrice. 2014. *The Oxen at the Intersection: A Collision*. Brooklyn, NY: Lantern Books.
- Keulartz, Jozef. 2019. *Dieren in ons Midden*. Groningen: Noordboek.
- Kim, Claire Jean. 2015. *Dangerous crossings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- De Lauwere, Carolien, Gert van Duinkerken, Annemarie Rebel, and Rob Bergevoet. 2019. *Inventarisatie van aan Diervoeding Derelateerde Dierenwelzijns- en Diergezondheidsproblemen en de Oorzaken Hiervan: Een Quicksan met Behulp van de Delphi-methode*. No. 2019-010. Wageningen Economic Research.
- Mansbridge, Jane J, James Bohman, Simone Chambers, Thomas Christiano, Archon Fung, John Parkinson, Dennis F. Thompson, and Mark E. Warren. 2012. "A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy." In *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*, edited by John Parkinson, and Jane Mansbridge, 1–26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marino, Lori, and Kristin Allen. 2017. "The Psychology of Cows." *Animal behaviour and cognition*, 4(4), 474–498. <https://doaj.org/article/c8c1be0c5b8d4124a5728ae21fd5f7da>.
- Meijboom, Frank L.B., and Frans R. Stafleu. 2016. "Farming Ethics in Practice: From Freedom to Professional Moral Autonomy for Farmers." *Agriculture and Human Values*, 33(2), 403–414.
- Meijer, Eva. 2019. *When Animals Speak. Towards an Interspecies Democracy*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

- Meijer, Eva. 2021. "Sanctuary Politics and the Borders of the Demos: A Comparison of Human and Nonhuman Animal Sanctuaries." *Krisis*, 2021, 2.
- NOS. 2019a. *Boerenprotest Den Haag voorbij, 2200 trekkers terug naar huis*. NOS. <https://nos.nl/liveblog/2304125-boerenprotest-den-haag-voorbij-2200-trekkers-terug-naar-huis.html>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- NOS. 2019b. *Deze boeren leggen uit waarom ze demonstreren*. NOS. Available at: <https://nos.nl/collectie/13799/artikel/2304207-deze-boeren-leggen-uit-waarom-ze-demonstreren-ik-zit-muurvast-door-dit-beleid>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- NOS. 2021. *In de wereld van BBB is het boerenbelang het algemeen belang*. NOS. <https://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2404660-in-de-wereld-van-bbb-is-het-boerenbelang-het-algemeen-belang>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- NRC. 2021. *Boeren zijn vaker depressief, 'onzekerheid en kritiek knagen aan je'*. NRC Handelsblad. <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2021/05/20/ze-hangen-de-vuile-was-niet-buiten-a4044369>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- NRC. 2021b. *Kabinet heeft plannen voor onteigening honderden boeren*. NRC Handelsblad. <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2021/09/05/kabinet-plan-voor-onteyning-2-a4057198>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Otjes, Simon, and Tom Louwerse. 2015. "Populists in Parliament: Comparing Left-wing and Right-wing Populism in the Netherlands." *Political studies*, 63(1), 60–79.
- Redbo, Ingrid. 1992. "The Influence of Restraint on the Occurrence of Oral Stereotypies in Dairy Cows." *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 35(2), 115–123.
- Science. 2019. <https://www.science.org/content/article/nitrogen-crisis-jam-packed-livestock-operations-has-paralyzed-dutch-economy>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Shukin, Nicole. 2009. *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Stuart, Diane, and Ryan Gunderson. 2020. "Nonhuman Animals as Fictitious Commodities: Exploitation and Consequences in Industrial Agriculture." *Society and Animals*, 28(3), 291–310.
- Tapki, İbrahim. 2007. "Effects of Individual or Combined Housing Systems on Behavioural and Growth Responses of Dairy Calves." *Acta Agriculturae Scand Section A*, 57(2), 55–60.
- Theunissen, Bert, and Inge Jansen. 2020. "Hoe de Nederlandse Melkveerassen Ontstonden en wat dat Betekent voor hun Behoud als Levend Erfgoed." *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 133(2), 279–302.
- Trouw. 2021. *Er zijn steeds minder koeien in Nederland maar die vinden onderdak bij steeds meer superboeren*. Trouw. <https://www.trouw.nl/economie/er-zijn-steeds-minder-koeien-in-nederland-maar-die-vinden-onderdak-bij-steeds-meer-superboeren-b6062da4/>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.

- Tsovel, Ariel. 2005. "What Can a Farm Animal Biography Accomplish? The Case of Portrait of a Burger as a Young Calf." *Society and Animals*, 13(3), 245–262.
- Vieira, Andreia de Paula, Vanessa Guesdon, Anne Marie de Passillé, Marina Andrea Gräfin von Keyserlingk, and Daniel MartinWeary. 2008. "Behavioural Indicators of Hunger in Dairy Calves." *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 109(4), 180–189.
- Volkskrant. 2021. *Plan voor Oplossing Stikstofprobleem Sneuvelt onder druk van Farmers Defence Force*. Volkskrant. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/economie/plan-voor-oplossing-stikstofprobleem-sneuvelt-onder-druk-van-farmers-defence-force~b6d61752>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Wakker Dier. 2021. *Melkkoeien*. <https://www.wakkerdier.nl/vee-industrie/dieren/melkkoeien/>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.
- Wilkie, Rhoda M. 2005. "Sentient Commodities and Productive Paradoxes: The Ambiguous Nature of Human–livestock Relations in Northeast Scotland." *Journal of Rural Studies*, 21(2), 213–230.
- Wilkie, Rhoda M. 2010. *Livestock/deadstock: Working with Farm Animals from Birth to Slaughter*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Young, Iris. 2001. "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy." *Political theory*, 29(5), 670–690.
- Young, Iris. 2002. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zembla. 2021. *Rabobank: 'Wij zijn medeverantwoordelijk voor de problemen in de landbouw'*. BNN VARA. <https://www.bnnvara.nl/zembla/artikelen/rabobank-wij-zijn-medeverantwoordelijk-voor-de-problemen-in-de-landbouw>. Last accessed: August 15th, 2022.