



Netherlands to buy out and close 3,000 farms to meet climate goals

by Breanne Deppisch, Energy and Environment Reporter | November 29, 2022 11:48 AM



The Dutch government is planning to buy out and close as many as 3,000 farms in the country, [exacerbating an already-bitter dispute](#) with growers as leaders attempt to [halve](#) the country's nitrogen emissions by 2030.



and other large nitrogen emitters "well over" their property values.

If farmers do not agree to the plan, the buyouts could become compulsory.

"There is no better offer coming," Dutch Nitrogen Minister Christianne van der Wal told members of parliament last week.



The plan comes as the Dutch government moves to halve its nitrogen emissions by 2030 in accordance with European Union conservation rules. But to meet that target, the government estimates that 11,200 farms will have to close, and 17,600 others will have to reduce their livestock numbers significantly.

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The targets have been met with outrage in the Netherlands. This summer, tens of thousands of protesters massed in major Dutch cities to protest news of the emissions cuts, blocking roadways, bridges, and key waterways.



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Farming is a critical sector of the Dutch economy. Despite being just slightly larger than the state of Maryland, the Netherlands is the world's second-largest exporter of agricultural goods, behind only the United States, and its exports in that sector totaled roughly 105 billion euros in 2021 alone.

Emissions from farming are a major concern in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has a nitrogen balance nearly twice the European average — the majority of which comes from farming.



Others fear a reduction in the Dutch agriculture sector will result in higher-cost, less-efficient production in other parts of the world.

“Global agriculture, in some sense, is zero-sum,” Ted Nordhaus, the executive director of the [Breakthrough Institute](#), a global research center, said in an [interview](#) this summer.

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"So if productivity and yields go down in the Netherlands, it means that the demand gets taken up somewhere else," he said.

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