Regenerative Agriculture ikbenboer, the Netherlands

Design Stage

Concept — Design — **Implementation** — Operation — Scaling

Arjen Verschure is more than a farmer, even though ikbenboer translates as “I am farmer”. Arjen is an innovator and pioneer who always wants to be ‘ahead of the curve’. Through several initiatives, Arjen has already been re-connecting agriculture with the consumer, and has been adding value to his farm produce before it leaves the farm gate.

Regenerative agriculture is Arjen’s future vision for his farm. Together with reNature, independent regenerative agriculture advisor Terra Prosperous, and bakery Amarant Bakkers, a trial is conducted on 10 hectares of land.

Mixed cropping, strip cropping, and cover cropping with cereals and pulses will be done with oat, lupine, peas, and buckwheat.

Buckwheat being one of the Future 50 Foods, this project will highlight the potential of this crop in a uniquely integrated and beautiful regenerative agriculture system.

Arjen Verschure

ikbenboer

LOCATION:

Flevopolder, The Netherlands

SIZE OF PILOT PLOT:

10 ha

SIZE OF POTENTIAL AREA:

100-300 ha

CLIENT:

Knorr (Unilever)

PRODUCTS:

Cereals & Pulses

GOAL:

Showcasing regenerative agriculture (using a future 50 food ingredient), creating a blueprint for scaling at the farm

MAIN FOCUS:

Growing regenerative grains and other crops in a mixed-, strip-, and cover-cropping system

PROJECT PARTNERS:

ikbenboer

Terra Prosperous

AMARANT BAKKERS

Start small, think big

A Regenerative Agriculture incubation chamber

Arjen is ready to start working his land. Some 10 hectares will be the incubation chamber for regenerative agriculture at Arjen's farm. Through the learnings from this pilot, we will be able to create a blueprint for scaling regenerative agriculture on the rest of the farm. We will document the entire process and make communications when key milestones are achieved.

An innovative cropping system

Several new practices will be introduced to Arjen's farm. Together with independent advisor Arjan Janknegt (Terra Prosperous) a design and implementation plan is developed, with the implementation running over a one-year period. Through mixed-, strip-, and cover cropping in combination with several other practices, we will:

- Restore the quality of the soil, increasing the carbon and nutrient contents of the soil;
- Accumulate biodiversity above-ground and below-ground, stimulating beneficial microbes and attracting beneficial insects;
- Improve the capacity of the soil to catch and store water, allowing for better water management and yield stability

Overall, the new system will be providing a plethora of valuable ecosystem services.

The vision: Transitioning the entire farm

Arjen has the ultimate vision to entirely transform how he currently runs the farm. Inspired by other regenerative farmers, he in the future wants to integrate cattle, pigs, chickens, cereals and pulses for human and animal consumption, agroforestry, and have a diverse palette of practices that strengthen the ecological and economic resilience of his farm.

Lastly: it will make farming more fun for Arjen and more beautiful for the consumer. In the end, he envisions his own pancake restaurant, selling delicious fresh pancakes made with eggs, milk, and flour—all from his own farm.

Budget & Timeline

Over the period of 1 year, we will design, plan, and implement the new cropping system and make a report of the impact on soil, biodiversity, and water by the end of the project period. To realize the 1-year plan, we will use the donation from Knorr to finance the initial project design and kick-start implementation of pilot plots, whilst continuing to scout for opportunities to scale the initiative in the coming years.

An opportunity for Knorr

The combination of buckwheat with other cereals and pulses, in a beautiful location and with a motivated farmer, means this initiative has a clear opportunity for story telling and promotion for Knorr, which we are happy to help realize.

1	61% More	45% More	23% More
Farmer & Family	Biodiversity	Soil Humidity	CO2 sequestration per ha/year