

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

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Dutch Refine Agricultural Priorities

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Biofuels

Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security

Policy and Program Announcements

Trade Policy Monitoring

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Report Highlights:

After the merger of the Dutch AgMinistry with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the newly formed Dutch Government removed "Agriculture" from the Ministry's name. The new Cabinet envisions the Netherlands as a playing a key logistical hub in the global bio-based economy thriving on agricultural feedstocks imported from abroad.

On Monday November 5th, 2012, the new Dutch Government was established. The Liberal Party (VVD) and the Labor Party (PvdA) formed a coalition and agreed to a cabinet of thirteen Ministers and seven State Secretaries. While the previous Cabinet merged the AgMinistry with the Ministry of Economic Affairs to the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, this Cabinet renames the Ministry simply the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The removal of "Agriculture" underlines the more business-focused policy for the agricultural sector, and the wish of the Cabinet to treat the Dutch agricultural sector as any other sector in the Netherlands. The Cabinet acknowledges, however, the importance of the sector. Since 2004, the Netherlands have been ranking the second biggest exporter of agricultural products in the world after the United States.

In the new cabinet, Henk Kamp (VVD) is appointed as Minister of Economic Affairs and Co Verdaas (PvdA) is appointed as Minister of Agriculture (below is the link to his bio).

<http://www.government.nl/government/members-of-cabinet/co-verdaas>

While the previous Minister, Hans Bleker had the opinion that the focus on animal welfare, sustainability and nature negatively affected the economic situation of the sector, the new Minister feels strongly about animal welfare and nature development. The Cabinet will focus on a green growth strategy highlighting innovative agriculture, the bio-based economy, renewable energy, and further developing the ports.

In the coalition paper, the following statements are made about *agriculture*:

- The Cabinet will lobby for a lower EU budget for agriculture, but will support a higher budget for sustainability and innovation.
- Innovation is regarded as a precondition for a green growth strategy towards a bio-based economy, an economy based on renewable sources.
- The development of a national ecological network will be restarted (Minister Bleker stopped it)
- Animal welfare will be assured in the livestock sector.
- The Product Boards will disappear.

In the coalition paper, the following statements are made about *renewable energy*:

- The Cabinet set an international goal of a fully sustainable energy supply in 2050, and a national goal of 16 percent in 2020 (was 14 percent).
- Co-firing of sustainable biomass will be subsidized.
- Security of energy and raw materials will receive special attention in the policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Opportunities for the United States

The Dutch Government wants to further strengthen the Dutch economy by following a "green growth strategy". This strategy entails investments in research and infrastructure and has as ultimate goal of making the Netherlands the knowledge centre and the logistical and biorefining hub of a global bio-based economy. Agricultural products will need to be the cornerstone of this proposal. As the Netherlands is only a minor producer of the essential raw materials, the United States can play an important role in supplying the feedstock and necessary agricultural inputs.

