

## 4m1: Bringing nature and farming in balance together – the case of the Dutch farmer collectives

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Roughly 2/3 of the Netherlands' land surface is used by agriculture. Therefore, the Netherlands' biggest challenge to save its native biodiversity is taking place in the agricultural sector, which also happens to be one of the most highly-productive agricultural sectors of the whole world. Can farmers be engaged in conservation work? And if so, how can this be done in the best way? In this masterclass we present the unique Dutch model of governance around agri-environmental measures. Since 2016, the Dutch government allows only groups of farmers called collectives to receive subsidies for farmland habitat conservation. This unique governance structure was set up to coordinate conservation measures at a landscape scale, and to thereby achieve a greater positive impact on biodiversity. In these collectives, the farmers self-organize to create optimum habitats for protected species on their lands. In this masterclass, the chair of the national association of collectives and dairy farmer Alex Datema will explain how this bottom-up system works and why it works to motivate farmers. Harm Kossen, a farmer advisor for the collectives will explain his vision on embedding conservation measures in agricultural production to achieve a more circular agriculture. And Aard Mulders of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture will elaborate on the role that the Dutch government took on in giving shape to this bottom-up approach. This session serves to inspire thinking about what is needed for innovative governance arrangements such as this one to succeed.