



Written by [James Murphy](#) on July 1, 2022

## Dutch Farmers Protest Government's Draconian Emissions Targets

Tens of thousands of Dutch farmers protested throughout the Netherlands this past week, even blocking the street of The Hague with tractors and other farm equipment. The farmers believe that they are being unfairly singled out by government targets to cut emissions from livestock and are now uniting to battle for their livelihoods in an organization called the Farmer's Defense Force (FDF).

The government claims that nitrogen oxide and ammonia from livestock need to be drastically reduced in general, and especially close to nature areas and protected habitats.

Farmers are angry that the government seems intent on pushing many of them out of business. They are protesting the emissions targets, which could lead to a 30-percent reduction in livestock overall. The farmers also believe that they are being treated unfairly while other industries such as construction, aviation, and transportation face far less onerous emission cuts.

The [FDF](#) began in 2019 with minor actions of civil disobedience, but their biggest action took place this past Tuesday when thousands of tractor-driving farmers blocked a highway between The Hague and Utrecht. Portions of the border between Germany and The Netherlands were also closed.

Apparently, angry farmers reportedly even broke through a police barrier in front of the home of Nature and Nitrogen Minister Christianne Van der Wal-Zeggelink. Prime Minister Mark Rutte was supportive of the farmers' right to protest but was rankled at some reported illegal activity.

"Freedom of speech and the right to demonstrate are a vital part of our democratic society, and I will always defend them," Rutte said. "But ... it is not acceptable to create dangerous situations, it is not acceptable to intimidate officials, we will never accept that."

One farmer took two of his cows to parliament and lamented, "If the nitrogen measures are adopted, one of these two ladies will not go home, but will receive a one-way ticket to the slaughterhouse," farmer Koos Cromwijk said.

The farmers are irate at being essentially put out of business by the extreme emissions cuts. "The honest message ... is that not all farmers can continue their business," the government admitted in a statement earlier this month. And those that do remain in business will need to radically change how they do things.

"It's not normal, what's being done to the farmers," protester Jan Poorter, 74, told French outlet AFP.



AP Images

Dutch farmers protesting in the Netherlands



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“It must happen gradually and that’s not the case,” Poorter added. “You can’t just close farms that are hundreds of years old. You just can’t!”

But the Dutch government’s answer is to essentially shrug their shoulders and say it’s an “unavoidable transition.” Rutte has admitted that the new regulations will have an enormous and deleterious effect on Dutch farms. “This sector will change, but unfortunately there’s no choice, we have to bring down nitrogen emissions,” the prime minister said.

But the agricultural industry in The Netherlands is not small. According to the national farmers lobbying group LTO, there are close to 54,000 agricultural businesses in the nation, exporting approximately 94 billion euros in goods annually.

Dutch citizens are showing growing support for their agricultural industry. The Farmer Citizen movement, represented by the BBB Party begun in 2019, has already grown into the third-largest party in the nation according to one [poll](#).

The Dutch government, under orders from the EU, is looking to cut greenhouse gasses across the board, but the nitrogen cuts, which mainly affect farmers, are the most draconian. They are looking to cut nitrogen nitrogen by up to 70 percent in 131 “protected habitat” areas.

The Netherlands is destroying its farming community, and it’s all being done in a fruitless effort to reach arbitrary climate goals by 2030.



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