



The cows who live on the vessel are milked by robots, each producing up to 25 litres a day. | Photo source Floating Farm

Innovation > Agriculture & Energy > Floating dairy farm promotes sustainable food cycle

FLOATING DAIRY FARM PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE FOOD CYCLE

 AGRICULTURE & ENERGY

The cows who live on the vessel are milked by robots and are fed with local vegetation

Spotted: A small herd of dairy cows is currently residing off-land along the banks of the Nieuwe Maas, a distributary of the Rhine River. Their home is a waterborne vessel in Rotterdam, Holland, that cost roughly €24 million to create.

The purpose of The Floating Farm is to promote a sustainable food cycle. The cows who live on the vessel are milked by robots, each producing up to 25 litres a day. The cows are fed with local vegetation that is recycled and delivered to the island via electric cars. Other robots clean up manure and recycle the waste into fertilizer.

The Floating Farm was developed by Minke and Peter van Wingerden after noticing how most urban areas devastated by natural disasters have trouble getting fresh food for days after the event. As storms become more severe, and drought becomes more common in agricultural zones, these moveable floating farms can expand production areas to lakes, rivers, and ports.

The milk produced by The Floating Farm can be found in about 23 Rotterdam retail markets. Production is underway to increase the number of cows each vessel can hold. Minke van Wingerden's next step is to develop floating poultry and food plants. A few cities in Asia have inquired about the possibility of adapting this model to their own dairy industries.

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Email: info@floatingfarm.nl

Website: floatingfarm.nl

Takeaway:

Though floating farms are not the answer to global agricultural crises, they can be used to support the need for dairy and other fresh foods in some urban areas. The eco-friendly operation of this farm is intriguing, from feeding to waste management. Land-based farms might do well in adopting some of these practices to improve their own impact on the environment.