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Netherlands

Agricultural Situation

New Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

2007

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Report Highlights:

Ms. Gerda Verburg is the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in the new Dutch government.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
The Hague [NL1]
[NL]

On February 22, 2007, Dutch Queen Beatrix installed the cabinet of the new government. Ms. Gerda Verburg is the new Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.



The 49-year-old minister is the first woman to serve in this post, which is traditionally filled by a member of the Christian Democrat Appeal (CDA) party. In her career, Verburg has had little involvement with agriculture, apart from the fact that her parents had a dairy farm. Prior to her new appointment, she held the position of deputy leader of the CDA. She has concentrated mainly on social affairs during the past several years as a Member of Parliament. Before she entered politics in 1998, she was a trade union executive at the Christian trade union confederation CNV. Her educational background includes the study of personnel administration and labor relations. Over the past four years as a CDA party spokesperson on social affairs, she had the difficult task of defending the often-rigorous reforms of the center-right government.

As a result of the election in November 2006, the following three parties were able to form a coalition government in early February: Christian Democrat Appeal, Labor Party and Christian Union. Together they developed the coalition agreement "working together, living together", a document which forms the basis for the new government's policies.

Under the coalition agreement document, the main points with a direct connection to agriculture include the following: a) developing markets for sustainable products (energy, water and food industry); b) developing "space" for living; and c) improving animal welfare (at the EU level). Under this government, the European agreements on reforming the Common Agricultural Policy will form the basis of the Dutch agricultural policy. During the mid-term review in August 2009, the cabinet plans to push for stronger provisions on cross compliance between EU single farm payments and social values (food safety and food security), maintenance of the landscape, environmental protection, and animal welfare.

Along with her other colleagues in the new cabinet, Minister Verburg will spend the first 100 days traveling in the Netherlands. This will enable her to meet with farmers, product boards, farm organizations, retailers and other stakeholders, to gain further insight into current agricultural and food issues.