KDV magazine
for the Sustainable Pork Value Chain
no. 04. 2024

THEME: SMART FARMING

Contract with Superunie

Real-Time Certification

Sjef van de Nieuwelaar:
‘Strong social bonds lead to healthier pigs’

Scan only is the future

DUURZAAM VARKENSVLEES

Real solutions for real farmers

The Sustainable Pork Value Chain (KDV) advocates sustainable pig farming. We are a 100% Dutch chain, with more than 250 affiliated farms, meat processors, butchers, and retailers. By sustainable we mean: continual improvements in animal welfare and the environment. This involves a comprehensive approach, which distinguishes us from single-issue initiatives. In pursuit of future-proof pig farming, we focus on 8 themes.

1 **Healthy pigs**
We have stringent requirements regarding issues such as antibiotic use, salmonella, and slaughter findings.

2 **Care for mother and piglet**
Our piglets stay with their mothers for longer, and she is given nest-building material around the time the piglets are born.

3 **The animal's living environment**
Daily manure removal helps us improve the climate in the sty. Enrichment materials, such as lucerne, are provided in sties.

4 **Minerals cycle**
We extract the minerals from the manure, return them to the cycle, and reduce mineral loss by improving utilisation by the animals.

5 **Biodiversity and soil**
We aim to minimise the amounts of copper and zinc in feed and reduce antibiotic use, so we disrupt soil life as little as possible by mitigating manure impact.

6 **CO_2 footprint**
By implementing energy-saving measures, daily manure removal, immediate manure processing and digestate processing, we want to make the chain energy-neutral.

7 **Food safety and quality**
We produce high-quality food. The feed that participants give their pigs has to comply with the KDV raw materials list. All soy in the pig feed must be RTRS certified. KDV is certified by an independent certification body.

8 **Smart Farming**
Thanks to an innovative system of electronic ear tags, we have achieved the ultimate track and trace system. The piglets receive an ear tag with an RFID chip at birth. As a result, the entire history of each individual pig is known.

DUURZAAM VARKENSVLEES

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Continuing to lead the way

Welcome to this special edition of our magazine, entirely dedicated to Smart Farming. You might wonder if there's really that much to say on the subject, but there certainly is. Nearly all KDV farmers are now using Smart Farming, applying knowledge directly where it's needed – in their sties. Smart Farming isn't about replacing their professional expertise but about enhancing it.

In this issue, we'll show you how Smart Farming can benefit your business operations. And we'll answer the tough questions: Who does the data belong to? And who benefits from it the most?

Smart Farming began as a system to ensure livestock were raised without the use of antibiotics. It's now clear that it offers many additional benefits, from processing without slaughter tags (scan only) to making sure farms are future-proof. We continue to lead the way in pig farming. And to illustrate our confidence in its future, this magazine features more stories from a new generation of farmers taking over their family businesses.

We'll also introduce you to the first of our KDV ambassadors, farmers who are proud of our chain and can communicate that pride effectively. We can all rightly share that pride in KDV and the ambitious, pioneering role we play in shaping the future.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue. If you know someone who would also enjoy this magazine, let me know, and I will make sure they receive a copy.

Jaap de Wit Jr.
Chairman of the Sustainable Pork Value Chain Foundation

'Bring even more expertise to your sty with Smart Farming'

Suzan Hopster of LeeO:

'A whole new world opened up for me'

Suzan Hopster is a farm coach at LeeO. She spends her Saturdays working on a pig farm and helps out with milking on two dairy farms. 'I mostly do it just because I enjoy it, but it also ensures I can still speak the language of pig farming.'

Suzan grew up around pigs. Her parents are affiliated with KDV and own a meat pig farm in Twente, so pursuing a degree in pig and poultry farming was a natural step for her. A part-time job gave Suzan an opportunity to work on a farm where Smart Farming was being implemented. 'It was really interesting to see how they did that. I realised there's so much more to farming than just what happens on the farm. I thought it would be great if it was something I could go on to work with later.'

Before long, a job opened up at LeeO. 'I didn't have to think twice. I wanted to spend more time working with people, helping to improve the entire supply chain. Supporting our customers by focusing on what matters to them and developing the app to meet their needs. For example, we recently introduced a new weaning function that allows farmers to log data for each individual pen. It's a feature that was requested by several customers. It's great to be able to work on this together with the LeeO team.'

Perhaps you've already met Suzan at one of our KDV study club evenings. She works with the support team to assist KDV farm coaches Arjan and Angelique. 'The best part of my job is when pig farmers are interested in how they can use their data to improve the performance of their farms. Insights from LeeO's data are already being used to inform many of their decisions.

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‘The slaughter tag-free' pilot is an incredible concept’

Leading the way together

Ten years ago, we embarked on a new venture: using electronic ear tags to track individual animal data. What began as a pilot project on a few KDV farms has since evolved into a system that can be implemented across the entire chain. Pioneering is not without its challenges, but we are enormously proud of where we stand today!

Exploring new possibilities

Since 2015, we've been seriously investigating the possibilities offered by individual animal registration, also known as Smart Farming. While the potential of the technology had been clear for a long time, we had not been able to achieve widespread application. Data is increasingly vital in a growing number of areas, enhancing and enriching professional knowledge and experience. For example, we identified significant differences in the performance of individual pigs and the outcomes achieved by different farms. In other words, the data showed where there was room for improvement. Naturally, we wanted to be at the forefront of this technological shift and attract the farmers of the future to our chain. At the same time, the chain had recently made significant investments in reducing antibiotic use. We knew there was a market for pork from animals that had never been treated with antibiotics. However, new and innovative methods were required to keep these pigs separate from others.

‘Smart Farming owes its success to everyone who has dedicated their time and energy to it over the past few years’

The early days of Smart Farming

Based on the belief that Smart Farming is vital to the farmer of the future, we initially focused on a clear, short-term goal: using Smart Farming to develop the Antibiotic-free Life Guarantee concept. We started with five KDV farms and conducted extensive research into digital ear tags and scanners. The development of the software (in collaboration with LeeO) and of the MijnWestfort app were challenging undertakings that required substantial effort. But we were ultimately successful. We established effective data connections that allow us to provide customers with product guarantees about relevant food supply chain information, such as origin, certification, and treatments. We also found a market for the products, initially in Italy, but we're now also making significant progress in the Dutch market.

A pioneering supply chain

KDV is the first pig supply chain in the world to use Smart Farming on this scale, thereby establishing us as industry leaders. The research and development phase is complete, and our focus is now on rolling out the system to all our members. From there, we can continue to develop and introduce new features. One of these is tag-free loading, which uses a digital ear tag, eliminating the need for a slaughter tag and sparing the animal from an additional invasive procedure. You can read more about it on page 8. This system is the foundation upon which we can continue to build, and we are immensely proud that it is now in place.

‘We are the first pig supply chain in the world to use Smart Farming on this scale’

Which data are collected?

Smart Farming involves the registration of data about each individual animal. At a minimum, farmers participating in the programme record data on the following: insemination, genetics, birth, sex, antibiotic use, mortality, relocations, and transport. But the system offers many more options for recording data about the pigs. Examples include records on weight, feed, climate, and treatments. While KDV does not make registering this information mandatory, it can provide pig farmers with valuable insights.

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SCAN ONLY

Tag-free loading

Smart Farming is constantly developing and offering new opportunities. One of the current projects is delivery without slaughter tags. In this pilot project, pigs no longer receive slaughter tags. Instead, identification and registration is arranged through the RFID ear tag.

SLAUGHTER TAG-FREE PILOT

The current laws do not yet allow pigs to be delivered without slaughter tags. To help change this, we launched a pilot in 2019 in collaboration with the NVWA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV). Farmers participating in Smart Farming use RFID ear tags containing an internal chip that records data from birth to slaughter, eliminating the need for slaughter tags. Not only does it save the pigs the procedure, but it also makes the driver's job much easier. Marco van de Craats visits Nico van den Kamp in Putten once a fortnight. He's participating in the 'slaughter tag-free pigs' pilot. It took Nico a while to get used to scanning the pigs. 'You have to keep track of which pigs you haven't scanned, and obviously, you need to make sure your phone has enough battery. But I've got the hang of it now. This method is more pleasant for everyone, and it makes loading much faster. We're often finished in less than an hour.'

STRESS-FREE LOADING

For Marco, speedier loading is not the most important benefit of the system. 'For me, it's 100% about animal welfare. It removes a huge amount of stress for the pigs. The farmer scans them beforehand so they can be loaded straight onto the lorry.' The atmosphere during loading at Nico's

Legal requirement

After birth, all pigs receive an ear tag indicating the farm where they were born. They receive a second ear tag when they are moved to the slaughterhouse. This 'slaughter tag' indicates which farm they were fattened on and links the data from the supply chain to that of the slaughterhouse. The lorry driver usually applies the slaughter tags on the loading ramp during transport. Tagging is already a stressful procedure for the pigs, and the unfamiliar environment, combined with being confined on the loading ramp, makes it even more stressful. However, the tags are required by law, and the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) ensures that the law is enforced; an animal must not be accepted by the slaughterhouse without a tag.

Marco van de Craats

When Marco van de Craats was a young boy, his father took him to work with him as he collected and delivered pigs and calves on his lorry. 'My father always said, "As soon as he's out of nappies, he can come with me." And he was true to his word. I went to work with him during the school holidays. We never went away on holiday, but those school holidays were the best days of my life. I passed my driving test first time when I was 18, and then I was allowed to go out on my own. I got a job with a trader, who I still work for today. But wow, it was much harder than I'd expected. I really missed my dad. Suddenly, I had to do everything on my own. If you're not familiar with the pigs, you won't know how to handle them. These days, a lot more thought has gone into how you get the pigs out of the sty. Back then, it wasn't so easy.'

Marco drives a German moving floor truck. 'You don't see them that often in the Netherlands, but they're very common in Germany. The pigs walk onto the lorry on their own. Every 10 or 11 pigs, I put a gate in behind them. When the lorry is full, I can lift the whole floor up to make room for another load. It prevents the pigs from getting stressed on the loading ramp, and you can keep the sty doors open.'

> ‘Our ultimate goal is for slaughter tag-free delivery to be the industry norm’

farm is calm and relaxed, with the pigs displaying no signs of distress. 'As well as the loading ramp and tagging, several other things could make pigs anxious during loading. For example, if there's a puddle of water in front of the sty door, you need to clear it away because they aren't familiar with it, and that can make them panic. Bright sunlight from the east can be disastrous, as pigs aren't naturally inclined to walk towards the light. But above all, you need to take your time. Luckily, the older you get, the more patience you have.'

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

One of the additional benefits of scanning is the ability to instantly check which pigs are still within the mandatory waiting period, preventing them from being mistakenly sent for slaughter. You can also see information about which animals have received treatment in the past 60 days, as required on the veterinary information form. The NVWA views this as a significant advantage compared to slaughter tags. We've also had a lot of interest in the project from farmers and transporters, and 100 companies are currently participating in the pilot. At present, we are the only chain in the Netherlands authorised to deliver without slaughter tags. However, our ultimate goal is for legislation to change so that slaughter tag-free delivery becomes the industry norm.

Are you interested in delivering without slaughter tags? **Contact your farm coach.**

WE'VE PUT OUR PILOT FORWARD FOR THE PIGNNOVATION AWARD

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9 tough questions about Smart Farming

We asked Jaap de Wit Jr. some tough questions about Smart Farming.

1 Who does the data belong to?

The farmer. That means all the data that farmers record on their farms always belongs to them. If you decide to stop working with KDV, your data will still be accessible, and you'll have ample time to decide what to do with it. However, the farmer does not own the data that is collected outside their farm.

2 What other data is collected?

Farmers record data about insemination, genetics, birth, sex, antibiotic use, mortality, relocations, and transport. The slaughterhouse then supplements it with quantitative technical, financial, and health-related information, such as carcass weight, which can be used to calculate daily growth.

3 What happens to the data?

The data is stored in the Westfort Data Warehouse. Farmers receive feedback on the data via the MijnWestfort app, quarterly reports, LeeO.nl and invoices, so it provides a valuable farm management tool. We also use the data for internal research to help us improve the chain. The data we use for that is anonymised, so it can't be traced back to individual farms.

4 Do you sell the data to third parties?

No, we don't sell data to third-party companies without the farmer's consent. Data is shared with other parties in the chain only after consultation with the individual pig farmers. In fact, this is often done at the farmer's request. We've shared data with companies in the genetics, feed and pharmaceutical sectors. These parties also contribute financially to the system's costs.

5 But doesn't data have monetary value? Are farmers paid for it?

Yes and yes. There are two main financial benefits for farmers. Firstly, they receive a fee for participating in Smart Farming. Several customers within the KDV chain pay a premium for meat with additional guarantees, such as the Antibiotic-free Life Guarantee. This allows us to compensate farmers for their participation. Secondly, Smart Farming can indirectly lead to increased revenue for farms. We supplement the farmers' data with data from the slaughterhouse and ensure they can compare their enhanced data with other farms. This provides valuable insights that they can use to manage their farms. Farmers are increasingly using data to support their professional knowledge and decision-making.

6 Who benefits the most from the data?

The entire chain benefits. In the future, Smart Farming will be essential as more decisions are driven by data. Data gives you deeper insights into processes and allows guarantees to be made in the chain. It promotes healthy farms and animal welfare (for example, tag-free loading) and reduces costs. That's where the real value lies.

7 Can farmers sell their data?

We create the data for farmers to use on their own farms. If third parties use it, they are also benefiting from the system behind it, so they should help pay for it. Westfort has invested considerable time and resources into developing the Smart Farming system, so it's only logical that third parties should contribute financially. Similarly, a significant portion of the data is provided by the slaughterhouse, which should also be fairly compensated. If you receive a third-party request to share data, let us know, and we'll work together to find a fair solution.

'Sharing data? We'll find a solution together'

‘The introduction of the new terms and conditions was handled poorly’

8 New KDV user terms and conditions were introduced recently. Were they really necessary?

Yes, they were. Over the past few years, we've made significant investments in Smart Farming. This includes developing the system, providing support through farm coaches, and giving feedback on the data, as well as the costs of ear tags, software, and materials. These were all upfront investments. So it was important that we had clear agreements in place. Moreover, customers who pay a premium for additional guarantees expect the system to be watertight. That can only be achieved when we have clear and concrete agreements with participants regarding the rules.

9 Not everyone was happy with how they were presented. Could you explain what happened?

I agree that it could have been handled better. First of all, I'd like to apologise for how it was done. When you install any app, you're usually asked to accept the terms and conditions before you can use it, and we thought it made sense to do the same. It was quick and efficient, but in hindsight, the idea was perhaps naïve. We should have given everyone more time to carefully read the terms and decide whether they agreed with them. It was not at all our intention to force the terms on anyone, but some members felt rushed, and we regret that. The feedback we received has been incorporated into a revised version of the terms, which will be included in the next update.

NICK BENJAMINS
Slaughterhouse production line manager
Joined: September 2020

What is the main focus of your work?
For me, it all starts when the animals arrive. My team and I are responsible for overseeing the entire slaughtering process. Every morning before the pigs come in, everything is tested and cleaned according to the NVWA (Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority) hygiene regulations. Animal welfare is also a top priority, and I trained as an Animal Welfare Officer. You learn to understand the animals. There's no need to force them into the slaughterhouse because if you just make a few adjustments, the pigs will walk in on their own. And if you recognise certain signs early enough, you can save yourself and the pigs a lot of stress.

What is your perspective on sustainability?
We aim to enhance value by using as much of the pig as we can, which means keeping production errors to a minimum. For example, making sure a leg doesn't slip off the chain during scalding. It becomes unusable if left in the hot water for too long.

What is your favourite pig?
A farmer would probably say the Duroc. A vet might prefer a different breed. When it comes to slaughtering them, the breed doesn't matter to me. My favourite pig is the Iberico, but only when it's barbecued! Haha!

What are your thoughts on any recent or upcoming innovations?
The 'slaughter tag-free pigs' pilot is an incredible concept. It means there's one less intervention for the pigs, and we no longer need to cut the metal tag off their ears. It will be great when scanning (of the RFID ear tag, ed.) can be fully automated. You'll be able to make sure you don't miss any pigs, and you'll see all their details immediately, so you can separate the antibiotic-free animals from the rest much faster. It's going to be fantastic.

What are you proud of?
Many people will have seen images of slaughterhouses where pigs are kicked and hit. They don't know how things are done here. I tell people that we have 20 cameras in the facility, and a special team monitors the footage. If anyone mistreats a pig, they're fired immediately. I'm especially keen to explain all this to people who would rather know nothing about the slaughterhouse. If you want to order good meat from me, you should know how it gets from the farm to your plate!

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A breeder and a finisher discuss their work

Twan is a pig farmer for Toonen in Reek, and for the past two years, he's been sourcing piglets from Stijn van Kuppenveld. By sharing data with each other through LeeO, they're able to offer the Antibiotic-free Life Guarantee. The pair have a lot of fun working together!

Twan: Have you seen it yet?

Stijn: Seen what?

Twan: We're in the top 10 again on the MijnWestfort app! Our pigs have been growing so well lately. We were even in first place the other day! I've got to admit, I'm pretty proud of that.

Stijn: I'm really proud of that, too. You get my best piglets, so it's great to see them doing so well on your farm.

Twan: Exactly. Smart Farming gives you so much information. We had no data at all when we first started two years ago, but now we've got information on more than 15,000 pigs, and that's when you can really start making good use of it. I asked our farm coach, Arjan van der Heide, to help me analyse the data recently. We looked at the growth differences between boars and gilts and tried using that to adjust the feed.

Stijn: And has that improved their growth?

Twan: No, not really. But I like seeing if I can use data to get to the heart of a problem. That's why I'm glad I always get good data from you.

Stijn: It took a bit of getting used to at first, but entering the data in LeeO is a straightforward job now. And scanning the piglets with the group scanner is a piece of cake. I just wave it over the group, and then I can see how many I've scanned on my phone. After that, it just takes one click to send all the data to you, and then you can assign it to a pen. You can see their birth dates, genetics, and litter numbers, right?

Twan: Yes, and the transfer weights. I can add my own notes on treatments or problems like umbilical or inguinal hernias. And Westfort sends us the data on carcass weights, which completes the picture. Well actually, not entirely, because I don't think I can see which treatments the piglets had when they were with you. Knowing their full history might influence which treatments I give them.

Stijn: I think that data is already available, but you get my best piglets, which means they've had almost no treatments at all. But let's look into that together soon. If there's anything I an do to make things easier for you, I'm happy to help.

Twan: Let's do that! Another thing I like about Smart Farming is the chance to be part of the 'slaughter tag-free loading' pilot. It really is fantastic. It was a bit of a nightmare to start with because we still had to tag and scan at first, but once you've scored 95% three times, you can stop using slaughter tags. Loading is definitely a lot faster now.

> ‘The great thing about Smart Farming is that, every week, I get proof that we're doing things right’

Stijn: It's a brilliant system, isn't it? For me, the great thing about Smart Farming is that, every week, I get proof that we're doing things right. We chose this breed because they're healthy pigs with good growth rates. If you look on the app dashboard, you can see that we deliver our pigs for slaughter 12 days earlier than other farms. That really validates our choices for me.

Twan: Yes, we wouldn't have been able to see all that without Smart Farming. It's about the whole picture: a good breed, selecting the best piglets, the right feed and making sure all the conditions are as good as you can make them. Sometimes, it's the little things that make the biggest difference. Westfort's dashboard really motivates me to do the best I possibly can. There's the odd week when we don't make it into the top 10, but analysing the data we get back lets us see where we can make improvements. We've turned it into a bit of a game, and we have a lot of fun working on it together.

A big leap forward with Real-Time Certification

Smart Farming gathers valuable data at the animal level, which, as well as being useful for pig farmers, speeds up and improves the certification process. Through our partnerships with feed suppliers, veterinarians and data specialists, we have demonstrated that Real-Time Certification is not only possible but also has substantial advantages for individual businesses and the chain as a whole.

What is Real-Time Certification?
Traditionally, certification involves reviewing the previous year's business activities against specified criteria. The problem with this approach is that if you notice any discrepancies, it could be up to a year before you can take action. This delayed response is exactly what we want to avoid. Our goal is to make data as accessible as possible so pig farmers can monitor their activities and make immediate adjustments where necessary. Our 'Real-Time Certification' project investigated how animal data from farms could be automatically joined up with data from external parties, like feed suppliers and veterinarians. This represents a big leap forward in both business management and certification processes.

Why embark on this project?
Real-Time Certification (RTC) uses live data from Smart Farming and LeeO. However, for the system to function optimally, additional information is required, such as the levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, copper, and zinc in the feed. Previously, we relied on annual reports from feed suppliers, which we had to request every January. Now we can access this data automatically and digitally via JoinData. This significantly reduces the need for data to be manually requested and entered, which not only makes the data more up to date but also reduces errors. A simple typo can sometimes lead to incorrect conclusions being drawn at the management level. An additional benefit is that RTC can accelerate sustainability efforts by allowing you to respond to the data much more quickly.

Which data is involved?
We started the project a year ago, working with data specialists whom we were able to enlist with support from the Metropolitan Region of Eindhoven. We developed a framework that allows us to receive external data on feed, antibiotic use, and growth. We then approached over 60 feed suppliers to establish the necessary data links. This was a huge task, but one that has paid off. Collaboration is essential to the success of such innovations. Also vital to the success of RTC is, of course, the availability of good data. So we launched a Smart Farming campaign in parallel with the project to help our pig farmers improve the quality of their data.

What's next?
The project has proven that Real-Time Certification is a viable concept. We've made great progress thanks to support from the Metropolitan Region of Eindhoven, but there is more work to be done. Development is continuous, so we also need to adapt continuously. For example, in the future, feed suppliers will provide CO2 footprint data for every delivery, and we're already preparing to integrate this into our certification process.

Support from the Metropolitan Region of Eindhoven

This project was on our wishlist for some time, and thanks to the Metropolitan Region of Eindhoven's stimulus fund, we have at last been able to bring it to life. Their support allowed us to recruit data and IT experts to help us build a framework, which we can now continue to roll out independently. This is exactly what the Metropolitan Region of Eindhoven stands for: helping innovative ideas take off so they can create long-term impact.

METROPOOL REGIO EINDHOVEN

Ambassadors wanted

To secure the future of Dutch pig farming, it is vital that we continue to advance in areas like animal welfare, animal health and the environment. However, we need to go beyond just doing the right thing – we need to proudly showcase what we do. That's why we're looking for farmers who are interested in helping us by giving interviews and welcoming visitors to their farms. In addition, for Superunie, we're seeking farmers who can enthusiastically deliver the KDV message and also contribute ideas about the future of the chain.

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

- KDV participants who are committed to achieving the Better Life Label in 2025.
- Farmers who operate well-managed businesses that embody our pioneering spirit of innovation.
- They will be available for interviews and photographs.
- They should also be willing to host (international) company visits.

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

We'll put your business in the spotlight, and we'll create a beautiful portrait photo of every KDV ambassador. To compensate you for your time, we are offering an attractive financial incentive.

INTERESTED?

We would love to discuss this with you. Feel free to get in touch with us via your trader. We're looking for forward-thinking farmers who can communicate the KDV message with pride and enthusiasm. We'll be with you at every step, making sure you have all the support you need to tell our story. This is a new venture for us, but we know that, together with our passionate farmers, we will create something special.

DUURZAAM VARKENSVLEES

Pork tenderloin wrapped in serrano ham

Serves 2 to 4 – Preparation time: 25 minutes (plus 30 minutes resting time)

• **2** pork tenderloins • **6 large slices** serrano ham • **250 g mushrooms,** quartered • **2 red onions,** roughly chopped • **4 tablespoons** tomato pesto • **2 tablespoons** sunflower oil • **2 tablespoons parsley,** finely chopped • **salt** and **freshly ground** pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C. Make a small lengthwise cut at the narrow end of each pork tenderloin. Fold the two pieces inwards and tuck them underneath to give the tenderloin a more uniform thickness. Lay out 3 slices of serrano ham, overlapping slightly. Place a tenderloin in the centre and roll it up until it is completely wrapped in the ham. Repeat with the second tenderloin.
2. Spread the mushrooms and red onion over a baking tray lined with baking paper. Drizzle with 3 tablespoons of tomato pesto and the sunflower oil. Mix well and season with salt and pepper to taste. Place the pork tenderloins on the tray with the vegetables and roast in the preheated oven for around 30 minutes.
3. Use a thermometer to check the internal temperature of the pork. It should be at least 63 °C.
4. Allow the meat to rest for about 5 minutes before slicing into even pieces. Garnish with 1 tablespoon of tomato pesto and the freshly chopped parsley.

PETER AND ARNO VAN OOSTERHOUT

‘My son knows a lot about animal feed, which really helps improve quality’

When Peter and his wife first began farming in 1985 in Made, in the province of Brabant, they had 700 meat pigs. At the time, Peter also had a full-time job in livestock improvement. Over the years, the business has grown into a closed farm with 500 sows. Now Peter's son, Arno, is taking over the reins, joined by his wife, Anouk, and their son, Jens. And soon, the family will welcome a baby girl.

Like his father, until recently, Arno had a job outside the farm. 'I always encouraged him to work for someone else first. That way, he could make an informed decision about taking over the farm,' says Peter. When Peter started out, he had just a few run-down pigsties. Over time, he modernised the farm but still made sure it was flexible enough to adapt to future changes. 'I always say that if we ever have to start farming elephants, we'll be ready!' Currently, the farm is preparing for BLK25 (Better Life Label 2025).

MAXIMISING SELF-SUFFICIENCY

'If the business is going to be passed on, it's worth investing in. We've always explored ways of being as self-sufficient and independent as possible. We generate our own electricity, and I have deals with local arable farmers for manure disposal.' Peter is happy to take a step back from the pigs as he turns his focus to crop farming. Arno is very knowledgeable about animal feed and knows which ingredients and by-products will improve quality and keep feed costs down. Arno recently became an ambassador for KDV.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Peter's two-year-old grandson, Jens, loves spending time in the sty on Sundays. 'He used to be scared of the pigs. But then he showed the farm to his friends, and since then, he's not been afraid. All of a sudden, he felt very brave and was able to tell them all about it. Who knows, maybe the farm's next owner is already lined up!'

Peter, Jens and Arno

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Jacques van Wieringen,

the driving force behind the Sty of the Future

Earlier this year, four members of Superunie signed a five-year deal to purchase KDV pork. This was a major milestone for confidence in KDV and essential for continuing investment in the Sty of the Future. The driving force behind this deal is Jacques van Wieringen, a buyer for Superunie.

‘I've always been convinced that this is the way forward’

Jacques, what aspect of KDV appeals to you the most?
'I've been working with Egbert Kruiswijk since 2011. Back then, I was a buyer for the C1000 supermarket chain, and I got on well with him. Like Egbert, I was born into the business. My parents had a butcher shop in Achterveld. In those days, we still did the slaughtering ourselves, so I was around farmers from a young age. I first visited the Sty of the Future six years ago, and it made an instant impression on me. When you walk through the sty, you can see what a big impact the clean air has. The animals are healthier and more content, and Hans Verhoeven hasn't needed to use antibiotics in years. It's a much more pleasant environment for the farmer to work in and better for the surrounding area, too. Another great benefit is that it often eliminates the need for air scrubbers, which are a common cause of fires. It's simply revolutionary, especially when you see how it also offers solutions to more recent issues, like nitrogen emissions.'

Alongside the Sty of the Future, KDV is pioneering Smart Farming. What opportunities does this offer for you?
'I've always been convinced that what KDV is doing represents the way forward for the future. KDV's source-driven approach addresses multiple sustainability challenges at once, and it also ensures the high quality of the meat. You need tracing for the Antibiotic-free Life Guarantee, but it could also be used with a QR code to trace which farm the meat came from or to calculate its CO_2 footprint. Tracing is also important for consumers. It provides a guarantee that the animal was raised under the right conditions. Smart Farming allows us to help our members continue to develop and promote good practices.'

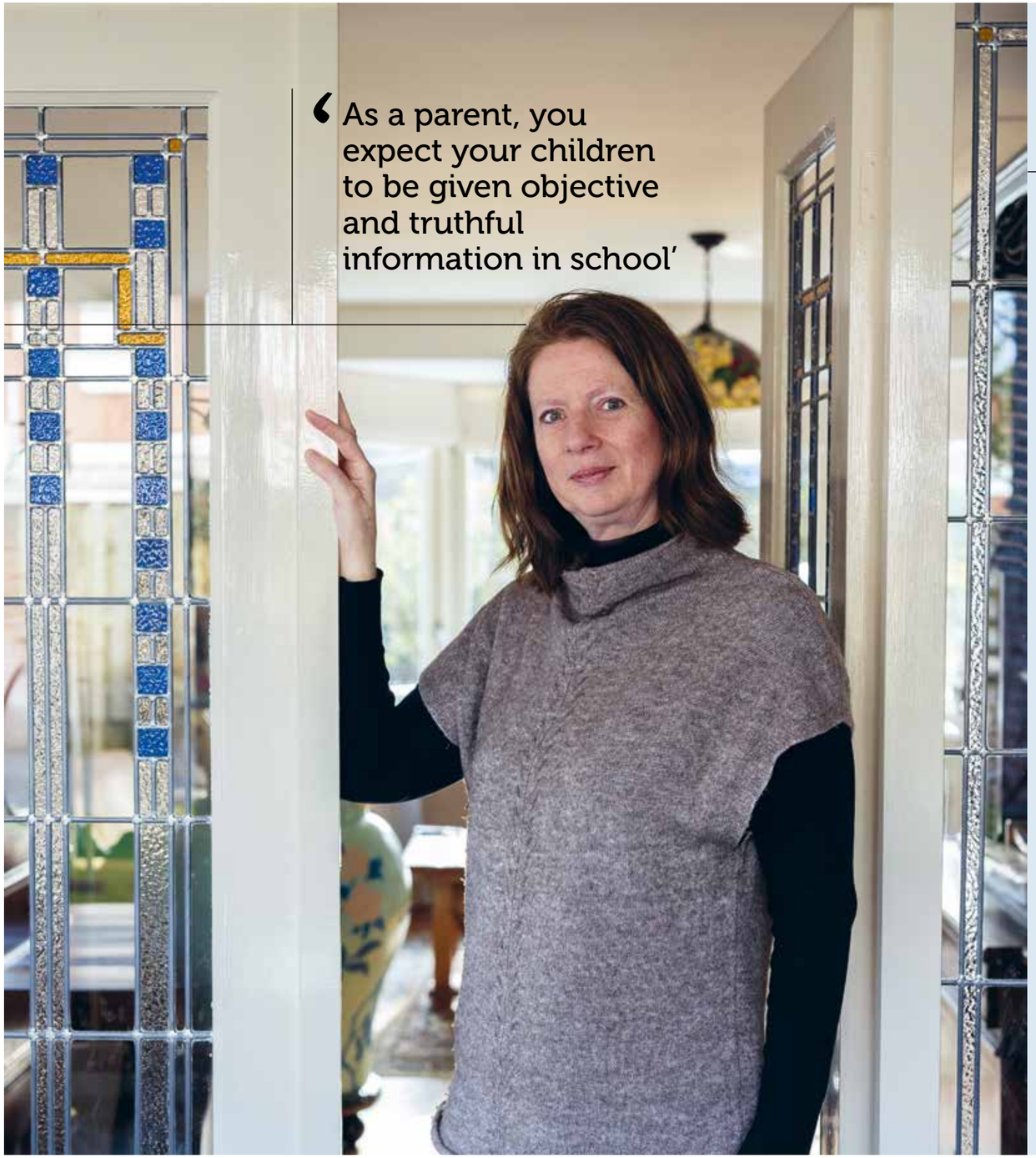
> ‘With KDV, you've got a strong story to tell and a price that you can justify to consumers’

You have a lot of confidence in KDV. Why?
'In my view, what KDV is doing will create lasting sustainability. But that requires courage. KDV has a clear vision, and they pursue it boldly. I think that's fantastic. That's why, at the start of this year, we signed a five-year contract with Poiesz, Boon, Spar, and Vomar. This deal provides the confidence – and the scope – needed to invest in the Sty of the Future. With KDV, you've got a strong story to tell and a price that you can justify to consumers. It's really impressive how the whole KDV chain has developed this together. If you really want to make an impact, you've got to improve the basic qualities of the product while keeping it affordable. And long-term relationships between suppliers and retailers are key to that.'

How can we further strengthen our collaboration in the years ahead?
'I'd love to get all the links in the chain around the table at the same time to discuss how we can tackle things together. Right now, each link tends to operate independently, calculating its own margins and only communicating with the links directly before or after them. Things could be done differently. That's why I'd like to have a conversation with some of the farmers who represent KDV. If we were to connect all the links in the chain, we could share the risks and ultimately achieve a better balance between price and quality.'

Almost 70 years of collective purchasing

Superunie has acted as a purchasing cooperative representing independent retailers in the Netherlands since 1956. Now, in 2024, Superunie is responsible for purchasing for 1,500 stores across ten retailers, many of which are family-run businesses and retail cooperatives with regional ties. This combined volume creates considerable purchasing power, allowing Superunie's members to compete with major national chains.



HONEST INFORMATION ABOUT FARMING IN EDUCATION

Children should learn from an early age where the food on their plates comes from. After all, very few children grow up on farms these days, and the closest most get to farm animals is at a petting zoo. That's why farming has increasingly become part of the school curriculum. However, the information presented to children must be accurate and objective.

A better world starts on your plate

Greenpeace developed educational resources for primary and secondary schools in several European countries, including the Netherlands. Called 'A Better World Starts on Your Plate', they teach children about the impact food has on the climate and biodiversity and cover topics like eco-labels and quality marks, animal welfare, and the health implications of eating animal products. Geesje Rotgers, from the Dutch Agrifacts Foundation, reviewed the materials aimed at primary schools with her colleague Piet van der Aar. They found that some of the information they contained was inaccurate. 'They claim that cows contribute more to the greenhouse effect than cars, that meat production is a cause of world hunger, that eating meat is unhealthy, and that animal products can simply be replaced by plant-based proteins. However, what's not mentioned is the fact that in addition to protein, meat and dairy also contain essential nutrients such as vitamin B12.'

Insufficient oversight from Education Inspectorate

The Greenpeace lesson pack was not the only one recently assessed by Agrifacts. Lesson packs from Malmberg and NMI Studiorom were also found to contain incorrect information about livestock farming. 'As a parent, you expect your children to be given objective and truthful information in school. Yet, many of these educational resources fail to hold up under scrutiny, particularly on topics like agriculture. One might assume that the Dutch Education Inspectorate would regulate this, yet, disappointingly, this is not the case. The inspectorate primarily checks whether the materials support core educational objectives but does not oversee teaching methods or lesson content.' Following Agrifacts' findings, ZLTO (the Southern Agriculture and Horticulture Organization) filed a complaint with the Dutch Advertising Standards Authority, which ruled that the Greenpeace lesson pack was misleading and classified it as child-targeted advertising. Greenpeace has since withdrawn the pack. 'There should be a central point for complaints about education. This would improve access and allow parents to voice their concerns more easily and have them addressed,' suggests Geesje.

Independent research bureau

The Dutch Agrifacts Foundation was founded five years ago to investigate whether government policies were being based on accurate information. The foundation also funds scientists to investigate under-researched subjects. The foundation focuses on highly politically charged issues like phosphorus, nitrogen, and water management. As Geesje puts it, 'We're critical, but we're also straightforward.' Geesje and her team's work is funded entirely by donations, voluntary contributions and sponsorships, which allows the foundation to guarantee its independence and ability to conduct unbiased research. The foundation's articles are all openly available.
www.stichtingagrifacts.nl

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Sjef van de Nieuwelaar:

'Once you get used to Smart Farming, you won't want to go back'

Sjef and Marian have always kept the farm up to date, ready to be passed on to the next owner. For a long time, it seemed that this would be someone from outside the family – until Dirk left his job and decided to come home to lend them a hand.

'I quit my job,' Sjef's son, Dirk, announced. After years of driving lorries, he was ready for something new. 'But what are you going to do instead?' Sjef asked him. 'I was actually thinking I could help you out on the farm.' His answer came as a surprise for Sjef. Always thinking about the future, he had been looking for someone to take over his business. However, he hadn't expected his successor to be a member of his own family. Dirk started working with the meat pigs initially because the sows were 'too much hassle'. But lately, he's found that the sows are actually much more challenging.

SJEF CAN FIND A SOLUTION FOR ANY PROBLEM

The farm has been using LeeO since 2017 and started with the KDV Antibiotic-free Life Guarantee pilot. Marian tells us that Sjef loves innovative ideas. 'He can find a solution for any problem. And then it's up to us to make it work.' Loud laughter rings around the table. 'Yes, that's exactly how it goes,' Sjef admits. 'I like figuring out how to make something. When I've worked it out, I get my tools and get on with it.' Sjef isn't a 'computer farmer', but he's a big believer in Smart Farming. Beaming with pride, he shows us the app on his phone. 'Look, I can see exactly how much the pigs grow each day. And we can see their total growth in the carcass weight data we get back from Westfort. If you're above 600, you're doing well. Other pig farmers don't get data like that.'

Our first KDV ambassador

Sjef is one of our first KDV ambassadors, farmers who want to tell others about KDV, what we stand for and how we work. They can show that KDV gives farmers plenty of freedom to run their farms their own way. Every farm has its own character, and that's exactly how it should be.

Being an ambassador suits Sjef. For years, he's been welcoming visitors to his farm in Roosendaal and passionately explaining how he runs it. He and his wife have been running his closed farm with 500 sows since 1985. Now that son Dirk has joined them, the division of work is more balanced: Sjef takes care of the weaned piglets and meat pigs, Dirk handles the sows and Marian keeps the books.

Sjef is proud of the fact that he keeps his sows on straw and makes his own feed from wheat, barley, maize, and by-products. He uses only small amounts of soya in the starter phase, and by the finishing phase, the pigs are completely soya-free. He also prefers to keep his litters together, believing that strong social bonds lead to healthier pigs.

THE FARM COACH HELPS YOU GET STARTED

'When you first start out with Smart Farming, you really do need the farm coach's help. They make sure the app is set up so that it's easy to use. Once that's done, you can get started. We register the pigs in the app by number and log all their treatments, even the sows. It makes it really easy to look up each sow's history in the app. Sow cards don't give you the same level of detail, so you don't spot connections as quickly. It took some getting used to at first, but now, entering the data into LeeO is second nature. I wouldn't want to go back to doing it the old way. I still get in touch with the farm coach now and then, like when we switched to new genetics. The farm coach can help you get extra analyses from the system. It's also great that we can ask them for help if we're having trouble finding something in LeeO.'

SMART FARMING GIVES YOU NEW INSIGHTS

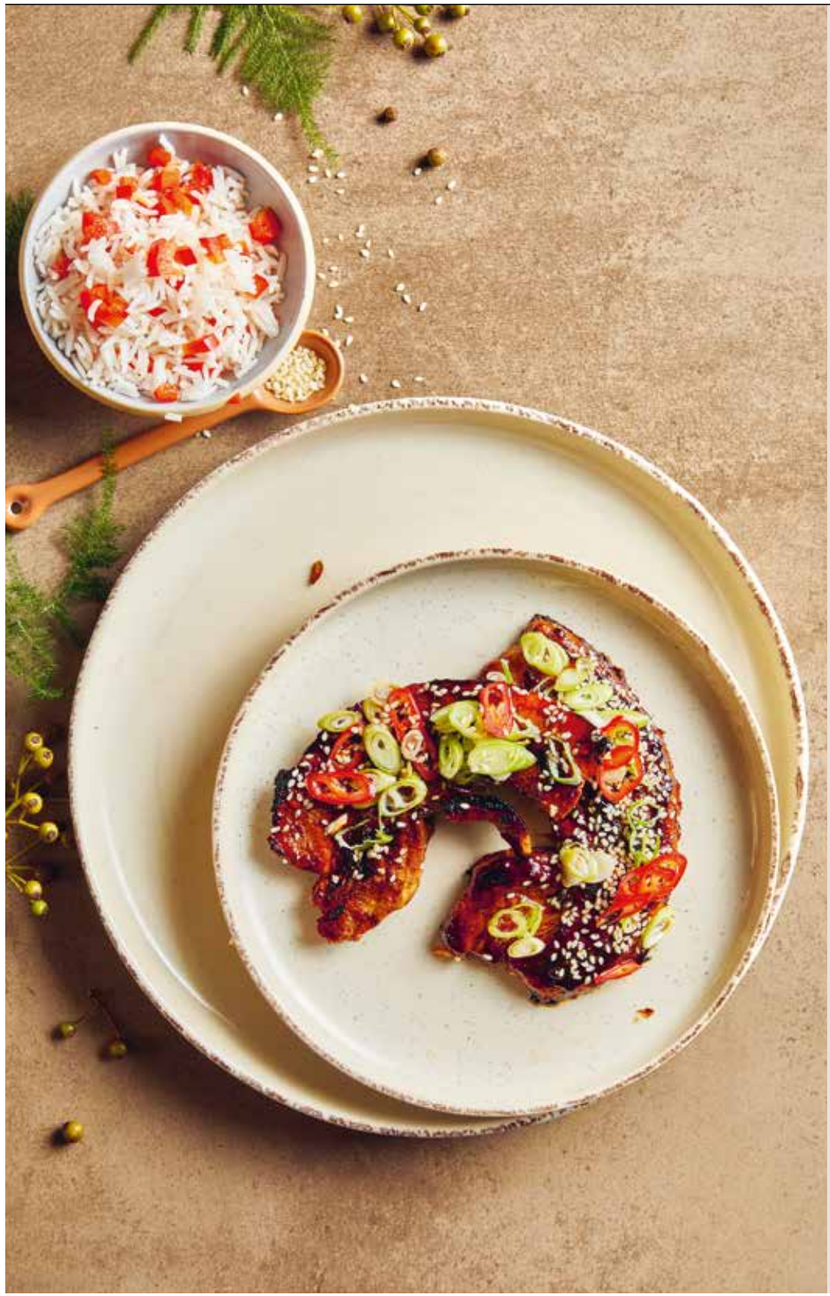
'When I need to deliver meat pigs, I always check their age first. That's really easy with the app. We weigh them at transfer, so we know the weight per pen. And I've noticed their growth improves when we keep litters together. I wouldn't have spotted that without Smart Farming. Another big benefit is being able to take part in the 'tag-free loading' pilot. The tag-free method is much easier and faster. It's clear that Dirk is much quicker at adapting to new technology. Marian and I worry that we might mess up the system and not know how to fix it. But I'm glad the younger generation finds that a lot easier because digital innovations are how we can secure our future.'

> 'I wouldn't want to go back to the time before Smart Farming'

Sjef van de Nieuwelaar and farm coach Angelique van den Hoogen

Caramelised pork belly

Serves 4 – Preparation time: 45 minutes (plus 2 hours marination)



• **4** pork belly slices • **100 ml** soy sauce • **150 ml** hoisin sauce • **2 tablespoons** honey • **1½ tablespoons** brown sugar • **2 cloves garlic,** finely chopped • **¼ spring onion,** sliced • **½ red chilli,** sliced • **2 tablespoons** sesame seeds • **400 g rice,** cooked according to packet instructions • **1 red bell pepper,** finely diced • **zest and juice of** 1 lime • **2 tablespoons** sunflower oil • **salt** and **freshly ground** pepper

1. In a large bowl, mix together the soy sauce, hoisin sauce, honey, brown sugar, and garlic. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour half of the sauce into a measuring jug and set aside.
2. Add the pork belly slices to the remaining sauce in the bowl and ensure they are fully coated. Marinate in the refrigerator for about 2 hours.
3. Remove the pork belly slices from the marinade and allow the excess to drain off. Heat the sunflower oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Brown the pork belly slices on both sides. Pour over the reserved marinade, cover and cook gently on a low heat for about 10 minutes.
4. Add the diced red pepper to the cooked rice and season with lime juice, zest, and salt.
5. Divide the rice and pork belly between 4 plates. Garnish the pork with spring onion, chilli, and sesame seeds.

Bring KDV's knowledge into the sty

ALWAYS INFORMED

KDV farmers who join our Smart Farming initiative receive the best information about their own companies and have the option to compare their performance to other participating farms. Our dedicated apps give farmers real-time insight into key indicators, ensuring they are always informed about their performance.