

# AROUND THE WORLD



**FLORIAN FEEDS THE WORLD**



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# WELCOME TO THE NETHERLANDS







**Also known as “Holland,” the Netherlands is a small, densely populated country in northwestern Europe.**

Bordered by Belgium and Germany, the Netherlands sits on a flat, curving landscape beside the blustery North Sea. It’s one of the “Low Countries,” a great nickname because about one-third of the Netherlands is below sea level. In fact, this part of the country is so low that surges from the ocean and river flooding frequently cover it with water.

To keep the land dry and habitable, Dutch engineers use dikes, dams, canals, and floodgates.





Oddly enough, living in a crowded, flood-prone region has given the Dutch people a unique advantage. From water drainage to farming and shipbuilding, the Dutch have always had to **innovate**. This knack for innovation helped make the tiny Netherlands a worldwide influencer during the Dutch Golden Age in the 16th-17th centuries when the country rose to prominence in art, science, commerce, and military power. Important **free market** trading institutions like the **stock exchange** began in the Dutch capital of Amsterdam.

Today, Dutch cities like Amsterdam are global hubs for finance, research, and technology, while **The Hague** hosts the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. In agriculture, the Dutch continue to innovate. New farming technology combined with centuries of expertise has made the Netherlands the second-largest global exporter of agricultural products after the United States. But most people don't know that the country's farmers are in a fierce battle with their government for survival. For years, the Dutch government has wanted to cut down agriculture in order to stop pollution and protect the ecosystem, but the country's farmers are pushing back.

### **Innovate**

To come up with new ideas or make something original that improves or solves problems in a creative way.

### **Free Market**

An economic system where individuals and businesses can freely buy, sell, and trade goods and services without significant government interference or control.

### **Stock Exchange**

A marketplace where people can buy and sell shares of companies called stocks, which represent partial ownership in those companies allowing them to benefit from their profits and growth.

### **The Hague**

The city where the Dutch government meets. While Amsterdam is the official capital, The Hague is Holland's administrative center.





# Fast Facts



Size of population:  
17.6 million people



Size of country:  
16,160 square miles



Official language:  
Dutch



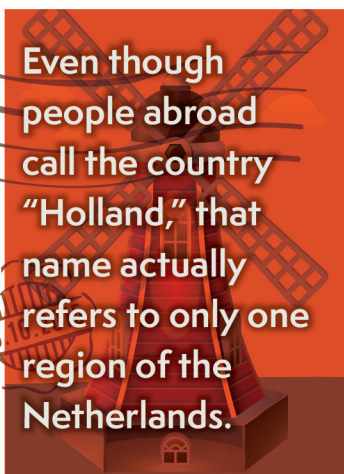
Neighboring countries:  
Germany, Belgium, and (across the English Channel) the United Kingdom



The city of Amsterdam is filled with canals and has over 1,200 bridges.



The country's lowest point is 22 feet below sea level.



Even though people abroad call the country "Holland," that name actually refers to only one region of the Netherlands.



By average height, the Netherlands has the tallest people in the world.



With over 1,000 people per square mile, the Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the world.





# Meet Florian

*Hallo!* This is Florian. He lives with his parents, Willem and Adriana, and his eldest brother Jelte in a one-story cottage on a 200-year-old dairy farm. Their farm is one of many in the Achterhoek region, close to the border with Germany.

Living on a dairy farm comes with unique advantages, hard work, and many responsibilities. Florian's brother Jelte works on the farm full-time, but their middle brother Daan is away at university, studying business marketing. Even though Florian is still in high school, he loves working on the farm. Unlike his friends, he goes to bed early and gets up at 6 a.m. After an hour of chores—things like cleaning and inspecting the farm's machinery, and helping move the hay and **silage** that 83 dairy cows eat every day—Florian grabs a quick breakfast and heads to school. In the evening, there's even more to do.

But even though he's part of a farming family, Florian is a typical Dutch teenager in many ways. During the week, he studies hard. During breaks or

holidays, he hangs out with friends, helps out on nearby dairy farms for extra money, or takes out his phone to watch clips of the Netherlands national rugby team, the *Oranje*. When the team is doing well, Florian and his friends wear orange to show their support. On weekends, or whenever all their chores are done, Florian and Jelte explore the roads, fields, and nearby forests on their **ATVs**. With an attachment that can mount his phone on the handlebars, Florian is recording his rides to share with friends.

## Silage

Pasture grass that's been compacted, fermented, and stored in bales. Along with hay, silage is a common food source for dairy cows.

## ATV

(All-Terrain Vehicle): A four-wheeled, gasoline-powered vehicle designed for outdoor riding.





# Farming in the Netherlands

When people think of the Netherlands, they imagine windmills, tulips, or wooden shoes... not cows. But the Netherlands is a dairy and food-producing powerhouse. Despite its small size (not much bigger than the state of Maryland), the country's rich soil, access to water, and long history of innovation give Dutch farmers a natural **competitive advantage**.

Because land is scarce, and because the dairy industry is regulated with high standards, farmers have learned to be productive, efficient, and even creative in their farming methods. Along with ancient strategies like draining floodwater and rotating crops to keep nutrients in the soil, Dutch farmers are raising the bar with robots that sort animal waste, phone apps that keep track of livestock throughout the day, and automated rotating brushes that keep cows clean and scratch their itchy skin. In the city of Rotterdam, there is even a floating dairy farm built on a river barge.

## Competitive Advantage

Having a special quality or skill that makes a person, company, or product better than others and gives them an edge in the competition.







# Farm Life, Past and Present

The farming life is the only one Florian knows. Like his two brothers, he grew up playing with young calves, building hay forts, and sitting on his dad's lap to learn how to drive the family's small tractor. The boys even convinced their dad to paint the tractor orange to represent Dutch rugby. In the summer, when he's miles away on his ATV and perched on a lookout hill, Florian can see the bright orange tractor pattering around their farm.

Both the cottage and the farm have been in his family for generations. As Willem reminds Florian, Jelte, and even Daan, they are the fourth generation born and raised on the family's dairy farm. Florian takes special pride in being part of a farming family. At school, he's the treasurer of the Student Agriculture Association, and he recently decided to run for president in the association's upcoming election. With years of experience working on a dairy farm and a solid reputation in the community as a hired hand, Florian thinks it will be an easy win.







# Helping Feed the World

While some Dutch farms are corporate-owned, small family-owned dairy farms like Florian's are still common near the German border. As members of a robust agricultural sector, they contribute to a yearly average of 100 billion Euros to the Dutch economy. Across the Netherlands, farms like Florian's produce the milk, beef, fruit, and vegetables, that feed people across Europe, England, and even China. When people ask Florian what keeps his family so busy, he usually laughs: "Nothing," he winks. "Just helping feed the world."

But Florian knows that running a small, family farm is an uphill battle. In the Netherlands, farming is so productive and so concentrated in small areas, that large amounts of runoff and animal waste leave **nitrogen** in the soil. By some estimates, the Netherlands and its farmland have the highest soil nitrogen levels in the European Union. Furthermore, Dutch scientists estimate that agriculture contributes as much as fourteen percent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

## Nitrogen

An odorless stable gas that forms 78% of the air we breathe. In farming, nitrogen is an important nutrient for growing healthy crops.





# All About Nitrogen

## Environmentalist

An individual or group that prioritizes the environment over other issues and works actively in pursuit of environmental goals.

## Climate Change

Long-term alterations in Earth's weather patterns and average temperatures. While the Earth's climate always changes, environmentalists see recent change as a cause for alarm and often attribute it to human activity.

## Greenhouse Gasses

Gasses like carbon dioxide that trap heat in the earth's atmosphere.

Cow manure, which farmers spread around to fertilize the soil, contains nitrogen... but that's not where nitrogen comes from. As it turns out, Earth's atmosphere, ecosystem, and geological history have a natural nitrogen cycle. The cycle started long ago, with nitrogen, sulfur, and other gasses trapped in the Earth's crust blasting into the air through volcanic eruptions. Having entered the atmosphere, nitrogen reacts with organisms like bacteria and algae. It seeps into the soil through rain and human activities like farming. After forming nitrates and other compounds in crops, plants, and animals' stomachs, nitrogen breaks down, reentering the atmosphere as a stable gas.

However, too much nitrogen in the water or atmosphere can be harmful to plants, animals, and people. This alarms **environmentalists** greatly, and they have pointed to nitrogen as a key contributor to **climate change**. Florian and his family would be quick to point out that the nitrogen cycle is a recurring part of the natural environment. It's good, and even vital for the ecosystem. For farmers who grow crops, nitrogen is an essential nutrient. Most farmers even buy nitrogen fertilizer made from fossil fuels in order to maximize their crop growth. Combined with other elements, nitrogen helps build the cellular structures that help plants grow, catalyze chemicals, and absorb sunlight. In fact, nitrogen is so essential to growing healthy, plentiful crops that farmers buy special products to keep nitrogen levels stable during planting season. Without nitrogen-infused soil, crop growth would be limited, and potentially millions of people would starve.

Dutch farmers like Willem know all about the nitrogen problem. Over the years, they have been working, innovating, and helping each other develop better ways to recycle materials, spread animal waste evenly, and help replenish plants and grasses. But as Florian is finding out, that's not enough for those who think that feeding millions of people around world is less important than trying to lower **greenhouse gasses** and eliminate all pollution.



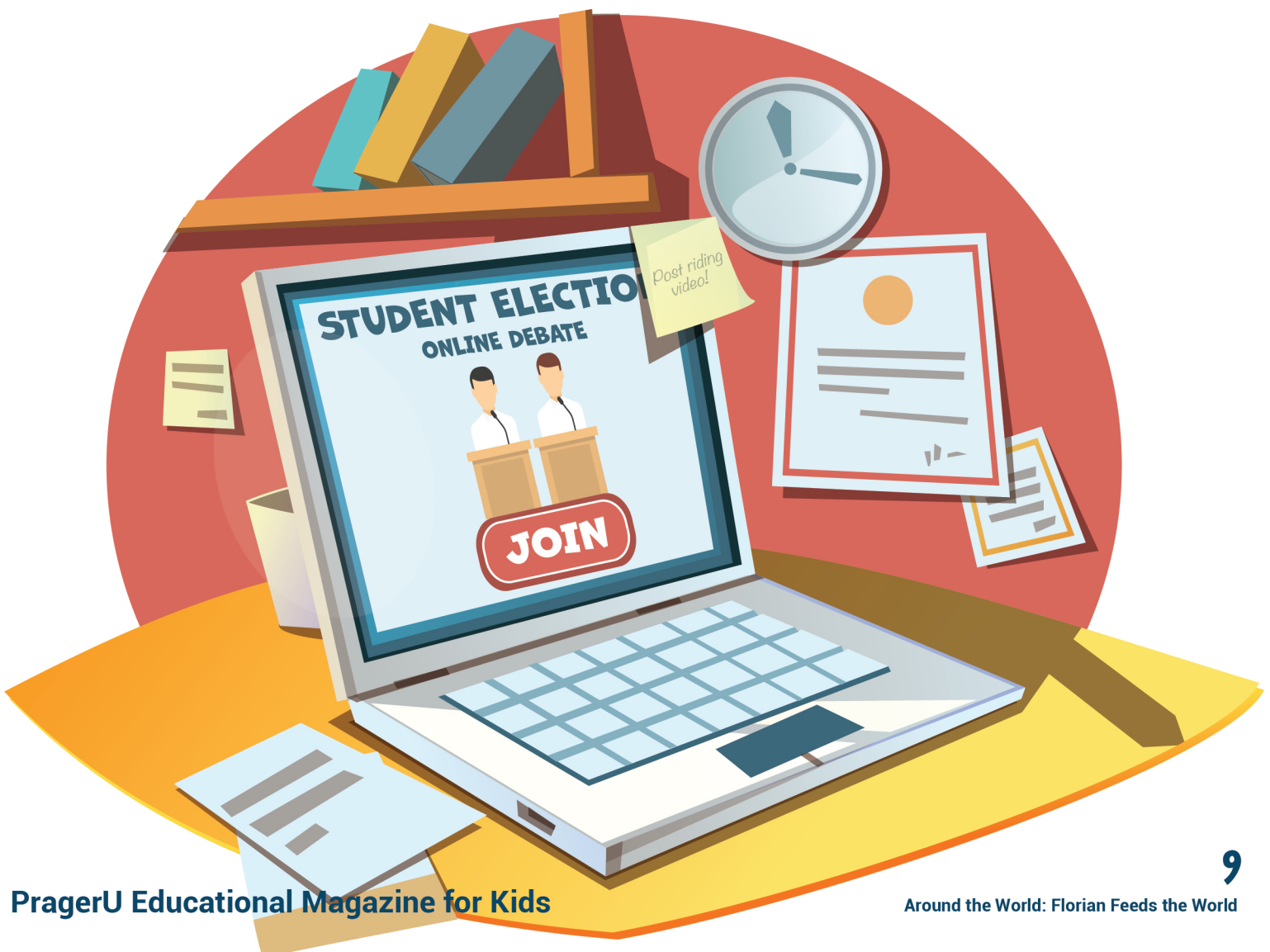




# A Farming Future?

Jelte and Florian have an ambitious dream. One day, after they've both saved enough money from working on the family farm and on neighbor's farms as contract milkers, the brothers want to buy land, hire workers, and operate their own high-tech dairy farm. Willem and Adriana are proud that their sons want to carry on the family tradition and pursue independence. But in the push to lower nitrogen levels and curb greenhouse gas emissions, farming is becoming more regulated. At the same time, farmland is very expensive. To help his sons with their future goal, Willem plans to expand the family business with more cows, more workers, and more land that Jelte and Florian can eventually own.

For now, Florian is enjoying school and has high hopes for the student election. As the only candidate who comes from four generations of dairy farmers, he's confident that he'll win. His school is hosting some kind of online debate for the candidates... but he feels good about his chances, and the fact that everybody knows him. Instead of participating, he's heading out on his ATV to shoot another riding video.





# Total Regulation

Whenever Florian's father talks to neighbors about the latest news from The Hague, he always looks discouraged. "Nitrogen," Willem says with a sigh. "Sure it's a problem—but shutting down farms is *not* the solution."

Sadly, Willem's plan to buy more farmland is hitting a roadblock. Over the years, and as part of a heavy effort to protect the country's soil and slow climate change, the Dutch government has passed strict regulations for farmers. One law passed in 2019 calls for the entire country to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by nearly half (49%) by the year 2030. For many years, these drastic regulations have targeted farmers, but with pressure from environmental activists, the Netherlands is starting to enforce them with large fines.

Florian knows why the new laws are targeting farmers—farming spreads nitrogen, and cows produce methane, a greenhouse gas emission that activists insist is causing climate change. It sounds like taking reasonable steps to lower nitrogen levels and protect the environment might be necessary, but activists and lawmakers seem convinced that farmers are single-handedly causing a **climate crisis** for the whole planet, and Florian finds that troubling. Already, strict **quotas** call for cutting the number of cattle, pigs, and poultry, and reducing the amount of nitrogen that passes into the soil. This makes operating a farm more difficult and expensive.

As if that's not enough, the newest regulation calls for reducing one-third of all livestock and buying out farmers who live near protected natural areas. *One-third* of all cows? Florian wonders how that would even be possible. Getting rid of cows and livestock would mean destroying farms like his—and could his family farm be next?

## Climate Crisis

A term used by environmentalists to describe the opinion that changes in the Earth's climate are urgent and severe enough to warrant drastic human intervention.

## Quota

A set limit on how much of something can be done or used in order to control its amount or distribution.







# Precision Farming

Willem and Adriana know that lowering nitrogen levels would help the ecosystem, which is why they and their fellow farmers monitor runoff, rotate crops, and spread animal waste evenly. As a community, they're working hard to implement **precision farming** methods that regulate nitrogen on their farmland. With tools like GPS-guided irrigation and spraying systems, livestock apps, and yield monitors that measure waste materials and farm products, farmers are very mindful of how much waste their farms produce.

Dutch farmers are frustrated when they see outrageous rules that might put them out of business being decided by people who live far away from dairy farms. Even if a third of the country's livestock is taken away, there's no guarantee that greenhouse gas emissions will drop. But jobs, futures, and rural economies that depend on farming would all be destroyed. The farmers even wonder if dismantling agriculture might force the Netherlands to start importing food from other countries instead of feeding the world.

## Precision Farming

Farming with high-tech tools and strategies that reduce waste.







# Trouble Brewing

The more Florian learns about these challenges, the scarier they sound. The push to lower nitrogen levels might make sense... but at what cost? Putting tens of thousands of farmers, and their families, out of business forever? He knows farmers have been protesting by showing up in cities, blocking roads with their tractors, and even lighting hay bales on fire. The Dutch media only shows the rowdy protests, and that's not good for anyone.

When Florian overhears his parents talking, the stories seem to be getting worse. Nobody is buying land and everyone is scared. Some neighbors who got permission to build new, carefully designed barns for more cows are now having their permits taken away. There are rumors about farmers being forced to sell their land to road construction companies, who are themselves big polluters. The De Vries, a family Florian knows and worked for one summer, have just been fined and ordered to appear in court. The reason? By not shutting down, and refusing to get rid of livestock, they went beyond their nitrogen limit.

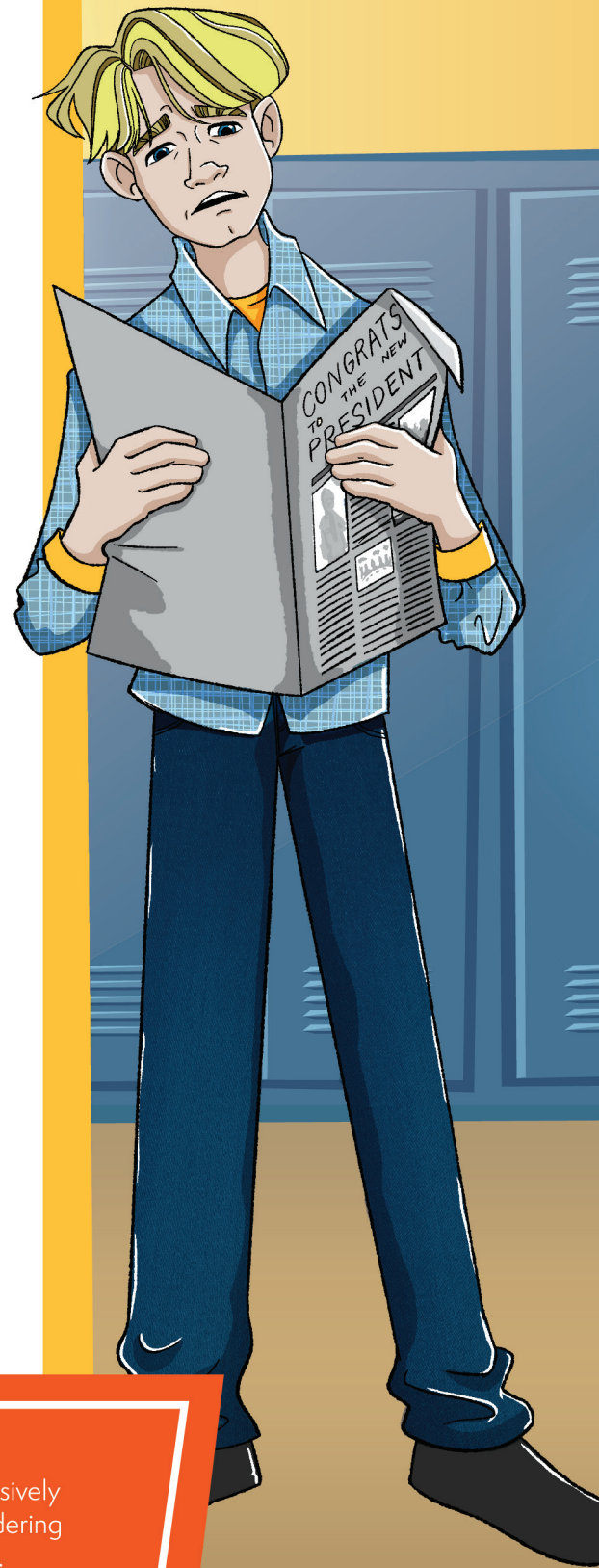
The farm  
is closed.



# Bad News

The election for Student Agriculture Association President came and went... but Florian did not win. *How could that happen?* Florian wonders. His small school is only a few miles from the farm, he has perfect attendance, and practically everyone knows him. More than that, working on different farms every summer has filled him with ideas that would have made him a very productive president. While he didn't tell anyone, Florian thought of several ways to help the students at his school get involved in each other's dairy farms. He knows that friends watch and share his ATV riding videos... so why didn't everyone vote for him?

Meanwhile, Willem and Adriana are worried. This week, they received an official letter from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture. Just as they feared, it's a fine for **noncompliance**. Willem knows that he's in trouble because he did not respond when the Ministry sent him a demand to get rid of twenty-five cows. Adriana supports his decision to not comply. Along with Willem, she's getting more involved with the farmer's protest movement that's taking shape all over the country. Together, they believe that the government is overstepping its authority and misusing its power in a **tyrannical** way; they want to follow the rules and regulations as good Dutch citizens and avoid the possible consequences, but they also know it would mean losing their livelihood so they are willing to stand their ground no matter the cost. But when she saw that the fine was for 100,000 Euros (nearly \$110,000), she broke down crying. That's more than their entire savings—money they've saved in hopes of buying a little more farmland to get Jelte and Florian started. If they don't follow the Ministry's demand, they'll receive *another* fine in three months. For the first time in their lives, Florian's family is worried they might lose the farm.



## Noncompliance

Not following or failing to meet the rules and requirements set by the government.

## Tyrannical

Using government power oppressively and unjustly, often without considering the rights or well-being of others.





# Resistance

In the past, Dutch farmers have been quick to protest unfair laws. As Willem is aware, some of those protests get rowdy and destructive. Until now, the protests always worked, forcing the Dutch government to back down from enforcing harsh restrictions. But with the Netherlands joining Europe's fight against climate change and pledging to cut its own emissions in half by 2030, the government is more determined to target farmers.

Willem appealed the fine. But while he's waiting for that, and with the family farm and legacy on the line, he and Adriana are getting active. Recently, they have been volunteering for a new political party that just formed to represent *boers*, or farmers. It's an uphill battle, but the party has one **MP** already and is hoping to win more seats in government during the next election. Florian's parents have been helping set up rallies in small towns that they hope will get people to vote. Among the dairy community, there's talk of another nationwide protest with farmers driving their tractors all the way to The Hague.

## MP

Member of Parliament. An elected leader representing one district of the Netherlands.

Florian is excited to see farmers standing up against the government's unfair nitrogen policies. He wants to help, but he doesn't know how. If he wasn't able to win the Agricultural Society election, why would anyone want his help? On top of that, the thought of his family selling their farm to pay an unfair fine is discouraging.







# Taking Initiative

Frustrated, and sick of all the news, Florian is hanging out with his brother Daan, who is back from college on a break, and venting about what happened with the school election.

"You're a great student," Daan said. "People like you. You work hard. You eat, breathe, and *sleep* farming... why do you think you lost?"

"I don't know," Florian shrugged.

"Well," Daan replied. "In business, it's not enough to have a really good product—you have to tell people about it. If you think of your campaign as a business, how well did you **market** yourself?"

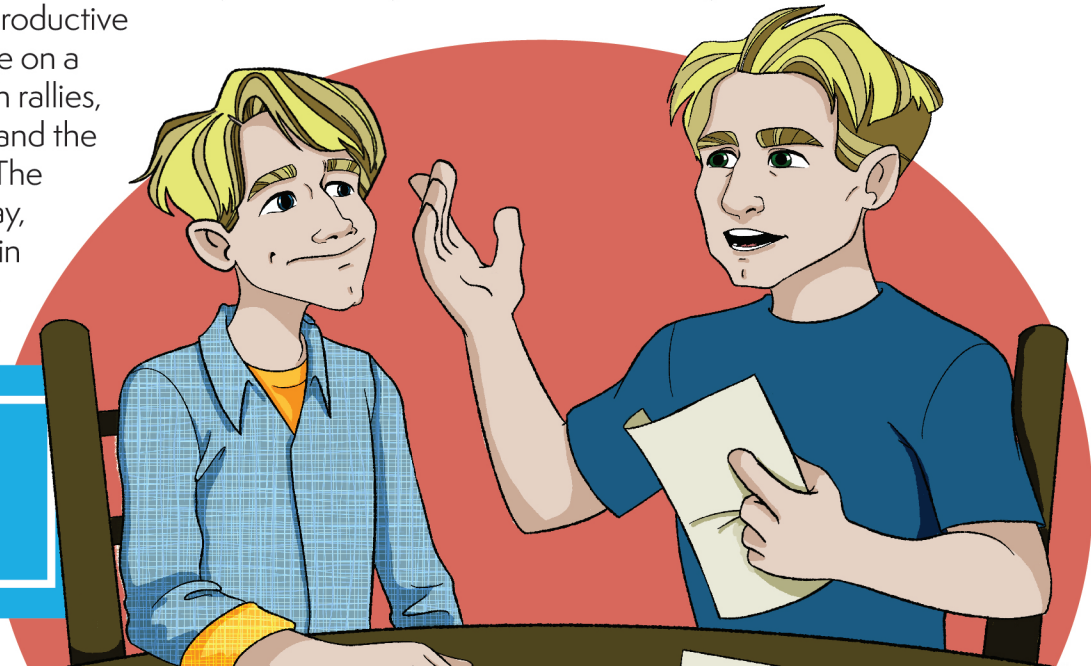
"What do you mean?"

"Did you get the word out?" Daan asked. "Did you tell everyone at school you were running for president? Did you share your ideas and give them reasons to vote for you?"

Florian thought about this. He remembered that the other candidates put up fliers and posted their ideas on social media. They also participated in that online debate... the one he'd skipped for an ATV ride. Most of the students at the small school knew him already, and he just assumed they would already understand his qualifications.

"I could have done better," Florian admitted. "I didn't market myself and show people why I'd make a great president."

The more Florian thinks about it, the more he sees how the protesting farmers are avoiding the mistake he made in the election. Instead of just assuming that lawmakers and regular Dutch citizens in far-off cities *know* how productive and careful they are, they're on a mission to show them. With rallies, websites, demonstrations, and the upcoming tractor drive to The Hague, farmers are, in a way, marketing themselves to win people over to their cause.



## Market

To promote a product or a service.



# Time to Drive

Florian's school took the rest of the week off, since so many farmers and their families are preparing to drive their tractors to The Hague! With their parents gone at back-to-back rallies, Florian, Jelte, and Daan are running the dairy farm. In between keeping track of 80 cows and cleaning the machinery that feeds them, milks them, keeps them comfortable, and recycles their waste, Florian has been narrating videos with his phone. Who knows? If people like his ATV riding videos, maybe they'll like short videos showing daily life on a small dairy farm.

"That's not bad," Daan said, eyeing one of Florian's videos. "You're capturing how hard we work to recycle, sort through all this animal waste, and make great dairy products. People need to see that."

"Better gear up," Jelte surprised them. "Mom and Dad just called. They're at another rally, and their court hearing just got moved to tomorrow... They need someone to drive the tractor."

"I'll do it," Florian volunteered, knowing that the tractor was needed to move hay and silage to the cows' grazing area every evening.

"No, you don't understand," Jelte laughed. "They want two of us to join the **convoy** that's leaving tomorrow morning for The Hague!"

Florian's eyes widened. Were they serious? Would the old orange tractor even make it that far?

"Daan, you and Florian should go," Jelte announced, pointing to Florian's phone. "He can film the trip and show everyone that we're not being pushed out of farming without a proper fight. I can run the farm while you're gone."

Daan and Florian decided they would take turns driving, and that Florian would film the trip to show people online what farmers like them were up to. A **livestream** of the tractor convoy might energize more farmers and citizens to vote for change in the upcoming election.



## Convoy

A group of vehicles traveling together.

## Livestream

A continuous video, usually shared on social media.





# Driving to Parliament

**BEEP! BEEP!**  
**HOOOOOOONK.**

Daan and Florian left the farm a few hours ago, around 4 a.m. Now, the sun is rising, and the long, slowly moving line of tractors are gleaming in all kinds of colors. Daan is driving and honking the tractor's deep **klaxon** every time a car beeps at him—they're not sure if all the beeps are in support of the farmers or just because they're causing a traffic jam. "Probably the traffic jam," Daan said, giving the klaxon another long honk.

Florian's having the time of his life. Watching the sun rise over rows of crops and waving to people who came out to cheer them on and wave the Dutch flag has given him a rush of energy. His arm is sore from holding out the phone, and his throat is dry from talking about what's happening... but the livestream is paying off. The video has gone from 100 viewers to 10,000!

"Time to switch," Daan said when the convoy stopped. "Here. I'll hold the camera and give your arm a break."

Florian is smiling from ear to ear. Before he and Daan left, they spoke with their dad on the phone. He sounded excited and honored that two of his sons are taking action to defend the family's way of life. Of course, their mom warned them to be careful... "and if anyone sets another hay bale on fire, *don't* join them. Stay focused and respectful... and when people in the city ask why you're there, tell them that we work hard feeding the world *and* taking care of the ecosystem!"

From the driver's seat, Florian can see farmland spread along the horizon. In the distance, a city and its buildings are coming into focus. It's a long way to the Dutch parliament in The Hague. But if this convoy is part of the journey to save his family, protect their cows, and allow him and Jelte to have their own farm one day, Florian is determined to see it through.

## Klaxon

A horn with a deep, raspy sound, used by ships and older vehicles.





# Back Home



Daan and Florian are exhausted. They've arrived home after two days in the convoy and navigating some crazy traffic jams. They haven't slept much and they're both starving, but the old orange tractor is back in its shed after making it to the suburbs of The Hague with the rest of the convoy. Even though Dutch police blocked off the roads around the parliament building and forced the tractors that made it there to leave, the brothers know that they went far enough. More people in a major city, and around the world on Florian's livestream, saw their protest against unfair nitrogen regulations than they could have possibly hoped.

"Guess what!" Florian told his parents. "My livestream reached 100,000 viewers! People around the world are watching and supporting us."

"If that won't help us with the upcoming elections, I don't know *what will*," Adriana said.





# A Huge Surprise

After eating some dinner and talking all about the convoy, Daan asked his parents how their court hearing went.

“About what I expected,” Willem said. “They gave us 30 more days to pay our fine.”

Florian’s insides filled with ice. So after everyone’s hard work and all his parent’s volunteering, they were still going to lose the farm. What would they do now? But then he noticed his dad’s sly grin.

“If I were you, I’d look more devastated,” Daan said.

His parents laughed.

“When you were gone,” their mom explained, “we got a call from a financial investment company in Amsterdam.”

Florian felt a rush of hope. “What does that mean? Are they going to help us?”

“We’re still working on the details,” Willem said. “But, yes. They’ve decided to invest in our farm. As part of that investment, they’re going to help us pay the fine.”

Florian and his brother stood and cheered.

“But there’s more,” Willem added. “The company thinks small farmers like us can make them a profit... while also helping our country lower nitrogen levels.”







“That means we’ll be making even more changes to how we farm,” Adrianna said. “They’ll help us every step of the way, but they want to see results.”

Jelte and Daan had dozens of questions. Their parents explained that after paying off the fine and helping them buy advanced machines for precision farming, the company also wanted to partner with them to buy farmland. As part of the arrangement, Florian’s family would farm the new land, with the option of eventually using the farm’s profits to buy out the company’s half. Florian could not believe it. He and Jelte’s dream of owning their own farm suddenly seemed possible.

“That’s incredible!” he said.

“And it’s mostly thanks to you,” Willem said, crossing his arms.

Florian’s stomach dropped. How was all this thanks to *him*? Then his dad explained that a partner at the investment firm had watched Florian’s livestream of the convoy. From there, he found Florian’s home channel and the farming videos he’d shot earlier that week while helping Daan and Jelte.

“When he saw videos of you and your brothers running this place,” Willem said, “he was inspired and got his company on board with the investment idea.”







# New Beginnings

The last few weeks have been a roller coaster. Several of the farm's cows have been sick, and Florian's been busy caring for them. But the good news is that more and more Dutch banks and investment companies are helping farmers keep their jobs and bring in new technology for more sustainable solutions. With the new financial help, Willem and Adrianna paid off the fine and are buying high-tech equipment to separate cow manure from other waste to help bring down the farm's nitrogen levels. Later this year, Willem, Jelte, and Florian will look into buying more farmland.

Meanwhile, Florian's summer and weekends have been filling up with a new **side hustle**—going around to farms in the community and filming short videos to help them promote themselves to investors. As a result of the tractor convoy, more people are paying attention to the country's hard-working farmers, and that includes financial experts who think that teaming up with them is better than forcing them to stop farming. Of course, farmers are still under pressure. Pushed by the European Union, the Dutch parliament is still going forward with its lofty nitrogen and greenhouse gas emission goals. With a **provincial election** coming and a political party representing the farmers hoping to win seats on councils around the country, Florian's parents have been more politically active than ever.

Shooting and editing high-quality farming videos has helped Florian realize something. The way to solve a problem like nitrogen runoff—or even winning a school election—isn't by ignoring it... and it's certainly not by forcing one group to shoulder the entire cost of a possible solution. Rather, it's by following the Dutch tradition of innovation, looking for new opportunities, and teaming up with other people to reach new horizons. While farmers like Florian's family continue feeding the world, he's excited to help them market themselves to people who want them, and the Netherlands, to succeed.

## Side Hustle

Part-time work that utilizes a skill to bring in additional income.

## Provincial Election

An election that selects leaders for regional governments across the country, rather than leaders for a central government.







# Writing Activity

Florian learned how to market an idea by presenting compelling arguments and evidence. Do you want people to vote for you in a school election? Or do you want to show the world how important your family business is? Think of something that you would like to convince people about and write an essay presenting your arguments and evidence.



# Recipe for Dutch Almond Bite Cookies

Prep Time: One hour

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup of softened butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 ounces of softened cream cheese
- 1 can (8 ounces) of almond paste, cut into cubes
- 3 large eggs
- sliced almonds

## Preparation:

\*Make sure your parents help you operate the oven.

**Step One** - In a large bowl, combine the butter and cream cheese until the mixture is light and fluffy. Then, slowly add the flour.

**Step Two** - Cover the mixture and refrigerate for one hour or until the dough is easy to handle.

**Step Three** - Roll the dough into 1-inch balls and press each ball to the bottom and along the sides of ungreased miniature muffin cups.

**Step Four** - (to make the filling) Beat the eggs in a small bowl and blend in sugar.

**Step Five** - Beat the almond paste and then add it to the eggs and sugar.

**Step Six** - With a spoon, put a round teaspoon of filling inside the dough, in each muffin cup. Put several almond slices on top.

**Step Seven** - With your parent's help, bake at 325° F for 25 minutes, or until the cookies are lightly browned and the filling is set. Let the cookies cool for 10 minutes before putting them on racks.

Enjoy your Dutch almond bite cookies! Or as they say in the Netherlands,

Eet smakelijk!

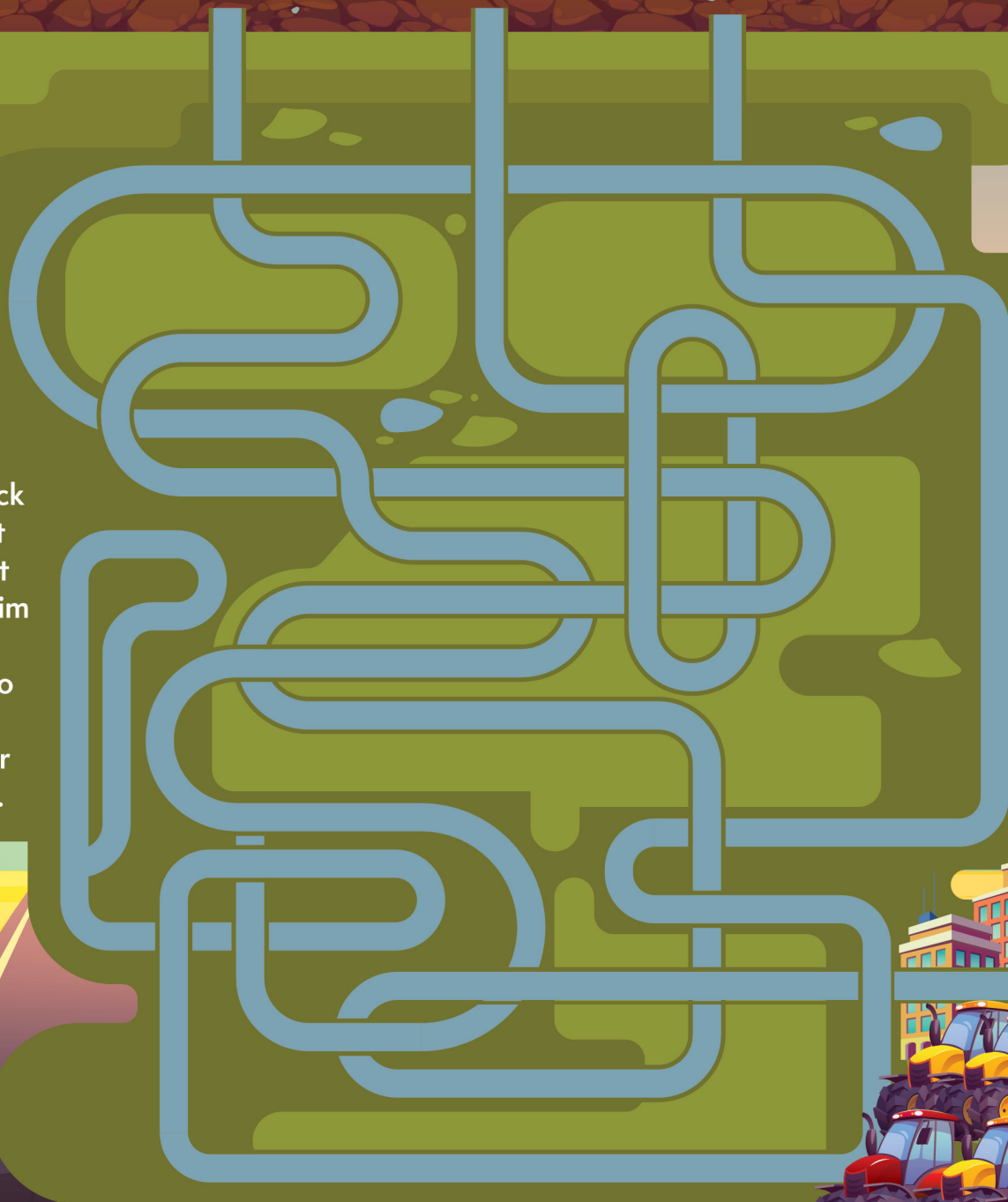




# Help Florian Get to The Hague!



Help Florian pick the right road that will lead him to The Hague, to join all the other tractors.



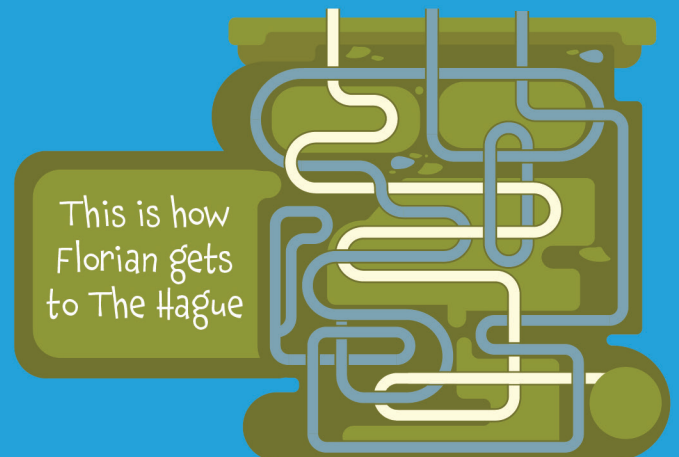




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An illustration of five diverse cartoon characters standing in a row against a blue background with a white outline of a world map. From left to right: a man in a dark military uniform with a peaked cap and medals; a boy in a blue and white soccer jersey with the number 30; a girl with long brown hair in a blue top and yellow skirt; a girl with dark skin and braided hair in a yellow top and patterned skirt; and a boy in an orange t-shirt and dark shorts.

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