



Maatschap Spijkerman - Duiven - family farm



Auke Spijkerman



71 hectares



animal management

## SEASONAL CALVING FOR OPTIMAL GRASS UTILISATION

Auke Spijkerman, an organic dairy farmer in the Netherlands, uses seasonal calving to optimize grass utilisation. His 100 dairy cows — a crossbreed of MRIJ, Jersey, and Holstein — graze on a 40-hectare grazing platform. The total farm area is 80 hectares, including 40 young stock alongside the 100 cows. Calving on the farm is seasonal, with approximately 60% of the cows calving in spring and 40% in autumn. Spring calving aligns well with the natural growth of grasslands, ensuring ample high-quality forage for freshly calved cows. The cows graze the same paddock 7 to 8 times per year. On average, cows are turned out when pre-grazing yield reaches 1,500 kg of dry matter per hectare.

The goal is to graze down tightly to prevent formation of tall patches. It's a careful balance between optimising milk production and optimising grass utilisation. With 3,500 grazing hours annually, the farm sources around 55–60% of the cows' diet from fresh grass. The spring peak in grass growth is fully utilized. This approach demonstrates how strategic alignment of calving and grass growth can support an efficient and sustainable dairy farming system.

### Farmer Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdrzq1z9YZo>



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