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Landbouw en milieu

Inhoud:

Redactioneel: Erwin H. Karel & Yves Segers, *Inleiding bij een themanummer, landbouw en milieu in de Lage Landen (Introduction: agriculture and environment in the Low Countries)*

Pieter De Graef & Tim Soens, *Boer en burger ecologisch verenigd? Een micro-perspectief op het gebruik van stedelijk afval als meststof in de vroegmoderne Vlaamse landbouw (Cultivator and citizen environmentally united?: a micro-perspective on the use of urban waste as fertilizer in premodern Flemish agriculture)*.

The shortage of fertilizer can be considered one of the greatest limitations to agriculture in the pre-modern era. In this regard, early modern agronomists and contemporary historians have observed that in addition to the meticulous collection of on-farm manures, a supplementary solution also arose in Flemish husbandry – the application of urban manure and industrial waste. This not only meant more nutrients for agriculture but also offered a solution to another environmental problem – that of urban waste removal. This contribution undertakes a historiographical analysis to determine whether small-hold Flemish farmers were able to obtain sufficient amounts of urban manure or whether large-scale farmers benefited most from the waste trade. The paper offers new research perspectives through a local case study.

Henk van Zon, *Cradle to cradle in het verleden: agrarisch hergebruik van stedelijk vuilnis in Nederland en omliggende landen, 1800-2000 (Cradle to cradle in the past: agricultural reuse of urban refuse in the Netherlands and neighbouring countries)*.

Recycling has become popular once again in the past decade. However, waste products have been used as raw material in production processes

for centuries. This article focuses on the use of urban waste material in agriculture during the nineteenth century. During this period, researchers (among them the ‘hygienists’) and officials developed various ideas about the reuse of solid and fluid waste. This article demonstrates how such waste was used as a raw material in the production of manure. The focus will be on the city of Groningen in the sixteenth century, where urban waste was used in the cultivation of former peatlands in the province.

Hanne De Winter en Yves Segers, *Oorlog als motor van vernieuwing. Het bodemvruchtbaarheidsonderzoek en de bemestingsadvisering in België, jaren 1930-1945 (War as a stimulator of modernization: soil fertility research and manure advice in Belgium, 1930-1945).*

The use of chemical fertilizers grew rapidly from the end of the nineteenth century. Government, farmers’ unions and industry all used representatives to promote the new fertilizers, but many farmers distrusted these new products. Hoping to find an answer to the economic crisis of the 1930s, the Belgian government began stimulating research into the more efficient use of land, in due course subsidizing soil research work undertaken at the Bodemkundig Station in Leuven, founded in 1941. After 1945, the need for advice on manure from this institute grew rapidly. The article demonstrates the importance of this development for the Belgian agricultural sector.

Jens van de Maele, *De resonantie van een stille lente. Nederlandse en Vlaamse persstemmen over Rachel Carsons Silent Spring (1962-1963) (The resonance of Silent Spring: an inquiry into the reception of Rachel Carson’s bestseller in the Netherlands and Flanders).*

This article analyses the reception of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) in Dutch and Flemish popular periodicals. To date it has been commonly assumed that the journalistic reception of *Silent Spring* in the Low Countries was largely favourable, thus similar to its reception in the United States. This assumption is examined here for the first time and it becomes clear that not all Dutch reviewers greeted *Silent Spring* with praise. Some were even highly critical of Carson’s attack on the prevailing faith in technological progress. In Flanders, the topic of pesticide use was linked to a controversy concerning the practice of fowling, which – like DDT – had a negative impact on the wild bird population. It was also linked to side effects related to other chemicals such as medicines and additives.

Henny J. van der Windt. *Natuurbescherming en landbouw in Nederland 1880-2010, tussen wetenschap en overheid (Nature conservation and agriculture in the Netherlands 1880-2010: between science and government policy)*.

The Netherlands ranks among the countries in the world with the highest agricultural production. During the twentieth century, its landscape, the natural habitat and the environment all changed dramatically as a result of the intensification, scaling up and industrialization of agriculture. At the same time, nature conservation organizations also grew significantly, with about fifteen percent of the Dutch population becoming members of a conservation or environmental organization and about ten percent of the area of the Netherlands designated as nature reserve. This paper reveals how developments in science and government policy strongly influenced the position and strategy of nature conservationists. During the past century, a relatively stable complex of science, practice and policy was developed. As a side effect of the close and long-term cooperation between science, policy and practice, certain areas and themes came to be seen as more important than others, such as a strong focus on vegetation science, political and ecological organs such as the National Ecological Network, and the issue of human-made semi-nature. In times of crisis, however, this cooperation faced challenges.