

## Reaction Report Alders

On the 23rd of September the commission Alders presented its report, 'from mega to better' about the societal dialogue megastalls to state secretary Bleker of EL&I. This societal dialogue follows the increasing attention that GGD in the local practice confirm for the public health aspects of the development of livestock farming.

GGD Netherlands therewith sees a good point of departure for further discussion. Additional to this we ask members of the Tweede Kamer (the dutch equivalent of the house of commons) to consider the following recommendation in the debate.

### **Sufficient safetying public health through a satisfactory assessment body**

GGD netherlands wants to emphasize that the current law and policy is not sufficient for the protection of public health. We hereby agree with the VNG, who earlier brought this point to attention in the dialogue.

The current law is primarily focussed on smell reduction and fine dust in the form of PM10, not on the endotoxins and biological agents, as a result of which there is not enough consideration of the health risks that result from livestock farming.

To be able to consider public health issues in the authorisation of licenses, an assessment framework needs to be developed as soon as possible. The research of IRAS gives an initial insight into the connections between health and livestock farming for these purposes. It describes various types of exposure next to fine dust that can potentially lead to extra health risks, such as endotoxins, diverse bacteria, and viruses.

### **Begin to phase out the exposure of community members to dangerous substances now**

Citizens that live within a radius of 1000 metres of a livestock farm are exposed to heightened concentrations of microorganisms and endotoxins. We support the recommendation of the VNG to create sufficient distance between the livestock farm and residential developments.

On the basis of the currently available publications and research the GGD Netherlands advises that within a radius of 250 metres, the precautionary action should be seen as necessary. This means that in the development of new buildings and planning no intensive livestock farm should be built within a radius of 250 metres of sensitive locations, just as no settlements should be build within 250 metres of existing livestock farms. Within this radius, there are higher concentrations of fine dust, endotoxins and livestock-specific MRSA-bacteria which correlate with potential negative effects on health. Further there are more instances of lung infections particularly in areas near poultry and pig businesses. Also, the IRAS research suggests that especially risk groups like asthma patients have a higher chance of bronchial tube affections.

The measurable concentrations of endotoxins and livestock-specific MRSA-bacteria decrease up until a background concentration at a distance of 1000 metres. Because of this, GGD Netherlands is of the opinion that when there is a distance of 25--1000 meters between an agricultural development area or company and a living area an additional risk assessment by a health expert must be carried out. In the advice that flows from this, business specific things such as animal type, type of build (open or closed stalling), location, wind direction and other spatial and organisational aspects are considered.

### **Ensure a lawful anchoring of public health priorities in relation to (intensive) livestock farming.**

Always take public health requirements with you when applying for licenses for livestock farm businesses, as well as obliging vets to always report threatening diseases to the GGD. This obligation has to be implemented at the national level to prevent local differences and to support provinces and communities in the policy formation.

### **Broaden then Health Investigation**

Knowledge of complications that arise in people with, among other things, asthma, or COPD that live near livestock farms is important in order to be able to take more focussed preventative measures. Next to that more research should take place into quality of life, risk carriers and the effects on health in situations where multiple companies and houses are close together, the so-called 'hot-spots'. In all cases it is important to match the research agenda for animal and public health with the policy agenda.

### **Handle resistance problems in the live stock farms at their source**

The government's current aims in reducing antibiotic use in live stock farms is 20% in 2011 and 50% in 2013. GGD Netherlands thinks a faster reduction is in the interest of public health. Antibiotic use is intended solely for curative purposes. This demands radical precautions in the way the business is run and in the entire chain of the livestock owner, vet and transport provider. Successful innovation projects on the terrain of antibiotic reductions have to be sped up to extend throughout the Netherlands through the sector itself but also through support and pressure from the government.

### **Update information magazine intensive livestock farming and health**

In October 2011 an update of the information magazine intensive livestock farming and health appeared. The information pamphlet is meant for community clerks and interested citizens. A more detailed explanation of the above recommendations can be found in this magazine.