



Alternative Land Governance: Lessons from the Netherlands and Flanders

Scotland's Land Reform Futures
Stakeholder Advisory Group



Land Reform Topic (E3)

Project JHI-E3-1

Scotland's Land Reform Futures

Netherlands Field Trip, October 2025

James MacKessack-Leitch, Catriona Mallows

12 November 2025



The James
Hutton
Institute

Outline

- Purpose of the trip: ***To learn more about alternative land governance strategies in the Netherlands.***

Scottish delegation:

- Dr Ian Merrell (SRUC)
- Dr Hannah Budge (James Hutton Institute)
- James MacKessack-Leitch (Scottish Land Commission)
- Sarah-Jane Laing (Scottish Land & Estates)
- Catriona Mallows (Centre for Mountain Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands)
- Dr Jessica Boucher (Independent Sustainability Consultant)



Scottish Land Commission
Coimisean Fearainn na h-Alba

Where did we go?

- CSA Farm, Lutkemeerpolder
 - Spoke with volunteers and learnt about their organisation.
- Boterhuispolder Farm, Warmond, Leidion
 - Learnt about Dutch Land Policy by Henk Boxma, Jan Spijkerboer, Johan Wedts de Swart.
 - Learnt about Flemish Land Policy
- Land Van Ons, Out Ade site
 - Peatland restoration, rice growing experiments.

Reflections

- 1) Access to land
 - High prices
 - Challenging for young people
 - But increasingly new solutions to this



Reflections

2) Climate Adaptation and Land Reform

- Water governance
- Restoration
- New partnerships
and governance
models



And More Reflections...

- Role of the public sector
- Tenure systems
- A focus on land consolidation?
- The importance of collaboration and chatting around a kitchen table



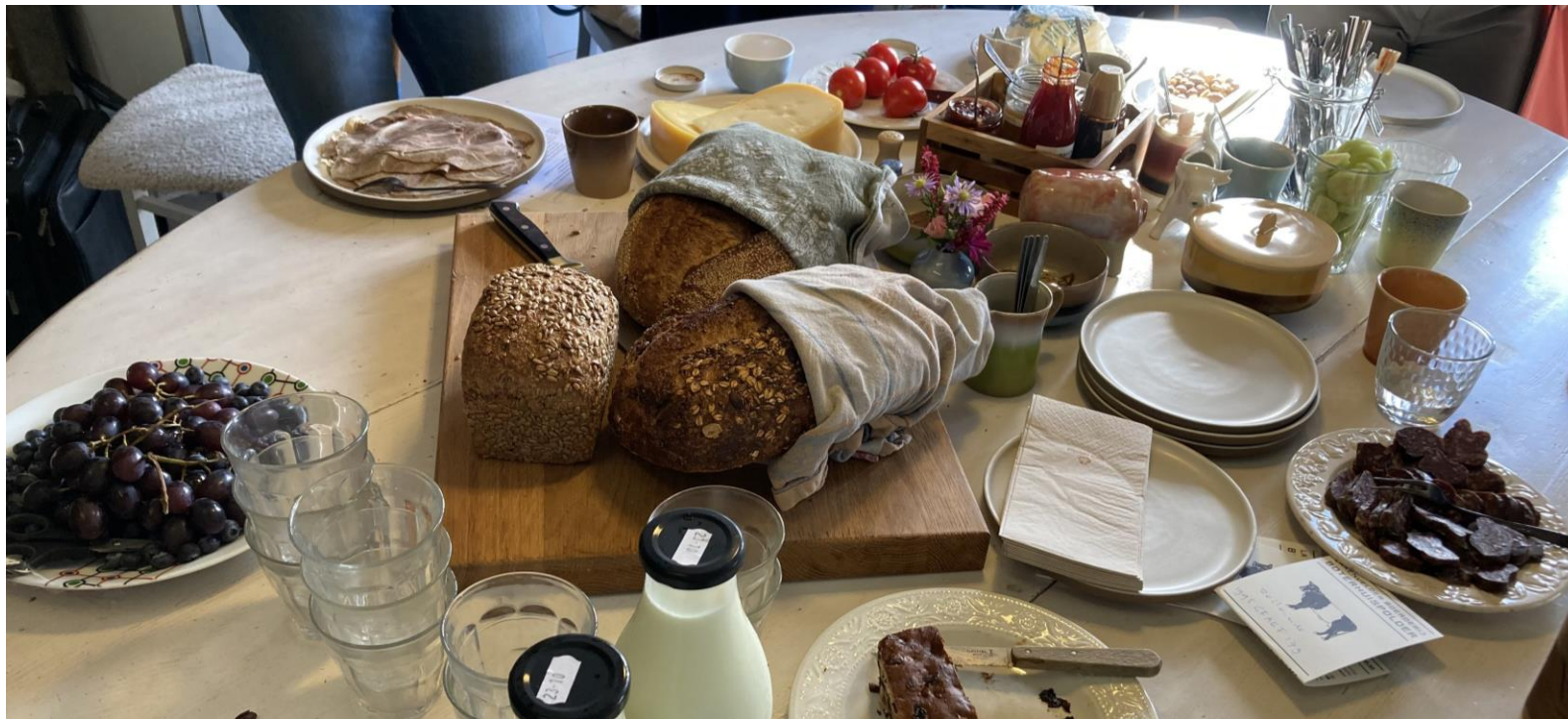
Different Reflections

- Public Sector Leadership
 - The role of municipalities
 - Strategist, Planner, and Developer/Deliverer

- Utility of the Cadastre
 - Fundamental to policy development & delivery
 - Ease and granularity of market monitoring

Other Different Reflections

- Tenant Farming / Agricultural holdings
 - Same issues – age structure, access, lease length
 - Different answers? Shared learning!



Thank you very much for your time.

Further information can be found via the project
webpage: <https://land-reform-futures.hutton.ac.uk/>

This research is funded by the Scottish Government's Strategic
Research Programme 2022- 2027.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot