



CASE STUDY - DAIRY CATTLE



Albert Blommestijn caught sight of the Roundhouse a few years ago. The characteristic shape was suited perfectly to his needs, in terms of animal welfare, handling system, ventilation and aesthetics. So when the building became available in the Netherlands, he did not hesitate.

In the densely populated Netherlands, the aesthetics of the building were a very important aspect for Mr Blommestijn. The farm is surrounded on three sides by residential areas. “Our neighbours have had an unobstructed view of the meadows for the past thirty years. I did not want to take that away from them”, said Mr Blommestijn. The open structure of the Roundhouse allows for a clear sight through the building on the grassland behind it.

The unusual shape of the Roundhouse also serves another purpose for Mr Blommestijn. The iconic building draws visitors to his other business: Poldersport – Outdoor Activities. Friends, families, colleagues, stag parties; they come to the farm to enjoy themselves with canoes, climbing, the challenge track and various other outdoor activities.

Attracting visitors was also one of the reasons for Mr Blommestijn to switch to a family herd of Blaarkop cows. The Blaarkop is an ancient Dutch breed, typical to the region. Allowing low-ranked animals to flee easily due to its round shape, makes the Roundhouse ideal for these horned cows.

In essence Mr Blommestijn is still a farmer, he has long been a fan of the idea of a family herd. “I love the sight of the calves in

the herd”, he says. The building is eventually intended to house 60 milkcows and 25 calves. “The perimeter of the Roundhouses allows us to create 140 feeding places for 100 animals” according to Mr Blommestijn. He also finds the feeding very efficient; in one turn the entire livestock can be fed.

Mr Blommestijn has created a free range barn within his Roundhouse. His cattle are housed on woodchip bedding. The circular shape of the building makes stirring the bedding easier, especially compared to a traditional barn. “I only have to draw circles with the tillage tool, which works very efficiently and creates a nice even result”.

Most important however is the excellent ventilation capacity of the Roundhouse. “Good for the health of the cows but mostly essential for a dry top layer of the bedding”, mentions Mr Blommestijn. The real test is going to be this winter but currently the bedding is perfectly dry. The animals have been in the Roundhouse since April. Mr Blommestijn did not find any problems yet. “You can see they feel happy”.

