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ACHIEVING HAPPINESS AT CARE FARMS IN THE NETHERLANDS

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ABSTRACT

Achieving happiness at care farms in the Netherlands

Care farms in the Netherlands, also known as social farms, are thought of as valuable day services centres, and sometimes as residential care providers, for highly diverse and mixed groups. This article is about the features of happiness at care farms. The main question is: what is the potential for achieving happiness at care farms in the Netherlands? Psychologist Ap Dijksterhuis' theory on the components of happiness serves as a conceptual framework. Based on a literature study examining the qualities and values of care farms, the features of happy living at care farms in the Netherlands are described and illustrated with examples from three present-day practices.

The care farmers were interviewed about their ideas and methods in relation to contributing to a good and happy life for care farm participants. This ideal life is mainly accomplished by means of: the stimulation of flow experiences through (farm-based) activities, emphasizing a connection with others and with nature; and providing farm-based products and services to the surrounding community.

Key words

Care farms, social farms, green care, subjective wellbeing, happiness, value configurations

SAMENVATTING

Werken aan geluk op zorgboerderijen in Nederland

Zorgboerderijen in Nederland worden gewaardeerd als dagbesteding, soms als woon- of logeervorm, voor zeer diverse en gemengde doelgroepen. Dit artikel gaat over de bijzondere, waardevolle aspecten van de zorgboerderij. De centrale vraagstelling luidt: Welk potentieel heeft de zorgboerderij in Nederland om bij te dragen aan geluk? De theorie over bouwstenen van geluk van psycholoog Ap Dijksterhuis dient als conceptueel raamwerk. Aan de hand van literatuurstudie naar de kwaliteiten en waarden van de moderne zorgboerderij, geïllustreerd met kwalitatieve casestudies van drie actuele geselecteerde praktijken worden de kenmerken beschreven van het goede en gelukkige leven op zorgboerderijen in Nederland. De zorgboeren zijn geïnterviewd over hun ideeën en methoden om bij te dragen aan een goed en gelukkig leven voor hun deelnemers. Dit krijgt hoofdzakelijk vorm door te streven naar flowervaringen in het (boerderij)werk, door verbonden te zijn met elkaar en de natuur en door verbonden te zijn met de omliggende samenleving via de producten en diensten van het boerderijwerk.

Trefwoorden

Zorgboerderijen, subjectief welbevinden, geluk, waardenconfiguraties

INTRODUCTION

Care farms provide care with the aim of helping those who need support to achieve a good, happy life. Several studies have defined "care farms", and the related terms "green care" and "social

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farming”, as being based on a particular form of synergy between agriculture and care, also known as green care in agriculture (GCA) (Bock, Dessein & De Krom, 2013). Care is considered from a broad perspective that includes social, health-related, and education-related goals. Due to social and economic changes, forms of multifunctional agriculture have emerged whereby farmers are no longer solely producers of food. Farmers have also become suppliers for other services, such as recreation, energy, education, and day (care) services for several target groups (Bock *et al.*, 2013). The degree of focus on agriculture on one hand, and these other services on the other hand, differs. The number of care farms in the Netherlands has increased tremendously, from 75 in 1998 (Ernst & Young, 2012) to approximately 1,100 in 2017 (Hassink, De Bruin, Berget & Elings, 2017a). Among those to whom the Long-Term Care Act¹ applies, 10–15% participate at a care farm (Van Rijn, 2014). These figures show that care farms have become a regular provider of day care services in the Netherlands.

Since the exponential growth in the number of care farms began, research has been conducted into the specific features which contribute to the “healthy and good life” of the participants who work and live at these care farms (e.g.: Bock *et al.*, 2013; Hassink & Ketelaars, 2003; Hine, Peacock & Pretty, 2008; Hine, Sempik & Wilcox, 2010; Sempik, 2008). In scientific studies, the good life is often framed as “subjective wellbeing” meaning people’s overall evaluation of their own lives and their emotional experiences (Diener *et al.*, 2017; Samman, 2007; Westerhof & Bohlmeijer, 2010). The term happiness is generally avoided in scientific studies in referring to the good life, because it has so many potential meanings and is therefore not considered concise enough (Diener *et al.*, 2017). However, most people have ideas on what a happy life means to them in their context (Diener *et al.*, 2017; Dijksterhuis, 2015).

In this article, however, we will adopt the term happiness in the context of care farms. The components of happiness described by Dijksterhuis offer a framework within which to define the good life at the care farm. On the basis of that framework, we will present the practice of three care farms by reflecting on the value configurations underlying the realization of happiness. First, we will focus on the specific features, context and value configurations of the care farm (1); second we will present the notion of happiness to frame the contribution of the care farm in striving towards a good life (2); third, we will provide a portrayal of the vision of care farmers at three farms where the achievement of happiness is a daily activity (3). Finally (4), we will draw some final conclusions of the adoption of the term happiness at the care farm specifically and in the social care domain in general.

To frame happiness, we use a psychological theory on modern happiness that Dijksterhuis describes in his popular scientific work "On our way to happiness – The psychology of a good life" (Dijksterhuis, 2015). There were two reasons for this choice: (1) as a psychologist, Dijksterhuis has focused on present-day ideas of the good life, which most people know as happiness. Also (2) his work links significant, strongly psychology-based terminology and thought patterns with present-day social work (Robbins, Chatterjee & Canda, 2005), such as: the systems perspective; psychodynamics; behavioural and social learning theory; and humanistic developmental perspective, which have been studied extensively in psychology.

SPECIFIC FEATURES, CONTEXT AND VALUE CONFIGURATIONS OF THE CARE FARM

In several research studies, participants and care farmers have been asked to evaluate the qualities and values they experienced at the care farm (Elings, 2012; Hassink *et al.*, 2017a; Hassink, De Bruin, Verbeek & Buist, 2017b; Hemingway, Ellis-Hill & Norton, 2016; Hine *et al.*, 2008; Leck, Upton & Evans, 2015). These studies revealed several features. Here, we present these in three categories: farm as context, activities, and social interaction.

First, on the matter of the farm as a context, it is important to realize that the production of food—which means working with plants and animals—is fundamental at a farm, regardless of its scale. This brings a specific character to the context. Working with nature means that life processes, such as birth, death, sexuality, and pecking order, are inevitable (Hassink & Ketelaars, 2003). Life in a biologically pure form is revealed to everyone at the farm, which entails both positive and problematic moments. Working this close to nature involves morality, emotions, and knowledge about life. What is helpful in these processes is that in this green environment, a certain tranquillity or even serenity can be experienced, potentially leading to reflection and meaning-making, which has a motivational effect (Hassink *et al.*, 2017b; Hine *et al.*, 2008). Due to the unique fact that food production is the original goal of any farm, participants gain a deeper awareness of healthy food and healthy living in general (Federatie Landbouw en Zorg, 2015).

Second, certain activities must be undertaken to keep the plants and animals healthy and alive. This leads to some sense of urgency in their completion. The nature and complexity of these tasks

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also differ widely, providing opportunities for individual development to the participants working and living at the care farm (Hemingway *et al.*, 2016). A farm is unique in that some activities involve taking care of living animals, which respond to the participants without judging them. Participants have the opportunity to connect and bond with the animals, which is educational and provides experience of the affective aspects of life (Hassink *et al.*, 2017a). The variation in these tasks creates opportunities for some participants to prepare for regular work or education, for in addition to agricultural tasks, there are many household chores that can be learned and completed (Hassink *et al.*, 2017b; Hemingway *et al.*, 2016). Undertaking useful and vital activities has societal and psychological aspects, as well as physical benefits. Many activities strengthen physical fitness in general and provide a certain amount of training regarding gross and fine-motor skills (Federatie Landbouw en Zorg, 2015).

The third category includes social interactional features. Traditionally, many farms are run by families and are therefore small-scale environments with familiar faces. Several studies describe their homely and safe atmosphere (Elings, 2012; Hassink *et al.*, 2017b; Hassink, Van Dijk & Klein Bramel, 2011; Hemingway *et al.*, 2016). The group atmosphere can allow participants to hone their social skills or simply to enjoy social interaction. Moreover, due to the small scale, there is time and space for participants to be supported by the care farmers in achieving their personal goals. As an enterprise, a farm is connected to, and dependent on, customers and suppliers, which leads to interaction with the surrounding world. Depending on how much the farm emphasizes food production versus care, this interaction is vital to its existence (Federatie Landbouw en Zorg, 2015; Hemingway *et al.*, 2016). Another unique and positively evaluated feature described in the literature is the presence of role models. In many cases, such farms are managed by agricultural professionals, who are considered authorities due to their agricultural knowledge and leadership role within the farm (Hassink & Ketelaars, 2003). Concerning the interaction with animals and plants, some care farmers indicate the potential for a certain reciprocity as unique feature, because participants relate to the animals and plants in the capacity of caregivers, which makes them feel content and happy (Hassink *et al.*, 2017a, 2017b; Hemingway *et al.*, 2016). Several studies reveal that participants positively evaluate the care farmers' personal approach, attention, and involvement with the participants' wellbeing without too much focus on disabilities, problems, or psychiatric history (Hassink *et al.*, 2017b, Hassink *et al.*, 2011; Leck *et al.*, 2015). In relation to aspects of social interaction, participating at a care farm indirectly supports informal caregivers, such as partners, parents, or neighbours, by providing them with a degree of respite from their care tasks (Federatie Landbouw en Zorg, 2015).

Having examined the features, context and value configurations of the care farm we will now turn to the notion of happiness. The contribution of the care farm in striving for a good life is framed on the basis of this notion. The five components that influence and contribute to happiness are helpful for the care farmers to explain and express their methods towards their clients, participating at the care farm. Working and living together in the context of the care farm can potentially contribute to greater happiness.

HAPPINESS AND THE GOOD LIFE

Scientific studies on happiness have often described it as subjective wellbeing. Social psychologist Ed Diener, who has been studying this subject worldwide since the 1980s, stated that “subjective wellbeing is defined as people’s overall evaluations of their lives and their emotional experiences” (Diener *et al.*, 2017, p. 87). According to Diener, the term “subjective wellbeing” refers to all means of evaluating one’s life or emotional experiences, such as satisfaction, or positive and negative affect, while the term “happiness” has many possible meanings and is therefore often avoided in the scientific literature (Diener *et al.*, 2017). However, every person has notions of, and personal associations with, happiness. Based on research examining 17 countries with economic and cultural differences, Diener stressed that most people claim that finding happiness is the most important goal in life and that this objective can be pursued in many different ways (Dijksterhuis, 2015).

From a broad overview of research involving happiness, Dijksterhuis derives a reflective framework on the features of happiness. According to Dijksterhuis, happiness is the highest purpose in life and is much more than experiencing pleasure, because it is connected to meaning-making in life. Individuals can also influence their happiness to a certain degree; therefore it should be considered as an active process, not as a fixed situation. In accordance with that view, individuals need to work on happiness and to maintain any gains they make. Lastly, happiness entails an attitude of contentment and peace of mind. Since happiness can be influenced, Dijksterhuis describes 6 components that contribute to happiness. In this article, we merge components 5: “training of consciousness” and 6: “insight into consciousness”, since they both focus on the same subject, while components 1–4 are clearly differentiated. The Table 1 gives an overview of this framework, followed by a brief explanation of each component.

Table 1: Framework of happiness components and their key elements.

Components	Key elements to happiness
1. Awareness of, and attitude towards materialism and money	Resistance against the 'hedonic treadmill' Prefer satisfaction to maximalization Spend money on experiences and on others
2. Connection with others and the transcendent	Inclusion in the right group size Connection with the transcendent Shared worldviews and values
3. Time spending	Active time spending and physical efforts with others Realistic expectations of the activity's circumstances Activities that stimulate flow experiences
4. Setting the right goals	Self-determination (inclusion, potentials, autonomy) Intrinsic or at least identification goals
5. Consciousness and peace of mind	Overall mindful attitude, focus Mindfulness exercises

Awareness of, and attitude towards, materialism and money

First, an awareness of our behaviour on materialistic matters influences happiness. Dijksterhuis suggests we should learn how to tame our "hedonic treadmill" (Dijksterhuis, 2015). This treadmill symbolizes the automatic and unsatisfying nature of our tendency to consume. Our urge to possess items is mainly based on mindless impulses, rather than on logic, despite what we often think. Second, our ideas about earning money are also part of dealing with the hedonic treadmill. A study involving 500 young people at the beginning of their careers illustrated that "maximizers", who aimed for the highest possible salary, and "satisficers", who aimed for a satisfying salary but also considered other aspects of life and work, differed in terms of both salary results and happiness (Iyengar, Schwartz & Wells, 2006). The "maximizers" did indeed manage to obtain a higher salary but the satisficers were happier. In the end, materialism leads mainly to unhappiness, because possessions are never enough and are therefore a source of frustration (Dijksterhuis, 2015). Money rarely contributes to happiness, unless it is spent correctly, and especially on charities and presents for others. Money spent on ourselves can best be used for experiences. However, a

certain number of possessions such as food, clothes, shelter, and money to obtain healthcare, do contribute to happiness as they are needed for basic life functions.

Connection with others and the transcendent

The second component of happiness relates to connection. It is human nature to have relationships with others and to live in groups. Groups enable us to strive to realize our full potential, while social exclusion activates the same parts of our brain as when we experience physical pain (Dijksterhuis, 2015). The size of the group also matters. In his social brain hypothesis, anthropologist Robin Dunbar stated that the human brain is vast in size relative to other animals. We need such large brains due to our extremely social nature and tendency to take part in multiple complex and relatively large group structures (Dunbar, 2014). Being in a group of the right size contributes to happiness. In smaller groups, according to Dunbar around 15 members, the atmosphere is intimate enough for activities such as sports or playing music, resulting in the production of endorphins, also known as the “happiness hormone”. Most important is Dunbar’s insight that we need the right group size to feel safe enough to create, learn, play, and work together. Dunbar’s findings on group sizes can be observed in natural groups such as families, but they also apply to organizations and teams, which require people to rely heavily on each other. We do not solely connect with other human beings; rather, some of us also connect to transcendent entities, personally experienced as God, the Cosmos or the force of Nature and so on. One study demonstrates that believers are slightly happier than nonbelievers (Diener, Myers & Tay, 2011). Other studies show that a positive, supportive and personal image of the transcendent power contributes to self-confidence and happiness, while belief in a punitive and controlling power leads to anxiety (Pargament, 2002). Dijksterhuis shows that being connected with others through a shared worldview (whether or not religious) or values configuration and acting out that linkage also leads to happiness. Taking part in a greater whole—such as a music or arts festival or a group religious event, such as a pilgrimage—also leads to happiness via sharing the same experience or flow with so many people (Dijksterhuis, 2015).

Spending time by being active, with other people, and in flow

The third component is about a satisfying way to spend time, and it involves three factors (Dijksterhuis, 2015). First, active forms and physical efforts with others of spending time lead to more happiness than passive ones, but unfortunately our habits often predominate over our

discipline and knowledge of what is best. Secondly, spending time in a satisfying way is influenced by our expectations of happiness. We need to take account of the circumstances and additional effects in those expectations. In that respect, making an accurate assessment of the circumstances in which the planned activity takes place is helpful. Third, activities that lead to a flow experience make us happy. Flow is a state of being, characterized by a certain loss of self-awareness and awareness of time, a strong focus on a specific activity in which behaviour and consciousness merge, and a sense of personal control and intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Certain activities lead to enjoyment, but flow leads to fulfilment (Dijksterhuis, 2015). Flow arises from challenging, personal activities, but these should never trigger fear.

The right goals are in line with our needs

The fourth component of happiness is about focusing on the right goals, and our preferences play a role in determining what is “right”. Moreover, what suits us is linked to our true needs, which in Western society draw on the idea of self-determination. People deciding for themselves how they want to live and what they want to achieve is valued highly. Based on a review of several theories, Dijksterhuis concludes that: most people want to feel included; they want to perform based on their potential; and they want to be autonomous (Dijksterhuis, 2015). In addition to needs, the nature of the goal also influences our happiness. There is a positive correlation between intrinsic goals and happiness (Dijksterhuis, 2015). Four types of goals can be distinguished: intrinsic goals (satisfying in terms of the outcome and activity), identification goals (satisfying in terms of the outcome but not necessarily in terms of the activity), impost goals (to avoid negative emotions, such as guilt), and external goals (purely to avoid punishment and collect rewards). Happy people mostly seem to pursue intrinsic and identification goals (Dijksterhuis, 2015).

Training consciousness to find peace of mind

Dijksterhuis stresses the importance of peace of mind in achieving happiness. He defines peace of mind as “experiencing the content of our consciousness as calm, balanced, and pleasant, opposed to experiencing this content as restless, rushed, and unpleasant” (Dijksterhuis, 2015, p. 167). Peace of mind correlates highly with happiness (Dijksterhuis, 2015). We can influence our peace of mind by getting to know our typical thought patterns and training our conscious minds. Our consciousness is our sense organ for happiness. This sense organ is often disturbed by the fact that we find it hard to focus on one thought for more than five seconds. Secondly, humans have a unique ability to imagine in terms of time and space. This lack of focus and the gift of imagination

lead to what psychology calls "current concerns", which emerge from our daily needs and desires. If these are negative, then logically happiness will decline. The overall conclusion is that we find it very hard to truly focus on the here and now. Enhancing our capability to focus our attention, or, in other words, to become more mindful, helps happiness to increase. In addition to an overall mindful attitude, practicing forms of mindfulness meditation have proven valuable. Increasing our mindfulness has been proven to positively influence our happiness, kindness, empathy, perception of autonomy, self-esteem, optimism, and other positive emotions. Mindfulness also decreases feelings of depression, social fears, neurosis and the frequency with which people worry (Dijksterhuis, 2015).

In the next section, we will describe the vision of three care farmers where achieving happiness is a daily activity. Agreeing that subjective wellbeing is equal to happiness, it seems worth reflecting on the practice of social workers, where the happiness of their clients is the higher good.

HAPPINESS AT THE CARE FARM

On the basis of three cases, we will describe the achievement of happiness as a daily activity at the care farm, according to the care farmers. The selected care farmers presented themselves as aware of, and reflective on, the importance of value configurations of that work.

The care farms

The three farms that participated in the interviews were selected based on their presentation of value configurations in their public relations materials. In order to select the farms, we searched for three farms which could be distinguished through their presentation of ideals, as described by sociologist Van den Brink's theory of moral-ideals proliferation (Van den Brink, 2012). This theory shows that our present-day configurations of moral ideals and forthcoming actions are formed historically by sacred, social and vital dominant notions. Since these three categories represent present-day practices, we decided to select one of each to provide a fuller account of the achievement of happiness. The farmers were asked to contribute to the understanding of achieving happiness in the farm context in the spring of 2015. Besides the qualitative interviews, a guided tour of each compound was given for observational purposes.

"De Ark" care garden is situated in the small town of Bloemendaal in the west of the Netherlands and is part of the worldwide Christian Arc community. The aim of all Arc communities is to provide

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an inclusive community for people with and without intellectual disabilities, connected by the wish to live and work together. "Ruimzicht" farm is a biodynamic farm, located in the east of the country, near the village of Halle. In addition to producing biodynamic food they provide educational and care activities. "Het Liessenhuus" farm is located in the same area, near the village of Breedenbroek, providing day services and care for people with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities, both adults and youngsters.

"De Ark" care garden – Bloemendaal

The interviewee's personal motive for starting a care garden was to escape from the hedonic treadmill, which in his case was a commercial job and a mortgage on a terraced house. The Ark offered him a community where people work, live together and learn from each other:

There is so much more! When you live and work together, you can learn from one another and continue your development in life. It is interesting to do things with other people that can sometimes be very hard and sometimes bring joy. It is challenging to believe in each other's ideas and accept them or stand against them from time to time.

Connection seems to be the most profound and explicit component. Connection is anchored within the global and local Arc community, and the interview and informal conversations repeatedly returned to that theme. Connection is experienced as being linked to: other human beings, particularly with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; the surrounding local community; and God or another spiritual power. The Ark garden puts this principle into practice by inviting and expecting customers to harvest crops themselves from the garden, where they make contact with, and receive assistance from the people working there. The gardener explains: "Yes, the connection between people with and without disabilities, that's the aim. We won't accomplish that connection if we put the crops in bags and set them near the road to be collected". According to the gardener, people need to become familiar with that contact and sometimes need encouragement to persist: "Also, people who said last year: 'I don't even like to set foot in a garden' now admit that they do like being here".

Satisfying use of time is linked to connection. Although every effort is made to find achievable, pleasurable and productive activities for everyone in the garden, inclusivity is more important. Moreover, setting the right goals is related to connection at De Ark. Activities and goals are chosen because they help to connect everyone.

When it comes to consciousness, the vision is that by actively working together, no one has to spend time alone with negative thoughts or concerns. Furthermore, the gardener explained the importance of carrying out all activities as mindfully as possible.

“Het Liessenhuus” care farm

By providing healthy and delicious food for the less fortunate via the food bank, “Het Liessenhuus” demonstrates how to “tame the hedonic treadmill”. The care farmer regards this as promoting social justice: “I consider it a mission that adds value. Like this, people who can't afford it financially can access healthy food”.

The happiness aspect of connection is shaped both outwardly and inwardly. Connection with the local community is achieved by producing and selling food. For the care farmer, it is very important to recognize everyone's contribution in that regard. The staff at the care farm put effort into making the “co-farmers”, as they call their clients, highly aware of this recognition. Empowerment, authenticity and competence are the aims, the farmer explains: “We make sure the boys will see a satisfied customer leaving our farm, and that motivates them to contribute”. Full dignity, based on a real and authentic contribution in any achievable step of the food production process is the higher goal and the reward in itself: “They have to learn to see that they are actually doing something for society. Yes, you are the boy who dropped out of school, and yet now you are contributing”. Regarding the inward connection, it is noticeable that the farm is small in scale, with a total of 30 co-farmers participating and a maximum of 12 participants per day. As we have seen, this is a very effective team size, according to Dunbar's theory.

Meaningful tasks are designed to ensure satisfaction. The concept of flow experiences is also an explicit value at Het Liessenhuus. “In every human being, a passionate curiosity can be found”, the farmer points out. Combined with the concept of experiential learning, arousing flow experiences is the key method at Het Liessenhuus. By offering contexts and activities with potential motivational value, such as the garden, animals, crafts, woodworking, and so on, the farmers try to discover each person's passion or area of curiosity. The care farmer explains their method:

We start with the experience. And to connect with the co-farmers, their passion is very important, as working with that passion provides strength. Once there is flow, they will probably

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experience no stress. From that point, we try to give them responsibility and give input for learning or to develop in any other way.

One of the aspects that influence happiness – setting the right goals – goes hand-in-hand with the search for personal flow experiences. Only after observations and a search for these experiences are goals set and translated into a care plan. According to the care farmer, many of the young co-farmers have had the unfortunate experience of extrinsic goals being set for them at school or in work environments.

“Boerderij Ruimzicht” biodynamic farm

The “hedonic treadmill” is being tamed at Ruimzicht through criticism of a capitalistic system that promotes economic growth at the Earth’s expense. In contrast to efficiency-based mass production methods and maximizing economic profit, the farmers at Ruimzicht aim for a different kind of profit from their dairy farm, garden, care farm, and various educational activities. The farmers position the farm as biodynamic: “We provide care for the Earth, the soil, plant life, animals, and people”. For the farmers at Ruimzicht, all life, the Earth and the cosmos are connected and valuable and should be handled as such:

From soil to human beings. In a biological and evolutionary sense. As Rudolf Steiner explains. And we want to care for people who are searching for themselves, for who they are and support them in what they want to be.

This means that being connected to the soil, plants, and animals is considered equally as important as producing food and providing care or education. All the techniques used are strictly biological, which means: no chemicals; as little machinery as possible; and a closed system starting with the use of dried cow manure to grow crops, some of which are used for animal feed and some of which are sold. The ultimate emphasis is on working as much as possible with what nature provides without breaking the circle. People visiting the farm differ in terms of their backgrounds and reasons for participating. The only restriction for the farmers is that they need to be sufficiently mobile to move around the compound. People come to learn or to recover from burnout or stress. They might arrive with or without savings.

On the matter of satisfying use of time, we found that the farmers at Ruimzicht are very devoted to their mission. Both the farmers interviewed admitted that they lacked free time

for their own relaxation. Their low income played a role in this regard. The solutions, according to the farmers, would be a fairer subsidy system and a more flexible policy for employee volunteers.

Consciousness as a building block for happiness seems to be a major theme at Ruimzicht. Doing the right things for all forms of life, the Earth, and the cosmos is essentially the basis for all activities and products at the farm. The farmers also try to accomplish everything with a mindful attitude, as the gardener explains: "Gratitude for what the garden gives us and showing we want to live with the seasons. This is something people like to focus on". The farmers at Ruimzicht aim for a good life via agriculture. This goal is exemplified in how and what they communicate, as well as by their products. Regarding the weekly produce box, one of the farmers stated: "I want to involve people. I do not just grow organic crops; I give them a story about how and why we do this". Along with the box comes a newsletter with recipes, personal experiences from the people working at the farm, and stories concerning how to best care for our planet.

HAPPINESS REVALUED?

Why should we bother to look into happiness in the context of care farming? Overall, because it demonstrates that happiness has a positive influence on people's physical, mental, and social wellbeing, which is supposed to be the aim of all social and healthcare organizations. Therefore, happiness should be practically included in the visionary paradigm, which is currently dominated by a biomedical, natural scientific approach (Diener *et al.*, 2017; Dijksterhuis, 2015; Van den Brink, 2012). Theories like "positive psychology" (Westerhof & Bohlmeijer, 2010) and "positive health" (Huber, 2011) are being explored in the field of healthcare and social work, emphasizing the importance of the meaning of life, happiness and subjective wellbeing. Helping people achieve happiness or subjective wellbeing is a professional and moral obligation for care farmers, and for social workers in general. Personal capabilities for achieving happiness should be enhanced. In this article, we have revalued the term "happiness" at the care farm. The five components of happiness provide a framework with which to define the happy life at the care farm.

Considering the studies on care farms reviewed, in combination with the theoretical framework on happiness presented, and the application of that framework to three selected cases, we can answer the research question: "what is the potential for achieving happiness at care farms in the Netherlands?"

Real farm products create connection and flow experiences

An important feature of the happy and good life at the care farms that we explored is that in one way or another, producing food for regular customers or offering leisure facilities for visitors is considered important as a real and useful contribution to society. What they provide has meaning for customers and for the people working at the farm, including the clients, volunteers, and professionals involved. These farm products and facilities create an opportunity for connection and acceptance. We have seen that this is a struggle for the farmers: the farmer at Het Liessenhuus gives visitors the opportunity to pick up their produce box quickly, but adds value via the foodbank, while at the Arc garden, customers need to interact with participants to retrieve vegetables. Customers admitted that this approach has enabled them to get used to interacting with people with a disability. The strategy may cause the farm to lose some customers, but in the context of these farms, where something real and useful can be found for everyone, it is possible to work on equivalence between people when they are brought together, and participants can experience a “farmer and co-worker” relationship rather than, or alongside, the “caregiver and client” dependency. The first is associated with a healthy and happy life.

A care farm has the potential to create flow experiences on account of its rich (outdoor) space and natural setting. Of course, reaching out for flow experiences requires a certain minimum level of interest from the participant in the tasks being done or the sources used in a farm context. It also requires the farmers and social workers to gain insight and skills to support clients in discovering their own potential flow experiences.

Although there are size differences between Dutch care farms, many are small-scale. It is also noteworthy that care farms offer a context for several heterogeneous groups. We have seen that such a small scale leads to more influence, safety, and happiness for the individuals involved.

Shared values lead to happiness

According to Dijksterhuis, circumstances hardly influence happiness in the long-term, but behaviour does have a significant influence. Of course, the rural environment, being closer to nature than the city, may not be everyone's preferred option. People who very much enjoy

being close to nature will probably feel happier at a farm than in an activity centre in the city. Considering the aspect of behaviour, it becomes more significant for care farmers to be aware of how they influence behaviour involving happiness. As we have seen in the three cases, the value configurations of the care farmers do influence their policies and methods. That has an effect on the behaviour of all those involved: care farmers, customers, and clients. What we consider morally right and part of “the good life” will determine our values. If we actively practise those values, we will develop matching capabilities, which our behaviour will then exemplify. According to the neurological type model of Gregory Bateson, our value configurations will definitely influence the development of our capabilities and behaviour, including our interaction with others (Dilts, 2014). In addition, people feel more comfortable in a context that includes others who share their values. Dijksterhuis’ study also reveals that shared experiences lead to happiness. These experiences take place not only in our physical context, but also in our moral and spiritual context, or at least in what we imagine that to be. This context is what Charles Taylor would call the fullness of life—a glimpse of what the world should be like and what we strive for (Taylor, 2007). In all three cases, we have seen a community’s shared idea about the good life, whether that is shared concern about the Earth and the cosmos, the provision of healthy and delicious food to the less fortunate through the food bank, or attempts to achieve equality by working and living with people with an intellectual disability. According to the economist Jeremy Rifkin, history shows we are getting better at acting on our empathy towards other human beings, animals, plants and the Earth as a whole, although this empathy has always been in our genes (Hense, 2017). The benefit of placing people at care farms based on a match in values could potentially be enormous, when we consider that living in line with our values leads to the experience of a happy and good life.

Value configurations strengthen social work entrepreneurship

It may be useful to involve value configurations in social work entrepreneurship as part of the transformation to a participation society. In the Netherlands, there are farms and other social work practices with more and less explicit value configurations. The three selected cases in this study show that value configurations matter to the entrepreneurs, and that they base their methods on them. However, more research is needed on the value configurations of care farmers and their clients for wider reflection. The most valuable form of research would be

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co-creative research involving care farmers, their clients, and other stakeholders. Explicating value configurations and the ways in which they do or do not match each other's needs and worldviews would contribute to developing these best practices to achieve happiness, or subjective wellbeing, for all involved. Dijksterhuis' framework provides care farmers with tools, or evaluation points, to contribute to a happy life. The sector could benefit from using that framework to evaluate and learn from practices.

Lastly, the governmental, neo-liberal point of view on the participation society encourages the empowerment of each citizen. However, the question of how this empowerment is achieved should not be a governmental matter. In a world driven by market forces, in all domains, it does not seem likely that people who need more time for certain tasks, for whatever reasons, can compete with others easily (Hermsen, Embregts, Hendriks & Frielink, 2014). The original empowerment movement is based upon the moral idea of humanity, not on productivity. There should be a proper governmental vision in the Netherlands for how places like care farms can provide safe havens where people can learn and work inclusively, empowering them to achieve happiness. This government's "power to the people" slogan means that changes must occur in the established order of power and economics.

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NOTE

1 Wet Langdurige Zorg

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