

# The farmers' protest: what lessons should we learn

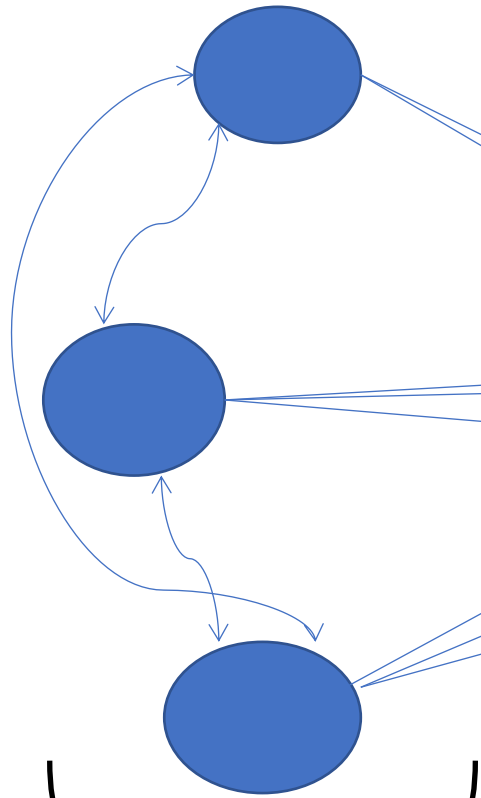
Jan Douwe van der Ploeg,  
Wageningen University

19 aprile, ore 17:00



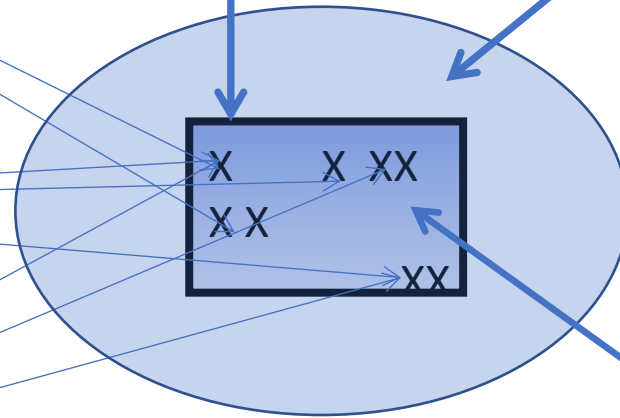
RIVM met de billen bleef  
**Nú niet eerlijk meten, in de toekomst geen eten!**  
"Auteurs van rekenmodellen zoals AgrosTacks en Aerius niet schromen  
om van modelonzekerheden van 30 tot 70% te spreken"  
**NO FARMS NO FOOD**

Institutions producing  
and using knowledge on  
agriculture



Cohesion

Horizon of  
relevance



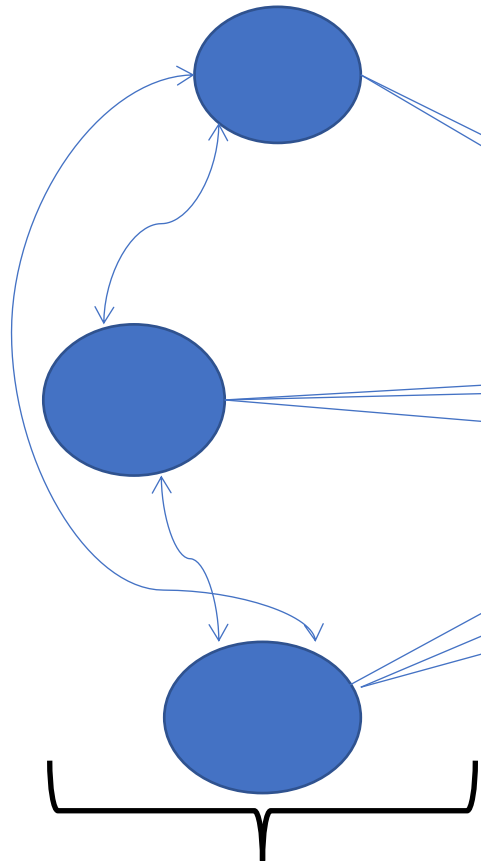
The periphery of the  
unknown

That what is known at  
institutional level



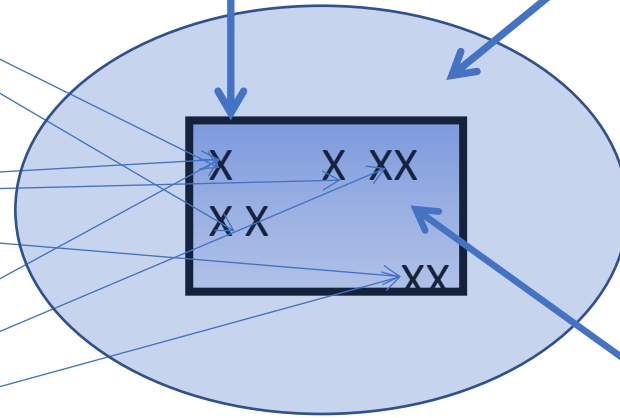
Convergence

Institutions producing  
and using knowledge on  
agriculture



Cohesion

Horizon of  
relevance



The periphery of the  
unknown

“optimal farming”

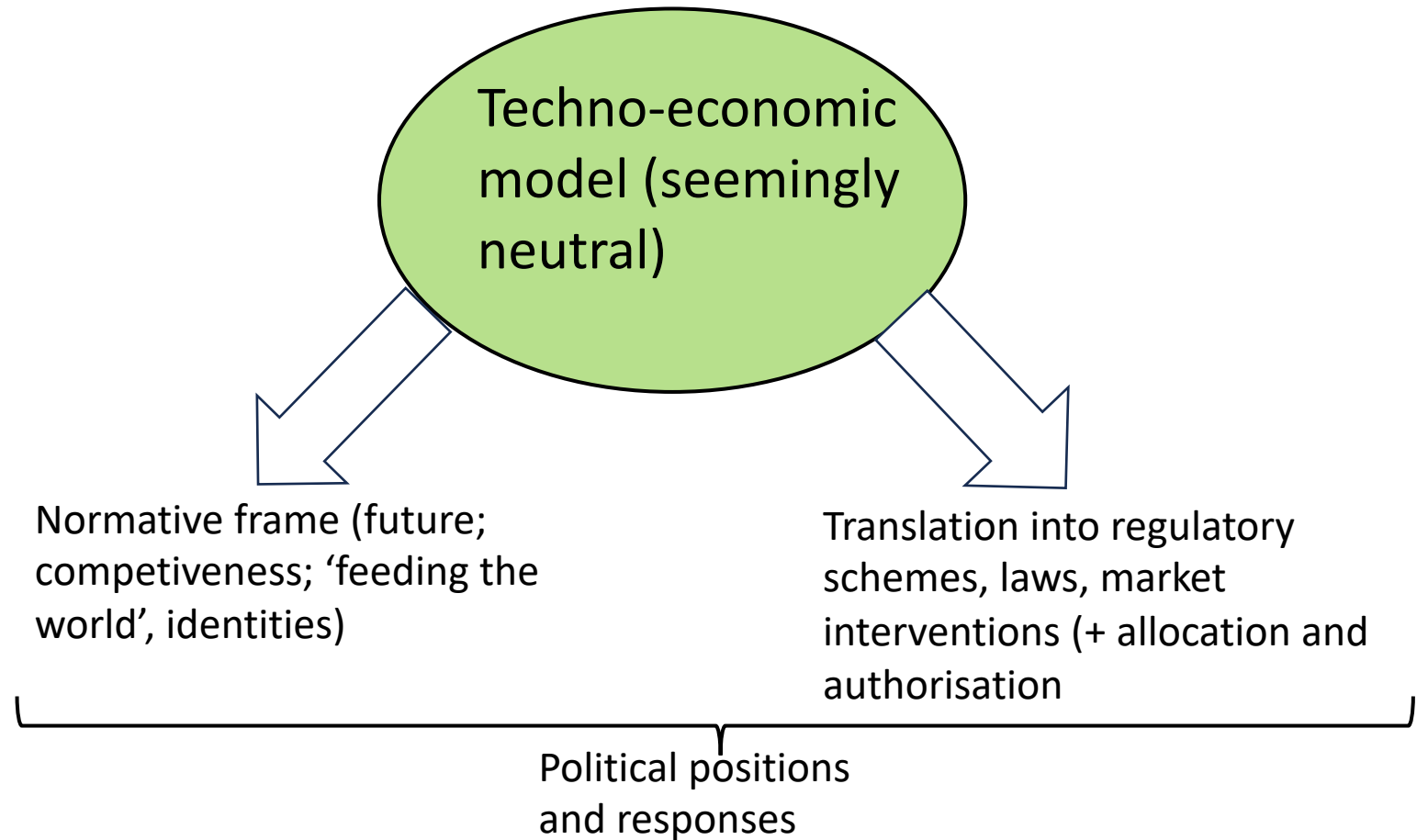
That what is known at  
institutional level



Convergence

# A threefold impasse

Normative  
Governance  
Politics

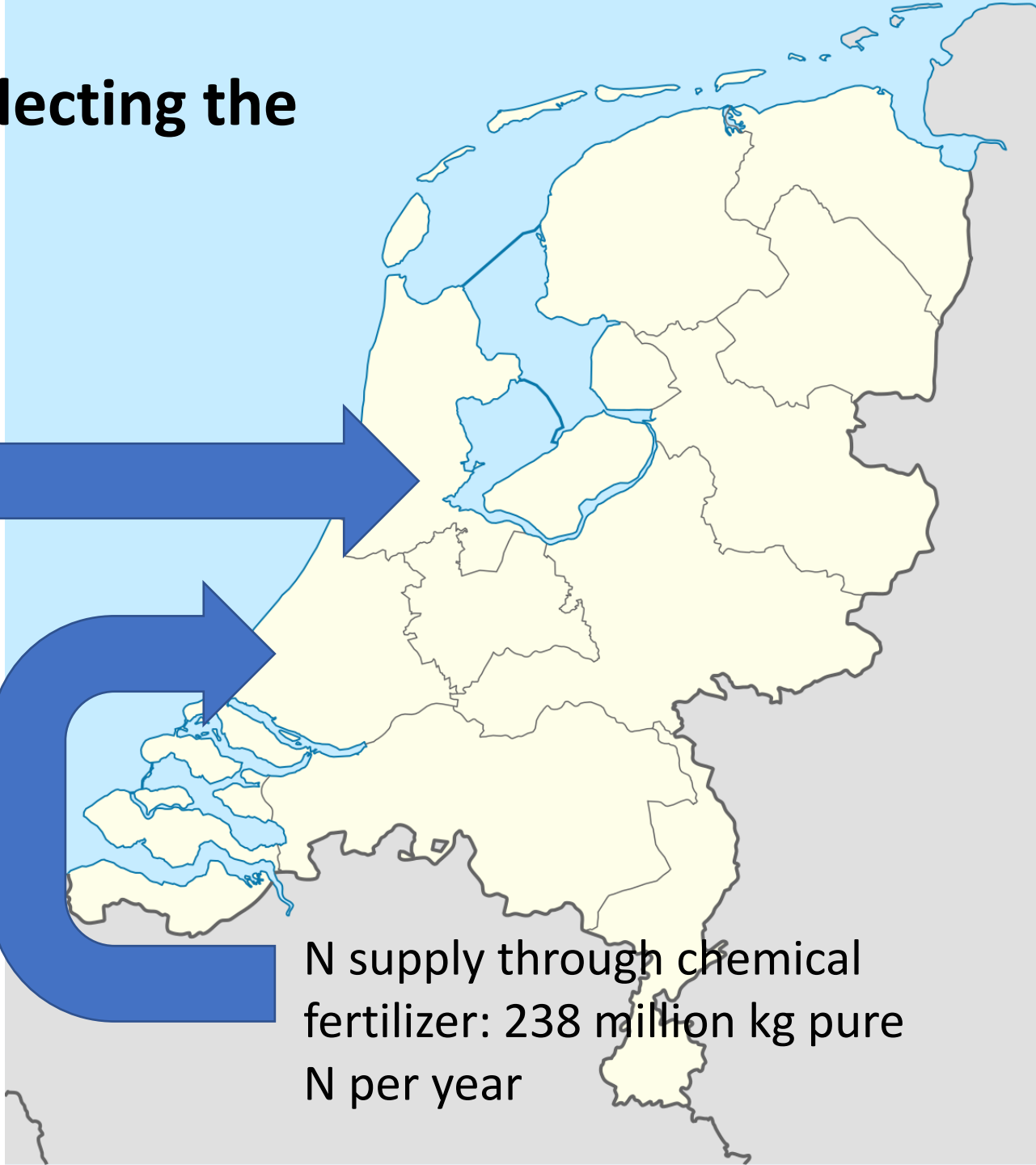


# 1<sup>st</sup> consequence: neglecting the core of the problem

N-supply through concentrates:  
434 million kg pure N per year



N supply through chemical fertilizer: 238 million kg pure N per year



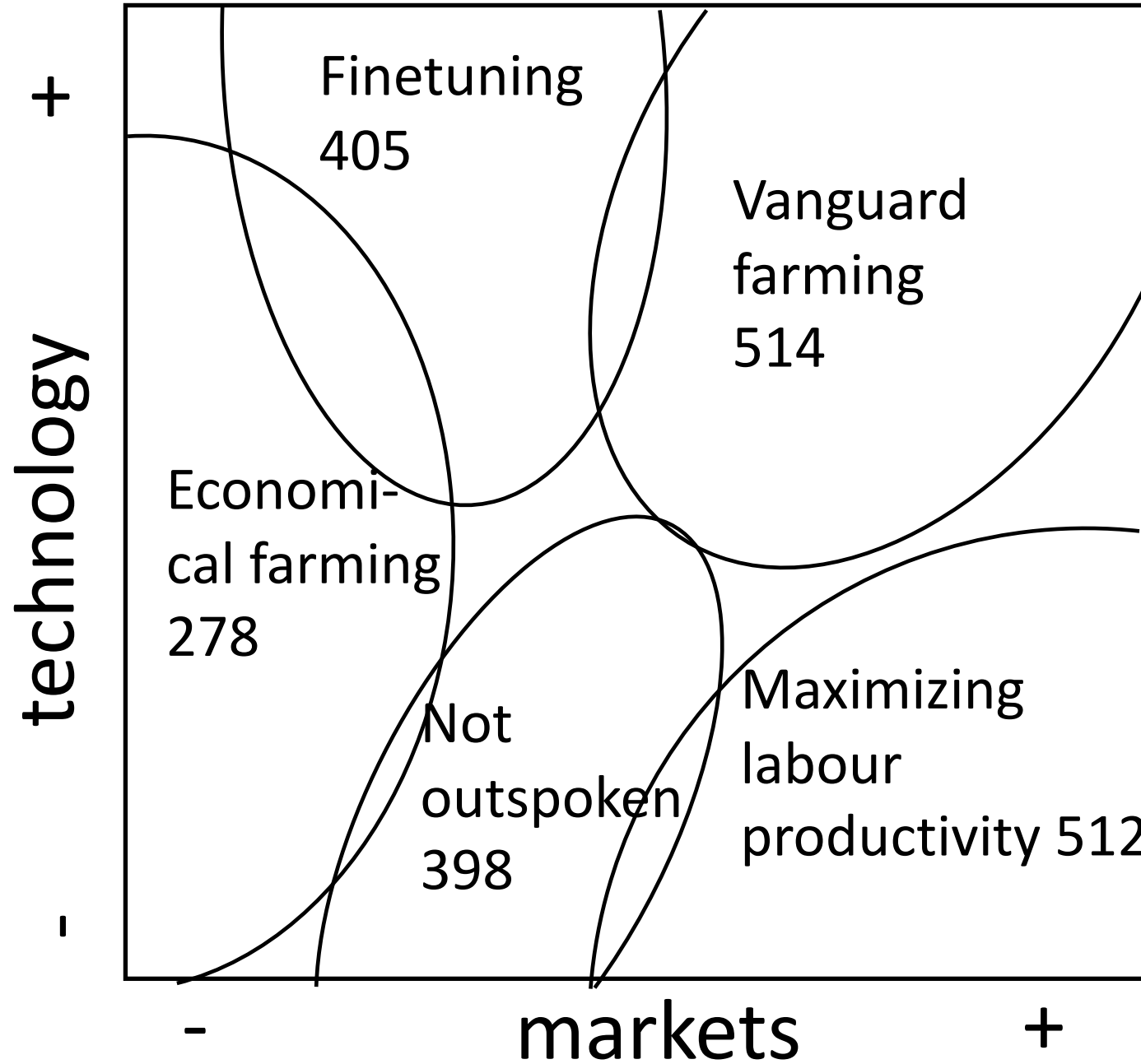




**#TROTS  
OP DE  
BOER**



**2nd  
consequence:  
neglecting  
heterogeneity**



Nitrogen surpluses  
per hectare

**DOBI  
1996**

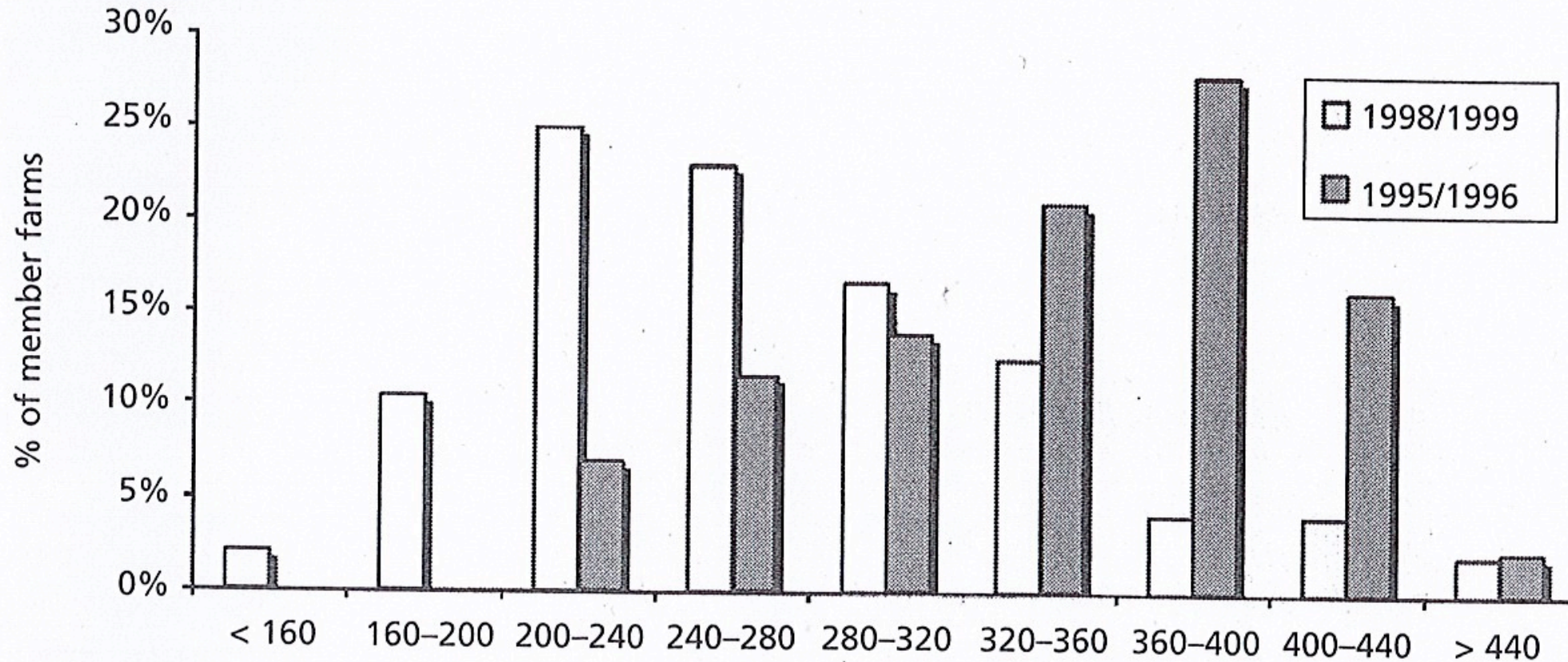


**3rd consequence: neglecting  
farmers' initiatives**  
(creation of VEL, later part of  
NFW)



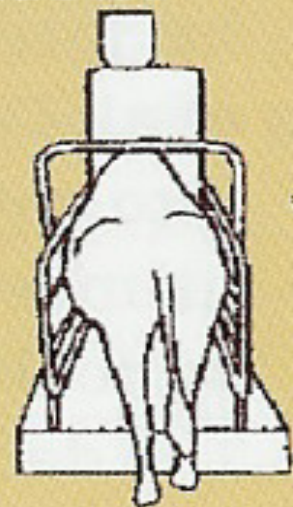


# A radical change in the late '90s

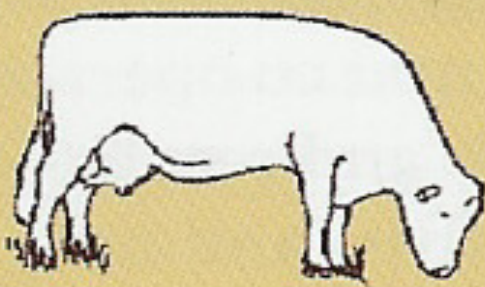


from 346 to 236 kg. stikstof/ha ( -31%)

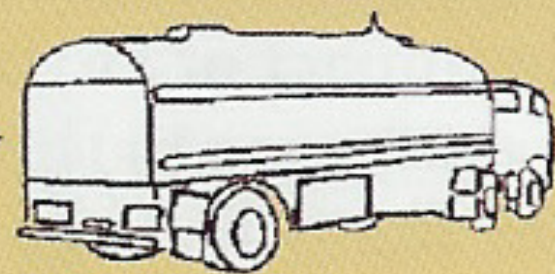
concentrates



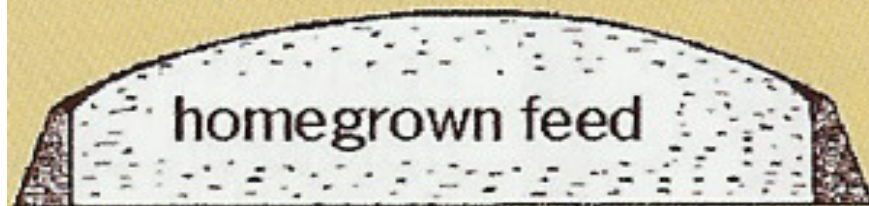
cow



milk + meat



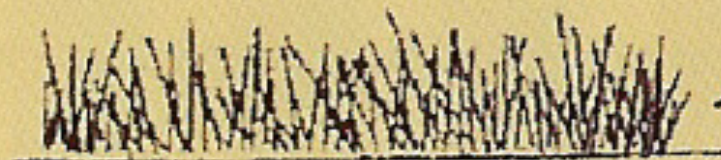
homegrown feed



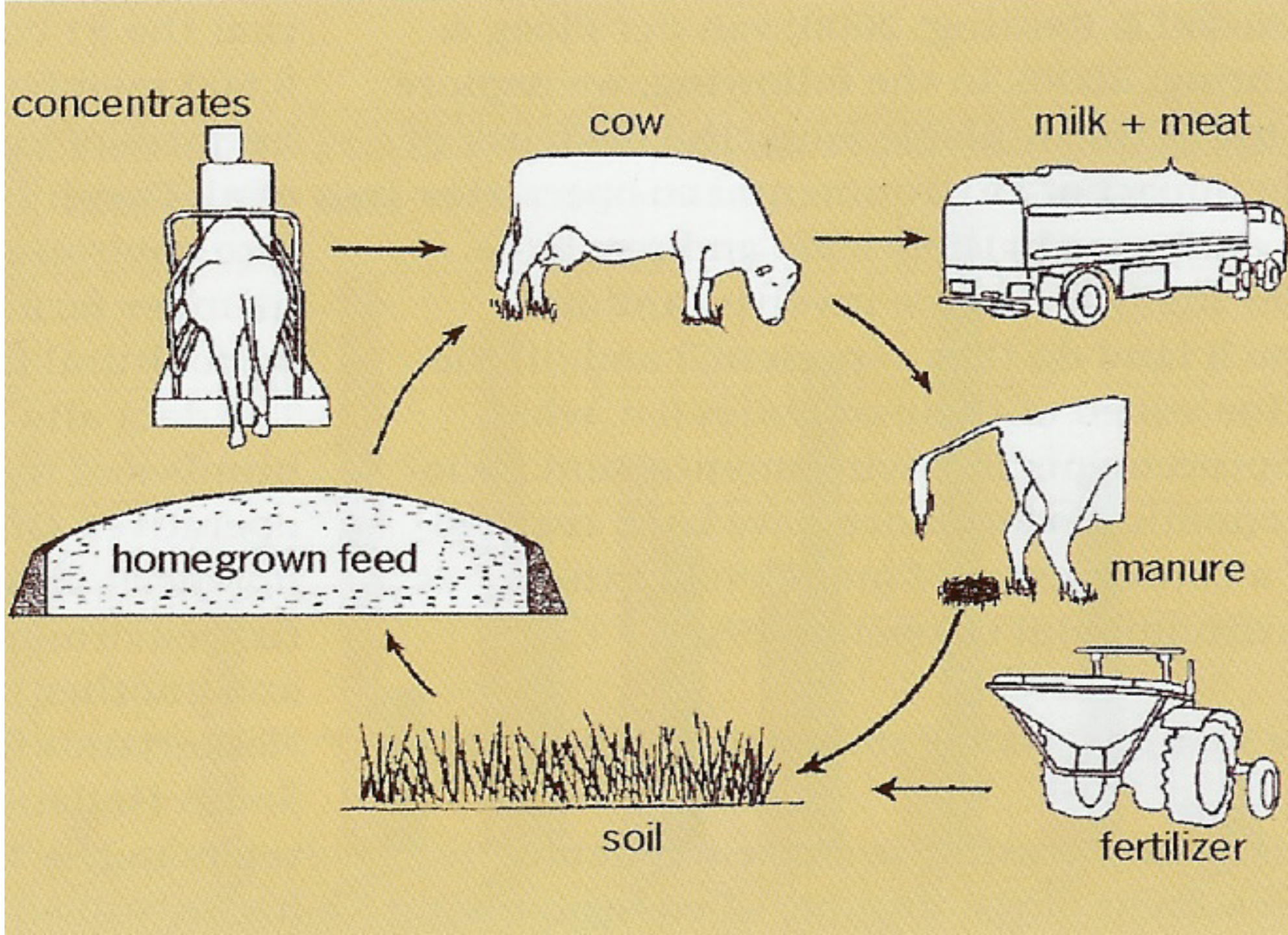
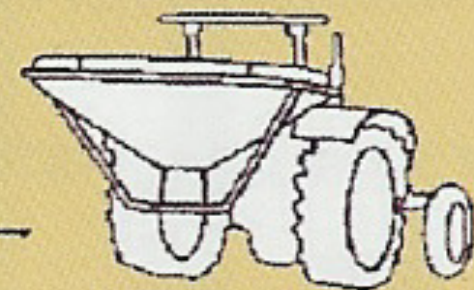
manure



soil

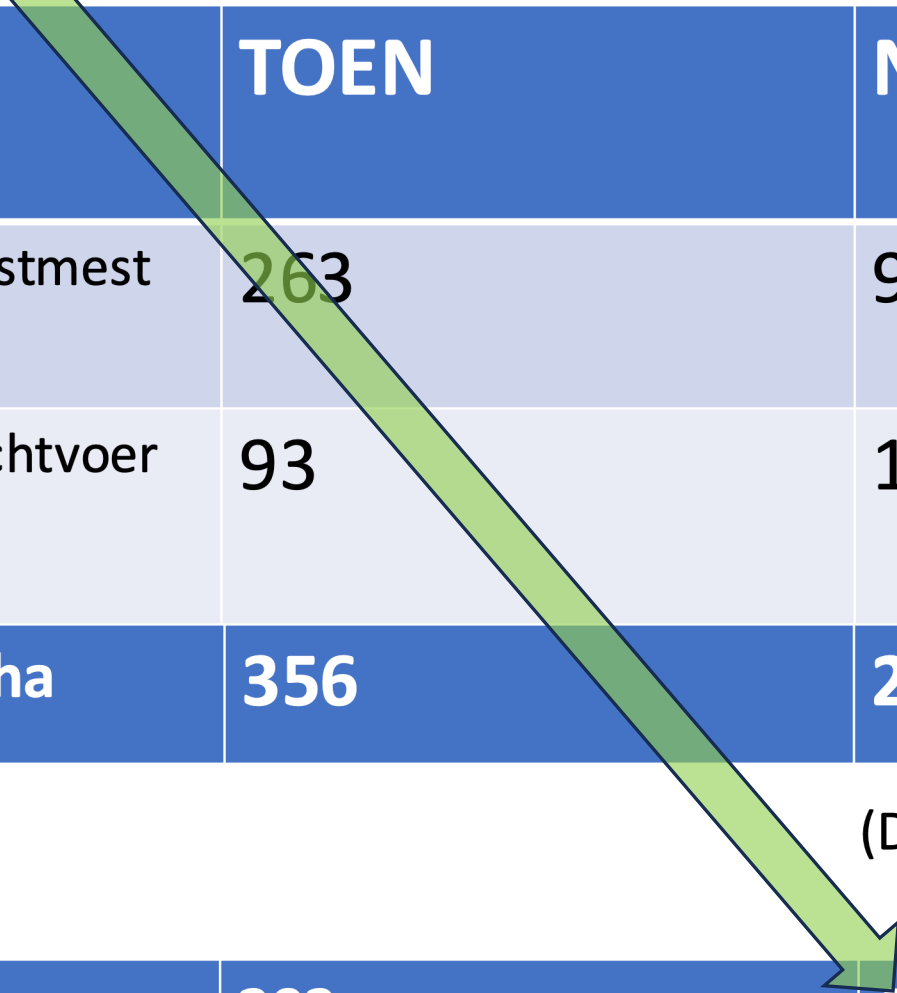


fertilizer



# 25 years later

	TOEN	NU
N aanvoer/ha via kunstmest	263	95
N aanvoer/ha via krachtvoer	93	109
<b>Totale N aanvoer/ha</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>204</b>
		(Daling van 42%)
<b>N overschot/ha</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>166</b>



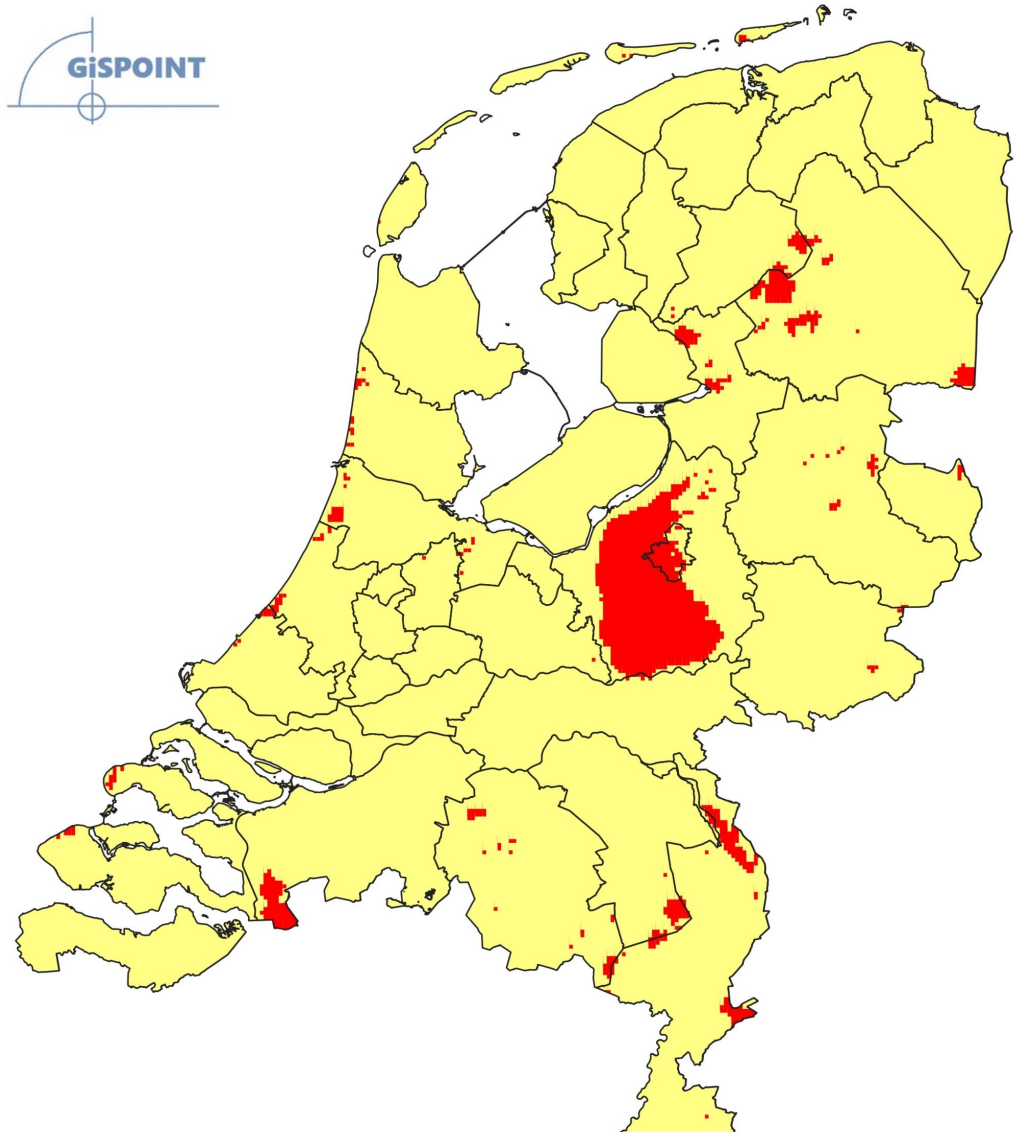
# Comparing with the national average

	Derogatiebedrijven NL nu	VELVANLA bedrijven nu (3 jaarlijkse gemiddelde)
N/ha via kunstmest	133	95
N/ha via krachtvoer	210	109
<b>Totale N aanvoer/ha</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>204</b>

(Verschil: 40% lager)

Assuming an overall reduction of 30% in N-emissions/ha in Dutch agriculture: remaining nature areas under threat

(Frank Verhoeven, Wouter de Jong)



Instead: a standstill of  
the economy, social  
upheaval and political  
impasse







## **Toxic cocktail:**

**1) Violence**

**2) Anti-parliamentarism + blaming the other**

**3) Considerable electoral wing**

**4) Tough support of agro-capital**

What are the lessons to be learned (1)?

## A layered policy approach

**Use the market to tackle the core of the problem**

**Introduce clear limits (to be translated in non-negotiable generic regulation)**

**Open spaces for legally conditioned self-regulation**

## What lessons can be learned (2)?

- 1) Accept and build on diversity; stop “seeing like a state”
- 2) Create space for experiments (strategic niches)
- 3) Build and use alliances and coalitions; stop with technocratic mega-projects; mobilize ‘problem-owners’; build as much as possible on civil society.