

### **New experiences with AES schemes for hamster in the Netherlands**

The decline of the European hamster has been going on for years already and occurs not only in the Netherlands but in almost all habitats in Western and now also in Central Europe. It is certain that changes in agricultural practice is one of the main causes. As a follow-up to the earlier 'Hamster experiment (2005-2010)', the three-year project 'Hamster op Eigen Benen' was started in 2015 with the aim of determining the effectiveness of alternative forms of agricultural management that are favourable for the hamster and other species of arable fields and at the same time cheaper than the SNL hamster packages used so far. With lower reimbursements, more hectares of arable land can be managed in a hamster-friendly way. Increasing the scale of hamster management has proven to be a necessary condition for the sustainable survival of the hamster in Limburg.

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