

*Wanted: cow-replacing fungus. Reward: 2.5 million euro*

## **PLANT-BASED DAIRY MAVERICKS THOSE VEGAN COWBOYS ISSUE RECORD-BREAKING GLOBAL BOUNTY HUNT**

On September 22, former Vegetarian Butchers Jaap Korteweg & Niko Koffeman launch their search for a rare fungal strain: one that turns grass into real milk proteins, without the use of cows. The word is spread worldwide, classic wanted-poster style, across universities and research facilities. The microbiologist who delivers the desired spore to their milk lab in Ghent will be rewarded up to 2.5 million euro. It is the highest bounty hunt prize ever issued in Belgium & The Netherlands. The end goal? Classic cheese and other dairy identical to cow's dairy but made by 100% plant-based precision fermentation. The first cheese is expected to hit the market in 7 years, but the bounty hunt is meant to speed up the process.

### **The Stainless Steel Cow**

After setting new standards in the meat replacement market with their company The Vegetarian Butcher, which was acquired by Unilever in 2018, Dutch founding cowboys Jaap Korteweg and Niko Koffeman now have their eyes fixed on new horizons: grass-fed cheese & milk products, made by microbes instead of cows. The right fungal starter culture is worth millions, for it could be the key to the Stainless Steel Cow: the next logical step in modernizing dairy farming, according to Those Vegan Cowboys.

### **Team up with Dutch dairy farmers**

Jaap Korteweg, 9th generation farmer himself: "Dairy farming has always been about efficiency and being a good steward for the land and its animals. Life animals have become wasteful and pitiful cogs in an otherwise fully automated production process. Replace the animals, and a whole new vista opens up." Dairy farming is notorious for its burden on land & water, biodiversity and climate. Without the use of livestock, the environmental impact would reduce enormously- a major leap forward for the entire industry. "Cows and calves can go back to living life on their own terms. What I like about it is that dairy farmers will still remain vital in the new production chain. They own the best grass land."

First lab results are in

The new process is being established and Those Vegan Cowboys' 20-person lab team has spotted the first microbial caseins. Creating casein micelles in bulk is the greatest hurdle in the plant-based cheese gold rush, and the bounty hunt may be Those Vegan Cowboy's golden ticket to a fungus that is more stable & efficient than the strains they currently use. Jaap Korteweg: "The leading path to our cheese Eldorado. Rather than the fastest, we are looking for the most efficient fungus with the best results. Might come from Russia, might come from China, might come from a small lab in Illinois. We're determined on finding this fungus, and make our Stainless Steel Cow the new standard."

All details about the hunt can be found at [www.thosevegancowboys.com](http://www.thosevegancowboys.com).



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