

Kikkoman Windmill and Water Resource Preservation Project in the Netherlands



In the 1990s, pollution became a major problem in Lake Zuidlaardermeer, Groningen Province in the Netherlands. This freshwater lake is the second largest in the province and an important water source. However, the fish, small animals, wild birds and other creatures that had frequently been seen around the lake were disappearing. Storage capacity management, water purification, and ecosystem restoration were required to address this issue. Stichting Het Groninger Landschap, an environmental conservation group, played a central role in a water quality improvement project for the lake, with support from entities such as the European Communities, the government of the Netherlands, Groningen Province, Hoogezand-Sappemeer City, and WXF (a WWF related group).

In 1997, Stichting Het Groninger Landschap asked Kikkoman Foods Europe B.V. (KFE), a company incorporated in the Netherlands, for their cooperation in the project. KFE participated in the project as one of the main sponsors, in line with its

management principles of harmony with nature and being a company that serves the local community. Kikkoman Windmill was installed with project funds, which pumps up the lake water and transfers it to the adjacent expansive water purification area, which is filled with beneficial aquatic organisms and microorganisms. The organisms work to gradually purify the lake water, and the purified water is then returned to the lake. As much of the Netherlands is below sea level, they have a long history of flood control measures, particularly those involving the construction of dikes and dams. This water purification project, however, is another method entirely, and returns once drained land to its original wetland state. Two project aims are to increase water storage capacity, and to restore the ecosystem by recycling water with the use of windmills that use natural energy.

After some ten years, the project is slowly starting to show rewards, with signs of improvement in the water quality.

