

Hinrich Heuer thinks big

The industrialisation of agriculture cannot be stopped

In 2048, the average dairy farm here in Germany will have 300 to 400 cows. Technology will play a much bigger role in farming than it does today. Cows will only be milked by means of robotic milking systems. Tractors will be working the land by themselves, without the farmer at the steering wheel. He will be at home, sending out working orders to the tractors via a satellite system. And I am sure that forty years from now, other automation systems that we can't even think of today will certainly be around. After all, it was only twenty years ago we thought that automated milking was impossible.

Humans will become less and less important, but the people who will still be working in agriculture must be highly qualified, on a technology as well as on an agriculture management level. I do regret this development, because the work pressure only gets higher.

Ninety percent of the cows will be in the stable, no doubt. However, I think that in certain areas, for instance in Bavaria in southern Germany, cattle still need to graze the mountain pastures for reasons of nature conservation.

The industrialization of Western agriculture cannot be stopped, one of the effects of which is that the gap between the rich and the poor countries is getting deeper. We will have the technology and they won't. Already today, we see Western companies buying up big agricultural areas in countries like Russia and Brasil. They take their technology with them, which results in unemployment for the farmers in these countries. To me, that's an unwanted development.



Hinrich Heuer, dairy farmer in Uelzen, Germany, 120 dairy cows and 140 hectares of grassland, has worked with 2 Lely Astronaut milking robots since 1999.

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